

## When I Was a Boy

I was born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1906. My family moved to Massachusetts when I was about three. We lived on a small farm which was mostly woodland. It had some grassland, an apple orchard, and a brook ran through it.

My father had one cow, a horse named "Punch" and chickens. For Punch, there was a carriage, a sleigh for use in the snow and a flatbed wagon for gathering hay.

We had a lot of snow back in those days in Massachusetts and we had sleds called "Flexible Fliers". Later my father built a double runner which was a long plank mounted on two small sleds, the front sled being pivoted so it could be used for steering. Four or five children could ride on it. There was hardly any traffic then, so we could often coast down long hills on the road.

When I was 8 years old a friendly neighbor who had been a Swedish sailor gave me a dog. We named her "Star". She loved especially to play in the snow. She hated to have us go away without her. I can remember that when we left, she would run upstairs and watch through a window.

I had a pair of mallard ducks and it was fun watching them raise a family of ducklings. We had a big garden and the first money I earned was from a harvest of squash, selling them to a grocery store in Spencer. We loved to play in the brook. It was a small stream, but we built a little dam which would make a pool big-enough to play in. My Uncle Nat once visited us and showed us how to cut a sapling and with a hook and line how to catch a trout in our brook. Before Christmas my father and I went into our woods and cut a pine or hemlock. It was set up in the living room and decorated with candles and ornaments. The tree was fresh and green so there was not much chance of fire, but; we never lit the candles unless there was some adult there to watch it.

At that time, we had no electricity and used kerosene lamps. We had no radio and it was a special Christmas when Aunt Gertrude sent us a windup phonograph and some records. We had no running water and you wonder how we took a bath. We used a round tub in the kitchen, which was the warmest room.

We went to school in a one room schoolhouse. Six grades were taught. There was only one teacher and about 18 pupils. Of course, our mother helped a great deal by teaching us at home. For 6th grade I started to go on a small train to Spencer where there were larger schools.