



Boys sit in cow pasture which later became Station Street. Houses in background face on Dundee Avenue. Three were moved there from outside of town.

7

“Such A Lovely Place to Play”

Downtown Barrington in the Early 1900's

On a hot day it seemed nice to see the large green horsewatering place that was shaped somewhat like a huge mixing bowl sitting on a pedestal stand in front. Below the bowl was a place where the people could drink, with a small, stone step for the children to step up so they could reach the fountain. On the north side of the fountain at the bottom was a small bowl where smaller animals could drink. It stood north of where the Last National Bank tavern is now.

Many an evening right after supper a group of boys and girls would all congregate in front of the Lamey Building on East Main Street. “Don't block the entrance to Ma Sherman's home cafe. If you do, you're in trouble.”

At the corner of East Main and Ela Street we played Hiding-Go-Seek; Run, Sheep, Run; Red Light; Ducky on the Rock; and other games. We played in front of the Lamey Building and the Commercial Hotel, with its three stories and spacious white porch out across the front of the hotel.

Salesmen would be sitting on this porch with their feet perched up on the railings, some of them leaning back in chairs to watch the girls go by. What else was there for them to do? Or they would watch the water wagon go by with the driver sitting high up on a seat which was fastened to a large, yellow, faded wooden tank filled with water. Nozzles stuck out the rear to spray the dusty Barrington streets every time the driver

would push down on the pedal with his foot. That sure helped settle the dust.

At the rear of the hotel was an enclosure with steps going to the second and third floors. What a climb! This building was later the Magnavox TV location with the third story removed, the building lowered to the ground, and a new brick addition at the back of the building.

In the rear of the Commercial Hotel stood the hotel's red barn. Also at the rear of the Lamey building was a weather-beaten coal and wood shed, as every one in the building had some kind of coal stove to heat with. Further back on the lot was a faded red barn that had two box stalls for horses, and a small run yard attached to the east side of the barn.

I can still picture Mrs. Miles T. Lamey's hard-rubber tired, wicker carriage, with the seats back to back. In the carriage shed built on the west side of the barn was the high seat wagon that Lamey and Co. used for delivery with a single horse. My aunt Julia Lamey told me the same wagon, with Daniel Lamey in the driver's seat, had run away down Grove Avenue. In order to stop the crazy horse, he had to run the wagon into a tree.

I remember two boys and myself reaching into a barrel and pulling out three pairs of skates all completely made of wood. They were used in the Lamey Hall when they had a roller rink upstairs. The hall was also used for dances and other social events. My Aunt Julia could see us skating from the Edward Lamey home at Ela and Chestnut Streets. She sure laid me out for not asking permission for the use of the skates.

Walking west down Main Street, we stopped at a cement step to look into the open door of 222 East Main. It was Schaede's Harness Shop with its wide, soft board floors and long wooden workbench by the east wall. Emil Schaede was sitting on a wooden stool working hard over a harness. There were old harness lying on the floor where the farmers had left them to be repaired, and bridles, saddles and new harness hanging from hooks on the walls. A small showcase standing near the west wall held bits of accessories, polishes, and stains. Mr. Schaede was a kind gentleman always ready to chat with someone.

After a visit to Emil Schaede's Harness Shop, we would walk past Miller's Saloon and the Dayton Restaurant (later the Dayton Hotel) named after the city where the family originated. George Atkins had bought the Paul Miller building and converted the two buildings into one as the Dayton Hotel.

Next door to the hotel was Mother's Place, a restaurant on Railroad Street that was operated by "Nanny" Atkins, as everyone in Barrington called her. Now and then she would give us kids a cookie. "Nanny" was the mother of George Atkins, who owned the Dayton Hotel. She was a small lady with her hair worn up high in a bun on the top of her head, and she always had on a pretty little apron tied around her waist.

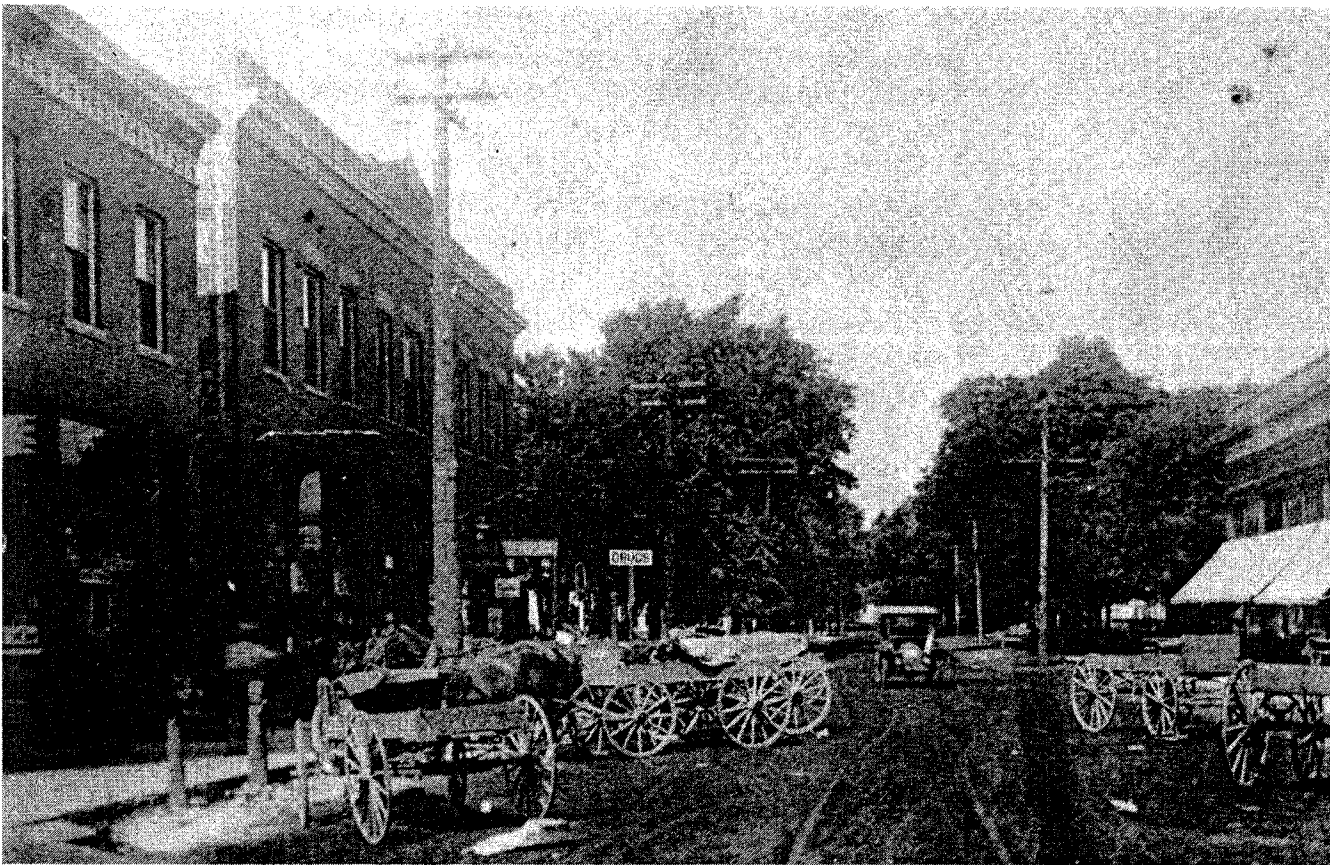
Next door to Mother's Place on Railroad Street we kids would love to stop in front of E. F. Wichman's blacksmith shop, one of the village smithys with its wide open front doors. There stood Mr. Wichman and his assistant, Conrad Lockert. Both had long, brown leather aprons and rolled-up, blue, shirt sleeves. They would hold the horses' hooves between their legs pulling off the old shoes and trimming the hooves, then nailing new shoes on.

The shop reminded me of Fourth of July when the bellows roared with the flaming fire in the hearth, the men with bulging muscles taking red hot horseshoes and pieces of iron or steel out of the fired-up coals to the anvil. They would swing the heavy hammers down on the red hot metals. How the sparks did fly around the anvils!

Sometimes we would go to the rear of the blacksmith shop and sort out a few horseshoes by weight where they had thrown them on a pile as rejects. We would take them home and amuse ourselves with a game of horseshoes.

West of the blacksmith shop where Cook met Railroad Street at an angle to East Main was a large open lot that was known as Burdock Park because of its burdock weeds. The merry-go-round would come here, and it was powered by a small steam engine with its glowing firebox, and a long, covered leather belt reaching far out to the merry-go-round. What fun it was to ride on the wooden horses and hear the tooting of the whistle from the steam engine and the music streaming through the air from the center of the merry-go-round.

Looking west on East Main from tracks in 1900's. On right is Foreman's Saloon, then Stiefenhoefer's Blacksmith Shop, then August Jahn's wagon shop, then A. W. Meyer's store. This block has been rebuilt because 1898 fire destroyed it.



Looking west on Main Street about 1912. The 1911 Overland automobile in center of street is at intersection of Main Street and Hough Street.



A blanketed horse waits patiently with wagon in front of Schroeder's Hardware at northeast corner of Main and Hough. Next to Schroeder's is A.W. Meyer General Store. After 1900 when this entire block was wiped out by fire, wooden sidewalks were replaced by these cement ones with rings on curbs to tether horses.





East Main Street block after it was rebuilt after 1890 fire. These buildings were on north side of East Main just east of railroad tracks.

As we walk down West Main Street on the north side of the street, we will pass George Foreman's Saloon and the Stiefenhoefler Blacksmith Shop. Next door at 110 West Main Street was our destination, August Jahn, the wagonmaker. We would walk between the two buildings to the rear of the shop to play in the old surrey with the fringe on the top, or sometimes in a buggy or an old wagon of some sort waiting to be repaired. We weren't fussy. At least this was one spot we didn't get chased from.

Across the street from George Foreman's Saloon on the south side of West Main Street, we see Rieke's Pool Hall, formerly Otto's Pool Hall, and Prouty and Jenck's farm implement store. Down the alley between the two buildings, we are headed for the back of Prouty and Jenck's to climb all over bright-colored red, blue, and yellow corn planters, cultivators, and hay rakes, pulling on all the levers, pressing all the pedals down with our feet.

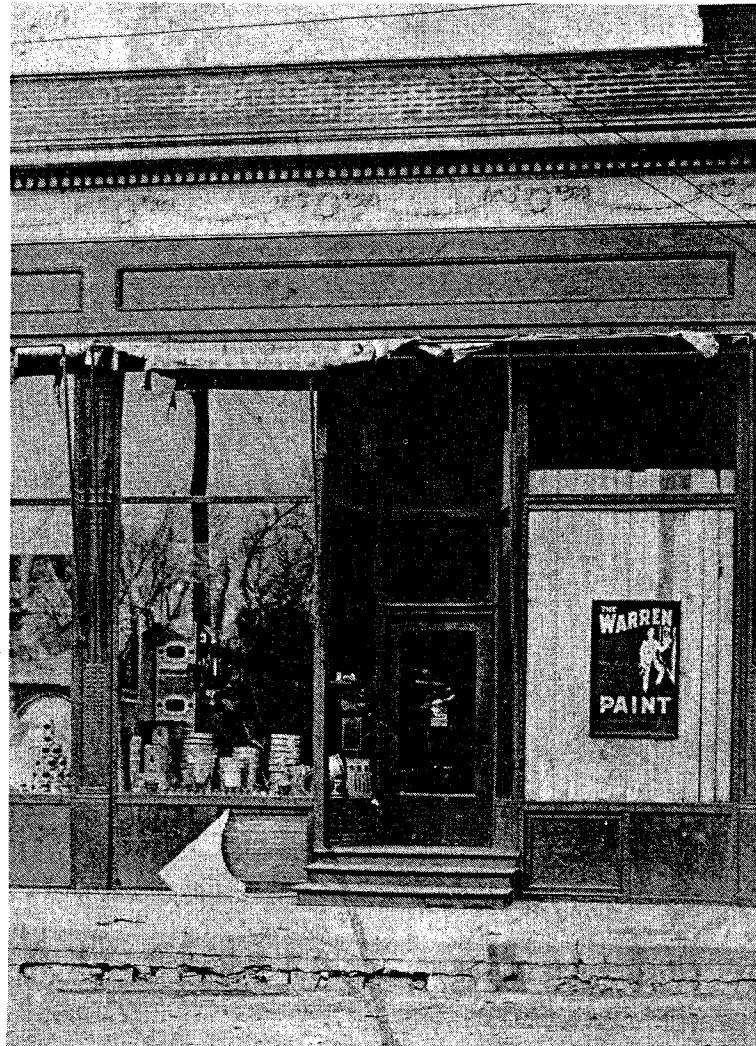
All of a sudden a door in back of the shop slides open. Mr. Prouty appears, standing in the doorway with no hat or coat on, a striped shirt with rolled-up sleeves, and blue overalls. He let out a piercing war whoop that you could hear a block away. I guess we thought the Indians were attacking because you should have seen all of us boys jump from those machines and scatter in every direction before you could say "Jack Robin." We will be back in a few days, though. It is such a lovely place to play. — M. S.

* * *

It was about 1911 that we had the "big shake" in Barrington. It occurred one night at about 8:20, and my brother and I were already in bed. All of a sudden the house shook, the dishes and windows rattled, and we jumped out of bed and headed down the stairs. Then the second shake came. The neighbor women hollered, "Earthquake, earthquake," which we believed.

The next day headlines in the paper mentioned the explosion of the

A 1911 explosion of a powder mill thirty miles north in Wisconsin caused damage all over town like this broken window, shredded awning, and damaged curbing.



Main Street looking West in early 1900's. On far left is Alverson and Groff Meat Market, then Peters and Pingel Livery Stable, then Prouty and Jencks Farm Implement Store. Right in foreground is village's hand-operated water pump, and on far right Foreman's Saloon.

powder mill in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin. The thick plate-glass windows in A. W. Meyer's General Store, which is now the Bob and Betty Shop at the northeast corner of Main and Hough Streets, and the show windows of Schroeder Hardware, all broke and fell on the sidewalks and streets. It was said that the big ships on Lake Michigan also felt the shake. — W. H. K.

* * *

I remember seeing cattle driven down the dirty road of Main Street to the stockyards, located with their sprawling sheds and pens beside the railroad tracks. There the cattle would wait for shipping to their destination in cattle cars.

I can't help but think of us boys playing tag at these stockyards, climbing up the side of cattle and box cars like monkeys to the roofs, and jumping down on the roofs of the cattle sheds, chasing one another back and forth. — M. S.

* * *

The Kilgobbin was a very famous thing. I suppose everybody knows about the Kilgobbin. It was simply a four-foot-wide ditch running between our house and the next house. It was an open ditch, and I suppose we had a bridge across the road to bridge that Kilgobbin. Then it ran down on our boundary and down through the town and eventually flowed into Flint Creek, and Flint Creek eventually into Fox River, and Fox River into the Mississippi. It was quite a famous landmark.

It ran beside our property which is now 130 West Lake Street. I



remember it ran across Station Street.

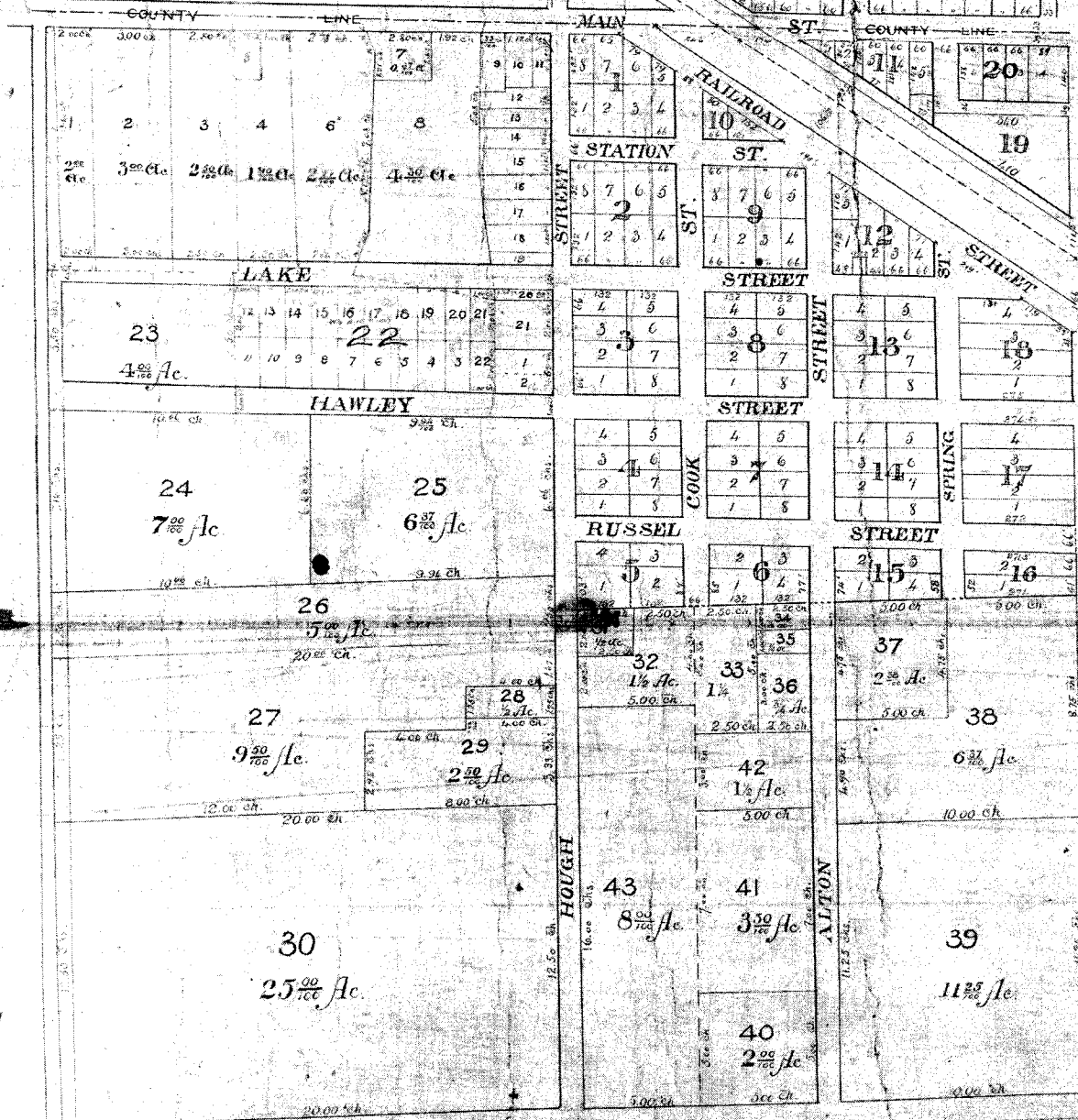
And there was a sidewalk that ran across the bridge. And there were no guards on either side. And there was a man that used to get a little "tiplicated" sometimes. He'd come home, and it's a wonder he didn't fall in that ditch.

Sometimes the Kilgobbin had a great deal of water, spring flashes, and sometimes a mere trickle of water. It was about four feet wide. And my grandfather took great pleasure in that. He thought that would be an everlasting boundary between our house and the next house. He never could feature it being tiled up and covered. Now, nobody knows where it is.

VILLAGE OF BARRINGTON

COOK AND LAKE COUNTIES
ILLINOIS
BEING PARTS OF SECTION 1, T. 42, N. R. 9, E.
AND
SECTION 36, T. 43, N. R. 9, E.
OF
3RD R. M.

Geo. Hale under date of the 16th day of July 1855 Certifies that he Surveyed and Subdivided the Town of Coburn being the S. E. 1/4 of the S. W. 1/4 of Sec. 36, T. 43, N. R. 9, E. on July 6th and 7th 1855 and the annexed plat correctly represents said Survey.



Alex. W. Woodruff, County Surveyor, certifies under date of Dec. 15, 1867, that he has divided for the Assessors for the 1868 and 1869 the S. E. 1/4 of the N. W. 1/4 of Section 1, T. 42, N. R. 9, E. into 48 lots and the annexed plat correctly represents the same.

Under date June 15th 1882, he certifies that he has Subdivided a part of lots 8, 19, 20 and 22 of the 3rd Division of W. 1/2 and S. E. 1/4 of N. W. 1/4 in Section 1, T. 42, N. R. 9, E.

F. C. Rossiter,
Surveyor of the Town of Barrington,
Chicago, Ill.

He named it "Kilgobbin." That is a Scottish name for ditch. His father was from Scotland, and he was partial to the Scottish. My grandfather was Millius B. McIntosh. — J.L.

* * *

To say that early Barrington was a wet place is an understatement.

The northwest corner of Lake and Grove was a frog pond, and a wash ran down Market Street (now Park Avenue). A cat-tail pond was where the First National Bank now stands, and a store was planted there on wooden posts as soon as the railroad came. There I learned to skate, sliding from supporting post to post under Plagge's store. The outlet was down a ditch in the middle of Park Avenue south of what is now the railroad to another cat-tail pond or slough at the northeast corner of Main and Hough. At the southwest corner of Hough and Lincoln was a cat-tail slough with a sinkhole well in the midst where Grandfather McIntosh's horse and Marshall's cow in turn got stuck in the well. All of the west side of south Hough Street in that block to Russell Street was very low. — A. L.

* * *

I believe that the greatest change in the way of life probably came with the invention of the "horseless carriage."

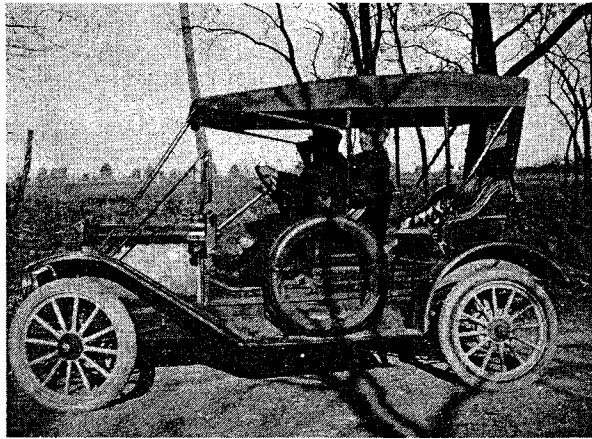
The automobiles first had kerosene carriage lamps. Later running-board gas tanks were hooked up to their headlights which to the magician's formula "whisto, presto, chango" were supposed to flash the headlights into a sun-like brilliance when a match was applied, but more often, they fizzled weakly and went out.

The new-fangled electric headlight had its weakness, too. The slower we travelled, the dimmer the lights became. They received their electricity from a magneto on the motor, and the roads were not conducive to speeds over fifteen to twenty miles per hour.

Those were the days before 1914 when there were no paved roads or streets running in or out of Barrington to keep dirt out of the traveler's eyes.



A 1910 EMF built by Flanders and bought out by Studebaker soon after. Harvey Jackson is at the wheel, with his father, George Jackson, leaning on car, and Sylvester Jackson with arm on knee. The car had a right hand drive, a mohair top, and side curtains.



A Flanders 20 is driven by Andrew Foran, the owner, with Sam Wade beside him.

International high wheeler automobile with Ike Fox and daughter Jerrine in front, Mrs. Fox and Clarence Halead, a boy they raised, in back.



Old Ike Fox had the other car buffs envying him when he mounted his new Claxon horn on his car. The horn made a noise like a dog fight and would scare the bark off a dogwood tree. One of the greatest problems of the pioneer autoists was keeping the horse from climbing a tree when a goggled, inhuman-looking person wearing a long, white duster coat drove near them in a clanking, snorting cross between a buggy and a prairie schooner.

One time on a hot July day some guests were sitting on the long, front veranda of Linus R. Lines, better known as "Charlie Lines". It was a commercial, three-story brick hotel on dusty East Main Street. The perspiring motorist spun the starter crank time after time in front of the hotel out there in the street. Finally when the spark took hold, and the engine ripped, snorted, and howled into life, the motorist sprung into his car and blatted his bulb horn and took off.

One of the men looked at the others on the veranda and stopped chewing his tobacco for a second and spit into the spittoon beside his chair and said, "Sure is one hell of a contraption. Snorts like a horse, yaps like a dog, and blasts like a bull."

At first the farmers and freighters cussed the autos, and so did the owners of the fancy buggies and carriage horses. There was good reason

*Railroad Street (later Park Avenue) in early 1900's.
Geister's Meat Market, Gruneau's Barber Shop,
Landwer's Dry Goods and Groceries, Grebe's
Hardware.*



because some motorists took no thought of the effect the sight and sound their "love chariots" had on unsophisticated horses.

The first autos caused more than one runaway team to spill its driver and smash the vehicle it was hauling, and more than one motorist had his life threatened. The horse people and the motor people did some feuding in the first few years of the horseless carriage in Barrington. — M. S.

* * *

In 1913 we purchased our first automobile, a Ford touring car priced at \$360 and no sales tax. The tire sizes were thirty by three-and one-half with sixty pounds of air. The best diamond tread tire carried a warranty of 3,500 miles. The front tires were smooth — no treads.

In the wintertime the cars were put up on jacks and not used due to road conditions. Some winters the roads would be impassable due to snowstorms. Snowplows were unknown. We would then drive through the fields with a team of horses and sleigh to deliver milk to Cuba Station at Kelsey Road and the railroad. In the winter, horseshoes would be equipped with sharp calks to prevent slipping on ice and snow. — R.M.

