

Beginnings

Log Housing In The Bush

An undistinguished genesis.

The author began his journey in Revere, Mass, USA; conceived in Catholic matrimony. His mother was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, of Immigrant Irish Catholic parents. His father was born in Vienna of Catholic Czech parents. His mother was number eleven of twelve. His father was one of one. His mother's father died of consumption at age 42. His



mother's mother died at age 67 of diabetic complications. His father's mother died at age 32 from ovarian cancer. His father's father died of a heart attack at age 61. His mother died at age 97 from the complications arising from old age. His father died of a heart attack at age 73. The author is presently age 83 living with his wife, age 73. The author consciously recognizes no denomination. His wife winces when he says apparently sacrilegious things that are obviously going to earn him a hot seat.

The author's mother was married when she was 30, and gave birth to her first at 32.

The author and his wife are in their second marriages, their joining having taken place in her parent's back yard with a JP officiating, with the neighbor's beagle howling, along with the other attendees, Charline's parents, the two children of the author, and the two witnesses, Mike and Portia, friends, arriving by motorcycle. He was 39 and she was 28 at the time. Theirs was a semi-hippie wedding, Charline wearing an elegant hippie wedding dress, hippie peace earrings, a free form gold band, whereas the other half, none the wiser, showed up in conventional garb, perhaps out of respect, or fear, of her very conventional parents. The author's daughter 10,

Beginnings

complimented Charline with a somewhat elegant, but circumspect hippie costume, his son 11, a more modest statement of the times.

As noted, the author found his squalling way onto the planet in the environs of Boston. Shortly afterwards he accompanied his parents to North Uxbridge, Mass. NEW [England]. He lived there with his parents and a brother who came along from Whitinsville. There they lived not happily thereafter, because his father wanted to study Art; that's not short for Arthur, but a generalized term embracing: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music, Dance, Writing, Photography, and a host of crafts including pottery, weaving (fiber arts), and expressionism (mud wrestling and slinging paint).



The author does not know from whence his Father's interest in the Arts. At the time he was a horticulturalist. It seems both his grandfather and his father were 'Sunday' painters, like Dwight Eisenhower, and Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, and father himself. Father wanted Painting (Art) to be a seven day a week affair. He chose the Art Students League in NYC to study Painting, leaving his sons in Leicester, Mass. NEW [England] at a Catholic Boarding school, Nazareth. The author was 8, matriculated in grade 4. His father was 39. His mother was 40. His mother found employment in the Grafton State Hospital, Mass., as a practical nurse.

After the completion of his studies, his father and mother, meanwhile reunited in NYC; it is certain mother drove a hard bargain in resuming the family scene after three long years absence. She found employment in another Institution in upstate NY, again, as a practical nurse, while father stretched canvases, and picked up occasional work as a mechanic up the highway from The Pines, a former tavern, that had become his studio and their home. The author was 11.


Shortly thereafter, a farmer, Josh Bates, further down the highway in the opposite direction, from whom father obtained a slaughtered pig, became the agent of the next relocation through a sale of his deceased sister (Sally's) mini-farm, found on a backroad not too far up the highway. Deep Hollow became the family home with the author's mother borrowing \$1000.00 from her sisters, back in Lynn. It was a nominal 10 acres, as stepped off by the

Beginnings

farmer, from tree to rock to tree, following this fence and that fence. When the place finally changed hands many years later, it was learned there were only 4 ½ acres.


In a way, this is where it all begins. No running water, no electricity. A salt box requiring intense fumigation. (The farmer's sister perished of cancer with her several cats and three layers of rugs.) In addition to the house there came a shed, a one cow barn, a corn crib and a split-level chicken coup.

The Only Building That Survived The Fire Of Nov. 1972

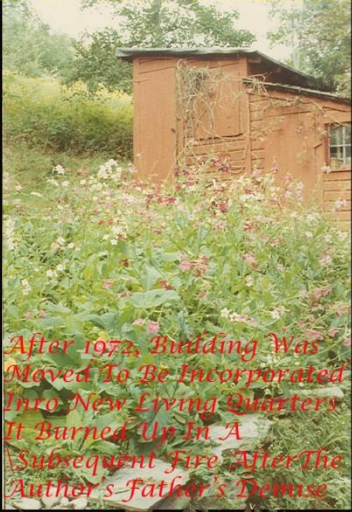


*Chicken Coup Looking Uphill And South
A Flock Of ~ 50 Chickens Was Maintained Throughout The Author's High School Years*

Edge Of House Roof



A Split Level Condo, Each Level With Its Own Entrance




After 1972, Building Was Moved To Be Incorporated Into New Living Quarters. It Burned Up In A Subsequent Fire After The Author's Father's Demise

Looking West

Grape Vine

Narrow Screened Porch

Shed



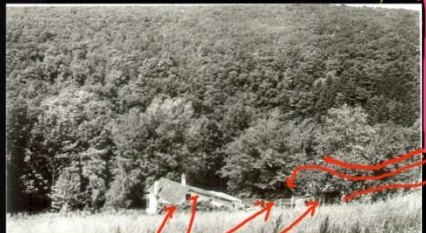
fieldstones hauled down hillside for retaining walls

looking West

32 Olds

The 'B & W' Were Taken A Year Or Two After The Author's Family Moved To 'Deep Hollow' The Colored Were Taken 30 Years later After All The Buildings Burned Down. And After Father Died And After The Next Round of Building Burned Down

*Barn Rear
Shed Hidden In Shade
Barn Roof*




*Grape Vine
Bedroom Window*


Chicken Coup; Fenced And Covered C. Yard

House Location

"When I Was Twelve"



Berkshires looking East



*Approximate Location Of House
Berkshires Looking North*

Beginnings

The author doesn't remember what it was like living with electricity and running water (and flush toilet) before the move. In Deep Hollow, for heat, it became a wood cook stove, and a Montgomery Ward, oval, top loading sheet metal wood heater (replaced every year). For lighting, it became kerosene lamps, for water, a well, with a pump outside the house, which would freeze up in the winter (even after it was enclosed in greenhouse attached to the house). When the pump could not be thawed with hot



water, usually the author needed to pack it from a spring down the road (down means a change in elevation, where trudging up hill with containers of water presented one with early acquaintance in gravitational forces. Oh!, The outhouse was a one hole affair located in the shed which also became the woodshed. The outhouse was a doored facility, with a large clipping from some publication, inscribed with THINK, tacked onto the inside of the closed door. The outhouse had to be periodically emptied into composting holes, by, guess who!

The corn crib was dismantled for some reason. The building contained a \$20.00 gold piece. The space acquired by its removal was incorporated into the chicken yard, accessed by the chicken coop, a home for a mixture of 50 New Jersey Black Giants, and Cornish. The chicken yard needed to be covered to keep the hawks from easy pickings. The one cow barn was a two story affair, the upper for the storage of hay, the lower, the cow's home. This was converted, in the upper, for a studio, a place where father wrestled with his demons, and the lower, for a work shop. The author is guessing, but the space occupied by the barn seemed not more than 16' x 16'.

Beginnings



*The Cow Barn /Garret During The Winter
Looking North Woodshed /Outhouse And
Stairs To Studio, Left; Clothesline To The Right*

Upstate New York was 100 miles north of NYC, in the Berkshires, not far from the Connecticut border. Upstate NY could be a very cold place in the winter, with lots of snow and ice. The summers could be sweltering with mosquitos and black flies; and thunderstorms, 'muggy' air.

The backroad was three miles long. On one end, for, maybe a ¼ mile or so, lived a bunch of the well-to-do, Dupont's amongst them. After that, no one lived but the author's family, in the middle, a mile from the other end of the road. The road would often be snowed in; attempts were made to keep it open to serve the mail vehicle that used it as part of its route. Perhaps fortunate for the author, who did more than his share of trudging, but also for mother who would need to trudge, if the car was not functional, the mile to the end to get a ride to work. The author's brother and he walked this same road twice a day to and from the village (Wassaic) where they either were transported by the NY Central, or a School bus, to Amenia High School, located in the next town, three miles away. This schooling/walking lasted for six years.

Beginnings



Meanwhile, the NY cold was impressive, even to a youngster, sometimes a week or two hovering between 10° to 20° below, F, occasionally dipping down to 30° below. One knew it was cold when, sitting in the living room, looking out through the single paned glass, not being able to see anything for the layers of swirling ice formed on the outside. The author can remember the radiator freezing while driving his 31 Chevy coupe down Route 22.

Stepping out the door into a foot to three feet of snow meant a lot of labor, and frozen fingers and toes, shoveling it, just to get from A to B. One could destroy a better part of a day shoveling the driveway. In the real cold weather the car (one of a series of dilapidated vehicles) would not start on its own; it required a running start downhill, even then, sometimes it would not start. (Fortunately that was father's headache; but did not exclude the author from a headache, listening to the old man rant).

Keeping the wood shed full was a task that involved most of the author's and his brother's summers, hauling dead chestnut from the nearby forest, often uphill, with only their ill-equipped carcasses as levers. Then to saw it with a two person crosscut, then split and stack in the woodshed, where there was never enough room to store the roughly estimated six cords needed for the winter. That was the way it started, with three stoves to feed, the kitchen, the 'parlor', and the 'studio'.

Beginnings

Not to demean the environs completely, he was impressed by the incredible magical quietude that descended upon the planet after a heavy snowstorm. (Refer to 'Twelve' in 'Apropos Of Nothing'.)

Father was no longer just a Sunday painter, but he did have designs and obligations with respect to lots of other things, that, as quick as he could, he would get his sons to handle. The woodpile was the easiest to palm off. When the greenhouse and retaining walls were built, the author and his brother hauled all the field stone, salvaged from stonewalls, fortunately lugging or sliding the rocks downhill. There was the splitting of the slate with wedges and crowbars to make the flagstone pathways and patios. Then the digging of the hardpan cellar. The annual garden was hand spading by you guessed; weeding, watering, and a woeful countenance. The chores seemed unending.

This bit of writing is an attempt to 'paint' a backdrop of preparation for Building A Loghouse In The Bush.

Life moved on. The author graduated high school, to enter another labor market at 17. Then the Korean debacle reared its ugly head; the author was classified 1-A and expected to become fodder in the legions aligned on one side. Somehow this had something to do with obligation and patriotism, none of which the author could fathom for himself. He was not privileged to vote on it. Finally, after three years of 'chickenshit', the author was free once again to enter the labor market. At first, in Oregon, he did only what was needed for himself. Odd jobs, periods of employment that would last a month or two, while he spent as much of his other time trying to figure out what he was going to do with the remainder of his life. He ended going to NYC to work in a factory that made the equipment he serviced when in the military. While doing so, he entered Art world at the Brooklyn Museum Art School to study sculpture and drawing. At this juncture it is not necessary to speculate how the author found himself going down this road. Enough to say, he was on a road. In the background, the road held out other prospects with writing, which was not as manifest as it became in later years, while, sculpture, in which he had been



Beginnings

engaged in his spare time for fifteen years, waned, after meeting his second partner.

Charline became a 'game changer'. The author was as close to being truly happy for the first time in his life. At forty he became a sailor, that is, he and his wife acquired a sailboat (which they owned for 39 years Refer to 'Knotted Twine'). It had been said life begins at forty. Others say it ends at forty. Lets have a war to decide. The Forty Year's War.



Somewhere along the way, the author 'burned out' after 20 years of working at the University of Oregon. Another chapter was about to be written. At age 47 he was a 'free' man, with his wife's 'blessing'.

This is where we begin the phase that led to the Log Housing In The Bush, which proposes to continue in the foregoing.

A short note listing qualifications for whatever it is we presume to do. The author learned early to work with his hands; true, by forced conscription. While in the military, he learned how to repair complicated electronic equipment. While in his first three years at the University, he learned the machinist's trade, also how to fabricate just about anything to do with the study of the sciences. And the remainder of his time at the U. he became a problem solver; albeit, 'lab manager'.

As already indicated he engaged in sculpture which involved working with many different materials.

He was also encouraged in the field of writing by a close friend of his father's; and by other unexpected circumstances.

He was even encouraged by another to engage in Log House Building.

Beginnings



Mother in the morning sun at 58



Dormer added 1948 Facing east Mother's room.



What you would find in the garret



After the kitchen floor was mopped it was covered with newspaper Afternoon Sun.

