

NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

Issue 74
October 2016
Editor
Gail M Cramer



ANOTHER MEMORY

Seems like everything has a beginning and an ending, physically anyway. I like to think that our memories have a beginning but no ending. When we lose something (however that may happen), we still have the memory. We can reminisce the good times that took place and if we have photos, they add to our memories. Just a couple of weeks ago I witnessed one of our old buildings being razed. It had served it's purpose for many years and was in great disrepair. As a historian I hate to see old buildings torn down, in most cases it is necessary for a number of reasons. When it is the case where it is determined to get rid of a historical building for the benefit of the existing owner....well, then I get a bit testy to say the least, and will often fight to save it.



Recognize this?

Most of us remember it as Van Arnam's Garage. Before Harry W. Van Arnam made it into a service station garage, it belonged to Nelson Chambers. Nelson, along with his wife Mamie, ran a bakery store in this building. After Van Arnam's closed and sold to F & W, it was sold in 1976 to the village. The village used it for the village offices, and village equipment. The front rooms were also used by other organizations up until 2016.

MUSEUM NEWS

New items continue to arrive at the museum. We are so grateful to those who remember us by contributing these artifacts of "memories" to us.

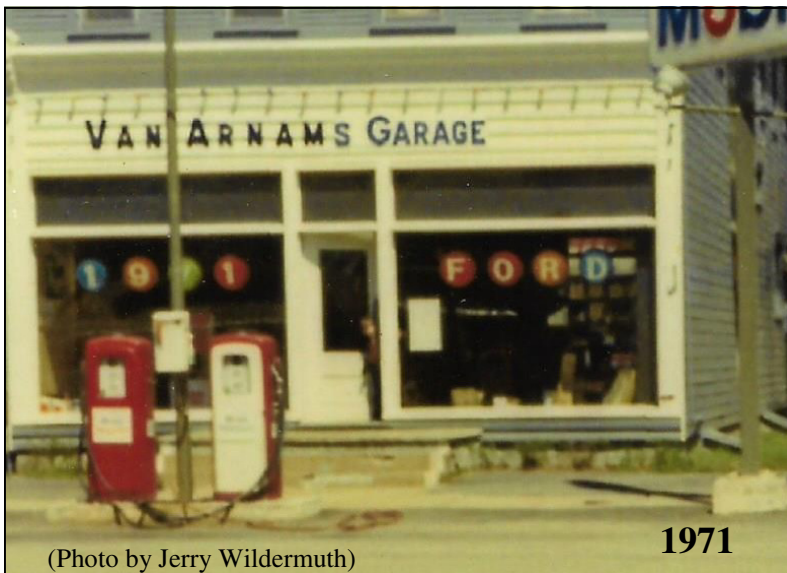


Mop wringer
Vise for sharpening
saws
Cornice from Van
Arnham's garage
School books and
Children's books
Milk dipper from
Skiff Dairy Farm

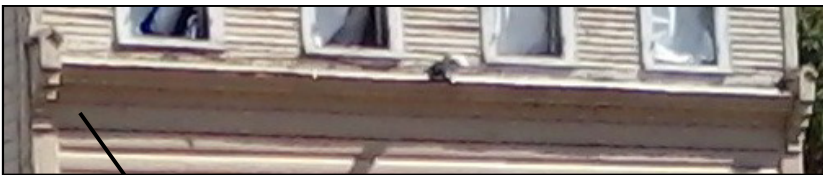




Nelson Chambers married Mamie Conkling . They had 3 children; Dewitt, May, and Philo. Nelson was a Methodist minister prior to operating a bakery on the corner of Third and Division Street. (later Van Arnam's garage). He lived upstairs over the bakery with his family. That apartment over his bakery was rented out to many families in years to come. His wife, Mamie died in 1902, at age 35. He was remarried to Mrs. Edith Conkling Edwards in 1912. Nelson died in 1914. Edith was remarried to Horace Buyce in 1915.



In 1913 Harry Willard Van Arnam became the first representative of the Ford Co. in Northville and established the agency in his home on Third Street. (that house no longer exists). Mr. Nelson Chambers died in 1914 and soon after, Harry W. bought the Chambers Bakery building where he transferred his agency. He called it, Van Arnam's Garage. In 1925 Harry died suddenly and his son George A. took over the business. George's brother, Bob, after serving 5 years in the army, retired as a Major, then returned to Northville, worked for a short time in the Northville bank and then became associated with his brother in the Van Arnam garage. The garage continued as a family business until 1974. Many local people worked in the garage over the years. It was sold to Ferraro-Weiss in 1974, which business was liquidated in 1976. The village of Northville bought the building and it became offices and a garage for equipment for the village. September, 2016 the building was razed.



As I watched the old building being demolished. My thought was, "what can I save of the building for the museum". As I stood there taking pictures I noticed the cornices on each corner of the building between the first and second floors. I asked one of the village workers if I could have the cornices if they were in one piece when they came down. They were fine and are now in our NNHS museum.



Note the name "CHAMBERS BAKERY" on the side of the building



Van Arnam Family: Marion, George A., George E., Harry Robert, Harry W.



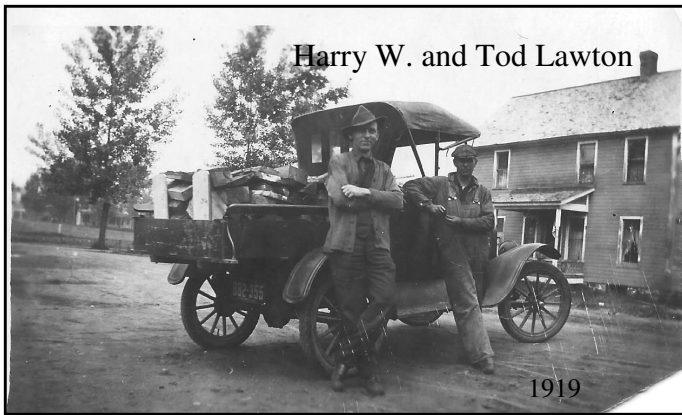
Harry Willard Van Arnam, and his wife, Martha lived next door to the garage with their children Marion, George A. ,and Harry Robert, (known as Bob), and Martha.

“Tin Lizzie” shipped in by F. J. & G train, delivered to the Ford Garage by horse and sled. 1920



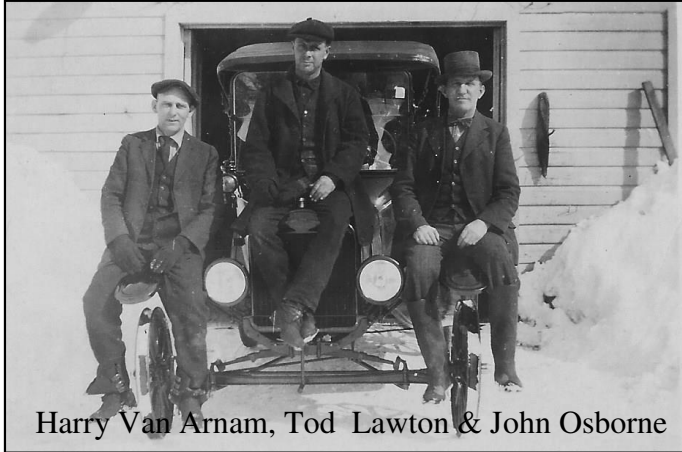
George A. in front of the garage



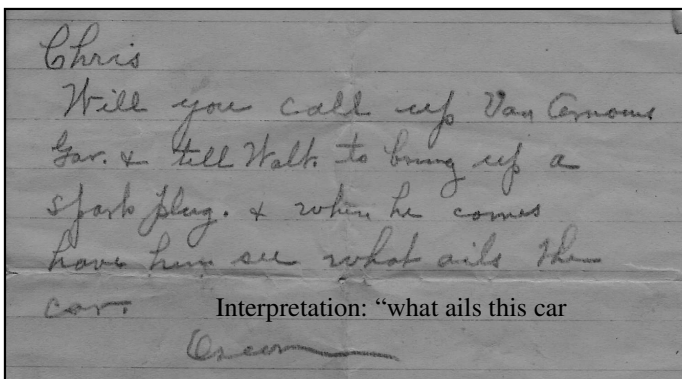


Harry W. and Tod Lawton

1919



Harry Van Arnem, Tod Lawton & John Osborne



Interpretation: "what ails this car"

There were so many good pictures I didn't want to leave any out. I've given you an overview and memories of the history of businesses and two families in our village. This note says a lot about the personal relationship people had with each other in a small quaint village. (Thanks Rusty and Linda Mosher for supplying some of the photos.)

JOHN M. GIFFORD

1903 - 1971

From
Gifford's Valley
aka Johnny Cake Hollow



John and his wife Mary lived just down past the 4 corner's in Gifford's Valley (on Collins Gifford Road. He was the son of Fred and Myra Gardner Gifford. He had brothers; Ward and George and two sisters; Sepha and Pheobe.

JOHNNY CAKE HOLLOW

A small settlement also known as Gifford's Valley. Our historical museum sat at the 4 Corner's before it was moved into the village of Northville..

Lew Decker tells in his book "Fulton County" a Pictorial History , how the name Johnny Cake Hollow came about. Lew was talking to an elderly gentleman from Johnny Cake Hollow and inquired of the origin of the name. The gentleman stated that the early people in the valley were rather poor, relied on the land for their support, and when peddlers journeyed into the valley all they had to offer visitors was Johnny Cake - thus the nickname.

Most of us now call Johnny Cake, Corn Bread and sometimes, Cornmeal muffins.