

A Wide World

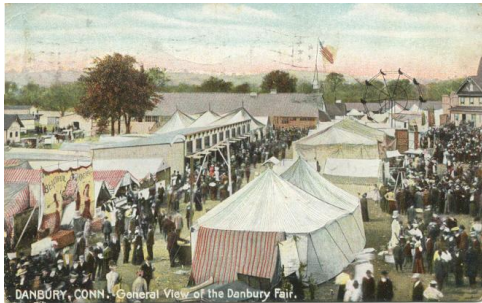
While Riley Bostwick spent much of his childhood on West Hill, he and his family recorded many visits to North Hollow in Granville where his Uncle Herbert and Aunt Mary (his mother Alma's sister) lived. They also traveled frequently to Hancock, Rochester, Waitsfield, Warren, Middlebury, Rutland, Bethel, Randolph, White River Junction and further.

Just before his 12th birthday Riley spent several days at a festival in Burlington - probably a fair - apparently all by himself. He may have enjoyed the entertainment, but mostly he worked, as reported in his 1901 diary:

Sunday, August 25, 1901

cool pleasant

I went to city



Wednesday, August 28, 1901

warm pleasant

I worked in cook tent

Sunday, September 1, 1901

warm rainy

Clyde came up. Worked in hot eating tent

Monday, September 2, 1901

warm windy

*Clyde and I went out to the park for a
boat ride*



Tuesday, September 3, 1901

warm

Clyde went home

Sunday, September 8, 1901

warm pleasant

I helped take down tents



Monday, September 9, 1901

cool cloudy

*I come to Randolph from
Burlington.*

Had my picture taken.



ADDISON CO. FAIR

THE 57th ANNUAL FAIR WILL BE HELD AT

MIDDLEBURY, SEPT. 10, 11, 12

ENTRIES FOR RACES AND LIVE STOCK CLOSE SEPT. 5

\$600 in Purses. \$2000 in Premiums

The Oldest and Best Up-to-Date County Fair in Vermont. Good Races, an attractive Floral Hall, Best Music, Excellent Show of Live Stock.

PROF. ARTHUR C. HOLDEN

In high, fancy and trick diving, makes a 75-foot high dive into five feet of water. The most thrilling, sensational and awe-inspiring attraction ever seen in the state. Prof. Holden will be the pyrotechnician of the Fair.

Don't Miss It. You Will Miss It if You Do

MUSIC — BRISTOL MILITARY BAND

DARWIN RIDER, PRES.
MIDDLEBURY.

C. S. DANA, SEC.
NEW HAVEN.

Country fairs and traveling circuses were much anticipated annual events in Vermont throughout the late 19th and early 20th century.

According to vermonthistory.org, in 1911 a Vermonter said that the fair, “is about the only legalized good time left to the country people.”

A “Hundred Year” Flood

A story that feels all too familiar today



The Chelsea Naval Hospital, just north of Boston, was commissioned in 1836. (Its original structure was built entirely of Vermont granite.)

Riley, suffering from health problems after serving in France during World War I, was a patient there at least twice.

His first visit was in the fall of 1927.

What the doctors discovered remains a mystery, for all the entries after his arrival are blank.

They only pick up to record a dramatic event happening at home – a catastrophe that sent him packing back to Granville.

Excerpts from the *A Line A Day Journal*:

Thursday, October 20, 1927

I went to Chelsea Naval Hospital in afternoon

Wednesday, November 2, 1927

warm and windy in VT

Thursday, November 3, 1927

Heavy rain in VT

Friday, Nov. 4, 1927

Heavy rain in VT

Very much damage done

7 ½ inches water fell in 36 hours.

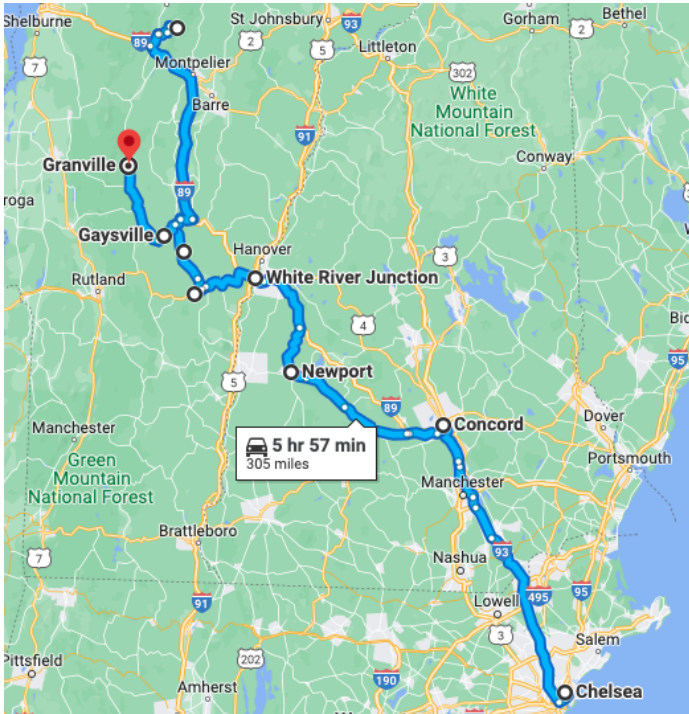
*All roads, railroads and phones in
very bad shape*

Tuesday, Nov 8, 1927

*I started for home over very uncertain
route. Went to Concord then to
Newport N.H. via train then
to WR Jc by bus. Stayed with Cook.*

Wednesday, Nov. 9, 1927

*I left for Home, came over from W.R.
Jc. to Hartland then to Woodstock
then Barnard to Gaysville (via Mt.
Hunger) then home by cross lots
mostly.*



Riley's route home seemed straightforward until he got to White River Junction. In this modern Google Map we see the direct route he should have taken, but Riley couldn't go to Granville from Gaysville. Instead, he had to continue north to go south. Mount Hunger - the northern most dot - is beyond Montpelier. Riley's final push to Granville "*cross lots*" would have involved bushwacking across the rugged spine of the Green Mountains. Finally home on November 10, Riley noted - stoic as ever - "*roads all torn up by storm.*" The journals of **Alma Bostwick**, Riley's mother, give us a close up perspective of the 1927 flood as it happened in Granville. They also reveal that the aftermath lasted for months.

Excerpts from Alma's Journal

Wednesday, November 2, 1927

Fair and warm, high wind, dashes of rain

about 9 P.M. Edward (Alma's husband) at Fullers - Xmas trees.

I chased cows. Mrs. John Foley died this morning.



Thursday, November 3, 1927

Rain most all night and all day quite hard most of the time. Edward went to Hancock to deliver Am. Products and take orders. The rain washed out roads, bridges, buildings, doing much damage. Gaysville is hard hit. M.E. Church, store & 15 houses went down the river. Bethel is wrecked. River St. big Steel Bridge, Covered bridges, railroads, useless for a time anyway.

Friday, November 4, 1927

rain most of the night ...stopped before noon but none too soon. The Peavine is ruined, the C. VT (Vermont Central Railroad) out of commission, can't run before spring.

No mail, loss of life in VT heavy. Lieut. Gov. Jackson one of the victims. Insane asylum at Waterbury lost all their herd and 30,000 head the estimated loss of cattle in that valley.



Lt. Governor Hollister Jackson was one of eighty people who lost their lives in the Great Flood of 1927.



Saturday, November 12, 1927

*Partly cloudy, high wind. 62° in morning
a little cooler at night.*

Edward at home, slept some.

*I read at him some. More than 100 familys
homeless at Johnson. Merle Farr came today,
brought quite a lot of supplies.*

Saturday, November 5, 1927

*Fair, everyone busy trying to turn water
and fix roads and bridges. Edward got back last night on
foot, left the car at Hancock. We lost the water, pipe
broke. Edw. fixed it some last night. May (Riley's wife) here
a few minutes today. She has no grain for her poultry,
none to be got, no way to get it.*

Friday January 6, 1928

Cloudy. Warmer, only no rain.

Got one of the new books, "Floodtide"

*Temporary bridge over W(hite). R(iver). at Bethel
first traffic today since Nov. 3.*

Clafin with the mail one of the first.

A Lively Voice in Hard Times

Alma Ford Bostwick's journals juxtapose everyday events with startling details about illness, death, and rising concerns about financial solvency. They also reveal a close knit community with many entries including names that are familiar to Granvillites today.

Excerpts from the winter of 1926:

Sunday, Jan. 10, 1926

A very fine day. Edward (Alma's husband) was down for mail and grain, left the cream at Shirley's for Blair. They brought me dry mash, ear corn, milk, & chaff for the hens. & I sent a half doz. eggs back to the farm.

Riley was over to Rob Fords and at Lingards. They are trying to settle some way so as to pay the bank. L(ingard) has been here several years and is owing us more every year he stays.

1) Alma 2) Riley 3) May 4) Edward





Thursday, Jan. 14, 1926

Sun shone most of day, but a blue haze over the hills. Two of Rice's men with teams took the (hay) press up to the farm. Osborn Parrish started for Boston for treatment for his infantile paralysis this morning. Mrs. P. goes up in "Texas" to work in a camp where George has work. Edward got a load of stuff they used about the press from Owen Bagley, left a can of cream there.

Saturday, Jan. 16, 1926

Amanda Lamb Kingsbury died. A beautiful day. Some wind in the night, but not enough to drift the snow much. Dana Goodno very sick. I finished mending Edward's undershirt.



Tuesday, Jan. 19, 1926

Cloudy. Mild. Riley was down to see Frank Lingard.

R takes the stock and they are to move to Rochester where he is working in a blacksmith's shop.

Chester and Alice Smith have a baby girl 5 ½ lbs. dressed.

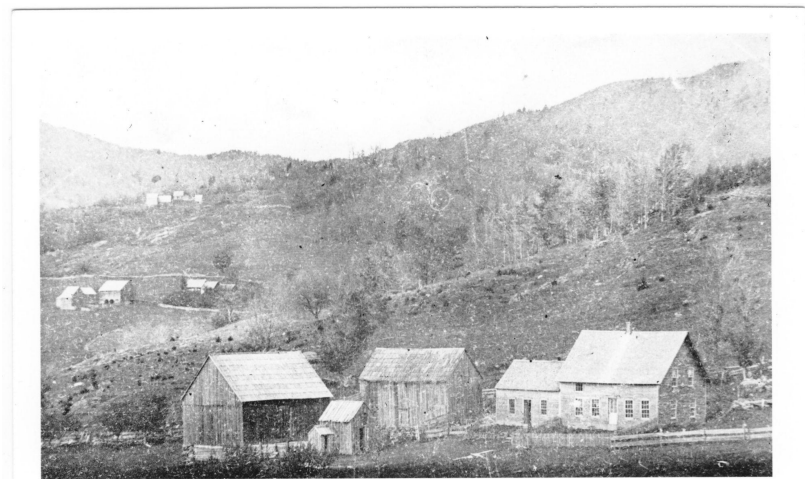
Claude Bagley 21 today.

Monday, Jan. 18, 1926

Began to rain about nine a.m.

Kept at it all day and part of the night. Settled the snow which was dry and light, but hasn't left the ground bare.

Old Mrs. Abear - Urana Whittier - died of a shock about noon.



Bagley ville

*Left side of Patterson Brook Rd.
2 miles +/- from Jct. on West Hill*

Wednesday, Jan. 20, 1926

Cloudy. They are sawing wood at the farm this morning.

Dana O. Goodno died about 11 o'clock last night 68 years.

Pressed hay in the afternoon.

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 1926

Partly cloudy. They worked at chores in forenoon.

P.M. took a dead horse out of the barn at Lingards and took 3 of the 4 cows away, left one so they can have milk for the family while they stay.



There are many more stories embedded in these ten diaries. Several of them are in the film *A Hill Farmer's Story*. Others are yet to be told. Stay tuned!