

NELSON FARM (NORTH CLARENDON)

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The Nelson Farm is located on the Cold River Road in North Clarendon, Vermont. The farm consists of eighty-six acres of land.

The people that founded the farm were two sisters named Parker. They made a living by mining clay and processing it in the clay factory located near the Cold River. After the clay was processed it was packed and shipped off for various uses. One use was talc. The clay factory later caught fire and burned down.

Behind the old farmhouse the Parkers built a cemetery. It was built out of marble and split stones. The Parker family is buried there, along with some people named Spafford, and a couple named Thomas.

The cement bridge near the farm now, used to be a covered bridge. It was referred to as the Parker Bridge.

The next family to own the farm were the Bidgoods. They came from Proctorsville and Ludlow. Jake Bidgood and his wife and two sons, Ben and Porter, were farmers. Jake delivered the mail from the Clarendon Depot, located then on Depot Hill, to the Clarendon Post office. After he retired, his son Ben took over the route.

The Lairds were the next family to live on the Nelson Farm. They rented the farm from the Bidgoods. They also used the land for farming. They lived there for about two years.

Issac Balch bought the farm in 1913. Mr. Balch farmed it and raised many sheep. He also built a sawmill on the site of the old clay factory. His son-in-law, Gustaf Nelson, managed the sawmill for Mr. Balch. The sawmill was water powered, with a large dam up stream and emptied into a large raceway approximately 800 to 1,000 feet long. Most of the sawing had to be done in the spring while the snow was melting back in the mountains, so as to have sufficient power along with spring rains.

There was also a murder at the mill yard. It happened when a man named Lawrence was coming home from Rutland. He had been drinking and stopped at the mill yard. There he threatened the life of Clarence Kenson and started to climb up onto a load of logs Kenson was unloading. Kenson tried to strike him with a cant hook, not intending to hit Lawrence side of the head. Lawrence later died at the Rutland Hospital. Kenson was not found guilty because he was said to have been protecting himself.

Mr. and Mrs. Balch had four children all born in Shrewsbury. They were all adults when the Balch's bought the farm. They were Erma Balch Swan, the oldest, Walter Balch, Clinton Balch and Blanche Balch Nelson. Blanche is the only surviving member of the four children today. She is still living on the farm. She is in fair health, considering she is 82 years old.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. An interview with Blanche Nelson of North Clarendon.
2. An interview with Willard Squire of North Clarendon.
3. An interview with Olive Haley of North Shrewsbury.