

SLIDE A

A few years ago at the height of Covid I was asking Elliott Morse about local farms and he suggested I talk to Audrey Lafirira about that.

I remembered Audrey from the lunch line at the Elementary School when our daughter Jesse was there in the '80s, and from Morse Farm Sugar Works where she had worked. She had a sparkle to her, a little mischievous at times. She was now in her late 80s and pretty much homebound, with daily visits from her children. It turns out that telling me tales of her life was just the ticket to liven up a dark time for both of us.

I'd be doing dishes and the phone would ring: "Hello Jennifah, it's Audrey. I have a story to tell you before I forget!" That took me out of the Covid nightmare and straight into Vermont's rich past. Audrey remembered so many things big and small. The police scanner was always crackling in the background.



A-1 Daniels House - West
County Rd Woodbury



A-2 Harry Daniels House - Rte 2
EM



A-3 EM Town Hall 1890-1966

(A1) Her great grandparents George Washington Daniels and Samantha Jennings, both born in 1832, raised ten children in a tiny house that still stands at the intersection of West County Rd and Dog Pond Rd in Woodbury. *Audrey said "They must have hung 'em on hooks."* George's nephew was Sam Daniels who started the foundry in Hardwick in the 1800s. The family continued a metal fabricating business until switching to Abby's Self Storage. I made their website.

Audrey's Grandfather Harry Lynn Daniels married Iva Burnham - Harry was involved in many things they moved to East Montpelier. **(A2)** He built a four square flat roofed two story house for his family on Rte 2 west of the bridge. But the flat roof leaked a lot so he added a third story with a hip roof and porch. It looks like Harry made sure he had a bigger house than where he grew up in Woodbury.

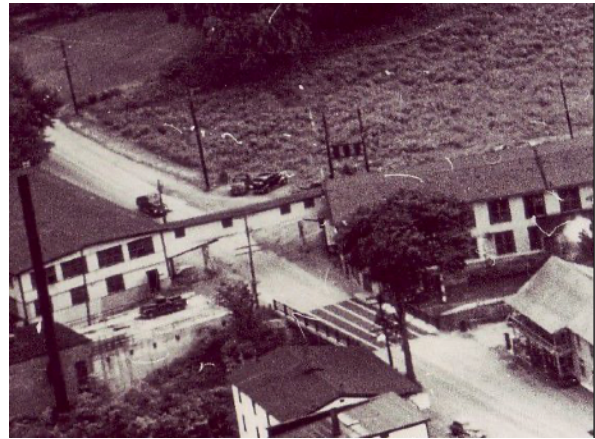
He was an energetic entrepreneur. He invested in many businesses - including a bank, a creamery, a woolen mill, several sawmills. He also served in the Vermont House and Senate. He first milled lumber and had a retail and wholesale lumber business on his property in East Montpelier since he owned the land along the Winooski from the current EM Home Center to the Rte 14 bridge.

(A3) In 1890 Harry was on the board of the Town Hall project and helped build the Town Hall on the south side of Rte 2 in front of the E. Montpelier Cemetery. It was demolished in the 1970s. Audrey remembered baked bean suppers and that it had two wood stoves in the main hall. Also it had a problem in the era of cars: there was nowhere to park them.

SLIDE B



B-1 140 Cherry Tree Hill - Altogether Now



B2 - Woolen Mill N Montpelier



One of the last of its kind operating in central Vermont is this old water powered sawmill near Wrightsville Dam.

B-3 Wrightsville Sawmill



B-4 Old Roma Gardens Bar on Barre St, now Kismet

(B1) After the original “Vene” Morse house on Cherry Tree Hill Rd burned in 1911 he bought the property and built a large gambrel house which still stands - it is the current All Together Now nursery school and camp. Audrey jokes that he knew how to build barns so he liked doing gambrel roofs best.

Harry also bought the old Green place on Minister Rd which is now a trail through the woods from Cherry Tree Hill Rd to Brazier Rd. Audrey remembered stories about the Green family walking in and out using a trail. In the early 1900s Harry developed the water springs there up the hill from the village, laying pipe for the first community water system. He put a reservoir in under his house, and added more over the years. He added a water system for the houses south of the Winooski by running a pipe across the river but had problems with ice jam

damage the spring. He added a second elevated pipe to be used if the lower one was damaged. Today Crystal Spring is still operating.

(B2) Harry invested in and expanded the N. Montpelier Woolen Mill owned by the Littles in 1916 and supplied the lumber for renovations. He added a bobbin mill to the factory complex and built a covered pedestrian walkway that went over Rte 14 between two buildings near the bridge. In 1955 a truck hit it and it was taken down. I have **THIS** bobbin I got as a Goddard student studying potter and living in the old blacksmith shop in 1972. The Mill was abandoned and I liked to explore the crumbling building. I kept some spools of thin faded wool and for 45 years I used the bobbin to measure the depth of pottery vases and mugs I made.

Harry acquired numerous items as payments for loans or investments he was involved in. Once he got “a mess of pianos” and the family was given one. Then he got a “mess of safes”. Audrey still had table cloths, silverware and chairs from a closed hotel in Randolph at the time of her passing.

(B3) He owned the sawmill north of Montpelier off Rte 12 in Wrightsville before the flood control dam was built. Audrey said one of the many products milled were thick hemlock boards for use as flooring in livestock barns. More about the Wrightsville Sawmill later.

Another family member had hoped to have a successful business. Uncle Lynn bought the Adamant Granite Quarry and also a right of way to develop a railroad to it, but things didn't work out and he went bankrupt.

(B4) Harry liked to drink a bit and used to go the Roma Garden Bar, at 207 Barre St, Montpelier - The building still stands. Harry smoked pipes and cigars and his clothes always had burn holes, according to Audrey. The ashes made a big mess too. Audrey was 15 years old when he died and clearly had a lasting opinion. Her father Earle never drank during his life and neither did Audrey.

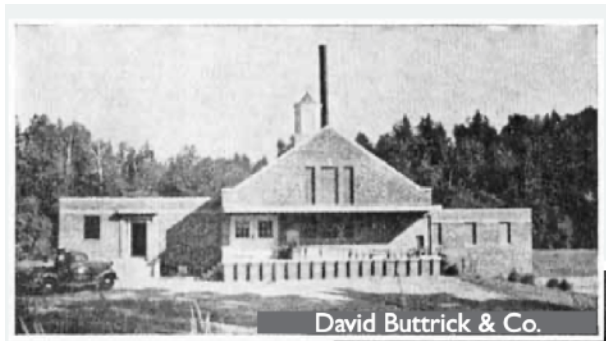
SLIDE C



C-1 2574 Rte 2



C-2 2600 Rte 2



C-3 Buttrick Creamery built 1945



C-4 Current EM Home Center

Earle and Myrle - Audrey's Parents

Audrey's father Earle Daniels, son of Harry Daniels, married Myrle Gray in 1926. She was the daughter of Herbert and Lucy Belle Gray whose marriage joined two Gray families in the Gray section that follows. Audrey, an only child, was born in 1931 and they lived on the third floor of Harry and Iva's house. Audrey had fond memories of the 3rd porch that looked out over the busy village.

Earle tried working in his father Harry's business the North Montpelier Woolen Mill but soon quit after a night shift and walked home to East Montpelier. Harry offered him a job in his Wrightsville Sawmill. Earle settled in fine there and eventually bought it. Audrey remembered that her mother had worked in the Mill and had lost the tip of her little finger using the machinery.

(C1) Earle had a gambrel house built in East Montpelier for his new family from Wrightsville lumber **(2574 VT Rte 2 - 1935)**. Audrey was around six years old when they moved in. The house was set back from the road because Rte 2 had

so many milk trucks coming and going to the old Buttrick Creamery next door that her parents worried about her safety.

(C3 C4) Ironically in 1945 the creamery moved into a new brick building that is the current E. Montpelier Home Center **(2548 US Rte 2)**. Traffic was again uncomfortably close to the Daniels house. **(C2)** Her father then built a new larger house bungalow, still standing **(2600 US Rte 2)**, closer to his parents big four square.

SLIDE D Snippets

(D1) When Audrey started attending the E. Montpelier Village School, now the Town Offices, her mother walked her to and from school. It had two rooms, 1-4th grades and 5-8th grades. There was a two or three hole outhouse. As a child she remembered contracting Chicken Pox and missing school. When the doctor visited the house he put up a quarantine sign on their front door.

Earle made Audrey things out of wood. He made her a pink cupboard that she put doll dishes in. He also made her a wide pine board hope chest for her blankets and doilies.



D1 EM Town Offices



D2 Old Montpelier High School



D3 Earle/Merle Daniels RIP



**D4 2764 US Rte 2
Katherine&Dennis Lane**

One late summer day in the 1940s her mother suggested they go up to Alfred Knowles's potato field on Drake Rd near the current Barre County Club. Alfred paid folks to pick potatoes and they figured they could make some spending money. At the end of a long day they each got paid 35 cents. They didn't do THAT ever again!

Wayland Page went house to house Mondays and Thursdays taking orders for goods at Dudley's store. He would make deliveries in the afternoon and in summer he sometimes let Audrey ride in the back of his pickup on runs around town.

(D2) Audrey then went to Montpelier High School, which was the current Middle School building on Main St, and her father Earle would give her rides on his way to and from the Wrightsville sawmill. The building had no kitchen so they would walk to the Union School for lunch. It was hard to adjust to Montpelier High School in 9th grade. There was a sharp divide between the Montpelier students and the new ones like her from surrounding towns.

(D3) For years Earle been making box boards for the granite shed in Montpelier, probably Montpelier Granite Company. They were slow about paying him on time and owed him a lot of money. He finally decided to order a nice large gravestone. The \$500 came out of the debt they owed him.

Audrey sometimes went to the sawmill with her Dad and liked swinging to and fro on the slab saw, when it wasn't running of course! Sometimes Earle needed to repair the dam when the water was low. She would take off her shoes and socks to give him and walk barefoot with him through the shallow water up the sluiceway to put the boards in to block the water.

Earle had built a box around the water wheel of the mill and filled it with sawdust and shavings to insulate it in the winter. One year a beaver family set up housekeeping in that nice cozy box. Earle called Fish and Game but didn't want to kill the beavers. The sawmill had to shut down until they could trap the whole family. They kept a baby beaver in a bird cage, and the others in bigger cages before relocating them.

The new Wrightsville Dam, towering above the sawmill, was finished in 1935. Audrey remembered the "government people" setting large blocks of granite on it. My guess is this was part of the work they had to do to make it higher when the first few floods still breached the top of the newly built dam.

(D4) Audrey's Aunt Catherine Daniels Lane was married to Dennis Lane, of Lane Manufacturing in Montpelier - now the Lane Shops Apartments. Catherine did the Lane books. They specialized in sawmills and parts and supplied the saws and replacement teeth for the Wrightsville Mill. Earle built a white house for the Lanes in East Montpelier, still there (**current 2764 US Rte**) just up from the Rte 14 bridge on the south side.

In 1964 Audrey's mother Myrle died at age 62. A few years later her father married Clopha Page. In fact Clopha was an active part of the East Montpelier community and a close friend of the family. Audrey got along very well with her step mother who was 15 years younger than Earle.

Clopha worked as a housekeeper and later she was head cook at the East Montpelier School. She had never gone to high school, but could sew anything, was an avid painter, and could feed as many people as needed. Audrey had several of her paintings. We are lucky to have one of her paintings. of this Brick Church on the back wall of this very room. Pastor Herb has shown me many names from those times in the church records.

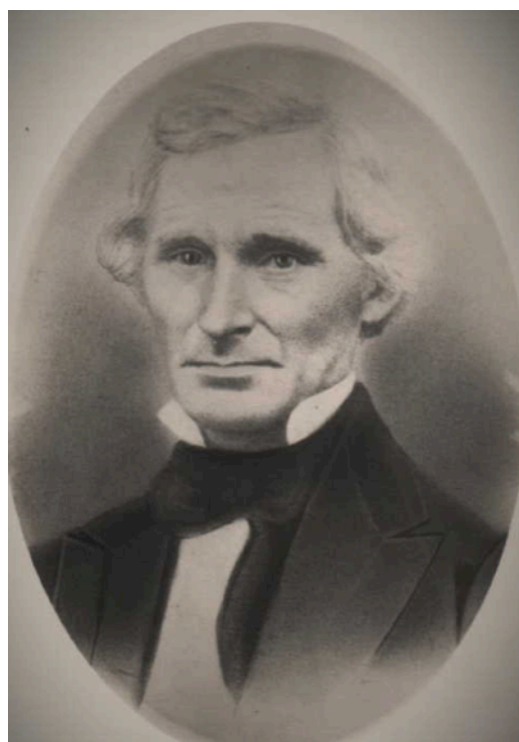
An article in the paper about a June 1954 Strawberry Festival at the Brick Church lists (among many others) Audrey's mother Myrle, Clopha Page, and Audrey. Also involved were Minnie Lane who was the long time Town Clerk in E. Montpelier. The newspapers from the 50s are full of these names helping with community organizations and several churches, cooking, and volunteering.

GRAYS - SLIDE E

Audrey's maternal grandparents were Grays - her grandmother Lucy Belle from the East Montpelier Grays and her grandfather Herbert from the Calais Grays. Chuck Willard and Ann Gray, cousins of Audrey's tell me that those two Gray lines link back to one British family line in the 1200's.



**E1 Grayholme at 8 George Rd
Photo by Erika Mitchell**



**E2 Audrey's great grandfather
Kelso Gray**



E3 Fairmont Station

(E1 E2) My head is still spinning from figuring out that tangle of genealogy! They lived at **8 George Rd** at the corner of Pekin Brook Rd in a house that still stands, once called Grayholme. The 1873 map on right shows this house of her ancestor **Kelso Gray** sandwiched between Pekin Brook Rd and the brook itself at the intersection.. In 1875 Kelso moved the house across the road, away from the erosion dangers of the brook, and built an addition. He was 71 years old. Audrey remembers Uncle Clark saying that her great grandfather Kelso's name is carved into a beam in the Grayholme hay barn somewhere, but the family hasn't seen it for themselves.

Grayholme used to have a big porch, long gone now. Audrey would play on the porch swing, and since her aunt Ida Persons lived in Laconia NH, she would pretend to be taking the train to Laconia. That train line started operations in 1867.

(E3) Audrey and her mother really did take the train from the Fair Mont Station just south of E. Montpelier on Rte 14. It was on the left between the current Black Rock Coal company and Cross Vermont Trail parking lot. The trail uses the old railroad bed that went through Plainfield village, Marshfield, and past Lanesboro station, put in by Lane Manufacturing in what is now Groton Forest. There was a freight train going to Woodsville, NH that had a 1/2 train car for passengers. At Woodsville they would switch trains to go to Laconia to visit their relatives.

One of my favorite Audrey stories is about the Slayton family and it shows a lot about Grandmother Lucy Belle's character. She used to see little Hiram Slayton walking from his house past Grayholme on his way to the Pekin school. There was only the boy and his mother. Gramma Lucy noticed that Hiram would leave his lunch pail, which was almost empty, hidden in the barn, and pick it up after school on his way home. It turns out that the kids at school were making fun of how skimpy his lunch was. She started making him a lunch for his pail every day. She also gave him work to do on the farm. He grew up and moved out of state, but the Slayton family always sent Christmas cards expressing thanks for aiding little Hiram.

Grandma Lucy liked to play tricks on Audrey's Uncle Clark who was still living with his parents at Grayholme. Audrey remembers how Grandma (imagine a dress or skirt) would invite her on a prank: in the early morning they would go upstairs and climb out a window onto the porch roof, then sneak down to Clark's bedroom window and rap on it, waking him up quite completely! In winter Grandma Lucy would let Audrey use her big chicken pot pie tin for sliding on the snowy hillside pasture behind the Pekin School.

They would buy nice light maple syrup from the neighbors, the Lilleys, probably the current 208 Jack Hill Rd, bringing a wooden tub to the sugar house to fill with very thick, hot syrup. As it cooled it crystalized into hard maple sugar in the tub. At home when they wanted some syrup they would chip out a few chunks of the maple sugar and put them in a pan with water. Once heated it became the consistency of pourable syrup. The mice got their share of the maple sugar in the pantry.

Grandma would make bed sheets out of cotton grain (or flour) bags. She would cut bags open so they were flat, bleach them, then scrub them on a scrub board until the printing disappeared and dry them out in the sun. Then she would sew four together to make each sheet. There was a feather bed on Grandma's bed and Audrey would sleep with her when they visited.

Once Audrey and her parents spent the night up at Grayholme. There was a wood burning kitchen stove salesman who stayed overnight there on a regular basis. He drove his car on a local route and liked clean places to sleep without bedbugs. The phone rang and he answered it, then yelled "Tell Tom Daniels his house is on fire!" Tom was her father Earle's nick name. The burning house was the first that Earle had built for the family in East Montpelier, and they were building the second bigger one at the time. The damage was limited to the attic.

Uncle Clark said #10 pond had no bottom and was 150 ft deep. He said it was named #10 because 10 people had drowned in it and bodies were never found. It's actually 110 feet deep and was named #10 because it was in the #10 school district. But what a lively story! Uncle Clark had a little terrier that would get into porcupines on a regular basis. Clark had a hard time pulling the quills out of this feisty little dog until he realized he could hold the dog on the ground and gently set a two tine pitchfork down so the tines sank into the ground on either side of

the dog's neck. Clark could pull the quills out with ease. He would go on to inherit Grayholme.

F Lafirira's First Farm In the 30s & 40s

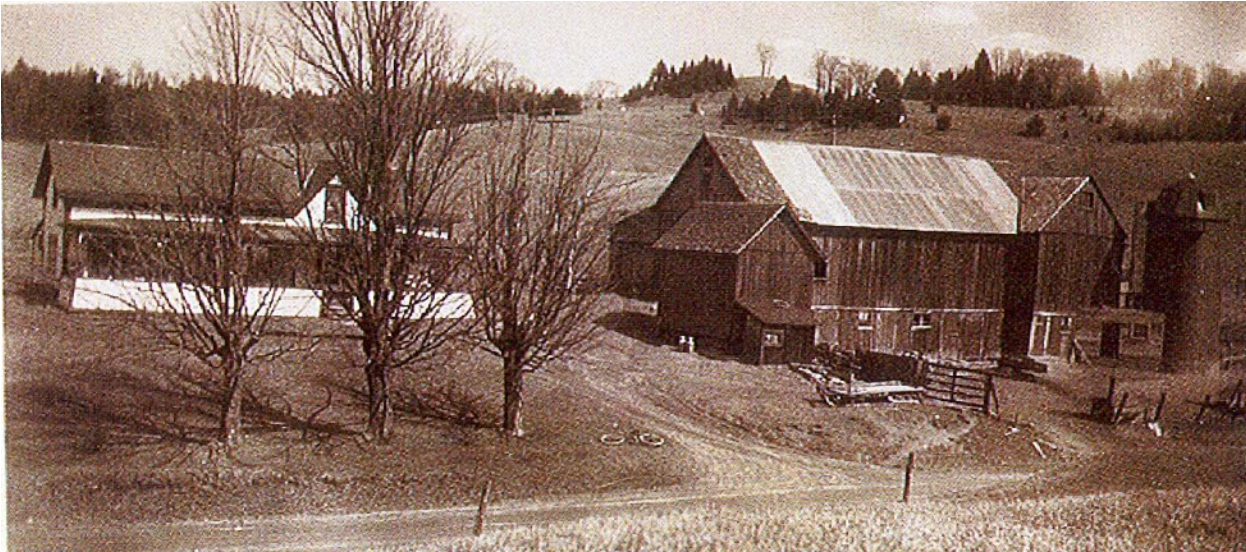
(F1 & 2) Audrey's in laws were George Patrick Lafirierre (Lafirira) born 1894 and Luvia Irene Page born 1901 . Audrey's father in law George grew up in Mansonville Quebec, west of Lake Memphramagog. He grew up speaking French but could not read or write since his family lived too far from the school for him to attend. He came to the United States with his family at age seven, not speaking a word of English. Luvia Page, his future wife, was from five generations of Plainfield residents, 3 generations of blacksmiths. George never did learn to read or write English or French, but Luvia read him newspapers and books and took care of the household business.



F1 Luvia & George Lafirira



F2 Luvia



F3 Lafirira Farm pre 1942 with current Rte 214 BELOW buildings

(F-3) The first Lafirira farm with 10 or 12 cows was at the current 1795 Rte 214 now owned by Chris Reed and Teresa Doyle, and the house still stands on the other side of the road from where it was built. Audrey remembered when the road was rebuilt in 1951. They moved it further away from the eroding river bank and that put the Lafirira farm on the river side. The porch had to be moved to face the “new” road. Chris and Teresa have ongoing erosion issues with the clay soil even now.

George and Luvia’s house had no plumbing other than a sink in the kitchen. There was a two hole outhouse attached to the house next to the dining room. Bathing involved heating pans of water on the wood kitchen stove. Luvia and George would have sponge baths in the kitchen. The children would have baths upstairs in their rooms.

George Sr and Luvia’s children were Irene, George (Audrey’s future husband), Frank, Gloria Ruby, and Roger. The North Montpelier School had recently been closed so they went to school with Audrey at the E. Montpelier Village school and she and Gloria were close friends.. They were born the same year and married the same year. Eventually they both became widows and always kept in touch until Audrey’s death in 2022. Irene married Marcelle W Camire of Barre. His family would later sell Audrey and George the Rte 14 farm in the 1950s.

Luvia was a well known psychic. She had a lot of customers for her psychic readings and her system was first come first served. She and her family always

had a big Sunday dinner. One couple would always come for a reading right before the Sunday dinner hour and Luvia would end up asking them to stay to eat. Finally she got a little sick of these free loaders. The next Sunday while they were visiting in the kitchen after the meal she took the plates off the table and put them on the kitchen floor so their German Shepherds could lick them clean. Then she put them straight into the cupboards. Audrey and Irene were helping do the dishes and stood with their backs to the couple since they could barely keep from laughing out loud. That couple never scheduled another reading right before Sunday dinner!

Audrey told me a typical reading of Luvia's: A farmer had bred one of his Jersey cows to a Jersey bull and could not find her out in the field when she was due to produce a calf any day. Luvia told him a location and said they better be looking for a red and white calf, not a Jersey color! The farmer shook his head, but sure enough when he found the cow and new calf, red and white it was. Luvia never charged for her readings about lost animals. She sometimes had to suppress a chuckle. A lady came for a reading, asking where the mouse hole was in her house. And still another came back after a reading about a lost item and said "You know, I found it! It was in the last place I looked!"

Luvia would take the cash payment, anywhere from \$2.00 to \$5.00 and tuck it into one of the books in her bookcase as the next customer knocked at the door. After she died the family realized they had a job to do. They started shaking out the books in her bookcase and found quite a lot of money Luvia forgotten about.

George Sr farmed, but also was a cattle dealer and trucked cattle in the area. He was called to a farm in the fall one year to pick up a cow to go to the slaughter house since she wasn't able to stand up. Turns out she had gotten extremely drunk on rotting apples. Instead of taking her to the slaughter house as instructed, George took her home to his farm. They slid her out of the truck on some pieces of metal roofing and eventually George was able to get her sobered up and standing. They bred her and used her for years "vealing off" young stock before she finally went to the slaughter house as an old lady.

Luvia's brother Mark Page and the Lafirira family were hauling manure to the fields one summer, using horses. Mark bemoaned how undignified it was to "haul shit" and asked Luvia to see if the dictionary had a better word to call said

shit. She presented him with a new alternative and Mark was much happier “drawing excrement” from then on.

The Lafiriras moved to another farm in Marshfield in 1951, the current 192 Lafiria Place across the Winooski off Rte 2. It would be the first time they had a house with a flush toilet and a bathtub. Luvia continued giving readings in her new home. In fact I went for a reading around 1972, since many of my Goddard friends were big fans. She also had a famous family of orange and white cats whose kittens were in much demand.

SLIDE G

(G1 G2) Audrey had friends all over the East and North Montpelier including the Lafirira clan and in winter would join them sledding on long Traverse sleds, traditionally used for winter logging. Six to eight people per sled would start up on Taylor Farm Rd and sled a mile down the old Burnham Rd to N Montpelier. They went so fast they ended up skidding out onto the current Rte 14. I walked the trail recently and it has some steep hills but also flatter areas and rises, so the sled had to be going very fast to get all the way down to Rte 14 without stopping. I’ve heard others have memories of Traverse Sleds.



G2 Traverse Sled on display at Morse Farm Maple



G1 Traverse Sled at Pavilion Hotel

Sandy Woodbeck remembers starting on Center Rd at the hill south of East Montpelier Center. They made it all the way to Montpelier! Slide G1 shows Traverse Sled in Montpelier. They sledged on East State Street.

Slide H George and Audrey's Rte 14 Farm

H1 George Lafirira, her good friend Gloria's brother, and Audrey Daniels were married September 29, 1951. The marriage certificate lists George as a saw mill hand - he worked for her father at Wrightsville. They would have 4 children - Ronald, Sheryl, Dale, and Julie. At first they lived on the third floor of her grandfather Harry's three story house on Rte 2. Within a year or two they bought their own farm on the current 130 Lylehaven Rd off Rte 14, now part of Fairmont Farm. They had 36 Jerseys. George loved Jerseys and disliked Guernseys. He also didn't care for horses, unlike his father the World War I teamster. They got their animal feed nearby at the Checkerboard Feed store next to the Fair Mont railroad station on the Barre Rd as Audrey called it - the current Rte 14. The feed came by rail until 1956 when the train stopped running.



**H1 Audrey & George's old farm,
Now Fairmont Farm**



H2 View of 200 Acre Field from near EMES



H3 Batchelder Plumbing & Heating 110 Mill St Plainfield

H3 They were able to get most other supplies at Batchelder's Heating, Plumbing & Hardware in Plainfield.

H2 They had an additional 200 acres up on East Hill near the current Barre Country Club. They got the "200 Acre Field" from the Camire family from Barre. I've found a farm on several 1800s maps in that area. The road is long gone but part is used by the snowmobile clubs. The farm was long owned by Orlando Lewis who married one of the Martins from the sheep farm that is now Goddard

College. The farm buildings burned in the 1920's but many farmers have kept this fertile farm land from growing back to woods.

For 20 years George and Audrey wrote 2 \$12.00 checks a year for the 200 acre that went to UVM and to a local church, a lease in lieu of town taxes, This rang a bell with me since I've been researching early E. Montpelier farms. In the late 1700s when each Vermont town was divided into the first plots to sell, several were set aside to be leased so the payments went to local schools and churches instead of the grand list for town taxes. When I looked at the 1790s map of plots I found "College Lot", "Minister's Settlement" in the area of the 200 Acre Field. George and Audrey's lease agreement was the very last one for that land. When they sold in 1969, it was added back to the town grand list so the next owner would pay taxes to the town.

When Audrey and George were doing the morning milking before sunup they would leave the dark house with four kids sleeping. 12 year old Sheryl was to wake baby Julie and feed her breakfast. Audrey would peek at the house during milking to make sure the lights came on at the right time. When Audrey came in the house Sheryl would sometimes joke with her that she had forgotten to feed Julie. Joking seems to be a family hobby.

Twice a week George had a regular early morning game of Cribbage at the farm with his friend Paul Gallerani of Rightway Commission Livestock Sales in Bradford, I think this is the current Farmway Store. Audrey would make them coffee. Paul had made sure his calls came to the Lafirira's, and Audrey kept a pad of paper by the phone to write down the addresses where Paul was supposed to pick up calves after they were done with their game. Cribbage was a very important matter!

The Night of October 16, 1961

Audrey was up with son Ron who was sick. She happened to look out the window and was shocked to see flames coming from the barn. She woke George and phoned the Montpelier Fire Department. They waited nervously for the firetrucks to get there.

Luckily it was a warm night so George had decided they should put the cows out to pasture one more night. Edna, Vene Morse's wife was one of the first

people to see the barn burning from her house across the valley up Cherry Tree Hill Rd, the house Audrey's grandfather had built. She brought them down fresh home made donuts the next day. The Montpelier Fire Dept showed up as well as the Goddard Fire Dept. Later a fire fighter would say it was a quick trip from Montpelier to the farm since the road from the current Rte 302 roundabout to E. Montpelier had just been paved for the first time. They were never quite sure where the fire started. People suspected the silo but it was empty. The silo made the fire worse since it drew like a chimney. After the fire was out, and the house saved, the firemen helped cram 25 skittish milking Jerseys into the one car garage. 7000 bales of hay were lost. Bob Simon, who built my E. Montpelier house told me he helped fight the fire. He, Elliott Morse and others would start the EM fire Dept three years later in 1964. George and Audrey had Paul Gallerani truck the cows to George's parents' new farm past Plainfield off Route 2, but things didn't work out since the cows didn't like the damp hay there so Paul Gallerani offered to truck the cows to Bradford to run a special sale so they could sell off the herd. He kept the traumatized cows there until they calmed down and started handling milking better. He even donated his fee. At the end of the auction George stood up and thanked Paul, who said "George has just said thank you but I don't know what for." The Lafiriras would later buy more Jerseys at Rightway's after they rebuilt the barn in 1962. Audrey still hated to hear about fires when she listened to her police scanner, even 60 years later.

Slide I



I-1 40 Lylehaven Rd



I-2 130 Carleton Blvd

George and Audrey farmed until 1969 when George decided to try something new, after all those years farming. They were passing on their turn, caring of this land to another farmer who saw it's qualities. They sold the farm and moved next door to (I_1) 40 Lylehaven Rd at the corner of Rte 14. George went on to be a State Livestock Inspector. He died in 1984 when the kids were 16, 18, 22, and 35. After George died Audrey, who still didn't drive a car despite a lifetime on farm tractors, took several jobs. She worked as an assistant in the East Montpelier Elementary School kitchen, taking over for her step mother Clopha who had become ill. Audrey assisted Ethel Vasher who ran the kitchen and ended up taking over from her.. They made everything from scratch. Audrey rode the school bus to work, and then got a ride home. She ate hot lunch every school day after making it. She left that job in 1993 at age 62. Then she worked for Morse Farm Sugarworks for 20 years serving sugar on snow and making candy, among other things, plus baking 30 pies a week for them to sell. Her daughter Sheryl worked at the counter with her. At first the Morses gave her rides, but finally Sheryl taught her to drive, Audrey got her license, and she bought a little 2 door Chrysler. Elliott Morse would introduce visitors to her as

“my great, great, great grandmother”. He was about 8 years younger than she was. She retired from Morse’s at age 82, but kept supplying them with crocheted towels to sell. She gave me a few of those beauties for my bathrooms.

Until her death Audrey lived alone in her tidy little house on (I-2) Carleton Boulevard behind the North Country Credit Union, the sixth East Montpelier house she had lived in, all under two miles from each other. She reached almost 91 years clear headed and independent, speaking to her hardy genes. Her son Dale and daughters Sheryl and Julie cared for her every need. She made many towels and afghans. Why sit idle? “Audrey do your hands ever hurt from all that crocheting ? “Oh, no, I’d say not.”

Her style of speech brought local history to life when we talked, with sayings I had never heard. Her voice will stay with me.

Afgan was pronounced “Af-uh-gun”

Daniels was pronounced: “Dannuls”

Referring to someone who didn’t like spending money: “He was tight as bark on a tree.”

If someone was not trustworthy: “He was so crooked he couldn’t lay straight in the bed.”

I ask her if she’s free to talk today: “I’m right home.”

Talking about something inconsequential: “It’s like a fart in the whirlwind.”

If someone was intoxicated: “He was drunker than a hoot owl.”

Someone wasn’t too sensible: “He didn’t have two oars in the water.”

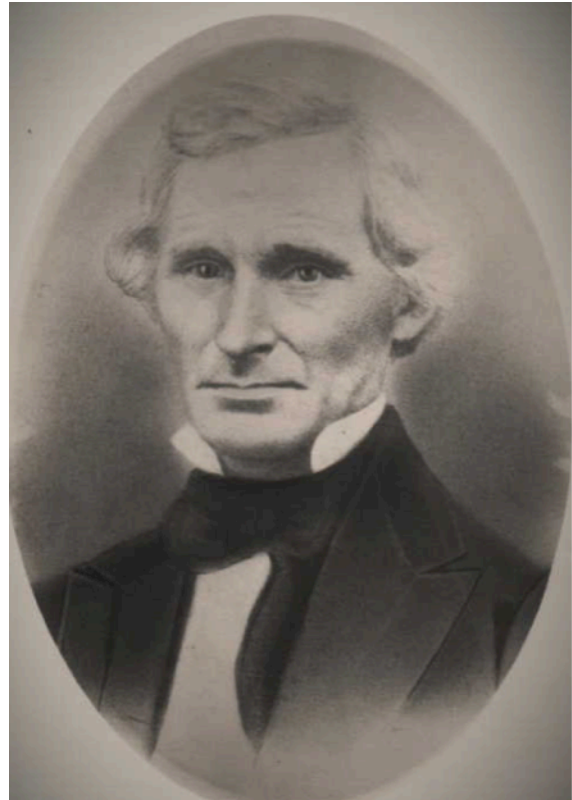
A husband had a wandering eye: “Mr So & So jumped the fence.”

If she ever mentioned something private, like for instance WHO jumped the fence, she followed it with “ Now, that’s not nice” with a little chuckle. Then I knew not to write it down. Audrey maintained a sunny outlook as her world



Audrey Lafirira

became smaller with age and Covid,



Her Great Grandfather Kelso Gray

always ready with a joke. How she laughed telling me how her her son Dale suggested putting wheels on her walker and sending her down the hill from the Hospital to the Barre Montpelier Rd. He always brought her breakfast every morning, including her **Beer**, which was actually coffee.

She periodically said we should go for a drive, visiting the people and graveyards we had talked about so much, but I just said “maybe someday” and let it go. Covid prevented it. I’m sad we never did, but I’ve already been to her grave in the Plainmont Cemetery next to many of her friends and family members. Rest well Audrey. You lived a rich life and will be missed. Audrey Daniels Lafirira - Born May 14 1931 - Died February 20 2022, aged 90 years. She leaves many grand children and great grand children.

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