

Memoirs of
Herman Weiss Johnston

1889-1969



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FOREWORD

When Dad was no longer able to stay by himself at Fisherman's Beach and until he was forced to enter the Eastern Long Island Nursing Home in Patchogue, he stayed with Myra Sawyer at her home in Mattituck. During this period, partly to help keep his mind active and partly from a desire to have written some of the history of Dad's side of the family, I asked him to write some recollections of his earlier days and some of the highlights of his later years. It took some urging, but after he got started some of his old enthusiasm returned. Over a span of several months in 1961 and 1962 he wrote what is presented here. Although there was some repetition and false starts in several sections, the overall organization was apparent. The editing by Peg consists largely in eliminating repetition and inserting additional information where appropriate. The wording is almost exactly as written.

Dad immersed himself fully in whatever task he set himself. Whether it was building a home, repairing or selling radios, curing himself of TB or waging a campaign for mass transit, he did it with tremendous enthusiasm and persistence.

From my earliest recollections he had a strong interest in building and architecture. He had a natural feeling for buildings and how they should be. During the course of his life he designed and built at least six homes and certainly influenced the design of many more. His later years at Fisherman's Point in Cutchogue, spent in designing and building the three summer homes there, were obviously thoroughly enjoyable to him.

Although he was probably happiest when he was building something, I believe the years of the mass transit campaign were in retrospect the most satisfying. One measure of his accomplishment is that the campaign incurred the opposition of Commissioner Robert Moses. Moses had conceived the idea of using the defunct Westchester and Boston road bed for an express truck highway, obviously precluding its use as a much-needed subway extension. (Opposition to mass transit of any kind was already a hallmark of the legendary Commissioner, c.f., Robert A. Caro in his recent biography of Moses, "The Power Broker.") It may well be that this was

the first and only time that Robert Moses was defeated in his grand plan to put New Yorkers behind the wheels of millions of automobiles. The fact that the N.E. Bronx is now served by the Dyre Avenue line of the IRT subway system is a tribute to Dad's persistence and his ability to inspire and organize people.

Despite Dad's opening remarks about the younger generation not being interested in family history, it should be noted that the publication of these memoirs is largely due to the interest and persistence of his granddaughter, Peg. She not only did the editing and some necessary research but actually guided the project through to completion. Nor could the task have been completed without the major job of typing the original handwritten manuscript and the final draft by his daughter-in-law, Ruth.

We hope this publication will provide pleasant recollections of Dad's life for those of us who participated in it and give some of the flavor of it to later generations already on the scene, who did not know him.

Houston,
April 2, 1975

Bob
(Robert Clark Johnston)

INTRODUCTION

I know I was born on July 20, 1889 in Eastchester, New York, for there was a notation in the family Bible saying so. There was also a notation in the same Bible that I was christened Herman Weiss Johnston.

But I cannot accept the story of being found by Dr. Jones in the raspberry patch behind the house. I remember Dr. Jones, I remember the raspberry patch, and I know the raspberries would be ripe at that date, but why Dr. Jones should go out to the raspberry patch when my father drove up to Mount Vernon to get him to treat my mother for a pain in the belly, I never did understand.

That happened 72 years ago, and now I look back on those years with mixed emotions. I certainly was not endowed to accomplish great deeds. I was not a scholar; it took me five years to graduate from college. But I did get a good education, and the urge to keep up to date on current events has given me a broad scope of knowledge, although I claim no specialty.

In this day and age, young folks do not seem to be particularly interested in their own forebearers. I am quite certain that my children and grandchildren have little knowledge of more than their grandparents. My son Robert has urged that I leave my grandchildren some sort of record about the three generations of Johnstons, who during the last hundred years have helped transform rural Eastchester into the mosaic that is New York City.

I regret not making a record of family dates and folklore during my own earlier years. However, I do have a fairly good memory of my grandparents and I will do my best to put down on paper my recollections of boyhood impressions. These pages do not pretend to be a documented history. Rather, they are the memories of my lifetime, augmented by the family history that I absorbed as a youth.

HERMAN AND ADELINE WEISS

This year, 1961, marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. My maternal grandfather, Herman C. Weiss enlisted shortly after he got married. I have in my possession the original 381 letters exchanged between bride and groom during his three years service in the Army of the Potomac. A collection of two-way Civil War marital letters is rare. *

Herman C. Weiss was born in or near Geissen, Germany in 1844. His half-brother Charles H. Weiss came over to America in 1836 and lived in New York City. Charley Weiss sent for his half-brother Herm somewhere around 1858 and gave him work in his sash and blind shop in Mount Vernon.

When the draft law was passed for the Civil War, it allowed a draftee to hire a substitute. One of the more influential and wealthy men who was called up paid Granpa a certain sum of money to take his place. I do not remember the amount but it was not too much.

But Herman was in love with Adeline Clary. So he rushed down to St. Paul's Church in Eastchester and was married by Reverend Samuel Coffey, whom I remember very well. He was pastor of St. Paul's Church for well over 50 years. **

*These letters were microfilmed and are now in the Archives of Columbia University Library. The originals are in the possession of Robert C. Johnston. Harlan B. Phillips made a transcript of this correspondence, a portion of which appears in History-4 "An Immigrant Goes to War: The Correspondence of Herman and Adeline Weiss" by Harlan B. Phillips, pp. 111-152 (Meridian Books, New York, 1961). --ed.

**I had a copy of Rev. Coffey's speech on his 50th anniversary of service in that church, but it was destroyed by Miss Tab when 3509 Conner Street was

I believe the marriage of Herman and Adeline was on November 3, 1862. Grandpa left for the front the following July 3, 1862. He returned home July 3, 1865.

The Clary family came over from England and lived for a time in New York City where Henrietta Clary went to school. In 1852 the Clary family moved to Mount Vernon and lived at 1st Avenue near 2nd Street in a row of single, wooden houses attached together. (These houses were torn down around 1910.)

Adeline Clary was one of 13 children, 12 of whom were girls. She and her twin sister Caroline were born in 1848. While Herman was on the battleground in Virginia, "Adie" and "Carey" were having their own difficulties. After the death of their mother, their father threw them out of the house. Already plagued by the burdens of war-time inflation and the uncertainty of her husband's safety, Adie and her sister were forced to go from one sister's house to another before they found refuge with a sister in Vermont.*

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cleared out. Incidentally, St. Paul's Church owned the 6 acres of land between the William F. Johnston property and his father, Nathan's property. We kids used to use a path for a short cut from our house, 4146 Boston Road to the Conner Street place of Grandfather Johnston. We stopped one day, took off the cover of a well in chasing a snake and Rev. Coffey caught us putting stones into the well. We were scared stiff! --H.W.J.

* This information as well as the exact dates of the marriage and birth of Herman and his wife, have been obtained from the research of Harlan B. Phillips (op. cit.) and did not appear in the original manuscript. --ed.

After Herman Weiss returned from war in 1865, he built his first home-- on Union Avenue between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Street in Mount Vernon. Later he purchased property in back of it facing on First Avenue. (145 S. First Ave., now torn down and replaced by an apartment house).

Herman worked for his brother in a small sash and blind shop where window, door, screen, blinds and enclosures were made to specifications. The plant was located on South Third Avenue, not very far from First Street. It was a rather narrow building, with a small front porch. The lot ran clear through from Third to Second Ave. Behind the Third Ave. shop was a rambling extension containing massive machines, circular saws, planing mill, moulding mill, etc., powered by a steam engine with a tremendous fly which turned into a pit in the floor and towered to the roof. The boiler was fed with wood scraps and quickly got up steam. When the machines were working the whole building trembled and I remember the noise terrifying me.

The other man in the factory was a boisterous Irishman with a trickle of tobacco juice always matted in his beard. His heart was as big as his capacity when he went on an occasional drinking spree.

Behind the engine room was storage for the clear white pine planks that are so rare nowadays. The Second Ave. front was guarded by a set of wooden doors to the yard where the pint-sized wagon and an indestructible little horse called Dexter were housed. That horse was so ornery that John Robison was the only one who could harness him up.

Granpa Weiss received \$15.00 a week wages until his brother died when he inherited the business. Herman retired about five years before his own death.

On \$15.00 a week Herman built his large residence at 145 South First Avenue. He raised three daughters until they were married. My mother was born in 1866, a year after the Civil War ended. The Weiss home in Mount Vernon was always the gathering place for relatives and offspring.

I remember my grandfather most vividly at our celebration of the Fourth of July. Come July 3rd after work, he took my brother and me by the hand and led us to Fourth Ave. to purchase a very generous supply of firecrackers. He himself bought black powder.

Back at 145 South First Ave. he loaded a small brass cannon with powder and fired it in memory of his return from the Civil War on July 3, 1865. The rest of the powder was used to celebrate the Fourth.

NATHAN AND MARY JOHNSTON

The beginning of the Civil War was also the year after the birth of my father, William F. Johnston. He was the son of Nathan Johnston and his wife Mary. Now, let us examine the early life of Nathan Johnston.

My knowledge of their history is rather fragmentary. To the best of my belief, the Johnston family came over from Ireland to help dig the Erie Canal. He was of Mohawk Valley lineage, as was his wife. I am not sure of the correctness of her maiden name, Dempster, but as a growing boy, I spent several vacations in Utica with my father's relatives and he had at least one aunt by the name of Aunt Mary Dempster, and I met a cousin of that name. *

* In fact, Charlie Dempster came down from Utica shortly after he was married to a very beautiful woman. They lived in the house that my father built on Boston Road when he got married to my mother.

The Blizzard of '88 played a part in the courtship of my mother and father. At that time, Pop and Ma were engaged to be married. On a Sunday in March he drove up to Mt. Vernon from Eastchester to call on Ma. It began to snow and the horse was stabled. It was decided that he had better stay all night. By evening the trains on the New Haven Railroad were blocked by snow drifting into the cut at Mt. Vernon, and passengers were instructed that they had better try to get better shelter at private residences.

Several groups of people on the train knew the Weisses and landed there for the night. The house was bursting with people. Monday morning Pop and Granpa Weiss fought their way to the nearest store and purchased what supplies they could get to feed the crowd.

In the meantime, Grandpa Johnston down on the farm in Eastchester still had some pork and veal left from a slaughter and he realized that his son might be hungry up in Mount Vernon. He loaded his farm sleigh with meat and other supplies and fought his way to Mt. Vernon through all the drifts in time to prevent the crowd at the Weisses from going hungry. There was no food to be found in Mount Vernon at all. This was the worst snowstorm in the previous 100 years and probably much longer.

My father and mother were married on June 20, 1888 at the Weiss residence on 54 First Ave., Mount Vernon. They moved into a house that my father built on Boston Road Eastchester.

I was their first child, born, as I said on July 20, 1889. My brother Nathan was born on December 29, 1890. Twin girls were born in 1893 but died within a few days. My sister Gertrude was born August 12, 1896.

(Gertrude married DeWitt Furman in 1930 and died December 16, 1947. Her daughter "Trudy" Furman married James Darroch shortly after her father's death in September 6, 1954. He was a Presbyterian Divinity student and upon graduation was assigned to a church in Axtell, Nebraska. They now have three children.)

EARLY EASTCHESTER

I do not have too much authoritative information on the date of Nathan Johnston's arrival in Eastchester. I do know that he came down from Utica to manage a fruit farm owned by a Phineas J. Fowler who was a political figure in Washington, D.C., possibly in the cabinet of one of the Presidents.

This farm was located in what is now Kings-hedge Gardens, Mount Vernon. It was north of Kingsbridge Road and west of 3rd Ave. These were two colonial roads. Third Avenue at that point was the Boston Post Road detour around the tide waters coming into the mouth of the Hutchinson River, before a bridge was installed.

At that time navigation by sail was carried on to the foot of Conner St., then known as Town Dock Road. The remains of a coal yard still exist. I have also seen evidence in the area of pear trees and grape vines, and I've heard old timers refer to the farm as a grape farm. Grapes as well as hardier fruit were best shipped by sail boat, so Conner St. was a center for distribution.

Nathan Johnston served as manager of the fruit farm for ten years, and after saving enough money, purchased all that part of a certain colonial estate which was south of Town Dock Road and fronting the Boston Road.

Now this colonial homestead consisted of about 25 acres fronting on Boston Road on either side of

Town Dock Road to within 50 feet of the Hutchinson River, and back to an arm of the Salt Meadow that ran from the river to Town Dock Road.

I can remember evidence of the grandeur of this estate. There were remnants of fences along the road, massive ornamental gate posts supporting double gates which were so constructed that the weight of the horse or carriage crossing an iron rod would open the gates and another rod on the other side would close it again. Stone fences separated it from another colonial mansion which was a comparatively narrow lot between the fence and the Hutchinson River.

The residence was a stately colonial mansion. It had front columns two stories high to support part of the roof. The house stood 25 feet back from Boston Post Road with a U-shaped drive. Nearly every room had a white marble fireplace.

These buildings, which included a luxurious Carriage house and barn, were located on a six acre plot on the corner of Boston Post Road and Town Dock Road. The lot was sold to Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church as a rectory, and for a long time it was used by Reverend Coffey. Gradually the buildings deteriorated, and the character of the tenants likewise deteriorated, until the vacant run-down buildings caught fire. Old Defender Hose Co., of which my father was foreman, managed to save the gutted framework of the building. However another fire six months later made it a pile of ashes.*

*The remaining six acres facing on Town Dock Road next to the church property and running over to the salt meadow adjacent to the creek was sold to Fred Hart, a German farmer, who built barns and raised vegetables and small fruit until he died an old man.

The remaining six acres fronting on Boston Road between the church property and the end of the property near the church was sold to my father who built 4146 Boston Road to occupy when he was married.

NATHAN JOHNSTON BUILDS A HOUSE

The first move of Nathan Johnston after acquiring part of this land was to build the large Johnston residence now known as 3509 Conner St. I have the greatest respect for my grandfather's ability to place and erect truly functional residences and barns. The Boston Road side of the lot sloped down to a valley which carried the rain water off to the south. The other side of the valley was steep with an outcropping of solid rock.

Nathan Johnston was very clever at utilizing these slopes in his buildings. At the proper height on the face of this rock he hewed himself a cellar from solid rock which was open to air and light on two sides to accomodate a farm kitchen and dining room.

The first floor was slightly over the level of the ground in the front. It contained a kitchen formal dining room, two parlors, and an office with an outside door and hall. There were two sets of stairs going to the upper story and one to the basement. There were five bedrooms and two baths on the second floor, and one finished bedroom in the attic. It seems that sibling rivalry played a part in Nathan's building such a large house. You see, his younger brother was building a large house in Utica, N.Y.

MORE BUILDINGS

Nathan found it handy to have a steep hill available when he was building his barn too. He chiseled out more rock and built a brick wall around the level area large enough to fit six horse stalls. Then he covered this with a platform for a carriage house and built a two story frame building on the platform above that. The structure had a high-pitched roof and contained a shop as well as quarters for summer help.

Later a masonry wagon shack was erected. It was so well-built that many years later the City of New York claimed that it was the foundation of a large building.

THE FARMER BECOMES A PICKLE PROCESSOR

Shortly after my parents got married, the Johnston family decided to go into the pickle business. My father had bought another parcel of the same colonial holding as his father, and built a six bedroom house on it at 4146 Boston Road. But even with this new acquisition, the land would not support two families. So, William and his father decided to go into salting and processing pickles, as N. Johnston & Son. They started by purchasing several vats eight feet high and sixteen feet in diameter.

As the business grew they needed a building for processing and bottling. So Nathan decided to use his hillside again. This time he built a three-story brick factory right across the valley. The loading platform of the top floor was on the same level as the carriage house of the barn. The loading platform of the middle floor was on the other hillside of the valley, while the floor of the valley served as the basement floor. The New York City Building Department later termed the building a one storied building with a basement and sub-basement but all floors had outside windows and loading platforms!

By 1895, N. Johnston & Son were operating their factory which steamed the pickles after they were stored in brine. Some were shipped by the old "Riverside" steamboat that made three trips a week from the Town Dock in Eastchester to an East River pier in downtown New York. Others were bottled on the middle floor of the factory by trained girls, labeled, packed in sawdust in boxes made on the spot, and shipped to the New York city office for sale and export. Many were bottled to the specifications of wholesale grocery houses. The ones that were exported to Cuba had to be dyed a vivid green, but even in

During World War II Herm dug out the manure from around the lower floors and used it for his Victory Garden. --R.F.J.

those days, the law prevented such in New York. Eventually, my father opened an office and warehouse in New York to sell and distribute the pickles. (The office was at 105 N. Moore Street.) ?

To support such a business required a vast increase in production on the farm. The Johnstons rented abandoned farms throughout the vicinity to raise cucumbers. In addition to their own production they contracted to buy the crops of nearby Westchester County farms. Extra farming meant more horse power so horses were bought. In order to keep the horses busy for the other eleven months of the year they had to be hired out by the day.

A PICKLE FACTORY AT WORK

The preparation of the land required four teams of horses. After the land was harrowed the land was furrowed three feet apart with a single horse plow. Then a wagon and team spotted a fork full of well-rotted manure in the furrow every three feet. This required two men- one tossing from the wagon and one working from the ground.

Following this were a squad of men with hoes and seed bags tied around the waist. They covered the manure with fine dirt, dropped 5 or 6 cucumber seeds on top and pressed them in and covered them with dirt.

At least one or more teams were kept busy throughout the year handling manure from the livery stables, and making piles of it near the fields, to allow it to rot. Each large pile was turned over at least once during the winter or early spring. After the plants were up there were several cultivations with a single horse cultivator.

The hoeing required a great amount of hand labor. Weeds were not allowed to get a start. The picking also required a large labor force. The picking basket was a standing woven split hickory bushel basket without a handle, but with two hand holes on either side of the rim. These were very durable and stacked easily. The workers carried them on their shoulders.

At the end of the rows light wooden barrels were spotted and when full were hauled to the salting shed. This was a collection of vats 8 feet high, 16 feet diameter. Platforms were built around them, and a rough roof covered the whole area.

The wagon with barrels of green cucumbers backed up to the platform and the cucumbers were dumped into the vats. A certain amount of rock salt was added. I don't remember how much water was added, but when the vat was full a rough wooden cover was built on top of the pickles, and the water just about covered it. Soon a fermentation appeared as a scum on top.

During the late 90's a plant blight made pickle-growing in Eastchester impossible, so my father bought a pickling plant in Chappaqua (Westchester County) and contracted with local farmers to raise pickles. The "yellows" hit there after a couple of years and he had to close down. From thereon his New York business could only exist by handling western pickles and that was not profitable. He simply closed out the business and concentrated on raising strawberries and sweet corn for the local market. His trade first centered around the town but then he opened a stand on Boston Road and discovered that the retail trade preferred coming to the house and barn.

THE STRAWBERRY STORY

Even before the marriage of my mother and father, the Johnstons had been selling berries to the grocery store in Mt. Vernon. The Weisses used to take a pail or bowl there and had a quart basket dumped into it, as the baskets had to be returned to the farm the next day.

My parents were married June 20, 1888 and the bride's parents left for a trip to Germany before the end of the month. Their leaving during strawberry season was one indication that raising strawberries was not a major farm crop at that time.

In 1925, Mr. Young, President of George Ferguson, Inc., an old time grocer and fruiter of New Rochelle called my attention to the fact that it was the 30th year that they had handled Johnston strawberries. Each year they had a pass book to the Johnston farm, in which each day's purchase was noted and at the end of the season, my grandfather or father turned in the book for payment of the bill. That would mean that strawberries were raised and sold at least as early as 1895, and possibly even a decade earlier.

A TYPICAL DAY IN THE STRAWBERRY SEASON

Let's take a fictitious date at the height of the strawberry season, Friday, June 12, 1912. This was a year with a crop a little better than average--6400 quarts.

The working force was father and mother, a hired farm hand working by the month, a friend of mine from college, and myself.

At 4 a.m. I was awakened by the chatter of the first of the boy pickers to arrive. It was still too dark to see the color of the berries, but these boys had walked over a mile from Mt. Vernon, and they had to walk back, change their clothes, eat breakfast, and be in school by 9 A.M. It was time for me to roll out of bed and get on the job, for a bunch of idle public school boys could do a lot of mischief. By the time the neighborhood boys had arrived, along with a few neighbor men who had picked berries since they were 12. They arranged their regular work so that they were free to pick mornings.

My father would appear as soon as it was light enough. We would open the shed doors and the crowd would jam in to get empty baskets and a tray and rush to which ever patch was to be picked that day.

THE FAME OF THE JOHNSTON STRAWBERRIES

The Johnston name for some 25 or 30 years in lower Westchester County could be paraphrased by the word "strawberry." In 1928 in a theater in Philadelphia I was greeted by one of the patrons as "Strawberry Johnston" and he explained that although I

didn't know him, he was a former resident of Mount Vernon and had picked strawberries on our farm as a kid.

Another time in Pecos, Texas in 1936, I signed the register in the town's only hotel as H.W. Johnston, Bronx, New York. The owner who was covering the desk, glanced at the register and said, "Strawberry Johnston." He had lived in Pelham Manor and knew the strawberry farm.

I remember once my father sat in the barber's chair in Eastchester. The barber was born in Italy, came over to America and opened his shop. Like all barbers he deemed it necessary to talk as he worked. Speaking to a waiting customer, he said, "Do you know Mr. Johnston? He's the man that raises those loquacious strawberries."

Mrs. Black of the Black, Starr & Frost, Fifth Avenue Jewelers lived in Pelham Manor. She had a kitchen maid from Ireland. She was blithely hulling a quart of Johnston Strawberries from Ferguson's in New Rochelle when suddenly out of the box jumped a large hop toad. She went into hysterics. In an incredibly short amount of time, I was driving up to Pelham Manor to visit the Black residence with a generous supply of berries. The maid was all ready to quit-- Mrs. Black was begging her to stay until after the dinner for her guests. The coachman had disposed of the toad.

I had to explain how one of the pickers had come across a hop toad, put him in the box, and covered him with strawberry leaves and filled the remainder of the box with the fanciest strawberries.

By the time I had hulled a couple of quarts of berries to demonstrate to the maid that every box did not jump, the maid went back to work. I went on to New Rochelle to placate the store keeper.

DEATH OF GRANDPA JOHNSTON

It was early in July 1896, two weeks before I would be seven years old. I was up in Mt. Vernon staying with Grandma Weiss. On the 3rd of July Grandpa Weiss usually took my brother and me out to buy our Fourth of July firecrackers. The 3rd of July was a red letter day on the Weiss calendar as it was the anniversary of the return of Grandpa Weiss from the Civil War, and was always the fete day for the entire family.

But my father and mother did not come that day. It was explained that Grandpa Johnston had gone out riding in his buggy and had not come back and that they were looking for him.

The facts were that he had spells. When breathing was difficult he got relief by driving up to hills between Bronxville and Yonkers. He had a blind horse and light carriage.

He left home in the morning of July 1 and when he did not return by night fall, the family (Pop, Ma, Aunt Agnes, and Lizzie) spent the night in hopes that he would show up the next day.

They did not know where he went on these trips but they did know it was to higher ground. The next morning they organized parties to search. They put an announcement in the Mt. Vernon Daily. By night fall they had circulars printed offering a reward for information leading to his whereabouts.

On the night of July 3rd, a couple of boys reported seeing a horse and buggy in a shallow pond in the woods several miles west of Bronxville. The next morning a search party located the horse and carriage, and after a search, the body of Grandfather Johnston.

The autopsy showed he had had a fatal heart attack. The horse, being blind, followed the scent of water. Once in the pond he stayed there until he was found. The boys received the reward, although the member of the group that first found the body figured he was entitled to it.

MY CHILDHOOD

My earliest memory is of a crowd of Italian laborers that walked down from New Rochelle two and a half miles every morning to hoe and pick cucumbers for the pickle factory. This must have been during the panic of 1893.

We lived in the house my father had built for his bride the year before I was born. This was on the Boston Road (#4146) and about 1000 feet across lots from the main Johnston family house and barn.

My first schooling was in a private class. The Russells, neighbors, had a private school miss because one of their daughters was not normal, and the teacher organized a kindergarten class consisting of the Russell girls, my cousins, Sadie and Bessie Hitchcock, Nate and myself. Then I had a year in Mt. Vernon schools, staying with Grandma Weiss.

I entered the Eastchester School PS 15 at the beginning of the four years. A year and a half later I graduated into the Wakefield School, PS 16. The Board of Education ran a stage from Eastchester to Wakefield for the children. It was fun in the spring and fall, but winter was tough.

In the fall of 1901, when I was 12, I became very sick. The doctor diagnosed it as inflammatory rheumatism and typhoid fever. It was a close call that left me with a crippled right hand and left foot. I was out of school until the following fall.

During that time I was sent to a New York specialist who used an electric machine to activate the muscles. It was a new gadget to the medical profession, but it was totally useless in treating me.

I found out later what I really had been stricken with. In 1916 there was an epidemic of infantile paralysis. I was packing vegetables for a doctor. He asked to see my crippled hand, and then asked, "When did you have infantile paralysis?" "Never," said I,

"I got this hand from inflammatory rheumatism and typhoid fever in 1901."

"That may be what they called it then, but you had infantile paralysis," he told me.

EASTCHESTER BECOMES A PART OF NEW YORK CITY

In 1898 Greater New York, with its five boroughs, was created. Previous to this, there was a flurry of excitement among the residents of Westchester County as to the policy of annexation to New York City.

In 1894 there was an election to give the voters of the towns of Eastchester and the village of Westchester a chance to decide the issue. Mount Vernon voted to be independent. The village of Westchester voted to remain independent by one vote.

The City of New York set a new northern boundary for the Northeast Bronx, leaving Mount Vernon and Pelham Manor in Westchester County, but including the village of Westchester and the southern part of the original town of Eastchester (after the village of Mount Vernon was carved out of it).

These were very exciting days for the residents of Eastchester. They figured that if they instigated improvements before the city took over, then the City of New York would carry them to completion and pay for them. As a result, two volunteer fire companies were organized and a contract was made with the gas company to put gas mains in all the roads. A water system was planned and some mains were laid.

DEFENDER HOSE COMPANY

Defender Hose Co. of Eastchester, N.Y. was founded in 1896 and William F. Johnston was its first foreman. It was equipped with a hose reel mounted on the axle of two wheeled carriages with an eight foot pole and towing rope. The alarm was a large iron ring hung from a rock and a light sledge hammer to pound it with in case of fire.

When the company was first organized, it was housed in our barn, but later a one story building was obtained on the Boston Road, close to Hollers Ice Pond. (The pond has disappeared, but the location was only a stone's throw east of the W & B Railroad Bridge over Boston Road.)

About ten years after its founding, a law was passed in Albany putting members of the company on city payroll. The law reasoned that no one could work for the City of New York without pay. The pay was finally set at \$10 per month for the foreman, \$7.50 for the assistant foreman, and \$5 for the firemen. This pay was also collected retroactively. The original members still in the company received a nice bonus.

Naturally, the original members were loathe to increase membership for fear that it would jeopardize their allowance. Therefore no new members were allowed until the company was too old and weak to perform their work. By this time, the company owned a discarded horse drawn wagon as well as the two wheel cart.

In 1908 the recruitment roll was opened to six new members. I was accepted as well as Herbert Holton, a young instructor in the College of the City of New York (CCNY).

At that time N.Y.C. fire trucks were horse drawn. There were city fire houses located on White Plains Avenue and Gun Hill Road, Williamsbridge, and opposite Woodlawn cemetery on 233rd Street. Eastchester had fire alarm boxes for the city departments but our company had no boxes.

When anyone discovered a fire they ran to the fire house and began to pull on a rope that brought a hammer against the tire rim bell. As soon as the fire alarm sounded there was a rush to get the first horse attached to the hose wagon, for there was a \$5 prize for that.

Most of the horses available were fat, well-rounded farm horses. On the sound of the bell I would rush to the barn, put a bridge on Helen, jump on her back and ride for the fire house. Not far from our place was a market gardener doing the same thing and if we happened to meet at the corner, there were two firemen walking around bow-legged for the next week.

We had some beautes of fires. By the time we arrived at the scene there was no hope of the house even being useable again. All we could hope for was enough of a building standing to provide for a good fire a year or two later. Don't think for a moment, though, that there was any lack of effort in our work. But, when you consider our set up it was almost impossible to get at the fire with equipment before the building was pretty thoroughly aflame. But we always had a line on a fire before the arrival of the city firemen from Williamsbridge or Woodlawn.

Being paid by the City of New York we were under the orders of a N.Y.C. Battalion Chief. Having the fastest horse and a light carriage with a skilled driver, he arrived quickly and took charge as soon as his apparatus arrived. We would probably be attached to the nearest hydrant and as soon as the second pumper arrived it would be put on our line. Then you had a stiff line to handle.

EASTCHESTER FIRES

There were three fires that were really exciting.

The first started on a hot summer's day. We were unloading a wagon of hay into the barn, when my father called attention to a jet black cloud of smoke crossing the sky. I took one look and realized that it was a terrific fire. I threw the harness from one of the horses and jumped on his back and galloped for the fire house. When I reached the corner, How Shilder was a block ahead and I couldn't catch him.

He hooked on a regular hose wagon and was off. Another fireman, Ted Brundage, arrived and we improvised a set of harnesses for the horse with a rope on the reel. Ted was to balance the reel and I ran along side driving the horse. As long as we were on level ground everything was fine, but when we started down hill, Ted could not stop the reel from going on the hose so I had to keep the horse ahead of the reel so that the horse would not be run over. Once over the steepest part we managed to get to the fire.

By the time we got there, the fire was still burning furiously. It was in a former freight house for the steamship line to New York City and was used for the storage and packing of the fat gathered from meat markets of a large part of Westchester and Bronx counties. We were putting a lot of water on the fire, but the smoke was black. The smoke and sparks were blowing straight south, across the creek toward the Boston Road.

The chief ordered me to take the reel along the creek to the Boston Road, then cross that bridge and be ready in case any of the houses caught fire. We found that the roof of an abandoned hotel was on fire. Ted boosted me to a lean-to roof, passed up the hose, turned on the water and then climbed up the roof to help me. We had the roof fire under control when a mounted policeman rode up and ordered us to jump, as the lean-to was on fire under us. We threw the nozzle and hose to the ground. Ted started to climb down in the same manner that we had climbed up, but he happened to put his foot through a window and the flames set his trousers on fire. The cop grabbed the hose and ducked Ted. I had already jumped clear. The fire had gutted the hotel without doing much damage to the outside.

The cop called to us that the roof of an old colonial house across the street was on fire. We put that out, and then went back to pour water on the hotel, but it was a hopeless job.

We began to realize that there was no traffic on Boston Road. I looked toward the bridge and saw that it was open and a boat was jammed into it. A N.Y.C.

deputy fire chief, finding the bridge impassable, drove his carriage up Columbus Ave. to 6th St. and Mount Vernon, and then through Pelham to Boston Road. On his way over to take charge of our fire, we found that a barge carrying dynamite had become lodged in the bridge and lifted off its tracks. By the time he reached us the wharf alongside had caught fire and we put that out.

Another fire that was outstanding occurred the day before Good Friday 1910, I believe. The Eastchester and Boston Railroad was being constructed. Creosoted tiles were brought up the Hutchinson River by barge to the end of the canal. The contractor built a temporary track and spur to bring supplies in. The creosoted tiles were thrown in a huge pile just south of the Dyre Ave. Station. There were 75,000 of them.

It was the Thursday that I had driven to Mount Vernon and I had stopped at my grandmother Weiss', when I heard the Mount Vernon fire whistles blow. I looked out and there was a tall black cloud rising in the sky toward Eastchester.

My horse, Sally, welcomed the chance to step out; we passed everything on the road. Autos were not fast or numerous then. Arriving at the scene I found that the Defender Hose Co. had got the first hose on and the first N.Y.C. engine had been put on our line. That meant two men on the nozzle and plenty of help keeping a straight line. Even with all that power, we could not reach the fire because of the heat. We built a barricade of railroad ties right on the tracks. By lying on our stomachs behind the barricade, we could push it far enough forward to get water on the edge of the fire.

The fire started about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. By eight o'clock in the evening, all N.Y.C. apparatus had been sent home except the engine company attached to our line. Our company was divided into two squads—one to stay through the night and the other to take over at 7 a.m. and go til 7 p.m. the next evening.

I had invited my college fraternity brothers up for Good Friday to play ball, and Ma was to provide a big meal. Therefore I had to take the night shift in

order to be free for the get together. As soon as I had my breakfast I got a couple hours sleep before the boys arrived and we went to the ballfield.

I went on duty again Friday night. It was no longer spectacular, just a continual wetting down til it formed a crust over the top of the pile. Then the superheated steam would blow up the pile like fire-crackers and the process went on again. It was not until 7 a.m. on Monday morning that our company was discharged. (Fire appartus had come from as far away as Yonkers, White Plains, and New Rochelle, having been attracted by the shaft of smoke in the air.)

One night, after I had gone to bed, but had not yet gone to sleep, I happened to glance out of the window and noticed a blaze down the road. I woke the folks while getting some clothes on. I ran down the road to the fire which was in an old, not very large house. The hall and front door were ablaze and I could hear a man screaming on the second floor. The second story windows in the front of the house were only 18 inches high.

The only chance was to get a ladder to get up on the porch roof. I ran to a boat yard at the bottom of the street, and found a ladder, but by the time I got to the roof the yelling had ceased and there was nothing but flames inside. To open a window would only give it air to burn harder.

By that time Pop arrived and then the hose cart. We had water on the blaze before the city firemen came. The building was a mass of flames inside but we were keeping the outside wet.

Ted Brundage and I were ordered to stand just inside the outer cellar door to watch for the body to fall. It was a gruesome job. standing knee-deep in water, with water streaming down from above, and pieces of floor beams falling though in a shower of sparks. Finally the body dropped down. It had hung across a floor beam. The city firemen took the body out and laid it under a tree until a police wagon arrived from the Wakefield station.

The cop wanted to know what the wife, who had arrived on the scene, wanted done with her husband's body. She told the cop to do whatever he wanted to with the body, that he was her seventh husband, and there never was an odd-numbered husband that was any good.

(It was only a few years ago that I met that cop, now retired, who drove the paddy wagon, and he told me about the wife's attitude. The husband's legs were paralyzed and he had been bed-ridden for nearly six months.)

The City of New York disbanded the Defender Hose Company in 1918 or so. By that time, the fire department was motorized and would have a fire out before the Defender Hose Co. could appear.

THE SALT MEADOWS

Part of the Johnston farm was seven acres of salt meadow. It was a very interesting piece of property for a youngster because it was only visited one week in the year, in late fall, but during that visit you would be marooned for about six hours, during high tide.

To get there you had to drive into a creek, the bottom of which had been paved with large boulders drawn there from different farms. This made for a very uneven bottom. It was necessary to drive about 60 feet along the channel and then pull out on the other shore. At low tide there would be a foot or so of water, but at high tide the water might be as deep as four feet, especially in the late fall when the hay was cut.

I remember one year when I was in high school we went out to harvest the salt hay. My father, two young farm hands, and I drove the hay wagon across the gully at about 10 A.M. The tide was going out, but was still fairly deep. The work was to haul the hay cut the previous day up on to a stack of hummock, prepare in general for a few days of flood tides that were due, and then haul a load of hay home, before the incoming tide got too deep.

As we were driving across the meadow toward the gully, one set of wheels hit a soft spot and tipped over a large amount of hay. Half the load was put over in the stack and the remainder was left to be hauled home. But the tide was too high so we had to wait. It was chilly, so I crawled under the hay. Soon it started to get dark, and we figured we would either have to cross the gully or stay all night.

My father was driving. He sat with his legs wrapped around the front ladder, while the three of us lay on the load. In the gully, the wagon hit a big underwater boulder, tipped side ways and half the load went overboard.

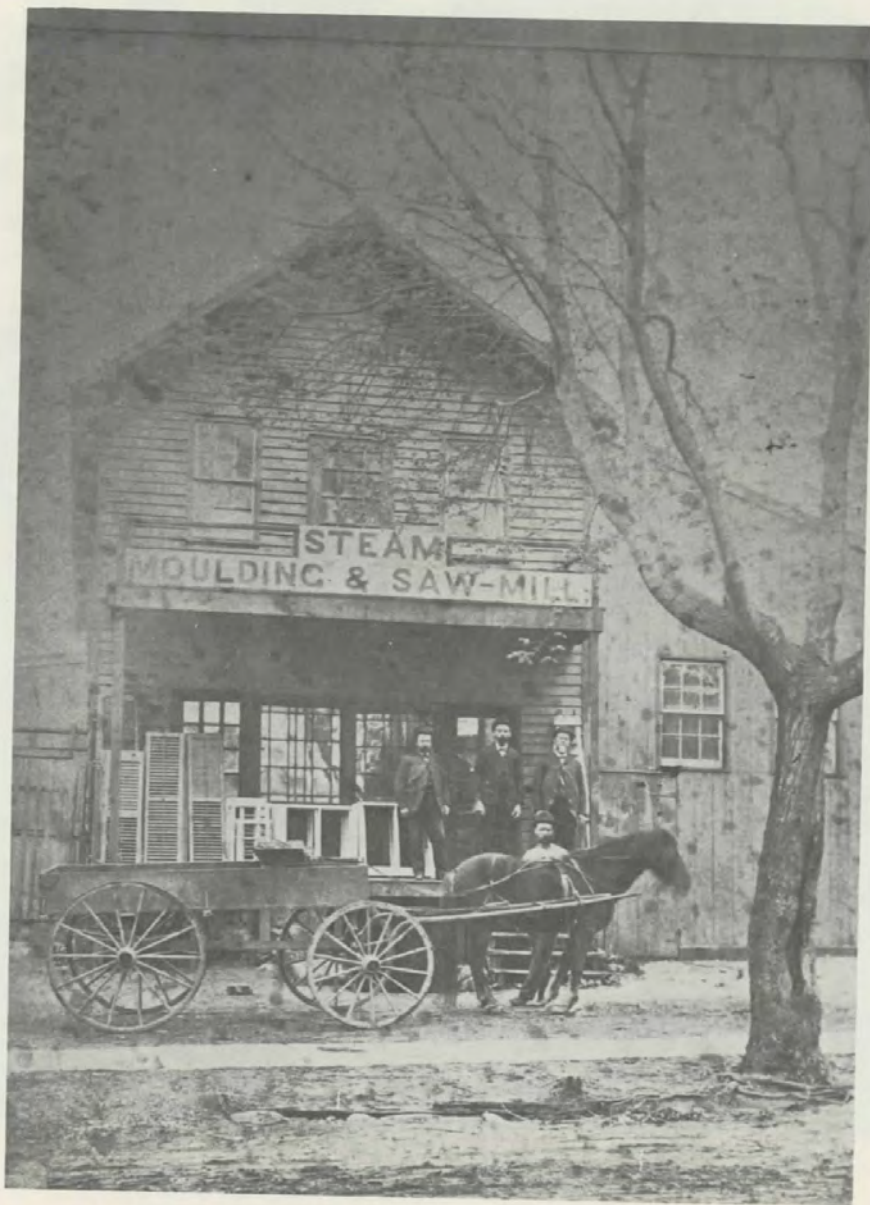
Luckily, the three of us dived off the hay just as it went over, and escaped being drowned, but we were completely soaked. It was not too difficult to get the team and the nearly empty wagon over the gully.

The three of us ran the half mile or more home, but by the time we reached there, the outside of our clothes were frozen stiff. Ma gave us a good shot of whiskey and a good hot supper. The two boys took the remainder of the bottle to their quarters in the barn and sang Polish songs and danced for hours.

THE SALE OF THE SALT MEADOW

The salt meadows, as a whole, were roughly 300 acres. Over the years, plots had been acquired by farmers for their salt hay. The price was nominal.

In 1908, the New York, Westchester and Boston Railroad was built from the Harlem River to Portchester, and another branch from Mt. Vernon to White Plains. At the same time, the New York State Barge Canal was finished and the expectation was that the produce from the Great Lakes Region would be shipped to New York City by barge instead of railroad.



The Sash Shop. On stoop: Unknown party,
Herman Weiss and brother

Below: John Robison and Dexter



LAST CALL.—The city's last volunteer fire company at East Chester will be disbanded today. Led by Chief W. F. Johnston (left), Veterans Schneider, Hollor and Brundage (left to right) made last call yesterday. (NEWS photo)

N. Y. SEPTEMBER 6, 1933

Field, Edenwald, Williams

Animal Barn Will Cause Sanitary Code Amendment

Commissioner Finds No Provision Against Storage of Wild Beasts in City Limits

Old Eastchester's animal barn will cause an amendment to the Sanitary Code, Health Commissioner Shirley W. Wynne told The Daily Argus yesterday. A thorough search of the code revealed to Dr. Wynne no provision against the storage of wild beasts within the City limits, he said.

Counsel for the department have been instructed to draw up the amendment for consideration at a meeting of the board this week.

"A case of this sort has never occurred before since my appointment as Commissioner," Dr. Wynne explained.

"We have provisions for maintenance of pet shops, public menageries and stables; but none that covers the storage of wild animals."

If the department has legal right to order removal of the barn, Tilbotson and Hollers Avenues, Old Eastchester action will be taken against the proprietor, Ellis Joseph, 179 East Mosholu Parkway, Dr. Wynne said.

The Commissioner's action fol-

lowed his visit Friday night to the storehouse, which he inspected with Dr. John Oberwager and Dr. Arthur J. O'Leary of the Bronx division. The visit proved the truth of protests made to Dr. Wynne Friday by a delegation from the Old Eastchester Community League.

"We found a tiger, a hyena, six zebras, several tapirs and four or five monkeys," Commissioner Wynne said. "I don't consider the building a menace because the animals are behind strong bars. But the untidy condition of the interior and the uncleaned cages constitute minor health law violations."

"Three inspectors who patrolled the grounds Friday night and early Saturday morning heard no noise from the barn. I have ordered the Bronx division to make a further examination."

A report that Mr. Joseph was ordered before the department yesterday to answer charges of health law violations is false, Dr. Wynne said.



Nate, Gertrude, Herm



3509 Conner St. Circa 1944.



Herm, Julia, Gertrude



Back row: Mildred, Herm, William F.

Front: Bob, Herman Weiss, Carey Weiss, Bill, and Julia



Herm and the Little Flower.



VICTORY!



Midge, Bob, Herm, Jill, Bill, Scott.



The Grandchildren: Grandson Bill,
Herm, Son Bill, Ruth, Scott, John,
Jill, Peg, Mark



Several of the head men in the construction companies that had contracts for the railroad work, got the idea that the Eastchester salt meadows would make a fine New York terminal for the barge canal. Very quietly, they acquired considerable acreage. But, nothing ever came of this and again, the property was largely delinquent in taxes.

In 1927 or so, my father received a phone call from a well known downtown lawyer who told him to bring his deed to this land to the lawyer's office at a specified time. He and Ma arrived at the lawyer's office only to find it crowded with a group of protesting people, all holding deeds in their hands and anxious to know why.

The lawyer appeared and told them that he had a very advantageous sale of the salt meadows that could only be made if everyone of the some 25 landowners guaranteed to sell their property at a price to be named by the buyer. The lawyer could only say that the price was generous.

It was a dramatic moment. These owners had no use for the land and in many cases the back taxes were terrific. Yet, who was this guy, who wanted an agreement to sell for an unnamed price. The lawyer ascertained the ones who were willing to sell, and left them to work on the holdouts. They finally all agreed to sell with the expected price believed to range from \$200 per acre to \$500, that being the most optimistic.

The lawyer came back and announced the price-- \$5,480 an acre. The buyer was Curtis Wright Airplane Company. They wanted it for a flying field. We received \$37,000 for our holding.

Nothing happened after that and in due time the property was put up at a tax sale. But in the meantime, the City Sanitation Department used it as a refuse dump, raising the level so that it was definitely above high tide. Various uses were proposed for the land, the most serious of which was a horse racing track.

In 1960 it became Frontierland, an entertainment park modeled on Disneyland in California. I have not been able to visit the park but I have a pretty good picture of it in my mind. I can only pretend that the old salt meadows that we worked every fall are still under the gaudy replica of the West of 100 years ago.

MY SCHOOLING

I graduated from public school in June of 1903 and started Morris High School in September. They were building a new school at 166 Street and Boston Road, Bronx, and in February 1904 we were transferred to the partially completed building.

Daily transportation was a problem. At that time the trolley car to Mt. Vernon stopped at the end of Town Dock Road. I could see the car start from the window of our house, and walk out to the road and the car would stop for me right in front of our house. This car took me to Mt. Vernon. From there I took another trolley down White Plains Avenue to Bedford Park and the 3rd Avenue elevated train to 166th Street and 3rd Avenue. Then it was only a short three-block walk to Morris High School. There were several other routes that I used but they all averaged one and a half to one and three-quarters hours. I had to leave home on the 6:50 trolley in order to get to school on time.

Due to a mental block in German, my graduation was delayed until June 1908. In those days one did not have the freedom of choosing subjects that is now available, but I managed to get in some courses that were not required for graduation.

In the summer of 1908, I worked on the farm. I met Herbert Holton, a young college instructor in mechanical art at CCNY, who had recently moved to Eastchester. He persuaded me to go down with him to see the beautiful new campus of CCNY which had only been in use for two years. Before I went home that day I had registered for the freshman class in Science III leading to a BS degree in Engineering, in spite of the fact that I lacked solid geometry, trigonometry

and advanced algebra. These I had to make up by taking classes at Townsend Harris Hall, before I could start the prescribed college math. That meant it would take me five years to graduate.

I worked hard that first year. The following fall I was one of the few high school students left of the 16 that had enrolled for the freshman class. Two of those that were dropped went up to MIT and eventually graduated from there.

In the fall of the following year I joined Theta Chi fraternity. It was a small chapter because of a shortage of Christians. There were two other national Christian fraternities- Delta Kappa Epsilon and Alpha Delta Phi. My fraternity meant a lot to me. We had a very active and loyal group of alumni. They helped us finance the rental of a so-called "frat house." In those days a frat house might be an apartment or a small house, but in the last two years that I was in college, we rented a coachman cottage connected to one of the old, swank residences on St. Nicholas Avenue. It was ideal for our purposes. I have always felt that my fraternal life turned a factory education into a college education.

Fortunately, the NY Westchester and Boston Railroad opened in 1908, thus solving my transportation problems. I could take that train from Dyre Avenue, to 180th Street and then take a subway to 135th St. and Lenox Avenue and walk from there up the hill to the campus.

I graduated from CCNY in June 1913 and had to face a reappraisal of my life's work.

WORK AND MARRIAGE

My father owned some 20 acres of farm land, free and clear. The growth of New York had to increase its value eventually. But it was not yet ready for development, and until it was saleable at a good price, taxes had to be paid. My father had a heart condition. It had always been the family intention that my brother

should carry on the farming, but Nate had broken down with TB and was living up in Ghent, New York, attended by a nurse.

As for me, I was in love, and wanted to get married just as soon as I could support a wife. So I made my decision to become a farmer. I planned to work on the farm and take home-study courses in agriculture from Cornell University.

In the latter part of July I was approached by the daughter of Robert Case, a large grower of peaches in Stamford, Conn. He wanted me to deliver his fruit to the stores of Westchester County, New York and Fairfield County, Connecticut. I started overseeing the picking crews. In a week's time I was called upon to take orders from the stores for delivery the next morning.

Previously, one firm in each large town bought the peaches by the truck load (80 half bushels) and he would distribute the peaches to other stores. But this wealthy man had a 1700 acre farm run as a hobby, and when his peaches came on the market, he made a daily delivery to each store. I was provided with a Ford car and spent my full time taking orders for delivery the next day.

At the end of the peach season I returned to Eastchester. At Christmas I was invited to Stamford for a weekend and Case asked me to work by the year on the farm as salesman and year round farmer. The pay was 2% of the farm income, room and board, and \$50.00 a month cash.

I managed to go to Eastchester every Saturday night and spent Sunday afternoon courting in Yonkers. I took an 8 P.M. train from Mt. Vernon to Stamford and then walked the two miles from the RR station to the farm.

In the fall of 1915, I made Case a proposition that would allow me to get married and hold out on the farm. He was to furnish the site and the materials and I would build a house during the winter. At my leaving his employ, the whole ownership of the house was his.

I worked hard that winter and built a five room house with a field stone fireplace, sheet rock walls, and a spacious porch across the front. It was ready for occupancy by March. I married Mildred Clark in March 1916 and after a honeymoon in Washington, D.C. we took up residence in the new house.

Our life in the new house was brief. About the first of June, three months after our marriage Doctor Brown, the family physician in Mt. Vernon, came up to warn me that my father had a heart condition. If he were not taken care of he could not carry on with the summer work. Meanwhile, my brother Nate took a turn for the worse and was forced to go to a higher elevation near Chatham, New York.

In 1916 we moved down to Eastchester and stayed in the Big Conner Street house with my folks. The following January 21, our first child, Robert Clark was born in Mt. Vernon hospital. By 1919, my father's heart condition improved. My wife had been unhappy living with my folks and the doctor advised moving to a less humid climate.

By August 1st, 1919, I had obtained a job converting a Westfield, New Jersey chicken farm into a fruit farm. It was owned by Arthur R. Rule, President of the North American Fruit Exchange, a nationwide organization that handled the national distribution of the fruit of the large co-ops such as the California and Florida orange crops, the Northwest apples, California grapes, etc.

It was not a fancy-paying job, but in effect, it was an opportunity to practice some scientific cost accounting on market garden crops. I could call on

Rule for the financing of the crops and besides getting a salary, all the cash profit came to me. During the war, Rule served on the Federal Price Fixing Board, and my crop cost analysis was of interest to him.

I bought and operated the first Fordson tractor that was stocked by the Ford dealer in Westfield. That tractor plowed on farms in a radius of three miles and led to its general adoption throughout the area.

Our second son, William Fulton was born on August 26, 1920. I remember that I was working out in the field on a hot afternoon and came in to get a cold drink. My wife said that we had better start for the Mt. Vernon hospital. I borrowed a car without permission and we set off. I worked on the theory that motorcycle cops who stopped me for speeding would cooperate in clearing traffic for me. They did.

It just happened that I had a blow-out right in front of a service station run by one of my school mates. He loosened the tire bolts, held the car up with strong arms, while I slipped the spare on, and we were rolling again fast. Things happened quickly at the hospital and Bill entered this world several hours after we left Westfield.

In 1923 we moved back to Eastchester, purchasing the house in which I was born (4146 Boston Road). My daughter, Margery was born on June 5, 1923.

As early as 1918 we had noticed a marked deterioration in the quality and yield of the strawberry crop. Experts from Cornell were called in and could only recommend testing out various mixtures of fertilizers. While down in Westfield, N.J. I called on the New

Brunswick College experts and they discovered an infection of red spider. They recommended dusting with a mixture of flowers of sulphur and lime, which did clear up the red spiders.

When I came back to Eastchester, however, we began to realize that it was getting impossible to make the plants grow. We were being forced out of the strawberry business. Within the last 15 years the trouble was diagnosed as "nematodes", a very short, hair-like worm that burrows in the land and simply destroys the efficiency of the roots. Nematodes were first found in California; they traveled East and hit New York by 1915. At the present time (1961) the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture has a team in the potato land of Eastern Long Island taking soil samples in an effort to block the spread of these worms to the remaining potato land.

In 1925 my father sold the 6 acres adjacent to our house for real estate development. With the sale of over half the farm and the complete failure of strawberry growing, we were out of farming.

RADIO

I had done research work in high frequency electricity in my senior year in college (1913). This was in the field of transmission of radio signals. Our experimental sending and receiving sets were among the first to establish code messages with Los Angeles.

By 1920 commercial broadcasting began. WOR in Newark was the pioneer station that we could pick up a coil of bell wire twisted around a cylindrical oat-meal box. A variable condenser attached to a set of head phones and a dry battery would bring WOR in very well from our house in Westfield, N.J.

In Eastchester my hobby was constructing a succession of increasingly complicated home-made sets which were sold to friends as soon as the next more advanced hook-ups were working.

The sale of about half the Eastchester farm land in the fall of 1925 marked the definite end of farming for me. It was my intention to get into the booming radio business by contacting several of my friends who made good in the field. My instructor was the chief engineer for what is now NBC. Another friend manufactured a quality line of 16 tube radios and was doing business of over \$1,000,000 a year. Another held a high position in the radio department of RCA.

Before I started this inquiry, early in December, I happened to see an advertisement in the New York Herald that the Banner Piano Company in New Rochelle wanted a radio man for the Christmas trade. I applied, was accepted and after Christmas was kept on. There was a branch store in Portchester and new branch stores were opened in White Plains and Mt. Vernon. I was placed in charge of service for all the stores and the boss's son, Fred Banner, a Cornell man, was designated as head of radio sales.

I had as many as a dozen service men under me at times, but usually half that number sufficed. My job kept me largely in the office and I had nothing to do with sales. I had to be familiar with the circuits of a large number of radio makers and entailed continual study.

Suddenly the ax fell. I was ordered to ship whatever stock I would like to carry in the Mt. Vernon store, for the next morning I was to report there as manager, salesman, and service man for the radio department of that store. The boss's son, Frederick, was sent to the White Plains store and another man to Portchester.

There was practically no repair business in the Mt. Vernon store, so I was forced to push sales. The store hours were from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. but I kept the radio part open until 9 P.M. to catch the businessmen who commuted from New York. Competition was keen, but our business was pretty good.

Supposedly, I was not to buy directly from the distributors, but I encouraged them to call so I could keep in touch with the trade. There were two distributors for New York Radio in the NY area. The Aeolean Co. sold to Banner; the salesman for the other distributor called and told me that there was certain to be a shortage of Majestic, the other line. He could not break into Banner Co., but he made me a proposition that I buy over the head of the main store. He said that there was certain to be a terrific shortage at Christmas. He would guarantee delivery of all the sets and the Banner Co. would not be billed until after 30 days.

I would never have taken the chance in breaking all the rules if I had valued my job more. But, Majestic sets rolled in direct from the distributor and the salesman took a chance and doubled my weekly order. And they were selling like hotcakes.

One morning Frederick Banner, the boss's son, called me from White Plains and asked if, by any chance, I had a Majestic on hand. I told him yes. He drove down personally to find six crated Majestics on the sidewalk, waiting for the janitor to put them in stock. He predicted the boss would fall on me like a ton of bricks for insubordination. However, he didn't know about the delayed billing, and at the end of the month I received a substantial salary increase in the form of a larger percentage of sales.

The following fall Spartan Radio made an all-out attempt to sell Banner Piano Co. their line. Mr. Banner came into the store at the same time that the Spartan salesman was demonstrating a new set. It had a tonal quality that I realized would go over very big. Unfortunately he ordered the salesman out and forbade me to have anything to do with lines other than those we stocked.

Several weeks later, I was still sold on the Spartan line, so I went over to New Rochelle and had it out with Banner. I told him I was so convinced that the line would sell, that unless I could stock it I would quit. He gave me permission

My opinion was based on the fact that previously all radio speakers did not have any life in the bass. The public could get quality speakers only on sets that cost \$500 or better. Spartan had it in an ordinary speaker at a very nominal price.

That winter I sold both Spartan and Majestic. Both manufacturers offered a prize for the sale of a set quota during the winter. By spring the Mt. Vernon store had won both -- two expense paid trips.

Mr. Banner called me over to the office and told me he would like to take the Spartan trip and that I could have the Majestic trip. He went and reported having a wonderful time. When it was time for me to go I was in bed with TB which started a whole new chapter in my life.

THE SARANAC LAKE EPISODE 1929-1933

I was all set to go to Chicago as the guest of Majestic Radio but I did not feel well. I went to the doctor and he recommended that I by-pass the Chicago trip and go out to the country and relax instead.

I had been interested in the development of Candlewood Lake, near Danbury, Conn. It was one of the manmade lakes, just filling, and it was built as part of the flood control on the Connecticut River. So I planned to take Bob and Bill with me and find a place to board and relax.

We drove from Eastchester to Candlewood Lake, located the property that I was interested in, and then we had our dinner. I was not feeling very well, so I took a room and went to bed with a high fever. It was a terrible night and as soon as it was daylight I loaded the car and we returned to Eastchester. I left the boys in Eastchester and went up to see the doctor in Mt. Vernon. He sent me to the Mt. Vernon Hospital for chest X-rays, and then ordered me to go home and to bed.

The next morning he came to the house and told the folks I had lung cavities and advised them to send me to Saranac Lake where there were facilities for curing TB. That was July 5, 1929, if I remember the exact date, and I stayed in bed until the day after my fortieth birthday, July 21, 1929.

I was driven down to Grand Central Station and took the 7 P.M. train for Saranac arriving at 7 A.M. I was met by Will Lurs, a relative of Herman Weiss, (probably a second cousin), who had kept in touch with the family. He took me directly to his house and I met his wife Gladys who was a TB patient that had made a quick cure and stayed on as a nurse. Will broke down with TB after he lost his first wife. He sold his prosperous store in Hoboken and went to Saranac with TB of the throat and could not speak for 7 or 8 years. Then he got his voice back, he met Gladys, married her, and now owed half interest in the best of the nine drug stores in town and was doing fine.

I had breakfast and lunch with them and then Will took me to the doctor he had selected where I had a thorough going over. He had made reservations for a room at 50 Shephard Avenue. It was a good-sized second floor front bedroom with a large side porch capable of holding two beds with plenty room to spare.

I had the room and porch to myself when I entered and for the first few months I had few visitors. There was a fine middle-aged registered nurse in charge of the nine beds in the house, with two young girls who did the actual work and of course a cleaning woman. The house next door was a TB cottage, that is one certified by the TB Society. It was owned by the sister of our nurse, but she was too old and fat to do any actual work herself. The meals were served from the house next door by a tray "boy" about 60 years old.

The first month there I saw only the nurse, two aides, and the tray boy. Will came in twice to say hello.

I was so tired that I slept most of the time, the first two or three days and then I borrowed books and read a lot. I was allowed to walk down the hall to the bathroom but only when necessary.

Never having had nursing care I dreaded my first bed bath so I asked the doctor if I could have tub baths. He ordered the nurse to do so. She came parading into my room, told me my bath was drawn, and she would give it to me. I insisted I could take it myself, so she calmly took the key from the lock and told me to be in the tub when she got back. Once I got used to the idea it was a mighty comfortable way to take a bath.

After the first month there was an occupant for the other bed on the porch. He was a young man, the son of a theatrical family who was sent to Saranac under the jurisdiction of the NVA (National Vaudeville Artists). He had been there several years, had several breakdowns, and would consent to regulation when he felt bad, but would sneak out on the town when he felt better. He did not make the grade as a TB patient, but he lived long enough to be a patient at the beautiful new sanitarium that was finished by the NVA while I was up in Saranac.

For 16 weeks I was kept in bed and gained 45 pounds. Then my diet was eased to maintain 180 pounds and I was permitted exercises which consisted of walking up and down the hall and visiting other patients.

After a stint of a week or so of walking you were started on the stairs. First you went up two steps, rested and returned. This was done morning and afternoon; each day another step was added. When you got halfway down you went all the way to the bottom and stayed downstairs for the day and slowly ascended at five o'clock. Patients were encouraged to spend as much time on the downstairs porch as possible.

The windows on the sleeping porch were sash on all three sides and they opened and shut by sliding. In the winter they were liable to freeze open, but once you got used to it, you got so you really wanted them open.

In Saranac it snows most every day during the winter--not big storms but light snow. When you wake up in the morning on a porch, you have to shake the snow off the top blanket. The lowest temperature I ever read on my porch at the head of my bed was 42 degrees below zero. My breath was freezing on the edge of the blanket and I had to cover my nose, alternating with one hand while the other was warmed by tucking it in my armpit.

By the end of March I had pretty well healed my lung tissue, so I was permitted home for a visit. But I had to promise I would come back and spend the summer in the mountains as a visitor. When I reached home I took it easy but there was so much to do that I had to be careful.

Will and Gladys Lurs had spent the winter down a at Virginia Beach and stopped to visit me on the way back. One day they drove me down to New Jersey to see some friends. I had an appointment with a vaudeville act playing in a North Jersey town to see the show from the wings. After the show they let me off in midtown New York and I returned to Eastchester by subway.

The next day Will drove me to White Plains to visit relatives and as I got into the car to return I started to show blood. They got me to Eastchester and to bed, but I began to have a severe hemorrhage.

The doctor got a trained nurse for the night. I had been having frequent small bouts but about 3 a.m. I threw a beaut. The nurse lost my pulse, rushed to Gladys' room and told her I was dead. She examined me and figured there was some life yet. She called the doctor and he asked her if she had any nitroglycerine tablets. Luckily for me she had some because of her husband's heart condition. She put one in solution and injected it; by the time the doctor arrived I was beginning to show signs of being conscious. For two days I continued to have frequent hemorrhages. By this time there were three trained nurses on the job. My doctor had delayed his vacation when I was at the worst. His substitute took over once and I realized he thought my case was hopeless.

My one chance, I thought, was to get to Saranac. The doctor told my folks that it was foolish to think about it. I asked for a N.Y. specialist to be called in and he ruled that I be sent to Saranac as soon as I had 24 hours free from blood in the sputum.

When that happened, the folks called my doctor in Saranac and he sent a nurse to bring me back. My Eastchester nurse rode the ambulance to Grand Central. I was put in a compartment on the ambulance stretcher and the Saranac nurse took over.

It was a night trip to Saranac and when the train arrived at 7 a.m. in Saranac, Dr. Lent and an ambulance were waiting. I was taken to my old room and temporarily denied visitors. The top doctor in Saranac looked me over as soon as I had rested a bit and had X-rays taken. He pronounced that if I would faithfully stay in bed for a year that I had a good chance for recovery.

When I was finally allowed to put my legs to the floor, I had to learn to walk again. My leg muscles had shrunk.

By the winter of 1931-2 I was able to go over to Lake Placid by auto to see the Winter Olympic Games. The winter of 1932-33 I spent in Eastchester, and the following summer I spent with Mrs. Huntley in Schroom Lake. Bob and Bill spent a month with me there.

All told, the Saranac Lake episode took five years of my life.

THE RESULTS OF THE DEPRESSION ON THE JOHNSTON ESTATE

My father died in 1934, shortly after I permanently returned from Saranac. Thus the burden of managing his estate fell on me. The original piece of land the Johnstons owned in Eastchester was changed by a series of complicated transactions which transformed it completely from the days of pickle and strawberry crops.

During the 20's there was a wild real estate boom, coupled with a great deal of speculation. My father managed to sell three different plots for astonishingly good prices. The total sale price was \$132,000.

First, the City of New York bought as sites for a school, the block bounded by Holler Avenue, Provost Avenue, Tillotson Avenue and Merritt Avenue. A third of this was part of the original Johnston farm. This was an all cash transaction.

Secondly, Curtis Wright Aircraft Co. bought up the salt meadow for an airport. This was sold at a ridiculously high price and under unusual circumstances, as I have said.

Then the large part of the farm located on the Boston Road running down to the bridge was sold to a developer for \$70,000. \$10,000 was put down and a blanket mortgage of \$60,000 was set to be amortized by payment of a specified amount for the release of title each time a lot was sold.

But, after the depression really began to get tough the buyer could not meet the payments necessary for the release of the titles.

At the time, I was in Saranac, Gertrude lived in West Orange, N.J. and Ma, who had always left the business to my father, was not equipped to handle the situation. A friend of mine, George Goebel, a retired lawyer, did his best and spent a lot of time trying to salvage what he could.

To this day, I do not understand all the ramifications of that deal. I can only say that the net return for the sale of the third piece of property was not over its intrinsic value.

My father invested a large portion of the money from real estate sales in first mortgages on residential property. When he died in 1934, only one mortgage had kept up the interest payments. After the depression worsened, it became almost impossible to collect any money.

When the owner could not pay the interest on the mortgage we did not foreclose the property until the owner had failed to pay taxes for two years. Invariably, when we were forced to foreclose, the properties were subject to tax liens for back taxes and were a year or more in arrears for payment of interest on the mortgage.

This meant that after foreclosure, we had to expend a considerable sum of capital to renovate the property, both physically and financially. The period of readjustment was in the late thirties and early forties, when we tried to liquidate the capital tied up in the foreclosed property for distribution to heirs under the will of my father, William F. Johnston.

I should note that it was necessary to carry on the business of the Estate as an entity until the sale of the last piece of real estate in 1959. My mother died in 1941, my sister in 1953, her husband in 1958, leaving their daughter Trudy Furman as the chief beneficiary of my sister's share. But Gertrude had willed that one fourth of her share was to be divided among the children of her husband, Dewitt Furman, by a previous marriage. So, at the end of each year, any cash capital had to be divided equally between my sister's heirs and myself.

The remaining real estate of the Estate of William F. Johnston, consisted of the house, (3509 Conner Street), the brick factory(the old pickle factory), and the dilapidated barn on a piece of land over an acre which was sold in 1959 for \$35,000. This, plus the value in mortgage, represented the value of the undivided assets of the Estate. It was divided equally between the Executor of the Estates of my sister and her husband (both deceased) and myself.

This closed out the Estate of my father, William F. Johnston.

CALIFORNIA HERE WE COME!

After my father's death in October 1934 my mother was exhausted from her long strain of caring for him. We planned to go down to Florida for the winter.

New Year's Eve, Gertrude and Dit* came over from Jersey and friends from Mt. Vernon came down to Eastchester to see the New Year in. They were well acquainted with Florida and were supposed to give Ma and me advice on what to do and see.

After Gertrude and Dit had retired, I helped Ma clean up the dishes. We talked about the trip and found that both of us were lukewarm about Florida. I suggested that we change our destination to California. Ma was agreeable but was afraid that Gertrude would object. So, we decided to go West but claim Florida as our object. We left for Florida within a few days and drove south. Before we turned west we sent Gertrude a telegram telling her to send our mail to El Paso, Texas.

We made our way via route 80 through Tennessee, then to Arizona and San Diego, California, where we rested a few days. We drove up the coast to Los Angeles and finally, having contacted Dr. Brown, our former doctor in Mt. Vernon, we took a house in Pasadena. We were there about three months and thoroughly explored the area from Santa Barbara to the Border and from Palm Springs to the Pacific. We returned home via San Francisco and the San Joaquin Valley.

Note: HWJ actually went on two trips West. He returned from the second in 1937.

* Dit was Gertrude's husband and also a distant relative on the Longworth side.

CIVIC WORK

In 1937, shortly after our return from California, I happened to read in the newspaper that the New York City Board of Transportation had requested permission to make a study of the feasibility of extending Concourse Avenue line of the Independent Subway System from 205th Street east along Burke Avenue to a spot close to the recently constructed Hillside Development owned by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. The paper mentioned the name of a man I knew slightly as being the sole speaker in favor of the project that I thought would be an asset to our community. This began several years work to improve transportation to the Northeast Bronx. I have always looked upon this work as a justification for my college education.

I called up this man and offered my help. He suggested that I call a mass meeting of the citizens of Eastchester to discuss the issue. I managed to enlist the aid of a young leader of an Italian Taxpayer's Group. He gave me the names of two other civic groups who would be interested in the transportation plan.

I had large posters printed and tacked up in all available places announcing a mass meeting on transportation. Over 100 interested people attended and almost every one had their own idea of where a subway should be constructed, usually to increase the value of their property.

A committee was appointed to contact the Board of Transportation to find out their ideas. The committee met at my house several evenings afterwards. We decided to ask the Bronx member of the Board, Charles V. Halley, for an interview to discuss the matter of the extension. We also agreed that we would not oppose the Board's plan, at least for the present.

There were about 10 of us that went down. Commissioner Halley had his office all set up for a formal hearing. His every move was very formal. After considerable talk, he invited us all over to the back of the room to see a map of the route. He started to explain it. There was no criticism or proposed change on our part. When he realized that we were in agree-

ment, he immediately thawed out and the rest of the interview was frank and informal. That meeting was the beginning of a close friendship between Charles Halley, his wife and myself that lasted until he died in 1960.

In 1938, the rail line serving Eastchester went bankrupt and left us without rapid transit to New York. A citizen effort was needed to pressure the City of New York to extend the Lexington Avenue subway to Eastchester.

So, we organized our own group into a close-knit executive committee of twelve members under the name of The Allied Civic Association of Old Eastchester, which at least on paper, was a committee of representatives from different civic groups throughout the area. We were organized in such a way that we could mobilize and move on City Hall whenever a new development came up relating to transportation. During the few years of its existence the Civic Association carried a good deal of weight in City Hall when it came to civic matters in the N.E. Bronx.

At one point in the controversy, our group decided to oppose a particular plan, called the Burke Avenue extension, which would benefit the Hillside Development at the expense of the rest of Eastchester.

An attempt was made by the owners of Hillside to organize their tenants to change the Board of Transportation to terminate the subway in the center of Hillside. At a mass meeting in Hillside plans were made by the mayor of Hillside to transport tenants by bus to the City Hall meeting, but very few went.

Our group, however, arrived early by design and were waiting for the doors to open in such numbers that soon the chamber was filled. When the meeting was called to order, it was necessary to change the agenda to get rid of us.

The Hillside Group, through their leader, Nathan Straus, had a letter from C. Ickle. This caused LaGuardia to state that New York City was not being run from Washington. The meeting ended with LaGuardia promising to inspect the territory.

He and his party arrived by auto along the proposed line and were met by a small delegation of the Allied Civic Association and the head man from Hillside. As a group we walked from the end of the proposed line to Hillside homes, preceded by a demented woman homeowner walking backward and pouring forth what would happen to her property if the route were not changed to pass her house.

The Burke Avenue subway never got past the paper and talk stage.

However, we continued our fight for transit. For a while I was owner, publisher, editor, and copywriter of the Bronx Civic Voice, a 12 page tabloid with a circulation of 20,000 copies. It was devoted entirely to the fight for transit in the Northeast Bronx. The cost of printing and distribution was covered by advertising. I sent a copy of each issue to all city officials.

It was effective too. When the copy for the 12th edition was on my desk, I received a phone call from the Board of Estimates saying that they had approved the extension of the subway to Dyre Avenue.

When the line was finally completed there was a big celebration to open it. On the first train to Dyre Avenue, the Mayor, the Board of Estimates, and members of the Civic Association were all aboard. We had a grandstand opposite the station for speech-making. Somewhere there is a picture showing LaGuardia and I, side by side, heading the parade down Dyre Avenue to the luncheon and celebration.

I learned later it was predicted that I would use the popularity from this transit fight as a stepping stone in a political career. But I can honestly say politics did not enter into the campaign for transit. We were a non-partisan force and the three candidates for council that had supported the improvement won regardless of their party.

* I remember being involved in this campaign-- gathering signatures in a well-organized house to house canvass. At one Board of Estimate hearing,

Dad proposed that I drive my old Model A up the City Hall steps as a publicity stunt. It never came off--it probably wouldn't have made it anyway. Maybe he wasn't serious.

This whole campaign occurred during the period of Robert Moses' ascendancy to power in New York City. Dad and members of the Civic Association distrusted him, no doubt because his anti-mass transit bias led him to oppose the subway extension. RCJ

Editor's Note:

Having researched the transit struggle in the (Bronx) Home News, I can add a few more details to this account of HWJ's role as executive secretary of the Allied Civic Associations of Old Eastchester. In 1938, the City included the Burke Avenue extension in its budget for new construction. But by early 1939, it was apparent to residents of Northeast Bronx as well as to some politicians like Charles Halley that the "inclusion of the Burke Avenue subway was a hoax staged to quell political opinion." (Mr. 8, 1939 HN pl)

While the Burke Avenue Extension was being discussed, the Westchester & Boston Railroad went bankrupt, and by June, 1939, the Allied Civic Association was urging the city to buy up the tracks for rapid transit to the Northeast Bronx. The city was reluctant to do this for a variety of political reasons.

Robert Moses, the powerful Parks Commissioner, had his eye on the railroad land to build a toll truck highway. This idea was opposed by the Civic Associations & the City was finally forced into buying the abandoned tracks in early 1940.

Throughout this whole struggle Herman Johnston proved himself to be an astute and able organizer. He understood the value of publicity and applying constituent pressure to recalcitrant officials. He knew when transportation business would be discussed by governmental bodies and when to produce large numbers of people. At mass meetings of the Allied Civic Associations attendance of 500 to 750 people was not unusual, showing that the group knew how to mobilize people when necessary.

HWJ was also innovative in the strategies he used to keep the issue before the city. In April of 1939, he organized a large number of landowners in Northeast Bronx to request lower assessments, reasoning that their properties were worth less without adequate rapid transit. Later that same month at the dedication of the Major Deegan Expressway HWJ lowered a huge banner from a window opposite the ceremony. The message urged LaGuardia to give the Bronx some representation on the Board of Transportation. HWJ also got several influential politicians on his side, one of whom was the head of the Finance Committee of City Council. He promised to hold up all expeditures for construction until work commenced on the Burke Avenue extension.

The October 26, 1939 issue of the Bronx Home News carried the headline, "Meeting Ends in Near Riot over Burke Ave. Subway- 700 People Attend." At this meeting HWJ was accused of working "in the interests of bondholders of the Westchester & Boston Railroad." At a subsequent meeting HWJ refuted these charges by publicly tearing up a \$1.00 check from the Railroad for a subscription to his paper, the Bronx Civic Voice,-the only money he ever received from the railroad bondholder. His friend and the president of the Allied Civic Associations, Herbert Holton, also jumped to his defense but Charles V. Halley summed up HWJ's contribution best. Halley called this accusation "an unwarranted attack on Johnston." He continued, "He (HWJ) has worked tirelessly, without hope of political or other reward, for the civic improvement of the community. He isn't a 'phony civic worker' and people in the community object to the attack."

P. S. 15 CELEBRATION

In 1942 the New York City Board of Education celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding by appropriate exercises in one school in each Borough. They chose P. S. 15 on Dyre Avenue in Eastchester near the Mount Vernon City Line. This school was built in 1872, 23 years before annexation to the City of New York. My grandfather, Nathan Johnston, was chairman of the School Board. The Weiss shop furnished the doors and windows. Just previous to annexation William F. Johnston was treasurer of the Board of

Education. So, I was asked to serve on a committee organized by Mrs. Warpole, Principal of P.S. 84 and P.S. 15 to arrange the public celebration.

Research was conducted about all phases of school work in 1842 and for that day all students and teachers were attired as of a century before; school was conducted as it was then.

The main part of the celebration was to be at an outdoor ceremony attended by the NYC Board of Education and the Borough President Lyon. Much to my surprise they dedicated a bronz plaque to be placed on the foundation in honor of Nathan Johnston who was responsible for building the school.

In the evening a large banquet was attended by top members of the Board of Education, friends and former students.

WAR WORK

During World War II, Herman Johnston served as a Captain in the Air Wardens Service. He lived at the family house on Conner Street, raising chickens and doing small-scale farming to relieve the effects of rationing. He also made wooden toys as a means of support for a time.

LONG ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

My sister and family had moved to Mattituck on Peconic Bay. While visiting her I came across a partially undeveloped sand spit called Fisherman's Beach, which projected out into Peconic Bay from Nassau Point. I bought a piece of it and developed the extension of the road by hauling in fill for the low spots.

Note: P.S. 84 was the school built on property from the Johnston farm adjacent to 3509 Conner Street. It was a 6 room school with several grades in some rooms. RCJ

My ambition was to erect a two car concrete block house with sleeping quarters above for my own use, and another which would be a one and a half story frame house with three bedrooms.

I started doing all the work myself, as a sort of challenge to my physical deficiencies during previous years. But I found that Herb Holton had not taught us how to lay concrete blocks in school and lugging concrete blocks was not for an ex-TBer. So, I had a mason lay the blocks and I took over from there. Instead of a two car garage with an upstairs bedroom, I made one side of the garage a kitchen and dining room and the other side as a living room. I took it over as my residence as soon as it was finished.

I then planned to build a story and a half frame house which looked out over the bay. I had the Big House framed- there was a large living room (15'x21'), a kitchen the same size, a dining room, and a bedroom in a wing. On the second floor there were two large bedrooms with a sleeping capacity for six.

I had a lumber dealer as a tenant on Boston Road and during the war he sent up a truck to New England to load lumber from the woods on to freight cars. He brought me a couple loads of rough sawed pine board, that were so full of knots that they were very low grade lumber. I had them stacked for over a year in Eastchester to cure, then I had them planed on one side and delivered to Long Island.

As a result, I have the living room, dining room and kitchen and stairwell in the knottiest of knotty pine.

I was going to live in the Block House myself while I built the Big House but on Decoration Day 1946 I had to give it up to my first tenant and batch it in the Big House. I finished the Big House and had a third building, a boat house, ready for my own occupancy in the spring. It has two sleeping compartments that can sleep three people. But when my grandchildren come down to visit during the season they bring their sleeping bags.

* Acquisition of property on Fisherman's Beach:

Purchased Lot 16 April 12, 1944 from Horton
14 July 26, 1946 from Sterling
13 July 16, 1946 from Jackson

Started the Block House Labor Day 1946.

After selling off the last of the 3509 Conner St. property, Dad considered Eastern Long Island and Fisherman's Beach his home. He found going into the city very distasteful but was very happy to occupy himself with the tasks of building and then renting and maintaining the dwellings on the Point. He was able to use his creative and mechanical abilities, and he was surrounded, during the summers at least, with people who appreciated his role as "mayor of Fisherman's Beach." He loved the water and did not seem to mind the long periods of solitude in the spring and fall. I think this last phase of his life was a fairly happy one. RCJ

