

Birth

Born, Henry Luther Chapman, August 5, 1875 in Hanover, Maine. The first son of Luther Bourne Chapman and (Martha) Amelia Howard Chapman.

Parents

Luther Chapman was originally from Kennebunk, Maine. Amelia Howard (as she was known) was from Windham. Luther and Amelia had met in Windham sometime in the late 1860s or 1870s (?) when Luther's father was preaching at the Windham Congregational Church. The Howards were local farmers, I believe.

Antecedents

Harry was descended from a long line of Calvinist farmers, small businessmen and Congregational ministers. According to a genealogy compiled by a Chapman in the late 19th century, Harry's line of Chapmans descended from Edward Chapman, originally from Hull, Yorkshire. Edward had come to the Bay Colony (Boston) in 1639/40 where he had kinsmen, who apparently arranged for his marriage. He was a carpenter by trade. The Chapmans migrated to Maine, Massachusetts and other New England colonies. One, John Chapman of western Massachusetts is now remembered as "Johnnie Appleseed" - a source of some family pride.

Grandparents and Parents

The more immediate Chapman branch settled in the Kennebunk and Kennebunkport area. Harry's grandfather was the Reverend Calvin Chapman (the one who later preached in

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Windham). Calvin was educated at Bowdoin College, where he graduated in 1839, and Andover Theological Seminary, graduating from the latter 1842. We still have Calvin's notes and some of his theological books. We also have an 1842 Encyclopedia Americana which we assume was Calvin's. Bowdoin at the time was a very small place, and I always liked to think Calvin would have known Longfellow, Pierce (Franklin), and Hawthorne - though, in fact, Calvin was there fully 10 years later (they all attended in the mid-to-late 1820s).

Calvin was ordained shortly after 1842 and began preaching at Epping, Maine. He seems to have been a strong-willed and difficult man - with, as one genealogical entry in another book put it, "decided convictions upon Christian doctrine, and [was] a logical and forceful reacher." He was literally "dismissed" from his pulpit in Epping in 1845, and began a more-or-less nomadic existence as a short-term preacher. He later held positions at Saccrappa, Foxcroft, and Standish, Maine, among other places. Windham fit in here, again sometime in the late 1860s or 1870s, I believe. (This would be worth a brief look at the Windham Church records).

In 1842 Calvin married Lucy Emerson from Parsonfield, Maine. She was related somehow (?) to the then director of the Andover Theological Seminary, L. (Luther?) O. Emerson. Lucy, whose 1828⁶ sampler we still have hanging, was somehow related to other Maine and Massachusetts Emersons and, according to family lore, is connected "reasonably closely" to Ralph Waldo Emerson. As with Johnnie Appleseed, Emerson is a family "plum" - one only distantly connected. Relations with L.O. Emerson remained close, however. Calvin and Lucy's son was named Luther possibly (?) after L.O. L.O. Emerson was also a talented musician and advised Calvin and Lucy's son, Luther, on music and allowed his name to be used as an endorsement for Luther's teaching abilities (see below for more on this).

Calvin and Lucy had three children in all: Emily Parsons Chapman (born in 1843), Calvin Emerson Chapman (born in 1844), and Luther Bourne (born in 1849). Emily Parsons suggests another family connection, with the Parsons also of Kennebunk (Parsonfield?).

Louella Parsons, the Hollywood gossip-columnist, was related to this clan and vacationed at the family estate in Kennebunk. Emily married H. (Henry) C. Whitcomb of Windham in 1883. She either met him earlier when Calvin was preaching there or after her younger brother moved to Windham himself. Calvin Emerson married Fanny Elizabeth Chapman (another Chapman - distantly related we assume) - the daughter of a farmer from Bethel.

Move to Windham

Luther Bourne met Amelia Howard sometime in the 1860s and 1870s, and finally married her in 1874. After a short-time in Maine (where Harry was born) the family moved not Windham. Here they bought Dr. Spafford's house in the village, a Greek Revival house built c. 1840-41. It is nearly identical in its details to the larger house next door (north) generally known as the Frank Harris house, but also as the Greeley house (related to Horace who once visited Windham) and most recently the Moore house.

Luther had a mortgage of \$650.00, which he eventually paid off in large installments. He became a locally prominent businessman, owned property "behind" and "above" the village (part of which would become Harry's small farm and part of which my Dad (Howard) still owns). He also farmed the old Mack Place, across the road and down the hill from his Windham house. He was marginally active in Republican politics, eventually (dates unknown) served in the Vermont legislature, and was the local postmaster, town clerk, town treasurer and notary. He was active in the church, directing the choir especially. Both he and Amelia were interested in music; both gave lessons and Luther had cards printed advertising his services. There was a violin and piano in the house, which at least Harry's sister, Winifred, did learn to play. Harry himself seems to have had no musical interests. Luther wrote and published music, mostly hymns, but some popular songs as well - such as "Under the Old Elm Tree." Amelia provided lyrics. She also wrote occasional poems for regional magazines. We have copies of most of the published music.

Something

Something interesting...
that Harry spent time in both places. My thought is that he went from dairy school directly to New York where he worked for awhile as a milk wagon driver for the Madison Square Dairy (with farms in Harlem, Harry used to tell me). My father remembers him working as a bread-truck driver in New York but ^{at} a slightly later period, for the Cushman Bakery. More research needs to be done on this. Tradition says he went with Frank Harrington of Chester (related to Stew Harrington, later postmaster). We have at ^{least} one New York-period photo of Harry (taken by someone else). We also have a souvenir book of a Hudson River Cruise line. He talked to me about how he enjoyed going down to the Battery on Sundays and seeing the crowds.

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Now, either before New York or as a break from it, he took a steamer down to Jacksonville, Florida traveling steerage. He worked his way over to central Florida to the Clermont area, taking a room in a boarding house. He apparently fished and hunted, selling both fish and game to local businesses, and also did odd jobs. He returned after one winter, traveling on the train, but returned periodically over the next few years. His last trip would be in in 1922-23 when he took my grandmother and father down for the season. Some of his nicer photos were taken in Florida, most, it would seem, during later trips. He met a young lady in Clermont during an early trip that he "nearly" married, but eventually returned to Windham. The main reason for his return seems to be that his mother was ill (with breast cancer) and needed someone to nurse her. This was around 1910. He stayed for at least a year, also helping his father with the business and farm. I believe she died on July 18, 1913. Luther would live on until 1920 (September 13).

Windham House

Harry apparently returned to New York for a while before his mother's death and also made other trips to Florida. His main purpose for the New York trips seems to have been to make and save money to build a house. He bought a set of standard plans around 1910-11 (?) for a hybrid kind of Craftsman-style/Colonial Revival home. The model is similar to one known as

"the New Haven" (somewhere we have more specifics on this). It had an open plan, dark varnished woodwork, an open-staircase, large verandah and gambrell roof. It also, supposedly, had the first bathroom with running water and the first indoor toilet in Windham. He built it on Cornhill behind his father's house. Earl Eddy, another Windham "lad" helped him.

Harry was very influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, though not in any methodical or "highfalooten (sic)" way. He built some Gustav Stickley type furniture to go in his house, with mortise and tenon joints, etc. including a pretty impressive desk. He also had sort of William Morris type wallpaper (though American) wicker furniture, and other things "Craftsmanlike." He bought a book on log cabins around 1920, obviously planning to build one, and was drawn to natural, outdoorsy things. This was reflected in his esthetic interests and, obviously, in his photography.

Harry was, overall, an old-fashioned naturalist and conservationist, kind of on the Teddy Roosevelt model, but without the bully-bully. One of his uncles, H.C. Whitcomb, was a bit of an adventurer and had spent some time in New Mexico managing a large ranch. It was said that he saw Geronimo (caged) after his capture, but this is all hearsay. He eventually gave his Winchester (model 1876, but not a low serial number) to Harry who in the 1960s gave it to me as a Christmas present. It was said to have killed at least one mountain lion. Harry (Henry) was probably named after this "Uncle Henry," incidentally (though the dates don't seem right).

Hunting and Fishing

Harry was an avid hunter and fisherman. He did some fly casting, and a few of his rather disheveled-looking flies were among his things when we finally cleaned out Winifred's (Luther's) house. He mostly used worms. He kept a boat at Lowell Lake and had at different times both a square-bowed and pointed-bow wood rowboat (this was later fitted with a small gas-operated, one-half horse engine). He fished for trout and at Lowell and other Lakes, perch

and bullhead - when they still had them! Hunting, he would invariably "get his deer" and especially liked hunting partridges and woodcocks. Down in Florida he caught all kinds of lake and river fish and hunted quail and pheasant - of which there are numerous photographs of dead specimens.

He raised dogs for hunting and especially liked English pointers, which became something of his specialty. One of his favorites, in the 1920s, I think, was "Lady". He raised dogs both for himself and others, including George Aiken, the Putney politician and later Senator from Vermont. Aiken and he were old hunting buddies and stayed in touch through at least the 1950s.

A lot of Harry's life was wrapped up in his outdoor activities. He wrote articles in a number of outdoor magazines, including Field and Stream. He had a wry, understated style, somewhat in the character of Mark Twain or other late 19th-century authors. He read ~~A~~ lot of "Boys Own" type adventure novels - railroad novels - and liked cowboy tales especially.

Harry was also a lot of fun. The bits and pieces of correspondence we have again sparkle with a kind of quiet wit. He was something of a jokester, eager to tell tales and pull your leg. He and Rowland and Winifred and the other Windham "young folks" put on little plays, with hand-written programs, at the church, sang songs in choirs and at parties and seemed to go on lots of picnics. Harry often photographed the picnics especially, using a remote release, so that he could be in the shots. It's really striking with how rough life must have been in poor old Vermont what a lot of leisure and what many good times they all had.

Marriage

Now back to the progress of Harry's life. In 1907 he had met May Goodell at his brother's wedding. She was a school teacher who also had attended (but not graduated from) Vermont Academy a few years before Winifred (she was the same age as Harry). She was educated finally

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in the Malden, Massachusetts public schools and later taught at Orange and Greenfield, Massachusetts. Harry courted her during summers, apparently walking (at least once) the 16 miles or so to Westminster West where her sister (and his brother) managed the store. They finally married in 1912, when both were 37 years old (She was born on March 7, 1875, he on August 5). They went on a camping trip somewhere in Vermont -- and there is at least one photo of them beside Harry's newish Model T Ford, while camping by a lake. They returned to Windham, setting up in Harry's house -- and here they lived until the mid-1960s, when they finally had to move in with my folks in Chester due to ill-health and old age.

They had my father (their only son) on January 23rd, 1915, when both were nearly in their forties. Howard Goodell Chapman, named after May and after Harry's grandmother, was a little tow-headed kid, with long hair and a Buster Brown outfit. He went to the Windham School (on the location of Peter Moore's later carpentry shop) and at 13 was sent off to Vermont Academy. Harry considered moving to Chester for Howard (sometimes called Hank, now called Chappie by everyone) to attend high school there, but decided against it. In 1922-23 the whole family took off to Florida in a 1920 Franklin, camping along the way or visiting old Windham friends, such as the Macks (who lived then in Washington). The tent and cots (which we still own) were provided by Abercrombie and Fitch -- which Harry had depended on for hunting equipment when he was in New York. (My 12-gauge Ithaca shotgun, once Harry's, was I believe from Abercrombie's).

Florida 1922-23

The Florida trip was undertaken in part for my father's (Howard's) health and in part for Harry to show May all she'd missed in Florida. They stayed the season, living in an apartment over a bank owned by one of Harry's hunting buddies, a local businessman named Charles Rowe. For years (into the 1960s?) Mr. Rowe sent my grandfather smoked pheasant as a Christmas

gift. Young Howard (my father) was a skinny kid prone to bad colds, and the doctors supposedly said he wouldn't live another Vermont winter. The main road (U.S. Route 1 and also present U.S. 441) was a dirt path most of its way. The family camped out. Interestingly, they stopped in Athens, Georgia, where I now live, and took photos here. They visited St. Augustine, Daytona (where Howard broke 90 mph on the beach), Tampa and other Florida cities before heading back. Florida was always spoken of fondly in our family and every November come the first real cold spell I thought from things my father was saying that we were going to move there. (Maybe that's why I never felt so tied to Vermont myself; I felt like an impermanent resident).

The whole Florida trip is well-documented in a large leather album which I still keep in my office. It has photos of alot of birds (dead) and fish (also dead) as well as the orange groves then being put in in central Florida - near the present Orlando area. There are also shots of the Rowes and old hunting buddies such as Sherm Fester -- all looking like characters out of the Yearling.

Life in Windham

Now, Harry was not rich to do all this. He and May lived a very modest life, without electricity (my folks finally insisted on and paid for a phone line in the 1960s), hauling in and splitting their own wood - a summer-long enterprise involving old friends of Howard's, such as Sam Abbot -- baking their own bread, raising chickens, keeping a cow, tending an orchard and keeping bees. Harry tried his hand at most things, including serious beekeeping. The horse, named Bessie and famous for living to 37, was used to help cut hay in the summer. The big cash crops were chickens (layers, kept until the 1930s when it became unprofitable), and maple sugar. Harry continued making sugar from his bush until the 1960s. Many a weekend was spent (by me and my brother especially) emptying buckets into larger buckets. He supposedly produced a premium grade, but that's probably true of all old Vermonters! Frank Harlow down in Putney, a Chapman cousin, finally made a bigger business of it.

Harry also was the insurance representative for Union Mutual, Vermont Mutual, and American Fidelity. This was mainly fire insurance and required only annual renewal; so it didn't take up much of Harry's time. He was a local businessman, involved in selling war bonds during World War I (he won decorative helmet for his efforts), and was also a notary. He served in the legislature a number of times, again like this father (the exact years I'm not sure of, but every winter he spent some time at the Old Pavilion Hotel in Montpelier where all the legislators lived for the session). However, it's clear that his main interests were hunting and fishing and just getting out into the woods. We have a very nice typescript from 1924 or so describing a hike he and Howard took on the Long Trail when Howard was about nine.

Photography

Finally, the photography: It is not clear when he began to take photographs. We have a shot of Winifred and Luther in a gig when Winifred was a small child. It was probably taken in the early 1890s. Among the family treasures are photos by B. H. Gurnsey, a well-known western photographer, which were probably brought back by his uncle H.C. Whitcomb when he returned from New Mexico. (Gurnsey's studio was in Denver). A number of the western photos were stereo-opticon views, and we still have the viewer. They were all taken in the 1870s. I think they may have been influential in some way. His own photographic work seems to have begun with Charlie Wellman, a local photographer in Chester. He started working for Wellman sometime in the 1890s -- as a teenager. They later became partners. Wellman was a typical portrait photographer, Harry was more interested in nature scenes. They decided to divide the business, with Wellman specializing in portraits and Harry in postcard views. Harry's postcard business was a major part of his work in the 1910s through the 1930s. A wing was added to his house in part to provide developing space and a studio. A darkroom (with red-tinted window in one of the risers) was added beneath the interior stairs. The developing took place outside the kitchen in the shed area, drying took place upstairs. He used a wooden, large format

view camera with adjustable bellows (now possessed by George Havill) and used standard Eastman/Kodak glass negatives. The prints were mainly contact prints (on Eastman/Kodak paper), though I believe he was set up for enlargements as well (we do have enlarged copies, but these may have been done at Wellman's studios in Chester). The paper was backed with standardized postcard "frames" on the reverse side, and photos were simply developed directly on the cards. They were sold on consignment at local stores. My Dad helped to truck them around. The business remained profitable, but only one of several "lines" of my grandfather's. Commercial printing of color views finally put Harry's kind of enterprise out of business, really in the 1940s. He continued taking photos for pleasure well into the late 1950s, and I remember him hauling out the old camera a number of times in my youth (I was born in 1949).

Harry's photos definitely have an "artistic" quality. Much of this seems to be more-or-less native good sense. He was not trained "artistically," though his family clearly had "artistic" interests, such as music, etc. Winifred kept a scrapbook of "famous views" (as well as portraits of famous folks) as a child, and there is at least one old book on "old masters." Harry did try his hand at painting, but this was really only a hobby. We have one painting of his dog "Lady" pointing, but it has a fairly primitive character (he also did some taxidermy, with fairly grotesque results). One of Winifred's friends was Ann Squier, a local artist. They were friends (I believe) at Vermont Academy. Ann taught art in the Springfield Schools and did several paintings in Windham. Harry more-or-less commissioned her to do a painting of the view along the road toward his house (partially from memory, as the fence shown was no longer present when Ann did the painting). She also did a view from his house and possibly a view of the house (this has not been attributed, it may be Harry's painting). We have ^{all three} ~~both~~ paintings at my folks' in Hilton Head. Many of his photographs reflect similar sensibilities, hearkening back to "nature" paintings of the Hudson River School (and Franconia Notch (?) group), both of which had at least some indirect impact on Harry's work - though specific connections can't be documented.

Harry's Family

Well, that's about the whole story. Young Howard (my father) returned to Windham in 1934 after five years at Vermont Academy. He worked for three years for the town of Windham (he was the town's youngest Lister at age 19), earning money for college. He wanted to go to Rensselaer (sic), but couldn't afford it, even with the math scholarship. He finally went to Tri-State College in Angola, Indiana, graduating with an engineering degree in 1939. He worked in York, Pennsylvania, a job gotten through some Windham summer people, the Lights. He was drafted in 1942, commissioned as a Lieutenant, spent time in Fort Story, Virginia (where he met my Mom, Mary Jane Ryan from Osceola Mills, Pa., then an Army nurse), and eventually shipped out to Europe, where he fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and later operated an R & R camp in Marienbad. Just before entering the Army he took my grandfather on a trip back to Hanover, Maine, to see the farmhouse where he was born (we have photos).

After the war my Mom and Dad moved to Chester; Dad worked as a mechanical engineer in Springfield, mainly for Bryant's. In the early 1960s both my grandmother and grandfather moved in with us. We bought a larger house in Chester to accommodate them (they required separate rooms). My grandmother had been "ailing" since the 1930s or 1940s at least, when an unsuccessful operation left her semi-invalid. Harry took care of her as long as he could, and my mother, father, brother, and I spend alot of time, especially every Sunday, in Windham when I was a kid. They both lived with us 'til 1967, when they both died (within a few months of each other).

1967
Died

Harry was a good old guy, but by this point was hard of hearing and hard of sight. He used to stand over the heating grate, I remember, flapping his arms, and this often surprised you when you came into the room. He watched alot of TV (from about one foot away) and especially liked soap operas. My grandmother thought it the nicest time of her life, and she used to like to watch the occasional school kids traipse by outside her window - which was alot more action than she'd

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ever seen in Windham. My Mom had a pretty difficult time of it, giving daily baths to my grandmother, preparing food and dispensing medicine. My grandfather thought my brother Tom or I would be able to give him rides around in his 1932 Ford (he had both a Model A and Model B, though the Model A was in "permanent storage" in Winifred's house). But we mainly drove him in our '58 Ford Fairlane, a kind of hot car of its time and fancier than my Dad had hoped for. I know Grandpa helped train me for my license, which is fairly amusing considering he couldn't see more than two feet ahead of him at the time. I'm afraid I didn't have as much patience as I now wish I had and never really pressed my grandfather for details of his life or recorded things as I would now.

Prepared by
Bill Chapman - grand son to Mary
Circa 1993



Portrait of a man in a suit