

Chapter One

Visits to the East

Louise and Herb had wanted to make the journey back to their home towns for many years, but it was quite a while before they could muster the funds and free themselves of obligations to travel across country and be away for an extended amount of time.

Finally, in 1973, after each of us (Patty, Susie and Dick) had married and started our own families, Herb and Louise were able to travel east to visit the places and people of their childhood.

Of significance was Louise's visit with her Aunt Mamie, with whom Louise was quite close when she was little. Mamie Stenquist was the sister of Louise's father, Axel Stenquist. Aunt Mamie was very much involved in the lives of both Bob and Louise when they were little. Louise and Mamie had maintained correspondence over several years. Mamie married Axel Blomquist, and they had two boys, Don and Chester. During their trip Louise and Herb visited with Aunt Mamie and Axel Blomquist.



At right (left to right): Axel, Herb, Louise, Mamie.

Herb made his own trip back east in 1976 to visit his younger brother Howard. Patty created the image below from two separate photos. Herb is on the left at home with Honeybun, and Howard is on the right in his home in New York.



With each passing year, as stories got told and retold, who we were as a family and where we came from gradually began to form in our minds, first as children then as young adults. But we wanted to get a more complete sense of how it must have felt and what it looked where they grew up a hundred years ago. We wanted to know them better as individuals, not just as our parents.

In 1986 Susie and Gene traveled back east to visit our parents' homes. They had been on the East Coast for three weeks before going to a "cousin's reunion" party. Bob and Opal Stenquist flew out to attend the party and to show Susie and Gene around Worcester. A few days before they were to attend the party an incredible event occurred.

In Susie's own words:

We were on our way to Worcester to meet Bob and Opal. We got lost, and found ourselves wandering through the town of Gardner. I remembered this is where Aunt Mamie lived, so we stopped a postman and asked how far

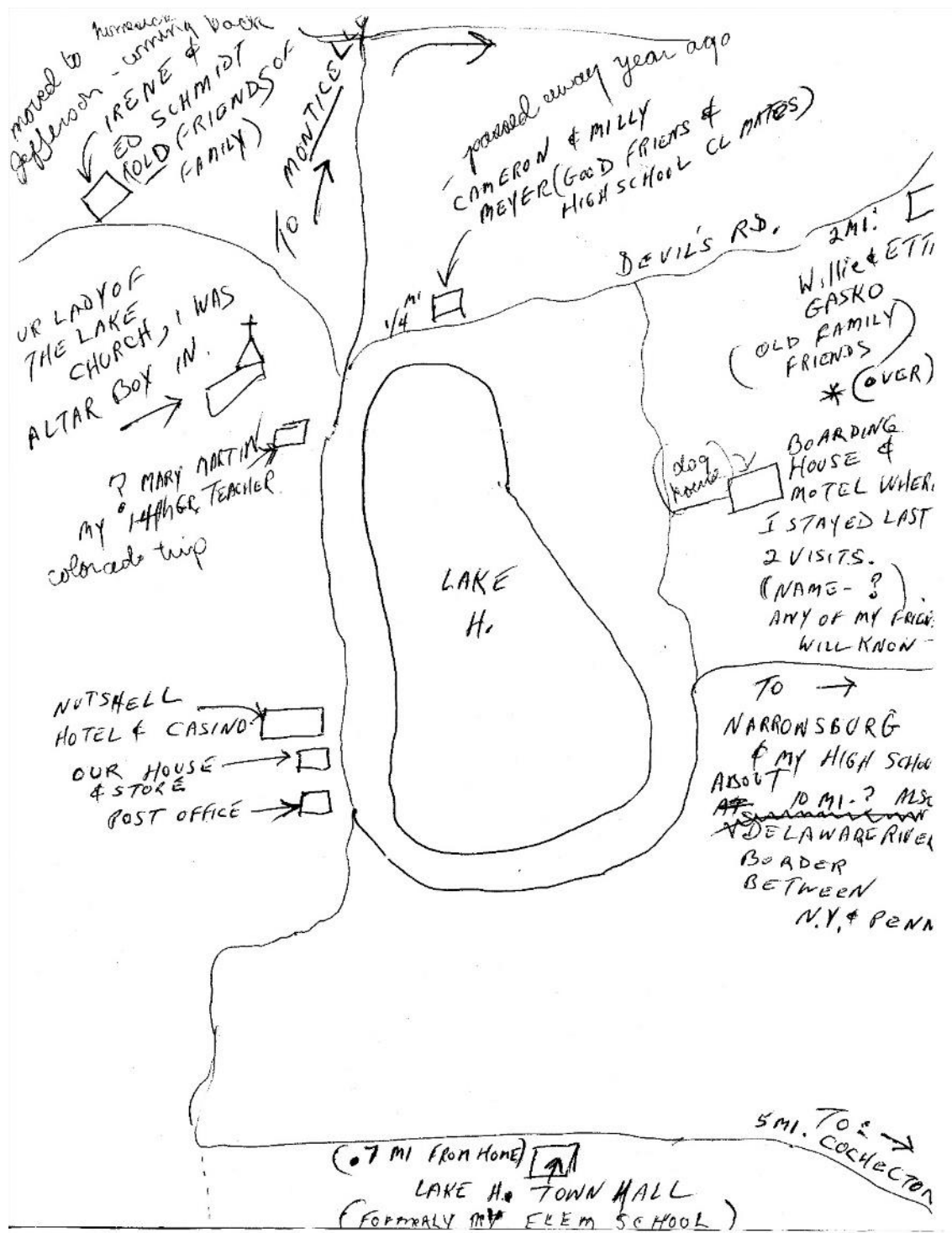
away we were from her address. Wow, it was almost around the corner. So, we just had to stop in (something I never do) to say hi. She was so gracious and welcoming. We came in and had a cup of tea, and she showed us some photo albums. I'm so sorry I never took any pictures that day, but was so "in the moment" it never occurred to me. After hugs and happy visiting, we said we would see her in a few days. But at the cousin party, there was sad news, she had died the day before!!!! So if, if, if we hadn't got lost, if we hadn't stopped in [we wouldn't have met her]. The universe works in wondrous and mysterious ways!!!! Best memory of the entire trip.

In 1996, Diana and Dick Lentz met up with Patty and Amos Dana to visit Louise's home in Worcester and Herb's home in Lake Huntington. It was an opportunity I will never forget.

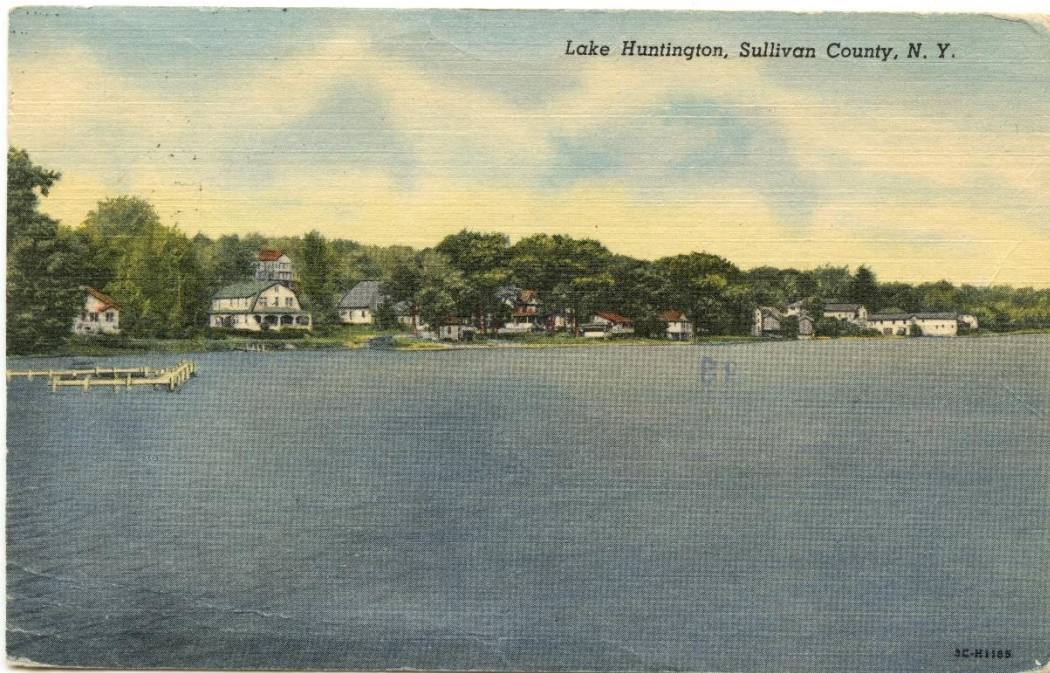
The pictures on the following pages show some of the main places and people that were central features of the stories that were told over the years. These journeys served, in a broader sense, as jumping off points for our continued quest to know where our parents came from. What we began to discover was a much richer story about how we came to be where we grew up as children in Halcyon, California.

Lake Huntington, NY

The main features we explored were the lake, the Lentz home and store, the old schoolhouse (since converted to a town hall), their church, and Herb's high school. Herb drew a map for us to use to help us get around during our visit (next page).



Below: Postcard photo from 1976 clearly shows the store's front porch with its characteristic columns. Chapter Six has photos of the store from the 1920s.



Above: Photo from our visit in 1996 shows the drug store on the other side of the lake.

Below: When we visited in 1996 the exterior of the building had been remodeled. There were no front porch columns anymore.



Above: The family's living quarters were upstairs.

Below: The local staff let me stand behind the counter for this photo.

The lady at the right is Etta who as a teenager worked for the family in the store and helped Herb's stepmom. She also taught him how to play bridge and to dance.



Above: Inside the café are Amos, Patty, Diana, and local staff.

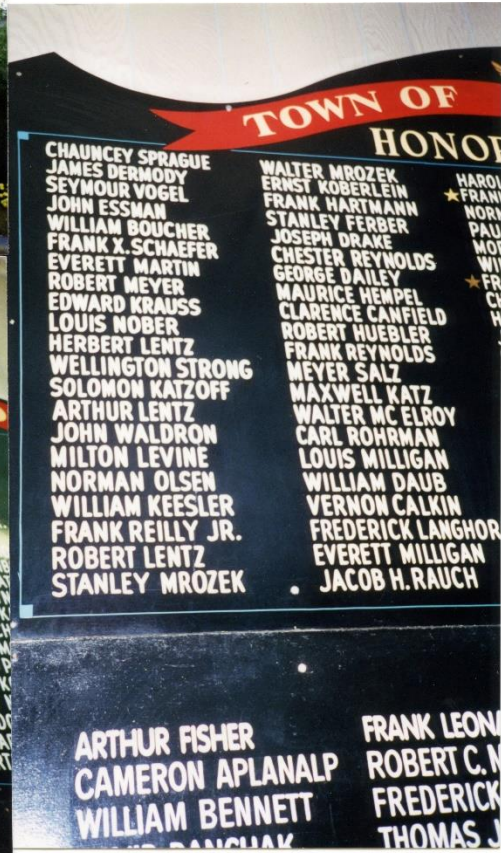


Above: Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church. Herb was an altar boy at this church.



Above: Central Rural School of Narrowsburg, NY where Herb completed grades 7-12.

This really was a 10-mile drive from his home.



The Cochection Town Hall is in the photo at the top. This building used to be Herb's elementary school. Before he returned to his home town to visit, he told stories about how he had to walk to school five miles through the snow! Then in 1976 he actually measured the distance to be 0.7 mile as shown on his hand drawn map.

Bottom photos: On the wall inside the Town Hall is this honor roll. It lists names of men from the Cochection area who served in the military. In the enlarged image at the right we can see the names of three of the Lentz boys.

Worcester, MA

The main places we visited were the Stenquist home, their school, Elm park and the Bancroft Tower. The photo below is the former home of Ebba and Axel Stenquist at 3 Mount Hope Terrace, Worcester. What a lovely home for Bob and Louise growing up as children, for Louise from three to eleven years old, and for Bob from five to thirteen.



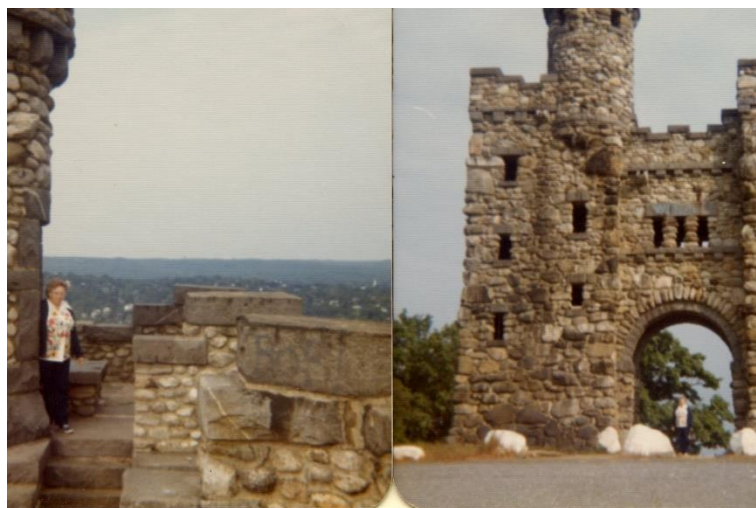
Pictured in front are Amos, Patty and Diana.

When we visited, we were fortunate that the current occupants were very happy to let us come inside and get photos of the interior, especially the bannister. This was the bannister that Bob would slide down, annoying his parents. They loved the story behind it.

In the photos below, the bannister is at left. The street they lived on, Mount Hope Terrace, is at right. Their home was the second one up on the right side.



Less than a half mile up the hill from their house was the Bancroft Tower. Louise told us stories of how she and Bob would often go up there to play. The photo below shows Louise at the tower during their visit in 1973.



More Photos of the Bancroft Tower

Below: Diana, Amos, Patty under the arch.



Above: View of Worcester from Bancroft Tower.

Their home was less than a half mile down the hill.

Below: Two photos of Elm Park taken in 1996. It is one of the oldest parks in the United States. Just a half mile downhill from their home, Bob and Louise often played there.





At left is a 1996 photo of Quinsigamond School. The school was undergoing some significant remodeling at the time. Bob and Louise attended Quinsigamond School for part or all of their childhood. There is more information about where they went to school in Chapter Five.

At right is the Second Swedish Congregational Church (photo taken in 1996). This is the church where our grandmother, Ebba (Nanny) played piano and organ.

We'll begin our family story in the next two chapters, finding our connections to our ancestors from Sweden and from Germany. Chapter Two explores the arrival of Swedes in Massachusetts, and Chapter Three reveals what we know about our ancestors from Germany.

