

Joe and May Stevens
Family and Friends
By Henry B Stevens



Today is August 8, 2002 and my Mother May C Stevens is in declining health at Pillsbury Manor North in South Burlington, Vermont. The story that follows is what I can recall. Parts of the story supplied by other people will be referenced. I have no idea how this will turn out. I may be able to gather material from sources not known or available to me at this time.

The picture above was taken at the Clark home and though it is out of focus it shows my parents as I would like to remember them. I keep the original in my house where I can see it every day.

As a stone thrown in a still millpond makes every larger circles the marriage of these two people June 25, 1932, set in motion circles which continue to expand and intersect. This story will start slightly earlier and go forward. It will be the story I know about. Everyone who knew these people could write a different story because their experiences were different. For instance I was 12 years old when my sister Barbara came

into the family. Barbara has a whole different story which I don't know anything about. My brother Murray lived at home a year longer than I did and nearby quite a bit of time.

This story will include Morrisville, VT, and Orleans, VT, and only touch on Lancaster, NH, Syracuse, NY, and Burlington Area, VT: all places where May and Joe lived. Mother told me one time she had moved 22 times during her married life. Related families will include mostly Francis A Clark family, but will include Herbert A Stevens family and Carolyn Sutcliff families. Joe's mother, Bertha Reece Stevens, was the only grandparent I really knew, although May's mother Blanche May Clark was alive when I was very young. Family friends will include Al and Fran Philips because I have enjoyed seeing these people all my life and Will and Ada Urie because of knowing them and still in touch with their daughters Joyce and Faye.

This is such a small sliver of family and friends of these wonderful people. Unfortunately, I'm the first to set down the words which follow.



It's not unusual that a brother will bring home from school his sister's future husband and this picture is that kind of a story. On the left is Herbert A. Stevens, center is Francis A. Clark, mother's brother, and on the right Joseph K. Stevens, my father. Francis and Joe were roommates, smoking partners, good friends, and lifelong friends as it would turn out. Francis wrote his own obituary which ran just after January 31, 2000, and said that "Joe was his brother in law and best friend." Herbert was Joe's brother. Joe and Francis were at Mount Hermon School. Herbert was attending business college.

This picture was taken at 72 Mount Vernon Street, Roxbury, MA, a suburb of Boston, Joe's home. Eventually Francis would take Joe home with him to 138 Congress St, Morrisville, VT. In the Clark home there were two twin rocking chairs; I now have one in my home and Murray had the other one. Joe and May sat up half the night the day they met and told each other their deepest dreams and hopes.



After graduating from People's Academy in Morrisville mother went to Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, NH, graduating in 1927. May is on the left and Charlene Brown on the right. From there Mother went to Middlebury College, graduating in 1932.



While May was at Middlebury Joe was in Burlingame, CA ,selling Packard cars. In the picture above of Joe at his desk you see May's picture. The picture on the bureau, which doesn't show well here, was a picture of Dr Henry B Stevens, Joe's father. Joe did well in CA, but he told me he didn't stay because he felt he would have missed the best chance he'd ever have if he didn't follow up with May.

Joe and May were married June 25, 1932. I do not have any picture, newspaper clippings or any information on this important event..

My Father went to farming but lost his herd of milk cows to mastitis, a disease of the cow's udder which results in them being sold for beef. He then went to work for United Farmers creamery in Morrisville. The family-Joe, May and Henry-moved to Maple St. Henry was born August 24, 1933, and Murray was born 27 October 1934.

Our next home was on Summer St in Morrisville. At United Farmers my family met Al and Fran Philips, family friends still. In fact, tomorrow, 8/11/02 I will be phoning Fran and their daughter Susan to tell them that Mother is failing.



This is an early picture of Joe and May. I do not have a date. There is no writing on the back of the picture, but it was sent to me in Sept 2002 by Fran Phillips and I believe it is a picture taken by Al Phillips. Al Phillips was single then and working at United Farmers and Joe used to invite Al to come home to supper with them. Alonzo and Francis Phillips were married in 1939.

In 1940 the family rented a farm in Glover, VT, returning to Morrisville in September in time for school. It was here that the Stevens and Urie families became friends, a friendship that continues to this day.

In June, 1943 the family moved to Orleans, VT. Joe worked in the creamery and we lived in an apartment over Converse Store on Main St, later moving to a home on Irasburg St. I was in the fifth grade and graduated from Orleans HS in 1951.

About 1945 Joe started a business as a partnership with Dave Gallup. Dave was a farmer, horse and cattle dealer, and together they started a small store with harnesses and farm products. They soon split up, remaining friends, and Joe moved to a larger store across the street and then again to a larger property on the square in Orleans. In 1951 Joe liquidated the store and went into a business arrangement with Carl Lesnick in Lancaster, NH. My brother Murray graduated from Lancaster HS in 1952.



This picture is taken at Garfield, VT, a location in the Town of Hyde Park at land and buildings Francis and Jean A Clark owned near Collins Pond. This is where a whole lot of Clark and Stevens relatives spent time. Francis and Jean gave each Murray and Henry parcels of land subdivided from their property. Murray and Carrie built on theirs, Henry and Pat camped nearby theirs.



On the same day this picture of May and Barbara with “Sandy” was taken. Horses were a big attraction to the female relatives, and Garfield provided many roads and trails.



Trips to Moody Beach were an annual summer event during this period. Francis and Jean rented a camp for two weeks and encouraged other members of the family to come over for a day. In fact, as I write this, 8/10/02, Barbara and Carrie are down near the beach in Maine eating lobsters and catching up with each other's news. Pictured above is Joe on left Henry center and Francis aka Brush on the right at Moody Beach in 1954. As children May and Francis went with Blanche and George to the beach every summer and Brush continued the practice providing many happy hours for Clark and Stevens families over the years.



This is a typical Thanksgiving at the Clark home in Morrisville. This one is 1954. From the left, Robert Clark, Jean Clark, Bertha Stevens, and Joe. In the second photo: Murray Stevens, Carrie Stevens, Francine Clark, Carolyn Clark, May Stevens and Barbara Stevens. May Stevens, Barbara Stevens



This is an important picture taken 1947 at Hotel Randall in Morrisville, VT. Seated is Bertha Reese Stevens in whose honor the others are assembled. Bertha was born May 18 1867 at Oliphant, Luzerne County, PA. So this was her 80th birthday party. Bertha died in 1957 at Brattelboro, VT

These people's lives were intertwined all their respective lives. It is noteworthy that Bertha was born two years after the end of the Civil War, and this web page will be viewed by many relatives now under 20 years old.

From Left to Right, Francis A Clark, Jean H Clark, Esther Stevens Erickson, May Clark Stevens, Joseph Kent Stevens. Seated, Bertha Reese Stevens.

For me, there are many, many stories prompted by this one picture. These stories will be told in a like fashion under individual titles.



May Clark Stevens photo by Mack Derick, a professional photographer in Orleans, VT. Mack Derick took many pictures that appeared in Vermont Life Magazine. This was one of Joe's favorite pictures of May and it certainly is a favorite of mine.

A Derick photo of a birch tree about 20 inches wide by 30 inches high, black and white with hand coloring, has hung on May and Joe's walls in all of their homes since being in Orleans, VT, and this photo hangs today, 12/18/2002, in May's room at Pillsbury Manor North, S Burlington, VT



May and Joe at their home in Syracuse 1966

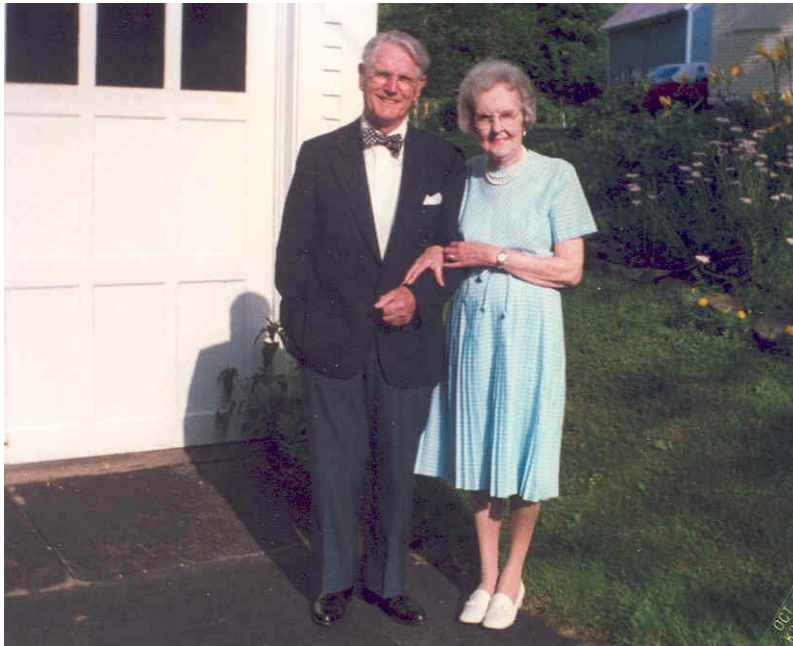


May Clark Stevens at their home in Syracuse NY, 1964. Between living in Lancaster, NH and Syracuse, NY May and Joe lived in Woodstock, VT briefly. Joe went from being a territory man for John Deere Plow Company to working in the home office at Syracuse, NY. May enjoyed Syracuse because there was a bus line at the head of the street and downtown Syracuse was a short ride away. Joe was traveling 5 days a week during this period, Barbara was in school, so May took the bus.





May, Henry and Philip Stevens at Syracuse, NY. This is one of the occasions where we left one or more kids with May and Joe while Pat and I traveled into Ontario, Canada or Pennsylvania on vacation.



This was taken at the Clark home on Congress St in 1987. It was the occasion of May's 61st High School Reunion. (People's Academy).



View of Mount Mansfield, VT from the house. 1992 (Photo GL)



The house at Cilley Hill Rd, Jericho, VT, 1992 (Photo GL)

By now Joe and May had lived on a dirt road in Jericho, VT where they had built a house out in the country. Stone wall, fields across the street and a view of Mt Mansfield. Together they loved it. But Joe more than May who could still remember the bus line in Syracuse. However, Jericho was perhaps Joe's happiest years.



Next they would be living in a condo at 16 Arlington Green, South Burlington not too far from where May now lives at Pillsbury Manor North on Williston Road. Joe died January 1988



May and friend in the living room 16 Arlington Green South Burlington



This is May at Essex Junction High School on the set of “Charley’s Aunt” April 6, 1991, talking with Elizabeth Page, who was in the play. Elizabeth was a senior at the time. Elizabeth went on to graduate from Middlebury, as did her mother Francine Clark Page. May graduated from Middlebury in 1932, and attended her 60th reunion there in 1992.



Joe’s nephew, Joe Erickson, lives in California. This picture was taken in July 1998 outside May’s apartment at Gazebo Pillsbury North. From the left Henry Stevens, Mrs. Erickson, Joe Erickson and May.

All additional information and corrections are welcome.

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