

**Alice Ridgway  
b. 1918**

**Family Life**

My grandfather's house was the only house in this area. Then he started selling some lots off of Fettersmill Road. Mrs. Betty Berg bought one of the lots and built her house there on top of the Fettersmill hill. She was an artist. Her maiden name was Bayuk of Bayuk Cigars. There were about four or five houses there along Fettersmill Road. This was during the 30's before WWII.



The house three doors down from us on Walton Road, a large gray stone house that sits back from the road, was on my grandfather's property. The property stopped there at that house. It didn't go down to Welsh Road. My uncle George lived in that house. It was built when he was married.

[Photo: Home of Ruth and Israel Hallowell built in 1904 at the top of the hill where Hallowell Drive now runs; OYRHS]

He was engaged to a girl who lived in the Redmile house on Murray Avenue, but she died in the flu epidemic of 1919. Then he married Anna Wynkoop who lived in the house on the corner of Wynkoop and Walton Roads. That house just recently burned down and now a new one is there. Her brother Fred lived right across the street where the Schneider's live. He was our school bus driver for a while.

My grandfather's property stopped at Walton Road. It went all the way back up the hill to Bryn Athyn, before the Woodland Road area. Some of my grandfather's family also lived in a house on Welsh Road where the bend is near the present post office. George McMahon, the man who owned the blacksmith shop at the intersection of Huntingdon Pike and Welsh Road, lived there before. The house is still there, a big stone house. There was a watchman at the train crossing at the Pike and Welsh Road, and a watchman at Red Lion Road. We used to stop and talk to that watchman on our way to school.

I have two brothers and two sisters. We were all born within seven and a half years. I'm the oldest, then Mary Emma, Beatrice, William Jr. and Richard. My sister Mary Emma was born at our home. The rest of us were born in Abington Hospital, but because of an influenza epidemic in 1919, when my sister was to be born, the hospital was full. Dr. Crowe told our mother to go home and explained how to make the bed for the delivery. She did that, and he came over and delivered Mary Emma.



[Photo: Bea, Mary Emma and Alice with their parents, Alice and William Ridgway]

My father thought he wasn't going to have any sons, so he started dressing us girls in boys' suits then. Back in those days, boys' suits were button-on. So when we had to use the bathroom, we had one bathroom for seven people, we had to unbutton the shirt and drop the suit off your body. We didn't wear it to school, but only in the summertime when we were working around the farm.

My mother and dad were married in the house up on Hallowell Drive. They married in a thunderstorm in January. The lights and everything else were knocked out. The cars were stuck in the mud due to the rain. It was 1916.

I'll never forget the time I walked Mother in the snow down our back lane across the railroad tracks where we had a little bridge there across the creek, out to Philmont Avenue to go to my grandfather's brother's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, in a snowstorm. I guess Uncle George came and picked her up. Dad came down from Norristown. The party was at the Old York Road Country Club. It was in January.

My grandfather Israel Hallowell was responsible for starting the Huntingdon Valley Bank & Trust on the corner of Fettersmill Road and Huntingdon Pike. His son George was the second president until First Pennsylvania took it over. Israel was a teacher at Abington Friends School before he started the bank.

My grandfather's house was on the top of Hallowell Drive. All that used to be was a driveway up to it which became Hallowell Drive. It did not continue past the house. There was a big barn on the property behind my grandfather's house. The Seltzer's used the wood from the barn in part of the house they build on that property.

My dad's mother ran a hotel on Long Beach Island in Beach Haven. He lived down there. In school there, they would seat an older student with a younger student. Two seats were together so that the older student could help the younger student. He came up to Abington Friends for high school. He boarded there and that's where he met my mother. His mother had been a companion to children. I guess you would call her a nanny today. Later she was running boarding houses. My dad's parents had problems, and his father was living somewhere else. My dad had a half sister in New Jersey.

Dad was a boarding student at Abington Friends School, and that's how he met Mother. She would walk down to the Bethayres train station and have to pay her money to the gate keeper at the toll road (Pike) at the gas station at the intersection. Mother would have to put in her penny or two pennies to go to the train station. She rode to Noble Station and walked up to Abington Friends School. Later, Uncle George took her to school in a horse and carriage. After he graduated Mother would drive herself in the horse and carriage.

The horse came from my grandfather Israel's barn at his house up here at the top of the hill on Hallowell Drive. One time my mother stopped and picked up a friend on Valley Road. They went to school together. There was a country club by Rydal Station so on this day there was a man driving a gas powered mower cutting the grass when my mother was going by. It scared the horse, and the horse and buggy went down over the bank onto the golf course and dumped the girls! I don't think they were hurt more than their pride. This was around 1912.

Dad had tuberculosis while he was working in Philadelphia and had to work outdoors, so he started with the chickens. He had had a chicken farm when he lived down in Vineland, New Jersey. Then, after he and Mother were married, they moved to the house on Red Lion Road after the farm house was repaired.

We went to Goldberg's on West Avenue behind what used to be a 5 & 10, across from Oswald's Drug Store, to buy clothes. When they put electric trains on the railroad, my grandmother took us in town. It cost us 10 cents to go in town on the electric train! We were just 12 or 13 at the time. We went to Snellenbergs, Strawbridge's, all those stores. We hardly ever went out to eat. It was just too expensive with the five of us children.

We didn't get together much with friends. We mostly had chores to do after school. When we lived on Red Lion Road, there were only two houses from Pine Road to Philmont Avenue on that stretch. That was all there was. As you went out Philmont Avenue, there was nothing but a couple of old farm houses. The Gibbs and the Gaines lived there. It was very sparse. There weren't that many children in the school. Only twenty some in the graduating class. This was when students from Feasterville and Siles (Trevose area) came here too.

We walked to school in those days. You had to live farther away, like the Elkins farm, in order to get the bus to school. There were only two buses, and each was very small.

Holidays were family affairs. Thanksgiving was always at the top of the hill at our grandparent's house with more of our family. Christmas was always just at our house with our family. My mother was the middle child of three. Her brother George lived right down the street here, and her sister Mary lived in New Jersey. My Uncle George had one child, and Aunt Mary never had any children. My aunt would come over for Thanksgiving. We had the biggest family. My father's mother lived out in West Philadelphia.

Down by the shopping center, all that area was just a field. This is where a new building will be going (700 Welsh Road). It flooded a couple of times. The old Hallowell homestead, still there, is where the Wheelworks Carwash is, as is the house at the bend of Welsh Road, still there, by the post office. I'd love to go back and see what is there. Our great-grandparents, Hallowell, lived back there. They had three boys, Israel, James, and John. Then when Israel got married, he built the house up at the top of the hill on Hallowell Drive. Then Uncle John and Aunt Mary lived in the house on the creek (back by Wheelworks). Our great-grandparents moved up to the house on the bend. Jim and Emma lived over in Germantown.

There used to be a house on top of where the quarry was. That was the Charles Saunders home. He was a member of our Quaker Meeting and we knew them well. They had two daughters, Jenny and Lillian. Lillian and her husband, Frank Tinari, lived in the house over on top of the hill that Tinari owned along side of the Pennypack. The Fishers lived in the little house that you drive into before you went up the embankment. The big house up there was lived in by Ike and Mildred Jarrett before they moved to Byberry Road. I used to be able to name who lived in each house on the Pike. I can't do that anymore.

When we lived on Red Lion Road, we had a creek that ran through our property. That's what our swimming pool on our farm was. We had a spring house plus the fact that my dad dammed up the creek and made a spillway into a diversion to the pool. This was back in 1932. Before long everybody in town was coming, and other people too. The pool didn't have sides. Dad dug it out. It had this dam in the front of it and went from very shallow to about six feet deep. You could walk right into it or you could go down and dive off the end, off the dam. It backed up to the railroad track which was behind it. It was down in our meadow. We started out inviting our friends. Then people started to say, "Go over to the Ridgways. Everyone swims over there!"



[Photo: Ridgway pool]

One summer Dad invited Phil Blaetz who printed *The Breeze* newspaper. He brought everybody up who lived in Rockledge. They had a picnic and went swimming in the pool. Our bath houses were the old chicken houses. That's where everybody changed their clothes.

We lived on the farm on Red Lion Road until 1950. Mother and Dad had this house, 706 Hallowell Drive, built then. This was our grandfather Israel Hallowell's farm. He had 37 acres. Now there were two Israelis, so you have to be careful. The other Israel lived over off of Welsh Road. Henry was that Israel's son. And Henry had a son named Henry. They called him Hank and he lives out in Hershey. We're cousins.

### Farm Life



Hallowridge Farm  
Huntingdon Valley, Mont. Co., Pa.

We were assigned jobs on the farm. We dropped tomato plants, cabbage plants, all the plants for the farm. We'd drop them down, and then they would come around with the dibble and put the plant in the ground. Then we'd water them. We also packed tomatoes in baskets.

[Photo: Ridgway farm house on Red Lion Road]

You would put the greenest tomatoes in the bottom and the nice ripe ones on top. We washed squash and put those in baskets. We bunched and washed beets and carrots and put cabbage in baskets.

My dad would take them all down to Dock Street where they were sold. He had a Model T Truck. You cranked it and pushed in on the pedals to shift gears. When he came home from Dock Street, he'd have a basket of cantaloupes he had bought down there. He'd have a box of

Damson plums, the little blue ones. Also a whole bunch of bananas, not just two or three, a whole line of them that we hung in the cellar.

We also had cows, horses, pigs, and ducks. In the summertime, many a dinner was a vegetable dinner with tomatoes, cabbage, and coleslaw. We helped with the cooking and canning. We canned a lot. All kinds of vegetables. Made jelly. We had 68 acres there. We came all the way down the hill to where the house is on the school property (behind Fairway Plaza).

That line was on our farm, across the railroad tracks and Philmont Avenue. There is a bridge across Philmont Avenue past Adcock's. There wasn't the traffic there is today. My grandfather bought the farm. The barn there had a date on it. I forget exactly what that was. It was about 1809.

Our cars were a Hupmobile, a Ford, and a Model T Ford. We would get gas at Black's Bus Garage down at the intersection. I remember Ike's Luncheonette. I never went down there because we didn't have money for things like that. We used to go down to where the bank is now (formerly Hutchie's and Tailfeathers, Philmont Avenue and Red Lion Rd) for ice cream. I recall Bubecks. Their daughter was Gertrude. Then one summer Doctor Brown put up a little stand in the woods behind the high school and sold ice cream. I was down there selling ice cream for him, cones and dishes. Ted Barrett was the soda jerk at Doc Brown's Drug Store.

Willow Grove Park is gone. My dad used to love going over there and saw John Philip Sousa. We walked to Jenkintown and back along the railroad. On Saturday afternoons we would walk to the movies at the Hiway Movie Theater and back. Pay a dime for the movie! We did this as teenagers. Walk to Noble Station and then walk up to the Hiway. Sometimes we might have an extra dime and be able to come back on the train. The train went right through our property.

There was a barber shop at the back on the side of the old Clayton's Store (corner of Fettersmill Road and Huntingdon Pike). It was owned by Elias Markley, no relation to Sylvia Markley. He had a daughter Ruth, and he lived down on the Pike somewhere. Haircuts were twenty five cents. Men and women. We went after school. There wasn't the traffic back then. You could walk across the Pike without any problem.

During WWII, my mother worked up in the auditorium on the second floor of Red Lion School giving out ration books. It was set up for the war effort. Isabel Williams taught home economics in the high school during this time. One girl, Iola Avinger, made a coat for herself. A winter coat. She had to rip out a lot, but she made it. She lived up in a farmhouse behind Pine Road School, part of the cemetery. The house was torn down eventually.

### **Student Years at Lower Moreland**

I attended Red Lion School when there were eleven grades, no twelfth grade and no kindergarten. For twelfth grade, by that time Murray Avenue School (formerly the Lower Moreland High School) was built so I was there from seventh grade on. 1928 was the last class to graduate at Red Lion. We skipped the year 1929. From then on you graduated from the high school on Murray Avenue. The class of 1930 was the first. We would walk up to Red Lion School for

lunch. In fact, I would go up early and help serve lunch. We got our lunch for free. We always had a couple of high school kids serve. There were 28 in my graduating class in 1935. The area out back of Red Lion School had steps, and that was where they would seat all the children for class pictures. That area was the playground too. Some of the pictures were taken in front of the tree that was in front of the school across from the firehouse.

When I was in school, we had departmental teachers. Miss Nielson was the fifth grade teacher and taught English and reading. Mrs. Markley, a sixth grade teacher, had math and spelling. Isabel Williams, a fourth grade teacher, taught social studies (geography and history in those days). So from fourth through sixth grade, we had departmentalized teaching.

In high school, it was mostly sports. Girls' hockey and basketball, boys' football, basketball, baseball. No other activities were in school. We went to Washington D.C. when we were seniors. I think we stayed at the Mayflower Hotel. We went down on a bus and had a guide who took us around to Arlington, Monticello, places like that. I don't remember any trips in grade school.

### **A College Education**

I wanted to go to college to become a social worker. One day my dad took my mother and me up to Norristown because we were good friends with the Montgomery County Superintendent of Schools. We went to see him, mother and I, and he talked to me and I told him what I wanted to do. He said, "You're not going to do that! You love kids too much. You're going to become a teacher." I hadn't made up my mind for it, but he did. He put my mother and me on an express train in to 69<sup>th</sup> Street, and we went in town and had an interview with Miss Illman who ran the Illman School for Primary Teachers. The second year that I went there, it became part of the University of Pennsylvania. The name was changed to the Illman Carter Unit of the University of Pennsylvania. So I took three years there and worked for my fourth year of college by working in the summers, or at night or on Saturdays. I got my degree from the university.

For the first year of college until April, I lived with my grandmother (father's mother) who had a home on 45<sup>th</sup> Street in West Philadelphia. One time when I came home right after I was finished class on Friday, she hadn't told me she wasn't feeling very good. That weekend Dad got a call from a friend of my grandmother's who told him that his mother was not very well. She went in the hospital and had surgery but she didn't come out of it. So then I had to commute from here.

When Mary Emma graduated, she went to Temple. It got to the point that she would make the 7:00 train and I would make the 8:00 train from Bethayres. So my mother was running taxi back and forth. We would come out on different trains too. I became a teacher, Mary Emma became a nurse, Beatrice became a secretary, and Bill started at the University of Pennsylvania, but then WWII came along. Bill came home one day and told mother he was going in the Marines. They wouldn't accept Richard because he had a hernia. He never got to college. When Bill came back, the two of them decided to do dairy farming. They became dairy farmers and started on the Red Lion Road farm when we still lived there.

## My Career with Lower Moreland School District

I started teaching in 1939, second grade at Red Lion. I applied for the job with Mr. Hoke. My dad, who was on the school board for 25 years, wouldn't vote for me at all! Pete Fesmire, Lloyd Reeves, Marian Hallowell and one other person were on the school board. I went back to college at Temple and got my elementary principal degree. Did that during summers and at night and didn't take off any time.

But when I taught, we used to take the school children on trips to Philadelphia and back to eat at the Horn & Hardarts Automat. It's a shame they don't have the Automat anymore. The kids had a ball. We used to go down on 7<sup>th</sup> Street to a museum, and then down to the Liberty Bell and



Betsy Ross House. We sometimes took the train, but also used the bus. During the war, we took the kids to the zoo on the train because of the gas situation. We got off at North Broad and took the subway down to Spring Garden Street. When we would come back, we would go to City Hall.

[Photo: A typical automat]

That's where I had a child run away from me. The child asked me what station we were going home on and I said, "City Hall." He said, "Oh, I'll go see my aunts there." I said, "Oh no you won't. You have to go back to school with us." He ran away. I had to send the mothers home with the children. I went all through City Hall looking for him with the police. He was a child who was a ward of the state, and he knew he had two aunts that worked in City Hall. He wanted to see them. He found them. When I got to their door, he ran right out the door. The aunts took over, and I went on home. It shook me up!

Miss Nielson was the teaching principal of Red Lion when I was teaching there. I taught second grade for ten years. My brothers kidded me that I was stuck in second grade! Then I taught third grade and eventually moved up to the new Pine Road School in the 50's. We had the children bring in shopping bags from the grocery store and put all their things out of their desk in the bag with their name written on it. They took the bags to Pine Road and put all their things in their new desks. I taught third grade there. Then I was a helping teacher for one year, and at the end of that year, Dr. Chiverton came and asked me if I would like to be principal.



[Photo: Faculty picture of Alice]

We watched Schmidt's barn burn down two years straight from Margaret William's classroom at Red Lion School. It happened before the school day started. They had started up a tractor, and the tractor set fire to the barn. They rebuilt it, and it burned down the next year. Margaret and I stood at her window. I had a classroom across the hall and we watched it. You could feel the heat from the fire. All the windows on the school got red hot. The fire company was able to put out the fire. There was maybe 50 feet between the fence of the farm and the school area.

Of course by that time there were cafeterias and school buses in both schools. Virginia Truby was head of the cafeteria. Once in a snowstorm we had some of the children here until 9:00 at night. Henry Kuhn had to get the keys from Mrs. Williams in order to open up the kitchen. We fed the children until they could get home! We entertained them with walks through the building, played games with them, sang with them – did different things. Some mothers called up and said, "How are you going to get my child home?!" One bus driver came and took the kids, but ten minutes later he pulled up to the front door of the school. He told us, "I got to the top of Pine Road hill and there were cars all over the hill!" He brought the children back in and we had them there for another hour or two.

### **People and Places around the Valley**

Josephine Pastore used to do my hair on the porch on 2589 Murray Avenue when Cataldos lived there. You had to supply your comb, your bobby pins and your wave set, and she would set your hair for you. This was before she even went to beautician school. Josephine was only in ninth grade when she did this. I sat there on my way home from school, and she would do my hair. I don't remember if she did anybody else's hair. She even did this in school after last period gym class. After that she set up shop in the second floor bathroom in her home (530 Red Lion Road).

I remember Cheap John. He walked all the way down our driveway when we lived on Red Lion Road. He would have a big basket on either side. He would have thread, needles, so much stuff to sell. He walked! I don't know where he ever came from.

Ethel Ramson was Cleve Ramson's niece who lived across the street from the original high school. There were three sisters: The oldest was Dottie (Yates), then Ethel and then Thelma. Thelma lived down in the Waterworks house on Welsh Road. None of them are left. They are all gone. Fanny Cataldo was a cousin of John Cataldo at 2570 Murray Avenue. John was the brother of the Joseph who lived at 2589 Murray Avenue. He was Sparky Cataldo's father.

Greenridge was formerly Clayton Hoover's farm. The quarry on Terwood Road was a workable quarry. The Pennypack Creek would freeze in the winter and Mary Emma would go skating. Mr. Slaybaugh, a teacher from the high school, also skated there. Years and years ago, near where the carwash is on Welsh Road, there used to be fireworks and a carnival.

Allen Peiffer had his own plane up on County Line Road by Pine Road and Buck Road. He even had a hangar for it. He worked for the state in the Liquor Control Board. He flew his plane when he wasn't working.

My good friends were Peg Johnson, Fanny Cataldo, Ethel Ramson, Johnny Oldroyd, Carl Fischer, John Friedrich, and Iola Avinger. They were all in my class.

### **A Lifetime of Volunteering**

Oh yes, I remember Enna Messina's store. When we were in school, if we wanted some snacks, we used to go there. She sold snacks, ice cream, and candy, things like that. When the school had bought that property, there was the big flood up on the Delaware River, near New Hope, and the school used her place to gather clothes and things to take up to the people. The people were flooded out. You know how high the river bank is up there! I remember the Leedom's had a house up there and they had put their canoe in the house. The canoe was floating in the living room. I went up to help take care of the volunteers who were up there. The first thing they gave me to do was to make coffee. I don't even drink coffee. I made forty cups in a coffee maker. I still don't drink coffee. It must have been back in the 30's.

They just needed help, so I started with volunteering. My time at Jeanes Hospital didn't start until after I retired. I've been down there 24 to 25 years. I had gone down there, and I knew that hospitals needed people to help out. My first job was to help patients with filling out their menus for the next day. Then in the afternoon we would take the candy and snack cart around. I did this one day a week. Now I do it at least six days a month. And every Friday I'm at the Greeters' Desk where people sign up for medical tests. I give them directions on where to go. Two Mondays a month I'm in the gift shop. The September after I retired was when I signed up for this.

### **Current Activities**

I'm a bridge player. I am a member of the Huntingdon Valley Women's Club. They have different groups. Some meet in the Library; some in private homes. The fourth Monday of every month I play, five or six times a year. On the second Wednesday of each month, Mary Emma and I are together. This all started with twelve people. Now we are down to four of us getting together.

### **Alice's sister, Mary Emma, recalls**

At Red Lion School, when it was snowing, we all took our sleds to school and at lunchtime, we went sledding on Schmidt's Farm hill. There were assemblies up in the auditorium every morning. And in high school, we would go to your classroom in the morning, and when the bell rang, everybody would go down to the gym. We had certain spots to sit, the same every day. The twelfth grade always sat right up front in the middle. There would be a Bible reading and the singing of a song, and Mr. Hoke, the principal, would make announcements at that time. We would go down steps in the back part of the school, there were benches like a theater, but it had a concrete floor. Bertha Crowe was a teacher although she had been a student in Lower Moreland a little ahead of us. I remember Mr. Anglemoyer, Mr. Slaybaugh, Mr. Steigerwalt, and Miss Johnson. Mr. Hoke was a supervising principal, like a superintendent, but also a principal.