



Amelia Weritz-Chubon and Pete (Peter) Chubon

Their Early Life

Pete (Peter) (1912 - 1993) was born at home in James City, Pennsylvania in 1912. He was the third of nine children born to Slovak immigrant parents, Peter and Rose. He first attended school in James City. He had a difficult beginning because he spoke and understood only Slovak, which was spoken at home. He was repeatedly scolded by the teacher because he did not respond. Eventually one of his classmates informed her of the language problem, and she began teaching him appropriately. In 1919 the family moved to a farm in nearby Lamont and Pete attended the two-room school there.

Pete dropped out of school at age 14 when he got working papers to help support the family. His first paid employment was at the American Plate Glass factory in James City. As the glass factory began failing because of the depression, he struck out on his own, working in construction, doing road work, and other short-term jobs. When his mother died in 1930, for a period, he assumed many of his mother's responsibilities, including cooking for the family. In this depression era, he worked at whatever employment he could find in the area. Eventually, he began working for Raymond Gentile, an oil jobber in Bradford, Pennsylvania.

Amelia (1915 - 1998) was born at the Weritz (Virecz) farm home at Lamont, Pennsylvania in 1915. She was the fourth of eleven children born to immigrant parents, Susie and Anton Weritz. She attended the Lamont School through the 8th grade.

In her early teen years, she did much of the cooking for the family and as many as 17 borders that the family housed in a shed-like structure near the house. She also worked weekends and summers for the James Family, the founders of James City, as a domestic. One of her favorite stories was about preparing roast leg of lamb every Sunday for their dinner. She told this with a chuckle, because lamb was never cooked/eaten at home, and she just had to assume it was edible because she had no idea what it was supposed to taste like. At age 17, she began working in a shirt factory in nearby Kane, Pennsylvania.

Life Together

Pete and Amelia married in 1935, and established residence in Bradford, Pennsylvania, where Pete was working. They rented an upstairs apartment in a house owned and occupied by a co-worker, Louis Palandrani, and his family. There, they became Italianized. The two families were close, and regularly recreated and ate together. Amelia learned to cook Italian dishes and the families worked together making wine each fall. Even after they left Bradford, Pete continued to buy groceries at Bradford Italian stores, including olives, large boxes of imported spaghetti, and wedges of well-aged Parmesan cheese. During hunting season in the fall, Pete and some of his co-workers were avid hunters. They would sometimes pool their quarry for a feast at an Italian club. The game would be cooked in a marinara sauce and served over polenta. The polenta would be poured onto a large cutting board and spread out to form a sheet over it. A pot of sauce and the cooked game would be poured in the center and the sauce spread out to the edges. Participants would sit around the table with a knife, fork and glass of wine, and eat their way toward the center, taking pieces of the meat from time to time. Cooking game in spaghetti sauce continues to be a family favorite.

When work on oil leases began to dwindle, Pete went to work at the Bovaird and Seyfang Foundry in Bradford. Although the foundry was established to provide motors, pumps, and other machinery for the oil industry, when World War II began, its production shifted to military equipment. It produced such things as engines for LST boats and high pressure pumps for submarines. Pete started as an apprentice molder and quickly worked his way up to journeyman status. To be promoted, he had to demonstrate mastery of the complete casting process, which included creating a pattern, making a sand mold from the pattern, filing the mold with molten iron, and ending up with an unflawed casting.

For his project, Pete made a casting of a bird dog, reflecting his love of hunting. The pattern was hand carved from wood, and took two attempts. When working on the first carving, he made a leg too thin and it broke. The second try was successful and the project was completed, resulting in his promotion. The casting is a superb piece of workmanship for a sand casting. It is 15.25 inches from the nose to the tip of the tail and 8.5 inches high at the head. The solid iron casting weighs 8.5 pounds. The smooth surface is remarkable in that it received no buffing or other finishing, indicating that the sand mold had been coated. It contains fine details that reflect both precision and artistry. The sand mold had to be smashed away to retrieve the casting and the pattern was destroyed so that an exact replica could not be made.



Pete protected the casting all his life. Only one time did he entrust it to anyone. It took years of convincing, but during the early 1950s, he arranged for Eloy (Blink) Bliski, a family friend from Johnsonburg, Pennsylvania to take it to an art teacher in a Johnsonburg school to be painted. She painted it with the same diligence and patience that

went into its making, using a magazine cover photo of a dog that Pete selected for a model. In addition to being one of a kind, the project was truly remarkable in that Pete had never carved wood before (or after). It is the ultimate family heirloom.

During his employment at the foundry, the family grew to three and the apartment became too small. They moved to a small one story house in Bradford. Also, Pete sold his Model A Ford and bought a 1937 Chevy pickup truck. The truck was well known in Bradford because it had been the popcorn truck used by a vendor who sold the popcorn at parades and other public gatherings. The popcorn maker had been removed, but the covering for it was still on the truck bed. They resided at this residence until 1942. That was the year after the the U.S. entered World War II, and Pete's father died at the Lamont farm in 1941. Because his brothers had all enlisted in the military service, Pete and Amelia became the default caretakers of the farm, requiring a move from Bradford. Pete continued to drive to and from Bradford. Fortunately, Frank Bergman, a Lamont neighbor was a co-worker at B and S and they traveled together. Because of the critical work Pete was doing, he was repeatedly deferred from the draft.

Commuting to Bradford, maintaining the farm, and coping with the house without running water, no bathroom, and heat provided by coal-burning pot bellied stoves and their four small children made life difficult. Additional hardships resulted from the wartime rationing of basic foods, such as meat and sugar, and gasoline. However, with a garden, venison available in the apple orchard in the fall and early winter, and Pete raising a few pigs, cows, and chickens the family fared better than many. Amelia kept the children in clothes she made from print feed sacks that dairy, pig, and chicken feed came in. In the late summer and fall, she spent much time canning vegetables, fruits and venison. In addition, crocks of lard and sauerkraut were made. Pork chops were preserved in the crocks of lard. In the fall, cider was made from the apples. Some was stabilized at the "hard cider" stage, and the remainder was left to turn into vinegar. To help with the farming, Pete bought a used Farmall A tractor made by International Harvester. He also had the pickup truck transmission altered so that it had an extra low gear, making it more useable for farm work.

By the end of the war, Pete had become a foreman in the foundry. However, he had also started having coughing spells, and he was subsequently diagnosed as having early signs of silicosis from the sand dust in the foundry. At that time, protective gear, such as dust masks and hard hats, were not used in the workplace. He was advised to leave the dusty environment, and did so as soon as the war ended. He became a laborer at the Sergeant Glass Works near Kane, and engaged in part time farming on the limited acreage. In the course of working the farm, he was the first in McKean county to buy a grain combine. Although he grew only a few acres of grain, he did custom harvesting for farmers within a 20 mile radius. Sons Dick and Bob, who were 8-10 years old, manned the combine, bagging the grain, while Pete pulled it with the tractor.

Because of the meat rationing during the war, Pete had begun to increase the number of hogs that he raised. At the time he left the foundry, he had approximately 30 and selling them was a major part of the farm income. Within a short time, he realized that if

he eliminated the middle men and sold meat directly to the public, it would be even more profitable. He was encouraged by family and friends to open a butcher shop, as there was not a reputable one in the area. Thus, he established Chubon's Meat Market, converting the farm garage into a combination slaughterhouse and butcher shop. The highlights were a cork-insulated walk-in cooler, and a bandsaw for cutting meat, which was a new development at that time. The meat market quickly grew, necessitating the purchase of large volumes of uncut meat from meatpackers, such as Swift, Wilson, and Armour. In addition, Pete began making routine trips to the cattle auction at Brockway, Pennsylvania to purchase cattle. He also transported farm animals to and from the auction for area farmers, a practice he continued until his retirement. Meat market customers included schools, hospitals, and the area's best restaurants, such as the Kane Manor. Individual customers came from area towns including St. Marys, Ridgeway, Johnsonburg, and Warren. Profitability was maximized by unpaid laborers, sons Dick and Bob. Their responsibilities were an integral part of the operation, ranging from trimming meat from bones for hamburger, to killing and plucking chickens, to providing bicycle delivery service for residents in the Lamont area. Holidays were an especially busy time for the meat market, driven by requests for special cuts of meat. At Christmas and Easter, hundred of pounds of smoked klobasa were made. All that could be produced was sold before it was taken from the smokehouse

As a necessity for operation of the meat market, a telephone was installed. Although it was on an 8-12 party line, the hand cranked telephone provided a connection with the outside world analogous to that provided by today's Internet. Although the phone was a business necessity, it provided Amelia and her mother an avenue for almost daily chats in Slovak. Many of the Slovak immigrants never became fluent in English, and this was a major social barrier for persons such as Amelia's mother. Also, during the time in Lamont, Pete and Amelia were active members of the Lamont Community Association, at times serving as officers.

Despite its success, the meat business was relatively short lived. When Pete's brothers returned from the military service, there was a need to settle the estate because the elder Peter left no will. Regrettably, disagreements arose and purchase by Pete fell victim. At that point, Pete became estranged from his siblings, with the exception of brother Anthony (Tony), who managed to stay above the feud. Eventually, following court action, the farm was sold to the Trulik family and Pete was given 6 months to vacate the farm. Consequently, the business was dissolved and Pete as forced to look for an alternative way to earn a living.

After closing the meat market, in the summer of 1948, Pete purchased the 100 acre farm owned by the Undrovic family a few miles from Lamont on the Highland Road, and the family moved. The indoor plumbing and free natural gas in the farmhouse were highly appreciated, but most of the farm had been neglected. At the onset, Pete operated the farm with no particular focus as had been done by the elderly Undrovics. Eggs from 200-300 chickens were sold, and the milk from a few small cows was separated into cream and shipped by train to a cheese factory near Erie, Pennsylvania. As such, the farm was not economically viable, and Pete worked toward the con-

version to a dairy farm. Again, with unpaid family labor, the conversion was relatively quickly accomplished when Pete became associated with the Halling's Hillside Dairy, a high quality dairy business in the area. With the size of the operation and the workload growing, daughters Joyce and Sandy were pressed into service along side Dick and Bob during the busier times, doing what ever was necessary. They drove the tractors, loaded bales of hay, and picked corn in the fall, in addition to doing their assigned daily chores.

During the early years, most of the profits were plowed into the development of the farm, with investment in the first concrete slab silo in the county, one of the first mechanized gutter cleaners, and the first hay dryer in the area. Most of the facilities were remodeled or rebuilt by Pete, sometimes helped by several brothers in-law. Because of his diverse early work experiences, Pete had mastered many construction and mechanical skills. It was only through self-reliance and family frugality that the improvements were possible. Eventually, The Halling family sold their business to the Modern Dairy at St. Marys, and Pete continued to sell the milk to them.

Remodeling the barn was quite a feat. The barn likely dates to the late 1890s or early 1900s, and was built with very basic tools and construction techniques, and using the resources at hand. The wood used in construction obviously came from huge virgin timber, with hand hewn joists as large as 12-14 inches square and 40 feet in length. Boards 18 inches wide were used in some places. The beams used to create the roof trusses were fastened together with pegs. From a remodeling standpoint, removing the stones used for pillars supporting the upper floor were a challenge. Some of the cut sandstone rocks were 4 feet square and a foot or more in height. It took a lot of sweat getting the stones, stacked 8 feet high, dissembled and removed. Some had to be split into smaller pieces because the Farmall A tractor was not big enough to skid them out whole. It is remarkable that these pillars were built by people with no power tools and only horses to bring the building materials to the site. One can imagine teams of people working much as the ancient Egyptians constructing the pyramids.

By the mid 1950s, the milking herd had grown to approximately 30 high producing cows, with the milking still being done by hand. In 1954, son Bob sustained a severe spinal cord injury in a gym class accident, leaving him paralyzed. With the demands on Amelia's time caring for Bob, and Dick enlisting in the army, Pete was forced to implement the final modernization and install milking machines. Further progress was slowed because of the medical expenses stemming from Bob's care. Much support was received from Amelia's sister Betty and her husband, Everett Johnson, who lived on the adjacent Bailey farm from 1953 until 1955. Everett was able to assist Pete with milking and other chores, and Betty helped keep the children in clothes with her sewing machine.

By the early 1960's Bob was approaching the end-stage of his rehabilitation, and the financial footing stabilized and then began to grow. The farm was well-mechanized and, with the children grown and gone from home, the farm was operated with a limited amount of part time help during busy seasons. At its peak, Pete had leased several of

the nearby small farms and was farming more than 200 tillable acres and 25 acres of pasture land. The farm also had an estimated 20 acres of trees that were selectively harvested.

In 1983, Amelia was diagnosed as having cancer of the uterus. Following surgery, she underwent a rigorous regimen of chemo and radiation therapy at the Roswell Cancer Center in Buffalo, New York. Although Amelia and the physicians triumphed over the disease, it took its toll. Amelia lost much of the sensation in her fingers and toes, but the greatest cost was the loss of her sense of smell and taste. The loss of dexterity, stamina, and taste took the joy from cooking. She acknowledged tearing up at times when eating a dish of her homemade chicken soup because to her, it tasted like hot water.

In 1977 Pete retired and sold the dairy herd. He continued to raise a few cattle, hay, and grain on the farm, with the help of grandson Jeffrey. In the mid 1980s, Pete had a small stroke, and already riddled with osteoarthritis, he lived out his remaining years with decreasing mobility. After being hospitalized and diagnosed with cancer of the liver, he died in 1993 in the Lutheran Nursing Home at Kane. Jeffrey continues to maintain a large part of the farm, although a portion has been sold. Jeffrey is also the current caretaker of Pete's cast iron dog.

When the family moved to the farm, Amelia was most appreciative of the improved living accommodations. She continued her role making many of the children's clothes until the finances improved. Most of her canning was replaced by the less demanding freezing process. She routinely washed the milking equipment and assisted with other farm chores in addition to her household role. As was the case throughout her life, Amelia continued to be the family caretaker. In addition to caring for Bob for several years following his injury, she provided meals for her brother Paul following the illness and death of their mother, with whom he lived. The food included a big kettle of her homemade chicken soup every week. She shared the care of grandson Jeffrey with his mother, Joyce, after she returned home in 1965. Finally, she maintained Pete who was quite dependent during his last few years. After his death, she continued to live at the farm, sharing the house with daughter Joyce and grandson Jeffrey. During her last years, her ability to get around and care for herself declined, and she made the decision to go to a nursing home. Subsequently, she was admitted to the Elk Haven Nursing Home in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. She always made the best of the situation and had a smile for the caretakers. Eventually, she was diagnosed as having multiple myeloma, an aggressive cancer. Following transfer, her final days were spent at the Lutheran Home in Kane, which was closer to family members.

Photo Gallery



Amelia and Pete (1985) taken at a celebration
of their 50th wedding anniversary



Amelia and Pete (mid-1940s)



Amelia and Pete (mid-1930s)



Adeline Bennet, Amelia, and Pete
over the July 4, 1991 holiday.

Photo provided by Jim Chubon



Adeline Bennet, Jacob Larkee, and Amelia
in Adeline's kitchen during the 1994
Christmas holiday.

Photo provided by Jim Chubon



Amelia and first grandchild, Jacob Larkee (1991)



Amelia shows her adventurous side by riding Scout, our pony. The building on the left is Chubon's Meat Market.



Dick, Bob, and Pete in the early 1950s. A good deer season meant new school clothes when the deer were sold.



The children of Pete and Amelia(left to right)
Front: Sandy, Joyce. Back: Bob, Dick (August 1954)



Pete on his new John Deere (Photo by Scott Chubon, circa 1970)

Making Klobasa on the Farm



Jeff gets instructed in the art of seasoning klobasa by Grandpa.
(Photo provided by Scott Chubon)



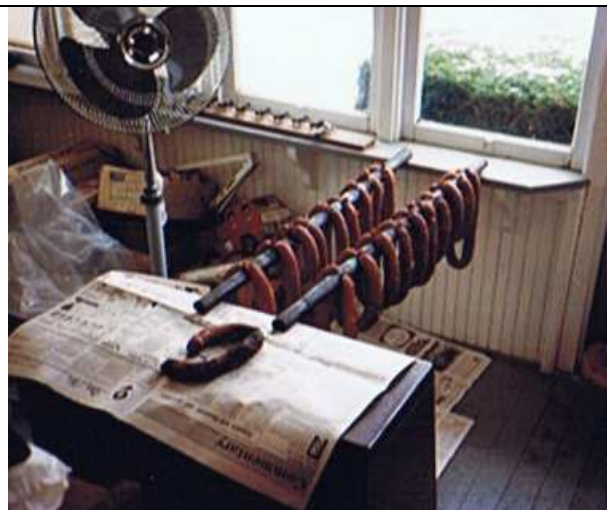
Smoking the farm way. Splitting wood was the hardest part of the job, especially if it was beech. The aging smokehouse started to lean and needed props. (Photo provided by Donna Bennet Chubon)



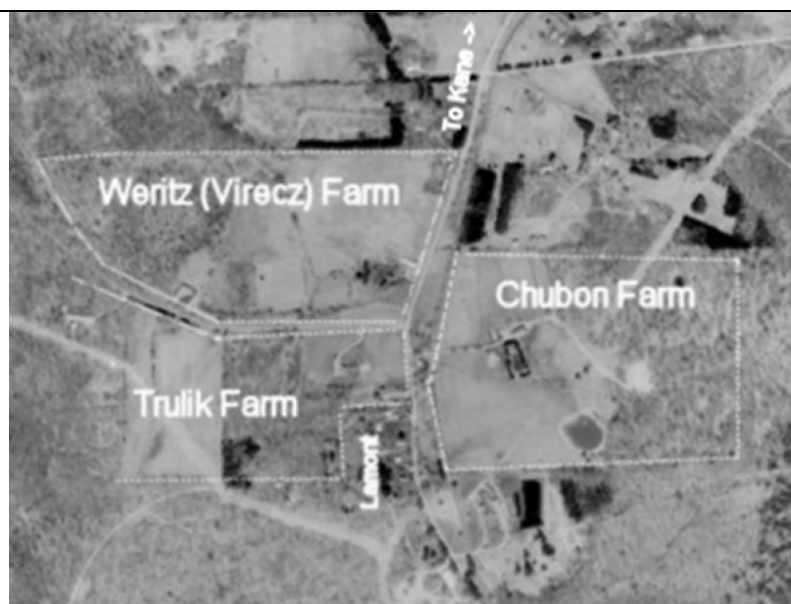
Now we're smokin! Scott has split an ample supply of wood for what may have been the last time the old smokehouse was used. (Photo provided by Scott Chubon)



Looking good!
(Photo provided by
Donna Bennet Chubon)



Cooling on the front porch of the farmhouse.
(Photo provided by
Donna Bennet Chubon)



An aerial view of the Slovak family farms at Lamont.
(2001)



An aerial view of the Highland
farm.(1970s)



The Highland farm in the winter. (Photo by Dick Chubon)



A stark fall day at the farm. The two large evergreen trees were potted Christmas trees Bob had in his hospital room in 1954. The taller tree is a Canadian blue spruce that was about 2 feet high and the other was a Florida spruce that was about a foot tall. The top had to be cropped because it was approaching the electric line. Photo provided by Donna Bennet Chubon.



Summer green (Photo by Scott Chubon)



Their first vehicle was a used Model A Ford like this.



This is a 1937 Chevy identical to the popcorn truck they bought.



This late 1950's Plymouth is identical to the one they bought, which was the first new car they owned.



Pete and Amelia's final resting place in the St. Callistus Cemetery on the outskirts of Kane, Pa.

The Bovaird & Seyfang Foundry



A glimpse inside

Photo - Courtesy of the Bradford Historical Society

By Mike Fuoco

Introduction

Although not as well known as other manufactures of oil and gas well supplies and related equipment, Bovaird & Seyfang Manufacturing Company nonetheless played an important role in the development of the Bradford, Pennsylvania and Western New York state oil and gas fields.

Although it could be safely stated that the majority of then products remained within a 100 mile radius of Bradford, Bovaird & Seyfang engines and equipment found their way into most major oil producing areas of the United States.

Bovaird & Seyfang built boilers, wood chemical plants, drilling and fishing tools, rig irons, romps, compressors, steel tanks, pumping powers, pumping jacks and steam, gas and diesel engines They also did complete turnkey installations for secondary ,recovery pressure plants and central pumping powers.

To do a complete treatise on the company would take volumes of material. Because the Coolspring Power Museum is internal combustion oriented, I will concentrate on this aspect of Bovaird & Seyfang's production.

History

The company was originally organized as a co-partnership in 1875 by David Bovaird, a native of Scotland and German born, John T Seyfang. The original location was in Shamburg PA. As the oil boom pushed northward, they relocated to Titusville in 1877 and in 1879 moved to Bradford.

The co-partnership was dissolved in 1891 and the company reorganized under the corporate name of Bovaird & Seyfang Manufacturing Company. John Seyfang retired in 1896. David Bovaird formed Bovaird & Company in 1895. The Bovaird Company still exists today.

Just before Pearl Harbor in 1941, the company was purchased by the Clark Brothers Company of Olean NY. Clark needed more equipment and production space for government orders. The move placed Bovaird & Seyfang under the umbrella of Dresser Industries. Oil production equipment though, was still produced under the Bovaird & Seyfang name until the early 1950s, when the demand for such equipment dwindled.

Production of multi-cylinder two stroke angle gas compressors continued into the 1970's. Dresser converted the plant into a coating facility for some of their products. The coating plant operated until the 1980s, and it too was shut down. Plant demolition began in the late 1980s, and was completed in 1992 when the plant's smoke stack came down with a thunderous crash. Today the plant site is occupied by a mini-mall and a drug store.

Coolspring Power Museum "Bores & Strokes"

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My memories - Bob

Mom

Mom was most recognized for her cooking. This is probably a result of her early immersion in cooking and having a mother who was an excellent cook for a teacher. Much of her cooking was done from memory and without measuring spoons and cups, and prepared from basic ingredients. From the earliest times, I remember the men who came to help with the threshing and hay baling on the Lamont farm raving about the meals she prepared for them, eating until every bowl was empty. Her dishes were always the first to go at the Community Association covered dish suppers. When it came to holidays, especially Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving, she outdid herself making many traditional Slovak dishes learned from her mother, such as nut roll and poppy seed roll. For Easter, she sometimes made a braided sweetbread. She always prepared the traditional Christmas Eve supper, consisting of boiled fish and rice cooked in milk (both drizzled with melted butter), a special sauerkraut which included dried yellow peas, and for dessert, boiled prunes. The meal began with silent prayer and the serving of Oplatki, a thin Communion-like wafer stamped with a Christmas religious scene and served with a dab of honey placed on pieces when served to family members. During our early years in Lamont, the family gathered at her mother's house across the road and her mother led the preparation of meals. However, when we moved to the Highland Road farm, because the demands of the holiday meals was becoming too much for her mother, the some of the gatherings shifted to the farm.

Mom loved musicals. I remember agonizing through many Fred Astaire and Jimmy Durante movies. (When Dad picked, it was Abbot and Costello or Ma and Pa Kettle)

She was very good at sewing and mending our clothes. For several years she made many of our shirts and the girls dresses from the print feed sacks available in those days.

By choice, she never drove. She expressed a great deal of fear at the prospect of even trying, probably worsened by a couple of mishaps attempting to drive the tractor. Consequently, Pete did all the shopping for groceries and most of Amelia's clothes. During the Lamont years, much of the non-grocery items were ordered from the Sears catalog.

Dad

There was a cultured side to Dad that seems to conflict with much of his background. One of my early memories of him from the Lamont farm was that on Sundays when he was home, every afternoon he would listen to the opera broadcast, "Live at the Met," on the radio. Perhaps he was influenced by the Bradford Italians. His appreciation of classical singing continued throughout his life, evidenced by his comments regarding the singers when they performed on TV.

When he worked at Bovaird & Seyfang, he and some of his co-workers engaged in interesting competitions, such as searching for the hottest peppers and seeing who could eat them, and seeing who could put large, complex picture puzzles together the quickest.

While living at Lamont, Dad's love of hunting took a terrible blow when his prized, pedigreed beagle, Flash, was stolen one evening when the family went to a movie in the pickup truck. (We kids always rode in the cattle box on the back, even in the frigid winter, covering ourselves with blankets and straw.) Dad frequently spoke of hunters who considered Flash to be the best rabbit dog they had ever seen, and lusted for the dog. Dad had the State Police launch an investigation and search, but Flash was never found and no suspect was identified. Dad never tried to find a replacement for Flash, but sometime later, he got us kids a large German Shepherd mix. We named him Thunder because of his fear of thunder storms.

After a movie or other evening trip to Kane, the ritual was for Dad to stop at the Texas Hot and pick up hotdogs to eat when we got home.

He considered lying to be the worst possible offense we could commit...and he believed in corporal punishment.

His integrity was unquestioned. He could buy a tractor or other piece of farm machinery with a handshake and no down payment.

When I think of summing up Dad's life and personality, the one word that comes to mind is "work." From the time he moved back to the Lamont farm in 1942 until he retired in 1986, he worked 365 days of the year. That is what the circumstances dictated. In Lamont there always was a need to care for the livestock and tend to the farm duties when he was working in Bradford and later, when he started the meat market. When we moved to the Highland farm, it was more of the same. Until retirement, Mom and Dad never had a real vacation or even a complete holiday without having to do critical chores such as milking. At most, Dad took an occasional part day off to take us fishing or to go hunting. In all those years, he probably did not have more than a dozen days when he was too sick to do at least part of his chores. That includes the 2 days he took off in the 1960s to have his appendix removed following a diagnosis of acute appendicitis. The day after surgery the surgeon examined him during hospital rounds, and Dad asked how he was doing. The surgeon told him that everything looked okay, so when he left the room, Dad got dressed, checked himself out of the Kane Community Hospital, and quickly injected himself back into his routine at the farm.

It was not only the quantity of work Dad did that was remarkable, but the quality. The dog casting is symbolic. There is a saying that "if it is worth doing, it should be done right." That seemed to be Dad's driving principle. He never cut corners or did a sloppy job. When we set fence posts, he laid out the fence rows using basic surveying techniques he learned doing road work. He would start by setting the corner posts, and spot the location of other posts by sighting over them while Dick or I moved the post around until it fell within the sight line. I remember one day when we were working near the road, a car stopped and the driver proceeded to tell dad that we had the straightest, neatest fence rows that he had ever seen. (The posts were mostly made from old dead chestnut trees which were still standing in the woodlands surrounding the farm. We cut the trees and split the trunks into posts by hand.) In the same realm, weeds were an embarrassment. A patch of mustard weed in a field was an abomination. From the time we were able to walk in the fields on the Lamont farm until the advent of herbicides we spent a great deal of our summers weeding row after row of corn and potatoes and carefully walking through the grain fields pulling mustard. When herbicides came on the scene, he used them with fervor. (In retrospect, it is probably no accident that he died of cancer. In the early days of herbicides, there were almost no controls, and the consequence of exposure was not yet realized.) Dad chuckled once when a couple elderly women stopped him and asked what crop the farm next to ours was growing that had the pretty yellow flowers, which was actually mustard weed in full bloom.

Yet another aspect of his work ethic was his self-reliance. It is obvious that during his diverse early work experiences, he not only did the job, but learned skills that he later put to use. He converted the Lamont garage into a slaughter house and market, including installation of a cork-insulated walk-in meat cooler. On the Highland farm, he remodeled the barn and built a milkhouse with a little help from a couple of Amelia's brothers. He built a hay drier and weed sprayer from scratch. He did masonry, carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring, and auto mechanics. With regard to the latter, he completely rebuilt the Farmall A engine, getting what guidance he needed from the manual.



My memories - Dick

Mom

Bob mentions that mom did not drive motor vehicles. But, at the Lamont farm she did occasionally drive a single horse, and, a few times, the team of horses. Once she was leading a harnessed horse and I was enjoying a short ride atop the horse, the horse somehow stepped on mom's foot, causing a painful injury. Her foot became badly swollen and all of her toes plus her instep turned black and blue. It took several weeks to heal. She had little time for horses after that. Epsom salts were a common household cure-all in those days and she spent evenings, after chores and housework were done, soaking the damaged foot in a pan of hot Epsom salts solution until it finally

healed. I don't recall that she went to the doctor for it as money was often scarce at the time and there was no health insurance. An injury or illness usually had to be life threatening before most people went to a doctor.

Mom had no time for gambling. After dad retired they once flew to California to visit dad's brother Tony (the longest trip they ever took). Uncle Tony took them to Reno and they stopped at a casino. He wanted mom to try a slot machine but she wanted no part of it. Frustrated, Uncle Tony put a quarter in a machine, took mom's hand, and pulled the lever with her. Wouldn't you know the bell started to ring and quarters started dropping into the winnings pail. (Yes – in those days the slots actually paid off in coins!) Mom was horrified and wanted to leave on the spot. Dad and Uncle Tony calmed her down and Tony had her pail of quarters converted into folding money – as I recall it was about \$45. She brought the money back home and gave it to either the Salvation Army or the Red Cross. She wasn't about to spend any ill-gotten gains. Talk about sticking to principles!

She often displayed a subtle sense of humor. Shortly after my 50th birthday I visited the farm and was bemoaning my age. She said "Don't you complain to me mister. Just think how I feel knowing I have a 50 year old son." Then she kissed me on the cheek.

Anyone who spent any time with mom came to know her as a very special person. Her unsophisticated but honest and sincere personality resulted in her being someone folks thought highly of. Despite an often very hard and frugal life, long hours of farm work and a number of family crises, she was always there if someone was hurting or needed help. Following marriage, Mom practically raised Pete's brothers Joe, Paul and Frank and treated them like royalty when they came home on leave from the military. For several weeks she stayed with, and assisted her sister Eva after she had given birth to a severely disabled child who needed much care. She frequently placed her own issues and needs on the back burner to provide assistance to others. A telling example occurred when I was driving her to be admitted to the nursing home in St. Marys. We'd been making small talk and were going through Johnsonburg when she became silent for a minute. I was sure she was going to start crying. But instead she said "Dick, I hope you're not feeling guilty about this. It was my decision. It has to happen. Don't worry, I'll be fine. You just concentrate on that wonderful family you have". A very special person indeed!

Dad

At big Slovak wedding receptions the families always asked dad to run the traditional fund raisers for the newlyweds such as the pillow dance, dancing with the bride, etc. Dad would collaborate with the band to delay the fund raisers until the guests had plenty to drink and then he'd go to work. He'd arm twist, badger and embarrass the men into paying to participate, often several times, until they ran out of money. By the time the evening was over he had usually collected a bushel basket of folding money which he proudly presented to the couple in exchange for a kiss from the bride.

Dad could be very assertive, especially if he thought something was not above board. He often served as an advocate for elderly neighbors and served as an interpreter in legal and business matters for area Slovaks whose English was poor. They trusted him to do the right thing and they knew he wouldn't back down when facing what were commonly referred to as "big shots".

He delayed a major pipeline construction project for weeks because he was not satisfied with their lack of a plan for restoring our fields after they were finished laying the pipe. He threatened to shoot the first worker to set foot on his property, and local gas company employees told the "big shots" they'd better listen to him. All he wanted was for them to push the topsoil aside and return

it when they were done so that he was not left with a 40 wide stretch of clay and shale running through the middle of the farm to grow crops on. His success encouraged other farmers in the pipeline path to seek better treatment from the pipeline construction company.

He was elected to the Kane Area School Board following allegations that certain businessmen were exerting influence on the board. A few veteran board members had a rude awakening when they attempted to conduct business as usual. Dad insisted on what we now refer to as transparency, especially in financial matters. But most came to respect him for his openness and especially for his assistance in getting the new high school built. He served for several years, and at one point, was vice president of the board. His election to the board was truly remarkable in that he only had an eighth grade education, and ran on the Democratic ticket in an overwhelmingly Republican stronghold.

Dad's exploits as a deer hunter were legendary. It was rare that he hadn't bagged a nice buck by noon on opening day. Local hunters marveled at how quietly and quickly he could move through the woods and the great distances he sometimes covered tracking a big buck. He was proud of some of the incredibly long shots he made with his WWI surplus 30-40 Krag rifle and its iron sights. For years he scoffed at hunters who used telescopic sights. To him they were "city slicker hunters". One absolutely true story stems from one deer season in which he was not particularly motivated, and waited until the last day to take out his rifle and head toward the farm woods. Less than an hour later he was home with a huge trophy-type buck. The buck had 13-16 points, depending if the smallest points are counted. The mounted head still hangs on the livingroom wall at the farm.

Dad played semi-pro football for a Johnsonburg team for one season. (I think they paid \$2 per game or something like that.) He often blamed his bad knees on playing football.

Dad's favorite drink was Old Overholt Straight Rye Whiskey. It was the only hard liquor he kept at home, and what he drank in bars. His standard drink in bars was a double shot of the Old Overholt followed by a pony bottle of beer.



Richard Scott Chubon - Memories of Grandpa and Grandma Chubon

As the first grandchild, I spent many summers on the Highland farm while I was growing up. “The farm” was my home away from home during the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, and I looked forward to every visit. I spent a lot of time with both grandparents and hold many vivid memories of my time there, even after all these years.

My first memory of Grandpa was that I was afraid of him. To a little kid, he was big, and loud. I remember being coaxed into his lap while he sat in his chair at the end of the kitchen table, the only place he ever sat in the kitchen. There was an unspoken rule that the end chair was exclusively Grandpa’s, and I don’t believe anyone else ever sat there, certainly not me



Scott and Grandpa plowing snow on the farm. For Scott, now living in Oswego,

NY, it was good training.

Photo provided by Donna Bennet-Chubon

One of my earliest memories was of their collie, “Sparky”. As a little guy I would occasionally attempt to ride on Sparky like a horse, but as I recall that was discouraged. One summer Sparky turned up missing. Grandpa figured he had been spooked by a severe thunderstorm, which seemed to be a frequent event at the farm. I remember driving around on nearby back roads with Grandpa, calling for Sparky. It’s ironic that Uncle Bob recalls a previous dog, “Thunder”, that was also afraid of storms.

As a little kid growing up in the 60’s I always had a “brush cut”. In 4th grade I was finally allowed to grow my hair long enough to run a comb through it. At that point Grandpa was certain that I was going to become a hippie. Because Grandpa was very outspoken on matters involving politics and hippies, it was a pretty uncomfortable situation. I guess he gradually accepted it once he was sure it would never be more than two inches long.

Since Grandma didn’t drive, Grandpa went “uptown” to do the grocery shopping, and I always tagged along. It was during these shopping trips that I discovered Grandpa’s affinity for YORK Peppermint Patties, which would always appear during the drive home. He would try to get me to eat one because “they’re good for you....”. I didn’t like them, so Grandpa would eat them both while he was driving. To this day I wonder if Grandma knew about this as the evidence (wrappers) were always disposed of before we reached the farm.

One of the few disappointments of visiting The Farm was that I was not allowed to get up early and tag along in the barn for the morning milking. My instructions, which I followed without fail, were to watch Captain Kangaroo in the front room until they both came in from the barn for breakfast. The routine was that I would go to a certain window in the front room and wait for Grandma to carry the next milk bucket into the milk house. That way she could see that I was up and safely watching TV. I guess she must have checked for me on every trip, because I never waited in that window for long before Grandma would appear with a smile and a wave, and I would return to the chair to watch the TV



Scott and Grandpa unloading silage during the fall of 1968.
(Photo provided by Scott)

.The TV was a big deal, even though they only got 2 or 3 channels, depending on the weather. It was unplugged at the slightest hint of an approaching thunderstorm out of fear that it would be damaged by lightning. It was also the focus of the evening routine. With Grandpa reclined in his leather easy chair, Grandma would bring him a sandwich while we tuned in to Hee Haw and Candid Camera. I remember these two shows because both grandparents laughed a lot. I think Grandpa laughed more during Hee Haw, while Grandma seemed to enjoy Candid Camera more. Eventually, Grandpa would start snoring so loud we couldn't hear the TV, so Grandma and I would "hit the hay".

Aside from actually driving the tractors, the next best thing was helping Grandpa work on the farm machinery in the garage. This often coincided with the afternoon "polka hour" on the local AM radio station. Grandpa had an old AM radio in the garage so we listened to polka hour while he disassembled whatever was broken, which was usually his International Harvester 340 tractor, which he often proclaimed was a

“lemon”. Once a teacher from the school stopped by while we were working in the garage. Apparently there was some sort of trouble and she was appealing to Grandpa the school board member for help. I also remember Grandma’s occasional reminders when there was a School Board Meeting. Grandpa would prepare by showering and getting dressed up in a suit and tie, which seemed unusual at first but I eventually got used to the idea.

Grandpa and Grandma hosted occasional visitors including Matt Mishic, and “Old man Ogrin”. Mr. Ogrin’s visits always ended up in the kitchen and involved bottles of whiskey. Once I found a small pocketknife on a chair cushion in the front room, not long after a visit from Mat Michic. Because I believed in finder’s keepers, I was excited to have acquired my first pocketknife. Grandma knew otherwise, and insisted that we return the knife to Mat, which we did. Sensing my disappointment, Grandpa gave me a brand new Case (made in Bradford) pocketknife, which I still have today. The year was 1966, and I used the knife to carve my name and the year in the new concrete sidewalk leading to the back porch of the farmhouse. The last time I checked it was still visible.

Grandpa also bought my first two bicycles at a bike shop in Kane. The red Western Flyer came with training wheels but they soon came off resulting in a few crashes in the driveway. The second bike was a green Murray with built in headlights. I couldn’t wait to try it out in the dark, so that night I somehow convinced Grandpa and Grandma to let me ride it to the railroad crossing. I must have been very persistent, because they allowed me to go even though it was dark and foggy. I had barely left the driveway when I was immersed in fog so thick even the new bike’s headlights were useless. Grandpa thought it was pretty funny when I returned within moments for fear I would become lost in the fog.

I was lucky enough to ride along many times when Grandpa drove his cattle truck to pick up cows at other farms, then on to “The Sale”. I don’t remember exactly where it was, but I do remember the drama involved in climbing and descending Boot Jack Hill in the old Chevy cattle truck. Once the truck stopped running and Grandpa had to borrow tools from a house along the road. I was instructed to hold my foot on the brake while Grandpa did something under the hood. He had it running in no time, and we were on our way again. Another time Uncle Paul came with us, and on the way home they stopped at a bar, which meant I had to wait inside the truck for a very long time. When we arrived home Grandma had made her wonderful home-made spaghetti sauce, and I was so excited they called the Kane radio station and had them play “On Top of Spaghetti” for me.

My recollection is that Grandpa sold the dairy herd in 1977 while I was away at Navy boot camp. I believe Grandpa was proud that I was in the Navy and on a submarine, even if it was “nuclear”. While I was away Grandma routinely wrote to me, and kept me up to date with the happenings around the farm and with cousin Jeff. She would almost always include a few cartoons clipped from the newspaper, and clippings from “The Reader’s Digest”.