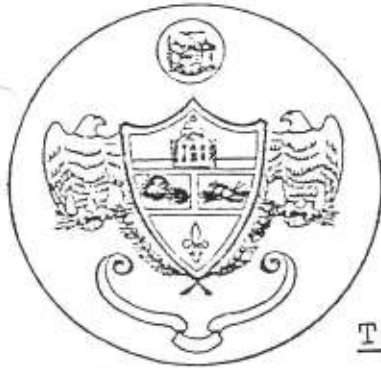




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Orleans County Historical Association

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1888-1979



Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Steele

Three Score And Four For The Clarence Steeles

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Steele of Oak Orchard Road in Barre Center celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary on Sunday, February 12. Friends dropped by to offer congratulations and to chat throughout the day. Homemade ice cream and anniversary cake was offered to guests. The Steele's dining room held an impressive display of congratulatory cards.

Clarence Steele and Edna Grinnell were married on Feb. 12, 1914 in the same house in which they now live. Mrs. Steele once told that it was a frigid 8 degree above zero day. Her brother took the newly weds to the train in a sleigh. They honeymooned in Detroit.

Clarence was a farmer all

his life until he retired about 20 years ago. He worked mostly Muckland and was one of the early farmers to "open up" some of that black dirt. Edna had plenty to do, taking care of their 12-room house - helping in a pinch with some of the farming chores, and caring for her 4 children. Of course Barre Center church activities were a very real part of her life. Both Steeles have been active Grange members for over 50 years.

Clarence and Edna Steele have one son Donald of North Carolina, a daughter Helen Caswell of Rochester and daughter Janet Hamilton of Barre. They lost their daughter Charlotte. Presently there are 11 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren.

Services Set For Clarence Steele, 90

Clarence H. Steele, 90, of Barre Center, died Thursday at Arnold Gregory Hospital, following a long illness.

Mr. Steele was born in Elba and had been a lifetime resident of the area.

He was a retired muck farmer and a member of the Barre Center Presbyterian Church and of Albin Lodge IOOF.

He was co-founder of Genesee-Orleans Vegetable Growers Association and a charter member of Barre Grange 1026.

He was a member of the Barre Fire Department and served several years on the Orleans County Draft Board.

Survivors are his wife, Edna Grinnell Steele; a son, Donald G. of Tarboro, N.C.; two daughters, Mrs. Stanley (Helen) Caswell, Rochester and Mrs. Lawrence (Janet) Hamilton of Barre Center; one brother, Gordon of Buffalo; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; one nephew.

The family will receive friends (2-5 and 7-9) at the Merrill-Grinnell Funeral Home where services will be held Saturday at 2 p.m. Interment will be in Mount Albion Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Barre Center Presbyterian Church or the charity of one's choice.

9-28-'79

J-R

2-15-1978

Albion Ad.

Orleans County Oral History Project

This project is being conducted by the Orleans County Historical Society. Its purpose is to collect information about the development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the County's development. These tapes will be located in the Orleans County Historians Office where they may be used as an educational resource and for purposes of publication.

Clarence H Steele

Signed

Jan 12/78

Date

Understood and
agreed to:

John B Mungus
Interviewer

Jan 12/1978
Date



Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Mr. Clarence H. Steele
Oak Orchard Road
Barre Center, New York

Mr. Clarence Steele was born November 29, 1888 in Elba, N.Y.

The following interview was conducted by John Munger,
East Barre Road, Barre Center, New York on
January 12, 1978.



Clarence H. Steele

Clarence H. Steele, 90, of 4706 Oak Orchard Road, Town of Barre, died September 27, 1979 at the Arnold Gregory Memorial Hospital following a long illness.

Mr. Steele was born in Elba and was a lifetime resident and muck farmer of that area.

He was a member of the Barre Center Presbyterian Church, Albion Lodge IOOF, Charter Member of Genesee-Orleans Vegetable Growers Assoc. and Barre Fire Dept., and Barre Grange No. 1026. He also served on Orleans Co. Draft Board.

Survivors include his wife, Edna Grinnell Steele, one son, Donald G. Steele of Tarboro, N. Carolina; two daughters, Mrs. Stanley (Helen) Caswell of Rochester and Mrs. Laurence (Janet) Hamilton of Albion; one brother, Gordon Steele of Buffalo; 11 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren and 1 nephew.

The family received friends at Merrill-Grinnell, Inc., 12 Ingersoll St., Albion on Friday, Sept. 28th and a service at the funeral home was held Saturday, Sept. 29 at 2 p.m. Interment was in Mt. Albion Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Barre Center Presbyterian Church or charity of donors choice.

1979

M And when was that Clarence ?

S In 1888.

M And the month ?

S November 29.

M Then from, you moved from Elba to Barre ?

S In 1900.

M What was Barre like then ?

S Well Barre - - - when you got through the swamp when we moved with the stock and all. There was no improved drive ways, improved roads at all. It was a log road way across the swamp. That's through new 98. That's through what's new 98, from Quaker Hill north coming into Barre. Yeah.

M A log road then. It was kind of bumpy wasn't it ?

S It was to. Yep. Well it was worn down. Of course they kept a good gravel on it but it was worn down so you hit the bumps quite often.

M Did you move right up to where you live now ?

S No. We moved over ~~the~~ to the farm in well it was between the Delano-Steele Road. It was a - - - a lady in Batavia that owned the farm, I can't recall her name right now. And the first thing they had to do was build a new barn. They had a cow barn there that was made of logs and marsh hay on top of it. That's where they kept the cows when we came there. Well in 1900 we built a new barn - - 93 feet long.

M Well was that a regular barn raising like I've heard tell about ?

S Oh yeah.

M The men with the pike poles and - -

S That's right, yeah.

M 93 feet long, that'd call for an awful lot of men to lift of one side of that wouldn't it ?

S That was quite a project. Henry Belson was the boss ~~xxx~~ carpenter.

And I can remember when they had the plates on it. They had a young fellow that was working with him, took a run router round the plate, from one corner to the round right on the plate. He was a little dare devil.

Gee, that would only be about 8 inches wide wouldn't it ?

That's right.

That's more than I'd do.

I know it. I can't think of that fellows name right now. He was, Will Hare ~~Hare~~ was working with him at the same time.

Will Hare ?

Yep. But this, Joey something - - I can't think of his last name.

But he was a pretty nimble chap and went around that place, went clear around it.

Well how long would it take to put the barn up? I assume it was all framed and laying on the ground.

That's right.

And then how long would it actually take to put the barn up ?

Well they had the raising of the barn. They would get a gang together and they put up the frame work. They raised each end and then they put up the sides. Frame work. At that time they would get, when they put up a barn, they would have a gang of volunteer farmers that would come in and help. They have pike poles, different ones would hold up the frame work until they get a carpenter up there and then they - - - this was a gamble roof barn - - - and they put a man up on top. But before they put it up they have to get that gamble part all prepared on the ground. Well I think that takes care of the raising of the barn. Had to put up a silo after that, which was another project. One of the things that we were interested in was the Muck land 'cause we had 50 acres of muck land on it and there had been quite a lot of discussion. We went

to meetings in South Barre at that time and there was quite a controversy about whether the muck land should be drained or not. There were people that thought that if the muck land was drained that the people around in the neighborhood would be short of water. Their wells would go dry. But that was discouraged as being rather poor thought and so they did the - - Farms Company, a big organization that bought up a lot of acres of muck. And then they forced through a drainage project that started way up at the Transit and went down to what they called The Feeder to the west. And we were incorporated in that area and so we just simply drained into the, one of the lateral ditches and we had our muck drained.

M The Farm Company, was that the Putnum Company ?

S Yeah. Yep.

M And it drained into the west - - -

S It was built to the west and they had a - - -

M Whereabouts in the west ?

S It went up to about to the Indian Falls Road. They used to tell about that it couldn't be drained because there was a feeder up there that had a lot of rock on it and they had to lower it. And they finally got through a regulation where they could have that blasted out and then they got the water to flow through and go into the Tonawanda Creek, I think it is. So that was 1913 when the muck land was started to be drained. And the main canal was dug, it was dug at that time and they had the sub-main that led into it and in some cases the farmer had to a certain amount of drainage to get into those sub-mains and there on into the main. But it was well worth it.

M Well that was all hand work then wasn't it ?

S Well they had power, the main ditch was a big dredge that there was a floating dredge. And then they had the shovels for the sub-mains, they

used a shovel type of a dredge.

M This would be a steam powered ?

I think it was gas - - I don't know gas or steam, I don't know which, I think it was gas.

M Oh the main, that would be the one that goes down by the - - what's now White City, would that be the main ditch that you're talking about ?

S It goes right across the - - well it's down at - - - White City you say ?

M White City.

S Well that garage that, right there is where the main ditch goes right down through and goes to the west.

M All right.

S But the White City is farther up the hill.

M All right. I've got that fixed in mind now.

S I see.

M Well to get those trees out and the brush out that was on the muck you couldn't burn it of course; did you have to pull it out with a team ?

S Well I know that I was one of the fellows that went ahead and we have to cut a swath down through the under brush and trees so that the dredge could come down through ~~xxxx~~ and make the ditch. And I think there was some burning done but it had to be very careful and see that all the fires were out because it would get into the muck and burn the muck, which was a very serious thing. And the drainage was in 1913. And at that time we had owned our farm, Father had bought this farm and we started in breaking up a little muck. And eventually, as I took over, we had 50 acres of tilled muck. And we grew, our main crop in those early years was lettuce and it was hauled to the Elba Station. We used to start in with, we used to sell it by, express it in small quantities. That was too expensive. Well then in '21 we organized a Genesee-Orleans Vegetable Growers Association and we had a manager and had a receiver in every city that was worth while and he would load these cars with lettuce

and ship it out. And it was a very good deal at that time, with the lettuce. But as time went on the Ice-Berg Lettuce begin to crowd out the Boston Lettuce. Ours was the Boston Lettuce. It didn't hold up as good as the Ice-Berg. The Ice-Berg was shipped in from the West and packed in ice. We used to hold ours, some of it, down here in the Acme Storage for awhile. But you couldn't hold it too long, it wasn't a firm a lettuce.

M Where would the Acme Storage be ?

S That was on the east end up there - - - it's a storage, a cold storage, I was trying of who was operating it at that time.

M Would that be in Albion ?

S Oh yeah, yeah. They used that storage more than they did the storage up west.

M Well that muck starting in 1913 has gotten to be over 5000 acres now I think it is. That's a lot of muck.

S That's right.

M 50 acres at a time. That Genesee-Orleans Cooperative, that's still in business, is it not ?

S I think it is, yes. But the move of the lettuce has gone way down. Because the Ice-Burg Lettuce has crowded out our demand for the Boston Lettuce. Ours was a softer lettuce and it wouldn't stand the packing with the ice has well as the Ice-Burg.

M Well then you switched to onions ?

S Then we went into onions and potatoes. Onions was a very good deal and potatoes was very good.

M Well to harvest the onions and the potatoes did you have migrant or transient labor then ?

S Yes we had to have plenty of it. They had a labor camp over there at the Point and we used to get labor over there.

~~THE POINT WAS WHERE~~

M The Point was where ?

S Well you know where the Point is. You climb up the hill there as you're going up from Old 98 and the Farms Company, as you call it the Putmun, up that road to the east is a labor camp. And you could order about so many men you thought you could use for the season and had a set figure as what you pay them. Of course it was quite interesting to see that you get all the help you needed and most usually they give them a ~~bonus~~ bonus to get more men or stay with them at least.

M ~~XXXX~~ Were these men from the south ?

S South, that's right. Yep.

M Well I think Rowcliffe has his Greenhouses there now in one of those buildings and some of those smaller houses right along Old 98 are regular homes now.

S Yeah.

M That's quite a change isn't it ?

S Oh yes. That's right. Yes we stopped in ~~there~~ there here a few years ago and the Greenhouses, we got a few different things ^{there} at the greenhouse and remarked how much change there was. There used to be a houses in the where they, well different people that worked with the Farms Company had one of those small houses there at the Point, as we call it.

M Well while you're involved in all of this, you're also involved with the Grange weren't you ?

S Yes.

M Well tell me about that from the begining. I've heard the story before but now is the time to put it all on record.

S Well I think my father was instrumental in organizing this Grange. He and his mother was members of the Elba Grange and when they moved over here Barre why he was interested. Of course there is a little link there that I've heard him tell about it. That they had a very small Grange down to South Barre.

M South Barre is over by the Sheelar Road ?

S That's right. South Barre Corners. They had the Grange there but after a few years it became extinct. And then, as I say, Father was quite instrumental in getting this Grange organized and he became a Deputy and went around and organized other Granges.

M Lets start with the Grange in Barre, where did that first meet ?

S The Grange in Barre, that was right on the - - - down by the - - - at the end of Delano Road and Old 98. In that corner in there. Course it's all disappeared now. But I've heard him tell about that they had a small hall and they didn't have they didn't have a dining room to the place at all but they had a hall that the lower part of it was a place where they would come and hitch the horses. It was all horse drawn vehicles at that time. But that Grange, as I can remember Father telling about it, became extinct and just what year I don't know but then they ~~xxx~~ were instrumental in organizing this Grange here at Barre Center.

M Where did that first meet in Barre Center ?

S It met in Culver's Hall the first time.

M Culver's Hall, where is Culver's Hall or what it is it now ?

S Well that is where - - - what is the outfit that's down there now ?

M That'd be Bentley's ?

S That's Bentley's, yeah.

M Upstairs in Bentley's store building then ?

S And then they came to - - - there was a hall, now that was in the place where the present Grange Hall - - - it was called the Sam ~~XX~~ Tent Building. And it was small, a small hall, and in fact it used to be previous to that, it used to be, I used to go a Good Temperence Meeting there before the Grange moved up there.

M Well let's hold off on the Grange for a minute. The Good ~~Temppers~~

TEMPERENCE

what was that ?

S Well the Good Temperence was an effort to keep people from drinking intoxicating liquors.

M Did they have evangelistic meetings there too ?

S What kind ?

M Evangelistic or religious too ?

S No.

M Just ~~snick~~ anti-alcohol.

S That's right.

M Then what did the Grange go to from there ?

S Well the Culver Brothers bought this hall. To begin with Jackson Rice took it over after - - - they was renting it. Jackson Rice rented this hall, the Sam Tent Building, really where the present Grange Hall stands now. And the Culver Brothers were running a store also down where Nesbitts are now.

M The automobile agency.

S No, no. Culver Brothers - - - well the Nesbitt down there is farther down. But I was trying to think of the name of the place that people that was in there - - - Culvers owned the hall - - - the Grange was organized at that Grange hall. At Culvers Hall. And then they moved up to this Sam Tent building and Culvers - - - Jackson Rice rented the building for a store. ~~and~~

M Now we're back to the lease and Culver Brothers again.

S Yeah. Well the lease that Culver Brothers had in the hall. Jackson Rice was operating it. That was the building on the, where the Grange Hall stands now. It was a store, Jackson Rice was operating it as a store. But Culver Brothers knew about the lease that they had to have it and when the lease ran out they took it over and it forced Jackson Rice to build a new hall. That's when the hall was built over here because they didn't have any place then after Culver Brothers took over that lease and Jackson Rice built this new hall.

M The new hall is where now? Where the Grange is now?

S Yeah.

M They built the new hall?

S That was where the - - the one that Rice's did have and they had to move when Culvers took it over and then so Rice's, Jackson Rice had to build the new hall over on the east side.

M Oh, on the east side now where is that, where the grocery store is now?

S That's where it is right now. Yeah.

M And the Grange met in the new building then?

S And then the Grange bought this building and I call it the Sam Tent Building, that Culvers really owned it, that is they had possession of it and the Grange bought it and the farmers went ~~xxxx~~ ahead and did a lot of extra work to build it up and put a basement under it and they had teams and excavating that would - - - they put a basement in it.

M The excavation, would that be with a hand bucket?

S Well the farmers had teams, they used teams there and one of these dump scrappers to help to clean out the dirt.

M The team pulled the scrapper and the farmers got in the back end and pointed down until they got a load and then the team pulled it out?

That was a lot of sweaty work.

S That's right. But the farmers pitched in on that and they did most of the work themselves. And then they, they had a committee of building the hall, the Grange Hall. I remember ~~Merritt Wolfen was one of the~~ Father was one and Merritt Wolfen was another fellow.

M Merritt Wolfham ?

S Merritt Wolfham. There was 2 Wolfham boys. Well I guess there was 3. Wayne Wolfham, Merritt and then I think they had an older brother. But Merritt was on this committee with Father in building the new hall.

M This was about when ?

S Well about 1916.

M 1916.

S Yeah.

M Then your father helped organize other Granges ?

S That's right, he was made a Deputy and he went around and helped to organize other Granges.

M Where would some of these other Granges be, would you remember that ?

S Well there was one in Clarendon and I think the Knowlesville Grange and there was a Grange over west here somewheres.

M Well in those years in the Grange did they do a lot of cooperative buying for the farmers ?

S They did, yeah, yeah. That was one of the purposes, they had a committee for - - a purchasing agent buying fertilizer and grass seeds.

M Well these committees and the cooperative buying, is that what eventually became G. L. F. ?

S No. Well I say, the G.L.F., that was the Grange League Federation. That was a - - - they took the name, I think probably there was stock that was built up but it was called the G.L.F. The Grange and the Diaryman's League and the Farm Bureau - - - G.L.F.

- M You mentioned the Dairywomen's League, did you ever milk cows and ship to the Dairywomen's League? Or are you all muck?
- S No we didn't send them to the Dairywomen's League. We had a few cows and we took it over to the cheese factory. Took our milk over to the Cheese Factory.
- M Over there in Clarendon?
- S Yeah.
- M Well I'm going to talk to Herb Keople about the Cheese Factory so I get more of the details from him on that.
- S I see.
- M Were there any great storms back in those days that you can remember and what was it like getting around in the winter time?
- S Nothing like the '77.
- M You had a big pile of snow here in front of the house in '77 I remember.
- S Oh yes. yeah, yeah. Why I don't think we had as hard winters, as much snow and so forth as we've had here in '77, no where near as much.
- M Well how about the social life of the Grange, can you tell me something about that?
- S That was a, you might call it sort of a social organization. While they did have a purchasing agent and they did a certain amount of business, they would meet every two weeks and they had a Literary Program and had what they called a Lecture that had a prepared Literary Program that encompassed a good many of the members furnished the talent.
- M Well then there was the dances too wasn't there?
- S And they had a dance committee and they had dances during the winter.
- M Well let's go on to a little different thing. Of course the '30s there was Prohibition, what was Prohibition like in the Town of Barre then?
- S Prohibition developed in there, somewhere along in there and there were those, of course that was quite upset about it. And they couldn't get a

license till they finally got in to where they begin to sell it at the grocery stores, if I remember right.

A Getting a little later along the line. In the - - - 1933 or 1934 there, was a real hard freeze did that hurt your farming any at that time ?

S Yes we had some bad freezes on the muck and I presume it was in that area. We had onion crops that - - - where it was a dry area it froze them right off, it froze the onions right off but if it was a low area why they survived, some of them. And it cut the potatoes down pretty bad. They looked, after the sun came out, ~~like~~ like they were all going to be dead; they all turned black. And they were big, standing up here two feet high. But it didn't result in really spoiling the crop entirely. It took all the leaves off the potato vine and killed some of the stalks, but not too much.

M Well that would be a freeze during the growing season or towards the end of it but I was thinking of the real hard freeze the year that Lake Ontario froze over and all the peach orchards went. Or don't you remember that one ?

S Well that would be later in the year ?

M In the winter time.

S Oh.

M Something like 20 below for a week in a row.

S Well of course that didn't have too much bearing on the muck land because they didn't have any crops in at that time of the year.

M What did you do for Outings and Excursions? Did you ever take an excursion on the Trolley car to Lockport or Buffalo or Rochester ?

S The Grange took an excursion and went to Crystal Beach one time on the Trolley.

M How long a trip would that have been from here ?

S The young people of the Grange took the trolley down here to Albion and

went to Crystal Beach. Now I don't know whether we was able to go right to Crystal Beach with the Trolley or not but we started out with it and come back with it; whether we had to transfer I don't remember about the circumstances. But that was one of the things that in the Grange they had a Parent Grange and they had what they called a Young People's Grange. And the Young People's Grange would take on activities that didn't really comprise the Parent Grange. In fact they had a Young People's Grange that they had their Masters and Overseers and it had the set up of a regular Grange.

M Did you ever get involved drilling for Natural Gas ?

S No. Natural Gas ?

M Yes. Now let's go back a little bit. Can you tell me anything about the Water Cure in South Barre ?

S Well I remember there was^a great big building over there with a lot of rooms and they supposedly had a - - some water over there that was supposed to be a Water Cure for people that was in poor health. And people would go there and stay there sometimes and drink and bathe in this water. And I don't know whether it - - - myself, I remember my brother and I riding over there on bikes when we was up on the farm. Went over there and saw them over there - - - but we didn't get inside of the building but it did have a number of rooms in it and people would come there figuring to improve their health by using that water.

M This would be about when ?

S Oh that must have been in the late '20s I would think.

M That building disappeared in an awful hurry didn't it ?

S Yeah.

M That was over by the corner of the Sheelar Road, is that right ?

S Yeah, it was just west of the Sheelar's.

M How did the WPA effect Orleans County ? The old Works Progress Administration.

S Why they had an effort to employ, I guess, people that they couldn't, -- didn't have any work and I remember up on this road where we used to live they had a gang come in there and cut the fence rows down. I guess that was the organization in which they had that help.

M How did World War I effect the farmers out here ?

S Well I don't remember too much about the World War I. I was on the Draft Board in World War II.

M Well that was quite an adventure, ^{everybody} trying to get out of the war and you saying, "No! Go any how."

S Yeah, you had to classify the people, what the circumstances were, whether they should serve or not or whether they had dependents that were actually dependents upon the person.

M Do you remember the Old Blue Moon on the East Barre Road ?

S The old what ?

M Blue Moon, the dance hall ?

S Oh yeah.

M Can you tell me anything about that ?

S Well as I understood it there was two different units put together and finally they had dances in it and so forth and finally they - - - it was separated and the - - - Norm Anderson and Bill Morton, not Bill but Harold Morton - - - each one had a unit of it and that's what they live in today.

M Harold told me when they cut that apart the last time they ran a saw through there they hit a nail and when they pulled the two parts apart they split right down the middle of that nail. Well they each got half, exactly half.

S Well I supposed that must have been more or less of a unit, separate uni

that was put together when they took them apart but maybe they wasn't.

M How about the Flour and Grist Mills at that time. Was there a ~~flour~~ Flour Mill here in Barre ?

S No. There was one over in - - - on Old 98. I think it was the - - - not the Sheelars but they had a grist mill over there. We used to take small grist and go over there on 98.

M Jumping back a bit, these Pike Poles that you put the barns up with. How were those made ?

S Well they were a long pole with a spike on the end of it. That's all I can say and they put up the frame work ~~xx~~ of a barn why they would lay down the end frame you might say and then, that being all fastened together, they had a barn raising and they would raise that barn up - - raise that frame up and have 8 or 10 fellows with those pike poles, and raise it up and put it up in shape.

M That sounds also, a big party like that - - - something like a thrashing bee. Did you ever go around with a thrasher ?

S No I never did. I remember when they put the barn up, you speaking about thrashing, this Will Hare, I think he was a thrasher. And he used to work for - - - as a carpenter for Belson when they put up our barn.

M How about any big fires in Barre ?

S Well the worst fire I guess they ever had was the ^{Dole's} Canning Factory, which burned down.

M When was that ?

S Well I would say maybe it was around '26. That's a guess, I really can't pin point it.

M Well with no fire companies what did you do for water ? Or just let it burn ?

S Well they hauled water the best they could but it burned down.

M What would the Canning Factory have canned at that time ?

S Dale's was running it at that time and they would can - - - they were canning cucumbers, canning tomatoes.

M And that's about it. Now how about the churches. What can you tell me about the churches here ? There have been just the 2 churches in Barre, the Presbyterian here and the Methodist over in West Barre ? Or was there more ?

S Yes, to my knowledge that's all there was.

M What did you do for fun in school ? You went to school here in Barre Center ?

S No I didn't go to school here in Barre Center. I went to Albion school after South Barre school I went down to Albion school and what we called the Purgitory - - - Preparitory to get into high school and I didn't get along too fast. ~~I went down - - - I would have to~~

SIDE THREE

- M This is the third side of a tape with Mr. Clarence Steele on the Main road in Barre Center.
- Clarence, when we left off we were going to talk about schools, starting back in Genesee County in Elba.
- S Oh in Genesee County. We went to 2 different district schools in Genesee County before we moved over here in Orleans County. Then we went to a district school down in South Barre.
- M Now where was that District School then ?
- S Well the South Barre school was a stone school.
- M That's the corner of Culver Road and Old 98 ?
- S The corner of the Delano Road and Old 98, yes.
- M That's where I think Bud Engle lives now.
- S That's right.
- M Anything particular about that School when you got to Barre ?
- S And we went from there down to Albion school and they didn't have the Academy School built at that time and we had to have classes in various places in Albion. One of the places was in the American Legion Building
- M The one they're now using ?
- S It's what the American Legion building is now.
- M Across from the jail.
- S And I think we had some of the classes in some of the Town Buildings there.
- M Well how did you get from Barre to school ? Take a carriage or put - -
- S Oh we had to walk, it was a little over a mile. We had to walk to school down and back.
- M From here to Albion ?
- S Oh you mean - - - I thought you meant from where we lived to the South

Barre school.

M No I mean from when you had to go the distance from Barre to Albion, how did you get to school ?

S We used to drive our own transportation. Have ^{our} ~~a~~ horse in the Drive Barn.

M Then you just tethered him when you got to school until classes were over

S Then we drove back home.

M This would be one of the regular work horses that you rode bare-back ?

S Well no we had one horse that was more of a road horse and we used to drive this horse to school. We had to get up in the morning early and do our farm work before ^{we} I went to school and then get home early and so some more farm work.

M What kind of subjects did you take in school when you finally got to Albion ?

S When we got to Albion why - - as I say they didn't have the Academy school so we go to school there and we went to various places in Albion for different classes. American Legion was one of them.

M What did you study there ? You already knew how to read and write before you got there, did you study history ?

S It was the beginning of the high school. I had high school subjects when I went to Albion.

M Like chemistry, physics and that type of thing ?

S One of the things that I hated the most was Ancient History.

M Ancient History, Latin ?

S I didn't take Latin.

M How about Greek ?

S No. I didn't take those languages.

M What other kinds of classes did you have ?

S Well I had Mathematics course and that was one of the things I liked; spelling and English. And we had an Agricultural class.

- M Agricultural class, to learn what you already were doing at home ?
- S Well it was supposedly a benefit to us. We learned something about it.
- M Well I think at that time there probably teaching about crop rotations that was something new wasn't it ?
- S Yes, in fact along with schooling I went down to Cornell for a winter course and took Agriculture and that had to do with a little advanced farming.
- M This would be about what year ?
- S That was in 1901 and 2.
- M You were pretty young to be going away, all the way to Cornell for schooling then weren't you ?
- S Well it was a winter course.
- M That was a long ways away from home.
- S Yeah.
- M Did you get back for Christmas that year ?
- S Yep. *
- M What was Christmas like ?
- S Well it was pretty good I thought. I was pretty lucky to get home. Pretty glad to get home. But went back afterwards. There was 4 of us fellows that went together. Wendell Phillips was one that went.
- M Wendell Phillips, he used to be Town Clerk over here.
- S That's right. And then there was Stanley ~~Snyder~~ Snyder down on the Transit.
- M I know Stanley.
- S ~~Maxid~~ And Harold Snyder.
- M When you got back for Christmas did you have a regular tree like we do now ?
- S Well the first Christmas tree we had was when our first child was born after it got 2 or 3 years old, my brother ~~bro~~ brought down a Christmas tree.

And that was the first Christmas tree that was ever in our home.

M Did you have the candle holders and the little candles on it ?

S No.

M No lights. Did you have it decorated with home-made ornaments and popcorn and that type of thing ?

S I think they did. In fact my brother, as I say, he was instrumental at that time. Our oldest child, the only one that was born at that time, was - - he thought needed a Christmas tree and he came out and he worked there in Buffalo and one of the clerks that worked with him give him quite a few ideas about a Christmas tree. And he brought 'em out and we decorated the tree.

M This would be about when ?

S Well let's see - - she was born in '21 and she was probably 7 or 8 years old.

M That would be '28 or '29. When did they first bring mail to you out here on the Star Route ?

S The first what ?

M Mail.

S Oh.

M On the old Star Routes.

S Well I remember the rural delivery. We had rural delivery when we was in Genesee County. When I lived up on the farm.

M They came every day like they do now?

S Yeah.

M And you ~~even~~ could send packages back with the Mail-man ?

S That's right.

M Did you ever order from Montgomery Ward or Sears Roebuck at that time ?

S We did yes.

M Much ?

S Oh some not too much.

M When did electricity first come out here ?

S Well here - - I was going to say, on the farm my dad got a home plant and manufactured electricity and had a storage for it. 'Cause we had electricity there, a home plant. A generator. Well in here - - -

M How did you run the generator ?

S Gasoline engine.

M No wind-mills ?

S Then we came here.

M Here being where you live now in Barre Center ?

S Yeah. We didn't come here from South Barre, we moved over to the other side of the church. And I don't think they had electricity then there. And that was in 1913.

M When in general did they take the electrical wires down the roads and wire each farm house ? That wasn't too long ago was it ?

S When did they take them down ?

M When they did come down the road with electrical wires and plug in each house and wire each house individually ?

S Well I think this house was wired. My father-in-law lived here. We bought this place from my father-in-law and they had just put in electricity I believe and that was in '29.

M Well now that you had electricity in '29, radios were beginning to come. Can you tell me something about the old radios ?

S Yeah we had a radio and I can remember particularly how a neighbor over here, Warren Stoney, used to come over and we used to fish around on that radio and see how many different stations we could get.

M What was the farthest station away, can you remember that ?

S Seems like we got Des Moines, Iowa.

M That's a long ways. That was a crystal set ?

S That was a, that was a table set.

M Batteries ?

S No I think they had electricity then. Got electricity here.

M Well you had to use ear-phones then didn't you ?

S We used them some but we finally got so the volume was high enough we could hear it without. ,

M And then came TV. What do you think of TV now ?

S Well I think it's quite important.

M You enjoy it ?

S Oh yes.

M 1918 was the end of World War I and we also had a Flu Epidemic.. Can you tell me anything about that ?

S Well that was a very serious epidemic and a - - - we had an old doctor that come up from Barre Center that used to come out to our place, we lived on the farm.

M How about telephones, when did you first get telephones ? There used to be an exchange here in Barre Center.

S Well the - - - we used to have a Home Telephone over on the farm. That was the Independent Phone line.

M When was that ?

S Well we were married in '14 and we moved up here in '23 and it must have been a - - - - we had a sort of called Local Telephone with a good many on the same line..

M That the kind you cranked up and told the operator who you wanted to talk

S We had to talk to the operator, yeah.

M Do you remember anything about the Turn Of The Century, New Year's Eve in 1900 ? Was there any big celebration then ?

S 1900 ? I don't recall too much right now, no.

M Just another year. How about the changes in agriculture, we want to talk about that a little bit too.

S Well I was interested in agriculture, I was the only one of the boys, the 4 of us that turned out to be a farmer. And I was interested particularly in the muck but we used to operate a 100 acre farm for awhile and we had some of the latest equipment. We had a cultivator on the high land where you could cultivate 2 rows of corn at a time.

M With the team ?

S Yeah, yeah.

M Well how about the changes in agriculture since the way you did it to the way they do it now ?

S Well of course the - - we developed into the muck more and most of our equipment at that time was muck equipment. And we had a 2 row cultivator with a tractor and we had to have lifters on the tractor to raise up the vines on the potatoes which we grew quite a lot of. And at that time I had a 3-wheel tractor that had rims on the sides. Had 3 wheels in front and on the axle we could put a extra wheel on each side of the axle so it was still a 3 wheel tractor. That was used for quite a while and then we got into the Ford Tractor.

M What kind was the first tractor you had ?

S That was an old Chase Tractor.

M Chase. Then you got into Ford.

S Then we got the Ford Tractor. We had a spray outfit that was pretty important.

M That would have been made by the Sprayer up here in Middleport ?

S Well I think we got some of it, part of it there and then down here - - Mannie Boyer built the bore on it so we had a longer boom on it and we could spray quite a - - - - course we had a duster also. But when it was awful dry ----- when it was too wet you couldn't use ---- if you got a drenching rain after you'd sprayed, very, quickly, why, it wasn't too satisfactory and we used to use a duster. So we had both.

M Well what do think of the way they do it now with all this big equipment

S Well I don't know's as I'm familiar with it. Wheãther they have improvement on the dusting any spraying.

M Well let's see I guess that's about all I can ask you about, Clarence. Can you think of anything more you want to tell us about ?

S Well as I say my interests were very strong toward the muck land and I find I rented off the high land and eventually sold the high land and worked the muck entirely and I broke up the most of it myself. 50 acres of it was marsh land, some trees on it and broke that up and we used to do real well out of lettuce. We had this Orleans County Vegetables Growers Association over there that we had a manager that had contacts with the receivers in the different cities and was able to do pretty well out of lettuce. And they finally got into a - - - - the lettuce begun to peter out because of the Ice-Burg Lettuce came along and it was a little firmer lettuce and they crowded us out on the lettuce deal. And we got into potatoes and some carrots - - but our big crop I think was potatoes and onions, after the lettuce petered out. And I was pretty well satisfied with how we was getting along on the muck. Muck's better than it is today they're having a lot of trouble these days. This last spring was so wet.

M Well if it isn't too wet it's too dry isn't it ?

S If it isn't too wet it's too dry; well I was going to say also in the fall last year they lost a lot of potatoes, they rotted right in the ground.

M Turn that up a little bit, we got competition. (Unplug the vaccum) (3)

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This interview was transcribed by Mrs. Betsy Hoffman, Waterport, N.Y.

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