

CAMBRIDGE HARKENER

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE OF CAMBRIDGE, VERMONT

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March 2024

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Robert Murray Burns

1895-1977

Reg Wilcox, Carol Wilcox Gray, Richard Wilcox

Robert Murray Burns, our Great Uncle, was born August 22, 1895 to William Harris Burns and Jennie Chase Burns. William and Jennie were the parents of six children: Herbert (b. 1880), Lizzie (b. 1883), Carrie (b. 1885), Burt (b. 1887), our grandmother Carlie Mae (b. 1888), and Robert.

William and Jennie Burns, our paternal great grandparents, purchased Tip Top Farm at the south end of Cady Hill Road from Benjamin and Matilda Wagner, our maternal great grandparents, on August 31, 1909 and operated a dairy farm and raised their family there.

Robert Burns, simply our Uncle Rob, grew up living a typical life on a Vermont dairy farm of the early 1900s. From early childhood Robert had his assigned chores. From these experiences on the family dairy farm he learned the value of food production, hard work, and personal responsibility. He gained much satisfaction from completing his assigned chores. Eventually Robert learned all of the tasks required to successfully operate a dairy farm on a "rocky hillside" in Vermont.

This is Robert Burns as a teenager, long before we arrived and he became our Uncle Rob. Those of you who recognize the two barns and the house will also recognize the topography of the land behind the barns and marvel at the lack of trees at this point in time (1909 to 1912).



WWI began when Robert was twenty two. Uncle Rob was inducted (drafted) into the US Army on May 24, 1918 at Hyde Park. After what appears by today's standards as a very short training cycle, Uncle Rob sailed for France in July that same year. In

Early History of Cambridge

by Ida Morgan Anderson

Beginning in 1935, Ida Morgan Anderson began serializing a column on the History of Cambridge in the *Cambridge Town Crier*. Many of our readers may remember the series of 27 Installments. The Harkener continues publishing the installments for a new audience on the assumption that the copyright (if it ever existed) has long since expired. We hope you will enjoy these "blasts from the past."

Installment Twenty

William Harrison Law practiced law in town for twenty-five years. His legal attainments were of a high order. He died in 1863.

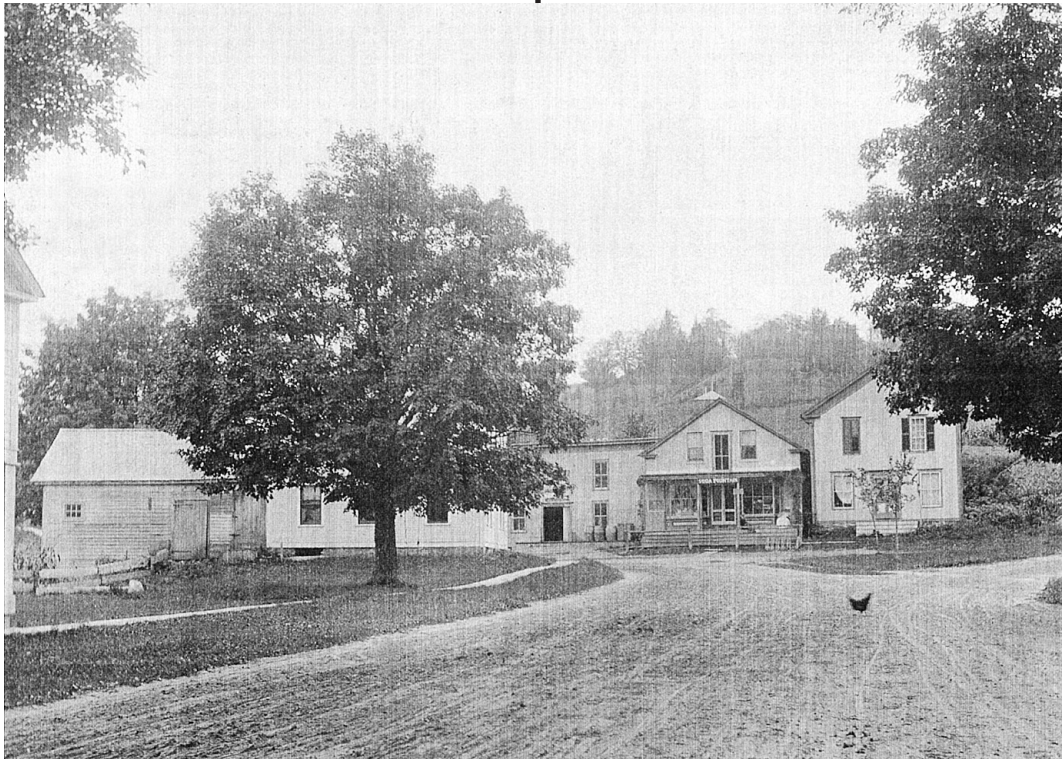
W. H. Parker was born in 1839. He was educated at the New Hampton Institute at Fairfax and Spaulding Academy at Barre. When the civil war broke out he enlisted and was the first recruiting officer of this town. He joined the 122nd U.S. Regulars and was commissioned four times. He served as first lieutenant until the close of the

The first physician in Cambridge was Dr. John Fassett, one of the pioneers, followed by Dr. Peabody, Dr. William Page, Dr. Miner, Dr. Deming, Dr. Albert Parsons, Drs. S. and E. R. Brush, father and Son, Dr. J. B. Morgan, Dr. G. H. Newton, and now (1932) Dr. S. G. Start at the Boro.

Dr. R. L. Flagg, Dr. Buchanan, Dr. E. H. Bushnell and Dr. J. B. Andrews at Jeffersonville.

(Editor's note: Doctor Start has since passed away. The resident physician now is Dr. C. L. Chaffee who lives in Jeffersonville.)

The two villages always supported several prosperous merchants. Willard Griswold sold



Griswold Store

war and was mustered out at Washington, D. C. He related with pride that he had the privilege of shaking hands with President Lincoln. He came of a patriotic ancestry, his grandfathers having seen service from the Revolution to and including the war of 1812. He was admitted to the bar in 1878. He practice (*sic*) law till 1897 when he was appointed immigrant inspector and stationed first at Quebec, then at St. Johns and Newport till 1911. Then returning home he practiced his profession till within a few weeks of his death at the age of eighty three.

goods at Jeffersonville and the business was continued by his son Henry for years. Harry Reynolds, son of Deacon Wm. Reynolds, carried on a large business and was succeeded by his son, Orange W. Reynolds, who located at the Boro for more than fifty years and had an extensive trade in this and adjoining towns. Other general stores at the Boro were owned by Deacon J. W. Turner and Son, and by Col. C. D. Gates. These have all passed into other hands, and with the advent of the railroad and the automobile much of their old tim (*sic*) prosperity has departed.

Continued from Page 1

a letter written to his parents from sea Uncle Rob described the ship he was on as "...some sort of schooner, don't know what kind but I am sure it was never intended for a passenger ship." The new soldiers reached England at the end of July. The next day Uncle Rob reached France and was assigned as a dismounted infantryman in Co. H, 127 Infantry.

Uncle Rob met Don Brown in August while units were being formed and they became very good friends. Fortunately, Don wrote a diary detailing his and Uncle Rob's unit's actions and Uncle Rob wrote letters to family and friends so now, over 100 years later, we have a good record of their time in combat. On August 8 Don wrote "...no sleep, train from here via Paris, long ride, 38 hours all in a boxcar" and the next day "...Bob Burns OK..."



A WWI infantryman spent much of his time in the relative safety of a front line trench. When a unit was ordered to attack the enemy it was "over the top" of the trench followed by a rapid advance across an open area until the soldier reached the designated objective which was chosen to provide safety. While advancing across an open area the infantryman was vulnerable to direct enemy rifle fire, direct machine gun fire, dropped bombs, machine gun fire from aircraft, and indirect artillery fire.

Company H, 127 Infantry joined the Soissons Drive on August 26, 1918. At 0900 on August 28, Co. H attacked "over the top" and this action marked the first and last combat advance for many from Co. H, including Uncle Rob. Don Brown successfully arrived at the objective 300 meters from the departure point, but many

others, including Uncle Rob, never reached that point.

In the fog of war, Uncle Rob was lost. Don Brown spent many hours, over many days, searching for him, all while the field he had crossed was still not completely secure, but Don never found Rob. A report reached Don that a soldier named Robert Burns had been hit, killed and was buried; with this information Don was convinced that Uncle Rob had been killed.

To Be Continued....

Upcoming Programs

April 10

The Far Traveler

A Vermont Humanities Program

Nancy Marie Brown

May 8

What ARE they doing in the Notch

Seth Jensen

June 12

History of Cambridge High School Sports

July 10

Green Mountain Byway

Ron Carter

August 14

Alcohol in the Green Mountain State

Rebecca Rupp

September 11

Reading Maps (of Cambridge)

Liam Kearney

October 9

Alden Memorial Gallery 40th Anniversary

a Conversation with Jane Shaw

November 13

CHS Annual Meeting

All meetings are held at the Warner Lodge

49 School Street, Jeffersonville

7:00 pm

There is no fee but there will be refreshments

All are welcome.

Membership Application/Renewal

Please complete this form and mail to: Cambridge Historical Society
PO Box 16
Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0016
or email to: rgtle@stoweaccess.com

New

Renewal

Name _____

Address _____
Number Street Town State Zip

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership Category

Individual \$20.00

Family \$30.00

Business \$30.00

Please consider becoming a:

Patron \$500.00

Benefactor \$1,000.00+

If you have suggestions about program topics or have some great ideas for fundraisers,
please let us know by listing your ideas below.

Cambridge Historical Society
PO Box 16
Jeffersonville, VT 05464



We are beginning a new serialized story from the Wilcox family. We hope you find it interesting.

We have a great lineup of programs planned for 2024. We hope you will be able to join us for one or all of them. If you have any ideas for programs please let us know.

This Newsletter is one of the perks of membership, so to continue receiving The Harkener renew your membership, and THANK YOU.