

# Sound of the bells on a Vermont Century Farm

by Daisy Dopp

Daisy Dopp lived most of her life on the Glover farm that is now home to the Bread and Puppet Theater. When her husband, Jim, died in 1970, Daisy Dopp moved to a home in the village and spent some of her time writing articles recalling life on the farm. Most were published first in the Newport Daily Express. Elka Schumann befriended Daisy Dopp and, in cooperation with the Old Stone House Museum, collected and edited her columns. This is the tenth of a series of these columns, with illustrations by Peter Schumann and photographs provided by the Glover Historical Society, that the Chronicle will publish from time to time.



Photo courtesy of the Glover Historical Society

When I was a child, we used to sit on the veranda in the evening and relax after the chores were done. We did not have cars then in which to ride around. We could hear a sound from neighboring farms that one would never hear these days — cowbells in the twilight as the animals grazed in comfort as darkness fell. It was restful to listen to the different tones of the bells as the family relaxed after a hard day's work.

We also loved to listen to the thrushes calling back and forth in the nearby woodlands. When I left the farm and came to town to live, I took two old cowbells which had always been with us as long as I could remember. Each has its own individual tone. For over a half century those bells kept company with one cow or another. They have traveled many miles over the Vermont hills and through the sugar place, even venturing into the

pastures of our neighbors where their familiar clang guided us to their hiding places.

I told my new town neighbors if they heard them ringing out in the midnight air, they might know that I had a problem and needed help. So far all my problems have happened in the daytime.

When we began to farm, Jim put a bell on one of our cows, and I looked for the herd near the orchard and the sugar place. As supper time drew near, I could usually hear the voice of the bell as the cows worked their way toward the barn.

Jim said we were soon going to have a cow dog. He got a young one on Sheffield Square, half collie and half Airedale. It was not long before his cow driving instinct began to show. He took the pup with him to help drive them to the barn. Our first little dog took to the duty as a duck will take to the water.

Soon he began to go for them himself and bring them too early. We discouraged him about that without frightening him.

However, about three o'clock in the afternoon

one could see little Rover sitting in the field anxiously getting nearer and nearer the sound of the cow bell. It took quite a lot of talking before Jim would call out, "Go get them, Rover" and he would be off like a flash. It was not long before he quieted down and would bring them gently to the barn.

More than once, Jim called me to look out the barn window and see our dog bringing the cows to be milked. Sometimes he came in their midst, sometimes at one side, but mostly he trailed them and any that loitered soon learned better after a few quick nips at the heel.

For 15 years he faithfully got our cows, and became known as the best cow driver around. But one morning the cows were not waiting at the barn. Jim went out on the porch, and Rover, who was like one of our

family, did not wake from his sleep when his master spoke.

Today country bells are seldom seen, or even heard. But in the past, they played an important part in farm life, in many ways. Of course, the big bells in the barn cupolas were the loudest and carried more messages to the farmer than the others. They rang to tell the men when it was time to come to the house for meals, but if they rang wildly and long, they knew it was something more urgent. It might be a fire or any emergency, and would attract the attention of the neighborhood also if it kept ringing.

Through the years many trips were made by someone from the sugarhouse to help the farmer's wife get a chimney fire under control. It always seemed to happen when they were the busiest.

This did not happen at our farm, but it was told to us by one whom we had no reason to doubt. A farmer had many rats in his barn, so he began to trap them. He took out a rat that was not hurt badly by the trap and put a little bell on a strap around the neck of the rodent. Then he let the rat go. The little bell rang madly through the wintertime until it was nearly spring when there were few rats and finally, the bell no longer rang. (Continued on page nine.)

## Happy Birthday

to the following people!

Penney Dopp, Holland .....	Sept. 1
Michael Jacob Tobin, White River Jct. ....	Sept. 1
Sarha Elizabeth Tobin Smith, White River Junction .....	Sept. 1
Pam White, Brownington .....	Sept. 2
Maude Timpson, St. Johnsbury .....	Sept. 2
Evan Kissinger, East Burke .....	Sept. 2
Paula E. Perron, Barton .....	Sept. 3
Brady Perron, Barton .....	Sept. 3
George Racicot, Troy .....	Sept. 4
Penny Cargill, Brownington .....	Sept. 4
Cecile Gaboreault, Barton .....	Sept. 4
Aaron C. Miele .....	Sept. 5
David Scott, Montpelier .....	Sept. 5
Alice Major, Island Pond .....	Sept. 5
Joel Machado, North Troy .....	Sept. 5
John Nadeau, Newport .....	Sept. 5
Rhys Ian Peters .....	Sept. 5
Rachel Twofoot, Brownington .....	Sept. 5
Harmoney Burbie, St. Johnsbury .....	Sept. 5
Angela Miele .....	Sept. 6
Jesse Lucas, Irasburg .....	Sept. 6
Claudette Racicot Gonyaw, Newport .....	Sept. 6
June Sheltra, Newport Center .....	Sept. 6
Brandon Perron, Glover .....	Sept. 6
Lois H. Carbonneau .....	Sept. 7
Raymond Lafont, West Glover .....	Sept. 7
Easton Kissinger, East Burke .....	Sept. 7
Bryce Greenwood, Albany .....	Sept. 8
Ellen Braithwaite, Richmond, CA .....	Sept. 8

Please watch out for the kids going off to school, and have a **HAPPY LABOR DAY!**

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Names are submitted by your family and friends, but if you'd like your name removed or your town changed, please let us know. Once you've submitted a birthday, no need to resubmit next year.

# Lambs don't recognize their mothers after shearing

(Continued from page eight.)

Every spring toward April we looked forward to the sheep shearer. For some years an elderly man from Hardwick would come bouncing in over the extremely bad roads, driving a fast-stepping trotter in an old road cart. He used to race her at Morrisville sometimes. He used to bring us news from our Calais cousins, and we all enjoyed his annual visit (except the sheep).

It was a real art to remove the fleece from the sheep without cutting them. The air would be filled with despondent bleats of the ewes, as the shearer, with almost unbelievable skill, made them sit just so.

With easy slashes of shears (which resembled grass shears), he would remove their winter coat and then trim around the face and feet of each individual.

It takes a very short time to do the job with clippers which replaced the shears that were used during the last years we kept a flock. I think Robbie did the work for us.

When the ewe was freed, after the fleece was off, her lamb would bleat sadly. It would not recognize mother without a coat. It sometimes took quite a bit of time and motherly love to make him believe it was really mother.

We always had a folding frame into which a fleece would fit. (I have often wished I had brought it to town with me.) It folded up into a surprisingly small and neat package when done right. The flock would have to be put into a box stall for warmth for

a while. It would not be long before the wool would thicken and soon they could be turned out on the mountain pasture.

When they left the farm for summer pasture each sheep and lamb would be wearing a large J.S. on each side which was made by a stamp dipped in tar.



Through four generations the stamp was used on eight or nine of the old sheep wearing a bell on a strap around the neck. So, if a bear or dog got after the flock, the neighbors would hear the ringing and let us know if there was trouble.

Sheep are a rare thing in Vermont now. They seem to have vanished along with many other things in Vermont farming.

Dad kept a flock of turkeys for many years and some of the hen turkeys wore little bells around their necks so the farmer's wife could locate them if they did not return with their little ones in the evening. She would go and drive them home with their brood.

Turkeys have queer wild ways and love to lead their young through the fields in pursuit of bugs and grasshoppers. When the poults got big enough

to fly into trees, the whole flock would rather roost in a tree than go into the barn. The bells helped keep the foxes and other varmints away as well as to reveal their hiding place.

I have heard my father use bad language when trying to mow the fields in haying. The turkeys riddled the hay and clover with many well-trodden paths. These tangled roads clogged and dulled the scythes on the mowing machine, until at long last I recall that Dad gave all his turkeys to Brother who also had quite a few of the birds. He hoped to rid our fields of the turkey highways. However, it did not work out as he expected, for those old birds, like a lot of people, enjoyed home best. They continued to use the old roads and worse yet, they also brought Brother's flock along for company.

When the men lumbered on the Sheffield Heights and drew their loads of logs at night so as to get an early start in the morning for Barton, it was the music of those team bells ringing out on the cold winter air that gave us warning to hustle up the evening meal.

In the summer when a cow was due to freshen, one of those team bells was usually put on her neck to help locate her and her little one. She was pretty tricky and would hide in the bushes, keeping quiet so we could not hear the bell. But if it were fly time she usually gave herself away.

The song of the bells once played an important part in country life in Vermont.

September 23, 1972

Workers at our town supermarket... keep it running smoothly.

## Newspaper Fun!

www.readingclubfun.com Annmills LLC © 2022 V35 Kids: color stuff in!

### Working at the Grocery Store

We all visit the grocery store to buy food and supplies for our homes. I like to take my own bags when I shop. There are lots of people working at the grocery store to make it run smoothly - from the baggers at the front to the workers behind the scenes in the warehouses.

**Celebrating Workers in Our Communities**

Fill in the puzzle with the person who does each job.

**In the Store:**

1. packs groceries and puts them into the carts
2. \_\_\_\_\_ clerk checks vegetables for freshness
3. \_\_\_\_\_ clerk changes tickets on an item to show how much it costs
4. scans items on the belt, collects payment and makes change
5. keeps the whole store running smoothly
6. watches customers and works to keep theft low
7. \_\_\_\_\_ clerk works hard slicing cold meats and cheeses, and scooping salads
8. gathers the shopping carriages, lines them up neatly
9. keeps the store sparkling clean and in good order
10. \_\_\_\_\_ service person works behind a desk to help with any customer needs or questions
11. cuts the meat into special cuts, answers any questions
12. shelf \_\_\_\_\_ refills the shelves and keeps them orderly

**Behind the Scenes:**

13. \_\_\_\_\_ driver moves piles of large, heavy bundles
14. brings trucks full of items to the store's loading dock
15. \_\_\_\_\_ programmers keep track of the stock, prices and amounts people buy

**Don't Break the Budget!**  
A good way to keep on track (to only buy items that you need and not overspend your budget) is to write a shopping \_\_\_\_\_!  
(Hint: look at the letters in the eggs.)

Labels in puzzle: cart-pusher, price, forklift, cashier, bagger, computer, truck driver, customer, butcher, stocker, produce, custodian, manager, deli, detective.

### Where Can We Find It?

Welcome to my area of the store called the "Floral Department." It's my job to keep flowers fresh and to help you choose flowers for a celebration or to decorate your home.

1. Match the departments on the left to the items that a shopper would find there.
2. Next, find and circle all of these words:

1. frozen  
2. produce  
3. laundry, paper, cleaning  
4. dairy  
5. meat and poultry  
6. bakery  
7. gourmet  
8. pet needs  
9. seafood  
10. beverage  
11. breakfast  
12. canned goods

A. paper towels, dish soap  
B. milk, butter, eggs  
C. ham, chicken  
D. ice cream, pizzas  
E. corn, apples, tomatoes  
F. bottled water, soda, juice  
G. fish, shrimp, clams  
H. fancy cookies, jams  
I. dog food, cat snacks  
J. bread, cake, pie  
K. fruit, vegetables, tuna fish  
L. cereal, pancake mix

Word bank: C P R Y O N G O U R M E T Z Q T U N A F I S H U Z F A O E A P H O T X E M T B H Y T C N B D P M V M F A N R T W C G K R V E F F R O N A S B S A R U H C N S H G N N U M L N A A V E U Z W K M O Q M I F T E C N S A L I E H E V W T K T P A P E R T C F C R B R Y A E P S E L E W Q G A L A U N D R Y T A P E O U E C C W P B R E A D O B N P S O D A Y Z L N I C Z T A O K S L A P G Q P S U D E Z G P O A D E N Z R E T L O S K E I R F L E I F P N N U W X F V D E Z E N E F K R F U A S T O T O M A T O E S H R I M P W D A A N R F I E R F D P Y D O Y M K I U C C A G P P T A G S M H J Y E B U Q F A T U F N Z F E L W X H A D I V T O D A I R Y S T I G I N W C K A M J G T M D O I V E W E O M O N L E V E T H R C T E A G L W O R A S L L C B Y R D C L E A N I N G A H A A H Z W Q A Z Y H O K O L K V I S Y W X M W P Y K M I K B R E A K F A S T R Q U T O V E B E V E R A G E M K M J E F U P C T R I S E A F O O D W N Z P F B A K G R Y U A M I P W R Y D S E G G S V E G E T A B L E S S H W F S M I S C L A M S P A P E R T O W E L S Q B B M I L K A X S X H Q P F E A N T D O G F O O D L F Y I V M S G M V D G U G O U T M E T N Y T K F F U J U I C E D B J F M L

### The Best Price

Yoshi needs a new collar and treats to clean his teeth. Go to both stores. Which has the lowest total price?

**Fred's Pets**  
Collar: \$4.00  
Treats: \$1.50

**Pet Style**  
Collar: \$3.50  
Treats: \$2.50

## CROSSWORD

**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Taxi
4. Cattle disease (abbr.)
7. Before the present
8. They burn in a grill
10. Enough (archaic)
12. "A Doll's House" playwright
13. Long loop of cloth worn around the waist
14. Napoleonic Wars battle
16. Chinese surname
17. Fragrant essential oil
19. Follows sigma
20. Model
21. A place with many dining options
25. BBQ dish
26. Corn comes on it
27. A sheep in its second year
29. Triad
30. They \_\_\_\_\_
31. Actor DiCaprio
32. TV's "Edith Bunker"
39. Sustenance
41. Man who behaves dishonorably
42. Cause a loud, harsh sound
43. A way to take in liquids
44. Gene type
45. The Miami mascot is one
46. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
48. Casino machine
49. Contains cerium
50. Something with a letter-like shape
51. Handwoven Scandinavian rug
52. Legendary actress Ruby

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Conqueror
2. Kin relation
3. Increases the value of
4. Pack
5. Popular nut
6. Dogs' enemies
8. Former OSS
9. Unpleasant person
11. Come again?
14. Beverage container
15. Rock formation
18. Dorm official
19. The bill in a restaurant
20. Type of jug
22. Importance requiring swift action
23. Outfit
24. Small Eurasian deer
27. Weight used in China
28. A major division of geological time
29. Popular beverage
31. Confined condition (abbr.)
32. Practical joking
33. Pouchlike structure
34. Pound
35. Lilly and Manning are two
36. Stopped discussing
37. Baltimore ballplayer
38. Candymaker
39. One thousandth of a second (abbr.)
40. Northern sea duck
44. Partner to cheese
47. Cannot be found

See solution on page 28