

# Reminiscence: Grace Chaffee - Part 1

This is Part One of an interview with Grace Chaffee, who was born in 1900. The interviewer is Barbara Upton, and the interview takes place at her home on Beech Hill on April 25, 1985. The interview was recently transcribed for the Andover Historical Society by Jeanne Barrett.

**Grace Chaffee:** My grandfather and grandmother Flanders, James and Mary, came from Wilmot. They had six children, and those were all born in Wilmot. They moved to East Andover in September, 1865, and they moved to the farm that was later known as Maplecrest Farm. At that time it was part of the farm owned by Lieutenant Brown who had a very large second story building up in what we used to use for a pasture; and that is nearly the spot now where David and Annette Bashaw have their home.

There's a lovely view from their house as far as New London. It's enough above the treetops so it is really a lovely view.

The Flanders had six children. The older one was Ellen Flanders Tuttle. She was a school teacher. And then there were Hale Thomas Hart Benton who was named for an artist out west, but I do not know why. And Charles. And then the twins, Evina Mary and Ervin James.

Ervin James was my father. He was a printer in Manchester, and that was where I was born. About 1903, his health was not good, and they told me he would have to be outdoors. So he came back to his old home where his father had lived, and that was where my

father and mother lived.

I went to the East Andover school, and sometimes it was a long walk, and sometimes I would have a ride. When Dad was a mail carrier, I could ride some mornings. Sometimes I couldn't.

The school was in the present school near the [Highland Lake] Grange Hall and the church. There were two rooms – the first four grades were taught by Nellie Morey at the time I went, and the other ones were taught by different teachers through the years. That was grades five to eight.

The superintendent of the schools would come down on the train. He'd visit the schools at East Andover, then he'd walk up Chase Hill to Flaghole to visit the Flaghole school, then walk over the hill by (probably you'd remember it as) Gertie Putney's place, but it came out down by the Boston Hill schoolhouse. Then he would visit that school, and then he would walk back to Andover. It's a little different from the way the inspection is done nowadays.

My Grandfather and Grandmother Eastman came to East Andover about the same time as my Grandfather Flanders. When they first lived here, they lived over on what we call Cemetery Corner now. They lived there for about two years, and then my grandfather bought a place and the land where Louise Wood lives today. Some of you may remember it as Larry and Louise Rislings' home.

My grandfather was a stone mason, and in the winter he trained oxen. The barn cellar on both the Bachelor Farm and the Dunn Farm (which was then known as the Philbrick Farm) were

built by my grandfather and his brother. My grandfather made the forms for the Bachelor barn, and they were drawn up by oxen on sleds while there was snow, before they were able to start the stone work. As I said, my father's health was not good, so we came back to East Andover.

He started setting out apple trees and clearing out the farm because it had not been lived in except for a short time in the summers. Then he didn't have any special work; he was just told by Mr. Bryant, who was a rural carrier, that he was not going to continue; he asked my dad if he was interested. Dad was, and he took the exams and passed, so for the next 22 years, he was a mail carrier.

There were two routes. The first one was a formal route. That went over Bachelor Hill up by Elbow Pond and came out on the main road. Then it went down to the switch and across the road there and out by Calvin Currier's place back to Boston Hill School; then to the corner where Anson lived, which is where the Colburns live now, up over the hill, and then it turned right and went up to where the old Jenny Putney or corner end used to be. From there it went to John Bailey's and then back to the corner road out by Cemetery Corner to the cemetery. That was supposed to be the forenoon route, and then dad went home and changed horses. This was horse and buggy or horse and sleigh – no cars then.

Then he'd have his dinner and start on the afternoon route. That went up over Tucker Mountain down to Dyers Crossing, up Marston Hill, then back

by the farm where Fred and Marcia Condon live now, and then by the Fultons, and down Chase Hill to the village. That was the afternoon route. Dad always changed horses at noon because the roads were not as nice as today.

In the wintertime, there were two ladies who were concerned about his health – Mrs. Bailey always had a hot free stone, and she'd take the cold one, which was warm when he left home but cold when he got to her house on the forenoon route. And in the afternoon, Mrs. Emery would have one ready for him. She used to live where the Goodys live now.

One day when they were using cars, my dad came along and one man, who lived alone and was elderly, he pulled out his watch and said, "Well, you're right on time, Ervin. I can set my watch by you."

The next man was Harry Eton. He had quite a sense of humor, and we always enjoyed talking with him. If it was a very windy day, Harry almost always would say, "Well, good day to win the beans, today." On other days if it was nice, he'd say, "Well, nice overhead but not many going that way." He always had a joke or a comment that we always enjoyed.

It's a little different now with the cars and the speed with which they get around. Sometimes when my dad would be up by the Mountain Brook in the spring, the brook would rise quite rapidly and the ice would come up into the sleigh. Sometimes when it was very muddy, he had a two-wheeled cart which he'd use instead of the four wheels in trying to help the horse out.

## Wilmot Historical Society

### By the Wilmot Historical Society

Dr. Allen V. Koop will present his program, *The First Ascent of Mount Washington*, on Sunday, February 28, at 4 PM at the Wilmot Public Library on North Wilmot Road and Route 4A in Wilmot Center.

For more than 200 years, historians believed that Darby Field made the first climb up Mount Washington in 1642. However, in the last several decades questions have emerged about his use of Native American guides, about the likelihood of prior ascents by Native Americans, about the route Field may have followed on the mountain, and about whether Field actually made the ascent as claimed.

Dr. Koop, Visiting Professor of History at Dartmouth College, will examine how historians reconstruct the "truth" when given scant, vague, and even contradictory evidence. The accompanying slide show provides wonderful historic photos of the early days in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

The Wilmot Historical Society

(WHS) has arranged for Dr. Koop to present this program through the generosity of the New Hampshire Humanities Council. The lecture is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served following an update on WHS activities, which will begin at 3 PM ahead of the scheduled program.

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