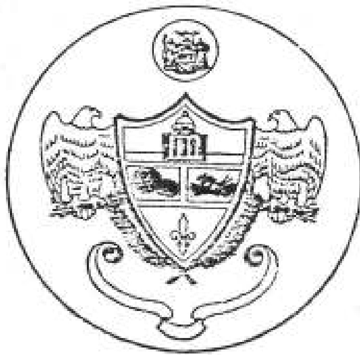

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Orleans County Historical Association

Robert R. Brown

In addition to the Memoirs of Robert R. Brown (hand-written by Mr. Brown and typed by Mrs. Ruth Applegate), materials for this file were copied from files of the Orleans County Historian (Wilson Lattin), and from the files of the Swan Library in Albion (especially the files of Mrs. Eleanor Wilder).

Contained in the book Tavern Lamps Are Burning by Carl Carmer, pages 435 - 438, is a delightful story concerning the Brown family. This was written by Helen Allen. This story is not contained within this file.

Helen McAllister of Medina, N.Y. compiled all of the materials in this presentation, and had the pleasure of a hoped-to-be-interview-preview with Mr. Brown. However, Mr. Brown elected not to be interviewed on tape and instead wrote his Memoirs for the Orleans County Historical Association.

(Many farm + family pictures).

Helen K. McAllister

November 9, 1981

(1902-1996)

The Saga of Oak Orchard Creek

By ARTHUR BARTLETT

COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY PINTO

"FOR more than two full centuries and throughout no small wanderings the Browns have been farmers. Since 1804 they have owned and operated the same acres beside Oak Orchard Creek near Waterport, Orleans County, New York. According to community tradition they have been good folks, kind neighbors, public-spirited citizens, devout and ardent churchmen and outstanding farmers. That particular countryside has been a better place to live because they were a part of it. In my thinking they as a family have, through very many years, symbolized and exemplified everything that is best in life on the land."

In these words, Governor Thomas E. Dewey last year cited Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Brown for membership in New York's unique Order of Century Farmers. The primary requirement for membership in this organization, sponsored by the New York State Agriculture Society, is the continuous ownership and operation of a farm by a single family for a century or more. The eligibility of the Browns, by a wide margin, was predetermined when Harry Brown's great-grandfather, Elijah Brown, pushed far out to Western New York in an open bateau on Lake Ontario in 1804, and built a log cabin about a mile up Oak Orchard Creek.

Elijah died before he had hardly started taming what was then the North Woods, but his wife and fifteen children carried on; and the farm they pioneered is now the nucleus of the Orchard Dale Fruit Farm, one of New York State's finest. Harry Brown, Elijah's great-grandson, is 82 now, a gracious, white-haired but modern-minded and active old gentleman—a country gentleman in the best sense of that phrase which has been this magazine's title for so many years. His 45-year-old son, Robert, is the active farmer on the place now, and a grandson, Ralph, recently turned 18 (great-great-great-grandson of Elijah), is in the obvious line of succession.

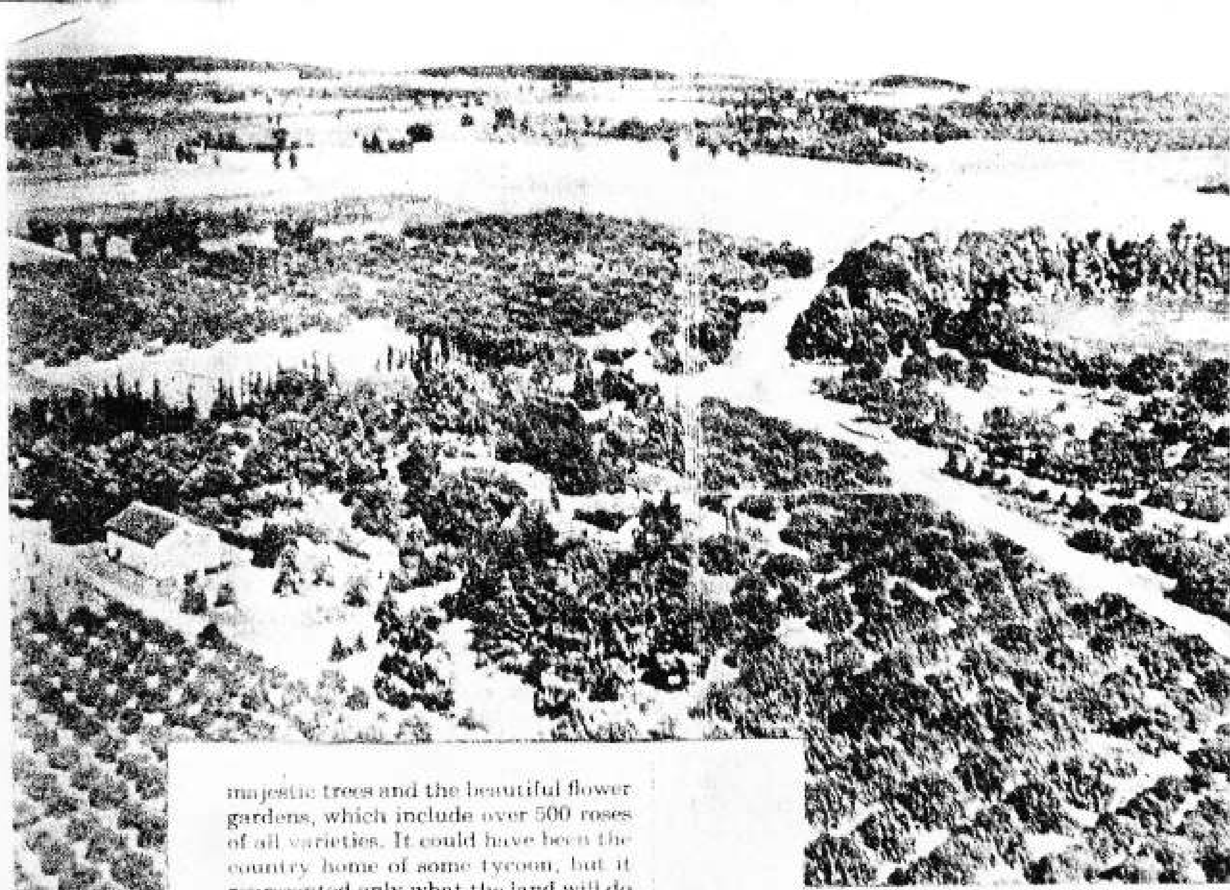
"Old Mother Earth is the source of everything we live for and enjoy," Harry Brown told me recently, as we sat on his spacious screened-in porch. "The land is the mother of everything, and it will do a lot for people if they treat it right."

It was evident enough all around us: the big green house, the sweeping lawns, the rhododendrons and other shrubbery, the evergreen hedges, the

(Continued on Page 101)

December, 1948

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN



majestic trees and the beautiful flower gardens, which include over 500 roses of all varieties. It could have been the country home of some tycoon, but it represented only what the land will do for those who treat it right. Doing their best according to their lights and under the limitations of their times, the Browns who had gone before had created and built the farm by the side of the creek, and Harry Brown, during his lifetime, had made it into a great modern agricultural enterprise, producing thousands of bushels of apples, quinces, pears, prunes and cherries, and providing for the three present generations of Browns the wherewithal for full and satisfying lives.

After looking into the history of the Browns, Jared Van Wagenen, the distinguished New York farmer and scholar who has been a leading light in the Order of Century Farmers since its inception more than ten years ago, has concluded that the Elijah Brown who started the dynasty was afflicted with a malady common among our ancestors: an itching foot. Born in Westerly, Rhode Island, in 1747, he was one of the Quaker families of Browns whose name is perpetuated in such Rhode Island institutions as Brown University and Moses Brown School. His father, Benjamin Brown, leased the whole of Fisher's Island, nine miles long and three miles wide, off the coast of Connecticut, for farming purposes; and Elijah and a brother did the same thing in their earlier years. Most of their produce—horses, sheep, cattle, turkeys and chickens—they shipped to the West Indies in a vessel of their own, bringing back sugar and other products in trade. This phase of Elijah's career ended, however, during the Revolution, when the British landed on the island, carried off all the stock and movable goods, and burned the buildings.

Common to all the owners of Orchard Dale Fruit Farm has been a passion for order and beauty. Here lies the homestead with Lake Ontario one mile to the north.

Weighing in and loading cherries is strictly a family affair. Bob (right) shows son Ralph how to keep tab on each picker's pick.

Elijah moved to the Connecticut mainland, but soon after the Revolution he headed West. First stop was in Yates County, New York, not far from where the famous Jemima Wilkinson, who called herself the "Universal Friend," presided over her religious satellites. It was good country, but eight years later Elijah moved on to Wayne County—now the leading apple-growing county in the East and one of the greatest in the country. The farm he bought—and sold—in Wayne County is now part of one of the most prosperous in that prosperous county; but after six years the itching foot—or some other compulsion now forgotten—set him moving West again, this time to Oak Orchard Creek. He was still traveling—making a trip back to Wayne County by bateau, presumably for some of his goods—when he died, less than a year later. An old-fashioned gravestone in a little family cemetery on the farm marks the end of his travels. On it is carved the traditional weeping willow, but the tree growing out of the grave is a rugged hickory.

In the Fisher's Island days, Elijah had courted and married a Long Island girl, Bathsheba Sheffield; and it was more than twenty years before her grave was dug beside her husband's in the little family cemetery. In the meantime, with her six sons and nine daughters, she had carved a farm out of the wilderness. Robert, the son who eventually took over its responsibility, had been nine years old when the family settled on Oak Orchard Creek. He is commemorated today not only by a marker in the cemetery but by a portrait painted by an itinerant artist of the day showing him sharpening his scythe. With a companion portrait of his wife, equally busy with her needle, it hangs now on the Browns' front stairway landing.

It was Robert's older brother, Elijah, Jr., who first planted apple trees on the farm—seedlings which constituted the first apple orchard in Orleans County. When Elijah, Jr., died at an early age, Robert assumed farm management. His son and successor—Harry Brown's father—also planted apples, but they were only incidental to general farming. A diary still preserved by the family indicates what farm life was like in that North Woods country in the middle of the last century:

"Feb. 3. (1851) Chopped in the woods. Sarah dipped candles, 13½ doz. . . .

"Feb. 25. Went to the post office and from there to the lake and helped draw the seine six times. Got a bony sucker as my share. . . .

"Dec. 6. Went to Kendall to see Reed about money. Got none, hard times. . . .

"Apr. 12. (1853) Took nine dozen eggs to the store and got nine cents a dozen."

Harry Brown's generation consisted only of himself and two sisters. He was 27 when his father died in 1893, and he took over the working of the farm. It had nourished three generations, but it was still only an average farm for those parts—even a little poorer than average, perhaps, because the hundred acres which Elijah had bought and handed down included many, back from the creek, which were soggy black-ash swampland. It had been a struggle for Harry's father and grandfather to keep it producing enough to pay out; and it had almost never, from the beginning, been clear of debt. Whatever Elijah had paid the Holland Company for it in the first place, there was an unpaid balance of $800 as late as 1828, which was being paid off at $100 a year. Later it had been necessary to mortgage it, and there was a $2000 mortgage on it when Harry's father died. An appraisal set the full value then at $6000. Thus the family equity was $4000.

"If it hadn't been my home," says Mr. Brown today, "it probably would have been better to have started farming somewhere else." But it was his home, and his mother's home, and his sisters' home; and young Harry Brown entered into an agreement with them—an agreement characteristic of a family which sets a high value on individual independence and the human dignity that goes with it. The county judge drew it up for them, writing it by hand on nearly a dozen pages of legal paper. Harry agreed to "care for and work said farm in substantially as good a manner" as had been done in his father's lifetime. His mother, during her life, was to share the proceeds and the costs. She and his sisters were to retain, for life, the right to live in certain rooms of the house; and his mother was also to retain for her own use "one horse and carriage, cutter, harness, robes, etc.," which Harry was to "get ready for her use at all reasonable times." Upon her death, the sisters were to quitclaim the farm to Harry for their original equity of $1000 each.

later he installed an electric plant, which has since given way to the power line that eventually came through. When he did that, he bought a large electric refrigerator, and relegated the old stone icehouse—now covered with ivy, and a picturesque addition to the grounds—to storage uses. The refrigerator, built in a day when so few families, city or country, were buying them that mass production was still in the future, cost $600, but it was solid porcelain under its outer surface of wood, and so ruggedly constructed that it serves today—having had one motor replacement—as efficiently as ever. Nowadays, however, it is supplemented by a large home freezer; and as other electric devices have come along to make housekeeping easier, Grandma Brown has been among the first to enjoy them. Washing dishes, for instance, is now, for her, merely a job of stacking them in the automatic dishwasher; and garbage disappears into the automatic disposal unit.

With Robert running the farm, the elder Browns have had time, through these latter years, to enjoy their flowers and trees, the books and magazines that fill the house, and to see the country. Mrs. Brown, white-haired and motherly, is a bird lover, and her feeding stations bring a galaxy of birds into view outside the windows. Once, some years ago, she brought up a young pigeon which became so tame it would perch on her shoulder and eat out of her hands, and would follow her around like a pet dog. A wren house hangs on the stub of a limb of a 100-year-old-cherry tree, just outside the house, which Harry's father cut off in 1872 to get the old house moved past it; suet and crumbs are spread on a platform for bigger birds; and little brightly colored cups attached to a rod are filled with sirup for the hummingbirds.

Evenings at home are often spent, with other members of the family, looking at moving pictures—many of them of birds and flowers—which Grandpa and Grandma Brown have taken, with their home movie camera, on trips to various parts of the country. On Mr. Brown's office wall is a road map of the United States, with red crayon marks of the routes of their trips, and it is completely crisscrossed in all directions. Since the day in 1912 when they bought their first automobile—a touring car that cost $2600—they have visited every state in the Union, and some of them several times. Last year the elderly couple motored to Florida and this summer, at 82, Harry Brown drove to Nova Scotia.

All of this, however, has been possible only because Harry Brown has made wise use of the land. When he and his young schoolteacher bride were married, they had exactly $60 in cash; and their honeymoon consisted of a train trip to the near-by cities of Rochester and Buffalo. Mr. Brown, who earned a twenty-dollar gold piece from his mother by not smoking before he was twenty, and who never took up the habit after that, likes to say that it is his "cigar and tobacco money" that he has used, since then, on travel; but it is money, however he might have spent it, which came as the reward of good farming.

Determined to more than live up to his pledge to operate the farm "in substantially as good a manner" as it had been previously operated, he tried, over a period of years, dairy cattle, chickens and feeder cattle, but it was fruit, as time went on, which proved the best and most consistent source of farm income, and he eventually turned the farm into orchards. Today, aside from a small flock of chickens which his son keeps for family use, the only livestock on the farm is a saddle horse. "We don't even keep a cow," says Mr. Brown, "but buy our milk." But whereas the bearing orchard left by his father consisted of 140 Baldwin trees, he and his son now have 140 acres of apples, plus 60 acres of quinces, 20 acres each of pears and prunes, 15 acres of cherries and a few acres of damsons.

Mr. Brown's mother's maiden name was Sarah Jane Luttenton, and his middle name is Luttenton. In recognition of this honor to the family name, a Luttenton uncle gave him two lambs when he was a boy. As the lambs multiplied, the proceeds of their increase were set aside and earmarked "Harry's lamb money." Shortly before his father died, Harry suggested planting some quinces, but his father replied that he had no money he could spare for the trees. "Use my lamb money," Harry proposed, "and let me have the first crop of fruit." As it happened, his father died before the trees came into bearing, but the venture paid out so well that Harry went on planting quinces through the years; and Orchard Dale Fruit Farm is now one of the biggest quince growers in the country. Certificates hanging in his office testify that as early as 1910 he had won a bronze medal for orange quinces at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, and he took the gold medal at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915.

Perhaps it was with this quince orchard episode in mind that his father made a remark about him, when he was a young man, which his mother later told him about: "Every time Harry gets a dollar, he proceeds to look around to see what he can do with it." It was a shrewd comment. One thing, however, the young farmer decided at the start: He would use money, as fast as he could acquire it, to build up his farm program, but he would not go in debt. All his life, with one exception, he has lived up to this rule, and paid cash for everything—or gone without. The exception came in 1908, when a neighbor's widow put an adjoining farm on the market. On higher, more sloping ground than the home farm, it was better adapted to fruit growing, and it could be bought for $7500. "I gave a mortgage to get it," Mr. Brown admits, "and borrowed $500 for the down payment." It doubled his holdings, and in recent years his son, Robert, has bought two other adjoining farms. Thus Elijah's hundred acres has increased to more than 400.

It is almost all in fruit now, though a 1912 farm map hanging on the office wall shows much of it, even then, being used for beans, mixed hay, oats, rye, timothy and pasture. In 1908, however, the year he bought the second farm, Mr. Brown had started converting to fruit in earnest. To do it, he had to have better drainage than his clay and sandy loams naturally offered, and he began laying drain tile. "From then on," he says, "I tiled and planted trees as fast as I could get the money to do it with." Today most of the farm is systematically underdrained by lines of tile laid three and one half feet deep, with the drains 34 feet apart. The system is unique and perhaps unlike any other in the country. Three- and four-inch laterals drain into small catch basins or silt traps, which in turn empty into a master trap via five- to ten-inch mains. All traps are cleaned regularly and thus prevent the system from silting up. The master trap itself is drained by a single fifteen-inch outlet. "Now that I'm older and have lost some of my nerve," says the elder Brown, "I sometimes wonder how I had the nerve to do it." But even the old black-ash swamps are thriving orchards now.

Of course it took more than well-drained land to make orchards thrive. In his father's day, and in his own early years, crops would fail every once in a while for reasons which nobody seemed to understand. Over at the State Agricultural College at Cornell, in the early 1890's, Professor Liberty Hyde Bailey was beginning to talk about a way to prevent such troubles by spraying; and young Farmer Brown was one of the first orchardists in the country to spray his trees. It was hardly a modern spray schedule that he followed: He used Bordeaux mixture and Paris green, but that was as far as science had gone in those days. One day, Liberty Hyde Bailey himself came out to see how it was working. "I think you'll find Harry out in the orchard," Harry's mother told him. "Just where I want to find him," said the great horticulturist. Other horticulturists have been following his footsteps into the Brown orchards ever since, and finding the Browns ready and eager to co-operate in advancing the knowledge of good fruit culture. For some years now, the Geneva Experiment Station has maintained its own spray rig at the farm for testing new sprays, particularly for quinces.

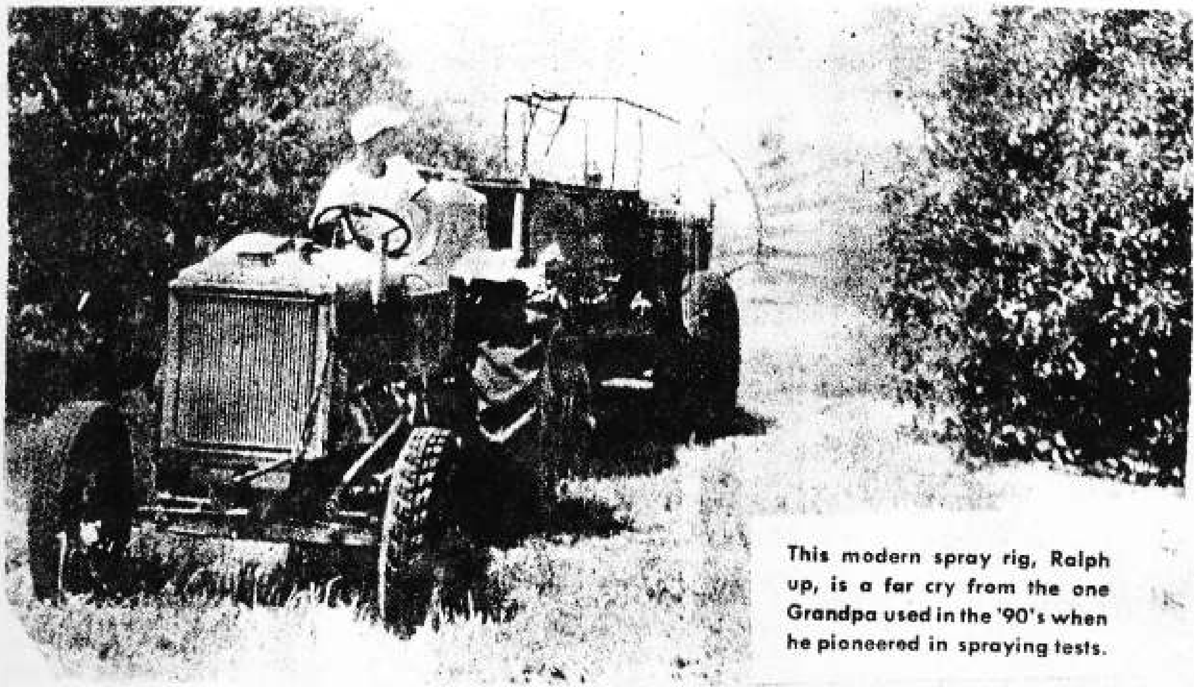
For many years, the Brown spray rig consisted of a barrel and a cumbersome hand pump, hauled around the orchards. An old photograph shows the first power pump, mounted on a horse-drawn cart. Nowadays, of course, like everything else on the farm from the five tractors to Grandma Brown's kitchen sink, the spray rigs are the most modern and efficient types available. Robert Brown, who has a mechanical flair, has even improved upon the equipment commercially available. In the spray shed, water for mixing is pumped into a large reservoir tank by an electric pump; and he has it rigged so that when it is full it overflows into a bucket on a lever arm, which falls under the weight of the bucketful of water and shuts off the pump automatically.

In recent years the Browns have broadened their spray schedules to include hormone sprays to thin their apple crop at blossomtime and to hold the fruit on the trees at harvesttime. And just this past summer they cooperated extensively with the Geneva Experiment Station in seeking a control for the red-banded leaf roller.

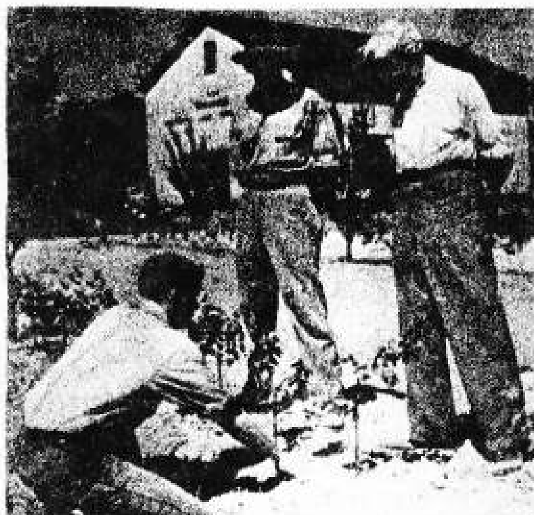
The routine at Orchard Dale Fruit Farm is a rigid and scientific one. All fruit plantations boast a heavy sod of timothy, alfalfa and clover, which is mowed twice annually. Trees are fertilized with solid nitrates each spring, at which season the dead and diseased are bulldozed and burned, each being replaced as rapidly as the desired nursery stock becomes available.

Sterile and fertile trees are alternated in orchard rows but pollination is not left to chance. During blossomtime, some fifty odd hives of bees are rented from an itinerant beekeeper.

Tree damage by mice is minimized through the use of cinder basins and mesh hardware or tarpaper guards. Despite these precautions, Robert frequently spots damaged trees, a number of which he has saved in the past by making bridge grafts at sod level.



This modern spray rig, Ralph up, is a far cry from the one Grandpa used in the '90's when he pioneered in spraying tests.



PINTO

Quinces, Harry's first adventure in fruit, are still a mainstay at Orchard Dale. Trees are raised in their own nursery.

Wheat and mixed hay are grown primarily to keep open cropland from being idle. As soon as he can find time and get trees, he hopes to plant another fifty acres of apples. Thirty acres of yearlings were set last spring.

Robert and his wife, Angilean, are carrying on the active management of the farm, as Jared Van Wagenen reported to the Century Farmers, "with ever-flowing enthusiasm and impressive skill." I asked them if 18-year-old Ralph, now finishing high school and soon to study horticulture at Cornell, was destined to take over the farm eventually, in his turn. "That is what we hope," said Robert Brown. He did not add, though I felt it was implied: "We Browns are independent and make up our own minds."

I strolled out to the barn, where Harry had once kept cattle. Inside, ready for launching, was the Raldor (named for son Ralph and daughter Dorothy), a big, sleek, modern power boat which accounts for the family's membership in the Oak Orchard Yacht Club. Outside, Ralph's saddle horse was munching grass. And just then, out of the lovely driveway by the big green house, through the opening in the evergreen hedge, came Ralph himself—on a tractor. I had no doubt then—nor have I any now—that the farm by the side of Oak Orchard Creek would stay in the Brown family for yet another generation, and more likely for many.

THE END

On a farm in Orleans County

Fruit Harvest in November

Story by Bill Lamale **Photos by Doris Barker**

AT FIDDLER'S ELBOW, between Lake Ontario and Oak Orchard Creek, in northern Orleans County, some of the orchard trees are still green and the weight of a harvest yet to be picked arches the limbs. This is a quince plantation, and that yellowish pear-shaped fruit hanging so thick along the branches is so hardy it can be gathered in early November, long after most tree crops have gone to market.

Nearly two generations of Americans are unfamiliar with this fruit whose cultivation pre-dates the Christian era and which originated in Persia. Too acid and astringent to be eaten uncooked, it has a high pectin content and was used by grandmother in making jelly.

She also added quince to apples to bring out their flavor in sauce. About the size of a large apple, the quince has ribbed sides and white aromatic flesh.

THE 60-ACRE ORCHARD in Waterport represents the handiwork of Harry Luttenton Brown, who set out the first trees when he was a boy. Brown, who also grew apples, pears and cherries, died at 93.

Brown was the fourth generation of his family to farm the land at Fiddler's Elbow. He believed there was a place for the quince on every bill of fare. His favorite dessert was baked quince.

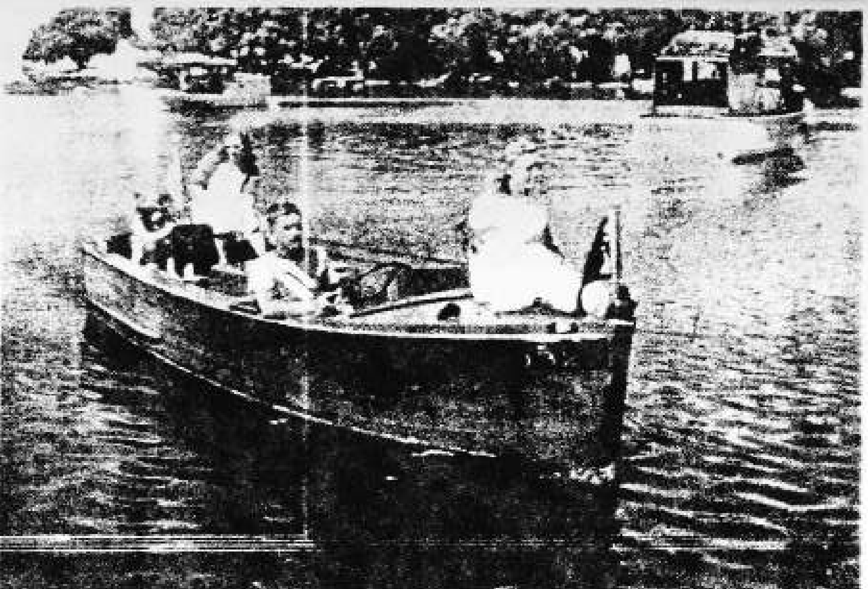
When he took over the ancestral acres at 27, he switched from dairy herds to fruit trees with emphasis on the quince. One of his varieties took horticultural honors at the Pan-American Exposition and the Pan-Pacific Exposition.

For years his quince crop went to the city markets where housewives bought them at the counter. When canned preserves became available on grocery shelves, many quince orchards were leveled. But Brown kept his plantation and shipped his crop to a processer who made it into preserves.

INCREASINGLY, members of the younger generation would ask the grower, "Well, what IS a quince?" Finally the orchardist from Fiddler's Elbow brought out a brochure describing his favorite fruit and listing recipes for jelly, steamed and baked quince combined with pears and sweet apples and "honey." He even included a formula for making a hand lotion out of quince seeds soaked in water.

In recent years the family's plantation has been operated by a son, Robert, who has now been joined in partnership by his son, Ralph, one of the sixth generation. They grow the same varieties started by Harry Luttenton Brown, the "Orange" and "Champion," and the crop averages 10,000 bushels. Nearly all of it goes to a Pennsylvania processer who extracts and pasteurizes the juice and then sells it to preserve makers.

Dorothy, Mrs. Bob Brown and Ralph (right) are all frequent visitors and laborers in the acre-and-a-half garden, vineyard and berry patch which figure so prominently in the Browns' pursuit of a good living from home acres. Speedboating on Oak Orchard Creek (extreme right). Jean Anderson **Heard**, another Brown **granddaughter**, and **Dorothy** Jane ride the stern and bow respectively **with Ralph** at the helm. The Browns boat regularly with members of the Oak Orchard Yacht Club at Point Breeze.

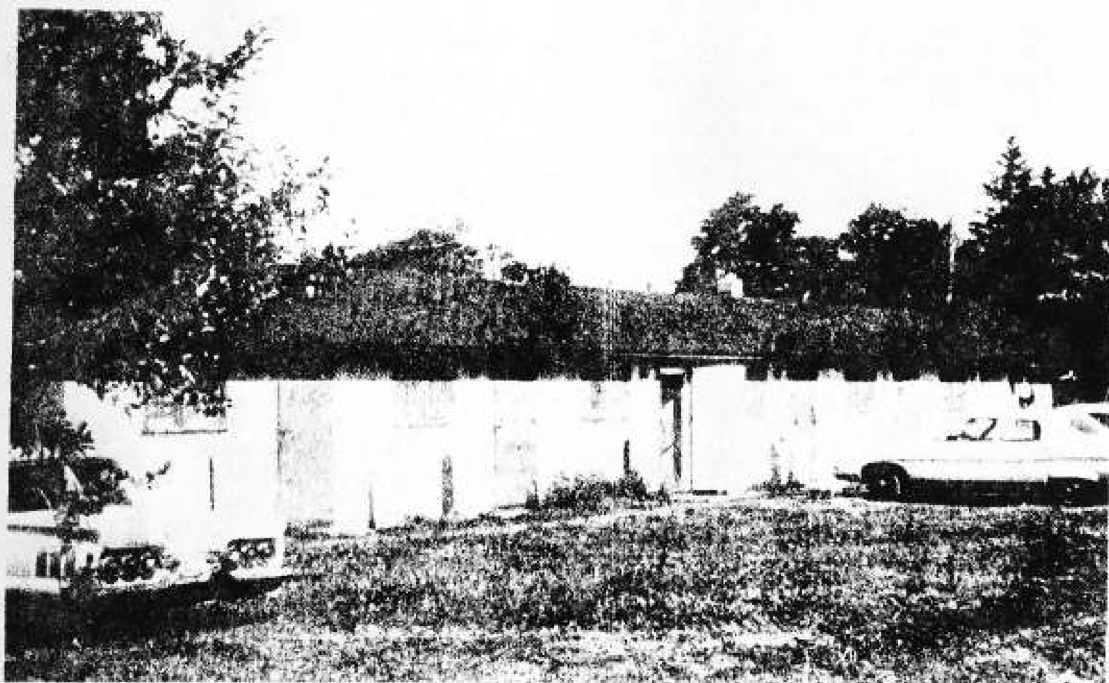


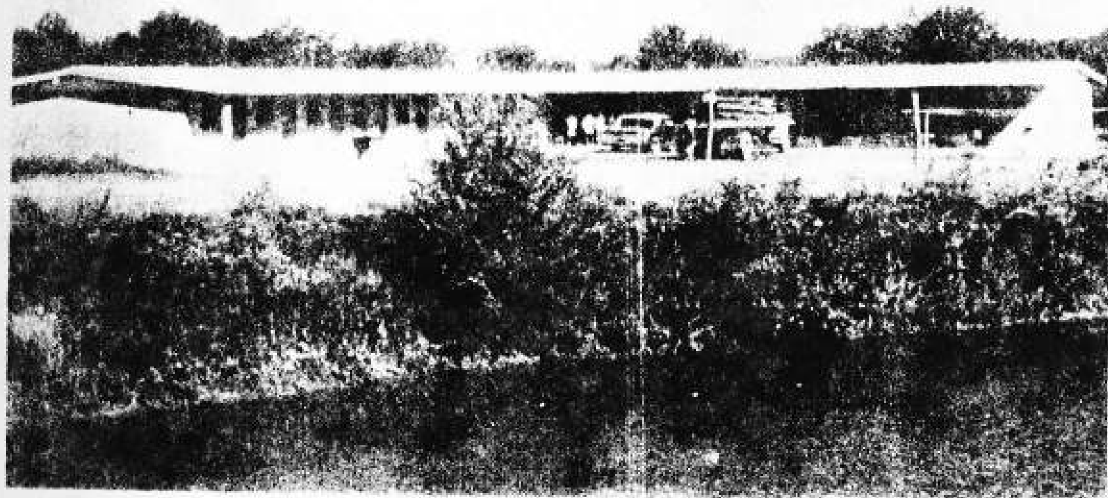
Cherry-p[illegible]**king time finds the womenfolk as busy as the men. Fr**[illegible]**m left to right: Mrs. Bob Brown,** [illegible]**randma and Dorothy Jane. Cherries are also pl**[illegible]**ed in cold storage.**

Reunion at the Bob Browns'. From left to right: Ralph, Mrs. Bob Brown, Grandpa, Mrs. Pauline Anderson, Bob, Dorothy Jane and Grandma. Mrs. Anderson is one of Bob's two sisters.

R. Brown

R. Brown





In the top photo, seasonal housing on the Orchard Dale Fruit Farm in Waterport is shown. This farm, owned and operated by Robert and Ralph Brown, received the first award for the larger houses. In the lower photo, seasonal housing on the Cornucopia Farm Inc. at Waterport, is shown. This farm, managed by Roy Perkins, received second award for larger houses.

Albion Adv. Aug 28, 1968

His mother died in 1919, and his younger sister even before that; but his older sister, Miss Clara, still has her quarters in the house, having retired from schoolteaching 18 years ago, when she was 70. At 88, pert Aunt Clara keeps up with the world with reading matter ranging from the New York Times and the Star, New York's liberal newspaper (formerly P. M.) to Vogue, and works busily in the flower gardens, taking particular responsibility for an old-fashioned garden started by her father.

He had been the sort of farmer, this father, who appreciated the beauty which the land would produce, as well as its more practical gifts; and had begun, in his lifetime, not only to plant flowers around the house but to replace some of the trees which had been systematically leveled in the process of creating a farm in the wilderness. A great black walnut now standing in the front lawn was a seedling which he brought back in his trunk on a trip to Michigan; and an immense maple is one that Harry, as a youngster, helped him to transplant.

Shortly after their father died in 1893, Harry's younger sister brought home another schoolteacher for a visit, a girl named Pearl Jennett Rowe. Pearl and Harry fell in love, and in 1895 they were married. As each of their children was born, they planted another tree; and four large, stalwart trees now represent the second present generation, two for sons, two for daughters. "That is Ralph's tree," they say, pointing out a graceful, spreading elm. Or: "The Siberian elm is Robert's." Ralph, the first son, died young, but grandson Ralph—Robert's son and the youngest of four who call Mr. and Mrs. Harry Brown "Grandpa" and "Grandma"—now carries on the name.

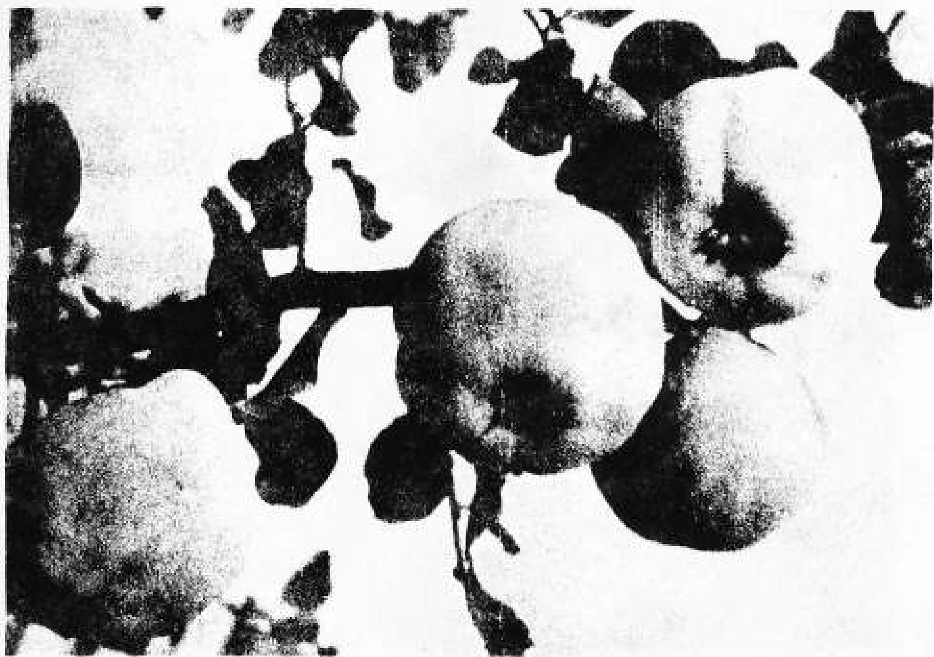
Of the three surviving children, two are married. Pauline, who lives with her husband on another fine farm a few miles away on the Ridge Road leading to Rochester, has a son who is an engineer, a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a daughter who also went to college in Massachusetts and who has recently married. The Robert Browns, in addition to Ralph, have a daughter, Dorothy, who on graduation from Syracuse University this summer entered the employ of the Army Map Service in Washington. Ruth Irene, the younger daughter of Harry and Pearl, is unmarried and, following the family teaching tradition, is a science teacher at Western Reserve University.

Grandpa and Grandma Brown and Aunt Clara are now the only occupants of the big green house, with its dozen rooms and two baths. Nine years after he was married in 1925, Robert built his own modern house, just down the road—a house, incidentally, furnished with many valuable and beautiful antiques, which older generations tended to discard, but which those of our time have learned to respect and cherish. Since 1928, Robert has operated the farm on much the same kind of arrangement with his father—though informal and unwritten—as that which his father had, years ago, with *his* mother. In recent years, he has also bought additional land of his own, but he built his house out of his share in the earnings of the original farm. "I didn't give him a penny toward it," says Harry proudly. "I wanted him to be independent."

Generation by generation, that is the way the Browns have been through the years, each creating on the farm a home to suit his own tastes and means. Elijah built a log cabin. That disappeared so long ago that Harry Brown remembers only the well hole on the site, long since filled in. In the next generation—that of Harry's grandfather—a frame house arose on the site of the present homestead. Harry's father moved that away to make room for a new house in 1872, and it exists today only as a structural part of one of the farm outbuildings. The house that Harry's father built—a square house, with a cupola on top, in the Victorian manner of the day—is now only the front half of the big green house. Harry built on a large addition in 1913—such a big addition, in fact, that he later took off one ell of it and moved it to another site, where it now serves as the nucleus of a building used as quarters for the 30 or so men hired each year at picking time.

When he enlarged the house, Harry put in its first central heat. Before that, the kitchen stove and a big chunk stove in the living room had provided all the heat there was. A few years

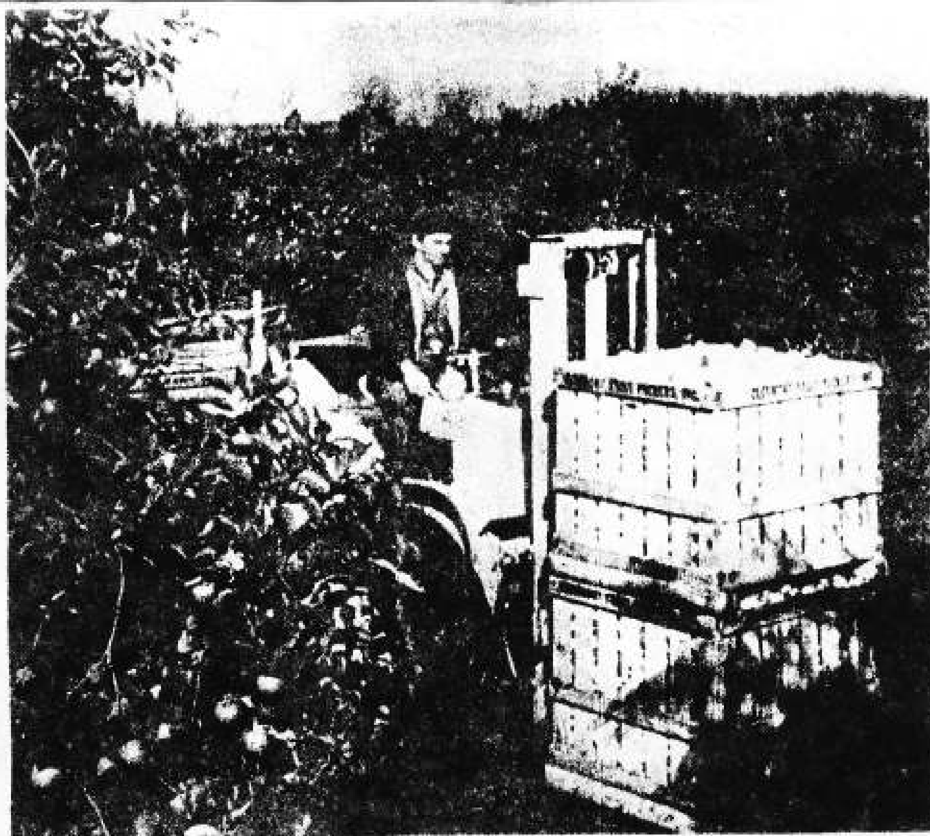
Happy day for the Browns—Thomas E. Dewey presents the Century Farmer award as J. Van Wagenen looks on.



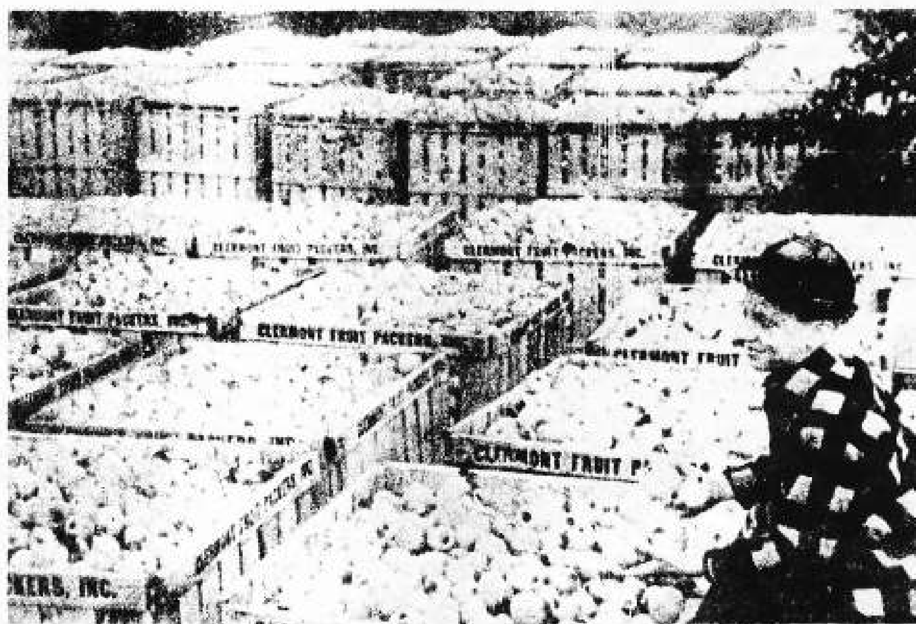
The globular tawny fruit has no stem and **must be picked with a quick twisting motion. Rubbing** off the fuzzy coating **reveals a waxy, grainy** skin. **Pickers** on **eight-foot** stepladders reach the tops of the stubby trees, which when **leafless exhibit contorted** branches.

Professional pickers from **Florida and the Carolinas work in the plantation** which Harry Brown began with the **proceeds from the sale of pet lambs. He** bought the original trees from a nursery. **Pickers empty their bags into 18-bushel** bins scattered between rows.

(1968)



To a waiting trailer truck at the edge of the orchard go these bins laden with prime fruit. Fork lift expedites transfer of the big boxes. Quince trees have a productive span of about 30 years, mature early and produce solitary flowers. Some varieties are used in hedges.



Robert B. Brown, grandson of the man who originally planted the quince orchard, looks over some of the first fruit. More than 1,700 bushels appear here. Related to the rose family, the quince grows on a small tree. When green it is hard and gritty. Horticulturists say that because it must be cooked to be edible, it has limited market appeal.

(Buffalo C-Express 11-10-'68)

Somebody still likes bitter fruit

By ROBERT C. KRAUS

Pitty the poor quince.

It even gets a bad rap from one encyclopedia that says it was "Formerly grown in home fruit gardens and commercially in the Northeastern United States but later lost its flavor."

Well, that bit about the flavor might meet with a dispute from any number of quince-eaters who have tasted the fruit in preserves, steamed, canned or in relish.

What is apparently one of the last commercial quince orchards of any size in New York State — and maybe the last — is owned by Ralph Brown of Waterport, Orleans County.

Brown has about 30 acres of quince trees, which are six to eight-feet-tall bushes of the rose family (rosacae).

Brown says his main fruit crops are apples, cherries, and quinces.

So, before going further, a quince is a yellowish, fuzz-covered fruit looking vaguely like a pear, which grows directly on trees without the benefit of a stem.

They're especially bitter at harvest time "But not so bad that you can't eat it," brown said.

The original trees were planted by his grandfather, Harry L. Brown, just before the turn of the century. Quince trees were "Typical of the old farm, and I think he could see a potential sale there," said Brown, the grandson.

Brown still sells quinces during harvest time at his farm, and passes out a printed recipe booklet for making quince honey, relish, jelly, and canned or steamed quinces.

The booklet also tells how to make a hand lotion from its seeds — which is one traditional use of the fruit.

"We sell quite a few at harvest time — it seems as though every year we get a few people who say 'oh, we've looked for those for years'," Brown said.

QUINCE

From 1B

Some quinces from his farm are sold at another farmer's roadside stand, but Brown said he doesn't actively advertise himself.

"Maybe it's just a matter of promoting it," he said, "and then there might be more interest in them."

At one point, there were twice the number of quince trees on his farm. "But probably one of the reasons we dropped the acreage is that in the past 10 years when we've had a full crop, it was hard to harvest and market it all."

Brown's commercial crop goes to a packer in Claremont, N.Y. Henry Abrahams, head of the packing company, said Brown is his only supplier.

"Mr. Brown and I work pretty closely," he said. "I try to keep it profitable for him; if he goes out of business, there may not be any."

Abrahams said his company prepares quince juice and concentrate which is sold to some specialty houses and to supermarket chains such as A&P, and is marketed primarily in the East.

He said it's possible his firm may have "about the only people in the country" processing quinces for preserves to be sold in commercial outlets.

"It's a specialty item, and the bigger firms don't want to go into specialties that much."

The demand "about now has leveled off," Abrahams said. "For the past few years it's been pretty level."

In California, he said, some quinces are sold fresh. In Mexico, quince is used to make candy "but that's a different variety than the quinces used for jelly."

Why the decline in the commercial production of quince?

"It's an interesting thing," said Dr. L. J. Edgerton, chairman of the Pomology Department at the State College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Cornell University. "Part of it came about during the late 1950s and 1960s, probably when more women were starting to work.

"There was much less home-canning done. And the commercial processors could never find much favor with quince," Dr. Edgerton said.

"It's a "darn tough fruit" when you're trying to get the skin off and seeds out in commercial operations, he said. "And it's an awkward shape — it doesn't lend itself to peeling machines."

"I like to have a half-dozen quinces myself," he said. But last year, while traveling in the Syracuse area where there used to be a small orchard, he said, he could only find an abandoned tree or two.

MEMOIRS OF ROBERT R. BROWN
Born 1902

My mother was Pearl J. Rowe (1871-1959). My father was Harry Luttenton Brown (1866-1959).

One of my memoirs is of a small country school which was District No. 14, Town of Carlton, Orleans County, New York, situated in a small hamlet called the Bridges, at the junction of Oak Orchard and Marsh Creeks. This little schoolhouse was a one-room building which had an old round stove for heat. There were two cloak-rooms - one for the boys and one for the girls. There were also two out buildings for toilets. This schoolhouse was approximately five hundred feet from the house where I was born. There was a russet apple tree in back of the schoolhouse. At recess the older boys threw apples up into the belfrey. This caper was done so often that eventually the bell would not turn for lack of space. Then the teacher would have to send two older boys through a hole in the ceiling to throw out the apples. I was probably eight or ten years old at the time.

One of my teachers was Miss Mabel Concver. She was a strict but very good teacher. In those days the teacher boarded with different families in the neighborhood - staying a few months with each family.

There was a thriving country store at the Bridges. It was owned and operated by Ben Bamber. He had the usual line of groceries - also some dry goods.

The local men would gather at the country store to discuss world affairs and swap stories. In the winter time they enjoyed sitting around the pot bellied stove - soaking up the heat.

There were other places of business at the Bridges. There was a blacksmith shop, a dry house, a meat market and a cobbler's shop.

Across from Bamber's store and across Oak Orchard Creek was a covered bridge built in 1845. I well remember when it was replaced in 1911 with the present bridge.

The dry house was located on the top of the hill past the store. This hill was much enjoyed by the youth in the community. It was fun to slide down it on sleds. We could go as far as the covered bridge. In back of the dry house was a Baptist Church.

Our house was situated on the west side of the creek. Within walking distance of our house was a Presbyterian Church. It had sheds built in the back to tie the horses during the service. I have a samll brass latern my grandmother used to carry when she walked to service and to prayer meetings. Prayer meetings were always held in the eve.

A Mr. George Simson, who lived at the top of the hill a short distance from Bamber's residence, (it is now the home of Ward Wilson) gave money to build a community hall. This was located on the Creek Road not farm from the dry house. The people of the community enjoyed many good times in this building. Such as church suppers, ice cream socials, community meetings and programs. The building has been torn down now.

There was lots of social activities among families then - more so than now. Such as skating parties, dances, cutter racing from the Bridges to Point Breeze, quilting bees held at the Community Hall. At that time the ice was 12 inches thick on the creek so it was safe to race cutters. The water was so clear!

Every family had an ice house. It was about 18 to 20 feet square. The walls would be filled with saw dust. The harvested ice would be cut into cakes by large tooth saws, loaded into sleighs and hauled to farmers' ice houses.

We had a large ice box which opened at the top. One could put a large enough chunk of ice in this to keep for a week. It was my responsibility to fill the box.

There were lots of post offices in the past. Each community had one. There was one across from Bamber's store. One at Point Breeze. One at Carlton Station. These post offices were only a few miles apart. The mail came in at Carlton Station on the Ho Jack train. Mail was there distributed to the post offices. Our mailman was Silas Boughton. When he picked up the Bridge mail he would also pick up and deliver the bread for the store. This bread came from Rochester. The railroad ran between Ogdensburgh, New York & the suspension bridge at Niagara Falls. Mr. Hoot was postmaster at Point Breeze. Mr. Fowler was postmaster at the Bridges. Mr. Maginn was postmaster at Carlton Station. These areas are all on Route 98. All south of the Bridges except Point Breeze.

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At that time the only way to travel was by cutter, bob sleigh, horse and buggy or walk. The roads were bad, full of pitch holes and deep ruts. When I went to high school I had to board for the week. I boarded with Mrs. Louis Bull.We came home on the weekends.

As I remember, it was in 1918 when the Town of Carlton purchased their first snow plow. It was a 10 ton caterpillar with a center plow and a moveable wing on each side. I remember the day this plow was unloaded at the Albion freight yard. I caught a ride with a neighbor who was taking feed to be ground at Woods & Sprague Milling Company. The snowplow was powerful but only moved at five miles an hour. Route 98 was the first road in the county to be hard surfaced. The dirt roads were scraped in the spring. These dirt roads could be treacherous when the ground was soft in the spring.

Dad's first car was a Hudson. I remember the starter didn't always work. The tires didn't last long, they would good for about 1,300 miles. The car (touring) had side curtains applied in cold weather. There was mica windows in the side curtains.

One of the winter chores was to take all the harnesses to the shop, wash them in warm water and when they were nearly dry, coat them well with harness oil. This was a job!

Ms. Sam Watt had a Harness Shop in Albion. He made complete harnesses and displayed them in his window on a model horse. Another

job in the fall was to go to the woods and get wood for the buzz pile - enough wood to last until the next winter. Wood was burned in the kitchen stove the year around. We also had a wood-burning stove in the dining room. We also had a large stove for burning coal in the living room. This had mica glass windows in the door, allowing one to see the cozy fire.

Within a one-mile circle around the Bridges I can name at least twenty five or thirty farm families - some tenants. They were able to live on the produce from their farms. Most of these farms dated back to the Holland Purchase. They contained around one hundred acres more or less. Each farmer had one or two teams of horses, one driving horse, probably a four passenger surry, one top buggy, a runabout, one democrat wagon and cutter for transportation. Their livestock consisted of two or three cows for milk, butter and cheese, a flock of chicken for eggs and to eat and three or four hogs.

Generally in late fall butchering would be done. Hams, shoulders and bacon would be put in salt brine to be sugar cured and smoked later. Also the fat was rendered for lard. Sasuage would be made also. Fall was the time to take the wheat to Spragues Mill to be ground. Most families kept a barrell of flour for their use.

Many of the farms had an apple orchard. After the apples were picked up they were taken to be dried at the Dry House. They were

peeled, cored and sliced. The slices would then pass through a passage heavily laden with sulphur fumes. This process helped lock in the flavor. Then the slices would be dried on slatted floor kilns. They would then be boxed and shipped for export.

For cash farmers would grow several acres of wheat, beans and oats. This grain would be harvested with a binder which would cut and tie the grain into bundles. Two men followed the binder setting the bundles into shocks. This shocks consisted of twenty or more bundles. After drying these for a few days, the bundles would be picked up, placed on a wagon and taken to and stored in the barn. When all the various farmers had their grain in the barn it was time to contact the man who thrashed. The man who was then thrashing was George Callard. He had a Frick Engine and separator. A long pipe extending from the separator blew the straw out into the barn yard. Two men generally built the stack. These stacks were about forty feet wide and probably that high. The staw was used throughout the season to bed down the stock.

A few weeks before the hens started moulting the farm wife would put down several dozen eggs in water-glass. This solution would keep the eggs fresh from six weeks to two months. These eggs were used for baking.

I remember mother making soap. Two ingredients were used for the soap - fats and grease (from preparing meat) and lye solution. The lye would be made from leaching water through wood

ashes. It was very caustic. These two ingredients were mixed together, boiled, a little rose water was added to the boiling solution. This gave a pleasant odor. This soap would be poured in shallow pans while hot. This was then left to cool and cut into cakes. This was the soap used for laundry.

I recall when I was about twelve years old, covered wagons came through our territory. The occupants were gypsies. They camped on the Kendrick Road. They always had good teams. Sometimes they had a horse tied to the back of the wagons. They had all kinds of well made baskets for sale. They were made of reed.

One of the neighbors was suspicious that his cows, pastured near the camp, gave considerably less milk while the gypsies were camped nearby. They would come to Bamber's store to get provisions. It was said they "needed watching" while in the store.

I have a picture of my fathdr in his first apple orchard. He probably had some hundred trees, Baldwins, Spys and Russets. The picture I have shows father standing by a Baldwin tree. The apples were piled on straw. He had several props holding up the limbs. The picture was taken in 1894.

Father had eight acres of quinces. This orchard was south of the old house. Ed Hinkley, a produce buyer from Carlton Station, bought father's apples and quinces.

Father's first tractor was a Chase made in Syracuse. It had lots of power but was not economical. About this time (1910) father bought an adjoining 80-acre farm. He planted this land in

McIntosh, Grunings and Rome Beauties. Baldwins were a good late keeping apple, but only bore every other year. These trees were set 40 x 40 feet the next spring. My father then interplanted these apple trees to peaches, now spacing 20 x 20 feet.

Father's first spray rig, which I can barely remember, had a one-cylinder engine and a two-cylinder pump. It did not produce much pressure. The fungasides used then were lime sulpher, & bordeaux mixture, and blue vitrol. For Coddling moth and curlico, arcenate-of-lead and paris green were the main poisions.

Later when the apple orchard was more mature father bought a spray rig from "The Friend Manufacturing" at Gasport, New York. This rig had a lot more pressure.

Apples then were picked and put into barrels which held three bushel. Peaches were put in a "High Hat" containers and covered with red mosquito netting. The apples on the top of the barrels were faced, apples chosen for beauty and the bigger uniform sizes. At this time the Grower's Cold Storage had been built. We could haul 38 barrels of apples per load to this storage.

Our first truck was a Model T. This carried 20 barrels, but was a lot faster than the team.

In 1920 I enrolled in the Alfred Agricultural State College. I graduated in 1923. While in college I studied soils, crops, animal husbandry, fruit growing and majored in fruit growing.

I was now 21 years old and I wanted to be a farmer. In 1925 I married Angilean Reynolds & lived on and worked the farm with my father until 1960. Our children were Dorothy Jane Brown born 1927 and Ralph R. Brown born 1930.

After father's death I worked the farm with my son, Ralph. In 1970 Ralph took complete charge of the farm.

It is now 1981. I am retired. I have enjoyed my farm life and would just as soon go back and do it all over again.

Robert R. Brown

1782 Oak Orchard River Road
Waterport, N.Y

(682 - 3133)

THE BROWN FARM

Orleans County

Harry L. Brown and Pearl Rowe Brown, *Owners*

Out of the little state of Rhode Island, once the Providence Plantations, have come a good many contributions to our American life. Possibly the most important of these exports have been the scions of the Brown family because again and again in many localities you will find folk who rejoice in the name of Brown and who proclaim that the roots of their family tree go back and take hold in that tight little Commonwealth whose patron saint is Roger Williams.

In the 1700's there was living at Westerly, Rhode Island, near the mouth of Narragansett Bay, one Benjamin Brown. In 1747 there was born to him a son on whom he bestowed the splendid Hebrew name Elijah. It was this boy Elijah who must be deemed the founder of the dynasty which we honor tonight.

In 1756, when Elijah was nine years old, took place the first of the family migrations which were destined to carry them several different sojourning places before the clan at last struck permanent root in the good soil of Orleans County in New York State.

The first move was to Fisher's Island at the entrance of Long Island Sound. Here the family lived and it would seem prospered for some twenty years. Then came the Revolutionary War and on two different occasions, British foraging parties invaded their island domain. The first time they took much of their live-stock and forage but tendered payment in good British gold which would indicate a certain chivalry not common among the foraging parties of modern armies. Later they came again and this time picked the farm clean and burned the homestead.

Meanwhile during their Fisher's Island residence, young Elijah had not been idle. He had gone courting across the water to Long Island and had brought back a Quaker girl with the glamorous name of Bathsheba Sheffield. To my thinking it is this Bathsheba who must always be the particular heroine of the Brown saga. It is she and not her husband who dominates the tale.

During the next twenty-five years amid episodes of terror and hardships and many changes and some far wanderings and always the difficulties and uncertainties of pioneer life she found time to bear fifteen children all of whom grew up and with one exception married and went forth to play their part in the world. No wonder that Mrs. Brown, the gracious woman whom we are honoring tonight, declares that the number of her great grandmother's descendants are beyond computation and the ramifications of her ever-spreading family tree past all finding out.

After their uprooting from Fisher's Island, they found some sort of a home on the mainland near New London, Conn., where they must have remained for some ten years. However in 1789 when the New England

migration to the lands of western New York was running at full flood, Elijah and Bathsheba and their always growing brood joined the hegira along with several other families and so came at length to Dresden in Yates County hard by the holdings of Jemima Wilkinson, the self-styled "Universal Friend."

Now it was surely a goodly and a pleasant land to which they had come but Elijah was not satisfied with the terms under which he held this farm and after eight years he sold out his property interests and gathering his family and his household goods about him and yet a fourth migration to Sodus in Wayne County. The present head of the clan after going back to view the land where his great grandfather settled tells me that he can hardly understand how he could have ever brought himself to leave it. As it was, he stayed only six years. I have the suspicion that by this time Elijah was a man afflicted with an itching foot which could never be at rest except when it was on the march.

The last family migration was in 1804. That spring Elijah went sixty miles to the west and from the Holland Land Company bargained for a farm of one hundred acres lying one mile south of Lake Ontario and fronting on the deep inlet of Oak Orchard Creek. It would seem that he paid a considerable price for this land because as late as 1828 there still remained an unpaid balance of more than $800.00, on which, as the Company receipts attest, he was paying $100.00 yearly. Perhaps it had not been a very wise purchase in as much as while the end next to the creek was deep, fertile, well-drained soil, the back end was a water-soaked black-ash swamp which vexed and discouraged his descendants for a full century.

The faring forth to this new home was unique in that it was made, not in an ox-cart following the pioneer trails, but by sailing the lake in a bateau, a cargo-carrying craft at the date common on the lakes and larger rivers of the state. It must have been infinitely pleasanter and more expeditious than the overland route although there was always danger in the sudden summer squalls that often swept the long reaches of the big lake.

For the family migration and their stuff, several trips were necessary and on the last passage, black disaster struck suddenly and irrevocably. Elijah was seized with an illness so grievious that, according to family tradition, he died before the boat made landing on the creekside of his newly purchased farm. His widow chose a little knoll that rose a few feet above the general level of this flat land and there they buried the Master. It was a score of years before Bathsheba came to lie down by his side. The Mrs. Brown who is with us tonight writes me with what I feel is true eloquence "Great grandmother was left a widow in an untamed wilderness; her only assets being a family of six sons and nine daughters along with a steadfast, understanding and courageous heart."

The other day I stood beside the very simple burial slab which stands above this pioneer heroine and asked myself the unanswerable question,

"By what strange miracle did she accomplish the impossible in keeping that great family together and creating for them a home in the wilderness?"

In more recent years the Browns have established an unusual custom. As each child and grandchild is born there is somewhere on the lawn a tree planted, dedicated to and named for the child. So it is that the present home which stands on the site of the first cabin is almost embowered in trees. I could not but reflect that had this delightful custom been put in effect in Bathsheba's time, the house instead of being sheltered by a pleasant grove would, ere now, have been lost in an impenetrable forest.

It was Elijah's second son, Elijah, Jr., who set seedling apple trees among the stumps of the forest clearing and so established what are believed to have been the first orchards in Orleans County. This boy did not have so many years to farm. He died in 1828 while still a relatively young man. His youngest brother, Robert Morris Brown, took over and carried on the farm. He married Fannie West and the pair reared eleven children. There was one of these eleven, a son, Robert Ralph Sheffield Brown who became the next Master of the Farm and the father of the present head of the clan.

Today three different generations of Browns live on Orchard Dale Farm. There is Harry L. Brown and Pearl Rowe Brown, his wife. They represent the present grandfather and grandmother of the clan and they are our honored guests tonight. Harry in his time has borne almost his fair share of the burden and heat of the day and very much of what you see are his accomplishments. Now, however, that he is past eighty-one and so has attained the summit of the serene sunset years, he is, I think, well content to be merely a sort of Elder Statesman while his son, Robert and his daughter-in-law, Angilean, sit in the drivers' seat. May I say that these young people have taken over the father's task and are carrying on with over-flowing enthusiasm and impressive skill.

And finally the seed-corn of the future and the hope of the dynasty for years to be is vested in a daughter, Dorothy, now a student in Syracuse University and a son, Ralph, still a student in High School. It is both a great honor and a great responsibility to represent such a distinguished family line.

The original farm which Elijah Brown settled on the inlet of Oak Orchard Creek in the year 1804 was one hundred acres. With the passing years as opportunity offered, these land-loving Browns have added field to field until today the family domain is one solid block of 400 acres. Isaac, the Hebrew Patriarch lives in history as "Isaac, the Well Digger." I think these Browns may well be remembered across the years as "The Tree Planters." For a good deal more than a century, they have been orchardists. There are now on their land 15 acres of cherries, twenty of pears, twenty of prunes, sixty of quinces and a hundred of apples.

A large part of their land has been systematically under-drained by lines of tile laid three and one-half feet deep with the drains 34 feet

apart. On the farm are more than fifty miles of such drains and it is this wonderfully expensive and laborious practice which has converted black-ash swamps into most beautiful and productive land.

The farm home is amply large having been built in those spacious days when it was expected there would always be troops of children and the coming and going of many family guests. With the passing years it has been modernized and beautified until now it is a place of gracious and cultured living where many books look down from the walls and tumble over each other in every convenient place. It is indeed a far cry from that summer day a hundred and forty-four years ago when Bathsheba stood by the water's edge in raw forest clearing to receive the body of her dead husband.

Governor Dewey: For more than two full centuries and throughout no small wanderings the Browns have been farmers. Since 1804 they have owned and operated the same acres besides Oak Orchard Creek in the township of Carlton. According to community tradition they have been good folks, kind neighbors, public-spirited citizens, devout and ardent churchmen and outstanding farmers. That particular countryside has been a better place to live because they were a part of it. In my thinking they as a family have through very many years symbolized and exemplified everything that is best in life on the land. I wish to commend them to you as worthy recipients of the high honor of membership in the Honorable Order of Century Farmers.

J. VAN W., JR.

★ ★ ★

The Order of Century Farmers was conceived in 1935 by the late Dr. Carl E. Ladd, Dean of the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University. The New York State Agricultural Society appointed a committee to nominate farms for this honor and set the standards for selection. These include the primary requirement that a Century Farmer must own, operate and reside on a farm which for a century or more has been continuously owned and operated by his family.

The first Century Farmers were enrolled in 1937 at the 105th annual meeting of the Agricultural Society. Herbert H. Lehman, then Governor of our State, presented the citations to members of the Century Farm families. Except for two war years, additional families have been honored each year at the Society's annual meeting until now with tonight's citations from Governor Thomas E. Dewey, forty-four families have been designated Century Farmers.

New York State has many farms which have been in the same family for a hundred years or more and, as the years go by, many more families will be enrolled in the Order of Century Farmers.

Wednesday ,August [illegible]

History of Two Bridges

Followinf is a history of Two Bridges as given this afternoon by Mrs. Harry Brown at the formal opening of the new bridge over Oak Orchard Creek:

The little hamlet of Two Bridges where the third bridge we come to open today, is situated in the Town of Carlton on the banks of Oak Orchard and Marsh Creeks ,the former so called magnificent oak trees which lined its banks and the latter for its thick marshy xxxxx.borders. It is still a beautiful spot and we can readily see why it was chosen by our forefathers as a place in which to build thie r future homes.the streams were filled with slamon and other fish in abundance and game of all kinds roamed the forest.

Come with me for a few minutes in the far distant past and you will see,not as you do today a quiet town,flourishing orchards and fields of waving grain,but a dense wilderness which the Indians were still using as a hunting and fishing grounds.

Into this vast regions came the early pioneers with few posessions but indomitable courage and brave hearts.At first they suffered many hardships and privations.No roads but Indian trails and the source of supplies were far away.

The winters were cold and dosease was ever present,especially fever and ague which often attacked whole families at the same time.

They were soon able to clear some land and grow corn and other grainamong the stumps but they still had the problem of geting it into condition for food.They either had to grind it in a primitive way at home or take it sometimes by a single bagful 20 to 30 miles on horseback to the nearest mill.Keeping the fires going was a constant care as matches had not yet been invented.If the fire went out ,more had to be obtained from the nearest neighbor ,usually several miles away,

All the land in this section then called "The North Woods"was owned by the Holland Land Co and sold by them to the early settlers.

In 1804 the families of Elijah Brown and Job Shipmen came up the lake from Wayne county in open boats and on up the creek to this point.Mr. Shipman finally settled about three quarters of a mile further upstream and the Brown family settled intalelog cabin which Elijah and his son had previously built just up the west hill from where this bridge now stands.From that time to this that land has been owned by his descendants.Here Elijah Brown ,Jr. planted the first appe orchard in Orleans countamong the other early settlers was the family of Asa Simpson,who came by ox-team in 1819 and took up land three quarters of a mile southwest of the Bridges.About ten years later he moved to a place just westof Two Bridges where the Simpson homestead now stands.

Later we find these names closely associated with the early interests of the own:Miles,Flood,Wilson,Grow,Anderson,Beckwith,Sanford,Wilcox,Skinner,VanCamp,West, Kelsey and Jerome.At the Harbor those of Murray,Blake,Clark,Ballous,Selheimer,Allen, Thayer,Godfrey,Fordun,Boughton,,and in this immediate vicinity,Pratt,Johnston,Hall Rodgers,Rich,Thomas,Wood,Drake and Tennant.

In these carlt timestransportation was difficult.Travel and commerce were conducted mostly on the lake .The natural harbor at the mouth of Oak Orchard had beeen ear;y recoknized, and it was thought a fine city woyld develop there. This ,however, never materialized, but the harbor was improved and in after years large saicing vessels came up the creek, as far as this place.In 1803 the Holland Land Company made a survey and made out what was afterward known as Oak Orchard Rpad. It followed and Indian Trail and went from Batavia to Oak Orchard Harbor.This is the first road laid out in Orleans County.

There still no bridges AD THE NEAREST fording place was a mile or two upstream. Many of you have seen the historical marker that indicates the spot .

FROM THE FILES OF
ELEANOR W. WILDER
ALBION, N. Y.

History of Two Bridges

In 1829 crude bridges were built over both Oak Orchard and Marsh creeks and the town began to ,flourish. The Marsh Creek bridge was replaced by an iron one. the first in the own about 1878 and the present one in 1922.

In 1848 what is known to us as the old covered bridge was built here over Oak Orchard Creek,/Delphus Simpson was the engineer in charge . It was an old landmark which we all hated to see torn down in 1911and replaced by the iron one you see now.

The first warehouse was built by Simpson Bros in what is now known as Fiddlers Elbow and a later one at the east end of the covered bridge.This served as a shipping point for the surrounding country for many years.As many as five masted sailing vessels were anchored here at one time ,bringing ties from Canada for the Rail...

At an early day we find in theotown an ashery and wagonshop and later two blacksmith shops,a harness and shoe shop,cooper shop dry house,two stores,two hotels,a sheoolhouse and two churches.The chiodren all likes to stop at Mr.Podgers blacksmith shop and watch him pound out a red hot horseshoe on his anvil,and also go into Mr. Rich's shoe and harness shop to be measured for a pair of copper tood boots,or to have new covers put on thier balls.

Although we have no written record we are told that the first hotel was a brick one standing just west of the building now occupied by our store.It burned nd was replaced by the secohd store building which was used for many years both as a hotel and a store..Mr. Tennant and Mr. Whalen were early proprietors.

LemuelPalmer was one of the early store keepers and was succeeded by Benjamin Fowler whO was also postmaster for a number of years.James Waldron was postmaster at one time.The Carlton postoffice was maintained here until the advent of rural deliveryBenjamim Mamber followed Mr. Fowler as store keeper and his father was one of the early physicians..

The hotel at the foot of the hill ,known in the early days as Willow Doll Temperance House was owned and operated by R.R.Tennant and was always famous for its fine food.

In 1846 the Baptist church was built on the east hill and soon afterward the Presbyterian on the west hill.Some of the early pastors were Rev.Hervey Blood, L.P.Merrill and Samuel Bacon ,N.Foster Brown and ,anyothers,. The little schoolhouse, now a dwelling house up the west hill,had many fine teachers and sent out many fine prominent men and women.It was given up and our fine two room school was built on the east hill in 1916.

From an old diary we get these interesting items that help us form a picture of the ear;y days.

February 3 -chopped in the wood.Sarah dipped candles,13 dozen.

January 6- Went to Two Bridges and got a new overcoat from C.E.Wilder,made by him, cost $14.

February 25 -Went to the postoffice and from thereto the lake and helped draw the seine six times.Got a bony sucker as my share.

December 6- Went to Kendall to see Reed about money.Got none,hard times.

April 12,1853ook nine dozen eggs to the store and got nine cents per dozen .

Some of you can remember when John Wood,Mr. Nate and John Simpson used to race horseon the ice on Old Oak Orchard in winter time and in the summer time the fishing parties taken out at night by John Podgers in his little steamboat..When the fish attracted by the light would jump right into the boat,sometimes 15 or 20 in one evening.

With the building of the R.W. & O Railroad and the completion of the Erie Canal the Harbor was neglected and the Two Bridges was no longer an important shipping point due to the march of progress. business began to wane.We find out town todsy with one store,one church,one hall,one blacksmith shop,two boat liveries and very good fishing. [illegible] new bridge built by [illegible] Gallagher [illegible] generations [illegible] Western [illegible]

New York's beauty spots,The Bridges."

Brown

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