

RAMBLE THROUGH TOWN

By June Ives Dow Falk

This story was written by June for the Russell history book in 1996.. I thought it would interest people as there is so much history in a few pages, and everyone around Russell knew June through the green house on the hill past the School.

I will begin my ramble on the Hermon road. The first thing I can see is the old saw mill which was owned by Will and Charlie Hepburn. There was so much lumber, you could just not imagine. The pond behind the dam was filled with logs.

As I ramble on, I remember the cheese factory, which was owned by Benny Woods, there were horses and wagons filled with milk cans lined way down to the bridge. The horses would wiggle, snort, and stretch their heads, as they waited for the wagons to get unloaded. Then the farmers would take some of the whey home to feed their calves and pigs. That cheese factory is still there.

On up the road before the bridge was a blacksmith shop owned by Mernie Chase, and across the bridge was Frank Kelly's blacksmith shop.

For about five years they used to hold carnivals where the Pilgrim Holiness church now stands. They were so much fun.

The Baptist Church lies just beyond, in later years they held the Eastern Star meeting and the Masons meeting there

Charlie and Will Hepburn parted as partners in the saw mill and Charlie purchased what I remember as the Fairbanks store. He had a good business

The corner store that was owned by the Maybees was a shoe store owned by Rolie Guyette. I used to gaze at he high-buttoned shoes, but my Mother would only buy me lace ones because she said that I would pop the buttons off..

Now my memory sees Palmer's dry goods store. They sold dresses and all kinds of dry goods. Next to that was a barber shop.

Across the road was the brand new Town Hall. They used to hold movies once a month, and Clyde Chase would run the projector. We used to hold plays, graduations and dances, and during the four winter months the Lyceum Troops would come and entertain. People would come from all around.

Down the road a ways was the Methodist Church.

Across the corner stood the Russell Hotel. It was owned and operated by Jessie Reed, who made his fortune in a gold mine in Alaska, and brought some back to Russell. He had a livery stable and held dances upstairs.

Across the street was Stan Derbys store (Later Harmer's hardware) Stan had a balcony out over the sidewalk. He lived upstairs over the store. Now, Stan was not a drinking man He did like beer and alcohol, but he loved vanilla. He would go on vanilla binges, then throw the bottles below on the grass. He would then sleep it off for two or three days, get up, and clean his mess up, and open up his business.

The next store was owned by Nettie Loucks. It was a grocery store. She was such a lovely lady and was always smiling.

Around the corner was the tin smith shop, owned by Bill Lennox. He was always busy, and could make anything you wanted out of tin

Oh, how I remember Hugh Kelly's grist mill. I was about 13 years old, and quite a good sized girl. One day two other girls and I decided that we wanted to get weighed. The other two girls got weighed ok (125 pounds each). When it came my turn, Hugh squinted and looked, squinted and looked, then took me out and weighed me on the hay scales (205 lbs.). I was so embarrassed, I heard that eating lemons would help you lose weight, so I took my 7 cents allowance and went to the store and bought three lemons, but I couldn't eat them, so I made a pitcher of lemonade, and ate a plate of cookies, while I studied. So much for the diet!

George Bartholomew had a watch repair shop where the Pike house now stands

I used to live down past the stone School house. When I was in grade school I was lucky because I could ride to school with my teacher,. When I passed my regents and could go to High school, I had to go to Knox Memorial. My Mother had to rent a room for me in town, where I slept and got my meals. Then I would go home on weekends. Knox Memorial was a grand place, with the beautiful stained glass window. It was only a couple years old. Prof Gibbons and his wife were strict but we learned.. He used to let some of the boys and girls leave their horses at his house, they could also leave them at the Hotel, or at Scotts, where Hazy Jenne now lives.

I remember the Old Arsenal. The lieutenant's house was just up the road from the school. In 1944 or 1945 we had an earthquake. It cracked many chimneys, that winter Mr. Williams, who lived there, was starting a fire and the chimney caught fire and the house burned down. Then the Arsenal burned. It's walls looked like an old sea relic standing there. The captain's house was across the river where the old Starkey place is..

. In winter time six of us would take a bobsled and to the top of Kimble Hill, while some stood down on the corner, and stopped the horses from coming through, We would ride down that hill all the way to Whites', what a ride! Once a day was all I could handle.

The loggers would also hold exhibitions to show their skills.

I am 89 years old now and I was 9 when I came to Russell. Russell was a pretty town and always bustling with activity. Everyone knew their neighbor, and everyone was friendly. I am happy to have spent most of my life in Russell, and I am always happy to come back home.

Yes, Russell was a good place to live.

Written by June Ives, Dow Falk for the Russell history book 1996