

THE GENEALOGY OF AMOS DOWN BRIDGE

DEDICATED to Ruth Emily Bridge and Elizabeth Gordon Bridge
"We really did listen and remember"

April, 2001

The Bridge Family History was first compiled in 1983 by Ruth E. Bridge. She dedicated that book to Emily Gordon Bridge, her aunt and daughter of Amos, who as Ruth so kindly states "was the inspiration for it". Seventeen years later Aunt Emily is still remembered.

Aunt Emily's warmth, smile and optimism put her scoliosis and short stature in a shadow. She was the sickliest of the eight as a child, yet lived the longest (87 years) and outlived them all (1960).

At age 41 she married a second cousin from England, Arthur John Bridge. They lived until their deaths in the front part of the home her father Amos built on School Street, across from "Fairlawn". Offices for Bridge Insurance Company and Bridge Construction were in the back. Behind were garage, carriage house, icehouse, dairy, cow and horse barns and two homes for help. So there was a lot of people traffic—many of whom dropped in on Aunt Em and Uncle Arthur.

Among her many interests was the large ever-sprawling family younger ones rippling out from Hazardville. She was like "central" and "information" one could talk to on the telephone. Non-Hazardville relatives and locals alike told her all and asked questions about others. This good book informs us about parts of a tree. Aunt Emily could bring to life any bud, twig or branch, living or dead.

Allyn G. Bridge
2000

AMOS DOWN BRIDGE

August 27, 1838 - September 23, 1906

Below is the text of Amos Down Bridge's obituary as it appeared in local papers.

AMOS D. BRIDGE

Seldom has this entire community been so shocked as by the announcement last Sunday afternoon that the Hon. Amos Down Bridge, one of the most prominent and influential citizens of the town of Enfield has passed away, his death occurring at his home on Fairlawn Avenue, Hazardville, at about 1:45 o'clock. To only a few was it known that Mr. Bridge had been in poor health, and no one suspected that the end was so near. During the summer he spent several months in Europe with his wife and returned with renewed strength. He had been attending to his duties to within about a week. Friday he went to Holyoke with his wife, and spent the night at the home of their daughter, returning Saturday evening. Though a regular

attendant at church, he was induced to remain at home Sunday morning. He ate heartily at dinner, conversing cheerfully with members of the family. Later he lay down on the lounge, complaining of a slight pain in his chest. He attempted to rise, but fell back, expiring almost instantly.

The life of Mr. Bridge has been one of unusual activity. Coming as he did to Hazardville when one church and three or four houses constituted the village, he has lived to see a prosperous and beautiful village grow up about him, he himself being a prominent factor in the development.

Amos D. Bridge was the son of John L. and Mary Prickett Bridge, and was born in Milton, County of Kent, England, in 1838. When but four years of age he came to this country with his parents, who located in Enfield. His father was first employed as a packer in the Hazard Powder Company's works, and later carried on a fish and yeast business in this village. He afterwards returned to Hazardville and conducted a general store. Amos D. Bridge was educated in the Enfield schools and also at the Connecticut literary Institute in Suffield. After a clerkship of four years, he entered the employ of the Hazard Powder Company as an office boy, advancing steadily until after eighteen years of service he resigned from the position of chief clerk to go into business for himself. He first took up the manufacture of kegs, which he sold to the Powder Company. In 1878 he branched into the lumber business, conducting both works until 1885, when he gave up the manufacture of kegs. He steadily increased his business year by year, until at the time of his death he had the largest works and employed the greatest number of workmen of any individual in this section. Mr. Bridge was well known throughout New England as a builder and repairer of macadam roads. A few years ago he did the work on more than one sixth of all the state roads in Massachusetts, besides having contracts at the same time for roads in New Hampshire, Rhode Island and this state. Mr. Bridge was the largest individual landowner in this territory, owning not less than 2,500 acres of land in Enfield and nearby towns. The Hazardville water works were built, owned and operated by him.

Mr. Bridge has always been a staunch republican and has held numerous public offices. He was auditor of the town for twenty years, assessor seventeen years, selectman one year, a member of the board of relief for several terms and a member of the school board for fifteen years. He had the honor of representing this district in the state senate, serving in 1891-92. At the age of 19 Mr. Bridge became a member of the Hazardville Methodist Episcopal church, and has always been an active worker in the church, not allowing his extensive business affairs to interfere with religious duties. Mr. Bridge married Miss Elizabeth Gordon, who survives him. He also leaves eight children, Mrs. Lincoln H. Randall of Holyoke, Emily G. and Mary, and H. Stephen, Allyn G., William A., Homer E. and Charles A., all the sons being more or less interested in the management of the various enterprises.

The funeral of Mr. Bridge was held at 2:30 o'clock Tuesday afternoon at the Hazardville Methodist Episcopal church. Places of business in this village were closed from 2:30 to 3:30, and in Hazardville the mills and places of business were closed throughout the afternoon. The public schools of the town were also closed for the afternoon. The funeral procession extended from the house where a service was held at 2 o'clock, conducted by Rev. George A. Grant-nearly to the church, one of the largest ever witnessed in Hazardville. The eulogy at the church service was delivered by Rev. Edwin S. Holloway of New York City.

The pastor, Rev. Mr. Grant, was also assisted by Rev. W. S. Machityre of Rockville. The school board of Enfield and delegations from the Board of Trade and Business Men's Association attended the funeral. The seats on the west side of the church were occupied by about 125 employees of Mr. Bridge. The honorary bearers were John K. Bissland and Tudor Gowdy of the Board of Trade, William Calderwood and Edward C. Allen from the Business Men's Association, Francis P. Leary and Dr. J. Homer Darling from the school board, and Walter Kelcey and Frank Brunette from the employees of the deceased. The active bearers were William W. Gordon, Arthur G. Gordon, George J. Gordon, David A. Bridge, George B. Bridge and Dr. George A. Bridge of Bisbee, Ariz., all nephews of Mr. Bridge. The floral tributes were many and very beautiful. The burial was in the Hazardville cemetery, services at the grave being conducted by Rev. Mr. Grant.

Some ten years later his wife, Elizabeth Gordon Bridge, passed on.

ELIZABETH GORDON BRIDGE

December 21, 1836 - August 27, 1916

Mrs. Elizabeth Bridge, 79, one of Hazardville's most prominent and respected women and widow of Amos D. Bridge, died Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock at her home on Fairlawn Avenue of chronic bronchitis and from ties incident to her advanced age. Mrs. Bridge had been in feeble health about three months. She was born in Glasgow, Scotland, December 21, 1836, a daughter of William and Jean Gordon, and came to Auburn, N. Y. with her parents when seven years old. The family soon moved to Thompsonville and later to Scitico, where she married Feb. 24, 1858, Amos D. Bridge. Soon after their marriage they located in this village, where Mrs. Bridge has since lived. Mrs. Bridge was a true helpmate to her late husband who rose from clerk in a general store to State Senator and founded the principal industry of the village, now known as Amos D. Bridge's Sons, Inc. Mrs. Bridge was a woman of splendid qualities and of a Christian character, always doing her utmost in the interests of the Methodist church of which she had long been a member. Her husband died about ten years ago. She leaves seven children, H. Stephen, Allyn G., Annie E., wife of Lincoln H. Randall of Melrose, William A., Homer E., Emfly G., wife of Arthur J. Bridge and Charles A. The brothers surviving are David Gordon, former State Senator, Andrew Gordon and George B. Gordon of the firm of Gordon Brothers, all of Hazardville, Peter G. Gordon of Stafford and two sisters, Mrs. Ephraim Bridge and Mrs. Samuel M. McAuley of Windsor Locks. She also leaves 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The funeral was held Tuesday afternoon at the home on Fairlawn Avenue. Rev. Thomas Tyrie of the Methodist church officiated, and Rev. E. S. Holloway of New York offered the benediction.

A NOTABLE GATHERING IN HAZARDVILLE - The Thompsonville Press December 1, 1887

Quite a large gathering of the Bridge and Gordon families-two of the oldest families of this village-occurred on Thanksgiving day at the home of Amos D. Bridge.

The Bridge and Gordon families became acquainted with and attached to each other about forty years ago. The Bridge family came to Enfield in 1842 and the Gordon family in 1844. They then lived in Thompsonville, near the Bell schoolhouse. As years passed that friendship and attachment became stronger, and as the children grew up they seemed to partake of the spirit and sentiment of their fathers. So strong did this fondness for each other become that after years of association in company in a general way, two of the Bridge boys each selected a Gordon girl and were united in that closest of all relations-holy matrimony. This step united the families with still stronger bonds, and the years that have intervened since it was taken, the first in 1859 and the second some years later, have been years of uninterrupted pleasure in each others society.

On Thanksgiving Day a company to the number of 54 convened at the house of Amos D. Bridge to partake of a Thanksgiving dinner. This number of 54 were all of the Gordon and Bridge families with their wives and the children of each branch of the families, all gathered without going out of Hazardville, except one family, which is that of Samuel M. McAuley, who married the youngest Gordon girl, Mary. With the exception of three families, named below, all of the sons and daughters of the Bridge and Gordon families, with their children, were present: Peter Gordon and family, living at Norwich; Rev. E. Holloway and wife of Plantsville; and Alfred Halfred and children of East Haven, Conn.

It was a great pleasure to have as the object of greatest interest the presence of father and mother Gordon, who have now journeyed together over the rough sea of life between fifty and sixty years, and still live among their increasing descendants to give them counsel and comfort.

A very happy little incident occurred, which gave great relish to the occasion, and was all the more enjoyed as it was wholly unexpected. Wm. S. Colvin, who was born and spent his early days in this village, and who is now the vice president and treasurer of the Hazard Powder Co., residing in New York, and Frederick Colvin, his brother, of New Haven, who with their families, had come to Hazardville, still the residence of their mother and most of the family, to spend Thanksgiving, came up to the home of Mr. Bridge for a call, and finding so many of their old associates with whom in former years they were in the habit of playing ball, proposed a game on the thirty year ago plan. For nearly two hours the amusing work went on, and one would not have dreamed that such activity and earnestness could have been aroused in persons who had gone so many years beyond the time for such sports. The game was most richly enjoyed by all.

Ball playing being ended, a good appetite was found to have been acquired for the turkey, etc., and it would have been very difficult to decide to which of the two games were given the most energy and interest. Later in the day jack straws, throwing bean bags, pinning on donkeys' tails, and such like games were enjoyed, and the time until between nine and ten o'clock was filled up in a most agreeable manner. The company broke up if possible more strongly united than ever in all those feelings that make friendships so desirable and -so en, g.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF MY GRANDFATHER

By
RUTH E. BRIDGE

Although I was only seven when my grandfather died I have some very clear memories of him.

Often on a fine Sunday morning before going to church, he would walk up the street to call on one of his sons. My father, the eldest son, lived nearest in a house on the corner of Oak Street that had been built for Grandfather's sister, Ruth Bridge Adams. Sometimes he stopped to see us. The other four sons lived farther up School Street in the order of their ages, as it happened. If Grandfather was going to visit one of them we would see him go swinging past with his energetic walk, flourishing his cane as the English do. The cane was in no sense a crutch, just part of his Sunday costume.

Another recollection is of grandfather's daily ride home from the office when his day's work was done. He owned a number of horses that were used in his business, and for himself he always had a good driving horse. Down the street he and his black horse would come, pell-mell, around the corner at Oak and School Streets, like as not on two wheels, then around the corner of his own driveway on the other two wheels to a dead stop at the barn. He and the black horse understood each other and both apparently enjoyed that rattleybang ride home each day. Everybody along the way expected to see him tip over and be killed some day, but as far as I know he always arrived home right side up and in one piece.

One afternoon when I happened, for some reason, to be staying with my grandmother I remember my grandfather coming in from the office at the rear of the house, not for a cup of tea as you might imagine, but for an orange. He had a special orange spoon with a narrow gilt bowl and a sharp point at the end. The dining room had a long oval table covered with a white damask cloth and he sat down at one end and enjoyed his orange. There was a tall lamp on the table whose shade was a flowered china globe. The orange spoon and the lamp are all I remember, but I'm sure that somewhere on the table was the tall silver saltshaker that had come from England.

REFLECTIONS OF AMOS D. BRIDGE

By
THEODORE E. BRIDGE
(last surviving grandchild)

Even though I never knew him, I have always been more than a little proud of my grandfather, Amos Bridge. He died more than a year before I was born. I have heard many stories about him, and I always found them interesting.

He was a man of substance as you will see. When he was a very small boy, his father immigrated from England to Thompsonville, Connecticut to take a job in the carpet mills. Colonel Hazard owned the powder mills in Hazardville, named after him. The colonel was a very rich man, and he must have taken an interest in Amos, because he sent him to the Connecticut literary Institute, a secondary school across the river in Suffield. There were no free high schools in those days, and the sixth grade was the end of grammar school. I have been told that Amos raised so much hell in CLI that the colonel took him out of school and put him to work in the powder mill office. He advanced about as far as he could go, without waiting for someone to die; so he went into business for himself. He built a homestead at the corner of Main and School Streets and planned to raise a large family.

His brother-in-law, David Gordon, in company with a few brothers, was running a tin shop in the center of Hazardville. Hawkers selling his tinware on their travels would collect a lot of old rags exchanged for tinware. David built and operated a shoddy mill in Scitico to convert these woolen rags into shoddy that could be woven into cheap cloth for horse blankets and the like. The Gordon brothers were prosperous. David Gordon went to his brother-in-law Amos and said, "You know all about building. You sell me your homestead, and go up on the hill to build a new one for yourself." Amos did that, The point is that Amos not only knew a lot about building; he knew a lot of other things too. They say he used to plead his own case in court. He secured a license to distribute and sell electricity before our present utility companies were established. He burned the sawdust at his sawmill in an HRT boiler to generate steam to run the steam engine that drove the saw, Another small engine drove a dynamo that provided electricity for his home and two offices; long before the Connecticut Light and Power Company was formed. He failed in his first venture with a grocery store, but he was successful in many others. He was active in the church and in the local debating society.

With all that, he had a good set of drafting instruments and a surveyors transit. He drew the plans for many of the buildings that he constructed, and he supervised the surveying of the boundary lines of his extensive real estate holdings. He filed his own deeds. As a young lad, I often carried the rod to help a surveyor look for boundary markers for some of his stands of timber. This work was done in the winter when the swamps were frozen over.

My father often recollected with pleasure, the noontime meals. Mom, Pop, two hired girls, two hired men from the barn, and ten kids sat around the dinner table every day. Four of the kids were girls. They and the two hired girls probably waited on the table, but they all ate together. So you see, his wife Liz had help in the kitchen. Liz died in 1916. I remember her as a rather feeble old lady.

They say that Amos was not too fussy about his dress, and he liked to walk. If he wanted to go to Thompsonville after supper to see Colonel Hazard, he would walk the four miles each way; even though he owned about a hundred horses. One time while waiting in New Britain for a train to Hartford, he found that he could beat the train my walking. So he put off down the track, and took up with a couple of hoboes. When one of them asked him the time, he was glad he had only a dollar watch. He thought that if he had shown a valuable watch, they might have stolen it. Although he may not have been too careful of his dress on weekdays, this was not the case on Sundays. I've been told that the Bridge and Prickett families created quite a spectacle as they marched to church every Sunday morning. Grandpa took his family to Sunday

morning service at the Methodist Church, and again to the Episcopal service in the afternoon, and back to evening service at night. I am glad I do not remember this. Once a week is enough for me.

Amos and Liz, must have loved children. They had eight of their own. When our cousins, Jean and Will Halford were orphaned, Amos said, "We got so many kids, two more won't make any difference." He adopted them. I found an entry in his diary for Dec. 20, 1871, "Homer (my father) is almost 5 months old." I think his kids were always on his mind.

I think that he also loved dogs. My dad told me of a time when he chastised a vicious dog with his bare hands, teaching him who was boss. Of course, he protected himself with a heavy coat. I like to think that he was trying to train the dog so that it would not have to be destroyed. But he was capable of anger. In another entry in his diary he vows that he will learn to bridle his tongue.

Amos loved oysters. The local store would get in a barrel of iced oysters once a week when in season. Rockwell tells of a time when the cap came off the shaker while Amos was peppering his oysters, dumping far too much pepper on the plate. In a fit of rage, Amos carried the plate out on to the side porch and threw it far across the lawn.

I don't think that he believed in women's lib. Few men did then. My cousin Stephen once told me that he really appreciated my mother. He said that she was one of the first liberated women in Hazardville. This may have been more of a tribute to my father than to my mother. One time Amos went to England on a pleasure trip, and did not take Liz. I am sure that my mother must have been livid, but I doubt that she dared to say anything. But someone must have, because he made another trip the next year, taking Liz. I always thought that my mother was somewhat reserved in her praise for Amos.

Liz must have really loved children, not only her own. My dad said that all the kids on the street used to congregate in her house on rainy days. Sometimes they would put chairs on the dining room table and play stagecoach, complete with ticket taker and a driver, and sometimes in costume. He said they had a lot of fun.

In the pantry several shallow pans of milk were always sitting, waiting for the cream to rise to the top. Dad would often take a crust of bread and scoop up a little thick cream. He would add sugar and cinnamon, and have a treat. No one ever complained.

Thanksgiving was a very happy time in the old homestead. We fifteen grandchildren would assemble in the morning in the office built on to the back of the homestead. We would talk, and get weighed on the scales that had been brought in from the barn. We knew that we would be weighed again after dinner by Uncle Link, with the weight recorded in the official record book. But we wanted to see how much we could eat; so we weighed in unofficially before dinner also. We would also play with the adding machines, which were quite novel then. Some of the rather fat ladies would squeal a little when they were officially weighed in after dinner, but they were good sports about it.

For dessert we had three kinds of pie and ice cream molded in the shape of turkeys or pilgrims. The ice cream would be shipped from Springfield in a five-gallon can, packed with ice and set in a wooden tub. Walter Girdler had not yet invented his ice cream machine. Uncle Link always carved the turkey in the kitchen. We fifteen grandchildren sat around a large table set up in the nursery, with the oldest unmarried grandchild, Chester, at the head of the table. Somebody always put dimes in the mashed potatoes. Chet would carefully stir the mashed potatoes. If he would accidentally uncover a dime, we would all squeal. He would quickly hide it, but he always managed to see that everybody got one. A dime then was equal to a dollar now. The grownups sat around their own table in the parlor. Judging by the sound, I think they had a good time too.

In the afternoon, the kids went back into the office on the back of the house to play "Jenkins Says Hands Up" with Chester presiding. Afterwards we went home for a supper of left-overs, and after supper, back to

the homestead to play "The Prince of Paris Has Lost His Hat" with Uncle Link presiding. Everybody joined in this game, kids and grownups together. We went to bed late at night, tired and happy.

Now that I have explained some of the activity in the old homestead, let's go back through the office and out on to the back stoop. Most people entered the office through the back stoop. This was the center of a lot of activity early in the morning of a typical workday. Thirty or forty workmen would here get their marching orders for the day. Amos usually had a barn or a house under construction somewhere near by. He also operated several farms with land to till and crops to gather. He had extensive orchards up on Somers Mountain. The timekeeper would check everybody in, and divide them into crews, each with its own leader. A horse and wagon would be waiting to carry men and tools to the job. They would be back around five, with a stable hand waiting to unhitch and stable the horses. Now that we have the men off to work, let's take a walk around the yard and talk about each building that we come to.

From the back stoop, we can see two sheds attached to the old horse barn. These housed the wagons that carried the men off to work. The shed on the right also housed the harness shop in a room upstairs. Mr. Gaskel used to keep all the harnesses in repair. If I needed a book strap or a skate strap, Mr. Gaskel would make it for me. I would often stop by just to watch him work.

In my day, the old barn housed only four horses, Bob, Houdini, Little Mare and Prince. Bob was a willing horse, He would run his heart out for you. I don't remember Houdini's real name, but he was quite a character. He could shake his head and throw off his bridle or halter. But he would respond to your control from the feel of the lines on his back, and you might not know anything had happened. But around about five P.M. you couldn't get him to go anywhere except back to the barn. After throwing off his halter in the stall, he would to over to the feed box, lift the cover, and help himself. This was a problem.

Little Mare was lazy. You had to slap her hard with the lines to get her to run. But if you would talk baby talk to her, she would make funny noises. Prince was the largest, the fastest, and the grandest horse. But I never thought he had much personality. Sometimes, not often, he wore a saddle.

In the wintertime when the roads were blocked with snow, you had to go almost everywhere either on foot, or by sleigh. Back then there were no snowplows. Well, we did use a horse drawn plow to clean the main sidewalks. The shafts on the sleigh were offset so that the horse could walk in the left track made by the preceding sleigh. Sometimes when my dad was going on a bill-collecting trip in the winter time, he would take me with him in the sleigh. I loved it.

To the left of the old horse barn stood the carriage house. In its day, it housed several fine carriages including a surrey with the fringe on top. I never saw it in use, but Douglas and I used to play in it. The carriage house has now been converted into a rental apartment.

Behind the carriage house stood the icehouse. Every winter, ice was harvested from a spring fed pond about four hundred feet north of the icehouse. I always thought that ice harvesting was both efficient and interesting. When the ice on the pond got to be eight to ten inches thick, we would screw steel caulks into the shoes of a plow horse and drive him on to the pond to pull the ice plow. With the plow we would cut grooves in the ice about an inch deep. A large cake of ice could be easily split at a groove. We would plow a large grid of grooves, about 12 in. squares, covering the entire pond. A canal would be cut with a saw connecting the grid with the bank. A strip of ice two cakes wide would be cut free with a saw and floated through the canal with pike poles, and on up a ramp into a sled. Then two cuts would be made across the ends of the strip that had just been removed. Now it was easy to split off one or more strips that could also be pushed through the canal and up into the sled. One after another, a sled full of ice would be unloaded at the ice house, where the cakes would be split apart and stored in a huge block to full the ice house. The huge block would be covered with sawdust, and would keep through the summer. The ice was delivered to the family. None was sold.

Across the road from the ice house, behind the old horse barn, stood the windmill. On top of the housed structural supports, sat a large wooden storage tank, and on top of it perched a large windmill. The windmill pumped water from the ice pond into the storage tank beneath. Excess water from the spring-fed pond flowed over the dam and through a water ram that also pumped water into the storage tank. The windmill pumped at a greater flow rate when the wind was blowing, but the water ram pumped 24 hours a day. This arrangement provided all the water needed by the family, but Amos started piping it around to the neighbors, and the Hazardville Water Company was born.

So much for the windmill. Now let's walk over to the cow barn. Amos peddled milk around the village from his thirty or so pedigreed Holsteins. In the summer they were out to pasture, and brought back to the barn for milking every evening. Ensilage from two connected silos was used for feeding in the wintertime. The ensilage cutter made a mournful sound in the fall. It coincided with the first week in school. I think that in my day, the ensilage cutter was driven by a belt from a pulley on a tractor. There was a treadmill in the barn that probably was used to operate the cutter before the tractor was available. Incidentally, the Bridge firm manufactured and sold the "Success" silo all around Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Cow manure was collected in a trench behind each row of cows. It was pushed through a hole in the trench to land on a large pile in the cellar below. From here, it was distributed on the land to fertilize the crops.

Excess milk was separated into cream for sale. The excess cream would be churned into butter in a hand-powered chum. The cream separator was motor driven. The creamery was a small building located between the windmill and the cow barn. The skimmed milk was mixed with bran and other grain, and fed to the pigs. I will never forget the time I witnessed the slaughtering of a pig. I am told that slaughtering is more humane now. I sure hope so. I became very faint, and Douglas took me into the homestead, where Aunt Emily revived me. As usual, she was very understanding. The pigs were kept in the cellar of the new horse barn, where the fifteen or twenty draft horses were stabled. Some of the horses, all those owned by the road department, were housed away from the old homestead.

Amos had a contract with the powder company to deliver powder to the Ensign Bickford Company in East Hartford that manufactured fuse for blasting. He delivered powder to other companies as well. No doubt he also loaded rail cars in Scitico, a mile away. My father said that as a young lad, he drove a powder wagon to East Hartford, pulled by a yoke of oxen. This two-day trip was quite an adventure for him. My father liked oxen. "They can pull very hard. And they don't get excited and thrash around the way a horse does when the going gets tough. They just lean on the yoke and keep pulling."

When a load of empty kegs was returned to Hazardville, the kids would go over it and collect all loose powder, storing it in another keg. Come the Fourth of July, they would have several full kegs. Every older boy in town had his own cannon, and they kept a frightful noise going all night long. How my mother hated it, but my father liked it. He said he liked the kind that "rattle the cords in your throat." My dad said that when he has a lad, they would lay down a mile long powder streak in the middle a,- tie road, from the water tank in Hazardville to the one in Scitico. Every kid would load up his cannon and run the fuse over to the powder streak. They liked to watch all of the cannons tip over, one after the other after lighting off in Hazardville.

Now that we have covered the buildings in the barnyard at the old homestead, let's go up to the mill and walk around the yard up there. The mill office sits in the middle of a connected group. A hardware store, the office, the gristmill, and the box shop. The saw mill is across Oak Street to the north. To the south, sits one building containing the blacksmith shop with four forges, a carpenter shop and a paint shop overhead. East of the carpenter shop sits the nailing room where boxes are nailed together. South of the nailing room stands a big red bam where finished mill work is stored. Unfinished lumber is stored in a large yard that surrounds all of the buildings. At one time, more than a million board feet of lumber were stored in the yard.

You will notice that everything was arranged to serve the farmers in the area. A farmer could bring in grain to be ground. While waiting for the grain, he could have had his horse shod in the blacksmith shop. He could buy hardware, paint or lumber in the hardware store.

The box shop was connected to the east end of the gristmill. In it were two rough planers, two resaws, a couple of band saws, a couple of matchers and four fitting saws. In the basement of the gristmill was a high speed planer for mill work, a shaper, another band saw and a table saw. Here we manufactured mill work for sale to builders.

All of the machinery, including a blower that supplied air to the forges in the blacksmith shop, was driven by a single horizontal cylinder Fitchburg steam engine. Line shafting and pulleys connected to the various machines, even a freight elevator.

The line shafting and machinery was kept in repair by the mill wright, Floyd Hastings. The saws and planers were kept sharp in the filing room over the engine room, by Fred Bertrand. He also started and stopped the engine and blew the whistle at the start and end of the morning and afternoon shifts. Several neighboring villages set their clocks by his whistle. I used to like to watch him blow the whistle. He had a good watch that he set carefully with a call to the telephone central. Most people did not have telephones in those days, and he knew how important it was for everybody to have the correct time. I also liked to watch him start the engine at the beginning of each shift. He had to disconnect the valve linkage, and operate the valves by hand until he put enough energy in the flywheel to carry the piston past dead center.

I think that the box shop started as a bonnet factory. Then when bonnets went out of style, Amos used some of the machinery to manufacture apple boxes and tobacco cases. Later, with the coming popularity of cardboard cartons, the box business dried up and we started making wire reels. (Today this is a substantial business, owned by Cariss Reels, however, still retaining the name Bridge Manufacturing Co.) Back before the days of the union, the workmen were more versatile. Men were switched from one craft to another to suit the schedule. The idea was to keep everybody busy. Amos tried to train all of his sons in many crafts. He felt that to supervise others, you ought to be able to do the job yourself. He would often work alongside his men in the shop or in the field. He had a passion for sharp tools. He would often be seen sharpening a shovel or a hoe. One day while working in the woods, he caught Frank Brinell sharpening a stake on the steel tire of a wagon wheel. This was a frightful disrespect for the cutting edge, and he was about to yea at him when he noticed that the ax never touched the steel tire. He was so impressed with this skill, that he transferred Frank into the carpenter shop where his skill could be used to the best advantage. When our house was remodeled in 1916 Frank did all the cabinet work,

While Amos lived, most homes were heated from the kitchen range, burning wood. Some of the more prosperous people may have had a wood bun-ling stove in other rooms, but for many, the parlor was heated by leaving the door open into the kitchen. When logging in the woods, the branches were cut into four-foot lengths and carted back to the sawmill. Here they would be cut into pieces one foot long with an engine driven table saw, and stored in sheds for sale. I judge that this was an important business.

This reminds me of the time that Douglas and I were given a horse and wagon and sent up to Pine Point, about two miles away, to fetch a load of wood. I think that we were about ten, and this was an adventure for us. By the time we had loaded the wagon, we were cold and tired. So we made a little nest in the load and covered ourselves with blankets. We had started the horse home. We figured that he knew the way. But somehow, he took a wrong turn and started wandering around in somebody's field. When we were overdue, my father started out to look for us. When he found the horse wandering around in the field, he was frightened. We were still resting comfortable in our nest when we heard him holler, and we popped up out from under the blankets. We were all much relieved to find each other.

HAZARDVILLE CELEBRATIONS

By
THEODORE E. BRIDGE

November, 1912

We had a lot of celebrations in Hazardville. A good example was election night. I still remember the night that Woodrow Wilson beat Charles Evans Hughes. A Nast cartoon in the Saturday Evening Post had showed Wilson in a candy store trying to tempt the voters with a large pull of taffy candy formed in a figure eight. Wilson was featuring a law to give railroad workers an eight-hour day. In our box shop, the men worked six ten-hour days every week. It makes me shudder to think of it.

My father and mother were playing Pedro with the Barnses from next door. As you know, there was no radio. Every hour or so, someone would lift the receiver and ask for the election results from the operator. She got the results from the Western Union. The results were hand keyed from New York. The telephone was no good that far away. When the democrats heard they had won late at night, they built a bonfire on an old wagon and paraded it through the village to celebrate.

A large crowd congregated in front of the Institute, and a bon fire was lit in the middle of the road intersection of Main and Maple. Charlie Smith was making coffee in a wash boiler on the wood stove in the Institute kitchen. He suspended an old sugar bag filled with a couple pounds of ground coffee in the boiler. When it was ready, two men would carry it out to the front steps. There were no paper cups then. We had to borrow a ladle from the kitchen to fill the cops also borrowed from the kitchen. I don't know who washed the cups; probably volunteers from the winning side. The winning side also provided the doughnuts. Cream was provided by the Bridge dairy, sugar by Allen's store. Winners and losers all had a good time.

November 9, 1918

We had a similar celebration (to the Fourth of July) the night the first world war ended. I was in the seventh grade. We kids were so excited we started running around on the tops of the school desks. Somebody decided we ought to ring the school bell. The bell rope hung down in the hall just outside our door. About six kids pulled so hard on the rope, they tipped the bell over on the first pull. We got one clang out of the bell, and rushed screaming from the building.

That night we built the biggest bonfire I ever saw at the intersection of Main and Maple. I think the flames leapt twenty feet high. The usual burning wagon was dragged through the streets. Howard Gordon placed a box of a hundred eight inch cannon firecrackers on the institute steps. He had been saving them for the Fourth of July. People would help themselves and throw them into the fire. Charlie Smith made the usual wash boiler full of coffee.

When we heard that this was a false truce, we said "Oh, Shucks. Now we have to do it all over again." We settled on a parade. My father organized one of the floats on a truck. He mounted an old six-foot diameter saw on the truck supported in the middle. A group of kids sitting on benches around the saw whacked at it with mallets. Noise was an important part of any celebration in Hazardville. My father arranged troughs on each side of the float. We shot skyrockets over the tops of the houses along the route.