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"This is a family picture that was taken outside the farmhouse on September 27, 1953 - my grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary. In the front are Guy and Nannie Hersey (my grandparents). In the back are Raymond Hersey (he is still alive and lives near the farm), Dorothy Hersey LaPlante (my mother), James (Jerry's father), Elsie Hersey Bassett (she is still alive and lives with her daughter in Rumney), and Samuel Hersey (Roger's father)." Rita Norander

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Easement On Roger Hersey Farm Preserves Local History

By Rita LaPlante Norander
Writing for ASLPT

It was Christmas in November for everyone in the Andover area, and for anyone who regularly travels Route 11 in East Andover. The gift received by all was the finalization of the conservation easement on the Roger Hersey Farm, thus ensuring that these picturesque open fields and scenic views would be protected forever.

In addition to preserving the beauty and tranquility of this property, it was important for the farm to be conserved from an historical point of view - the history of the Hersey family, the history of farming, and the history of the people of Andover.

In 1904, my grandparents, Guy and Nannie Hersey, purchased the property from Carlos Tilton. Carlos had owned the farm since 1877, and his wife was Nannie's great aunt. My mother, Dorothy Hersey LaPlante, was born in the farmhouse, as were her brothers Samuel (Roger's father) and James (Jerry's father). Samuel, the oldest son, inherited the farm, which he eventually deeded to his son Roger, the current owner.

My family grew up in close proximity to our grandparents, and when visiting them in the forties and fifties, it was like stepping back in time. They had no electricity or telephone, no running water or indoor plumbing, no tractor or car, and no central heating - things most people at that time did have, and considered necessities - even our struggling family of nine! This was my grandparents' way of life, and they seemed to be content with it. It was a life similar to that led by their ancestors before them, and by other Andover farm families as well.

The Hersey Farm has changed very little from when I was a child, or for that matter, from when my mother was a child a hundred years ago. This is what makes the Hersey Farm so special, and why it was important for it to

be conserved. It is as if time has stood still on these 60 acres of land in East Andover - untouched and unchanged by the modern world - a relic of the past, to be honored, treasured, and appreciated by all.

While at the Ausbon Sargent annual meeting this fall, I overheard a conversation that made me smile. A member was telling my cousin, Jerry, that driving past the Hersey Farm can be a safety hazard (not the exact words, but the gist of the conversation). Immediately, I knew exactly what he meant, because I too, often have this feeling. When driving this stretch of highway, it is so hard for me to keep my eyes on the road! Instead I am trying to take in the sights around me - the buildings, the cows and calves in the pastures, the haying in the summer and the beautiful foliage in the fall. I never tire of seeing these things, and how lucky we are that we will be able to continue to enjoy all this in perpetuity. Thank you Ausbon Sargent and all of the supporters who made this project possible and a special thank you to my cousin Roger Hersey.

In Their Time by Helen LaPlante Duchesne, tells the story of growing up in rural NH in the early 1900s. Copies can be obtained from Pat Cutter at 735-5628 or Pres@AndoverHistory.org. Price is \$10, plus shipping and handling, or pick up or delivery could be arranged.

Rita, a former teacher, grew up in East Andover, but has lived in Westford, Massachusetts for 47 years with her husband Bob. In 1994 Rita & Bob purchased the LaPlante homestead, which had been owned by Rita's parents since 1929. Rita & Bob have extensively renovated the property, and will soon retire there. History of the area and family genealogy are two of Rita's many interests.

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