

*From Vera Brown Tosoni, 12/12/22: "I do think this is a great opportunity for me to attach the stories my dad, Bud Brown wrote in his eighties. His handwriting wasn't always easy to read, but I did my best to interpret what he wrote. I also may have the wrong house picture attached to a story. Please let me know if you see something that I should correct.*

*I love that you are reminiscing about the old days and keeping my dad's memories alive. Also, let me know if this should be sent to the Wentworth historical society. I did give them a printed copy but should probably email them as well.*

*Sending over 11 stories for you to read. He also wrote about his days during World War 2 if anyone is interested.*

# **Memoirs**

**by**

# **Alson w. Brown**

**/**

# Table of Contents

1. The White House
2. The Bee Hive
3. The Jewett Farm
4. The Old Boarding House
5. The Brown's Mills Blacksmith Shop
6. The Mill Pond
7. The Saw Mill at Brown's Mills
8. The Water Well Serving Brown's Mills
9. The Gold Mine on House Hill
10. The New Era The Mechanical Age
11. Their Legacy

## **The White House**

After one hundred fifty years we can only imagine what transpired in this house and think about its short history. It is known that Alson L. Brown (1889) and presumably his younger brother, Oscar (1892), were both born at the White House. Their mother, Mary Arabell Follansbee Brown, not only took care of two children but also a husband, William Wallace Brown (1852-1919). Today, in 2005, the 20'x25' field

stone cellar hole sits serenely where it has for one hundred fifty years secluded in brushy overgrowth, with an occasional visitor, but no sunshine to warm and provide light to the neat and sturdily built foundation.

The cellar hole faces south and parallel to the Orford Road (Rt 25A). It is located between the old Atwell Hill Road (now a private driveway) and the Cape Moonshine Road, on less than ¼ acre that is owned by Mrs. Juliet Brown Rand of Plymouth, NH.

There is no question that the White House was built by the Brown Lumber Company. It served as an office for their extensive business. Buyers and salesmen alike were treated to lunches, home cooked meals, and even lodging at night. The schedule of the B & M Railroad passenger service at Wentworth Station dictated their coming and going and length of stay.

The occupants of the house enjoyed the southern exposure and took advantage of the warmth of late fall afternoon sunshine as well as the light it produced.

The White House was an elegant home and office as well as a place to provide comfort for entertainment and business. It was well painted and maintained. A nine foot deep dug well about twelve hundred feet north of the house beside the present Cape Moonshine Road supplied running water to the house through a half inch lead pipe. It will require further research to determine this however. Other Brown Company buildings along the Orford Road did have running water from this well, so it is rather certain that the white house was not overlooked.

The “White House” was consumed by fire probably around 1915-1920 but no records remained to factually tell the story.



## **The Bee Hive**

The Bee Hive was an “apartment” house nineteen feet wide by nineteen feet long. The corner stone and some foundation are still in place today. Apartments varied in size to accommodate either single men or families.

Alson L. Brown had his employees construct this dormitory strictly for his expanding need for stable manpower. Each apartment had its own wood stove for heat and cooking and its own running water from the large well to the north, adjacent to the Atwell Hill Road. Each apartment had a large wooden barrel for water storage and for safety in case of fire.

The well was over fifteen hundred feet north of the “Bee Hive”, nine feet deep with clean cold water. Water pressure was ample to serve twenty-four occupants of the Bee Hive plus visitors and many other employees and purposes. On several occasions I have personally “cleaned” this well with help and buckets of course, as the water stored in the well had to be removed by bucket. The bottom of the well is pure white

fine sand with a three inch inlet on the bottom northwest side. Because of the heavy weight of the water and sand the bottom had become extremely compressed, a real delight to look at and to study. I am sorry you didn't see it at the time the well was last cleaned about August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1988. It was newly cemented at the top and a sturdy well house was constructed to keep it clean and free from debris. The well water could be used today; a copper pipe connects to the present Brown Homestead, but water is not used do to the use of a one hundred twenty foot "artesian" well installed in or about 1950.

When you refer to the photograph of the White House, as you look east beyond it you will see the Company Store and then the Bee Hive. A single cellar hole remains exposed and was probably that of the company store. The Bee Hive had a small cellar hole and narrow foundation on the eastern end now occupied by the present Brown Homestead. It can be assumed that a single fire consumed the Bee Hive, the Company Store, and most likely the White House as well.

Water flowing down the steep hill from the well through a half inch lead pipe was inadequate to even dampen the roofs of the many buildings to help turn the devastating fire that was rapidly moving from east to west under a strong easterly wind.

The Bee Hive was a place of sociability, fun, and laughter. The hardships were shared by all as neighbors helped each other through hard times.

### **The Jewett Farm And the Crippling Fire of 1927**

There are no other memories or records available of the early Jewett Farm. As a young man however, I realized how labor intensive this farm had to be with around seventy animals to care for, including horses, milk cows, oxen, hogs, and piglets, as well as hens and pullets: all this on one hundred fifty acres. The workload involved another one hundred fifty acres of woodland and pasture. Cutting and hauling ice from lower Baker Pond for home use and some for sale was a big job.

As the Jewett's were getting old and tired, they elected to sell the farm to Mary Ennis Currier Brown my great grandmother, and wife of Alson L. Brown (1827-1882), owner of Brown's Mills. She then deeded the Jewett Farm jointly to grandsons, Alson L. and Oscar W. Brown in 1915.

Sadly, in the very early morning hours of March 25, 1927, an arsonist from Rumney torched this very valuable and beautiful property. He walked to Wentworth through two to three feet of snow, carrying gasoline cans. He poured the fuel into the carriage shed on the east end of the long building, struck his fatal match and then watched it burn with four adults and four small children asleep inside, (this information was from court testimony taken a couple of years after the fire). Gasoline cans were found in the newly fallen snow and distinctive footprints were easily traced to and from Rumney from the Brown homestead. No names, records, newspaper accounts, or circumstances for the fire were ever released by the court.

About two a.m. on this date, Mrs. Alson L. Brown (Wilhelmina A. Brown 1885-1960), my mother, was awakened by the smell of smoke and immediately made sure that all of us were awake and alert.

The four children were safely evacuated and placed in the door opening of the “icehouse”, about seventy –five feet from the burning house. This all occurred seventy-eight years ago today. However, I still clearly recall the very intense heat and speed with which the house was devoured. All persons and all sixty animals, with exception of one or two dogs, survived.

My mother, Wilhelmina Adeline Wessler Brown was the heroine of this horrific occurrence! She calmly and aggressively moved all to safety. I must admit that my dad, Alson L. Brown, was severely handicapped because in the turmoil he had lost his glasses. However, he did carry my sister Juliet and I from our beds upstairs, to the safety of the icehouse a short distance away.

After, the house and all of our personal belongings were gone, nothing but a heap of red-hot smoldering coals remained of the house, and carriage shed. The farm buildings, including poultry houses, icehouse, cattle, horse stalls, and machinery were left intact including hay storage, but, minor paint blistering did occur on the barn.

An alert and kindly neighbor from Atwell Hill, David Keneson, saw the bright glow of the burning house in the night sky. He promptly, harnessed his team of horses and headed down the mountain hitched to a “pung” which would easily seat the two families. It was a two and half mile round trip.

As the two families were destitute without food, clothing, money or anything, the good folks on Atwell Hill, Howards, Kenesons, Chases, and many others, provided lodging and the necessities of life for a few days. We were lucky however, as “the old boarding house” at Brown’s Mills was vacant and in we went in a couple of days with donated furniture, scraps of clothing and food. As dad always said, don’t worry, “The Lord will provide”, and did! There was plenty of room as my family occupied the east apartment and my uncle’s family occupied the western apartment.

There were some humorous moments to this tragedy, especially when it came to selecting sleeping accommodations. Late that first night on such short notice in the early morning after the fire Oscar (1892-1965) and his wife, Gladys Ridgewell Brown (1901-1965), elected from several invitations to stay the several days with their friends, The Leon Chases, a short distance away. But, I had no bed for the night! Mother had forgotten to tell me, however the problem was quickly solved by the young schoolteacher boarding with the elderly George and Flora Howard. She quickly said “he’s all mine” as she picked me up and carried me with her to the small bedroom and the already warmed bed in the loft. It was cozy, peaceful, night! By now, I had forgotten about the excitement of the fire!

So, I turned six years of age on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May and conversation was soon about school, new ball brand sneakers, spelling department, and who would my teacher be? As we talked about school, mom said to me, you can no longer be called “Birdie”, it’s just not right! This was a nickname given to me by my Aunt in Germany a few years before this incident. Mom said, “from now on you will be called “Bud”. Life had now begun in earnest! Or so I assumed. But, it was about thirty years later that the “Birdie” faded out, as people forgot and I grew older. By the way what is my real name mom?

In the spring of 1928 excavation began on the Orford Road to transform it into a wide paved highway. But that is another story and another chapter to an already exciting life.



## **The Old Boarding House**

The exact date of construction is unknown. What is known is that season after season various individuals or small companies would move in, take dubious possession and soon move on. This photo is of the Brown Mills period of possession. Wood crews, teamsters, mill workers, blacksmiths, cooks, and loggers would crowd into nine rooms. Leftovers would have to shift for themselves, the same for horses and drivers.

A cook's helper would tend the fires in the five wood burning stoves twenty four hours a day, carry in water, remove ashes from the stoves, split and carry in wood all under the supervision of the chef. About twice weekly these same cook's helpers would designate two men to take a tote team to the Wentworth Railroad Station and pick up food and supplies, fodder, oats and mail that would arrive by rail.

Also, a long dining table extended east and west along the rear of the north wall. Two settings were needed to feed everyone. Teamsters took special privileges because of the care and feeding schedule of their



horses. Horses generally were placed on farms in the summer months when forest and milling activities ceased.

Twenty-two horses are shown in this photograph with some of the teamsters. Sawed lumber was hauled daily to the Boston and Maine Railroad shipping terminal in Wentworth. This was a seven-mile round trip. A maximum of two trips daily was the average except in heavy snow and during the “mud season”. Four horse hitches were common as they were heavily loaded with green lumber and “turn around” time was considerably shortened.

Two horse teams were used when sawed lumber was stacked near the mill for later shipping. Horses needed about a two-hour period to consume hay and oats three times a day. Teamsters worked very long demanding hours. The horses “lumbered” along at one pace only – theirs. As springtime approached both men and horses become very impatient due to the impending fly season. Fly control options were very limited and practically worthless. Mostly the horses retired to farms for green grass for the summer season. Here they would shed their thick winter coats, become slick, smooth and fat.

Even with no care or maintenance, the old boarding house stood for about forty years or so after this picture was taken. When the Brown (Jewett) homestead burned by arson on March 29, 1927, Alson L. Brown (1889-1975) and Oscar W. Brown (1892-1965) owned the property per a deed from Mary Annis Currier Brown (1831-1915), wife of Alson L. Brown (1827-1882), their grandmother. At this time a large barn and the old boarding house were relatively sound. The two families moved into the house occupying east and west apartments respectively. This arrangement continued until the brothers could build their own new homes. In 1928 the present new paved highway was opened for travel.

The final collapse of the old house occurred around 1935 following years of neglect, water damage, rotting timbers, etc. The cellar hole is sturdy and visible sitting adjacent to the Orford Road, now Rt 25A. The land, twenty acres, is owned by Mrs. Juliet Brown Rand of Plymouth, NH. The large barn was directly across the road (Rt. 25A) from the Boarding House had been used for horse stalls by the Brown Lumber Co.,

and for storage purposes, auto repair shop, etc. It is remembered standing in 1940-1947 but rotted down soon after.

The last timber operation to stay at the Boarding House as can be remembered were several Hungarians on or about 1930, probably logging a stray wood lot or two on the mountain. We could not communicate because of language difficulties. They owned a pair of low-set chunky horses that worked singly. The loggers loved the horses and treated them very gently, never a harsh word; the horses were groomed to perfection each day and were fit and shiny. As I recall each day was a workday for men and horses.



### **The Brown's Mills Blacksmith Shop**

The blacksmith shop was adjacent to and on the east side of the Atwell Hill Road. It was about twenty feet by twenty feet in size, very sturdily built, and only a few steps from the Virginia Forseth home.

It had its own well for water about two hundred fifty feet north of the shop. Portions of this blacksmith shop were standing until about 1935 when wind, rain and extensive snow loads caused it to collapse.

A funny thing happened in 1929 when I was seven years old and with my Uncle Oscar at the shop. He casually opened the side door of the shop to check on his twenty white leghorn pullets he kept there. With no other physical response, he merely said, “what a miserable puke”. He was referring of course, to the thief who had stolen his beautiful white leghorn pullets. We all felt badly.

Many iron relics have been pulled from the soil at this site. Scrap pieces are very common around blacksmith shops. This shop and its three full time blacksmiths made and repaired harnesses, horseshoes, logging equipment, chains, sled logger’s milling equipment etc., as well as looking after the feet and shoes of twenty five to forty horses, seven days a week. Each shoe had to be formed and fitted to a specific horse, for a specific hoof. It was a very exacting and demanding job, if a horse couldn’t work because a shoe had been lost; loss of production affected the entire mill and all employees. This shop was an important asset to the business.

### **The Mill Pond**

Simply put the Mill Pond was a holding area for the logs as they were hauled from the forest. The logs were hauled in the winter directly onto the ice of the Mill Pond and stored there until the spring thaw. As the ice gave away the logs could be moved on open water toward the sawmill. Sometimes men would be riding on these logs.

The cutting and hauling of these logs from the woods was planned for the heaviest snow months. This work was easier on horses, as logs and sleds moved easily on snow. Some well-trained “twitch” horses, those led by or directed by an attendant, stayed at night in the woods in their own comfortable stalls with hay, grain and water. Horse blankets were generally not necessary but were available if the weather became severely cold. My own experience as a young boy was very interesting as I learned about the strong smell of ammonia (urine) in a “tight” stall in the winter with two or more horses stabled inside; the tears flowed from

my eyes. As an explanation, a horse working to assemble logs at the site of origin, worked, along with an attendant and moved logs away from stumps and positioned them for pickup by the long-haul teams, this was called a “twitch horse.”

Much planning and fore thought was required to be sure logs were always moving downhill and towards the collecting points and the Mill Pond. This was considered the ultimate in logging efficiency.

Logs were dragged onto the Mill Pond and crews would make sure they were piled high and safely for later sawing as the ice “let go” or thawed.

Water flowed by gravity through the “sluice-way” and the resulting pressure, speed and weight of the water turned iron shafts with saws and other equipment attached. Waterpower did the work.

The logs would be guided to a moving endless chain that put them in position to be moved to the forty-eight-inch circular saw.

Every man and every horse had their job to do and they did it well and efficiently. The sawmill, dam, and sawdust recovery buildings are shown here with auxiliary buildings seen in the background.



## **The Saw Mill at Brown's Mills**

The Lumber Mill at Brown's Mills was the heart and soul of the business, located on Pond Brook a few hundred yards east of and downstream from the Lower Baker Pond. It had a good flow of water from the pond as well as from several small tributaries flowing from the north slope of the hills above, to the millpond below. With a renewable source of timber, good prices, ample trained manpower and sturdy horses; conditions seemed favorable for many years of profitable operation.

However, as the years went by the management of Brown's Mills was challenged daily to keep cost under control and production up. Competition was ever present as was new and innovative techniques and equipment. Waterpower for moving logs in the millpond and powering the machinery in the mill was, of course, not dependable. The seasonal changes in water flow, from drought to flood stage, further impacted productivity and profits.

As each day passed availability and quality of timber receded further into the hills away from the centralized mill. This placed much stress and fatigue on men and horses alike. A "block buster" hit the employees, families, friends, and the business community too, when, in 1882, A.L. Brown suddenly died. Just prior to this time, his brother and business partner, Warren G. Brown had elected to go west for his fortune. No one ever heard from him after this. Warren had spoken of the vast lumbering opportunities in the northern reaches of Michigan and beyond. Warren G. Brown's former home in Whitefield, N.H. stands today on a hill overlooking the town, as a proud symbol of things that used to be.

A short time before his death, A.L. had turned his mind to farming, investing his personal wealth in hundreds of apple trees and other schemes in an attempt to recover his personal losses. Now being familiar with Boston, he was sure that this huge market could use thousands of bushels of the right variety of apples. So he selected the Nod-Head. This was a red, flavorful fruit, "hard as nails", but a great "keeper" during the long, cold winter months. Of the hundreds of trees planted, the last Nod-Head tree is barely alive (2005) but

not productive after a hundred years of acid soil, freezing winters and no protection from wind, snow, and insects.

Devastating floods in subsequent years destroyed and washed away the Mill Dam and related buildings. In the mid 1930's, Camp Pemi boys would even canoe to the site of the Dam; spend time jumping from remaining timbers into cool water on a hot summer afternoon. The 1936 and 1938 floods removed every last evidence of time gone by at Brown's Mills.



### **The Water Well Serving Brown's Mills**

Sizable working population, some with families, were attracted to "Brown's Mills because of the good wages, comfortable working conditions, modest recreation and potential for advancement.

At this point everything seemed to be available except for pure, clean water for drinking and domestic use. A.L. Brown as owner and general manager promptly put a working team together to solve this problem. Certainly there would be someone among his employees capable of being able to locate a steady flow of water, and so they did!

Fifteen hundred feet north of the heart of Brown's Mills on the west side of the private Cape Moonshine Road one of the employees, probably using a "divining rod", located an active flow of water, well under the surface. With A.L.'s approval they sent employees in every direction to locate mostly smooth, flat, small stones of a certain dimension for building the well they had in mind.

The results were phenomenal, truly a work of art. Today estimated to be at least 165 years old it is still holding fresh, clear and very cold water. A small neat and cemented well house protects it from weather and time. I have been to the base of the well and the wall several times to remove debris if any and to check the foundation.

The well is nine feet deep from the surface and it generally has eight- and one-half feet of water in it summer and winter. The well has a couple of air vents for circulation covered of course with galvanized metal hardware cloth to prevent birds and rodents from entering. The well is so close to the roadway, my big worry now is just when will the snow plow veer off just slightly to the west, hit the well house with their oversized scraper blades and destroy everything we have been working so hard to preserve.

A nine- and one-half inch lead pipe buried in the ground by A.L. Brown and his crew served the sizeable Brown's Mills complex. By 1936 my dad decided we had had enough of gravity fed water trouble fifteen hundred feet down the steep hill and to our newly built home. Over this distance air was sucked into the system and getting a cold shower every time we turned the faucet on was not our idea nor intent.

So we dug three to six hundred feet following the old lead pipe ditch and replaced it with a new copper pipe. This did not solve the problem of air in the pipe, so we had to live with it for a while.

The REA was pushing closer and closer to our farm and finally in 1940, we had electricity, and then a water pump and artesian well and then a shower stall and one or two extra light bulbs in the house. And

guess what? At Christmas 1940 there was a gorgeous lighted Christmas tree, which we all worked on. My sister and I were both in college by now. It was so nice to come home to the well-lighted house and oh yes, hot and cold running water too.

Now, the well had another feature. And I have to tell this one. At the bottom of the well, a circumference of about 3 ½ feet was pure white fine sand covering the complete bottom of the well. It often bubbled up for the” fun”. But there it was fine and smooth, as white as snow. I have stepped on it several times since with no one to see and no one to tell.

### **The Gold Mine on House Hill**

About 1881, Alson Landon Brown (1827-1882) decided “That Hill” certainly contained great mineral wealth, “Mostly Gold!” It was “confirmed” at a session held at Boston with a respected séance practitioner who was also a spiritualist. This person professed to communicate with the spirits of the dead. He further directed A.L. to the exact location where to begin mining “site” unseen. A.L. was a spiritualist to be sure.

On his return from Boston, A.L. went directly to the site described by the Boston spiritualist and directed several employees to “commence digging” for the riches that he was certain existed there.

After several days of strenuous toil and in conference with A.L. it was decided that a large sturdy “mine house” should be built over the pit already taking shape. The dimensions of the complex are unknown. However, the main building contained a six-foot diameter windlass plus slag bucket, employee lift platform, ladders, ropes, etc. and space for a single horse to hoist the slag bucket as well as a turn-a-round and dump area for all excavated material.

This, of course, was another one of A. L.’s “wild cat” schemes! He never expected nor did he receive opposition from his staff or employees. This all occurred as the lumber business was declining. Good timber was farther and farther away on the mountains. Men and horses were pushed to exhaustion to recover losses. Finished lumber sales were slow. This added up to “Hard Times!” So A.L. turned to other matters to help curb his extensive losses and of course this is where the “Boston Spiritualist” comes in. In later years, we all learned of “spiritualist” going to Boston but for what purpose we were never told.



The riches never did materialize! The mine, which was finally abandoned, is thirty to thirty-five feet in diameter and forty feet vertical in depth. There is no written recorder remaining of this venture.

Persons interested in seeing this site are encouraged to do so. Call Bud Brown (Alson W. Brown) 568 N.H. Route 25A (413-764-5742) for a guided tour. A.W. is the great, great nephew of Alson L. Brown. He lives only a few yards from the mine site.

A.L. directed that any salvaged lumber for the mine house would be given to the Atwell Hill Baptist Church for building their church about 1890. This was done and stands today; sturdy, well cared for and used for weekly services, as the "Atwell Hill Baptist Church."

We never considered the Model "T" Ford to be "self-propelled" but, after all, the driver did the work, didn't he? Dad was the driver! He would "push" by "keeping the clutch depressed" when going up a hill. Much strength was necessary, especially if loaded, to move forward and he sure had the strength to do it. What a vocabulary was used to lubricate every gear and bearing, as we clattered to our destination. You see, the Model "T" did not have a gear transmission. Movement, if any, was transferred from the 20 HP cast iron engine to a selected rotating disc, backwards or forward constricted by a flexible band. The car would lunge forward or backward. On a favorable roadway, a hand lever could be pressed forward to "throw momentum" to high gear and no longer need to depress the foot pedal – until the next hill.

The Model "T" was a very crude contraption but we are talking about the 1920's. The roads were either sand or mud or coarse gravel. Here in the country, road repairs were by hand labor; teams of horses hauled gravel (if available, a crude grader was also used). Progress was very slow. Wages were a dollar or a dollar and a half per day per man. A Model "T" could be purchased new for \$700-\$800.

On Atwell Hill, a small mountain stream flowing under the roadway was affectionately known as the "Ford water station". It provided fun, recreation and an occasional undersized trout and lots of spontaneous laughter, as well as water. I mention the Ford Water Station because it was halfway between home (Brown's Mills) and the local church, the schoolhouse and the George and Flora Howard Farm, all on top of the hill a mile away. I mention this because the Model "T" was always "thirsty". It had no water pump, a small

radiator with perhaps a leak or two. The small engine was underpowered, ran very hot, and poured out large volumes of steam. The “water station” was generally the first stop on the way and our 40-pound dog was always the first to get out and beat us kids to the stream. School started at 9:00 am and of course, we were always late. So we soon told Dad to forget the Model “T”. We could walk up the mountain, do it easier and be on time and even stop at the Water Station for a cold drink, with the old dog in tow, of course.

Further, the “T” had no fuel pump. It depended on fuel from a small gas tank under the right side of the front seat. As the “T” had no fuel pump you know the rest is academic. A steep or even moderate incline would invariably cause fuel starvation. The rig would cough and sputter and the engine would flounder and die. A simultaneous reaction was verbal abuse by the passengers. The “T” had to be turned around and readied to continue the trip in reverse order so fuel would flow by gravity to the carburetor. Every able bodied person was needed for this chore as the roads were narrow rutted and limited because of deep sand or mud or rain water and also deep wagon wheel ruts. The “T” was never used in winter because of deep snow and safety reasons. And who could start the darn thing anyway? Hand cranking in cool or cold weather was not an option. The “self-starter” was only used as a “sales pitch” and most batteries were inadequate. So we had to somehow get it into a shed, jack it up and walk away until spring.

On most occasions “the fliver” had to be “pushed” down a steep grade with a depressed clutch pedal. Four-wheel brakes were unheard of. This slowed the “speed” to a manageable level. So we “pushed” ourselves up hill and down hill with the dog still with us, running behind or even in front and nipping frequently at the tires. It was his choice! We “instructed” him to stay home, didn’t we?

When that little Red Veeseey came along to replace the “Model T”, we laughed, not so much at the car as the fact that Dad never did quite learn to handle it. His foot was either too heavy on the throttle or the clutch pedal was always “missing”, throwing the Veeseey into dangerous spasms, jerking car, passengers and luggage for considerable distance until he could, as he said, “recover his equilibrium”.

But, these were great times, with humor, laughter and frivolity at the farm, at the school and at home; poking fun at our “poverty”, wherever it was found, sustained us for another day and another year. One more

comment must be made about the Model “T” Ford, its fuel tank and local ingenuity. A neighbor, H. Dewey Chase, said he had seen enough of such contraptions backing up Cape Moonshine Mountain so, he decided to take action. He “invented” a simple yet very practical device to get gasoline to the starving carburetor when climbing a hill. When the carburetor became higher than the fuel tank that was the end! So, Dewey “customized” a gas tank screw-on-cap by drilling a hole in the cap only large enough to accommodate a valve stem, (generally) removed from a discarded inner tube. A hand pump was required as well as a strong twelve-year-old boy (or girl), who could squeeze into a very small space to reach over the rear of the front seat and keep the pump forcing air into the tank. This was then called “air pressure the hard way”, as the work soon tuckered out the kids and who else was available to assume such a responsibility.

Dewey, to my knowledge, never made a nickel on his invention. As we lived “in the hills” alone with the poor folks, it came in handy and we made “good use of it”. It obviously was never mentioned. A fuel pump was never a part of the “T”. So on we went. The Model “T” was soon displaced by bigger and better cars and to my knowledge no one complained. The country soon entered the age of “prosperity” for a few days anyway! Fuel pumps became standard equipment; fuel tanks were repositioned, so Dewey never did get rich on his device. Come to think of it, I doubt Dad ever paid for the cap he got either.

But, the lack of a fuel pump was probably the least of many problems – the Model “T” did not have adequate oil pressure, to be truthful; it had no oil pressure period. The splashing of the connecting rods in the oil well at the bottom of the engine was all it had, and this spelled big problems. It was called the “splash system”. Well, you guessed it! Oil was splashed throughout the engine and out through the spark plugs as they were loosely seated as well as other joints and leaks. The “bugger” also “burned” lots of oil because it ran hot, leaving a cloud of smoke everywhere it went. The all-important oil was soon gone.

This lubrication system was a failure! The connecting rod bearings needed continuous lubrication and if this failed, the trip was off! The bearings without oil would last only a short distance before they wore out and the “knocking” began. But then what? Again, Dewey Chase came to the rescue! He had three solutions, one slow and temporary: take out and file the worn-out parts and replace them. Two wait two-four

weeks for new factory parts and three was the “quick fix”. Drop the oil pan, remove the gasket (the oil was all gone by now) run to the kitchen for a small chunk of salt pork rind and with his jack knife fashion a perfect cushion to be bolted in place between the main bearing and the worn part. He would get out from under the rig, look at his watch and say to the owner, “that will be \$1.35 everything included”. He would turn to us, bystanders and say, “that should get him another 7-10 miles!” From that time on Dewey was known as “pork rind” Chase.

### **Their Legacy**

Brown’s Mills at Wentworth, NH was not A.L.’s (1827-1882) first challenge. He and his brother, Warren G. Brown, had proved themselves as business leaders and innovators in the great North Country forests. They owned a large successful lumber business in Whitefield, N.H., known as the A.L. & W.G. Brown Company, logging in the White Mountains using steam-powered railroads. The logs were hauled to the sawmills and then in coordination with the Boston and Maine mainline roads the finished product went to the large cities of Southern New England, Boston, Haverhill, Manchester, Hartford, Lawrence, and others. Construction, closely following a great influx of foreign workers, created mills, homes, apartment buildings, retail stores, churches etc. This all placed stressful demand on the forests of N.H. The Brown brothers were part of this great expansion. But A.L. Brown and the Brown Lumber Company were recipients as well as victims of this business “boom and bust” soon thereafter.

A.L. Brown died in 1882 without leaving directions or resources for continuing the business and the competent and trustworthy employee, who was left in charge, soon stressed-out and quit. All buildings at Wentworth had long since burned to the ground, washed away in the several floods, and “thieves” soon took care of the remaining loose property.

His wife, Mary Ennis Currier Brown, although considerably less than 5’ tall, was a giant in every respect. She, and she alone, selected and purchased farms for her sons (Joseph and Amos while Wallace received nothing at the time). This was good judgment on her part because Wallace was unreliable, and not inclined to carry his share of the load. It was not until Wallace’s two sons, Alson and Oscar, became mature

that she again showed her good judgment when she purchased the Jewett farm and then deeded it directly to the “Boys”, in 1915. Wallace lived at the Jewett Farm until his death in 1919. Mary Ennis Currier Brown died in 1915 in Whitefield, thirty-three years after her husband, Alson L. died.

The real legacy to the family was and is the Pine Street Cemetery lot (60’x50’ or 3000 Sq ft), which is preserved for future generations of the greater Brown family. The original concept for the lot was beyond belief: three large green cast iron urns (30”x 36”) for flowers, two cast iron French settees painted white, a large green cast iron fountain with flowing water and landscaped throughout with gray granite curbing surrounding the burial site. We’re thankful to A.L. and Mary Currier Brown for their hard work and foresight. Work continues to this day at the Pine Street Cemetery to maintain this beautiful lot where much damage and theft occurred during the destructive “hippy” period of the 1970’s.

The A.L. Brown home in Whitefield was a large rambling structure torn down during the early 1950’s. The “Mary Ennis Currier Brown” pink New England rambling rose still survives where she and her husband planted it close by the entrance to their Whitefield home early in the second year of their marriage, about 1894. Other roots of this rose exist and flourish at the previous site of the old “Beehive Rooming House” at Brown’s Mills Farm as well as at my daughter, Karen Brown Fritz’s home in East Longmeadow, MA.