

White Grandma

My mother's parents, Edwin and Jean Grove, were dubbed "White Grandma" by us kids. They lived in a little white house on the Ridge Road in the hamlet of Johnson Creek.

A visit to White Grandma's was, in some ways, a step backward in time. The house dated back to 1840, and they had lived in it since their marriage in 1937. Though my grandfather had enlarged the house and added some modern improvements, it still retained a quaint old-fashioned charm.

Being a plank house, the outer walls were solid, so the water pipes and electric conduits were routed along the floor boards and up the interior walls. The living room windows even contained their original wavy panes of glass. I felt as though I had entered the 19th century whenever I walked through the small rooms and felt the floor boards creak beneath my feet.

For such a small house—it was absolutely dwarfed by the modern two-story home next door—there were still plenty of little nooks and crawl spaces to discover and explore. Us kids never knew what we might find every time we opened a door or peeped around a corner.

Grandma kept her washing machine and clothes dryer in a funny little back room with a slanted floor behind the kitchen. A door at the end of the short hallway behind the dining room led down narrow steps to the cellar with its low ceiling, storage shelves and rows of canned vegetables. A mysterious section on one side of the cellar was partially blocked by a crumbling stone partition. I never had the nerve to climb through and see what was hidden back there in the darkness.

A large closet in the hallway had a second door opening into a back bedroom. It was great fun to step into the closet from the hall door, push through an assortment of overcoats, and pop out into the bedroom. If I had known about "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe" at the time, this closet would have served admirably as a substitute magic wardrobe.

A small blackboard on the kitchen wall, ostensibly for messages, became covered with doodles as soon as we grew tall enough to reach the chalk and eraser. My grandmother didn't keep candy in the house, but she sometimes had a cookie jar full of homemade molasses cookies, very large and soft.

For many years a note was stuck on her refrigerator door: "He who indulges, bulges." This warning didn't have much effect on the household; Grandpa was always tall and thin while Grandma was forever short and plump.

Strange as it sounds, the most attractive feature to us kids was the steep little staircase that led to the second floor. It was tucked away behind a door in a corner of the living room, and was often blocked by a straw-backed rocking chair. The second floor had three small rooms tucked under the roof, each with a wall devoted to cupboards or closets. These were always fun to explore, full of books, old family photographs and other mementos, but the staircase itself was the main attraction.

It was remarkably cozy to sit on the carpeted steps and look through old books that lined the bookcase at the head of the stairs. These had been the childhood reading material of my uncles and aunts and dated mostly from the 1950s and early 1960s. A few were even from my grandmother's school days: I remember reading through an autograph book filled with humorous verses and signatures from the 1930s: "Yours till cows wear corsets" and "Yours till Niagara falls."

My grandparents had a tabby cat named Christopher. He was friendly enough when our paths crossed, but for the most part I only caught glimpses of him from a distance as he slunk through the shrubbery on some secret cat business of his own. Perhaps "slunk" is the wrong word, as Christopher was one of the fattest cats I've ever known. Johnson Creek was a crowded neighborhood, and I suspect Christopher made the rounds of several back doors each day and received more than his share of handouts.

Out behind the house was a garage with an upper and lower roof. It had a dirt floor and smelled of dirt, oil and engines. Against the back wall were lawn mowers, ladders, and other yard-working tools. An old scale hung from one of the roof beams; and every time I set foot in the garage, whether as boy or adult, I had to test my strength by giving that scale a pull.

Outside the garage at one corner grew an evergreen tree. Its lower branches were spaced just right to serve as a ladder, and they were worn smooth from years of kids climbing them. Ducking behind the tree to climb up onto the garage roof was a favorite summer pastime. A good-sized shade tree grew behind the garage; as I got older it became a test of courage to climb up onto the highest part of the garage roof and step across onto a limb of that tree and then jump down.

Further back in the yard was a small brown shed. Its dimly lit interior held mostly gardening tools, but back in a dark cubby hole there was a scattering of gnawed corn cobs that hinted of possible pigs or hens once living there. A small stack of old firewood behind the shed gave us kids access to the roof. We climbed up now and then, but it wasn't as adventurous as climbing onto the garage roof

Attached to the shed was the centerpiece of Grandpa's yard: a homemade swing. Knotty pine poles were used for the uprights and the big center-pole. Thick ropes were twined around the center-pole to support two swings, both made of heavy planks. The swing was enjoyed over the years by a multitude of kids: children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, neighbors and school friends.

My favorite game was to swing in high sweeping arcs, then jump off at the height of the arc to soar through the air and land tumbling in the soft grass. There was always a thrilling element of fear to the swing. The ropes creaked and the center-pole bent ominously with each swing; the exciting fear was that one of these days the pole would break and the whole thing would come crashing down. It never happened, of course.

A huge walnut tree stood in the back yard. Every autumn my grandfather gathered a bushel of walnuts for us to take home and peel and crack open. He also raked the leaves into big piles that we couldn't resist jumping into. We had no shade trees at home, so jumping into a pile of leaves was a rare treat.

Grandpa had an excellent garden, well-tended and full of vegetables and flowers. We played in the sandy soil, building roads and towns and helping ourselves to an occasional radish or strawberry. Alongside the garden stood a handful of old fruit trees that still bore fruit for us to pick. The plums

were my favorite. Also nearby was a rhubarb patch. It was almost a ritual with me on summer visits to wander out behind the shed and pick a stalk of rhubarb to gnaw on.

Behind the neighbor's house was a horse barn and pasture, and on the other side of that was a dairy farm. If the horses were out we handed fistfuls of grass over the fence to them. Sometimes my grandfather walked us over to the dairy farm to see the milking. He had grown up on a small family farm, and although he earned his living as an engineer he still had a keen interest in agriculture. There were always copies of farming magazines in the house for me to flip through during winter visits.

At the back end of my grandparents' property was a small pine grove. I suspect the trees were supplied as seedlings by my great-grandfather, William Grove. He had been an employee at Krull Park in Olcott in the 1940s and planted trees in the park. My great-uncle Chester had a similar grove of pines behind his own house on the Hartland Road.

Behind the pine trees was a large cow pasture, and away back at the far end of that was a large pond. One time my cousin Kent and I heard a rumor from somebody that there was a dead pig floating in that pond. Upon hearing this we just had to walk back there to check it out.

It was quite a trek, and my younger brother insisted on coming with us. He couldn't have been more than four years old at the time, and I wasn't sure if he should go so far from the house. But after yelling at him once or twice to go back, I relented and let him tag along. It would have been heartless of me to deny him the sight of a pig floating in a pond.

We trooped through the pasture, empty of cows at the moment, back to the pond. It was a good half mile hike, but the pig was everything we had hoped it would be: fat and swollen, floating belly up out in the middle. We walked around the perimeter of the pond, skipping stones across the water and taking a good look at the pig from all angles. On the long walk back my brother got tired and lagged behind, but still trudged along manfully without complaint. I think I only yelled at him once or twice to hurry up.

It wasn't until we were crossing into Grandpa's yard that a disquieting thought struck me: had we told anybody where we were going? Possibly we forgot that part. I glanced up at the house and my stomach did a flip-flop: a bevy of stern-faced parents were waiting for us on Grandma's porch. Uh oh.

“Where have you been? *Where?* What on earth is the matter with you! How could you take your brother all the way back there? You know he's too little to go that far.”

Well, this was rich. It wasn't like we *dragged* him back to the pond. And besides, what boy could resist walking a mile overland to see a deceased pig in a pond? Grownups just never take such enticements into account in their dealings with young boys. For my part, I was glad I let my brother come along with us. I'm certain that the adventure—if he actually remembers any of it—is one of his most cherished childhood memories.

On another afternoon Kent and I ventured out into the pasture to see the dairy herd. The scattered cows, being curious creatures, wandered over to take a closer look at us. As the large animals clustered thickly around we got a little nervous and started backing away. The cows moved in closer, so we

began to walk back to the fence. The cows ambled along with us. We broke into a trot. The cows trotted along.

Within seconds we were sprinting desperately across the pasture, the entire herd thundering at our heels. Upon reaching the fence we dove beneath the lowest wire and scrabbled into the dirt on the other side. The cows, brought up short at the fence, milled around in a cloud of dust, kicking up their heels and frisking about in their big clumsy way. They had enjoyed the run and were ready for more, but we were finished.

I had another encounter with the dairy cows that could have easily ended in tragedy. This one involved my younger sister and I. We were walking back to the pine grove near the pasture fence, when out in the pasture the herd bull spied us. Our presence somehow enraged him; he charged the fence and tried to break through. We stood rooted in our tracks, staring in horrified fascination as the huge animal bellowed at us, pawing the ground and grinding his horns against the fence post.

The thought eventually came to me that this situation might be dangerous. I had my little sister to think of, so I sent her scurrying up to the house while I remained to keep an eye on the bull. What I thought I was going to do if he came through that fence I have no idea.

Luckily—very luckily—at this point the farmer came roaring along the edge of the pasture on his tractor. He tried to drive the bull away from the fence with his tractor bucket, all the while shouting “Get out of here! Go on! Get away from here!”

His shouts had reached a desperate note before I suddenly realised that he was not yelling at the bull but at ME. With my heart pounding I turned tail and ran, not stopping until I had reached the safety of Grandma’s porch. Only years later did I realise just how much danger my sister and I had been in—and I shuddered at the thought of what might have happened if the bull had gotten through that fence.

We spent many Halloween nights trick-or-treating in Johnson Creek. We started at Grandma’s and made our way from house to house down to about Chapman’s Store and back. There was no sidewalk, so we walked along the shoulder of Ridge Road or trudged across front yards through the fallen leaves.

Johnson Creek was a nice neighborhood in those days. There were a lot of Halloween decorations up, candle-lit jack o’ lanterns lined front porches, and one house always played tapes of spooky sounds and music. It was my mother’s old neighborhood, so many of the houses we stopped at were friends of the family. Us kids were often drawn into the light of a front room for closer inspection, while the adults talked over our heads.

“Is this Nancy’s boy? Is this Scottie? Look how big he’s getting! They grow up so fast, don’t they?”

White Grandma often hosted our annual holiday get-togethers and summer picnics. Christmas gatherings followed a nearly identical routine each year. After opening presents, the adults relaxed in the living room for gossip and small talk, venturing out to the dining room table to fortify themselves with chips and dip and glasses of fruit punch. Someone would call Aunt Carol in Texas and pass the

phone around so everyone could say hello. Us cousins were usually banished to a back bedroom to play games under the supervision of Aunt Sally: Tip-It or Break The Ice when we were young, and board games like Life and Clue as we got older.

Inevitably before the evening ended we would be summoned to the living room for pictures. Every year we lined up on the couch or the stairs, fidgeting and glancing in all directions like a litter of puppies as multiple cameras snapped away and flashbulbs went off in our faces.

For summer dinners beneath the shade trees in the back yard, tables and chairs from the Hartland Methodist church were pressed into service. A table was filled with potato salad, macaroni salad, sliced watermelon, and more potato salad. Grandpa manned the grill, wielding his basting brush and preparing his famous barbecue chicken.

There were no organised activities, but someone might pull a battered old croquet set out of the garage and set it up in the side yard. Or we might bring out the Jarts game for a few rounds (the original Jarts, with skull-piercing steel tips), or just wander out back to see the horses and play in the pine grove.

In my early years Great-Grandma Hooper was the matron of honor at these family get-togethers. Jessie Hooper was the only great-grandparent I knew, the others having died before I was born; but I have only the vaguest memories of her. Visits to her house were largely devoted to exploring or playing with my cousins. I remember more clearly some of the artifacts around her: the quilts she made for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and her extensive collection of salt and pepper shakers.

And I remember the cake. This was a chocolate cake made according to Great-Grandma Hooper's own recipe. When she passed away in 1976, it became a tradition for one of the womenfolk to bake this cake for family gatherings. At least once a year, at Christmas dinners or summer picnics, someone would bring out a pan of "Grandma Hooper's Cake." We would all dutifully receive a piece of cake to munch on, murmuring little comments about keeping the tradition and passing on the recipe in memory of Grandma Hooper.

This went on throughout the next three decades. It wasn't until some time in the 1990s that a brave soul—I don't remember who—finally had the courage to speak up and publicly proclaim: "This cake is terrible."

It was true. My great-grandmother was undoubtedly a creative and resourceful woman in many ways, but her cake recipe was lousy. The cake was dry, crumbly, tasteless, mud brown in color, and entirely unappealing. All those years we dutifully choked it down, each of us too polite to say anything about it.

My own theory is that Great-Grandma Hooper devised the cake recipe not for enjoyment, but as an aid in keeping her children in line:

"I want both of you to be on your very best behavior today. Otherwise I may have to bake you a chocolate cake."

"No Mama! Don't bake the cake! We'll behave! We'll behave!"

One year at White Grandma's house I was given a brand-new archery set, complete with bow, arrows, and leather arm guard. I don't remember why; maybe it was my birthday. The set was still in its box, and my father told me to leave everything in the car until we got home, so he could teach me how to use it.

Well, I couldn't wait that long. When cousin Mike whispered a tempting plan in my ear, I was more than ready to fall in. We crept up along the line of cars in the driveway until we were next to our family station wagon. Keeping down out of sight, I opened the passenger door and retrieved the bow and arrows. We slipped behind the garage with our prize and headed out back to the pine grove.

A neighbor had some straw bales set up, so us boys strung the bow and took turns whacking arrows into those bales. After a while we thought we'd better sneak the bow back into the car before any grownups got wind of our misdeed. But it was too late. We came around the garage to find my father standing next to the car waiting for us.

Generally my mother was in charge of disciplinary matters in our household. This was one of the rare occasions when my father took me to task, which somehow made it seem all the worse. He glared down at me while I meekly handed over the bow. The first thing he did was unstring it.

“Didn't I tell you to wait until we got home? Look, you had the bow strung backwards. It could have broken and snapped right in your face. Put it in the car and don't touch it again until I say you can.”

Following a suitable period of punishment, my father did show me how to properly string and use the bow. I could never hit much of anything with it except the side of our backyard shed. But I thought it was a fun game to simply shoot an arrow straight up into the air, and watch it diminish to just a pinpoint in the sky. I would wait as long as I dared, then run like mad to get under cover before the arrow came whistling down and hit the ground with a solid *thwack!*

The original arrows are long gone, lost in the weeds behind the backyard, but I still have the bow. A few years ago I borrowed a couple of arrows from a niece who was going through an archery phase. I strung the old bow again (the right way around this time), and discovered that, yes, I could still hit the broadside of a shed with it, and not much else.

Our nearest relatives in the early 1970s were Uncle Roger's family. They lived near Middleport, next to a nice park-like stand of trees with a small winding stream. Their house was a novelty to me. It was set into a slight incline, so you could walk in the front door at ground level, go downstairs into the basement, and from there step out into the back yard. They also had a fine swimming pool, a fireplace, and an old upright piano.

I've wondered at times if there was a story behind that piano. It was well-worn and badly in need of tuning; it seemed rather out of place in Roger's neat and tidy middle-class home. I don't think anybody in the family actually played it.

At some point in the 1970s the piano ended up at our house. None of us could play it either, but the endless stream of small children that my mother looked after certainly enjoyed pounding on the keys.

The piano sat in our living room until my parents could no longer take the noise, then it was banished to my sisters' room down the hall. It grew shabbier and more out-of-tune with each passing year.

In 1981 I was given permission to dispose of it, and spent a very enjoyable week dismantling the entire thing. It was fun and instructive taking that piano apart piece by piece, and learning how it was constructed and operated. The wooden parts were all burned, but the huge and heavy cast iron frame was hauled out to its final resting spot behind the back yard. I believe it's still there, strings and all, buried beneath decades of lawn clippings.

The earliest time I can remember staying overnight at Uncle Roger's was when I was about five or six years old. My older cousin Michele was away, so I slept in her room. It was a very girly sort of room: a four poster bed with a frilly overhead canopy and lace curtains on the windows. This, coupled with my natural unease at being away from home, led to a night of tossing and turning.

I eventually dozed off and awoke to sunlight streaming through the windows. I wondered what time it was: was it too early to get up? I tried listening for breakfast sounds from the kitchen down below. As I pondered what to do, the door was nudged open a few inches and a little Dachshund trotted in. He didn't seem the least bit surprised to see me instead of my cousin, and came over to wish me a good morning. I knew then that it was okay to rise and head downstairs to breakfast.

Somewhere around that same time-frame I was invited to a birthday party for Cousin Kent. We were good friends and playmates in our childhood; but I was a very timid and bashful boy, so I hardly felt at ease among the boisterous gaggle of Kent's school chums, all of them strangers to me.

Nevertheless, I met my match in shyness that day. We were all hanging out in the garage when a car pulled up. A small boy emerged and made a few tentative steps across the driveway towards us. By coincidence his name was also Scott. At the sight of him, all the boys shouted "Scottie!" and ran out to greet him.

This wild yelling mob of boys bursting out of the garage at him was too much for the little guy. He stopped dead in his tracks, eyes wide with terror, then spun on his heels and raced back to the car. It took a lot of talking from his mother and the other boys to get him out again.

Once inside the house the timid Scottie was allowed to sit out the birthday games we played, such as Spin The Bottle, Pin The Tale On The Donkey, and something that I remember as: "I James, friend of Kent". The other timid Scott—myself—received no exemption. I had to summon up what courage I could and play along like a man.

A few years later Uncle Roger and family moved to a nice neighborhood in Clarence Center. After a few visits to this area of quiet streets, respectable houses and manicured lawns, I began to refer to my cousins, perhaps unfairly, as "the suburbanites."

Several overnight visits to Roger's house gave me a taste of middle-class suburban life. Cousin Kent and I camped out in the backyard, went for midnight swims in their huge pool, and trekked into downtown Clarence Center for pizza and pop. Down in the basement we conducted dubious experiments, usually involving fire, with his chemistry set, and played with my uncle's vintage Lionel

train layout. Kent was a sports fan, and Aunt Beverly drove us into Buffalo a few times so we could watch the Buffalo Sabres hockey team practicing at Memorial Auditorium.

At the far end of Roger's back yard stood an impressive two-story clubhouse, built by Kent and some friends. I was only inside it once or twice, but I'm willing to bet it was the envy of the neighborhood. I remember it caught fire one night, and we rushed out of the house to douse the blaze with a fire extinguisher and buckets of water scooped up from the swimming pool.

Kent and friends were eventually ordered to remove the clubhouse, so they dismantled the entire thing and transported it via wagon and garden tractor down the street to a more welcome location. Then, as boys are wont to do, they apparently lost interest, and the clubhouse was abandoned.

Behind Roger's back yard was a railroad. This was the so-called Peanut line, that had once stretched from Niagara Falls out to Canandaigua. It was virtually abandoned by the 1970s, and closed down permanently in 1978. Kent and I walked the tracks a few times, but I have no memory of ever seeing a train on it.

More interesting to me at the time were the passenger jets that flew low over the house. Uncle Roger's property was beneath one of the landing paths of the Buffalo International Airport. One year Cousin Kent built a crystal radio receiver to listen to the chatter between pilots and air traffic controllers. I remember the winter night he heard his first McDonnell-Douglas DC-10 coming in for a landing. I didn't really know what a DC-10 was, but that didn't prevent me from joining in Kent's excitement as he danced around the room shouting, "A DC-10! A DC-10!"

On a summer evening when I was about twelve or thirteen, I was riding with my aunt and uncle and cousin to stay over at their house, and we took a detour into Lyndonville to do some visiting. Kent and I went out to explore the town with some local boys, and ended up at the dam that spans Johnson Creek next to the high school. This dam is 275 feet long, and the top is just a slanted strip of concrete only a few inches wide. The group of boys, in a feat of adolescent bravado, started walking across the top of the dam in single file.

I wasn't so sure about this. There was a lot of deep water on one side, and a long drop into more water on the other. But I was a bit younger than the others, and I didn't want them to think of me as a scaredy-cat. So, keeping my eyes firmly on the narrow strip of concrete in front of me, I followed behind Kent and went foot over foot all the way across.

Everyone reached the other side without mishap, and one of the town boys produced an illicit bottle of whiskey. He passed it around and we all took a swig to toast our bravery. A pack of spearmint chewing gum was then handed round to mask the smell of the alcohol. But the pack of gum never reached me, and for the rest of that evening I hardly dared to open my mouth, for fear that my aunt and uncle would detect the whiskey on my breath.

Cousin Kent also came to stay at our house in Appleton. I recall him strumming the untuned strings on my father's old guitar and belting out a verse or two of "Jeremiah Was A Bullfrog." And one night we stayed up late, jumping up and down on the twin beds in my room and telling corny jokes, until my mother came in and said, "Alright boys, no more jokes and no more jumping. Time to settle down."

We once attempted to put on a backyard magic show. I was the alleged magician, dressed in a bathrobe and armed with a colorful silk handkerchief. Kent was supposed to be unseen, hidden inside a tall wooden box that had a small hole drilled through the top. My big trick was to crumple the handkerchief into my clenched fist, and position it so Kent could secretly draw it through the hole to make it magically vanish.

But the handkerchief got stuck and Kent voiced his frustration a little too loudly—"I can't get it through!"—causing the whole illusion to fall rather flat. The audience, consisting of Aunt Beverly and a few household kids, politely applauded our failure and then overran the stage: Aunt Bev to ask if the silverware set I was using as props belonged to my mother, and my brother to confiscate the silk handkerchief with an indignant, "Hey, that's mine!"

If the Clarence Center cousins represented my idea of middle-class suburbia, then the Cheektowaga cousins were, in my eyes at least, real city kids. Uncle Ted and family lived in a neighborhood of plain box-like duplexes set amid treeless yards. They rarely came to visit us in Appleton. Cousin Mike considered the rural countryside a barren wasteland, devoid of any attractions whatsoever.

"There's nothing to do!" he would exclaim in frustrated boredom. I couldn't really blame him; a hard-bitten city kid like him was sure to find country life a bit dull. The two of us had very little in common anyway. He liked to throw footballs around, and I wasn't sure how to even hold a football. And there was a cynical, city-bred edge to him that I never felt very comfortable with.

Cousin Joanne was more fun. She was full of energy, had a wacky sense of humor, and wasn't afraid to play the clown for the sake of entertaining us. I can still see her reciting "Diddle Diddle Dumpling My Son John" and performing her famous Wicked Witch routine:

"I'm m-e-e-e-l-l-l-ting! M-e-e-e-e-l-l-l-l-t-t-t-i-i-i-n-n-n-g-g-g!!!"

An overnight visit to the Cheektowaga cousins on their own turf was a trip into an altogether different world. There was plenty to do, but most of it was intimidating to a quiet country boy like myself. We walked down baking-hot sidewalks and across busy streets to the nearest 7-11 store for bottles of pop, and trudged even farther to the community pool.

Going swimming in the city was a far cry from just dashing out the back door at home and jumping into our own pool. Here it was all concrete, chain-link fence, and hordes of kids jostling and screaming at each other. I didn't like it.

One night Cousin Mike and I went prowling around the back streets of his neighborhood. We were slipping through a dark alley when suddenly a gang of kids burst out of the shadows at us. They ignored me but ambushed my cousin. I stared in horror as he disappeared in a circle of scuffling bodies and flailing limbs. This was far outside anything of my experience. I didn't know whether to fight or flee. Should I go to his aid, or run to the nearest door and yell for help?

But before I had time to even react, the mass of boys broke apart with a flurry of catcalls, laughter, and mock punches. With infinite relief I realised that they were all his friends. Apparently this was how pals

in the city greeted each other. I wasn't sure if my nerves could handle such a social life. We spent the rest of that evening gathered around a lighted doorstep, listening to wisecracks and crude stories told by some of the most cheerfully foul-mouthed kids I've ever encountered. It was an eye-opener.

I felt more at ease back at Uncle Ted's house, where us kids amused ourselves by sliding down the wooden staircase in our sleeping bags. We got into position at the top, took a deep breath, and launched ourselves—bump! bump! bump!—all the way down.

We stayed up late one night to watch a horror film. Most of it was B-movie silliness, but there was one scene that scared me so badly that I spent the night huddled on the couch and had to be taken home the next day. I've seen that film a few times since then; and I still find that one scene very jarring and disturbing. No wonder it nearly traumatized me back then. (If you're curious, the film is called "I Saw What You Did.")

That was the last time I stayed over. I saw the Cheektowaga cousins afterwards only at family get-togethers. I remember one final event at Ted's house in 1976; I believe it was a combination birthday and going away party. We ate Rice Krispie treats and the inevitable potato salad; and kids and grownups alike played a game of kick ball in the back yard. Shortly after, Uncle Ted and family moved to Houston, Texas; and the cousins became true city kids.

Visiting my relatives in Clarence Center and Cheektowaga was an adventure, a glimpse at lifestyles that were a little different from my own. I enjoyed the fun times and was grateful for the new experiences. But in the end I was always happy to get back to quiet Appleton: where there was nothing to do, and all day to do it.