

**About Roger Sanborn**  
**Some Memories from Elaine Clow**



**Old Home Day – Circa 1951**  
**Sammy and the Pony Trap**

**Roger grew up with cows, horses, ponies, donkeys, sheep, and numerous friends**

**Left to Right:** Joey Bush, Roger Sanborn, Nancy Brown, Betsy Sanborn and two unknown boys out for a ride in the Sanborn Pony Trap. Can anyone assist in naming the two boys in front of Betsy? According to Adele Sanborn, Sammy was alive when she and Roger started dating.

Roger joined the numerous post-WWII kids who grew up on the Plain. As early Boomers we were in and out of each other's houses, haunted the 1913 Library, the Church Park, played up and down the street, and in the Plains School yard until the streetlights came on, or at 5:00 p.m. This is when the fire siren, installed on the Much-I-Do Fire Station to warn us of nuclear attack, sounded for us to go home for supper. As we aged, bicycles gave us more range to roam, and we did ROAM on summer evenings! Were we home on time? Sometimes. Maybe.

Born three days apart in October 1947, Brian Swenson and Roger were almost inseparable friends. At Mrs. Swenson's the libation of choice for kids, was homemade root beer, with sometimes exploding bottles popping in the cellar. Sandy Holmes, the Raymond kids, the Powells at Daniel Webster Inn, BettyJean Connor, Ricky Butterworth, David Simpson, Stephen Booth, the Egounis youngsters, a bit later the Kamuda girls; we all participated randomly coming and going with our peers. Trains came and went down at the station, pennies got put on the tracks to be squashed; the intact bridge let us cross the river to see our friends in Canterbury: Joanne Nelson, Patty and Valarie Graham, Marcella (Cookie) and

future rock musician, Glenn Jordan at Kadockadee Farm. We had hills to climb and brooks to fish. Immaculate Conception was the Catholic school in Penacook, the rest of us went to first grade at Main Street, and attended there until grade 4 finished, then two years at the Plains School, and back to Main Street for grades 7 and 8. Such Freedom!!! We Boscawen kids had a choice of Penacook, Warner, Franklin, or Concord for High School; both Roger and I chose Concord in the days before Merrimack Valley School District existed. We roamed, found outhouses and springs, skating at Peach Pond, took risks, and had adventures.



#### **PLOWING MATCH AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN**

In pre-TV days families visited back and forth in the evenings; sometimes there were musical evenings – with Mrs. Gardner on the Piano, and whoever else had an instrument to play or sing, varying between houses on the Friday and Saturday nights that did not include Firemen’s Balls or entertainment at the Town Hall. Occasionally we visited a lucky family that had a tv set.

Often moms gave us snacks: popsicles... fluffer-nutters... popcorn... root beer, kool aid, or we drank from a hose or pumped wells, as we free-ranged our part of town, or crossed the bridge. Once in a while those with bicycles made it as far as the spring on the way to Sandogody Pond prior to a mom picking us up in a station wagon to get us the rest of the way for a swim in hot summers. We had the summer reading program at the Library; some of the elders on the street took an interest in what we



did; Grampa Raymond with “drop” apples from his stand, Mrs. Dadmun with her dominoes, Roger’s “Unk” Tabor on his Dartmouth-days bicycle that was at least 50 or 60 years old as he rode up and down the sidewalk. Sometimes the seniors suggested terrific books to read from an earlier era. Older kids kept an eye on us and what we did, or joined our activities to suggest older versions of our games. There were shows and entertainments and especially club meetings, Town Meetings, and church suppers at the Town Hall; with kids often expected to play outside or play board games in the dining room while grownups transacted their business in the hall. With all the organizations in town, we kids were expected to participate – especially in 4-H. We “children” were bonded in our generation, with sometimes older people we didn’t quite understand, but we either ignored or embraced their knowledge of how the world worked, and maybe took in a value or two on the way by.

There were ponies, cows in pastures, chickens, donkeys, goats, sheep. Sanborn’s milk house on The Plain was mostly on the honor system, it was twenty-five cents for a quart, and it was neither homogenized nor pasteurized, with the cream rising to the top, and freezing in winter. That was a treat to sneak from our home milk boxes! Little Roger sometimes accompanied Big Roger on his milk route, delivering to homes in the area, stopping to talk if people were home, or leaving the milk in the box. Their Guernsey cows gave the best milk in town, no kidding, of all the local producers.

Did I mention Aunt Dorothy, (or Mrs. Sanborn as we called friends’ mothers) did crafts with us, and she always had numerous books to recommend. One of their cows was killed by a train on the Boston and Maine tracks, causing chaos and consternation, along with a news article or two. Then there was the day Betsy Sanborn and Sandy Holmes took Rosie the donkey for a walk down to the store next to the fire station. While the girls might have been appreciated by Mrs. Laughter as customers, taking the donkey inside wasn’t. . . “GET THAT ANIMAL OUTSIDE!



**Roger age 5 and a Half**

## THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

In June 1955 N.H. was agog with a HUGE local event – IKE, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Military Hero of World War II, traveled through town in an open-topped convertible, up to the Belknap Recreation Area in Gilford. The President gave a speech and had a gala celebration, given by Sherman Adams, Ike’s Assistant of vicuna coat fame, before visiting The Old Man of the Mountain. A group of local grownups rigged up in costumes and opened the formal festivities at the ski area as they danced the minuet for the President. Dorothy Sanborn raided attics for costumes; Edythe Clow directed numerous rehearsals of the dance steps and etiquette necessary to look authentic for the sixteen actual dancers from various local Granges. At the parade in Franklin John Keegan broke his arm that day.

After the parade through town, we trekked up to Gilmanton in a convoy, with the excitement of being out AFTER DARK in an evening to watch the adults perform. I believe Mrs. Sanborn and Mrs. Clow breathed a sigh of relief when it was over. Especially riding home with a bunch of grumpy, tired kids. The next President didn’t fare so well in an open-topped convertible in Dallas when we were in high school eight years later.

Speaking of Mrs. Clow (my mum, a teacher mostly at the Plains School, mostly grade 5) -- I’ve known her to lose her cool only once with a student – and it was with Roger -- who was sometimes inattentive. She said, *“You’ve got to learn to read and write, so you can be successful when you grow up.”* His response: *“I don’t need to learn to write, I’m going to have a secretary to do it.”* I suspect Mrs. Sanborn had something to say about “talking back” if anyone ever told her.



**The Grange Dance Team  
Edythe and Jesse Clow in front**



### **Roger and the New Harrow at the Community Garden**

Laugher's store was next door to the Plains School, with 5¢ cokes in bottles, and penny candy for recess. Sometimes a freight train went through that shook the buildings. We got to practice "*duck and cover*" under our desks to protect us from the atom bomb on our flight path from Russia, aimed directly at Pease Air Force Base. We pulled the heavy rope for the bell to start school, come in after recess, and after lunch. We ate downstairs in the school cellar. The school lunch program cost 25¢, probably for the week. Options included going home for lunch or bringing a lunch box. On Friday everyone got those coins to count and add up to practice arithmetic.

Roger and Mrs. Holmes had a deal; Aunt Barbara knew Roger liked American Chop Suey, she let him know when it was on for lunch, and he went there, while Sandy was in Penacook at the Catholic School. We had a weekly walk up to the 1913 Library where Julia Goldsmith or Viola Knowlton made recommendations for books to take home until next week. We walked to the Plains Cemetery for Memorial Day and Veteran's Day remembrances, usually with cut Lilacs in the spring. Some recesses we were able to go across King Street to play scrub baseball, and there were games of red rover, tag, jump rope, and marbles, and building snow forts, in addition to the slide and swings in the school yard. Girls from Boscawen knew how to pitch and hit for those of us who attended Rundlett in Concord back when it was new, and Nancy Holden, Carolyn Swenson, and I were in demand.





### **Wagon Rides**

Community and service clubs played a large part in nearly every family. Church groups, the Grange, Civil Defense, the two Volunteer Fire Departments and their Ladies' Auxiliaries, Ladies Aid, Women's Club, Baseball at the Park, all provided time for kids to be near adults but have time together to play with limited supervision by bigger people; we had to work out getting along.

Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, and 4-H trained us to get along with others. Big Roger Sanborn led the Much-I-Do 4-H Club for boys; Marjorie Emery and later Helena Egounis, then Henrietta Kenney led the Earnest Workers for girls. Special animal shows, the Hopkinton Fair, the Dress Revue all became seasonal markers of our years passing and growing, as places for kids to mature, showcase practical life skills of animal husbandry and showing animals, sewing, various crafts, cooking, bread making, and preserving food, led to bringing home award ribbons.

Most of us had pets to care for and many had farm animals, or they were nearby to enjoy. Little Roger learned to judge livestock through 4-H, and traveled far afield to Boston Common and Richmond Virginia. As we got old enough to earn money, our jobs came from within our community; Sandy Holmes' first job became washing milk bottles at Sanborn's milk house for 10 cents a case; mine was Ken Marshall's farm stand for .25/hr. Babysitting, splitting wood, mucking out stalls, animal care, working in the family store, changing beds at the inns, or just helping others added to financial solvency as we moved on to high school.

Roger went to Rundlett Jr. High, then to Concord High School as several of us did. He went on to study at the University of New Hampshire, Thompson School of Agriculture. He also was chosen to go into the International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE) in India in 1968-69, where if I remember right, he experienced some culture shock so far away from New England.



**Little Roger, Getting Warm (age 18 or so)**





### **Roger and His New Tractor**

After his return to Boscawen, Roger followed in his father's footsteps in many ways. Big Roger and Little Roger worked together to build a new cow barn and milking parlor on the family farm, using advanced dairy technology of the time. Big Roger Colby Sanborn was a Selectman from 1955 to 1976, and Captain of the Much-I-Do #2 Fire Station from 1960-1967. Little Roger Wheeler Sanborn took over as Captain of the Fire Department in 1976 and continued his long involvement with operations of the community, including Select Board, and most Commissions, and Committees.

The entire Sanborn family was always interested in history. Both Rogers were life members of the N.H. Sons of the American Revolution; Roger C. and Dorothy were founding members of the Boscawen Historical Society, where Roger W. still has interests and occasional contributions to make, including debating "old tracts, tracks, and Rangeways" with me to discuss possible routes, long overgrown, and not mapped since the original 1600 or 1700's surveys. In my role with the NH Surveyors' Association Rangeway investigation team, there were lots of questions, as our town had complied with the enabling legislation as our King's Grant Contoocook Plantation evolved into in the newly independent Boscawen in the late 1700s and early 1800s. We did it right, back then, unlike some other NH towns.





### **Sleigh Ride**

Roger and Adele got married in 1974, and I hear rumors that on their honeymoon in NYC they took a very large painting to a gallery for restoration for the Boscawen Historical Society, where it holds pride of place in our collection at the BHS Museum.

They had two sons, Christopher Foster Sanborn, born in 1979, and Benjamin Wheeler Sanborn, born in 1982. Roger takes agriculture seriously and brought his love of it to town politics as he served the town and local area in various capacities over the years, with his fingers in many pies: Rescue Squad, Fire Dept, Bicentennial Committee, Old Home Day, Church Park, Town Park, 4-H, and Livestock Judging at Hopkinton Fair, and a founding member of the Granite State Draft and Pony Association.





**Layout Day at the Community Garden – Roger Sanborn and John Keegan**

Years later, when my family visited Boscawen from Toronto to see grandparents, my daughter Marilyn savored the ability to go roaming with our neighbor Sarah. One day after Sarah moved down to Highway View Farm, the girls and I decided to hike from Sarah's house up what was then abandoned Railway tracks but is now the Northern Rail Trail, to Roger's, "just up over the hill." It seemed a "reasonable" walk, so we arrived exhausted, just at milking time. Generous with the city kid, Roger allowed Marilyn to milk a cow – an unfathomable treat for her, though old hat for Sarah, in the time before the horrible barn fire that eliminated the dairy operation. Since moving down to NH, Marilyn has been working part-time with Adele in her studio.



In Canada I apprenticed on a sheep farm, learning to spin, weave, and naturally dye wool. The first entire fleece I ever bought was from Roger in the summer of 1970; actually, it was 3 or 4 fleeces. Finding maple syrup from Roger's sugar shack when I came home to Boscawen in 2005 was a bonus. I was delighted when he asked me to become involved in the formation of the Agricultural Commission as a Vice Chair, and with Roger's assistance the formation of the resulting Community Garden. He, his farm equipment, his contacts, and his energy contribute significantly to food security and fresh produce for our community, whether for individuals, the food pantry, or gleaned by the county.

It was a pleasure to work with both Roger and Adele with the AgComm, the Town Garden, the 1913 Library Seven to Save Committee, and various other Old Home Day and Town Garden projects, including judging decorative Cows, Sheep, and Chickens appearing along the streets. I was a "featured artist," for one of the Old Home Day art show nights, knowing that about 40 years before some of the wool in some of the display pieces came from Roger. Those were lovely fleeces.

It's been a quiet and enduring friendship since we were 4 or 5, and our moms became good friends and especially book loaners. I hope this brings back some pleasant memories for you, Roger. Thank you so much for your generous service and support to individuals, friends, Boscawen, Merrimack County, New Hampshire, and Agriculture. You have given, and continue to give, so much to keep our community, and individuals in our community, vibrant. We had an amazing time to grow up in Boscawen. Thank you to our wonderful Village, nearly three hundred years old. Let us try to retain our knowledge of our history, and those who continue to add to it to keep it alive.

Elaine Clow, President  
Boscawen Historical Society  
Town Meeting, March 2024



**Someone's Birthday at the Park, circa 1952 or 1953**

Best guesses of identities:

**Front Row:** Bobby Adams, Joanne Burdette, Janice Raymond, Elaine Clow, Roger Sanborn, Clifton Burdette

**Back Row:** BettyJean Connor, Sandy Holmes, Betsy Sanborn, Carolyn Swenson, Ricky Butterworth, Brian Swenson or Bobby Raymond, Sandra Wall