

Meeting an old time hunter: A young boy's 1930s and 1940s visits to Stratford, NY

I was born on June 3, 1930. As soon as I was old enough to remember anything, certainly by 1936 my folks took me to Stratford, NY during the fall hunting season. It was in the depths of the great depression and automobile rides were few and far between. We lived at Marshville four miles south of Canajoharie, NY. My grandfather Garlock (my mother's father) had gone to Goodwin's at Stratford for many years before I was born. He often said he was going to Uncle Charlie Goodwin's. To understand why he called him Uncle Charlie we will have to examine the genealogy of my forebears. Grandfather Garlock was born on April 28 1877. His wife to be was Anna Hubbs of Cherry Valley. Her father was David Hubbs. Her mother was Maggie McFee Hubbs. Maggie died very young leaving three small children. I do not know how long after that great grandfather Hubbs remarried. His new wife was Gertrude Goodwin Rimmel, a widow from Stratford. She was born a Goodwin and her brother was Charles Goodwin (Uncle Charlie). To a young boy (me) it was a great treat to make the trip to Stratford. It seemed to me that I was going to the great North Country to visit a real old timer hunter, Uncle Charlie. In reality he truly was an old time hunter and at that time quite long in years. I do not know if he ever really knew my name. He just called me Boy. In that family the other members were Bertha (I believe Wood) and Robert Goodwin. Sometime George Goodwin came on the scene. He doubtless was older than I was.

When we went to Stratford during the deer season we went to the old house called the Boyer Place. There was a well with a well sweep not from the house. The old Boyer house was weathered and somewhat run down. It is strange what is remembered from one's youth. One day I threw a ball that broke a house window there and got my butt thrashed.



Hunting party with Charlie Goodwin (left) and grandpa Garlock (right)

By the time I was 10 or 12 years old I was deeply interested in old guns and had acquired some guns and knowledge about them. I asked about everyone I met if they had old guns. I was familiar with grandpa Garlock's 38-56 Winchester model 1886 rifle. That is the rifle he holds in the early 1900s photo of the Stratford hunt. I was not allowed to see Uncle Charlie's guns but was told that a muzzle loading rifle was there along with others. I always have wondered if the muzzle loader was made by Wyllys Avery the Salisbury gunsmith. I was not destined to find out since the guns burned with the Goodwin's house. My grandfather did describe one of Charlie's guns. It was a Colt pump rifle in 40-60 caliber. A pretty advanced rifle for the 1880s when it came on the market. Grandpa Garlock told of Uncle Charlie's hunting feats with that Colt rifle. Apparently the cartridge became difficult or impossible to obtain. The rifle that Charlie holds in the attached photo appears to be a Winchester self loading rifle which became

available about 1903. The other man in the photo seems to have a Remington model 8 which came around by about 1905. It was an automatic. Grandpa holds his Model 1886 in 38-56 caliber.

I remember Uncle Charlie telling me that there were more deer at the time we were talking than when he was young. The reason was the practice of dogging and jacking deer. We went up so my father and Bob could go deep into the woods. Uncle Charlie at least one year shot a deer right behind the Boyer house. Bertha once tried to play a trick by making deer tracks with a deer foot. It fooled Bob and my father but not Charlie who said "no deer made those tracks."

I was once taken down by the creek where Charlie had a sawmill. Grandpa said it had been an up and down saw something that was long since abandoned by nearly everyone. George once took me to the garage to show me some dynamite that was stored there in an old oven. It just shows what kids got into then as much as now.

Grandpa often spoke of Charlie Goodwin's camp at Howe's Pond. I do not know if it was House or Howe's Pond. It was the fall hunting destination for grandpa and friends long before he went there by automobile. He once told about he and a companion going there by horse, stabling the horse and as evening approached starting the walk in to the camp. It got dark and they were lost. They rolled up in blankets for the night. At daylight they smelled smoke and found they were within sight of the camp.

I've written what I remembered from when I was a small boy. Above all else I remember how nice an old man Charlie Goodwin was and how thrilled I was to meet a real old time hunter. Those were exciting days for this young boy.

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