STONY WOLD SANITARIUM AT LAKE KUSHAQUA NY
WHAT I REMEMBER ABOUT LIVING AT THE PLACE BY CARL F JACOBS1

I was born on September 18, 1933 at Hillside 2 on the north side of town

TB was a very serious disease and we had to be careful at all times

Rest hour was from 1PM to 3PM for the patients and no noise was to be made on these hours even motor boats on the lake were forbidden. In the summer time I would get working papers and get a job working at the San as we all called it. My boss was usually my father Pearly Jacobs and I worked helping various people who worked there full time. One of my first jobs was painting under the tutelage of Charlie Dukette who was in charge of all painting. He taught me how to mix paint as we had to do it ourselves. Then I got to go out and put up a 40 Ft ladder and p1aint the main building along with two other men that were on 35 Ft ladders. It was during Rest hour and I leaned over to paint a spot that I had missed when the ladder began to slide and I grabbed the ledge which I had just painted and tried to stop my decent. Gradually I stopped sliding and pulled myself and the ladder back to a upright position. Then and only then did I say something but as I started to swear Charlie on my right and below me said SH,SH,SH it's Rest Hour!! Bill Wilson was on my left and just gave me a big grin and put his finger to his lips. I was covered with paint but I did'nt wake any patients or I would have been fired.

Another job that had to done monthly was to wind the big clock on the churches. this usually required two men for a couple of hours and was no easy task. The clock ran by weights that had to be wound up by use of a hand crank and they were very heavy. Then the chimes were wound the same way with a different set of weights and a additional crank. One man would crank until he had to stop then the second man did the same until the weights were up to the top and they would last for 30 days. The clock had Westminister Chimes but were shut off at night and during Rest hour so as to not disturb the patients.

There were two churches in the building, one Catholic and one Protestant plus a movie theater where we had first run movies every Wednesday night. People would come from around town and also from Onchiota to see the free movies.

Lake Kushaqua was almost self sustaining except that we had to import coal for the big furnaces and also the cottages. The furnaces produced steam for heat and other uses and at one time produced electricity for everyone's use. They had a farm with all the vegetables they needed, they had cows, pigs, and horses. My father raised chickens so we also had eggs and chicken so all in all we had much food. There was also various wood lots for firewood and lumber for our sawmill that was on the north side of the town. We had our own water system from Mountain Pond and piped throughout the community as well as a central sewage system. (which is still there)

My mother was a school teacher who taught 8 grades in a one room school that was

1 mile south of the San. We walked that distance morning and night and also kept the snow shoveled and the furnace going. The teacher was required to teach 8 grades, fix a noon meal do the census, and keep control of up to twenty students. During WW2 she did food stamps as everything was rationed and also showed us how to knit to make afghans for the troops.

The Powerhouse was fired with two kinds of coal. Blackjack was used in the old furnaces and stoker coal was used in the new furnace. The old furnaces were fired by hand and the type of coal in them burned very hot and dirty and also caused large clinkers that had to be broken up and hauled out of the front doors. They were deposited on the cement floor and allowed to cool before being broken up and taken out side and piled. Later they were broken up further and loaded on a dump wagon, that was drawn by a team of horses (Bill & Bess) and taken to one of the roads in town and dumped and then spread by hand to make a hard surface. It worked quite well but sure was a lot of work.

The new furnace used stoker coal and was shoveled into a automatic feeder and had much less clinkers. The coal was stacked outside the wall in front of the furnace. Then someone came up with the idea to build a trestle outside that was forty feet above the entrance and the wagon carrying the coal would back in and the coal was shoveled over the end gate to form a large pile in front of the door. Then we got modern and were given a small dump truck that was backed on the trestle and dumped. The trestle was very narrow and quite hard to back on but no one ever got injured. Over time the coal built up and of course was resting against the wall of the powerhouse and one winter day the wall collapsed and fell into the power house just missing the fireman inside who when he heard a noise ran down a passage between the new boiler and the old boilers. He along with others expected this to happen some time and his quick action probably saved his life as the coal buried the front of the new furnace which had to be shut down and the coal shoveled out of the way in order to restart it. There being little or no damage three days later it was restarted and worked fine except there was a terrible draft from the hole in the wall. It was eventually covered with canvas until spring when the wall was rebuilt and reinforced.

There were about twelve to fourteen trains a day that either passed through or stopped to deliver freight and passengers. The patients , many from New York City, came by train and went home by train one way or the other. Many died of TB because at that

time their was no cure other then the fresh air good food and rest. Later after WW2 started we had a lot of Norwegian sailors that were also curing. They were young and were'nt used to laying around and had some novel ways to pass the time.

The trains brought coal and any thing else that was needed to run the San and also anything that might have been ordered by the local people or the patients. The tracks went from Lake Clear to Malone where they were switched to other tracks to go to Utica one way or to Montreal the other. Around 1940 the railroad decided to use our part of the line to test some new Diesel Locomotives that were to be used in the Rocky Mountains so they brought in two engines with two generator units between them plus one hundred freight cars to pull and started daily runs. Needless to say the men in the old steam engines did'nt think to much of the shiny new engines. It was winter time with temperatures below zero and the new engines were hauling there load from Malone to Lake Clear and were coming up a grade near Owls Head when the fuel froze up and the train came to a standstill blocking service both ways. They then called for the steam engines to come to the rescue and so they sent two of the old steam engines down and they had to back them down the tracks. I was in the station at Lake Kushaqua when they went by backwards at a tremendous rate of speed. Later in the day we heard a whistle and they rounded the bend pulling the four unit diesels and the one hundred freight cars up the track. It was a wonder that they could move at all because they were blowing the whistle so much to let everyone know that the old steamers were still the kings of the railroad. Of course this was the beginning of the end of steam locomotives but for awhile they gave everyone a good laugh. Much later I found out that when the steamers hooked on to the diesels the steam that was used for brakes and heat warmed up the new engines and even before they started towing the train they had started both engines and were good to go and signaled the steamers to disconnect but for some reason the engineers in the steamers could'nt here or see there signals all the way back to Lake Clear!

Al Oliver was the station agent at Lake Kushaqua and kept traffic moving. He sold tickets and handled the freight along with running the telegraph and keeping the big pot belly stove running in the winter time. The stove was half way between the waiting room and his office with a fence separating the two. It was quite large and many times I have seen it so hot that it was cherry red and was a good place for any one to come in and get warm. One day I was there when we had a sleet storm and as I watched the telegraph

wires build up with ice until one by one they broke and fell to the ground. It wasn't only the telegraph lines that broke but also all of the power lines and also the telephone lines and so we were pretty isolated. At that time we were not very dependent on electricity and so it did'nt affect us very much. The coal stoves and furnaces kept going , and we had kerosene lights so it was'nt a whole lot different than usual . After a week or so they got the lines back up and the roads cleared and plowed and the trains were moving again and everything was back to normal . We only missed a couple of days of school as the teacher was very dedicated to her work and insisted that school reopen regardless of the weather.

Al Oliver lived close to the rail road station in a small house with his wife Pearl. He had a car that he kept in his garage and it had a leak in the gas tank. He had a pan under the car to catch the gas which he would put back in the tank. On e night he was pouring the gas with a railroad lantern for light when the gas exploded and he was on fire and yelling for help and at that moment the night watchman (Norm) was across the street and saw what happened and grabbed a hose from a fire hydrant that was there and ran across the street and started to put water on Al . Then Pearl who was home ran out to help and got Al put out from the fire and Norm started putting water on the garage which was attached to the house. By this time everyone around was coming to help thanks to the party line that was in the village. Within a short period of time the fire was out and Al was taken to the hospital. He was severely burned but he had some awful scars on his legs and hands and it took him a long time to recover fully but he had a great nurse attending to his needs. (Pearl was a RN)

As I said before there were many freight trains going through to Malone and on to Canada. Around 1954 or 55 there was a train wreck not far from the railroad station. The cars came off the track and darn near ran over the manager of Stony Wold who's name was Ernie Jones a retiree from New York Telephone Co. He was on a road that paralleled the tracks and he happened to look in his mirror and saw rail road cars coming at him from the rear. He stepped on the gas and managed to stay ahead of them until he was clear of the scene. I guess it was a pretty close call. At that time I was stationed in Germany so I missed all the excitement but my younger sister Pat kept me informed of the goings on at home.

Many of the men who worked at the San were veterans of WW I. Some of them had been gassed some were shell shocked and most were alcoholics. In those days there

were no places they could go to get help and so they worked for a month got paid and spent most of their pay in town on booze and returned to work another month. They got there meals and lodging and the pay was meager but that was how they chose to live and there weren't many jobs around especially for worn out vets.

In the winter time no one drove their cars and so in the fall the men got together and went to each garage where the cars were kept and jacked up the cars and placed blocks of wood under the axles. The only plow that we had was a wooden vee plow made out of wood and drawn by the team of horses. Needless to say it didn't do a very good job and in the spring when the snow began to thaw, there would be two or three feet of slush and we would have to wait until it melted before we could go and take the cars off the blocks and use them again for the summer. We didn't put too many miles on the cars in a years time this way. Lake Kushaqua was in the Town of Franklin and they plowed the main roads. They had big Walter Snow Plows which were all wheel drive and also had two wings one on either side of the truck. There was a little shack in the box of the truck big enough for two men who when it was nessary would raise the wings with chain falls which was no easy job but that was the way it was done. There were two men in the cab one being the driver and the other who raised and lowered the big vee plow in front of the truck. This was done with a hand operated hydraulic pump and they said that it pumped up hard but when it came time to lower it they just released a button and it went down. As long as it wasn't done to many times it worked quite well. The motor worked very hard and I've seen times that when they shut it off it would start running with the ignition key off as it was so hot it was dieseling or running without any ignition. The only way to stop it was to put it in gear and let the clutch out and that would stall the engine. When they sanded the roads they used the same truck and loaded it with sand. Then two men sat on the back of the tail gate and they would fill their shovels with sand and throw it on the road covering as much area as they could. As the sand was deleted they would signal to the driver to raise the box a little to make the sand slide toward the rear where they were so that they could continue sanding. When they were plowing snow they ran with both wings down and on the left side of the road. When they met a car they would stop and pull up the right hand wing to let it pass and then put the wing down and continue on their way. Needless to say there was very little traffic in those days but it was quite a thrill to meet the snow plow! Franklin County was the only county allowed to plow with two wings and that was because of the many miles of

road they had to cover. Of course when they plowed the State Roads, they only used one wing and plowed on the right side of the road. After some of the heavier snow falls it was two or three days before the plows would get to Lake Kushaqua but we just kept shoveling until they got there and there was plenty of that to do.

Getting back to the Power House , as I said it ran by coal. The coal was delivered by train in coal cars that were put on the siding next to the main line. We had a unique way of getting the coal first on a horse drawn wagon and later on our dump truck. Of course most everything was done by hand and so someone came up with an idea to to dig a tunnel under the siding and make a large hole so that two men could simotainously shovel the coal down to the vehicle that was backed under the tracks. It worked out ok but it still had to be shoveled by hand and in the case of the horse drawn wagon it also had to be shoveled off. Of course when we got the truck the driver could just dump the coal and come back for another load. We often would get two , three , or more cars at a time. One car would be spotted at the coal shoot by the train crew then when it was empty we had to move it back by hand and then move a full car into place also by hand. We hand long poles with a lever on the bottom that we pushed under the wheels of the coal car and in this manner we could inch the car ahead and put it where we wanted to place it. We had about three days to unload the cars after which if they weren't unloaded they would charge us what was called demurrage or something like that so we really had to work hard and fast to make sure we got the cars unloaded. In the winter time the coal would freeze and we would hit the side of the car with a sledge hammer repeatedly to loosen the coal. This helped a little but someone would always have to get inside the car with a pick ax and loosen the coal so it would run down to the pocket. Sometimes it would all let go at once and almost bury the man inside the car but other than being buried up to the waist in coal we would manage to dig ourselves out sometimes with the help of the rest of the crew and continue to get the cars unloaded. One or two cars were'nt to bad to handle but more than that was to say a lot of hard work with no time to rest until the cars were empty. After the cars were empty they might sit on the siding for a week until a train stopped and picked them up but we still had to get them unloaded in the designated time or we would be charged for each day that it took to finish the job .

As I said before we had a carpenter shop that was run by Elmendorf Brown on the north end of the village. He made everything for the repair and maintenance of the main

buildings and also for the cottages where we lived. There was saws, planers, and much sawdust in the mill. Everything was powered by belts from big electric motors and it was quite interesting to see everything working and the resulting products that were made and also it was a warm place to hang out in the winter time. In the winter they had a horse drawn sleigh that was pulled by the team (Bill & Bess) and they made the rounds of the village delivering ice coal or whatever needed to be delivered. There was a blacksmith shop in back of the carpenter shop that had a forge that used forced air delivered by a hand crank to make a very hot fire to forge horseshoes for the team and also for about anything else that was needed in the village . It was run by Martin Dodge who was a very good smithy and he could do about anything with metal that needed doing. It was great fun for us to get to turn the crank for the blower and watch the sparks fly as the smithy hammered the metal into shape then stick the work into a pail of water to harden the metal which created clouds of steam to our delight. It didn't take too much to amuse me in those days. We often road on the sleigh with Bill Wilson and helped with the loading and unloading and listened to the stories that were told by everyone that we came in contact with.

The telephone system that we had was what is called a magneto system and everyone in town was on the same line . We used a system of rings to call someone which might be two short rings plus one long or whatever was assigned. When there was a fire the ring was one very long ring. These rings were done by using the hand crank and cranking the correct code but they rang every telephone in town so everyone could listen in whenever a call was made. This was good in the case of a fire but one difficulty was that the girls dorm had one short ring and at times the boys would get annoyed and instead of one short ring they would crank the phone for a minute and then everyone thought it was a fire and everyone would get on the phone yelling where is the fire? This of course upset the boys and they would say I'm trying to call the girls dorm and someone would respond with fool the dorm is one short ring not one long one long is for a fire. Everyone listened in any way so nothing was a secret. We also had a switchboard later on so all you had to do was pick up the phone and the operator would ask who you wanted to talk to and you could say for instance I want to talk to the carpenter shop and she would connect you or if you wanted an outside line she would ask what number and call the long distance operator and then your call would be completed.

There was a pond across from the school house that was called the Ice Pond which was where the ic e was cut for use in the homes in the village. The ice was cut by hand with ice saws that were interesting in that they were quite long and had very large teeth. Only one man could use them at a time and they made long parallel cuts in the ice which would be twelve or fourteen inches thick. After the cuts were made then cross cuts were made in the blocks of the size that was wanted but not all the way through then a horse (Bill) would

be hooked to the long block and skidded up to the ice house and covered with sawdust from the lumber mill until it was time to use some of the ice. The ice would last all summer in the Ice House using this method of insulation. When we wanted to get ice to deliver we uncovered what was needed then we used a ice chisel and where the ice had been scoured previously we would pound on the mark until the piece broke off and then carry the ice with ice tongs and place it on the wagon to be delivered to each residence. When we arrived at a residence first you had to go in and take out what was left of the ice in the icebox and throw it away then haul the new block in and slide it into the icebox. That is why they were called ice boxes!! After awhile we finally got refrigerators but most people from my time still call them ice boxes.

We used to make our own maple syrup. In the spring we would trudge through the snow with a hand drill and sap buckets and tap the maple trees in our area. Then as we got warm days and cold nights the sap would rise and drip into the buckets. Every day after school we would go to the trees and empty the buckets into a large container that we would eventually haul back to the house where it was dumped into a large pot that was boiling on the stove. I believe they said it took a barrel of sap to make a gallon of syrup and I don't doubt it for one minute. We made syrup, soft candy and hard candy usually because we let it boil too long as we were most interested in making syrup!!

At the powerhouse on the roof of the building was a huge siren run by steam from the furnaces. All of the time that I lived there (about twenty five years) I only heard it twice and that was just to test it. It was very loud and usually not everyone was informed of the test so it produced some interesting results! It was so loud that people in Onchiota could hear it and that was two and half miles away and of course they would wonder what was going on so that is probably why it wasn't tested very often. The steam in the boilers ran at about 90lbs pressure so when the siren was turned on it always worked!