

THE HISTORY OF PUDDING ISLAND FARM

AND THE PEOPLE WHO BUILT IT



PETER SANBORN

Edited by Mallika Mitra

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: THE DREAM	4
CHAPTER TWO: THE PARENTS	19
CHAPTER THREE: THE FOUNDERS	45
CHAPTER FOUR: THE FAMILY	60
CHAPTER FIVE: THE TRADITIONS	79

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INTRODUCTION

Dedicated to my mother and father. Their love of Silver Bay was infectious.



Anne and Don Sanborn at the dock.

My Father died in October of 2020, right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the circumstances, we couldn't have a service, so we decided to wait and have the service that summer at Silver Bay.

At the reception, I sat down next to my Uncle Blackie. I started asking him questions about how Pudding Island Farm came to be and sharing with him what my father had told me. My dad was a great storyteller and sometimes embellished the details a little, so I was trying to establish fact from fiction.

We sat together for almost an hour. Blackie helped fill in the gaps and shared some stories I hadn't heard before.

It had been 15 years since my last visit to Lake George. In fact, my children may be the oldest of the Parlin-Sanborn-Smith clan to successfully complete their first swim of the lake. This isn't due to their swimming prowess, but because the last time they were there Hawkins was in diapers and Audrey was a toddler.

Even though I hadn't been to Lake George for well over a decade, everything felt natural. There wasn't that usual awkwardness that comes with the passing of so much time. Conversations with my relatives seemed to just pick up wherever they had left off 15 years ago.

Of course, there were some new faces. Nicole's twin boys, Tristan and Kellan, were there every morning to greet us at the dock. Watching them reminded me what a magical place this was to be a child.

There were some new things as well, like my cousin Tim's boat. This, according to my kids, was the best addition to the place. Tim took all the kids inner tubing, which entailed going top speed, turning hard, and watching the kids skid across the water and get bounced off the wake.

My brother and I tried it; it made me feel my middle age. Whatever happened to water skiing?

For a full week we were there. We (my brother and sister and their families) stayed at the Pudding Island House (formerly the Big House), which cousin Jennifer had rented to us. It was a marvelous week!

Towards the end of the week I started to think about writing this story. Maybe it was inspired by staying in that beautiful historic house, or being with my relatives and hearing stories about past generations, or simply that feeling of detachment when both parents pass and you long to stay connected to their roots. Whatever it was, it inspired me to write this.

No matter which branch of the family you belong to or what generation you're part of, we are all connected to this history in one way or another. I hope you enjoy these stories and, more importantly, find a little bit of yourself inside of them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was a team effort all around. There are a few individuals that require special acknowledgement:

Mallika Mitra: I always knew my niece was talented but seeing her in action as Editor in Chief on this project really drove that point home. She showed me what a great editor can do.

Victoria Sanborn: My wife Victoria got interested in genealogy years ago. She was instrumental in tracking down people, dates, and archival documents that enriched the story and filled in gaps.

Leela Mitra: Leela painted the view from Pudding Island Farm that is on the home page of the web site, and on the cover of this book.

Camilla Smith: Aunt Camilla (Charles's daughter) was simply a joy on this project. While we never talked in person, we stayed in regular correspondence throughout the project. She shared numerous entertaining stories that helped bring color and personality to each character.

Blackie Parlin: Uncle Blackie (Charles's son) provided the inspiration to get this project off the ground. In addition to interviews, he also helped to correct facts, and provide encouragement, along the way.

Joan Parlin: Aunt Joan (Blackie's wife) was instrumental filling in gaps on some of the stories and organizing and scanning historic photos.

Chris Parlin: Chris (Charles's grandson) was interviewed twice and provided historical corrections and some great stories, like the founding of Rag Tag.

Jeanne Chiang: Jeanne (Kaye's daughter) shed light on Kaye's incredible life and what it was like to come into the Parlin clan as "outsiders."

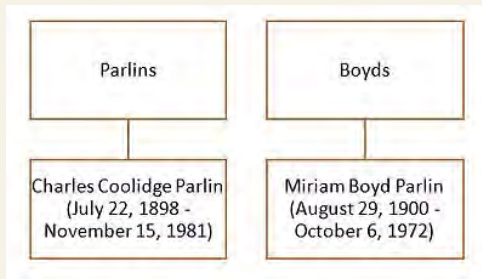
John Sanborn: Uncle John (Charles's nephew) was interviewed and had many stories about the early days of Pudding Island Farm and what it was like to work on the farm as a young boy.

Susan Rigger: Sue (John's daughter) organized historic photos and provided copies of the Parlin family history books as well as other archival documents she found buried in the barn.

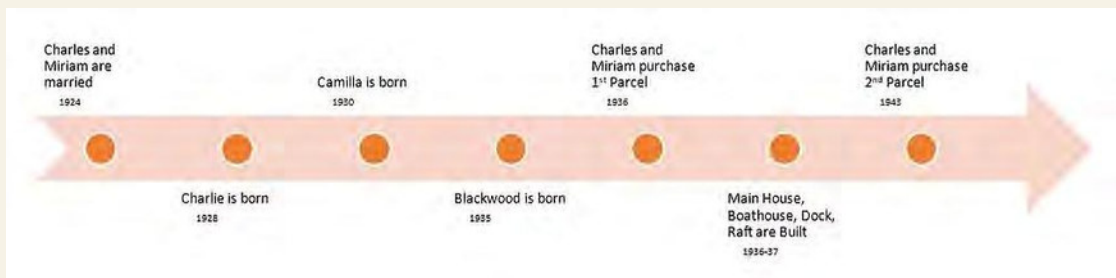
Kathy Mitra: Kathy (my sister) helped me to organize the family history books and track down our family's copies of them.

CHAPTER 1 - THE DREAM

the people:



the timeline:



THE STORY:

The year was 1936. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was serving his first term as President of the United States. The country was still suffering from the financial ruin left behind by the Great Depression. The global financial crisis continued to ravage parts of Europe. A young, ambitious politician named Adolf Hitler had recently been appointed the Chancellor of Germany, and his Nazi Party was rapidly dismantling Germany's democratic institutions.



Americans feared job loss and poverty, all while the potential of another World War loomed overhead. It's important to understand the mood of this era because it makes what Charles and Miriam Parlin did that much more extraordinary.

The Dream

Charles and Miriam sat at their kitchen table in Tenaflly, New Jersey, discussing the next chapter of their lives. It had been 11 years since they were married and now they had three young children (Charlie, Camilla, and Blackwood).

Tenaflly was a lovely town to raise a family, but the summers were dreadfully hot and humid (air conditioning had not been invented yet). They needed a place to summer where they could get some fresh air, teach the kids about the natural world, and re-energize.

But deciding where that should be was a surprisingly difficult decision. Both wanted to spend the summers where they had as children Charles at the New Jersey shore and Miriam at Lake George in the Adirondacks, and choosing between the two starkly different places was, in their minds, like choosing between the Alps or the Mediterranean. Sand, waves, boardwalks, and salt water taffy versus fresh water, mountains, hiking, and apple cider.

Their ultimate dream was to build a place that would last for generations, so there was no in-between. They had to choose one or the other.



New Jersey Shore and Boardwalk.



Silver Bay, Lake George



The family at Wildwood Crest 1936.

The Decision

The couple was still deadlocked in their decision so that evening they consulted the children. All three were in favor of Lake George. Charles turned to Camilla and asked her why she liked Lake George better.

“Because there is more water there!” she said. Charles and Miriam burst out in laughter. That sealed it.

They were already familiar with Silver Bay because they had summered there with Miriam's parents, William and Corabel Boyd. In June of 1936 they found a piece of property that fit the size of their dream. It was a beautiful parcel of raw, deeply-forested land with steep hills that rolled down to the lakefront.

The east-west boundaries extended from the lakeshore to Route 9N and north-south from the dirt road that goes out to Armes Point (and passes by what is today Chris and Angie's house) to the area where the Friendship Trail starts (close to what today is Andrew's house and was previously Camilla's house).

Charles and Miriam bought the property from Dr. White. Dr. White was president of the Biblical Seminary of New York. He had long been associated with the missionary movement, the YMCA, and the Silver Bay Association.

White owned a huge parcel of land that stretched north to Charles and Miriam's property, south to Van Buren Bay (to the end of the Friendship Trail), west to the lakeshore, and east up to the northeastern slopes of Sunrise Mountain.

He had bought the land from Edwin McBrier in 1925. McBrier was vice-president of the Woolworth Company and quite wealthy. He knew Dr. White because he attended his weekly Bible classes at the Railway Club in New York. McBrier sold his vast property for less than half of what it had cost him. Why? Because he was a firm believer in Dr. White's dream of establishing a retreat where students, ministers and others could come for recreation and serious study of the Bible.

Dr. White's endeavor, called the Columbiana-on-Lake George Conference Center, was launched with great enthusiasm. There were already many ministers and YMCA leaders living in the area that supported it. But then the Depression and financial setbacks caught up to White and he was forced to give up his dream.

The exact purchase price that the Parlins paid Dr. White in June of 1936 isn't known, but it was somewhere in the neighborhood of \$30,000, which in today's terms would be about \$600,000. One only has to go on Zillow and look up what property in the area is going for today to quickly realize that Charles and Miriam got a bargain.



Charles and Miriam Parlin at Pudding Island Farm in the early days.

Construction Begins

“The sculpture is already complete within the marble block, before I start my work. It is already there, I just have to chisel away the superfluous material.”

--Michelangelo

Where the Pudding Island House (aka the Big House) now stands, there was just a wooded bluff with a steep drop into the lake. No houses, no dock, no raft, no tea house, no nothing. The pine trees were dense and huge, the underbrush thick and the lakeshore barely accessible.

Despite this, Charles and Miriam envisioned a lakeside retreat where they could be with family and friends. They wanted a place where they could entertain large gatherings, sharing the beauty and wonder of the Adirondacks.

It was a big dream, but they had to start somewhere.

The first step was to build a house with enough rooms for Charles's parents, the three children, guests, and themselves. A spacious living room for entertaining, a screened-in porch for summer evenings, and a kitchen big enough to feed everyone.

Construction started in 1936. They had a small cabin [1] built where they could stay for the weekend to supervise construction and to serve as a hide-a-way for the family winter holidays and as guest space in the summer.



The original cabin (now Blackie and Joan's place).

Charles had met with a handful of homebuilders earlier in the year. He wanted to find one who didn't see the job as just building another house, but who would be a partner who understood and embraced the larger vision. Charles selected a local builder, Milton Grinnell, who was excited to push his talents as a craftsman. Milton had always wanted a big project to show the world what he could do.

One example of Milton's craftsmanship is the beautiful living room that looks out on the dock and lake. The log beams that stretch the length of the ceiling are from timber that was harvested on the property. Rather than simply milling these timbers, Milton chose to hand-hewn them with traditional tools like an adze and drawknife, giving the living room the rustic Adirondack feel that Charles and Miriam were hoping for.



Living room with hand-hewn ceiling beams.

The construction proceeded smoothly with questions being dealt with during daily check-ins between Charles and Milton [2]. There was only one issue that started to concern Charles. After two months of construction, he had not received an invoice. He knew Milton was incurring significant costs already.

When he asked Milton about this, Milton's reply was that he had no faith in the Ticonderoga banks.

"These banks are on thin ice and if I put my money with them, who knows when I'll get it back?" Milton proclaimed, "I'd rather you owe me money than the banks. I know you'll pay!"

Charles got a big kick out of this and they agreed to a more regular payment schedule.

In addition to the house, Milton's team built a boathouse to store all the canoes, kayaks, and ski boats that would eventually come. They also had the foresight to build a big room above the boathouse for the day when the children would become rowdy teenagers and wanted a place to blast the radio, play games, and generally stir up trouble as only teenagers can do.

With the structures drawn out and construction underway, it was time to turn to the lake. Charles and Milton walked up and down the rocky shoreline looking for the right place

for a dock. While no spot was really that ideal, they eventually settled on a place where Charles and Miriam could keep an eye on the kids via the main house's living room window.

The original dock [3] was a wooden rectangle and extended about 30 feet into the lake. There was a series of paths carved down the steep hillside from the main house and a set of dirt steps carved into the final stretch.

With the design of the dock complete there was only one question left to answer: Where would they swim to?

Most likely the raft was an afterthought, or at least the most minor of the Parlins' concerns. They thought it would be fun to have a place for the kids to do cannon balls and catch fish. Unbeknownst to them at the time, they were building what became one of the most important fixtures of Pudding Island Farm memories.

The original raft was a square box of planks nailed to a frame suspended by floating drums. It required a sturdy enough mooring to withstand wind and waves. What could do the job? A few different options were considered and discarded. A large boulder would probably do the trick in terms of weight, but how would you secure it to the anchor chain? A cinder block would be easy to secure but not heavy enough to keep the raft from drifting. Eventually someone had the brilliant and unconventional idea to strap the raft to an old Ford Model T engine. It had the weight to hold the raft in place and plenty of footings to latch onto. [4]



Raft in the early days.



Remains of engine that was used to anchor raft.
Photo credit: Blackie Parlin

Construction was completed in late fall of 1937, just in time for Thanksgiving.

Late in the evening, after a large gathering of family and friends for a Thanksgiving meal and parlor games, Miriam and Charles sat on the dock admiring the stars. Evenings on the dock were their favorite time because there were almost no other lights along the lakeshore. It was a darkness that they couldn't experience in Tenaflly and certainly not

in New York City. They sat on the dock and with every shooting star they'd point and yelp, playfully arguing about if that was the best one they had seen.

After a while, they just sat quietly. The evening frost was beginning to settle on the dock.

Charles was lost in thought about his plan to explore the mountain that sat adjacent to his parcel just across Route 9N. He knew the area was well known for maple syrup and he wanted to see if there were maple trees there to someday make his own.

Miriam was thinking about the abandoned farm just down the dirt road. She wanted to learn more about it because she was starting to think about someday bringing it back to life. As a young girl in Evanston, Illinois, she remembered having a small flock of chickens in her backyard. She had had so much fun caring for them.

But for now, these were all just thoughts.

Amount of this Certificate		ARCHITECT'S NO. 7	
\$ 1615.00		38654	
To Mr. Charles C. Parlin			
This is to Certify that Milton G. Grinnell			
contractor for the Creation and Completion of your			
building House at Silver Bay, N. Y.			
..... is entitled to a 3rd payment of			
Sixteen hundred fifteen and 00/100..... Dollars			
Amount of Contract	\$	16,181	07
Additions to date	\$		
Total	\$		
Deductions to date	\$		
Net Total	\$	16,181	07
Am't. of this Cer.	\$	1615	00
Previously authorized	\$	4269	55
Total authorized to date	\$	5,884	55
Balance		10,296	54
Date		Dec 15th 1936	
Received from		Charles C. Parlin	
\$ 1615.00		1936	
One thousand six hundred fifteen and 00/100 Dollars			

House construction contract for \$16,000.



The main house in the 1940s.



The original dock and waterfront.



House featured in an Architectural Magazine.

The Expansion

In May of 1943, Charles and Miriam purchased the abandoned farm just down the dirt road from Janet Cratty. The property included two barns, one farm cottage, a large expansive meadow including a fish pond teeming with catfish, and a mountainside with a sugar house for producing maple syrup.

The parcel stretched from the dirt road at Armes Point to just past the barn (what is today Sue and Bill Rigger's house).

It was this purchase that really completed their dream. They called it Pudding Island Farm, named for the small island that rises from the lake like a dollop of pudding.



Approximate boundaries of Pudding Island Farm.

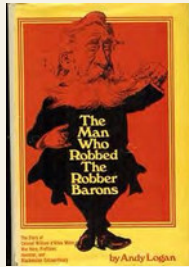
The owner prior to the Cratty's was a character worth noting: Colonel William d'Alton Mann.

Mann was the kind of person that historians write books about (and some, like the author of "The Man Who Robbed The Robber Barons," even did).

The jacket cover of the book sums up his life:

"Colonel d'Alton Mann was a protean figure, hero of Gettysburg, designer of the sleeping cars for the Orient Express, defendant in the first major trial for oil swindling, and a millionaire even before blackmail swelled his bankroll. He was a striking example of the vigorous, exuberantly talented, and unprincipled age in which he lived and thrived."

- Andy Logan, *The Man Who Robbed The Robber Barons*, 1965



So how did he rob the robber barons? The colonel was the owner and editor of a weekly magazine called Town Topics. It was essentially what today would be considered a tabloid, with a lively and controversial gossip section. The colonel didn't make his fortunes via advertising and paid subscribers. The real money was in writing scandalous articles about wealthy, famous New York City residents like the Morgans and Vanderbilts, then giving them the option to pay him to suppress the story or see their name in print the following week.

Today we call what Colonel Mann was doing "catch and kill" journalism - basically paying off a publisher not to publish a story. All of this eventually caught up to him and he was successfully sued for libel, faced time in prison, and had to pay out large financial settlements. It was the beginning of the end for Town Topics.

Colonel Mann died in 1920. At first his heirs were anticipating an inheritance of millions from his vast portfolio of properties, investments, royalties and other assets accumulated over his eclectic lifetime. But, he'd unfortunately also accumulated a lot of debt, and when the accounting was complete, the estate was insolvent and tied up in probate and lawsuits for years.

So the farm had been neglected for over two decades and it showed. The fields were overgrown, the farm equipment rusted out, and the fishing pond more of a swampy jungle.

But, Charles and Miriam could see the potential for developing the farm into a true working farm. While many people may have shied away from all the work that would be required to reboot the farm, they saw it as a challenge and an opportunity.

And eventually Pudding Island Farm did grow into a fully functioning farm with cows, chickens, horses, and various sundry cats and dogs (not to mention the mice, rats, bats, and woodchucks hiding in the barn's walls).

There were also gardens carved into the hillside where vegetables grew for the dinner table. Stretches of raspberry bushes provided dessert and apple trees supplied gallons of apple cider each autumn.



Animals come to Pudding Island Farm.
Blackie (head turned), Ed, Howie, Camilla (1941).



Charles and Miriam working in the garden.



Camilla and friends (Proudfits) at the Barn.



Corn rows.



Charlie and his hog.

The farm took on special meaning during WWII. A sense of patriotism mobilized the country as men were shipped off to Europe and the South Pacific to fight, and women poured into factories to build planes, ships, and armory. At the time, there was nothing more patriotic than creating a garden (commonly called a "Victory Garden"). The more citizens could feed themselves, the more of the national food supply could be sent to the troops overseas.

The farm provided not just for the family but also for the community at-large. Every Saturday they gave away fresh chickens at their road-side stand. The children and their cousins would manage the stand. Cars would pull up and place their order, the kids would run to the coops grab the right size chicken, behead it with an axe, drop it in a pot of steaming water to de-feather, and package it up. The kids enjoyed it because it gave them purpose. The surrounding community loved it since fresh meat was very expensive, if available at all, during the war.

This free-chicken enterprise is best described by Camilla Smith (Charles and Miriam's daughter):

"Dad got the idea of supplying chickens to all the neighbors at Silver Bay- Armes, Seerups, Mrs. Stevenson, etc. As a result, Saturday morning became chicken-for-free at the Parlins. This meant that the chickens had to be slaughtered, the feathers plucked off and the internal organs - liver, heart and gizzard - had to be cleaned. All of our family and helpers were roped into the process of preparing the chickens.

"It fell to cousin Howie Sanborn, a worker on the farm for the summer, to chop off the heads of the chickens. Now this was no easy task. A chicken is not a docile animal to kill. A chicken will wiggle ferociously when held up-side-down by the feet. Holding the chicken's feet in one hand, the executioner must try to get the chicken's head on a block, swing down with a hatchet in the other hand and chop off the head. Now a chicken does not lie still when headless. The nerves in a chicken neck evidently go into high gear when the head is cut off. As Howie learned, to his frustration, a headless chicken will jerk so violently, that it is very hard to keep hold of, and a headless chicken

will run at a very high speed all over a yard until it is caught or drops of exhaustion. We had a lot of laughs at Howie's expense!

"You may have heard the expression used of someone, 'Running around like a chicken with its head cut off.' We certainly learned what that meant those summers at Silver Bay."

- Camilla Smith via email 10/10/2021



Miriam and a White Sussex.



Blackie and John Sanborn feeding the chickens.

Charles and Miriam soon learned that a working farm required a lot of work. Even with their clan of children, nieces and nephews they couldn't keep up, so they hired Henry Watts. Henry was the son of Captain Watts. Everyone referred to him as captain because he was a surveyor for the US Army. The Watts had their own working farm so Henry had the experience and knowhow that was required. He was a student at the nearby Middlebury College and had summers off. He also had lost one eye in a firecracker accident when he was a boy so he was not able to serve in the war.

Henry was already familiar with the property because he was part of Milton Grinnell's crew that built the Big House and served as a caretaker during the winters.

Without Henry it would have been difficult for the farm to operate in the war years. In the years after the war, it was possible to hire other men to help on the farm, but Henry remained the boss man until the early 50s.

Charles and Miriam could have just bought a house on the lake – that would have been much easier. But their dreams were much bigger than that. Even more impressive than the size of their dreams was their ability to bring them to reality. Where others saw rough, forested lakeside, they saw a family compound with generations of kids enjoying the lake and nature. Where others saw an abandoned farm full of rusted out equipment and crumbling barns, they saw a working farm that could help feed the community.

Walt Disney once said, "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." Never has this been more true than what Charles and Miriam created at Pudding Island Farm.

Footnotes:

[1] The cabin they stayed in during this time was later renovated and today is Blackie and Joan's log cabin.

[2] Milton and Charles developed a lifelong partnership that extended into future generations. Milton's son, Dick, built Charlie's house, Camilla's house, renovated Blackie's cabin, and renovated the Barn. His Grandson, Bill, built what is now Tim's house.

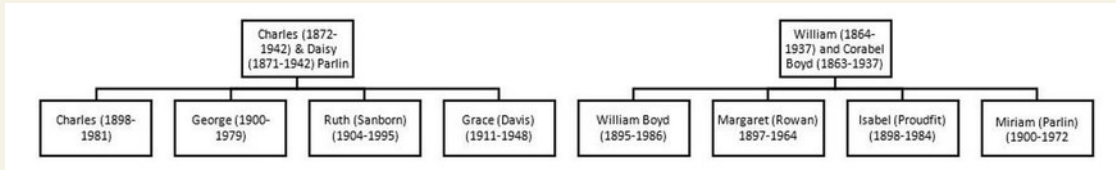
[3] The dock was later torn down and replaced by a cement dock that was much larger. The winters took a toll on this wooden dock as ice and rain pelted turning the wooden dock into a quilt of splinters.

[4] It turns out the Model T was not formidable enough to do the job as a few years later it had to be replaced with the even more robust engine of a Chevy -- which to this day still sits on the floor of the lake, diving distance from the current raft.

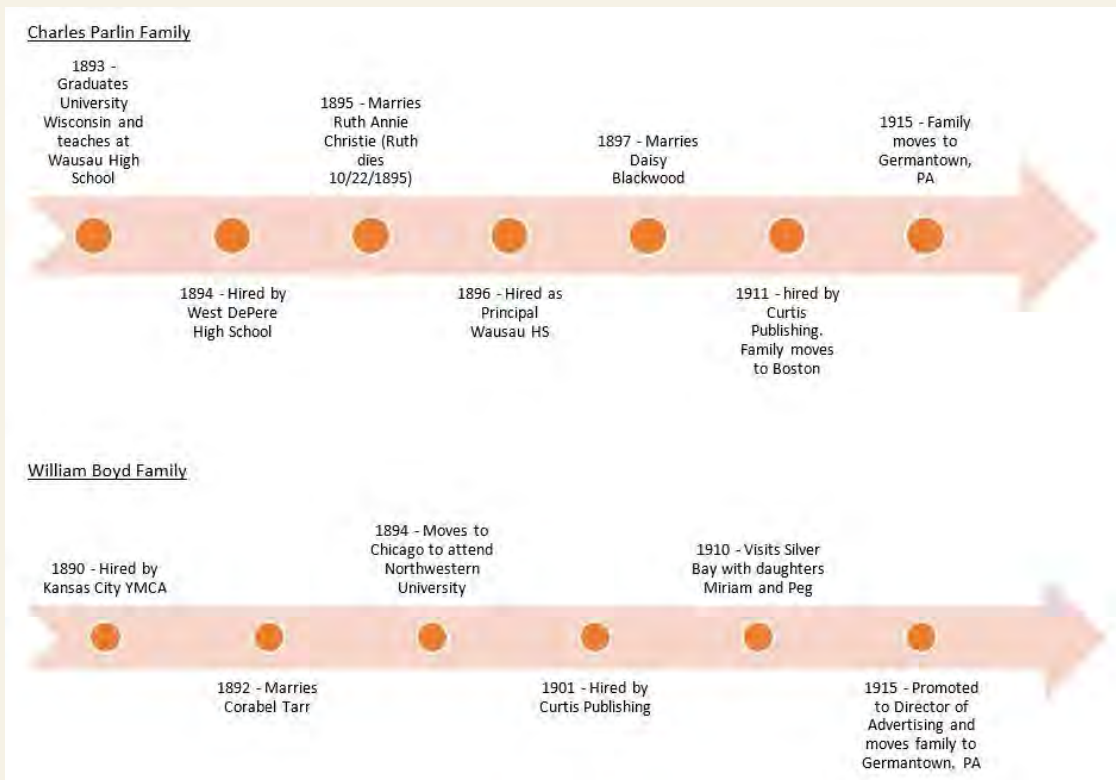
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CHAPTER 2 - THE PARENTS

the people:



the timeline:



THE STORY:

Charles and Daisy

In 1911, Charles Parlin stood in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia and nervously checked his timepiece. He still had one hour before the job interview, so he found a bench and reviewed his notes. It still wasn't clear to him what job he was interviewing for. An old acquaintance of his, Stanley Latshaw, had called him out of nowhere and explained that he wanted to build the Division of Commercial Research for the Curtis Publishing Company.

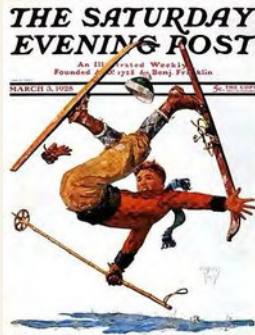
Charles Parlin was a high school principal in Wausau High School. He didn't know anything about the publishing business, much less "commercial research." In fact he had never heard of it.

Charles had done extensive research at his hometown Wausau Public Library before he left for Philadelphia. On the two-day train journey he had written, read, rewritten, and reread his notes numerous times.

He committed the most salient facts to memory:

- The Curtis Publishing Company was founded in 1891 by publisher Cyrus H. K. Curtis.
- The company's publications included the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The American Home*, *Holiday*, *Jack & Jill*, and *Country Gentleman*.
- Curtis's wife, Louisa Knapp, was the editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Curtis Publishing had acquired it in 1883 and today, in 1910, it was the most popular women's journal in the country.
- Curtis bought the *Saturday Evening Post* for \$1,000 in 1897, when it had a subscription base of 2,000. By 1906, the base was over 1 million.
- In 1910, the Curtis Center was built and served as the company's headquarters in Philadelphia.

Curtis Publishing was essentially the Facebook of its time. Its journals were sent to almost every household with a mailing address, just like today Facebook is in every household with an internet connection. Through Curtis's publication platform, Americans got information about current events, lifestyle interests, and cultural affairs.



In the early 1900s, the Saturday Evening Post was like the Facebook of its time.



Stanley had explained that the board of Curtis Publishing was concerned about the advent of the radio and its potential to divert advertising revenues away from Curtis' magazines. They needed to get closer to their advertisers and better understand the rapid changes happening in their industries.

This included questions like: how will the advent of aviation disrupt the railroad industry? And, how will the proliferation of telephones change the way people communicate?

These questions were on the same scale of uncertainty as questions we have about today's technological disruption. Questions like:

- How will self-driving cars and trucks impact the transportation industry?
- Which jobs done by humans today will be made obsolete by artificial intelligence?
- How will blockchain technologies like Bitcoin change the banking and financial industry?



When Charles finally walked through the doors of the Curtis Publishing Company, he jumped from nervousness to near panic. This was no average business.

Imagine walking into the headquarters of Amazon for a job interview. The main feature of the Amazon campus in Seattle, WA is called "The Spheres." The Spheres are three massive (four stories high) glass dome conservatories filled with 40,000 plants from 50 countries. They serve as the employee lounge and workspace.



Amazon Sphere Interior. Seattle, WA.

The feeling you would get walking into the Amazon Spheres and waiting to be escorted to your job interview, is the same feeling Charles had waiting in the lobby of the Curtis Building. The building was just a year old and exuded grandeur and power. The interior of the building featured a terraced waterfall and fountain, an atrium with faux-Egyptian palm trees, and a glass-mosaic called the Dream Garden. The Dream Garden stood 15-feet high and 49-feet long and comprised of over 100,000 pieces of Tiffany glass in 260 different colors.



Curtis Publishing Headquarters



Dream Garden Mural in lobby of headquarters

"Mr. Latshaw and Mr. Hazen will see you now," the secretary said to Charles. Hazen? He knew Stanley, but who was Mr. Hazen?

He entered Mr. Hazen's spacious office; both men were warm and inviting. Stanley was clearly the visionary, talking about his ideas about the future of everything from food production to transportation to communications. Edward Hazen was the business guy in charge of advertising.

What was supposed to be an hour-long interview extended into lunch. Hazen finally asked Charles, "What qualification do you have for the job of studying industry for The Curtis Publishing Company?"

"Just one," Charles replied, "I know nothing about industry, have no prejudices and will waste none of your time unlearning anything."

"Mr. Latshaw told you about the job," said Hazen, "Do you want it?"

"It seems vague to me," said Charles.

"It is vague," replied Mr. Hazen, "But it is a magnificent opportunity; take it and make the best of it."

Convincing Daisy

Charles boarded the train and settled in for the long journey back to Wausau, which cost an eye-popping \$115. Thankfully the Curtis Publishing Company was going to reimburse him for it, as that was well beyond the budget of a high school principal.

In fact, he was just beginning to get a taste for the difference between employment with a public school and employment with a large corporation. The company also told him to book the Pullman Berth luxury-class private room with a bed and wash, and book the revered "20th Century Limited" from NYC to Chicago, which was advertised as the "The Most Famous Train in the World."

Charles had much to think about on the long train ride home -- but first he had to clear his mind. He purchased that day's edition of *The Pennsylvania Inquirer* and as the train pulled out of 30th Street Station, Charles immersed himself in the front-page story about how Teddy Roosevelt was going to split the Republican Party in next year's election through the formation of a new party, The Progressive ("Bull Moose") Party. Current President William Taft was flummoxed by this as it spelled doom for his chances to win a second term as President. It all but handed the election to the Democratic Party's up and comer, Woodrow Wilson.

After a few more articles, Charles dozed off. The next thing he knew someone was shaking him awake saying, "Hey Fella - everyone off the train. We reached the end of the line." He groggily glanced out the window and saw the sign for Grand Central Station. He had to hurry to make his next train.

As he raced across the station the famed "20th Century Limited" started to come into view. It was fabulous! He was warmly greeted by the steward and ushered along a crimson carpet to the onboarding ramp. Maybe he could get used to this.



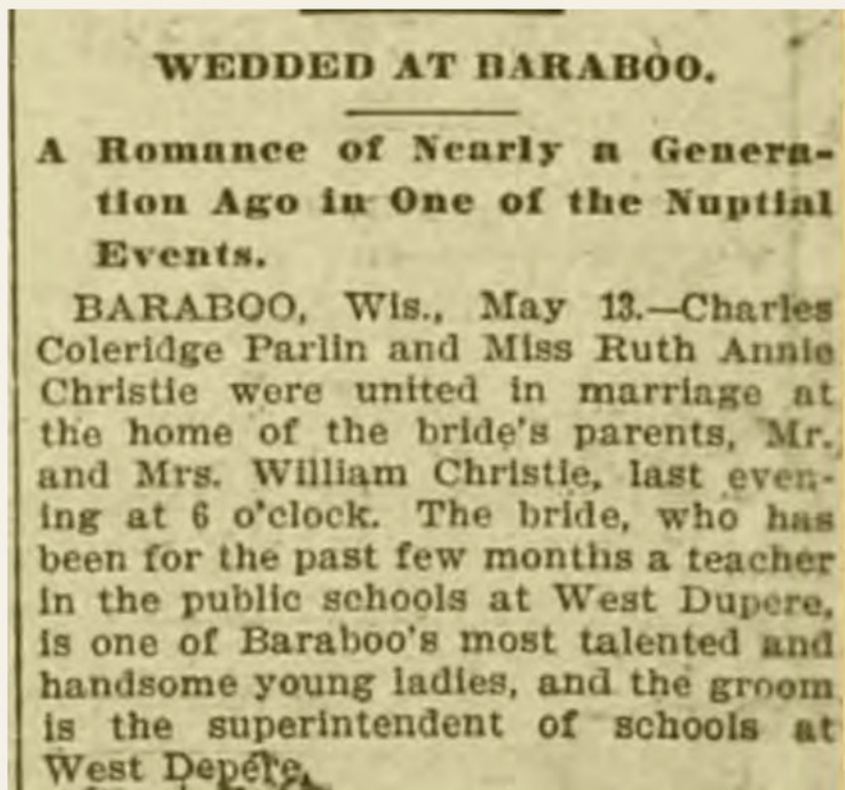
New York Central train the 20th Century Limited leaving Chicago's LaSalle Street station.

Settling into his private cabin, Charles had much to think about. Being an academic by nature and filled with curiosity, he was fascinated by the opportunity to research industry and try to predict where it was headed. He envisioned leading various studies and traveling the country to interview executives.

Getting paid -- and paid well compared to a principal's salary -- to talk to people, research current affairs, and ponder the future? This was his dream job.

There was only one concern: convincing his wife Daisy. She loved life in Wisconsin, and he loved her dearly. Even though he never spoke of it, Daisy helped Charles rise from the ashes.

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin in 1893, Charles took a job as a teacher at Wausau High School. The next year he got an even better offer to be the principal of the High School in DePere, Wisconsin. There he met Ruth Anne Christie, who was also a teacher at DePere, and they married in 1895. Tragically, Ruth died that same year from pneumonia. [1]



Wedding announcement for Charles and Ruth.



Ruth Anne Christie Parlin headstone.

Charles was devastated, but eventually he met Daisy. She was a teacher at DePere High School and her and Charles became friends.

During one of their strolls, Charles mentioned that he was considering a new job. Karl Mathie, Charles' close friend from his days teaching at Wausau, had become superintendent of the Wausau schools and wanted to hire Charles as his principal.



Wausau High School



DePere High School

As he was explaining all of this, Daisy tried to hide her disappointment. Wausau was more than 100 miles away and she had grown quite fond of Charles.

At the end of their walk Charles turned to her and said "There is only one negative, and it's a big one, that I haven't mentioned. I don't want to move away from you."

In the Fall of 1896, Charles started his new position at Wausau High School. By this point, he and Daisy were more than just friends. On New Year's Eve, during a visit at

her parents' house for the extended Christmas holiday, Charles proposed. Her smile, as they shivered in blankets, sipping hot cocoa watching fireworks light up a dark winter night sky, was forever ingrained in his mind. At the stroke of midnight Charles dropped to his knee, ring in hand, and she said "yes"!



Charles Coolidge Parlin (age 22).



Daisy Blackwood Parlin (age 22).

After the wedding, Daisy moved to Wausau where they had lived ever since. They had three children - Charles (13), George (10), Ruth (7) - and one on the way (Grace if it was a girl, Josiah if it was a boy).

Asking Daisy to pick up and move the family 1,000 miles from Wausau to Boston, where the advertising headquarters for Curtis were located at that time, was daunting because she had deep roots were in the area.

Her Grandmother, Rosetta Manley, was recorded in Wisconsin history as the first white woman to settle north of Milwaukee. Her father, Captain Silas Blackwood, was a celebrated Civil War veteran who, after the war, settled the family in Kewaskum, WI.

Her grandfather wanted her to attend Lawrence University, as there was a scholarship there in his name. But she chose OshKosh College because she wanted to become a teacher and the school had an excellent teaching certification program.

Daisy was a founding member of Wisconsin's chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). She held various leadership positions at the local level and chaired the national WCTU's Scientific Temperance Instruction Committee.

Her work on this committee had opened her eyes to the scientific evidence that alcohol was indeed the “devil’s poison”. She had seen this herself on the streets of Milwaukee during church field visits, where Skid Row was littered with souls lost to drunkenness.

Charles was 39 and Daisy, 40. Was this really the time for them to upend their lives and start again in a new city where they knew nobody? It was daunting, but Charles knew he would never again get an opportunity like this -- if not for Stanley Latshaw, this opportunity never would have come up.

Stanley had been a student at Wausau during Charles’s first year as principal. He was rather mischievous, so he spent a lot of his time in the principal’s (Charles’s) office. But Charles secretly admired his brilliant, if not devious, mind. His pranks were pure genius.

On one occasion Stanley wired a low voltage battery to the men’s urinal which would deliver a mild shock to sensitive parts each time someone used it.

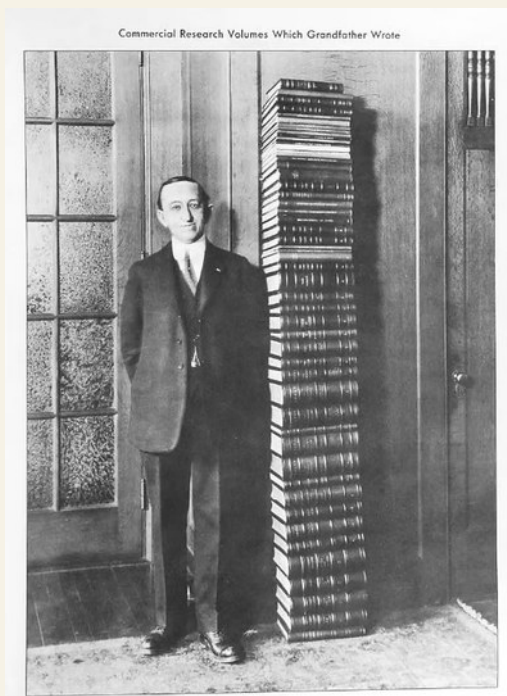
On another occasion, he hired brawny Wisconsin lumberjacks to corral a live 2500-pound Holstein Bull up 3 flights of stairs and leave it tied up on the roof. It was quite a surprise for everyone the next morning. School was canceled that day and Charles had to hire the same lumberjacks to get the massive bovine off the roof.

Finally, Charles got back home to Wausau. Daisy took one look at him and said, “We’re moving, aren’t we?” which made Charles laugh and hug her tight.

Charles was surprised; Daisy was excited for the change. She could once again see the spark in his eye.

It wasn’t as much the opportunity for better pay that was exciting him, it was the chance to build something from nothing. There was no such thing as market research, and Curtis was asking him to invent it.

Or as Mr. Hazen said, “It is a magnificent opportunity; take it and make the best of it.”



Charles and the commercial research he produced. He is widely credited as the founder of the field of Commercial Research.



Charles and Daisy.

William Boyd

In the summer of 1910, William was sitting at the ferry dock in Lake George waiting for the Horicon to take him to Silver Bay. His daughters Margaret (11) -- everyone called her Peg -- and Miriam (9) were with him.

Finally the announcement came to board. In a flash, Peg and Miriam went from bored to bouncing. It was their first voyage on a steamboat and the Horicon was a classic. It was built in 1877 and, while starting to show her age, had all the craftsmanship of wooden steamboats in that era. It was handsomely furnished with grand saloons and cabins as well as a handcrafted bald eagle mounted at the top of the mast.



Horicon Steamship

The girls didn't sit for the entire two-hour journey. They ran from the front to back and from lower to upper deck. They loved the steam engines. To slow down and speed up, the 200-ton Horicon had to use all 555 horses of horsepower it had. The rumbling of the twin engines shook the floor and rattled the windows. The churning propellers and steam made the lake boil.



The General Slocum Disaster.

Corabel probably wouldn't have permitted William to bring the girls if it was not for her familiarity with where they were going, the YMCA Christian Retreat Center at Silver Bay. When William and Corabel got married in Kansas City in 1892, she was very active in the Young Women's Christian Association, traveling extensively as their General

Secretary. She wanted the girls to see it first-hand, knowing they would love it.



William Boyd.



Corabel Boyd.

William was traveling to Silver Bay to meet Luther Wishard. Luther was the founder of the Student Volunteer Movement, an organization which, in 1898, merged with the YMCA. In his earlier career as Secretary of the YMCA in Kansas City and Chicago, William had heard the incredible story of how Luther Wishard built the Student Movement from nothing to one of the largest faith-based student organizations in the country.

In 1877, Luther Wishard became the first full-time staff member for the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). His job was to direct the YMCA's work with students in the U.S. colleges. Almost a decade later, and still with the YMCA, Wishard became obsessed with the Haystack Prayer movement. The movement was founded in 1806 by five students from Williams College. Gathered in a field just outside the campus, they got caught in a thunderstorm and found shelter under a large haystack. They prayed and discussed their religious calling to spread Christianity everywhere they could.

They ended their prayers proclaiming, "We can do this if we will!"

In 1886 Wishard decided to visit the Haystack Prayer monument (which had been erected at Williams College in honor of the five students that founded it). Standing in front of the monument, it dawned on him that what happened to those students was again happening in his generation.



Luther Wishard.



Haystack Prayer Monument.

“What they had done was ours to complete,” he prayed, “I am willing to go anywhere, at any time, to do anything for Jesus.”

Today, it may seem like Wishard and the founders of the Haystack Prayer Movement were religious fanatics with their zeal to spread Christianity. But it was more than that. It's the same youthful passion and yearning for justice that inspires young people today to march in the streets in support of Black Lives Matter. Or, get in a Green Peace raft to stop illegal whaling. Or, to speak up against harassment as part of the #MeToo movement.

The missionaries were not just trying to spread Christianity, they wanted to make the world a better place. It was social justice for them, in the same way that young people fight for social justice causes today.

That evening William read about the origins of Silver Bay. In the 1890s, a local farmer built a lodge capable of supporting 80 to 100 people. In 1897, Silas Paine, a Standard Oil executive, vacationed at the resort and decided to buy a portion of land adjacent to the property. In 1898, Silas built the Silver Bay Inn (which still stands today and is a historic landmark).

He and his wife ran it for three years as a private enterprise, then Mr. Wishard convinced them to dedicate it as a center for Christian conferences and missionary training. In 1904, Paine sold the inn and grounds to the YMCA for \$70,000.

It dawned on William that so many of his beliefs and values were reflected in this wonderful place. He put the girls to bed then retired himself, anticipating his visit with Mr. Wishard in the morning.



Dock at Silver Bay (now the EMP Dock).



The Inn.



The Store.

In the morning he dropped the girls off at day camp and went back to the inn where he met Mr. Davis, whom Luther had arranged to transport him.

They took a horse and buggy because the roads were damp, and Mr. Davis didn't want to risk getting his new Model T stuck in the mud. He learned that Mr. Davis was a retired professor from the Princeton Theological Seminary and after his retirement a few years ago, he built a summer house near the Wishards.

Mr. Davis shared some of the history of the area.

"That house to your right is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Paine. He used to work for Standard Oil," he said "And from the size of that mansion he did quite well for himself."
[2]



Path from Silver Bay to Van Buren Bay.

Then Mr. Davis told the story about how Mr. Wishard had convinced Mr. Paine to convert the Silver Bay Inn into a Christian conference center. William was already familiar with this from what he read last night, but he listened intently nonetheless.

Mr. Davis said Mr. Paine and Mr. Wishard became good friends. The Wishard's bought their property from Mr. Paine and their house is called the "Bonnie Doon." It was the first house built in Van Buren Bay and for many years served as what you might say was the social center for the Missionary Movement. It's where Luther promoted the movement and built support for Silver Bay.

He went on to explain that the Silas and Mary Paine owned much of the property around Van Buren Bay and were intent on populating their "village on a hill" with ministers, missionaries, and other men of upright character.

"Unfortunately, Luther is not the man he used to be," Mr. Davis said, looking away. "His health has been failing for a few years now."

The men pulled into Van Buren Bay and the first house William saw was delightful. It was built in the Adirondack camp style, with spruce beams, hemlock bark siding, and white Tudor-like gables.

"Oh that's not the 'Bonnie Doon,' " said Mr. Davis, "That's Thorton Penfield's house. He's also retired. He's from Brooklyn where he was the secretary of the YMCA." [3]



Penfield Cottage at Van Buren Bay.

William laughed and explained that he used to work for the YMCA too. The amount of connections he had to this place was amazing.

Mr. Davis dropped William off at the Wishards and said he'd return in a bit. William had a nice visit with Luther --not as awe-inspiring as he thought it would be, but still very pleasant. Luther's health was indeed failing and the visit didn't last long.

Luther hadn't lost his missionary passion though. He got quite animated talking about how the Paines sold the parcels around Van Buren Bay to men of faith. He imagined it becoming a retirement community for ministers and missionaries, where they could continue their work, albeit on a smaller scale.

On the ride home Mr. Davis asked William how long he was here. "Oh we're here for one week," William said.

"We?" asked Mr. Davis.

"Yes I'm here with my two young daughters, Peg and Miriam."

"Well would you and the girls be interested in joining us for a picnic after Sunday services? The kids will love it. We organize all sorts of fun and games."

"That's very kind," William said, "We'd love to."

After services that Sunday William and the girls walked to the picnic. It was a nice sunny afternoon and he wanted to tell the girls about the area along the way.

When they arrived, they saw Mr. Davis in front of Penfield Cottage talking to another man.

"Welcome! So glad you decided to join us," Mr. Davis said, shaking William's hand. "And you young ladies must be Peg and Miriam, yes?"

The girls shyly gathered behind their father. They weren't afraid of the man, they were afraid of the scary looking sea monsters hanging behind him. Big, fat, gray sea monsters with whiskers protruding from their heads.

Miriam pointed towards them and asked, "Are those sea monsters?"

The men laughed. "No, dear, those are called catfish. Not much to look at, but wonderful to eat."

Miriam, ever curious, got closer and reached her hands out to feel their slimy skin.

"Hold on there!" the other man called out. "They can give you a sting."

Miriam jumped back. "Do they live in the lake?" she asked nervously. They had brought their swim dresses with them, but she wasn't going to swim with sea monsters.

"No, no" said the man, "These fish only live in ponds. You don't have to worry about them, they're none in the lake. We get them from a place down the road where there is a fish pond."

The girl's eyes widened at the thought of eating sea monsters. "Don't worry, we also have hot dogs and fried chicken," he said, much to the girl's relief.

Mr. Davis introduced the man next to him, Mr. Penfield. William recalled that Mr. Penfield was the man who worked at the YMCA. They got to talking and were surprised by how many people they knew in common. The girls were getting restless with all this grown-up talk so Mr. Davis pointed them to the beach where the other kids were playing. The three men followed after them.

There was a large gathering of families. The children were playing along the shore and the adults were in Adirondack chairs, soaking their feet in the lake.

"Ok everyone - I'd like you to meet William Boyd and his two daughters Peg and Miriam."

Just then a few of the kids ran up. They had a can with them filled with salamanders. Peg and Miriam looked into the can. The creatures looked like little dragons with their protruding tongues and buggy eyes.

“Come on,” one of the boys said, “Help us find more.”

The girls skipped off with the rest of the kids. William was offered a chair.

“This is Captain Watts,” Mr. Davis said. Captain Watts was originally from England and recently built his retirement home up on the hill. Everyone referred to him as captain because, after moving to the states for college, he joined the army as an engineer constructing army bases all over the country.

“And this is Charles and Margaret Michener,” Mr. Penfield said, “They were the original owners of the house I’m in now. They built it.”

“That is one of the most splendid houses I’ve ever seen,” William complimented them.

The Micheners explained that they originally built a house up on the hill away from the lake. Margaret herself was the architect. She described it fondly: “It has a big wide porch and with rails of spruce and cedar that we harvested from the forest around Jabez Pond. The siding on the outside of the house is covered with hemlock bark that we got from trees along the lakeshore.”

She went on to explain that a few years ago their daughter contracted Polio and the doctors advised her to regularly exercise in the water. So, in 1907, they sold their house on the hill, and began constructing a new house right on the lakefront. Margaret designed this house too, now occupied by Mr. Penfield, in the same Adirondack style.

“And here is Earl Taylor.” Mr. Taylor was a close friend and colleague of Luther Wishard. They had co-founded the Young People's Missionary Movement together. Later he became a Secretary for Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

“And here is William and Muriel Millar.” Millar was another YMCA man. He was instrumental in founding the Army-Navy YMCA in 1898 and was responsible for Army-Navy training at Silver Bay. He later became a Methodist minister. [4]

William settled into his chair and spoke with everyone, amazed by how much he had in common.

After about an hour a loud bell rang. “Time to eat!” Mr. Penfield said, jumping up.

It was quite a feast. Fried catfish and chicken, cabbage slaw, apple salad, fresh baked bread. The kids had hot dogs, chips and bottles of Coca-Cola - much to Williams's girls' delights.

This was the best catfish William had ever eaten. It was thickly breaded, crispy on the outside with white juicy flesh underneath.

"This may be the best catfish I've ever had!" he said.

"Indeed it is! In fact, sometimes we call Captain Watts 'Sir Catfish'" Mr. Millar said.

Captain Watts explained that he learned to cook catfish in Georgia while he was working on an army base there.

"Wouldn't you believe my luck that, there's a fully stocked catfish pond just down the road," he said with glee.

The pond was owned by a Mr. Mann, who Captain Watts had become friends with. Once while visiting, he noticed a pond across from Mann's house that was filled with catfish. Mr. Mann was quite old and no longer fished, so much to Captain Watts' delight, he told Watts he was welcome to fish there anytime.

"The old guy is a real character," the captain said, "Not exactly the Christian type, but boy does he have some stories. He was a Civil War veteran and, fought at Gettysburg under Colonel Custer. Then he went on to develop the Mann Boudoir Car, a railroad sleeping car. But now he's known as the scandalous figure that created a newspaper called Town Topics."

William stopped chewing and looked up in disbelief. "Sorry, is this Colonel Mann?"

"Indeed it is," Captain Watts said.

William laughed out loud and explained he was familiar with Colonel Mann since William worked in the publishing business too. He even knew some of the Colonels' advertising men. William didn't have much respect for Mann's scruples, but he sure enjoyed his catfish.

As they walked back to the Inn, William got goosebumps rehashing the many connections he had with the people they just met. He belonged here, he thought.

After dinner, they were scheduled to take an evening boat tour on the Oneita. Walking to the boathouse, they saw a small group standing by the lakeshore and a swarm of bats diving at their heads.

“What are they doing?” asked Miriam.

Having no idea, William took the girls over to see. There was a box of tiny potato wedges on the ground. He saw one of the boys grab one and throw it up in the air. The bats swooped down and plucked them out of the air.

“Want to try?” the boys asked Peg and Miriam. This was the funniest game they had played all day.

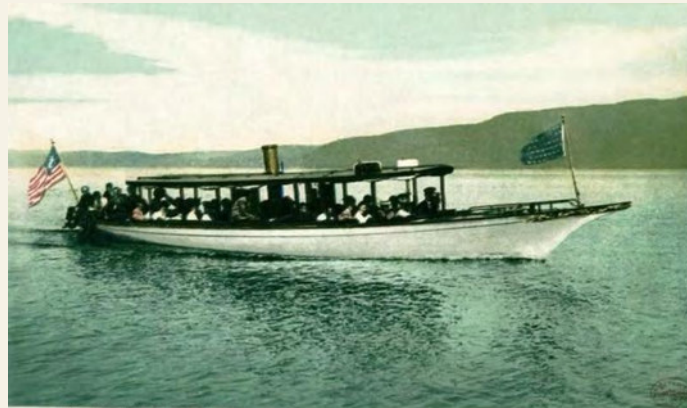
One of the older boys explained to them that bats can’t see. That’s why they say you’re as “blind as a bat.”

“Well, if they can’t see then how do they catch potatoes?” Miriam asked.

“Nobody really knows,” one boy said.

They can’t see but they can catch potatoes; she thought about this as they walked to the boat.

The Oneita was marvelous. The hull, gunwales, and trim were made from dark mahogany that shimmered against the water.



The Oneita at Silver Bay.

They boarded the boat and headed south. Powering around the first bend, William realized he was looking into Van Buren Bay. There were scattered specks of light coming from the cabins of all those families met at the picnic.

When they crossed the lake the captain explained, “Nobody lives over here -- yet, that is,” the captain said. The entire stretch of mountains ahead - at least a mile in each direction - were inaccessible by anything except a boat.”

“But the way things are going here on the lake, it’ll get developed someday,” he added.

“Who owns it?” asked Peg.

“I don’t know but I sure hope they decide to keep it like it is.”

Me too, Peg thought.

Historical Note: Peg got her wish. In 1999, her son, Hank Rowan, a successful businessman, helped organize and fund a coalition of land conservancies that bought 168 acres of forest and shoreline directly across the lake from Silver Bay and kept it "Forever Wild." There is a marker at the outermost point of the pavilion at Slim Point, memorializing the Margaret Boyd Rowan Preserve.



Henry Rowan with his daughter Virginia Rowan Smith
at the dedication of the Margaret Boyd Rowan Preserve, July 10, 1999.

The rest of the ride was at a gentler pace. As darkness settled in, out came the stars. This was indeed the greatest show on earth, William thought. The captain pointed out the Big Dipper and other constellations. The girls jumped with excitement at each shooting star.

As they rounded Odell Island and headed home, Miriam was almost in a trance. Her mind was trying to piece everything together. Bats that can’t see but catch potatoes in the air. Salamanders that regrow their tails. Fish that sting but are still eaten. She loved this place and all the mysteries that came with it. She wished someday to return.

Historical Note: William Boyd served on Silver Bay’s board of trustees from 1917-1926, helping to steer the organization through a difficult financial era when it came close to bankruptcy. In honor of his service, a new 43,000 square foot conference facility opened in 2018 was named in his honor. Virginia Rowan Smith, Boyd's Great Granddaughter, said she and her husband “are pleased to be able to provide a lead gift for this important center. And to think it all started over a hundred years ago, when he introduced his young daughters to Silver Bay in the summer of 1910.”



The William Boyd Center at Silver Bay opened in 2018.

Germantown, Pennsylvania

She hated these things, but it was important to her mother.

They were at a luncheon hosted by Woman's Club of Germantown, a group her mother was involved in, and Miriam was awkwardly making small talk, which she was not very good at.

The luncheon was to establish a junior section of the Woman's Club of Germantown, which her mother was encouraging her to get involved in. She had no interest in it, but didn't have the nerve to tell her mother so.

It was early summer 1920. Miriam was daydreaming about heading to Silver Bay and the cabin her father William had built in Van Buren Bay. Silver Bay was one of her favorite places in the world; she fell in love with it the moment she first saw it as a child more than ten years ago.

This summer she planned to hike and explore the trails of the Lord Howe Valley, which was just south of the historic town of Ticonderoga.

As she was daydreaming about Lake George and mindlessly milling about the white gloved gathering, she stumbled upon a small plaque in the back of the room.

"Johnson House: Home of The Underground Railroad" the plaque read. This caught her attention.

"Built in 1768, the Johnson House was one of Germantown's oldest homes. The Johnsons were Quakers and believed in non-violence."

“As did many Quakers, the Johnsons were against slavery and offered their home as a station on the Underground Railroad in the early 1800s. They provided sanctuary, food, clothing, and transportation to untold numbers of African freedom seekers. Tradition holds that the prominent abolitionist Harriet Tubman visited the Johnson House.”

Wow, Miriam thought. When her family moved to Germantown in 1915 she had no idea of this history. To her, it was just a quaint suburb of Philadelphia.

The next day Miriam went to the library to learn more. She was interested in, and sympathetic to, the plight of negroes. She abhorred the history of slavery.

It turned out that Germantown was the origination point for many social justice movements. It was founded by German Quakers in 1683. The Quakers strict interpretation of the teachings of Christ led them to refuse to kill in war, swear oaths, keep slaves, and consume alcohol.

Although Miriam was Methodist -- largely because her ancestors as far back as they could trace were Methodists -- Miriam held many Quaker ideologies. She strongly agreed with the foundational Quaker belief, "that of God in every one," meaning that God lives in every human regardless of their race, class, or social standing.

She also found a more trivial, but nonetheless interesting fact about Germantown. It was the birthplace of Ross Granville Harrison. Mr. Harrison was currently the Chair of Zoology at Yale University and the managing editor of the *Journal of Experimental Zoology*.

Miriam had heard of Mr. Harrison's work in one of her biology classes at Wellesley. He was a major contributor to the growing field of medical research called genetics and had even been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

One of his experiments caught Miriam's attention. It involved amputating the right limb of a salamander then reattaching a limb bud from the left side. The limb buds essentially provide instructions to the body for what type of limb to grow. The right left limb grew back, as a normal right limb despite the bud coming from the left side, proving that there were some sort of instructions embedded in limb buds independent of the body.

The science fascinated Miriam, but the reason this experiment stood out was she vividly remembered those boys at Van Buren Bay telling her if you cut off a salamander's tail it will later grow back.

“The library will be closing in ten minutes,” announced the librarian.

Miriam rushed to return the books she was reading. She had lost track of time and had to hurry home for yet another one of her parent's dinner parties. Her parents, particularly her father William, entertained a lot. This was not a trait she inherited. Miriam preferred to be by herself.

"Dear, you are late. They will be here shortly," her mother said when she got home. "Run up and get ready."

They were having the Parlin family for dinner. Miriam's father worked with Mr. Parlin at the Curtis Publishing Company and the families were both members of the Methodist Church in Germantown. Miriam suspected this wasn't the only reason he invited them for dinner though. Mr. Parlin had a son, Charles, named after his father, who was about the same age as Miriam.

While she loved her parents dearly, she disliked how they were always subtly -- and sometimes not so subtly -- trying to match her up with "suitable" suitors. They tended to meddle in her affairs and were very concerned that she would not find a husband due to her shyness and introverted nature.

She adored her father, but she could not be less like him. He was affable and gregarious, always meeting new people and befriending them. His larger-than-life personality served him well in his advertising career at Curtis, but as a father it often meant that he was all too willing to share his opinion about Miriam's affairs.

They sat down to dinner. Of course, she was seated next to Charles. She tried not to like him, but it was hard not to.

Charles was interesting and engaging. He'd just been accepted to Harvard Law School, so she asked him how he had become interested in the law.

"I guess it started with my interest in mathematics," he said.

Miriam looked at him quizzically, not seeing the connection.

He went on to explain that when he was in college at the University of Pennsylvania, he studied math and was fascinated by the laws of numbers. He applied mathematics extensively during the war when, in his junior year, he enlisted with the Army's Heavy Artillery Corps.

Because Charles had studied trigonometry, he was sent to the officers' training camp at Fort Monroe, where they learned to operate the biggest cannons in the artillery. These massive guns were mounted on railroad flat cars which would shoot at targets as far as 75 miles away. Since the operator obviously could not see the target, aiming had to be determined with mathematics, he explained.

“There are very elaborate mathematical formulas which tell the curve which a shell will take when the cannon is tipped at a given angle. Then you must study the wind, how hard it is blowing and in what direction. Also, the shell spins around and around so it goes through the air and thus causes it to curve in much the same manner that a pitcher curves the baseball by spinning it as it goes through the air.”

He stopped talking and looked at her, “Sorry this must be terribly boring.”

He grew quiet.

“To the contrary, I find it fascinating,” said Miriam. “I’m also intrigued by math. I’m majoring in chemistry at Wellesley, so we use math all the time.”

Charles tried not to look surprised, he hadn’t met a lot of women that studied math, much less chemistry. They spent the rest of the dinner talking about academic topics and enjoying each other’s intellect.

As everyone was getting up from the table and preparing to leave, Charles turned to her and, trying not to be too forward, said, “I’d enjoy seeing you again.”

Footnotes:

[1] Pneumonia was the third leading cause of death overall at the time of in this era.

[2] The mansion still stands today as part of the Silver Bay Association. It’s called Paine Hall.

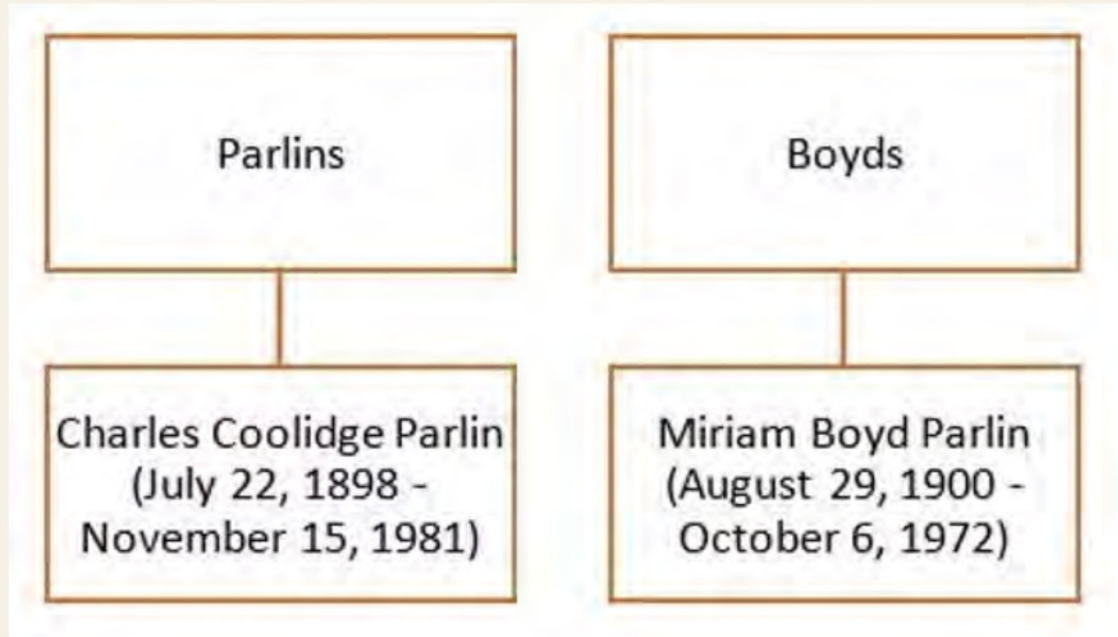
[3] Penfield Cottage still stands today. When you get to the end of the Friendship Trail, it sits to the left along the lake.

[4] The history of Van Buren Bay and the history of its settlement had been documented by Charles G. Gosselink - *Benjamin Van Buren’s Bay*.

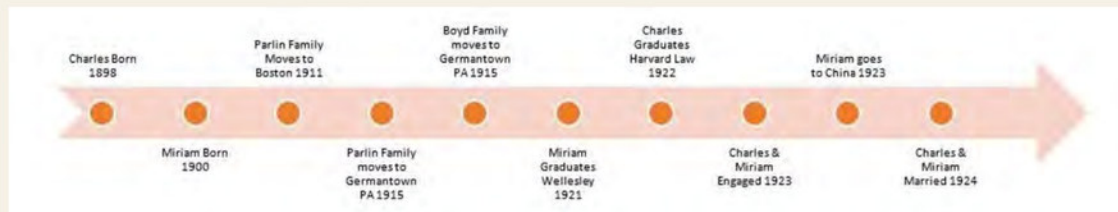
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CHAPTER 3 - THE FOUNDERS

the people:



the timeline:



THE STORY:

Charles & Miriam

After the dinner at the Boyds, Charles and Miriam stayed in touch. When they returned to school that fall, they were a short 30-minute commute from one another -- Charles at Harvard Law School, Miriam at Wellesley. The schools had joint social functions, so they saw each other frequently.

When Miriam graduated in 1921, she moved back to Philadelphia and began graduate work in advanced mathematics and chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania. Charles had one more year at Harvard, so they maintained a long-distance relationship through correspondence and family gatherings during the holidays.

Charles graduated in 1922 and went to work for Simpson, Thacher, & Bartlett as a legal associate. The firm was based in New York City, a short commute to Miriam in Philadelphia.

By the spring of 1923, Charles knew he was going to propose. He and Miriam were deeply in love -- a love that had stood the test of time and distance. He went to the Diamond District just south of St. Patrick's Cathedral in NYC to shop for rings but was quickly overwhelmed with all the options.

Fortunately, he had a good friend from his army days at Fort Monroe, Paul MacPherson, who was in the diamond business. Paul helped him pick out a diamond.

The last hurdle was working up the nerve to ask Mr. Boyd for his approval. Charles knew Mr. Boyd liked him and would probably look upon his proposal favorably, but he was still intimidated. Mr. Boyd was an imposing man.

Charles consulted with his brother George for advice.

"I like Miriam, but nothing on earth would give me the courage to ask Mr. Boyd for her hand!"

George said, only half-joking. "Good luck!" [1]

Charles went to Philadelphia early that summer to meet with Mr. Boyd in his office at the Curtis Center.

"I love your daughter Miriam and I'd like to marry her with your blessing," Charles said nervously.

"Well, I was wondering what was taking you so long, good boy! Of course, I say yes. The two of you are two peas in a pod," Mr. Boyd said much to Charles' relief. "My only question is how do you plan to support her and provide the life she deserves?"

Charles looked at him, unsure how to answer, then launched into a lawyerly explanation about how his net worth was not much but would grow as he ascended the ranks. He earnestly provided examples of Harvard Law graduates older than him and where they were practicing today.

"Charles," Mr. Boyd said, "I have faith that you'll work it out." [2]

In the summer of 1923 Charles and Miriam were officially engaged. Little did they know that their relationship would stand one more big test before they got married.



Charles Parlin



Miriam Boyd



Charles and Miriam.

The Great Kanto Earthquake

There was nothing in life that could prepare her for what she was about to see.

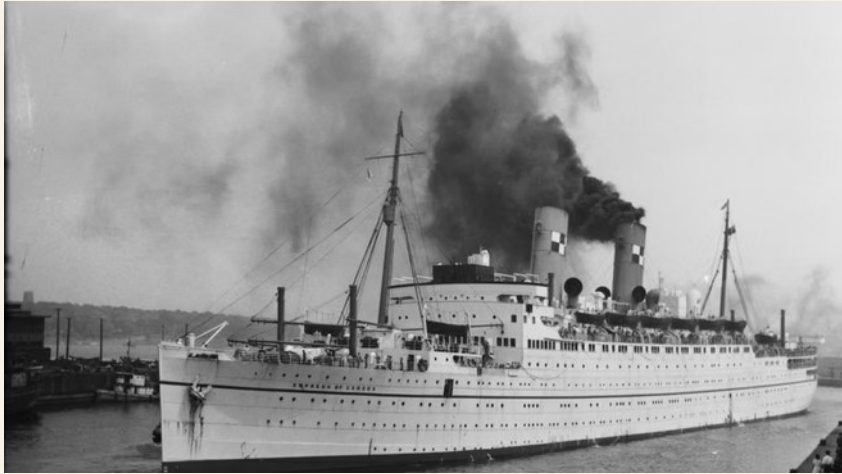
In 1923, Miriam was traveling to China to teach chemistry at Yenching Christian University. The invitation had come from the president of the university who was having dinner at her parents' house in Philadelphia. Miriam was seated next to him at the table. When he learned she had a degree in chemistry he said, "I need you to come to China and teach at the university. My current chemistry teacher is returning to the states."

She didn't know how to respond. On the one hand, it appealed to her sense of exploration and desire to help those less fortunate. On the other hand, she had just gotten engaged and this would take her away - very far away - for an entire year. On top of all that, it was very unusual for a 23-year-old woman to travel by herself halfway around the world.

She and Charles discussed it that night. They both had a deep sense of mission and believed that if you were privileged, you should use your talents, education, and resources to help other people, especially the underprivileged. Charles' career as a tax attorney was just taking off and he knew he would be working 18-hour days anyway. Their relationship had survived time and distance before; they knew it would again.

Besides, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. They agreed she should take the offer.

In the late summer of 1923, Miriam took the train across the country to California with her sister Isabel, and then went on by herself to Vancouver to board the Empress of Canada, a trans-pacific ocean liner. Boarding the ship by herself, not knowing anyone, Miriam began the two-week voyage across the Pacific Ocean. The first stop was Yokohama, Japan.



Empress of Canada.

On September 2, 1923 she was making her way to breakfast and saw a large crowd gathered at the bulletin board.

“Wireless advises this morning that Yokohama was destroyed at noon Saturday by earthquake and fire. It is reported that at first shock of the earthquake, buildings collapsed and fires broke out in various places. Any further information will be posted in due course.”

Many of the passengers were desperate for more information as they had relatives in the city. There was a great deal of confusion due to the lack of detail. The city was completely cut off from the outside world.

The rest of that day the ship was at a standstill as the crew tried to get more information and decipher whether or not it was safe to proceed to the harbor. That night the passengers were told that they would continue to the harbor at first light. No passengers would be allowed to disembark. The ship's only purpose was to take on refugees.

Nobody got much sleep that night. Miriam saw the ship hands setting up cots in the gymnasium and upper deck, presumably to take on the wounded. There was an air of foreboding. The passengers discussed what might be ahead of them, trying not to imagine the worst.

All passengers were up on deck at four in the morning the next day. The ship slowly moved along the coast, making its way to the harbor. As it started to get light, they could see smoke pouring up from the city and the flames started to come into view.

Just then the captain made an announcement: "All passengers are to remain below deck. If you remain on deck it's for one purpose and one purpose only -- to assist those who have been injured."

The announcement caused a stir as most began moving to their cabins. Miriam started to her cabin and then stopped cold. Years later when she reflected back on it, she couldn't say if it was her Christian commitment to serve, her lifelong interest in nursing, or just the naivete of a 23-year-old facing danger and jumping towards it.

Whatever it was, she stayed on deck.

As they pulled closer into the Tokyo harbor, she could feel the heat like an open oven. Fire was everywhere. She turned and saw a pillar of flames 60 feet high swirl up like a tornado, setting off explosions as it ripped along the waterfront merchant district.



Metropolitan Police Department burning.



Artist's depiction of scene at dock terminal.

They couldn't dock, but pulled up alongside the Empress of Australia, which had just set sail when the earthquake began. Many people had been on the dock to see the ship off and were thrown into the harbor when the dock split in the middle and sank. Some of them drowned, many of them were burned neck to knee from the flames of burning oil on the surface of the water.

There were still bodies floating lifelessly in the harbor, the smell of burnt flesh in the air. She didn't think; she just acted.

Miriam started pulling the injured, who had dived off the pier to escape the fire, onboard. Then she ran to the top deck where the injured were laid down and passengers doing all they could to help.

Miriam saw a young, terribly burned woman screaming out for her child as she tried to jump over the railing back into the harbor. The woman's husband was holding her back because he knew the child was gone. She saw a man stumbling across the deck, trying to get to something or someone, his hair burned to the scalp and his eyes seared shut.

Many of the wounded were carried onboard half naked and badly burnt. The Japanese first responders had run out of bandages, so they were covering wounds with tar paper torn from the flooring of the dock. While this had stopped the bleeding, it had also sealed itself to the burns and had to be gently peeled off.

The responders quickly used up all the bandages in the infirmary, so Miriam joined a group of passengers who got all the clothing they could spare and began ripping it into makeshift bandages.

Although there was mayhem around her, Miriam was calm and methodical. While she wasn't fanatical about her Christianity, that day she felt the Lord inside her.

The ship took in 1,400 victims total. The captain had been ordered to take them to Kobe, Japan where the medical facilities were on standby. The entire eastern coast of Japan was on high alert for aftershocks and tsunamis. The hospitals in Tokyo and the surrounding cities were overwhelmed.



Aftermath of earthquake and fires.

Miriam spent the next 48 hours on deck caring for, feeding, and comforting the injured. She prayed for the souls that didn't make it. She didn't sleep. There was too much adrenaline running through her and, besides, there were too many people to care for.

In a letter to her parents describing the disaster she told a story about one of the survivors:

“The last boat full was brought to our ship about 10 o'clock. In it was a little Russian woman on a stretcher. It was pouring rain by then, which added to the misery. She was burned very badly, her face cut deeply, and her eyes and face black from being buried. She was so bad in fact that the doctors would not examine her. She was covered with tar paper. They thought her back was broken too. Her brother had dug her out and her husband had carried her 10 miles on his back. There was little hope for her but she was put on the floor on a mattress in the Writing Room. One woman sat with her all night and would not let any of us relieve her. In fact, for three nights she watched her. The poor little thing was taken off at Kobe, very much improved, had been examined and her back not broken. The gratitude of the brother and husband was great. But her face will haunt me every time I think of this. And it was only one of many.”

- *Miriam Boyd: Letters from China 1923-4*

When the boat finally pulled into Shanghai, Miriam was exhausted and dazed. She helped get the injured off the boat and joined a prayer circle that had gathered below deck. She gathered what remained of her clothing and other possessions and set out to the Shanghai Methodist Episcopal Church where she was to spend the night before continuing to Peking (Beijing).

When she entered the church there were three older women there to greet her. She apologized for her appearance but didn't explain what had happened. She just couldn't find the words to describe it, nor did she want to relive it.

The three women became rather condescending towards Miriam. They thought she was much too frail to endure life as a missionary in China. When Miriam picked up on this she got very quiet.

She politely thanked them for meeting with her, got her bag, and headed straight for the Shanghai Train Terminal. From there, she boarded the 17-hour overnight train to Peking.

Miriam learned later that these women even had the audacity to write to her mother saying that they couldn't understand why the university would send such a frail, unprepared girl to the mission field.

When she arrived in Peking she went straight to her final destination, the Yenching Christian University. She got some sleep on the train so she felt a little better, but the aftershocks of trauma were still with her.

That afternoon she got a tour of the classrooms and church and met her associates. After dinner, she excused herself and turned in. She slept on a cot in the open air and slowly drifted off under a spectacular star-filled sky.

After a year teaching chemistry at the university, Miriam returned home. She only spoke of the event to Charles once. After that she never spoke about it again.

The Great Kanto earthquake, as it is now known, was the 9th worst natural disaster of the 20th century. The entire city of Tokyo burnt to the ground; 143,00 people died. Miriam's faith in Christ had never been so tested, nor had it served her so well.

While Miriam chose not to talk about it, the memories of what she experienced never left her.

Miriam Boyd Parlin died on October 6, 1972 of a degenerative disease that was never diagnosed, but is presumed to have been Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). The

children, now adults, would visit her in Englewood, where she had a full-time nurse providing care and was bedridden.

Her last years of life were a struggle as she lost the capacity to feed herself, walk, and, in the last year of her life, speak. She could only squeeze her visitors' hands.

One afternoon, almost a year since they had last heard her voice, Blackie and Joan were visiting Miriam.

Charles had set up a TV for her and the four of them were watching the evening news. There had just been a natural disaster and Walter Cronkite was reading down the list of the worst natural disasters of the century.

Out of nowhere Miriam started wailing and screaming in utterances none of them could make out. It was a terrifying sound, like the primal noise of a wounded animal. They tried to comfort her but she just kept wailing. The nurse finally had to sedate her.

"Do you know what triggered that?" Charles asked them.

"I have no idea," Blackie said, disturbed.

"Do you remember what was on the television? As Walter Cronkite was listing all those disasters, when he got to The Great Kanto earthquake of 1924 and showed the images on the screen, that's when your mother started screaming."

"What are you talking about?" Blackie didn't understand the connection because his mother never spoke of it to any of the children in detail. Charles explained the terror Miriam experienced on that ship.

If it wasn't for being there when Cronkite mentioned the disaster, Blackie may never have understood how deeply impacted Miriam was by it.

Religious Faith

Miriam was a devout Christian, but she wasn't one to proselytize. To her, religion was deeply personal and private. Her faith was combined with a sharp scientific intellect. The fact that some people, particularly in academia, were beginning to question religion as new scientific evidence began to emerge about life's origins didn't bother Miriam. For her, science was simply the language we used to understand God's intent.

Miriam's enlightened views of religion made her somewhat cautious about pushing it on the kids. One day when 13-year-old Blackie came home from Sunday School, he was very upset.

“We had the stupidest lesson today, you won't believe it,” he said in disgust. “We took an imaginary trip to visit Wong Foo in China on a magic carpet. And we learned that Wong Foo is just like us. They treat us like we're in pre-school!”

Miriam didn't say anything about the lesson, but she was deeply disturbed by it. And it wasn't the only time that Blackie came home contemptuous about Sunday School.

“You don't have to go anymore,” she told Blackie the next day.

It was her own spirituality, combined with intellectualism, that led her to this decision. She simply could not tolerate the thought of her children being introduced to religion through a lens they rejected. For her, faith was personal, and one had to find their own relationship with God. While she had a strong connection to the church, she didn't view it as a prerequisite to living a holy life.

Full of Surprises

Because of her introverted and shy personality, Miriam was constantly being underestimated.

It was a family tradition to spend Labor Day at the Rutland State Fair in Vermont as it was only an hour away from Silver Bay and marked the end of the summer. Everyone in the household would go.

One year Miriam was walking with the family through the fair when she came upon the duck shooting booth. She approached the booth and was looking at the setup when the rather uppity teenager attending the booth said to her, “This is really more of a man's thing, lady. Just down the way are some games more suited for women.”

Miriam didn't say anything. She just stared at him blankly then looked down at the dozen rifles chained to the counter at the front of the booth. She laid down her money and began to take off her white satin gloves. She pulled each finger on one gloved hand and laid it on the counter, then the other. Slowly she reached up and took the hat pin out of her hat and set it in the soft fur lining. Then she set her hat on the counter without an ounce of emotion.

She began to lift each rifle, carefully inspecting them to find the one with the right heft and lines. She took her time. The family stood back and watched incredulously without saying a word. The attendant had a smug, supercilious sneer on his face.

Finally, she chose one of the rifles and lifted it to her shoulder. Carefully and deliberately she took aim, and BAM!, down went a duck.

Never letting the rifle off her shoulder, BAM!, down went a swan.

Ten shots! Ten birds down!!

She glanced at the attendant and placed the rifle down on the counter. She picked up her hat and carefully set the pin. She picked up her gloves, and pulled them on, one after the other. Then she turned and took Charles's arm, and they walked on down the midway.

Neither of them said a word until they were out of sight, and then they both broke into laughter. The dumbfounded look on the booth attendants face was priceless.

The kids were thrilled. "Our Mom, the markswoman!" they shouted. None of them had ever seen their mother with a gun before, and never saw her with one again. How she learned to shoot, they had no idea.

Remembrance

The "older cousins" of my generation (I was the youngest of my generation) have many fond memories growing up with Miriam. Rob Parlin left a wonderful remembrance in his contribution to the Parlin Family Volume 4:

"I am now 43 years old (August, 1995), soon to be 44 on September 25. There isn't a day I don't think about Gramma, and I have a picture of the two of us taken in September 1962 sitting on my desk at work.

"I miss you, Gramma. It's not time for me, yet -- hopefully not for a long, long time -- but someday I'll cross the river to the other side and be with you, Grampa, Nancy, Nana and all the gang I knew during my Big House years. I wish that all the other grandchildren could see you as I Did: strong, full of life, and happy that I was a child and your best friend.

*I love you,
- Robbie"*

- Rob Parlin, 1995.

Charles

"I know I'm asking a lot of you Charles, but you are going to be more or less in charge of the family," his father said.

Charles was only thirteen. The thought of being the man of the house all summer was intimidating but he could tell by his father's seriousness that it was important.

It was June of 1911. His father had just accepted a position with the Curtis Publishing Company and the family was going to move from Wausau, Wisconsin to Boston. However, since Charles's sister Grace was only three weeks old, and his mother was still recovering from childbirth, the plan was to have his father go to Boston and the rest of the family would follow at the end of the summer.

"I need you to make every effort to see that things go smoothly this summer," his father went on, "Your mother will need your help. She should have no trouble from you, George, or Ruth and, as the oldest, this will largely depend on how you behave."

"Lastly, and most important, your mother needs rest and sleep to recover, so you will need to assume much of the responsibility caring for baby Grace."

It was one of those moments when a child has to become an adult. "Yes, I can do this," Charles said determinedly, "I want mom to rest and get back her strength. I'll keep after George and Ruth and make sure Grace is cared for."

Charles didn't really know what this entailed, but he found out soon enough. He learned to feed Grace from a bottle, change her diapers, and rock her to sleep.

In that era, it was common practice to have babies sleep in the same bed as the parents. Many nights, Charles slept with Grace in his bed. He loved it. She would snuggle up next to him and wake him for feeding by pawing at his face. She was an uncommonly good baby, never giving him trouble. It's almost like she knew she had to be good, he thought.

The summer passed without any mishaps, much to Charles' relief. His mother was doing much better but still not ready to do everything needed to move the whole family, so Charles went to Boston himself to live with his father.

He entered the Newtonville Technical High School, which his father had picked because, at the time, Charles expected to go into engineering. Charles and his father shared a room at the Newtonville YMCA.

With the demands of his new job, Charles' father was spending much of his time on the road and Charles was on his own frequently. This quite shocked the fellow boarders, who considered a boy of thirteen much too young to be left on his own. But, his father had a great deal of faith in him and Charles enjoyed being independent.

Later that fall Charles' father was scheduled to deliver the president's address at the Wisconsin State Teachers Association. This was his last obligation to his previous job.

After the address he would go back to Wausau and help Daisy pack everything and everyone up and bring the rest of the family east. He'd be gone for three weeks.

The Sunday after his father left for Wisconsin Charles attended church by himself. A friend of his father's saw him alone and invited him for dinner. After dinner the man said, "I will wait while you telephone the people you are staying with for a ride home."

"Oh no, I'm on my own," Charles said much to the man's dismay. Soon enough the Parlins became known in their church as the parents who left a thirteen-year old boy alone in the big city for three weeks.

Charles wasn't fazed by any of this. With each new challenge his father put before him, Charles showed the traits that he would carry into adulthood: leadership, confidence, and optimism.

In fact, when the family arrived in Boston, Charles had already found a house for rent and made all the move-in arrangements.

The experience of being the "man of house" at such a young age left Charles with a deep sense of paternalism for the rest of his life. Even as they grew into adulthood, Charles felt responsible for the well-being of his siblings and their families.



Charles later in life as Head of Firm at Shearman and Sterling law firm.



Charles and Miriam.

Footnotes:

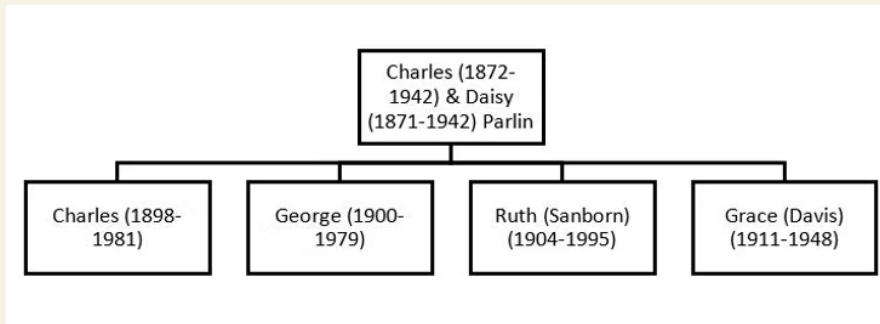
[1] One example of Mr. Boyd's imposing nature is that he would offer his sons-in-law stock options as a means to know their net worth. As soon as the young man could afford no more, Mr. Boyd would know their worth. But Charles, being quite clever and quick to spot opportunity, went to the head of his law firm and told him about his father-in-law's scheme. The head agreed to lend Charles as much money as he wanted. Eventually Mr. Boyd stopped offering Charles stock options.

[2] Charles did indeed "work it out." He went on to have a successful career at Shearman and Sterling, one of New York's most prestigious law firms. He became a partner in 1945 and ascended to head of the firm in 1956. His career is chronicled in the book, *Shearman and Sterling 1873-1973*.

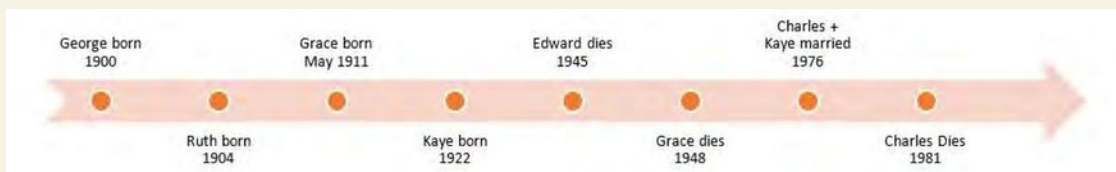
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CHAPTER 4 - THE FAMILY

the people:



the timeline:



THE STORY:

George Parlin

He couldn't figure out why he kept running into this wall.

Get off the train, turn right, walk 132 paces, feel for double pillars, turn right, walk 76 paces, arrive at the ferry dock. He had practiced with Howard numerous times, so why did he keep running into this wall?

"Hey fella I think I know the problem," he heard from behind him. "You're running into the back of a luggage carriage that they left in the middle of the walkway. Here, you let me help you out."

George was blind. He couldn't put an exact date on the day he went blind because it was a progressive condition that kept getting worse as he got older. George was rather stubborn about the whole thing and never let his bad vision get in the way of living.

In fact, it wasn't until George was eight years old that anyone knew anything was wrong, despite the fact that he had less than one-tenth of normal vision. That summer his father returned from Europe where he had been conducting tours and lecturing on European history and art. He had acquired a pair of opera glasses from the Palais Garnier and the kids were passing them around pointing out how clearly they could see things so far away.

When it came to George's turn, he looked at a calendar with numbers over an inch high that was hanging on the wall ten feet away from him.

"Well these certainly are good glasses," he said. "I can see the numbers on that calendar just as clearly as can be."

"Very funny, George," his mother said.

"What do you see when you look down there?" inquired his brother Charles, pointing down a long hallway that had a bookshelf at the end of it.

"Just kind of a fuzzy wall," said George. They all looked at each other quizzically and started asking George what he could see -- this table, that chair, a painting. He couldn't see anything clearly. So his father took him to the ophthalmologist and had him fitted for a pair of powerful glasses.



George Parlin.

As a young man, despite his handicap, George wanted to serve his country. Eager to join World War I, he applied with many different departments, but was rejected because of his poor vision. On one occasion he tried to memorize the eye chart by listening to the boys ahead of him being tested. But when his turn came, they swapped out the chart.

When the recruiting officer found out how little George could see, he said, "You're not near-sighted, you're blind! Go back home until we need blind men!"

George kept trying, pleading with departments to take him and he eventually found one: the Motor Transport Corps. George thought it odd that the army would trust him and his bad eyes to drive a truck but not perform other duties, but he wasn't going to ask any questions. This was his big chance! Fortunately for the world, but unfortunately for George, the war ended six weeks later. George claimed he won the war.

He got another chance to serve his country during World War II and served in the American Military Government. After Allied Forces got control of towns in North Africa and Italy, George would oversee the town, adjudicating business problems, ensuring basic services were back in place, and re-establishing law and order.

The army doctors diagnosed George's degenerative vision condition as a detached retina. While today, detached retinas are treated through basic laser surgery, at that time the only solution was to surgically sew the retina back into place.

It was a high-risk surgery and, unfortunately, it was not successful. George was left completely blind. He spent weeks in bed recovering from the surgery surrounded by sandbags so he wouldn't move or try to touch his eyes. Unbeknownst to the doctors and George at the time, he was also allergic to penicillin. So in addition to being in a great deal of pain and not being able to see, his skin was aflame with itching. He had to remain perfectly still.

His only solace was visits from his kids, nieces and nephews. His nephew John (Ruth's son) would record Sunday services with a wire recorder, and they all would listen to it together a few weeks later when Ruth's family could get down from Glen Ridge, NJ for a visit.

After months of recovering in the hospital, George was finally discharged. The Army sent him to a school for the blind in Chicago so that he could learn how to get on in life with no sight. There he learned to use a cane, read braille, and generally get by.

He also learned to count his steps as a means of getting around in the real world. When walking away from a known place, for instance your front door, start counting your steps because if you have a problem you can always turn around and count your way back, they told him.

This is why George was so thrown off by the luggage carriage sitting in the middle of the walkway. He had walked this route dozens of times with his next-door neighbor and brother-in-law, Howard Sanborn, on their way to work in New York City from their home in Glen Ridge, NJ. He had memorized the steps and turns over and over in his mind because he knew that while Howard and George's sister Ruth were away at Lake George, he would be on his own.

There was one silver lining of being blind though: Everyday George experienced the kindness of strangers. Just like the man who helped George find his way around the luggage carriage and get him back on track, George had numerous stories just like this.

The last leg of his commute to the office required crossing a wide, busy street. This was well before the day when traffic lights were equipped to assist the handicapped with crossings, so George really had no way of telling when the light was green or red. He would approach the crosswalk, cane in hand, and inevitably someone would offer him assistance. Having seen first-hand the evil side of human nature during his time in the war, these small offers of kindness renewed George's faith in humankind.

Tragedy at Lake George

George had two sons, Steward and Edward. The story of Edward's death is one of the saddest stories surrounding the history of Pudding Island Farm, and George Parlin specifically. Rather than rewrite the story, below is the story as told on the Silver Bay Blog by Kihm Winship:

"It was September 3rd, Labor Day, 1945. The war in Europe had ended in May; Japan had surrendered on August 15th. Mrs. George Parlin, whose husband and older son were both in uniform, must have thought she was in the clear. She was living at Silver Bay with her younger son, Edward Parlin; he was working as an assistant hike leader for the Silver Bay Association. He was 16 years old, but looked older. He was on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout, and his hiking merit badge was next. For that, he needed to take a 25-mile hike. On Labor Day, he set off on his own, wearing blue jeans and a white 'Silver Bay' sweater.

"When he did not return the next day, he was declared missing. Rumors flew. A local sheriff said he'd seen rattlesnakes on Tongue Mountain; the boy must have been bitten. Someone else suggested he had hitch-hiked home to Glen Ridge, New Jersey. Major George Parlin was stationed in Italy; one can imagine Edward's mother's feeling of helplessness as the hours turned into days. The boy's uncle, Charles Parlin, a New York City attorney, offered a \$1,000 reward for information leading to Edward's return, and searchers began ranging farther and farther from Silver Bay. Finally, on September 16th, a party of six -- three from Hague and three from Silver Bay -- found

the boy's body on Catamount Mountain, at the base of a 75-foot cliff. After setting up his camp, he had gone to gather firewood, lost the trail and plunged to his death.

"The site was about seven miles east of Silver Bay, and seven miles from the nearest road. One man stayed behind to guard the body while the others hiked out with the news. The next day, 14 men spent six hours cutting a trail to carry the body back out, taking it to a funeral home in Bolton Landing. The coroner ruled that the boy had died of shock and multiple fractures. Edward Parlin's body was buried at the Valley View Cemetery in Ticonderoga.

"In 1946, George Parlin donated \$2,500 for a dormitory to be built in his son's name at Silver Bay. Employees and guests made generous donations as well. Edward Parlin Men's Dormitory was dedicated in 1952."

- Kihm Winship, Silver Bay Blog



Steward (brother), Dorothy (mother) and Edward Parlin.



Edward Parlin

Many Happy Years at Pudding Island Farm

Despite tragedy in their lives, George and his wife Dorothy enjoyed summers at Lake George with their son Steward well into old age. In the 1950s, Charles converted the Barn into a residence and gifted it to George and Dorothy's son Steward. Then in 1975, Steward bought Ms. Stevenson's house, which was the last remaining non-Parlin house on Pudding Island Farm. Uncle Charles then gave the Barn to the Sanborn "boys": Howard, John, and Don. Today the Barn is owned and cared for by Bill and Sue Rigger (John's daughter).

Ruth Parlin Sanborn

Everything was perfect. The view, the setting, the structure -- it all was perfect. It was the summer of 1972 and Ruth was sitting in the newly minted "Tea House" with her

brothers George and Charles and George's wife Dorothy. There were a few other relatives and family friends there, all enjoying their afternoon tea.

For the last two weeks she had hosted this afternoon tea party promptly at 4:00 for tea and biscuits. It was perfect except for one thing. All the adults showed up, but the kids didn't. Ruth wanted to involve everyone, especially the kids.

She turned to her brother George, "Why aren't any of the kids showing up? Look at them all out there on the raft. Why aren't they here?"

"Well it might be these stiff biscuits -- this is old people food!" George said.

Ruth loved that George didn't mince his words. She also suspected that since he was blind his other senses were heightened, maybe he overheard the kids talking. In any event, it got her thinking.



Tea House under construction 1972.



Ruth serving tea at Tea Time.

That night at dinner Ruth was holding court. She kept bringing the discussion back to Tea Time and how they could get the kids interested in it. There were a variety of ideas thrown out.

"Maybe you should serve lemonade in addition to tea?" her oldest brother Charles suggested.

"But the point is I want the kids to learn to be civilized and there is nothing more civilized than enjoying a cup of tea. Don't forget Charles, our roots trace back to the Mayflower and the Queen," Ruth said.

Charles rolled his eyes. He had no idea where Ruth got the idea that their ancestors were on the Mayflower, but she was convinced of it. She was also convinced that there was some lineage back to English royalty, but she never produced evidence of that. Ruth had one of those powerful personalities; she could will things to be true.

"Ruth, how many times have we -- " Charles started in but was quickly interrupted by her.

"I know, I know Charles, 'Where's the evidence?'"

"And by the way, the Mayflower was filled with miscreants that England was trying to get rid of," Charles reminded her.

"I've read my history too, Charles, but they also needed a few aristocrats on the voyage to represent the Queen. They're our ancestors," Ruth sparred back.

"And your evidence for that is where?" Charles asked.

"Stop being such a lawyer!" Ruth said and everyone laughed. This wasn't the first time they had this debate. "Anyway, back to the problem at hand. How are we going to get the kids to Tea Time?"

"I know -- let's put out jars with each kid's name on it and every time they come for tea time we put a nickel in their jar. It's kind of like a commission," Howard chimed in, excited by the brilliance of his idea. Since Howard was a successful stock broker, he tended to think of life in transactions.

"Oh, Howard, please," Ruth said with a smile.

They all sat in silence thinking. Nancy, the cook, brought in dessert. It was Ruth's favorite part of the meal. Tonight's dessert was brownie a la mode. Before taking their first bite, Charles and Ruth exchanged a glance and then laughed so loud you could hear it from the dock.

"I think I missed the joke," Howard said.

"It's right in front of you Howard," Ruth said as she pointed to his dessert. And then it struck him too. Brownies would get the kids to tea time!

That night Nancy worked in the kitchen baking up enough brownies to feed an army. She baked chocolate brownies, caramel brownies, brownies with nuts, brownies with M&Ms.

The next morning on the dock, Ruth stopped each wave of kids as they dropped their towels on the dock on their way to the raft, "Do you like brownies?"

"Yes!" they all replied enthusiastically.

“Well we’ll be serving them up this afternoon at tea time. We even have some with M&Ms.” The older kids stayed cool but she saw that spark in their eyes. The younger kids bounced up and down saying “Oh yes!”

The bait was set. Just about everyone came out for tea time that day. It’s exactly what she had envisioned.

When she and Nancy were cleaning up afterwards she turned to Nancy, “Thanks so much Nancy, you helped make this into what I’ve always wanted.”

Nancy demurred, “Oh, it was nothing Ms. Sanborn. My pleasure.”

“Where did you learn to make those amazing brownies anyway?” asked Ruth.

“Why that was from my Mama, we made them since I was a little girl.”

“Can you share the recipe with me?” asked Ruth.

“Oh it’s nothing written down,” said Nancy, “I watched my Mama so many times. I just do what she did.”

Ruth looked at Nancy and wondered just how different their childhoods must have been.

Every summer for the next 20 years, Ruth served tea at the Tea House every day, promptly at 4:00. And much to the delight of the children, she also served Nancy’s brownies. And much to the delight of Ruth they all got accustomed to tea, because the rule was, you had to sip your tea before you got a brownie.

She and Howard had three sons: Howard, John, and Don. All three of them worked on Pudding Island Farm at various times caring for the chickens, mowing the fields, and helping out with other farm chores. When they got married and had children Uncle Charles set aside the Farm Cottage for them to use in the summer. The three brothers would split the summer in thirds and each had a turn in the cottage. Later they moved across the street to the Barn.



Ruth Parlin Sanborn



Ruth at the dock.



Ruth and her niece Camilla Smith at the annual 4th of July Picnic.

Grace Parlin Davis

She was the youngest of the four children by 7 years. Her siblings were all accomplished and successful. Charles and George were establishing their careers in law, Ruth was married with kids and a community leader.

Grace didn't share their ambitions. In fact she was kind of a rebel. She was the youngest of four and trying to establish her own identity.



Grace Parlin Davis.

She was artistic and of the moment. Her refuge was the piano; it was where she felt most confident and centered.

She practiced hard, not because she wanted to be better than anyone else in the family (although she was). She practiced hard because she loved it. It came naturally to her. It was like the music was already inside and the piano lifted it out. Her mind would go quiet as the notes jumped off her fingers.

Her instructors thought she had the potential to become a concert pianist with a big city symphony, but she didn't have that drive. She waited for life to come to her.

One day in 1946, she stayed at the piano longer than usual. She was troubled by a recent visit to her brother's summer place in Lake George. For the most part, she loved Lake George -- swimming around the islands and taking long hikes with her husband Wilbur.

They were married in 1935. She always suspected that her family didn't really approve of Wilbur. It was nothing they said outwardly, but she could see it in their demeanor. Unlike her sister's husband, Howard, Wilbur sat on the periphery of the family's inner circle. It was likely because of his lifestyle; he drank and smoked. He was educated in the east but grew up in Bozeman Montana, which at the time was a rough and tumble frontier town.

The family didn't understand her and Wilbur. They belonged to a different generation. Some people referred to them as Beatniks. They were part of a community of poets, artists, musicians, and philosophers that lived in Greenwich Village. This was the generation of Kerouac and Ginsberg -- it was a generation that embraced a counter-culture of liberation and jazz.

Grace simply saw life through a different lens than her parents and siblings.

At times these differences caused tension with the family, especially with her older sister Ruth. Ruth was a gold star child. She won awards. She was bold and outgoing. All the adults always said what a polite and charming young lady she was.

Ruth was also staunchly anti-smoking and anti-alcohol, which just happened to be two of Grace's indulgences. Ruth was not reserved in voicing her disapproval.

So, it was no surprise one evening when Grace and Wilbur were drinking and smoking in the backyard of Charles' place at Lake George, that Ruth got upset with them.

"It would be nice if you two didn't do that right there where everyone can see," Ruth said in a scolding tone.

"Oh Ruth, you're such a party pooper," Grace shot back.

They traded a few more barbs, which then escalated. Ruth said Grace had no respect for this place that her brother had worked so hard to build. Grace fired back that Ruth was always looking down on her and Wilbur.

The exchange only lasted a few minutes, but the aftershocks lasted days.

The next morning Grace and Wilbur returned to their apartment in Greenwich Village. Grace went to her studio at the Steinway Hall Center and was on the piano for hours, trying to exorcise her anger.

A few days later she received a letter from Ruth. In it Ruth apologized for some of the things she said but also firmly restated her disapproval of Grace's lifestyle. At least her disapproval was couched in compassionate terms. Ruth said she was concerned about Grace's health.

Hadn't Grace read the latest speculation that smoking may cause cancer?

About a month later, the two of them met at The Russian Tea Room on West 57th Street in New York City for afternoon tea.

The Russian Tea Room was one of New York City's iconic establishments. It was founded by the Russian Imperial Ballet in 1927. It exuded opulence. Ruth loved the place; Grace thought it was over the top. Nonetheless they both enjoyed afternoon tea so that's where they met.



Russian Tea Room, New York City.

Despite their differences, the two sisters loved one another. It was nothing they said to each other, but both of them felt it every time they were together. Every time they had a fight -- and it was becoming more often -- that gravitational pull that binds sisters together, no matter how different they are, brought them back together.

They sipped tea and snacked on stacked trays of finger sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and jam, and sweet cakes.

As they said good-bye at the 57th Street Station Ruth gave her a longer than usual embrace. When she finally pulled away she said, "I just want to grow old with you -- that's why I get so upset." Both sisters started to tear up, so they quickly walked away before their emotions surfaced.

Tragically, Grace was diagnosed with cancer six months later. She died on May 8, 1948. She spent the last few months of her life living at Charles and Miriam's house in Englewood, NJ. In that era, the likelihood of recovering from cancer was very low. They all knew this. Even though it was a very sad time, there was the comfort of being surrounded by family. Just as Charles had cared for Grace as a baby in her first year of life, he also helped care for her in her last year.

Blackie, Charles' 13-year-old son, spent a great deal of time with Grace in her final year. He also got to know the full-time nurse they hired to care for Grace. Like many 13-year-old boys, at the time Blackie was into baseball and followed the New York Yankees, which he would talk to the nurse about for as long as she would listen. Over time, the nurse grew quite fond of him.

A few months after Grace passed away, Blackie received a package from Grace's nurse. He opened it to find a baseball that was signed by Babe Ruth. That was it, no more explanation. But Blackie knew immediately it was the Babe Ruth because Grace's nurse had gone on to provide hospice care for him in the last months before his death on August 16, 1948 in New York City.

Kaye Parlin

决心. Determination:

Determination is a positive emotional feeling that involves persevering despite obstacles.

Perhaps there is no better word that captures the essence of Kaye Parlin.

Kaye's father died when she was 5 years old. He was a highly-decorated general in the Chinese Nationalist Army, head of the Chinese Police Academy in Shanghai and eventually promoted to the prestigious position of Director of Customs in Shanghai. It was a highly lucrative job with the potential of extra income in a corrupt system. But he was a man of integrity and refused to take bribes. This was disturbing to some in the system but his comrades admired him for it. He died unexpectedly at age 40 of a mysterious gastrointestinal hemorrhage.

Kaye, her three siblings, and pregnant mother, were now orphaned and widowed. Fortunately for them, her father had been the younger son of a concubine in a rich lumber family. Eventually the family was taken in by the wife of the governor of Fukien Province, where her grandfather's lumber family originated. Kaye grew into adulthood in this grand household.

Kaye was the oldest of the four siblings and felt a great deal of responsibility for their well-being. She would help them with their studies, scold them when they misbehaved, and comfort them through challenges. In many ways she was both sister and mother to them.

As children, they lived in comfort with all of their needs taken care of, but there was no money to support them as they grew into young adults. As a result, when Kaye graduated from secondary school there

was no money to send her to university. There was only enough to send her brother, the only son.

Kaye was smart, articulate, and could create beautiful calligraphy so she was able to find jobs tutoring children from prominent households. Most of the income she made she put right back into supporting her siblings.

In 1948 she married James, who was a handsome young man training to be a pilot. Soon after the wedding, Kaye became pregnant. This was during the Chinese Civil War between the Communists and Nationalists. The Nationalists were in retreat and she knew that the Communists would soon overtake where she lived, so she fled south with her mother and crossed to Hong Kong in escape.



Kaye and her first husband James.

She gave birth to her daughter, Jeanne, in 1949. Later in life Jeanne worked for the National Council for US China Trade and would flatter her Chinese counterparts by telling them that she had the same birthday as the People's Republic of China -- 1949. Of course what she didn't tell them was that her mother had run away from the PRC Regime and her uncle was an operative in the Nationalist Underground.



Kaye, her mother, and her daughter (Jeanne).

In 1950, tragedy struck again. James was flying air supplies for Americans in the Korean War and was killed in an air accident. His income was all they had and now on top of dealing with the devastation of losing her husband, Kaye had to figure out how to support her one-year old daughter and aging mother.

Over the next 8 years in Hong Kong, she worked as clerical staff in an airline, and then at an American relief organization, where she could get in line early for emigration to the US.

In 1959 she arrived in the US under the auspices of the US Refugee Relief Act. She found herself in a new country, surrounded by strangers (not all welcoming) with a sick mother and ten-year-old child. Once again, she had to rebuild.

Her English was poor so she could only find low level clerk jobs typing numbers on accounting charts. Her office was close to Manhattan's public library. It was an hour commute by bus every day. From the Port Authority Bus Terminal she had to walk four long blocks along 42nd Street to get to her office, which at the time was rife with filth and crime. She kept her eyes down, her head high, and walked briskly. When she reached the library she knew she was safe.

During those years she raised her daughter and cared for her mother, who had diabetes and tuberculosis. But no matter what life threw at her, she always found a way forward. At first, she lived in a room with her daughter in a friend's house and sent her mother to Connecticut to live with a family friend. Then she made enough salary to bring the family back together, to a basement tenement apartment. From there they moved to a unit in a two-family house down the street. She slept in an enclosed porch, her mother in the dining room, and her daughter in the only bedroom, which faced a railroad track, with the commuter train rattling by twice a day.

After her mother died, Kaye moved to an above ground apartment, then later, further up to a garden apartment. When her employer moved to Connecticut, she managed to buy a condominium. For the first time in her life, she was a property owner.

In 1966, in an effort to secure scholarship money for her daughter Jeanne, Kaye was introduced to Charles Parlin who ran a scholarship program called the Epworth Fund. Charles helped secure a scholarship for Jeanne. In the process Charles' wife Miriam took an interest in Jeanne. Miriam had been a teacher and missionary in China and took an interest in Chinese academic students. She wanted to see Jeanne succeed. The two families became friends.

Kaye was devastated when Miriam died in 1972. She had been so kind and welcoming to Kaye and Jeanne. They stayed in touch with Charles as family friends. Time passed and eventually Charles and Kaye's relationship grew into more than just friends. They got married in 1976.



Charles and Kaye at their wedding with Great Granddaughter Nicole.

On the surface, Charles and Kaye could not have been more different. Charles was from a well-off New England family, educated at the top American universities. Kaye was from a Chinese family with no money, and a high school education. Charles was the managing partner of a prestigious New York law firm. Kaye was an accounting clerk with a pharmaceutical company.

But their connection ran deep. Charles was the oldest sibling, and de facto patriarch, of a large American family. Kaye was the oldest sibling, and de facto matriarch, of a large Chinese family. They both had to care for their siblings from a very young age, which left them with a deep sense of responsibility and paternalism. They both were boundlessly optimistic no matter what challenges life threw at them. They both had a strong sense of purpose in life and worked to make things better for themselves and others.

For Kaye, coming into the Parlin family was complicated at first. She spoke flawed English which made communications challenging. On top of that, given the culture and class that she came from, it was an unusual fit for that era and took the family by surprise.

Kaye's daughter recalled the moment Charles told the family about their engagement.

"One cannot help but be struck by the insertion of a small non-white immigrant woman into a large Anglo-Saxon clan," Jeanne recently said. "I think it was one of the ironies that amused Charles Parlin himself. I remember the formal family meal at which he suddenly announced to his stunned family that he was marrying Kaye."

Nonetheless over time as the family members grew to know Kaye and see her character they grew to respect and love her.

When Charles passed in 1981, Kaye was once again left widowed. She remained an integral part of Pudding Island Farm. In 1993, she had the aging Farm House taken down to be replaced by a magnificent home that she designed herself. Here she hosted members of both families and used it as a gathering place where the families could all get to know each other.

Even into old age Kaye was always looking out for members of both families. She cared deeply, never losing that sense of paternalism and family honor. She died in 2020 of complications from COVID-19. She was 97 years old.

At her memorial, Heather (Camilla's daughter), who got to know Kaye well because she married into a Chinese family and lived in Hong Kong, summed up her relationship to Kaye most fittingly:

"She was my 'Nabu'--my Chinese grandmother, my consultant on all things Chinese, my role model for straddling two cultures with grace, dignity and good humor. Kaye, thank you. I love you, I miss you, and I will never forget you."

- Heather Smith Xie, letter for Kaye's Memorial.

Nancy Wilson

There were many people outside of the direct family that helped build the spirit and culture of Pudding Island Farm, but perhaps none so much as the family cook and housekeeper, Nancy Wilson.

Nancy was hired by Charles and Miriam in the 1940s. She served the family both at their homes in Englewood NJ and at Lake George. Nancy was both soft-spoken and larger than life. She was warm and loving with a big heart housed inside her tall, large frame. Over the years she became an integral part of the family. She was much more than an employee. She was a second mother to the kids, a confidant to Miriam -- particularly as she grew ill -- and a beam of pure joy that could lift anyone's spirits.

Camilla Smith (Charles and Miriam's daughter) tells a story that captures Nancy's essence:

"On Labor Day it was our family tradition for many years to spend Labor Day at the Rutland State Fair in Vermont, which was only an hour away from Silver Bay. For us, it marked the end of the summer. Everyone in the household would go.

"One year we stopped to watch people wield the large sledgehammer and smash it down on a round metal plate attached to a spring that sent a round disk up a track with a gong at the top. If the hammer hit the plate with enough force, the disk would hit the gong with a resounding 'BONG!'

"Nancy decided she would try this. Nancy was tall, and she was BIG, not fat, but just very big, probably close to 300 pounds.

"Nancy grabbed that sledge hammer and BONG went the disc. The barker was thrilled! 'Do it again,' he said, 'for free.' And she did! Now in rural Vermont, there are not too many African Americans, and even fewer as large as Nancy. A crowd began to gather, and the barker was thrilled. He egged Nancy on to swing that hammer again. Again and again, BONG went the gong! People began to cheer. Nancy began to laugh, and she eventually was laughing so hard she could not swing the hammer anymore!

"How we loved Nancy's spirit!!"

- Camilla Smith email 8/24/2021

Nancy loved fishing. Every morning she would bring her fishing gear down to the boathouse, pull up a chair, and drop her line. Occasionally she'd catch a nice fat bass but mostly it was Freshwater Sunfish, aka Sunnys. Nancy was one of the few people with the patience to debone these small bony fish. While Nancy loved fishing and looking out at the lake, she didn't know how to swim.

I (Peter Sanborn) personally learned this the hard way when one day my brother Bill and I offered to take Nancy and her friend Irene out in the rowboat to fish off Skippers Island, where the larger fish were. As we were getting Nancy into the boat I pulled away from the dock too quickly and with a big splash Nancy went into the lake. There was quite a ruckus with Nancy splashing around and everyone jumping in to help her out. Fortunately, the water was very shallow, and we got her out. I thought she was going to be angry and felt horrible. But there she was in full dress, soaked from head to toe, laughing hysterically.

“Lord, child,” she said, “I forgot to tell you I can’t swim!”

That was the end of trying to get Nancy into the boat. Much to my relief, there were no hard feelings and my brother and I fished with her at the boathouse the rest of the summer, enjoying her warm personality and stories.



Nancy Wilson



Charles and Nancy at the Rutland State Fair.

* * * * *

CHAPTER 5 - THE TRADITIONS

Lake Safety

While swimming and boats offered endless entertainment for the kids, Charles was worried about the potential dangers of the lake as well. Rather than setting rules for what the kids could and couldn't do on the lake, he opted to create a system of incentives. These incentives defined lake privileges based on demonstrated swimming capability.

Although the incentives have changed throughout the generations, the lake privileges have not. The original system was:

1. First five strokes: ice cream cone
2. First fifteen strokes: ice cream cone
3. Swim from dock to rock: ice cream cone
4. Swim from raft to shore: ice cream cone. Privilege of rowing alone between raft and shore
5. Swim from Skippers Island to shore: Privilege of rowing alone between Skipper Island, Pudding Island and the boat house
6. Swim around islands (Skippers, Scotch Bonnet, Pudding): Jack knife and initials carved in canoe dock, privilege of rowing alone between Skippers Island, Rowan's Point and Armes Point
7. Swim across the lake: \$1.00 and privilege of rowing or swimming anywhere on the lake.

Rag Tag

In the summer of 1960, a game was invented that has been enjoyed by generations ever since. That game is called Rag Tag.

Chris and Rob Parlin, along with their neighbor friends Galen Seerup and Dale and Danny Sarjeant, were the founders. Like all teenagers, they were enjoying their summer and the free time that came with it. One afternoon they started throwing around a tennis ball on the raft. Then they started throwing the ball at each other and

trying to dodge it. That evolved into a game of tag whereby whoever was hit by the ball was “it.”

They soon discovered that a tennis ball wasn't the optimal device for the game because if you missed your target it would sail far away. So they tore up an old t-shirt and this started the tradition that has continued for more than 60 years: Rag Tag.

That summer, the kids played the game endlessly. The rules evolved along with the game but the basic rules were:

1. If you get hit by the rag you are “it.”
2. The ladder used to get on the raft is a safe zone (meaning you can't get tagged if you are touching the ladder). You are protected until another person touches the ladder, then they are protected and you are open game.
3. You can sink the rag by splashing it but if you touch it, you are it. This rule alone is probably the most contested rule in the heat of the game with the lack of instant replay to assist questionable calls.
4. There are no boundaries. On one occasion this rule was tested to its limits when a hot chase went all the way from the raft to Armes Point and the target of the chase crawled ashore and ran the dirt road all the way back to the dock and then swam back to the raft.
5. No packing the rag with mud from the bottom of the lake. This rule had to be instated when Galen Seerup realized it was much easier to hit his target with a rag filled with mud and stones.
6. Time out can only be called when an adult is swimming laps between the dock and the raft. Time out only lasts long enough for the lap swimmer to safely clear the raft.

In the 60 years of Rag Tag there has only been one person banned from the game for flagrant violation of the rules. Blackie Parlin had the ingenious idea to use a popsicle stick to shove the rag up between the cracks in the planks of the raft and “tag” the bottom of players feet. His children informed him that this was such an egregious violation of the rules that he was permanently barred from playing with them in the future.

Injuries have been mostly limited to splinters from when the raft planks were made of wood and bruises on the head from coming up for air too quickly and banging your head on the bottom of the raft. But the most memorable injury happened to Danny Sarjeant

who knocked out her two front teeth when she jumped off the raft to sink the rag but landed face-first on the back of her brother's skull.

After the end of that inaugural summer of Rag Tag in 1960, Joan Sarjeant presented a framed commemorative rag to each of the kids as memorabilia of their summer of fun.



Commemorative Rag memorializing first year.
This currently is proudly on display at Chris and Angie Parlin's house.

End of Summer Plunge

One year sometime around the early 1960s, everyone was gathered at the dock enjoying the late afternoon sun. It was the last day of summer vacation after such a great summer. Now, it was over. Time to say goodbye and head back to the suburbs.

Charles sensed melancholy in the air. He tried to think of a way to lighten everyone's mood as he walked up from the dock to help Miriam pack the car. An idea dawned on him.

He went to his room and got dressed in one of his finest suits and dress shoes. He was dressed just as he would be going to work at his law firm.

Of course, this wasn't unusual to the family because he typically dressed formally when he was heading back to the city.

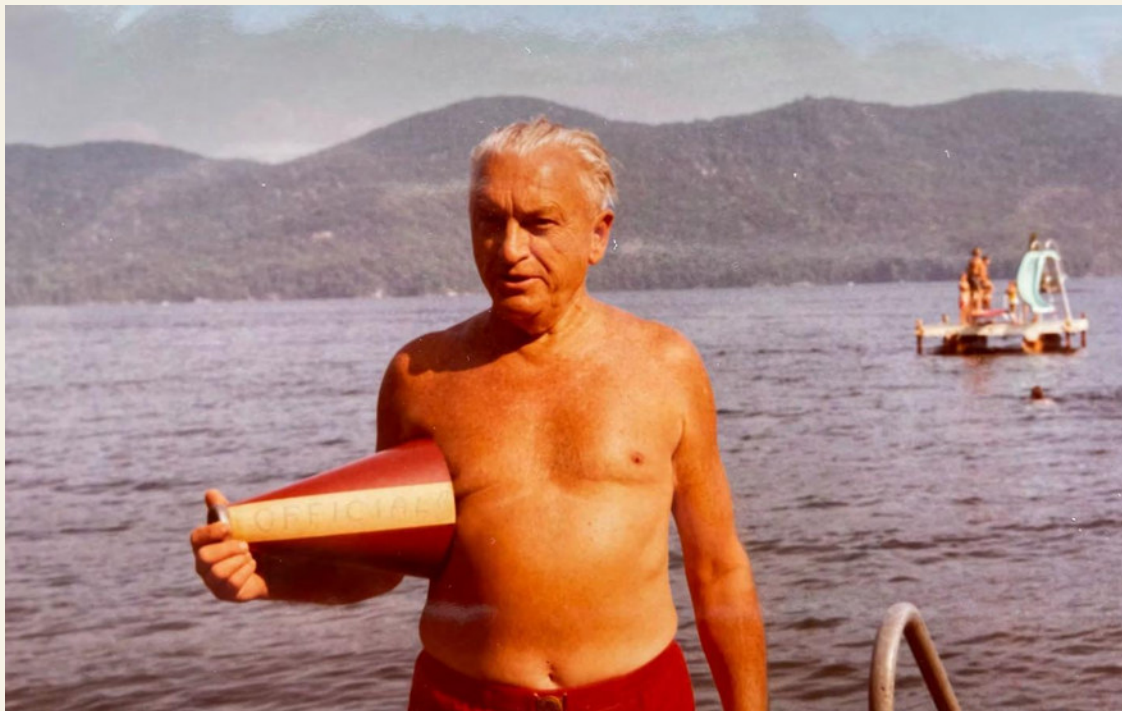
He slumbered down to the dock with the most sullen expression he could muster and took up his seat at the end of the dock. Everyone got kind of quiet because it was quite unusual to see him in a depressed state. He almost never was.

Slowly Charles lifted his head and gazed across the lake longingly. If he didn't go into law he might have made a good actor. Everyone was convinced that he was on the verge of tears. Slowly, he began to rock his chair, almost imperceptibly at first, then at steeper and steeper angles. People's expressions went from sympathy to concern as he tipped to the point of almost tipping over.

And then--SPLASH! Into the lake he went, suit and all. Everyone jumped up afraid he had cracked his head on the side of the dock and he popped up laughing and splashing everyone as they peered down at him. You could feel the weight of sadness lift from the air.

Every summer for many years this tradition continued. Even though everyone knew what he was up to when he came to the dock dressed to the nines on that last day, it was still just as funny and enlightening as the first time.

It was his way of saying, "Let's not be too sad -- we'll all be back next summer."



Charles Parlin at the dock.



House and lake from Route 9N (1937).

