

A Collection of Life Stories



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What was your Mom like when you were a child?



I have wonderful memories of my mother while growing up, I recall her as tall, thin and always well dressed and elegant. She was from a long line of prominent New England families.

Born in 1892 she married her first husband Fred Sauer in 1915 who was a government diplomat and lived in Washington DC. They had three daughters before Fred died during the Spanish Flue epidemic in 1918.

When she married my father Tom she was a widow with three teen age daughters and I imagine the years prior to that were not easy however she never complained.

Being well educated having graduated from Emerson College she became a school teacher along with her mother in Everett Mass schools. She gave up teaching when I was born.

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Her mother was widowed herself when my mother was only 4 years old.

They were all living together with her mother with the 3 girls in Melrose a few houses away from my father's family home and apparently met and they married in 1929.

She was a very strong woman who bragged about driving her model T Ford, was involved in local politics, church, gardening and various drama and woman's clubs, she would dig right in and handle about anything, She was very artistic and we have many of her paintings painted in her later life.

She was completely devoted in me as though I was an only child as her daughters were starting their own lives. I suppose most would say I was "spoiled" added by the fact my older sisters also doted over me.

My mother was determined for me to be exposed to and experience as many things as I might encounter in life.

I was taken to the Symphony, Ballet, Opera and other events such as The Ice Capades, Circus and Sportsman Shows but there was no encouragement for sports.

In addition my father and often with my mother as well took me hunting, fishing, boating and skiing. I was well trained in the use of guns and had quite a collection even in middle school.

I was included in financial discussions and taken along when looking at purchasing houses etc. and they provided a wonderful foundation for later life.

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Although my first 9 years or so were during the depression my folks never seemed to be affected much and made my life very full and happy, we seemed to have anything we needed and lived quite well

Doris Crosby 1936



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What was your first big trip?



My first recollection of taking trips was to my Father's muskrat farm in Windsor Maine.

The reason I selected this subject is when I was young anytime I was asked where I'd like to go it was "Down Maine" and I have loved Maine & New Hampshire ever since.

A side note, even though Maine was North, New Englanders at that time always said they were going "Down Maine" which was a term used by old mariners sailing their coastal schooners as Maine was downwind when seen from Boston.

It was in the early 1930's and in the middle of the depression, few folks had money for trips and ours were mostly up there.

At that time we lived in Melrose, Mass and even though it was a suburb of Boston it still wasn't fully developed and most of the trip was through rural country up old Rt.1 along the coast.

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My memory has probably combined all those first trips into one as I was very young and more influenced by stories my sisters told me than my own recollection.

My Mother, 3 sisters and I used to spend summers there and my father would come weekends as he was fortunate enough to have a job in the city.

I was never able to understand how they afforded it but my folks had a brand new 1931 Chevrolet roadster with a rumble seat. Also how they managed to cram all of us into it with whatever they needed to take.

My sister Dorothy told of the time she was waiting with me in the roadster in Augusta while my parents were doing errands and there was a violent hail storm and she was afraid the hail would come through the roof and she laid over me.

The farm was 195 acres in South Windsor Maine on Rt.32 fairly near the Windsor Fair.

My father had started the farm raising muskrats before he met my mother who was a widow with 3 daughters.

Muskrat skins were a hot item in the "Roaring 20s" for muskrat coats and the farm had a nice brook where he dammed up and fenced off a large area.

Muskrat skins lost value during the depression and a major flood destroyed the dam and fence letting all the muskrats swim away. He later sold the farm in the mid 30's which I've regretted ever since, my father always said he actually was never paid for it

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either.

He had an old Model TT dump truck which I loved to sit in and wish I could find the photo I've seen of it with me behind the wheel, he told me of using it to haul clay from the farm to surface the surrey race track at the fair where he was a grounds keeper at times.

I'll try to include what photos I have of the farm.

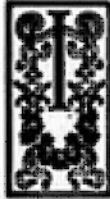
As to trips generally there weren't many until we retired, unless you consider the Navy and weekends in New Hampshire, as we were self employed and couldn't afford the time off.

We did take one very nice 3 week trip to Hawaii which the kids gave us as our 25th wedding present and began many years of traveling after that.

A good description of his Muskrat farm is in my fathers own words in an article I found on-line in "Fur Fish and Game" magazine from around 1929.

Muskrat Fence

By **TOM O. CROSBY**



I STARTED in last summer in the muskrat game and fenced in a 20 acre marsh which has a wonderful growth of flag, cattail, water lily and blue joint on it. There are 27 large houses there this spring and the rats wintered well, as I raised the water about six feet this winter.

I had a nice looking fence last fall of four foot, No. 16 gauge wire and steel posts. This ran one foot under ground and in spring holes I drove 3-ft. sheets of galvanized roofing to be sure no mink would dig under. Now I have a very bad looking fence—the wire bulges out between posts, and where it was fastened to the posts it is all jammed together and looks like a month's hard work to get it back straight again. I would be glad to hear from some other ranchers who have a fence in a clayey soil and find out if this is to be an annual occurrence.

I have an idea that plowing a furrow three or four feet inside the fence and one on the outside and draining the furrows might help. I had no trouble with the fence where it was wet or in gravel but where it goes through a field and through the woods it is in bad shape. Possibly the trouble is due to my not getting the trench filled before the last of October and the ground had not packed well before the frost set in.

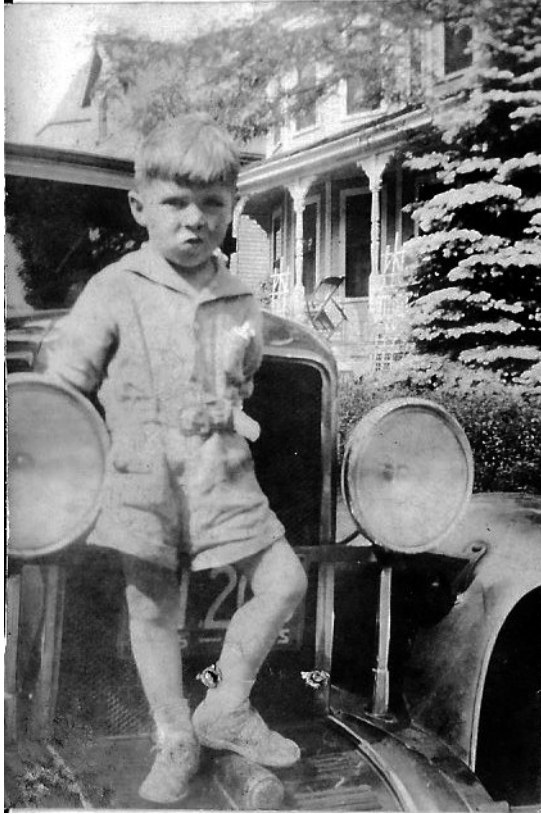
Any information I can get from other ranchers as to how their fences winter will be very much appreciated.

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Farm in Maine

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Me in front of 1930 Chevy Convertible

Did you have a job while you were in high school?



I had several jobs while in High School and a few before that.

Although I remember wanting a paper route growing up before moving to Cape Cod my parents talked me out of it along with the few times I helped a friend with his route made me decide it wasn't for me.

My only newspaper job was in the summer before we moved to the Cape permanently at Mortimer's store (It's name prior to Millers/Barnstable News/Market etc) putting the various papers together early Sunday morning. At that time they delivered all but the news sections on Saturday. I'd get up at 5 am and assemble hundreds of rotogravure, comics and classified sections with the newly dropped off news section. At the time we had several Boston papers and New York ones for the "Summer" folks from there.

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In Melrose during the war I worked after school for my father rebuilding electric refrigerator motors in his shop next to our home.

This was a fairly responsible job as it required disassembling the motor, cleaning all parts, checking the armature on a growler and turning it on a lathe, then replacing brushes and necklace, installing & reaming the bushings. Then reassembling, painting, lubricating and testing it using 110 volts.

This was a big responsibility as my father was installing these in refrigerators about as fast as I could get them done.

I also remember he paid me 50 cents each and was selling them to customers for \$18.50.

You can imagine the mechanical and electrical experience I was able to utilize through the rest of my life in the garage business.

We moved to the Cape after my freshman year in high school and my first job outside working with my father in his shop working on outboard motors etc. was as a Soda Jerk in a small pharmacy that opened up across the street when the war ended.

In addition to working at the soda fountain we had a lunch counter and served breakfasts including toast, bacon and eggs also lunch of sandwiches, soup, coffee and etc.

About the same time a service station opened up next to the drug store and I started working there at what became my life work servicing automobiles.

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After high school I still worked part time at the drugstore and service station along with a service station in Hyannis, also mowing lawns and various jobs using my Model A and Chevy pickup truck.

A few years later is the following article which appeared in the Barnstable Patriot in 1951.

This was on a summer Sunday afternoon and we were located on Rt. 6 (no mid-cape Hwy. at the time) and it was the main route off cape. As far as I know we were the only one on the cape pumping gas.

I hooked up a power lawn mower engine to one of the gas pumps which were all mechanical back then. Of course we started with the "Premium" pump and limited sales to \$5.00 which bought quite a bit at around 20 cents a gallon.

I was pumping as fast as possible, Ernie Whitney was collecting the money and had bills stuffed in every pocket. Cars were lined up waiting well beyond the lights at Mill Way and up post office hill.

When the "Premium" ran out we switched to "Regular" and pumped till either the cars or gas ran out, not sure which.

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Barnstable Patriot, Thursday, August 30, 1951.

Power Failure Gave All Cape a Blackout

For several hours last Sunday night all Cape Cod and adjacent territory held an unofficial blackout, when an electric power break between Tremont and Acushnet in the New Bedford Gas and Edison Light Company system broke down. A main line carrying 110,000 volts snapped at 7 p.m. The stoppage of light and power affected 500,000 persons. Cause is said to have been determined as rifle shots which shattered porcelain disk insulators.

Many unusual results were recorded. Freeman Crosby, son of Tom Crosby of Barnstable, used his ingenuity at work at the filling station of Ernest Whitney by attaching the power lawn mower to the gas pump and was kept busy filling thirsty cars with gas.

Telephone lines were kept busy, causing a call for all operators to duty.

At the police barracks at South Yarmouth, mothers brought baby bottles to be warmed.

One call went out for an operator to milk cows by hand.

Patriot Article August 1951

What was your Dad like when you were a child?



My Dad was an exceptional father not only when I was young but throughout my life.

He was a great friend and teacher who I credit with any success I've had during my lifetime.

He and my mother made my childhood a happy and learning experience which I'm sure was not appreciated at the time. I was his constant companion as soon as I was able to follow him around.

I have covered his experience with the farm in Maine and my first memory was of his working for Frigidaire where I remember his converting old "Ice Boxes" to electric refrigeration and I occasionally accompanying him. After a few years he started his own refrigeration business with a shop in our cellar.

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At that time I was old enough to learn the use of tools and remember him buy me a power jig saw and letting me use his large tool collection as well, I spent most of my after school hours there.

He trained me to respect and in the use of guns. We had a rifle range in our cellar and I had a collection of rifles, shotguns and pistols, was a member of the Jr. NRA and later member of a Junior gun club at the Bass river Rod & Gun club after moving to Cape Cod. We took many hunting and fishing trips even when I was quite young. Later when on the Cape some very cold Duck hunting in Barnstable harbor using a pair of duck boats he had made.

Another large influence on my life I contribute to my father was our building together two large model railroad layouts in both our first two houses where I learned the fundamentals of electricity including the difference in AC & DC, soldering, transformers and solenoids along with basic construction of the tables and scenery from a mixture of powdered asbestos & water. Both layouts were large enough to run into two rooms through the wall.

In addition he gave me my own work room on the 3rd floor in our second house in Melrose and was provided with large “Erector” and “Chemistry” sets which were popular at that time. The Erector set taught me the fundamentals of construction using metal components, wheels, nuts & bolts, and even electric

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motors with belts to run things I built.

The Chemistry set included many chemicals I'm sure that kids wouldn't be allowed to have today along with an alcohol torch which I lit with old fashioned wooden matches. It often got out of control so I also learned how to extinguish fires. My mother always complained about the horrible smells I created mixing & heating the chemicals.

I was trained in seamanship from a young age following a long family tradition on the ocean.

I remember his building our first 8ft. boat which used a 1/2 hp motor in which one time he took both my mother and I fishing off shore at Deer Isle, Maine.

When the war ended and we started to go to Barnstable he purchased a new Lyman boat with a 10 hp motor and at that time one of the fastest boats at the Barnstable Yacht club in which I was reprimanded for speeding by one of the fishermen in the area now known as the marina, before it existed.

He was an avid fisherman all his life and took out fishing parties in Barnstable for a few years. I spent a lot of time on the water and he taught me much about fishing, clamming and navigation during our time on the Cape. One time he and I brought a boat he bought in Osterville through Woods hole and the Cape Cod Canal using nothing but a road map.

In addition to providing and training me to do all the above my father was constantly involved and guiding me through the

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various experiences during my childhood and very forgiving for any of my mishaps for which I'm eternally grateful.

My Father and Mother



How did your parents pick your name?



I was named after my Grandfather “Freeman Maynard Crosby” who on his death at 70 years old was president of the United States Leather Company.

Apparently it was a family tradition to name the first born boy after his grandfather and Etta and I followed that tradition naming our first born Tom Oaks Crosby after my father.

My Grandfather was named after his Grandfather Captain Freeman Crosby who on his death at 59 years old was retired from the sea at an early age.

The Freeman name was very popular last name in New England and my best calculation is it found it's way through my 6th Great Grandmother Mercy Freeman born in Eastham in 1687 who's Freeman line I have traced back to an Edmund Freeman born in 1596.

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The middle name of Maynard was introduced by my Great Grandparents James Edwin Crosby and Modena Parker as Modena's father was named Maynard. Prior to that middle names were not common. I have traced the origin on the Maynard name back to a John Maynard born in Cambridgeshire England in 1598 through John Maynard born October 15 1636, Simon Maynard, and Mary D Maynard who married William Parker 1716-1748 who became parents of Maynard Parker 1795-1860, father of Modena.

I have recorded 12 "Freeman Crosby's" in my genealogy, many not related at all.

What is one of your favorite children's stories?



The story I requested the most as a young child was “The Little Engine That could”.

I wonder if it didn’t spark my interest in railroads, back then trains were the main way people traveled and a train every 15 minutes or so was common and I loved to ride the train.

Whenever asked what I wanted to be when I grew up was always “Engineer”

Of course I didn’t pick up on that it’s main theme of the book was optimism and hard work.

It was written in 1930 a year before I was born and is still popular over 90 years later.

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What early memories do you have of your sibling(s)?



I have wonderful memories of my siblings in my early years, my mother was a widow with three teen age daughters when she married my father.

From stories I've been told they took a great interest in having a baby brother come into the house.

Although technically they were "half sisters" it was never brought up and my father raised them as they were his own and the girls treated me the same.

As they were all much older we never "played" together like those closer to the same age.

Tragically my sister Betty who was my favorite died after a long illness when I was about 7. Both my other sisters lived into their 90's.

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Cynthia who was the oldest married Harris H. Purdy (Hap) in 1937 and Dorothy who married James Carpenter in 1939 both moved away after they were married, however I often stayed at their houses and was involved in their lives as a youth.

I remember “babysitting” for Hap & Cynthia’s first child , probably an hour or two as I couldn’t have been very old.

And very fond memories after they bought a farm in Concord visiting there gathering eggs and selling produce in a roadside stand. Probably another influence in my interest in farming or at least the tractors & equipment I was exposed to.

About the time I started High School Cynthia and Hap moved to California and Jim & Dot moved to Maine.

Jim & Dot visited often however I only saw Cynthia once or twice after that but we did remain in contact.

Many of my memories I’m sure came from stories Dorothy told me later in life about our summers in Maine but all in all I enjoyed my years spent with them.

Our family visited my sister Dorothy’s 90th birthday celebration at Waterville ME in 2006 and those afterward till she passed in 2010. My sister Cynthia who lived in California most of her life also attended the 2006 celebration

What did you hide from your parents as a child?



I don't remember hiding anything from my parents as a small child however when I got a bit older I'm quite sure I never told them of this.

I'm not sure of my exact age but I was quite young and did it several times, probably there was another boy with me at least once.

We were living in Melrose, a suburb of Boston but still quite rural in the early 40's.

There were Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway busses that connected to the Boston Elevated Street Railway in Everett which then connected to the Boston Subway system.

I'm not sure of the bus fare but not more than 15 cents and we would switch to the "Elevated" in Everett for 10 cents which eventually entered the Subway and went underground to Park Square and beyond.

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Of course we didn't really want to do anything but ride the trains so we would switch at Park Square and take each line as far as we could go & back.

In those days most subway stations served both directions and if you were very careful not to get off at any that didn't we would just go from one side to the other without having to pay and ride as long as we wanted, eventually returning back to Everett to pick up the bus back home before we had to pay again. That 10 cent fare was in effect quite a while as noted in the song sung by the Kingston Trio in 1949 "Charlie on the MTA", the year I graduated from High School.

Every time I hear that song I remember how much fun we had riding it for hours.

I'm sure this was later in my youth but do remember getting off at Scully Square Station which was the heart of the red light district and somehow getting in the "Old Howard" & or "Casino" burlesque theaters but can't imagine now how they let us in. I'm sure that one never got to my parents.

I defiantly remember seeing one performer named "Rose La Rose" Queen of Burlesque but never saw the famous "Gypsy Rose Lee"

What was it like learning to drive?



Driving has been one of the most important things in my life and I took my license exam on my 16th birthday.

I had an early interest in all things automotive as long as I can remember reading books and learning to know all the cars by name.

I built my first motorized vehicle when I was 14. See attached photos of my first 2 “Cars”.

The first one used bed rails as a frame and a Maytag washing machine engine, I have recently collected several Maytag engines as a hobby.

The second had real auto type king pins and steering and first used an old motorcycle engine, later the motor from a captured Japanese generator a neighbor brought back from the war.

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Things were a bit more relaxed when I was learning to drive. There were no “Learners” permits and as I recall there was no age limit as long as a licensed driver was next to you, however that may have been my father's interpretation. In any case on the Cape he let me drive locally that way from at least 14.

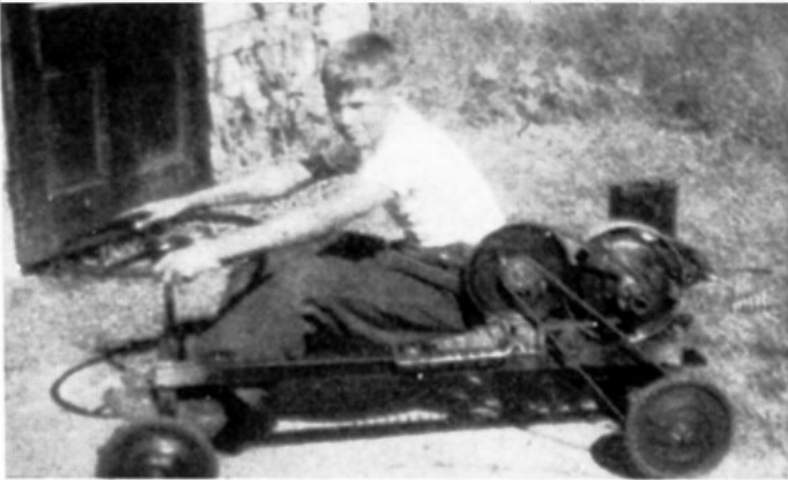
I definitely remember his letting me take our car by myself up & down main street in a parade of honking vehicles on VJ day at the end of WWII. He said no one would stop anyone that night.

As to actually learning it just sort of evolved, we kids all had our home made 4 wheeled racers made out of orange crates etc. where we learned a lot about steering and handling, the Chevrolet garage even gave us free steering wheels which they took off when they put on “Deluxe” ones for customers.

There were no automatic transmissions and using a clutch was probably the hardest thing to get right. When we got to the driving test at the Registry of Motor Vehicles which was on Main St Hyannis a few doors east of the train station, the “Inspector” after the written exam took us out for a drive, no directional lights so we had to use proper hand signals and no “Park” on the transmission so we had to use the hand brake. We went down to Center St. and up Elm St., come to a full stop on the hill and then start up working the brake, clutch and gas pedals without stalling or snapping off the inspectors neck. Then we had to parallel park on busy main street across from the Registry. At some point we had to also get in a 3 point turn as well.

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At this point I've enjoyed driving 75 years some over 50,000 most over 20,000 and well over a million miles.



This light, fast chug-motor, built by 14-year-old Freeman M. Crosby II, of Melrose, Mass., is all motor and wheels. The Maytag motor is mounted on an angle iron frame which also serves as the body of the vehicle. A Gates V-Belt, used as a clutch, turns the reduction pulleys for a chain drive to the rear axle.

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What's the first major news story you can remember living through as a child?



The first major news story I can remember living through as a child

I have vivid memories of first hearing of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7, 1941.

The war had been going on in Europe since 1939 and our relationship with Japan had been deteriorating since WWI.

We collected “War” cards which came in bubble gum similar to the baseball cards which came along later. They depicted the Japs committing atrocious and bloody attacks on the Chinese. Talk of war was everywhere but the United States had remained neutral.

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Even though I was only 10 years old I was very aware of the world situation from news broadcasts and listening to discussions by my parents and what we learned at school.

There was no TV and we only had one table top radio at the time and my first hearing of the attack was quite traumatic for a 10 year old.

It was a Sunday afternoon and my parents had left me alone for the first time while visiting my aunt and uncle on the other side of town and I had the radio all to myself.

I remember distinctly sitting on the living room floor playing with my "Lincoln Logs" when the radio was interrupted with the news bulletin of the attack.

I was really scared not knowing if they would be bombing or attacking us and remember waiting for my parents to come home.

When they finally did I babbled out the news and I remember they really didn't believe me until they heard it again on the radio.

Our world changed that day, all eligible men were drafted and even my father who had fought in WWI was called to duty, he was exempt because he was in an essential business.

The entire population was called upon to make some sort of sacrifice for the war effort, in addition to the draft we had rationing of about everything, also scrap metal and rubber recycling.

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New items were hard to find, no cars were produced till 1945 and used items rose rapidly in price. All sorts of production was directed to the war effort leaving little for the people.

We had “Blackouts” on the east coast every night, black window shades and “Wardens” patrolling the streets to enforce it. Car headlights were painted half black and no street lights. There were volunteers patrolling the back beach on Sandy Neck looking for Nazi submarines and possibly men landing on the beach.

However looking back the war brought us out of the depression and the country came together as never before or since.

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What is the best meal you've ever had?



What is the best meal you've ever had ?

My wife Etta and I were attending my Niece's wedding on the Island of Islesboro Maine and arrived a day before as the ferry left early in the morning. We found a restaurant near the ferry dock and both had a wonderful lobster feast at a very reasonable price we both remembered long after.

Many years later on another trip we were thinking of a place to eat although it was miles away on the other side of the state we decided to drive there and get another meal.

After driving several hours we arrived and were shocked by the now high price, both opting for a couple of \$25.00 lobster rolls.

I've had many memorable meals and it's hard to select any one but that lobster dinner still stands out as being my favorite.

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What was your weekend tradition when you were a kid?



What was your weekend tradition when you were a kid ?

Up until we moved to the Cape after WWII my father worked 7 days a week so we didn't really have any thing I'd call a family tradition.

If I were on my own I'd usually be working on some project in my fathers shop and really enjoyed the occasional trips we took as a family.

Our holidays were usually spent at certain families homes, Thanksgiving was at my mother's uncle Ern's place in Norwell, he owned a funeral parlor and was quite wealthy even through the depression. I remember he used to take us all for a ride in his brand new Buick to show off. To this day I remember marveling at the directional lights on his 1940 Buick. They also had a fleet

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of hearses and flower cars I always had to look over. Another example of my interest in automobiles.

The meal was always a special turkey from Lorenzo's turkey farm cooked and served by the maid.

Christmas mornings we spent at home and I remember getting lot's of new electric trains, erector and chemistry sets and was obviously very spoiled. Again this was during the depression and many of my friends went without much.

For Christmas dinner we went to my Grandmother Crosby's for an elegant meal served by her live in cook, maid and butler.

Are you still friends with any of your friends from high school? How have they changed since then?



It's been 73 years since I graduated from High School and few of my classmates are still around and any who are have changed considerably..

By today's standards our class was small at 96 members however we continued to have class reunions every 5 years through our 60th where 22 showed up. Efforts to find anyone able to organize the 70th did not work out.

I haven't been back to Barnstable since the 60th reunion in 2009 and by 2014 we had lost more than 45 classmates. I'm sure many more since but I still maintain contact through the internet with one classmate living in Bonita Springs Florida.

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We email back and forth frequently, he has health problems but recently bought an RV.

His daughter will be his driver and they plan a trip to Hyannis this summer.

Did you have a car in high school?



The first car I drove to High School was an old Model A Ford, after that I had a 1936 Chevy pickup truck which I can't find any photos of.

I spent a lot of time on sandy neck and was fascinated by an old rusty Model A station wagon next to the lighthouse, It had been driven into the water by mistake a few years earlier and been covered by the tide. It was just left there after it was pulled out.

I was 15 at the time and found out my aunt knew the owner of the lighthouse and she gave me his address. I wrote him and we agreed I could buy it for \$15.00 if I could get it running.

I spent several weekends and days after school going back and forth in my boat to work on it.

The engine was seized by rust and the tires were flat but eventually I had it running. Only to find out the clutch was

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locked up and whenever the engine ran it wanted to move.

In addition the starter didn't work and I had to crank it.

In order to drive it I would put it neutral, start and warm it up, jack up a rear wheel and restart in low gear. With the engine running and the rear wheel turning I'd reach over the back and release the jack and off we'd go. If it didn't stall I'd jump in the front, grab the wheel and drive the dunes. Of course I had to pick up the jack as we left in case it had to be restarted during my trip. Later I learned to tie a rope to it so if I missed it would drag along behind.

When I was ready to bring it home I borrowed a dealer plate from Jones's garage (every one in town used them) and had a friend with a license ride with me up the back beach till we reached the road. With him driving and me shifting we made it back to our home on main street in the Village.

There is a photo attached showing it in our back yard where I drove it round and round creating a muddy mess for my folks to live with.

I replaced the clutch, added a windshield and roof using old metal signs along with a body made from two hatch covers from a sunken liberty ship salvaged on sandy neck. At that time the back beach was littered with things from torpedoed ships during the war.

During the first few years of driving I acquired a variety of old cars and Tractors made from them, I first registered the

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Model A as a tractor as it didn't require a state inspection., After being stopped many times by officers who eventually realized the little kid driving was old enough one mentioned I should really register it as a truck which I did creating much work to get it to pass state inspection.

However again Jones garage was pretty lenient with me and I got a sticker.

I eventually graduated to a \$300.00 1936 Chevy pickup and sold the Model A for \$95.00.

I used the Chevy Pickup to commute to School in Boston after graduating from High School.

In addition to the Model A during that period I had a couple of Model T Fords one converted to a tractor and another was a pickup. The T's didn't have a clutch but 3 pedals, push the left down for low and release for high (only two speeds). The hand brake lever in addition to putting on the brake put the left pedal half way down for neutral. The right was the brake which was on the transmission.

The brakes were poor at best and you would jam both brake and reverse to stop.

Some of the other kids had jalopies, many unregistered and we drove them through the wood roads (or made our own). One time I towed the Model T tractor behind the Model A up into the woods and left it under a large pine tree on a friends property. Then I was able to go up and drive whenever I wanted without a

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registration. In those days we could go all the way to Hyannis through the woods.



What were you like as a teenager?



My teenage years spanned the second half of the 1940's I probably wasn't a typical teenager but have good memories of those days.

During my early teenage years I was pretty shy, WWII was in full swing, we grew up fast and I'd say more grown up than today's teens are, I was very aware of world events and many activities centered around the war effort. I was very small and never was interested in participating in sports and my interests were mainly in working around my fathers shop after school and weekends.

I wasn't a very good student unless the classes interested me and just squeaked through middle and high school. I did like history, geography and science classes and was very successful at technical school studying automotive subjects which formed my business career.

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I turned 16 about the time we moved to the cape and spent my last 3 years of high school there.

I'd say I was a typical teenager after we moved to the cape and gained my self confidence.

The village was small and made for a good life with lot's of friends and jobs I enjoyed, also the fire department became a big part of my life. I did some unusual Halloween pranks but we never did anything destructive. During the summer I enjoyed boating at the Yacht Club and playing "Hide and Seek" on Locust Lane with the summer kids.

Of course I was pretty popular having a car and we cruised main street Hyannis most every night looking for girls, without much success, although I had a few girlfriends, and "summer crushes" none of which lasted when I went away to school.

By the time I finished technical school my teen age years were about over.

What were your favorite subjects in high school?



Actually I really didn't like any classes or school much at all.

I was more interested in working at the service station and on my car. In addition to girls and the summer activities at the yacht club boating and going out with the gang at night.

One class that I enjoyed was history and it still is one of my interests. The internet now allows me to read whatever I'm interested in at the time. Automobile history and transportation in general including railroads are favorites as well as road and bridge construction in the past.

High School classes were broken down into "American History" and Ancient History", I enjoyed Greek, Roman and Egyptian history classes the most.

American history was very interesting and has helped tremendously throughout life with my genealogy work to place things in perspective as to life for my ancestors during those

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times.

Geography was also interesting as it fit right in with the history classes. It gave a good basis of where countries were in the world which has helped me throughout life.

Of course the war was changing geography as countries were conquered or merged as we were studying it and is very different now.

Other high school classes I did well in were Science, Physics and Chemistry where I learned the basics regarding things which helped later at technical school, in the Navy and later as a mechanic.

I didn't enjoy Math, Algebra or Language classes, struggled through English, flunked German and my handwriting is an example of failing that as well.

My Mother was a schoolteacher before I was born and she knew most of my elementary school teachers. I'm sure she wasn't proud of my marks and probably the only reason I passed some of the grades at all.

Once I began studying things of interest my marks rapidly improved and I was high in my class at technical school first in my class at the Navy school that followed.

Who did you date while in high school?



I went out with a multitude of girls during my high school years however I wouldn't consider more than two or three as having dated.

My first real crush was for one of the "Summer Girls" who was a member of a large group of other kids who vacationed near Cobb village.

It was the year before I had my license and several of us "Local" boys would pedal our bikes down where they all lived. I was really infatuated with her and we were getting along great till the summer ended. She went back home and I didn't keep in touch, hoping things would continue the next year, however by then she was dating someone from her home town who later became her husband.

I had my license and the Model A by the next summer and still got together with the same gang and we used to all pile into it

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and I have great memories of those few years.

I found my next girl playing at the Fairgrounds one day with a bunch of kids while driving my Model A through the fields. She was a member of a large local family and we went together till I went off to school in Boston, although we still went out weekends I was home we drifted apart.

In addition to those two who I remember we would get a few guys together and “Cruise” Main Street Hyannis looking for girls, however none were memorable. We had a lot of competition for girls by the service men at Otis Air Force base and many of them married them.

How I met my wife will come in a later story

Who did you go to prom with?



This is an interesting question, I'm not sure which or who's prom it was but certainly the one I remember most. No names will be used although all parties involved have long passed away.

I was working for a man who had a daughter definitely not my type that hadn't been asked to the prom, he offered me \$50.00 (a lot of money at the time) to take her and I turned him down. A little while later I was approached by a local young married man I knew. He was having a secret affair with a girl my age who I also knew and was quite good looking. He also offered me \$50.00 to take her as she wanted to go to the prom and obviously he couldn't take her so I agreed hoping my boss wouldn't find out. . Things went OK until after the prom we stopped off at the beach on the way home, I'd barely stopped the car before she was all over me wanting more than I was willing to give so I quickly took her home..

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A while later it turned out she was pregnant, the affair became known and his wife filed for divorce.

I never knew if it may not have been a plan to trap me by claiming I was the father and keep his wife from finding out about the affair

What is the farthest you have ever traveled?



That's a very easy to answer, on our 25th anniversary our children gave my wife Etta and I a wonderful surprise party with friends and family along with a trip to Hawaii.

We added a bit ourselves and chose a 3 week trip to 4 Islands which included in addition to air fare to and from the big island and flights between islands a rental car at each airport we landed at. We were free to travel by ourselves but also able to attend all the arranged events and attractions that included some meals that another group traveling with us by bus went to. Our luggage traveled between airports and hotels along with the bus group. In addition to the regular tourist attractions the car made it possible for us to explore away from those areas in local farms, neighborhoods, restaurants, volcanoes, beaches etc.

A few of the things I remember was visiting the WWII memorial at Pearl Harbor, swimming from a glass bottom boat in Cook's

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cove, Black sands beach, several volcanoes, coffee plantations, driving to Hanna and continuing on around the island of Maui on a cliff hanging road where rental cars were prohibited, a luau and many more adventures.

On our flight out from Boston we stopped at San Francisco but not long enough for us to see much. On our flight back we flew all the way to Chicago to change planes. however during the trip United Air Lines went on strike and we were left there with hundreds of other passengers to sort through all the baggage and find another way home. We were very fortunate to find two seats on American Air Lines and a porter who managed to get us to it just in time.

Which family members do you wish you kept better in touch with?



My interest in family history has made me wish I'd kept better track of all of my relatives but it wasn't possible in many cases.

As far as I know I'm the last family member alive in my generation and have been trying to record all I can for future generations.

I had two older half sisters who married before I was 10, my sister Dorothy settled in New England but Cynthia moved to California shortly after marriage and I only saw her two or three times before she died at 93, However her family has kept in touch with mine on social media and I've been able to fill in some of their information in my genealogy.

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Although not close we have had mutual visits and kept in touch with Dorothy's family quite well through the years, attended several marriages and family reunions etc.

I had 3 cousins who I knew quite well as a youth One, Betty Carmody who was much older also moved to California and although we communicated by mail I never saw again and she died at 97 . She didn't have any children however she an was immense help in tracing my family line.

Another Barbara Currie also much older died a few years after getting married. I have had recent email contacts with her two sons who never married.

My Cousin Blair Currie also moved away and although I have had recent contact with his daughter lost track of most of his life.

What was life like in the 60s?



Although the country was undergoing social change and in the midst of the Vietnam war our life during those years was very good and I will only talk about it.

Etta and I had been married about 7 years in 1960 and had left the Navy, bought a house, had 3 children and been in business for about 3 years owning a gas station.

Etta worked along side me and although fairly successful it was a tiring 24hr. 7 day a week operation with several employees, We decided in 1982 to build our own shop on my parents property and concentrate on automotive repairs along with snow plowing and bulk propane tank installation.

This was a life changing event and as I already had built up a following was successful from the start.

Of course I still had Etta's help bookkeeping and running parts but she had much more time for the kids and we had weekends

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free and made the most of them,

Summers we spent a lot of time in the boat, spring & fall we took a lot of trips with many to New Hampshire and later bought some land and built several camps there.

However one drawback to the one man shop was if we were going to make money I had to be there so our only vacation besides long weekends till 1976 was in 1968 when we closed up and took a trip to visit my folks on Manasota Key Florida near where I live now.

I remember the 60's as wonderful times, Gas was plentiful at 30c a gallon and everything else was affordable as well. The "Good old boy network" was in full swing and we all helped each other out in every way. (Friends helping friends)

And I can't leave out the volunteer fire department which not only responded to fires but was the center of social activity for the village, they played a big part in our lives..

What famous or important people have you encountered in real life?



I can't think of any I've really encountered that would be remembered today.

I did know Lou Little, a famous at the time, football coach from Columbia University who was a family friend when I was a youth and actually was invited to our wedding, he didn't attend but sent a nice gift.

Although not a personal encounter I did attend a dinner at the 1952 Republican National Convention in Chicago with a delegate from Barnstable when Dwight Eisenhower was nominated. Ike and Mamie were present and I remember them walking in by us and he speaking.

Dr. Conrad Wesselhoeft a well known doctor was a good friend and customer. He was instrumental in introducing us to world

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renowned Dr Trygve Gundersen who successfully operated on our son Tom's eye at Mass Eye and Ear when he was very young. Dr Gundersen also operated on King Saud of Saudi Arabia who traveled to America for the event.

As we were quite young and just starting in business I remember questioning the cost of such an operation and was startled at the quote, I believe about \$6000.00, and remarked that would be hard for us to come up with but we would, well they kept reducing the price and each time I said the same thing and after lot's of discussion I think we settled on \$600.00.

And last but not least Kurt Vonnegut, famous author and Barnstable Village resident was a customer when I had my gas station and I made many road calls to his house in the freezing cold to start his Saab which by the way he was a dealer for with his showroom in Atwood's Garage in west Barnstable.

Our friendship ended when my wife took him to small claims court trying to collect his bill.

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At the 1952 RNC national convention when President Eisenhower was nominated with Mrs. Paul Swift

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If you could do it over, would you join the military?



Although my time in the Navy was enjoyable and brings back wonderful memories, Probably not.

I'm glad I did it but as I've mentioned in other stories I was about to be drafted and certainly didn't want to go in the Army, It seemed like joining the Navy was the only way to go and I just made it, my draft papers arrived after I signed up but before I reported for duty.

At the time I had a great job and a wonderful girl friend, about to be 21 and had everything going for me. The war in Korea was going on and stories from the battlefield were not good.

However as much as I didn't want to go it did me a world of good and added to my education as well as how to be self sufficient and get along in the world.

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I'm a great believer in every eligible man be trained in military service and maintaining a strong armed service.

What are your favorite musicians, bands or albums?



It's pretty hard to select my very favorites, I enjoy all most all songs that I can understand the lyrics to, especially lively faster tunes. Some bring back memories and I frequently spend hours just listening to the wide selection on-line today.

Starting when I was about 10 or so I salvaged an old wind up Victrola from my grandmother's barn and would buy used 78 rpm records they took out of Juke Boxes for 10 cent each.

I remember my favorites were Irish songs popular during that time.

During the war my favorites were the big bands with Glen Miller top of the list.

Later I still remember playing the "Beer Barrel Polka" on a Juke Box while on a trip from the Cape in a little roadside diner and it's still one of my favorites along with many polkas like "The

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Blue Skirt Waltz”. I also enjoy both the German version (Rosamunde) and the Czech Version (Skoda lasky) of Beer Barrel Polka.

When I was about 15 (1946) I remember listening to “To Each His Own” by Eddie Howard over and over while “Necking” with one of the Summer girls, the romance was soon over but I’ve never forgotten the song or her and I probably listen to the song about once a week as it was also one of Etta’s favorites as well. Etta was a country music fan and we both listened to it by the hour while traveling and my favorite radio station now is “Willie’s Road House” on Sirius XM.

I like early country music such is done by the Carter Family & Grand old Opry but very little “Alternative Country”.

I also enjoy a lot of foreign singers and groups like Heidi Hauge, the Seekers, Slim Dusty and ABBA.

I have hundreds of YouTube links to music ranging from Ray Conniff, James Last and Andre Rieu to Dr. Hook.

As I write this “Chattahoochee” by Allen Jackson may be my favorite as it brings back memories of Etta and I camping frequently on the Chattahoochee river.

What was one of the most difficult experiences during your time in the military, and how did you get through it?



Actually looking back on my time in the Navy, aside from the desire to be nearer home for the first few months none of it was difficult.

I joined knowing I would be drafted shortly and as my family had always been seafarers and my father a Navy veteran it was an easy choice. However it did require an 8 year commitment, 4 regular and 4 reserves versus a much shorter Army tour.

I certainly didn't expect my Navy service to turn out as well as it did.

I'd finished Automotive Technical School right out of High school with high marks and had a great job at a Kaiser Frazier

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dealership in Hyannis when I decided to join, just after I signed up I got my draft notice.

I'd been going with my future wife for several months and was quite worried our time apart would probably end our relationship as we both agreed not to be exclusive as she was still in high school and didn't want to be tied down.

Boot camp was not as bad as I expected and Etta came down to visit one weekend with my parents.

Fortunately the Navy decided to send me to Great Lakes for Engine man school which was my first choice and having just spent 2 years at technical school I graduated first in my class.

Turning 21 shortly after joining the Navy let me make some great memories during my time there with weekends in Chicago, Milwaukee, Lake Geneva and even attending the Republican National Convention with a delegate from Barnstable where Eisenhower was nominated.

Things turned even better when I graduated top of the class as we were allowed to pick our next assignments from those available starting from the top down.

Only one choice wasn't a ship, "The Mine Hunting Unit, Norfolk Va." and I took it not knowing what I was getting into but I hoped it was on dry land.

It probably was the best choice of my life, it turned out to be a small detached unit of about 30 men who were keeping an eye on possible Russian mines in Chesapeake Bay as well as our own

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fixed mines which were controlled from shore in case the enemy ventured in. It all counted as sea duty and I spent the rest of my time there.

It was all top secret at the time and we were also evaluating various short range aids to navigation for the Navy. The Unit was very relaxed and we led a very good life, the Engine men only had to keep the small generators in shape and maintain a couple of Jeeps and occasionally fix an officers car.

For about 8 months after arriving in Norfolk I drove home to Cape Cod every weekend to see Etta. On May 30th 1953 I asked her to marry me and she said yes, Luckily her brother was also stationed in Norfolk at the same base living off base with his wife and new baby.

Her parents let Etta come down and stay with them till we got married in August.

Etta and I had a beautiful apartment right on the beach at Chesapeake Bay and we stayed there till Tom was born, just in time to leave the Navy.

Another fortunate thing was the fact I'd had the schooling and experience to pass every test available to improve my rank and before I left I had 6 months as First Class Petty Officer under my belt making quite good pay at the time.

Of course I didn't appreciate it all then but the service was a great asset in preparing for the rest of my life.

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How did our family experience WWII?



I've covered a lot of this subject in my other stories but will try to summarize it.

Even though my father was a WWI Navy veteran with 3 dependents he was called into the service except he was in an essential occupation and deferred.

Hitler had been invading Europe for several years and most of us expected we would enter the war but was totally surprised when we were attacked at Pearl Harbor. The whole country mobilized quite well after that.

Living near the coast we had total blackouts with wardens patrolling the streets for any light leaking by our special blackout curtains.

Vehicle headlamps were blacked out half way and night driving was dangerous and discouraged.

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The country was just recovering from the depression and already used to hard times.

Rationing was in effect and we were issued stamps for certain food and fuel however all in all our family really didn't seem to suffer much.

My father was in the refrigeration business which was considered critical for food preservation and had unlimited gas coupons and serviced many commercial and restaurant freezers and coolers with their owners happy to provide him a good supply of all sorts of meat and other rationed items as a reward for taking care of them at all hours.

He was on call 24 hours a day and the phone rang constantly and although the work was very rewarding financially really took a toll on him physically.

Near the end the war started my folk bought a large Victorian home with a big barn that my father used for his business. My mother completely restored the home and beautifully furnished it with period furniture, mostly from auctions as most everyone was selling all they could to get by.

Although I'm sure the adults were apprehensive I have great memories of the years spent at that house, I spent summers at a boys camp in Maine as my parents were busy working and there was anxiety the Nazis might start bombing the east coast.

At school we were taught how to respond during air raids and had Red-Cross courses in first aid, had Airplane identification

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charts for both friendly and enemy planes and I remember the skies full of planes on their way to Europe from bases in western Mass.

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Tell me what a typical day in the military was like for you.



As I've mentioned in other stories I spent all my Navy duty in the United States.

After my Boot Camp and Training schools I was assigned to the "Minehunting Unit" stationed at the Little Creek Amphibious Base near Norfolk, VA.

I arrived there as a 3rd class Engineman and immediately was issued my "Liberty Card" which I retained for the remaining 3 years allowing me to freely go on and off base as I wished, an unheard of privilege at the time. The Unit was actually on "detached duty" from Mine Force, Atlantic Fleet. headquarters in Charleston SC.. under the command of a Lt. Commandeer and the whole unit had a very casual manner except the "Diving crew" who used the full helmeted diving gear of the day, Scuba

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diving was fairly new and still not in use for their dangerous work in Chesapeake Bay.

Our engine group had a Chief Petty officer and one 1st Class. Engineman a couple of 2nd Class and 2 of us 3rd class when I arrived.

Each year as the tests came out to be promoted I passed and went from 3rd, 2nd and up to 1st class in my first 3 years and it was as high as I could go as an enlisted man.

As I mentioned we were pretty casual, wore dungarees and had very few inspections and if late to roll call someone always covered for you.

When we got married, a little over a year after I joined Etta and I got a great waterfront apartment with a beach right on Chesapeake Bay. My hours were just as though I had a regular job, 5 days 8-4 . Etta worked at a store nearby, we had a nice car and took weekend trips to the Shenandoah mountains among other places.

My average day started by arriving on-base about 8am and maintaining some small power plants in our building behind the office. Also maintaining a couple of Jeeps and after I was promoted mostly keeping records, ordering parts and tools needed.

Some days I would accompany the Electronic Technicians in a Jeep to our shore station in a WWII watch tower at Fort Story to run the power plants while the ET used the Shoran system.

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Other days I'd take a large Navy truck loaded with supplies on the Kiptopeke Ferry to Cape Charles to meet our men and transfer the supplies to a small boat they used to get to the shore station at Cape Charles Lighthouse.

Occasionally I'd take the truck down through Virginia Beach and along the shore 21 miles to the Currituck Light in Corolla NC.

I really enjoyed the days away from the shop.

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What was your role in the military?



Our primary job was maintaining special several small 4 cylinder power plants used to power the Shoran navigation units used in our shore stations which were set up in lighthouses on Smith Island VA, Currituck light, NC and Fort Story near Virginia Beach.

These were used to pinpoint any suspicious objects the ship we used saw on sonar, then the divers would go out, dive down and retrieve what was found, mostly gallon paint cans, 55 gallon drums and junk thrown overboard from the many Navy and civilian ships going in and out of the bay.

After a while we got a couple of Jeeps and I was assigned to maintain them. There was an old grease rack out back of our building which I took over to service them. I also was able to maintain my own car and even the Lt. Commanders.

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A not so typical day was once the Lt. Commander called me up to his office, thought maybe I was in trouble but it turned out his car had died on his way to work in downtown Norfolk.

He told me to take a Jeep and one of the men and see what was wrong with it. We found the car, a fairly new Ford V8 with a fuel supply problem.

There was a Pep Boys Auto store across the street and I went in and bought a 16 foot logging chain, I used that chain for years, even after I started the garage.

We hooked the Ford up to the Jeep with the chain and proceeded to tow it back to the base, probably been court marshaled if stopped by the MPs.

In any case we made it back to the base and when we approached the gate were flagged through without stopping and SALUTED !

I was familiar with that Ford engine and what happened was the fuel pump push-rod had worn down and no longer had stroke enough to pump gas. We replaced it and it was still running when I left.

While in the service, where were you first posted and where did you travel?



As a new Naval recruit I first attended Boot Camp at Bainbridge, MD in March of 1952 for 6 weeks.

After graduating from there as a Seaman I was sent to Great Lakes Naval Training near Chicago where I studied to be an Engine man. This was a perfect fit for me as I'd just recently graduated from Franklin Tech in Boston where I studied nearly the same subjects.

With this great advantage I managed to graduate from there first in the class which gave me my choice of available assignments. On the day we chose the whole class assembled in a room with all the assignments on a blackboard and although it sounded ominous I chose the "Mine Hunting Unit" in Norfolk VA. As it was the only one that wasn't a ship.

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It turned out to be one of the best choices of my life as it was a small group of about 30 men who were actually on a temporary assignment to Little Creek VA. Our job was keeping track of any mine activity in Chesapeake Bay along with testing various navigational aids for use in our tracking projects.

The assignment was rated as “Preferred Sea Duty” which counted as sea duty without the extra pay, however it did count as sea duty in regard to time in service and it kept me from being forced to go to sea after 2 years. As temporary as it was it lasted long enough for me to complete my whole tour in this country on shore, it was great at the time but not a very interesting story.

How did you get your first job?



I assume it's my first full time job when I entered the workforce, not the many part time ones while in High School.

I had just graduated from Franklin Tech after a course in Automotive Service and Management and living with my parents on Main Street in Barnstable.

I started working almost immediately at Ernie Whitney's Atlantic gas station where I'd been working part time since it re-opened after WWII. for several owners. I got a minimal salary but made a 50% commission for all the repair work I did.

Not long after starting I was approached by Carl Liimatainen who with his family recently opened a Kaiser-Frazer dealership in a brand new building which also housed their Auto Body shop. Ernie was furious, not at me but Carl who had come onto his property with his proposal.

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As I remember I got Ernie's blessing and took the job and we were lifelong friends, he helped me a lot when I opened my own Garage a few doors away about 6 years later.

Carl's offer was be "Service Manager" at a decent salary but was really a title only as I was the only one there that wasn't a body man and I'd check the customer in, write the work order, get the parts and do the work.

I was very happy there, they treated me like family and I have great memories of my time there.

I also met my wife Etta during that time but it all came to an end with my joining the Navy just in time to avoid the Draft.

The back story is that Roland Peal who was a district manager for Mobil Oil and very influential was a good friend of my parents and had followed my interest in automobiles and technical training. He had plans for me and the Liimatainen's had a Mobil station at their shop.

He was a major reason I got that job and many others to follow, including having Mobil Oil build me a brand new garage and service station right across the street from our Main Street house.

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Carl Jr. Carl Sr. Bill Whalstead Freeman

The Crew at Liimatainen's

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Tell me about an adventure you've been on.



I can't think of any real adventure like climbing Mount Kilimanjaro or such, however my whole life has been a wonderful adventure.

I suppose my venture into starting my own business certainly might apply as an adventure and certainly a life changing one which shaped our whole family for years.

I'd just been discharged from the Navy and with my wife Etta and son Tom were living with my parents in the house on Main Street when again I was approached by Roland Peal, the Mobil Oil representative for the area who was a family friend and who had been following my automotive career such as it was including my schooling, Navy training and work at a Mobil station in Hyannis.

His proposal was to have Mobil lease the large old garage occupied by the W. A. Jones construction company next to

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Barnstable News on Main Street Barnstable and renovate it into a large service station and garage facility perfectly suited for my planned service work.

I was discharged in early March 1956 and the new place wouldn't be ready till over a year later in April, 1957.

During that time we purchased our house on Sunset Lane and Roland kept me busy training at several of the Mobil Stations on the cape and Mobil's training facility in New Bedford.

I was fortunate to obtain most of my initial equipment from two of my previous employers, the Liimatainen K-F dealership had closed it's dealership and I obtained two first line tune up machines, jacks and many tools. At about the same time the Sherman Square station closed and I got most everything I needed as I'd collected quite a good lot for school and previous jobs.

As far as financing was concerned my folks lent us \$5000.00 and we borrowed \$5000.00 from First National Bank of Yarmouth who's president was also a family friend.

The tanks held 10.000 gallons of gas and it took \$2000.00 to fill them, Mobil expected a check on delivery and during some lean times I'd call the bank for a short term loan, was always told "just write the check" and they would cover it till some money came in.

Etta and I were fully involved partners in this and each business we entered into, she kept the books and ran parts trips several

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times a day.

At the time we opened there were two other service stations in town and the Mid Cape was just starting to carry traffic past Barnstable village so fuel sales were not ever enough to sustain the overhead but we managed to survive on repair work and by 1962 were able to pay off all our debt.

All through the first years we were working 7 days a week and featured emergency 24 hr service with a lighted phone number sign in the front window.

For a while we had been discussing opening a small one man shop doing strictly tune up and specialty repair keeping only the profitable portions of the business along with my sidelines of snow plowing and installing large propane tanks for local gas companies with my wrecker..

When our lease became too expensive to maintain in 1962 my parents built us a nice two bay shop behind their house which we rented till they both passed away which gave them income and us a great place to run our shop.

We very successfully operated this way till about 1987 when Etta and I decided to slow down and slowly turned it over to Bob. We continued helping out summers till Bob had an opportunity to get a more secure full time position on the Fire Department.

It certainly was the greatest adventure in my life however there were many others as well.

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Freeman's Friendly Service - Main St. Barnstable Village 1957



Freeman's Auto Specialty Shop "Freeman's Friendly Service"

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Articles about opening new shop and retiring in Barnstable
Patriot

Barnstable Patriot, Thursday, December 06, 1962.

Freeman Crosby Opens New Shop In Barnstable

Freeman Crosby, former manager of the Mobil station on Main Street, Barnstable, has opened his new service garage on the Main Street parking lot. He will specialize in ignition work, electrical service, brakes repairing, carburetor service and engine tune-up.

To be formally opened on Monday, the new garage of cement block construction will be able to handle fleet maintenance of power mowers and similar machines. Outboard motors, however, will not be one of the repair services offered.

Wrecker service and snowplowing will be continued as formerly. Freeman plans to utilize his ability as a mechanic exclusively. He will have more time to complete any job he undertakes without the interruption of gas pumping. His phone number is FO 2-6002. Freeman's many friends wish him success in this venture.

Patriot Article 12/21/1989 Freeman Crosby's Friendly Service garage for all intents and purposes is no more. It's still physically there, abutting the county parking lot behind the Main Street stores. But Freeman Crosby, after many, many years, has shut up shop and doesn't dispense the good personal service you couldn't get anywhere else.

A Collection of Life Stories

Have you ever doubted your faith?



As to my faith I've never considered doubting it however I never thought it was based on a conventional religion as I always talked directly to God where as most pray through Jesus...

During my first years I was brought up as a Unitarian and went to Sunday school for a few years.

However I haven't attended a regular Sunday service since.

In order to do some research for this story I decided to look up the Unitarian principles and apparently the Unitarian religion teaches praying to God, so apparently that is the basis for my faith and I'm actually grateful to have it clarified in my mind.

A Collection of Life Stories

Did you consider any other careers? How did you choose?



Not really however as a youngster I'd wanted to be a railroad engineer and have always been interested in them and had some elaborate model train layouts.

I have been fascinated with automobiles as long as I can remember and remember my father telling me about his early cars and experiences.

By the time I was 10 I could identify every car I saw and even before that when a Chain Drive Mack would drive by the house I'd run out to watch it.

Fortunately my parents allowed my to follow the path I wanted in the automobile business which led to a successful and happy career as I was originally being groomed in grammar school for MIT which was my grandfather's Alma mater.

A Collection of Life Stories

What is the best job you've ever had?



Another hard one as I really enjoyed almost every job I had and have good memories of each even including the time I spent in the Navy.

I can tell you about one I didn't like at all though.

I'd was 25 and just been discharged from the Navy and returned to Barnstable with my wife of 3 years and a 6 month old son.

Fortunately my parents came through again and let us stay with them in their fairly large house till we could get settled.

The job I had before enlisting was no longer available as Kaiser-Frazer was out of business and there weren't many others available.

The William A Jones construction company was still located across the street from our home on main st. and I knew the owners so I asked for a job there thinking I'd be helping their mechanic who I also knew.. They agreed but when I showed up

A Collection of Life Stories

they had me working at the asphalt plant getting it ready for the summer season and once that was done had me on a road crew spreading asphalt behind a dump truck. It wasn't for me and I told them I'd expected to work in the shop so they put me back there but shortly after I was asked to train at a service station in Chatham for my new service station which was soon to be built replacing Jones Garage.

I have pleasant memories of working at the local drugstore soda fountain, Whitney's Service Station, Jack Schluters Mobil Gas, Ted Latham's Mobil Gas, and the Liimatainens Kaiser-Frazer and of course my own businesses among others I've forgotten.

Where did you go on your honeymoon?



We had great plans for our Honeymoon, I was still in the Navy and had 2 weeks leave.

Etta had been living with her brother near my base in Norfolk, VA and we had traveled together to the Cape for our wedding.

Our plan was to spend the first night in Plymouth at a motel then travel to Washington, DC where we would spend a few days seeing the sights and relaxing before heading back to Virginia where we had rented our first apartment.

I remember driving around the Washington Monument and seeing the line of people wrapped around the block in the August heat and as we were both anxious to get back to our new little home we decided to head there instead.

Soon after that however we did take a nice trip to the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia and we thoroughly enjoyed just settling in to our new life for the rest of my leave

A Collection of Life Stories

How did you meet your spouse? When did you know you wanted to marry them?



Earlier I mentioned how a car full of boys would “Cruise” Main Street Hyannis looking for girls.

Main Street Hyannis did finally pay off as a couple of years after high school while sitting in the car with some guys I saw my future wife running down the sidewalk and said to myself “I want to meet her”.

Her cousin was one of the boys who used to go out with us and one night a while later she had been left without a ride by another cousin and we offered her a ride, as she knew one of us she got in and we took her home.

Apparently I was able to talk her into going out with me and we were married as soon as she finished high school.

A Collection of Life Stories

It wasn't that simple a story however as she was only 16 when I met her and I had to overcome a lot of competition from both high school students and all the service men at Camp Edwards who came to town looking for girls.

Slowly I prevailed and we were going steady for quite a while when I went into the Navy, we both agreed to date during my absence though but wrote about every day keeping our romance alive .

My parents brought her with them for a "Family visitors weekend" while I was in boot camp at Bainbridge, MD and we had time together during my post boot camp leave.

After school at Great Lakes I became stationed in Norfolk, VA. where I was able to drive home weekends to see her for a few hours before driving back.

At this point we both knew each other was serious and when she graduated high school I asked her to marry me on Memorial Day 1953, she accepted and came to live with her brother and his wife also in stationed in Norfolk till our wedding in August 1953 back on the Cape.

What was your wedding like?



I was still in the Navy and we had to plan ahead to save up enough leave for the time required to travel to the Cape, have the wedding and get back so we did it all in two weeks.

Etta had been living near me in Norfolk since our engagement so that left most of the planning to the folks at home and about all we had was her wedding dress before we left for the Cape.

I got married in my Navy Dress Blues which was a custom during that period.

The wedding was planned for August 22, 1953 which would be half way through my leave on the Saturday after we got home. There was a 3 day waiting period after we obtained the license and during that time a blood test was required.

We managed to make the 3 day waiting period but had to get a waiver for the blood test so our family friend Judge Paul Swift obliged, the Swifts also gave us a beautiful antique mirror which

A Collection of Life Stories

we still have.

On that subject we got many wonderful gifts from many of the Barnstable socialites who were invited by my parents but not really expected to attend I'm sure.

Both the wedding and reception was held at the Centerville Baptist Church with the reception being provided by lot's of Etta's family members.

My parents held the rehearsal dinner at their home the evening before, Etta's family was strictly against any alcoholic beverages so the rehearsal dinner was the only place my folks were able to serve them.

The reception was in the Church hall and catered by several of Etta's relatives.

After the wedding we drove to Plymouth and stayed at the Yankee Traveler Motor Lodge which is still there. On our way we stopped for a memorable lobster dinner at a small restaurant in Manomet.

The story of our honeymoon is told in a separate story.

Wedding Photos

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A Collection of Life Stories



Miss Robbins Is Bride At Centerville

Young Couple,
To Live in Virginia

CENTERVILLE, Aug. 20. A double-ring service was used by the Rev. Walter R. Goehring, pastor of the South Congregational Church, when he officiated at the wedding there of Miss Etta Beatrice Robbins of this village and Freeman Maynard Crosby 2d, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tom O. Crosby of Barnstable, at 4 p.m. Saturday.

Greens and white gladioli were used as decorations for the ceremony. Miss Robbins, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Percy B. Robbins, was given in marriage by her father. She wore a full-length gown of white nylon lace and net, topped by a long-sleeved lace jacket.

The bride's fingertip nylon net veil was caught to a crown of lace and seed pearls. Her spray bouquet of stephanotis was centered by a white orchid. She was attended by Miss Barbara Coleman of Osterville, gowned in pink nylon net and carrying an old-fashioned bouquet of pink tea rosebuds.

Serving as best man for Mr. Crosby was the bride's brother, P. Burton Robbins Jr., while Bruce Lovejoy of Barnstable and Eugene Crocker of Hamden, Conn., and Centerville were ushers. The latter is a cousin of the bride.

Mrs. Hazel Roche was organist and Mrs. Virginia Buckler of Centerville, soloist. Following the nuptials, a reception took place in the church vestry, which was decorated with bouquets of cosmos and gladioli.

Choice of Mrs. Robbins for her daughter's wedding was a pink dress, white accessories and a glabella corsage. The bridegroom's mother appeared in a gray cotton dress, with which she wore gray accessories and a corsage of pink rubrum lilies.

On completion of a week's motor trip to Washington, the young newlyweds will take up residence at 9644 Beaumont Street, Ocean View, Norfolk, Va. The bridegroom is stationed at the Amphibious Base in Little Creek, Va., with a mine-hunting unit of the Navy.

The bride's traveling outfit was a white linen suit, to which was pinned the orchid from her bouquet and complemented by white accessories. A graduate of Barnstable High School with the class of 1953, she has been employed as a clerk. Her husband was graduated from Barnstable High in 1949 and from the Franklin Institute of Technology two years later.

What is one of the most romantic gestures you've ever made?



My wife always considered one of the most romantic gestures I've ever made and her final decision that I truly loved her more than my car was my driving through a blinding Northeast blizzard to see her.

As I may have mentioned I was working for a Kaiser Frazier dealer and had a beautiful 1948 Frazier car that meant the world to me.

She mentioned that event many times through our marriage how she remembered my driving through that storm to see her and it convinced her to marry me

A Collection of Life Stories



My 1948 Frazier with Etta posing at Craigville Beach

Tell me about the first date you ever went on.



My first real contact with girls was when I attended Mrs. Hess's Dancing school in Middle school.

Even though I took dancing lessons for a few years I never really was able to master dancing to this day.

Not only were we taught dancing but proper etiquette which included how to properly ask a girl to dance and handle ourselves like ladies and gentlemen.

I remember the girls wore white gloves but don't think the boys did however remember many of the girls wearing corsets which felt like a rock when dancing with them.

At the classes the boys all sat on one side and the girls on the other and we would rush to ask the girl we wanted when the dance was announced..

A Collection of Life Stories

This was probably my first experience with dating as I had a favorite girl who lived a few streets away and would pick her up and take her home from the evening classes.

My parents would usually give us a ride but I do remember walking her when the weather was warm enough.

Of course I had to go to her door and escort her to the car and walk her back when arriving home..

I think we also did go to a few movies but I moved away after my freshman year in High School and only saw her one more time when she was visiting the Cape.

I read in a high school reunion yearbook she married a Dr. And had a very successful life in NJ.

What is one of the most expensive things that you've ever bought?



You would think a house would be the most expensive thing however my last RV camper tops the list aside from my financing the home next door for the family “guest house”

Fortunately we bought our first house on the Cape long before prices rose to today’s level and although we remodeled our first place several times it never reached the actual cost of the RV.

In fact the last two Rvs list prices both exceeded the cost of our home on Cape Cod.

A Collection of Life Stories

What is one of the most memorable camping trips you've been on?



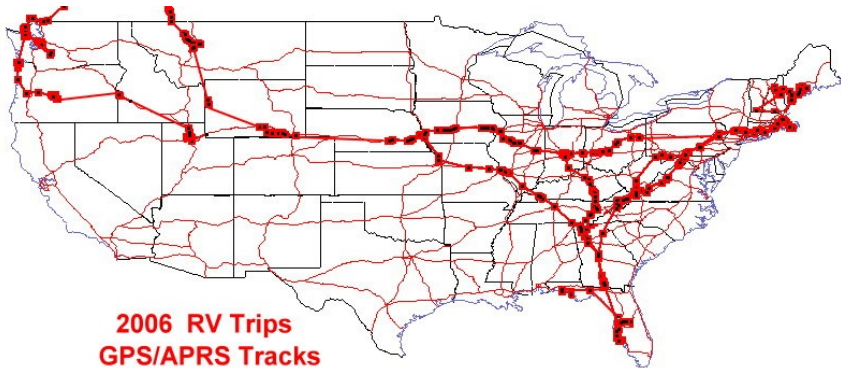
Camping and road trips were a large part of my life and mostly were with Etta throughout the East and Mid-West however the longest and most memorable trip during almost 45 years of RV travel was in 2006 when Letty and I traveled about 6000 miles during the summer in our new RV.

The main trip was through Iowa to leave our cat with a friend then to her son's in Bend, Oregon via Utah and Salt Lake City for her 70th birthday celebration where all her family spent about a week, then we continued to the west coast and followed the Pacific Coast Highway up to Port Angeles, Seattle and Vancouver Island where we stayed several days visiting Victoria and much of the area.

Then over to Vancouver, Canada, up to the Jasper Glacier, Banf & Lake Louise, we then came back to Yellowstone Park for a few

A Collection of Life Stories

days, Jackson Hole for a few more then over to Iowa to pick up the cat then to Maine via Indianapolis where I left Letty and the cat while I attended my sister Dorothy's 90th birthday celebration. We visited a multitude of sites and places of interest along the way too many to mention. There were other trips as well that year and I have attached a map recorded by my GPS of all the trips that year.



Freeman and Letty in Oregon 2006

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2005 Sprinter RV during our 2006 Camping Trip



A Collection of Life Stories

Have you pulled any great pranks?



Several but one of my most successful was one Halloween.

For many years the local kids would ring the bell at the Baptist church at Main & Rendezvous Ave. in Barnstable. This one year the custodian let it be known he was sleeping at the Church to prevent this.

That year we kids all hung around the barn next door where the Edwards kids slept in the converted loft.

My idea was the day before we would sneak up to the belfry and attach a nylon fishing line to the clapper and run it to a window in the loft so we could ring the bell even though it was being guarded.

It all worked to perfection as the line was nearly invisible and when released fell away from the barn into the woods.

A Collection of Life Stories

Only casualty of this one was my father being really mad I'd used a brand new roll of his fishing line.

Another involving Halloween many years later involved our large pumpkin we put on the doorstep which was almost always stolen and smashed by the local kids.

We had a new Polaroid flash camera and I mounted a solenoid on the trigger activated by a switch under the pumpkin. Sure enough one of the kids tried to steal it and we got a photo of a really scared kid's face who promptly dropped the pumpkin and ran away.

One that I wasn't involved in that the local kids did each year was to steal the hay wagon from the Bacon Farm and roll it down post office hill to the Courthouse. It was quite a job but they managed to roll it up to the front door and lift the wagon off the front axel then place the two wagon shafts around the flagpole and re-assemble it so it seemed impossible to remove it.

Another earlier one was the locals did at the Baptist Church was to steal a goat from the Bacon farm and with great effort manage to get it up to the belfry, tie it's tail to the clapper and run fast.

Did you ever move as a child? What was that experience like?



We moved 2 times during my childhood however I looked forward to each and the experiences were exciting as were those that followed which I'll include as well

When I was born in 1931 we lived at 92 Trenton Street Melrose, Mass and lived there until 1942 when my parents bought a large Victorian house at 63 Hillside Avenue in Melrose and completely renovated it..

Shortly thereafter they also bought a house and store in Barnstable where they planned to semi-retire after the war and also restored it to it's colonial past, it being built in the late 1600's to early 1700's.

In 1947 after the war had ended we moved to the Cape where I finished my last 3 years in High School.

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As an adult I lived there until my marriage and discharge from the Navy in 1956 when Etta and I bought a small cottage at 35 Sunset Lane in Barnstable which over time we renovated into a 4 bedroom garrison colonial.

In the late 70's and early 80's we had started to vacation a few weeks at a time in Florida on Manasota Key where my parents had also wintered for several years in the past.

By this time we were also camping a lot in a small trailer and decided to reserve a couple of months in a trailer park on the key for the next year. Etta enjoyed the park and we returned several years for longer periods finally purchasing a mobile home on the beach in 1987. We became Florida residents although still spending summers on the Cape. In 1991 the residents bought the park from the previous landlord and in 1992 we bought a small concrete block home where I reside today.

Other property adventures

Around 2013 the Unit next door became available and along with my 3 children and spouses we bought it for their use as a place to vacation and it has been used extensively by them, the grandchildren and friends. Since then both Tom, Nancy & Diane have bought homes locally and Bob & Paula added a new room to my place and now living here assisting me.

We never actually moved to them but during the course of living on Sunset Lane we also purchased a small cabin in North

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Haverhill, N.H. for weekends etc.

I then built a new cabin on a portion of the N.H. land and sold the first one using the money to buy a large tract nearby.

Over the next few years we developed that property constructing more cabins and selling lots.

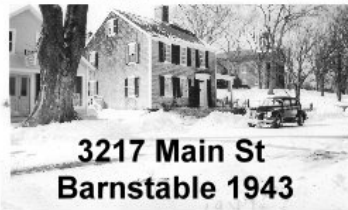
Also during the time we were on Sunset Lane we also had an opportunity to purchase 18 acres of land on Red Brook Rd, in Waquoit from one of Etta's relatives for a very reasonable sum.

My friend Ed Kelly, a land surveyor created a subdivision plan of 18 lots. After selling the ones easily accessible from the road we sold the rest to a builder to develop in one package.

Another story involving land was when my father died in looking over his papers we discovered several deeds to wood lots in Brewster owned by my great great grandfather Freeman Crosby which had passed down through the family all the way to my father who had told me they were taken by the state for Nickerson State Park. Again my Friend Ed Kelly came through as he mentioned one day he had run into some land in Brewster marked "owners unknown" that had previously been owned by a Freeman Crosby in the 1800's. I told him about the original deeds we had to land in Brewster and he was able to match the deeds to the lots. I took the deeds to the Brewster town hall and by paying 3 years back taxes they were transferred to me. We enjoyed cutting wood and visiting the land for several years but finally it

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was taken for conservation by the town.



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1956



**35 Sunset Lane
Barnstable
Showing Remodel
From 1956
to today**

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**Mobile Home 9 Golfo St
Englewood Fl**



**Present Home
Estada St.
Englewood Fl**

Hobbies throughout my life



I have had several hobbies during my lifetime each of which led me to learn many new things.

As I have mentioned previously my first real interest was in trains and my father who was a licensed electrician built large train layouts in both of the first houses we lived in. I learned a multitude of lessons both electrical and mechanical from helping build and maintain these systems including soldering, solenoids, types of electricity (AC vs DC), voltage, amperage all at a very young age which I've used daily throughout my life.

During the same period I had a great interest in Guns, was a member of a gun club & belonged to the Jr. .NRA. and later on the Cape the Jr. Bass River Rod & Gun Club.

Again my father was a big influence in encouraging me, we had rifle ranges in both my first houses and I had a collection of rifles, pistols and shotguns.

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I remember him taking me hunting both while we were in Melrose and later on the Cape including duck hunting in Barnstable Harbor in freezing weather.

What I'd consider my next hobby was automobiles which I've already covered and continues to my recent involvement for 12 years in the Florida Flywheelers antique engine club.

I would have to place my Ham Radio hobby at the top of the list as it has been a part of most of my life.

I was fascinated reading about Ham Radio in my teens but didn't have the opportunity to pursue it until I was stationed along side electronic technicians in the Navy.

I obtained my Amateur Radio license at FCC headquarters in Norfolk, VA while still in the Navy.

I was a charter member of the Barnstable Radio Club which was formed shortly after I returned from the Navy and served as it's president for it's first eight years . I was also a charter member of the Englewood Amateur Radio Society and still remain an honorary member. I was instrumental in installing the second voice repeater on Cape Cod (Shootflying Hill) and ran my own repeater which had several unique features for several years. During this time I became interested in digital radio and wrote software for and ran a Teletype bulletin board from my home on Sunset Lane. When Packet radio became popular I then ran a Packet Bulletin Board and wrote over 100 various servers and

A Collection of Life Stories

message routing programs used by hams worldwide. These used computers extensively which led into my present hobby involving operating and working with computers.

Studying and compiling our family Genealogy was another use of my computer which started when my cousin Betty Carmody sent me the old 1800's Crosby family bible. About the same time I met another Crosby at a radio club meeting who provided me with an extensive genealogy file of our family back to the 1440's

I added this file to what we had compiled from the bible and placed it on my website where it attracted a number of others leading to establishing a group of over 100 contributors. At the moment the on-line genealogy contains over 16,000 people not all directly related but with some connection to each other.

As I mentioned another hobby has been writing code and running several websites for myself and other organizations I have belonged to.

Barnstable Radio Club Annual Banquet Held

About 60 members and guests attended the annual banquet of the Town of Barnstable Radio Club

held recently at Armands in Hyannis.

President Freeman Crosby, WTK-PR, welcomed those present and introduced Clarence Bowley, president of Cape & Islands Radio Club, and his wife Connie (KIIDA) from Provincetown.

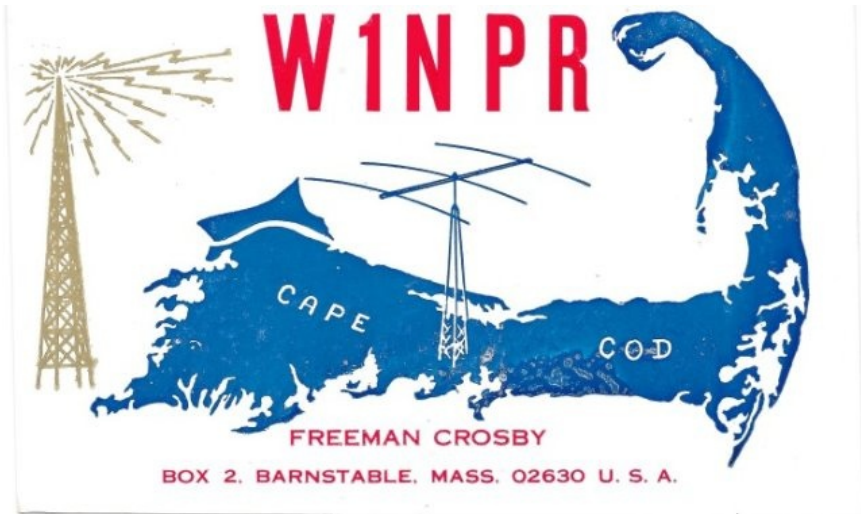
At a short business meeting following the dinner, it was voted to accept the QSL card submitted by the committee for the club's use. A vote of thanks was given the banquet committee comprised of Gerald Sherin, KIBey; Capt. John Fabbanks, KIGAZ; Arthur Flyn WIAEB; Florence M. Baker KILIE; and Robert K. Edwards KILEK.

Door prizes were awarded to the lucky ticket holders by Robert Edwards of the entertainment committee and Frank Horn, WIEUX and world traveler, gave an illustrated talk on his trip to Italy.

QSL Card designed by Sally Norris adopted by the Barnstable Radio Club

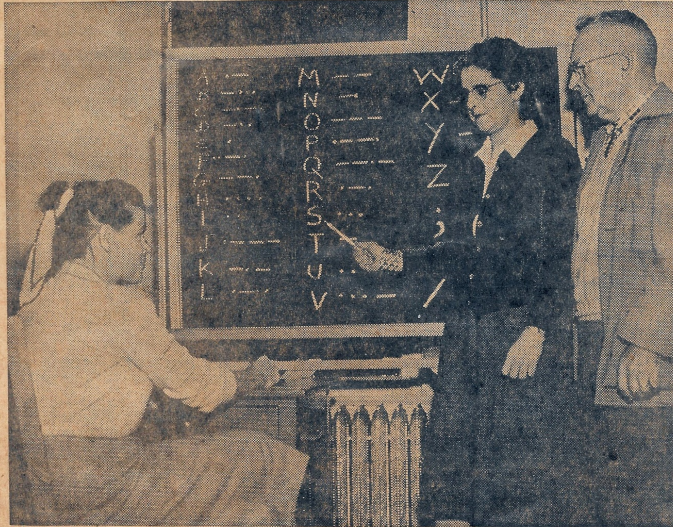
(Barnstable Patriot, Thursday, February 15, 1982;)

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Morse Code Made Easy for Her



Miss Sally Norris of Hyannis is trying to make the code work easy as she instructs Mrs. Freeman Crosby of Barnstable, seated, at a meeting of the code class of the Barnstable Radio Club. Looking on approvingly is Arthur W. Flint of South Yarmouth, a member of the Radio Club and an expert on code work, too. The class is held at the old Maritime Academy in Hyannis. (Cape Cod Standard-Times Photo)

Ham Radio "Shack" Sunset Lane Barnstable

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Junior Rod and Gun Club Officers Presented



Mr. Ira Thatcher, president of the Bass River Rod and Gun Club, presenting the officers of the Junior Rod and Gun Club to the gathering at the Club's Christmas party. Left to right, Leonard Love, secretary; Richard Graham, vice president; Freeman Crosby, treasurer; James Todd, president, and Mr. Thatcher.

