

A Swinger of Birches ... My Early Memories of Edwards

**by Frank E. Casanova
Written in 1996**

By the time of my first memory my parents had bought a house on the outskirts of the village, and one of my earliest memories is that of paving reaching our town. A concrete (probably one-lane) road was poured from Gouverneur. As the pouring came down Eastman Hill (It would have come down what is termed New Street now.) my mother took me to watch the progress. We sat on a roadbank covered with ripe wild strawberries, which were delicious and remain in my memory stronger than the road work.

We had a well at the back door and no running water. The facility must have been referred to as an "outhouse" because when a visiting girl asked where our "privy" was I told her we didn't have one! My father dug the ditch to bring town water to the house by hand. I only remember the frogs that fell into the ditch and couldn't get out. However, this gave us indoor facilities. Heat in winter came from the wood-burning kitchen stove and a wood-burning heating stove in the dining room. The open stairway to the 3 upstairs bedrooms was directly above this stove and the door at the head of the stairs was kept shut until bedtime. There was also a down stairs guest bedroom.



Carl, Frank, Gilbert and Walter

Frank Casanova
and his three brothers

In summer my mother used a kerosene stove in the attached woodshed.

My father also enlarged the cellar by hand and installed a furnace, with, I believe, only one register - in the wide doorway between the dining and living rooms.

He kept a cow, chickens and at times a pig, a flower garden, and extensive vegetable gardens. He smoked Prince Albert and I was paid one cent for each tobacco can (pocket size) that I filled with potato bugs.

Surplus eggs were preserved in "water-glass" in a crock in the cellar, and when baking my mother would at times ask me to go to the cellar for an egg. That stuff was cold and slimy.

My father had cut wood for stoves, alone, with a one-man cross-cut saw in what I thought was called the "Rushton lot". Years later I learned that it had once been owned by a brother of the Rushton of boat-building fame - a name known to residents and vacationers in the Adirondack Mountains (The Rushton family settled in the nearby village of Fine. The "Blue Line" of the Adirondack Park passes between Edwards and Fine.) And it was to the Rushton Lot where we went for spring flowers. Trillium, columbine, Dutchman's Breeches, Adder's Tongue (Trout Lilly), Foam Flower, squirrel corn, violets, Jack-in-the-pulpit; and on the open adjacent ridge top pasture, Bluets; and on the bank of the Oswegatchie River the explosive seed pods of Witch Hazel.

The river splits where it enters the village, forming an island built up as much as any part of the village. Both channels are bridged, and in my childhood were dammed, one powering a grist mill, the other Maybee's sawmill. We took burlap bags ("gunny sacks") to the latter to fill with sawdust for bedding for the cow. The sawdust was below the floor of the mill, where long wide endless belts transmitted power to the various milling machines. Gilbert had good luck fishing for pike below both dams. Now both dams are gone, as is the sawmill, and the grist mill, once a farm supply store, was a residence when last seen. (Note - burned later)



Edwards was at the end of a spur line of the N.Y. Central, with one train a day - in the evening. Perhaps the main reason was to haul the zinc from the mine, and the milk from the milk plant.

The surrounding farms were mainly dairy, and the town at one time had more than one cheese factory, and cheese was still made in my memory. Large hard discs, which went to N.Y. City. were not dented if run over by a truck. At an early stage in the process of manufacture the congealed curd was cut into strips about 1/2" in square cross-section which broke into short sections, and salted provided a tasty snack widely appreciated in St. Lawrence County. Years later we were surprised to find small packets in a supermarket in the Philadelphia, PA area.

A friend's father ran the milk plant and one time when I went in there with him he dipped a long-handled dipper into a vat of iced cream and we drank from it - delicious ! (The friend was Claude Williams and Claude's father was E. J. Williams)

Edwards experiences severe winters. Ice was hand cut from the river above town and transported on horse drawn sleds through the main street of town to an ice house of which I have no memory. But the rear runners of the sleds extended beyond the bed and on our way to school we could stand on them for a free ride. The same was true of farmers' sleighs.

Homeowners shoveled their walks and on some days the sun melted the banks on either side and the melt water froze on the walks, in narrow strips of various lengths as the temperature dropped. So heading to or from school wearing overshoes with 4 buckles (no zippers then) one could run approaching these strips, jump on and slide its length and maybe get in a few more running steps to get up momentum for the next one.



This photo shows Roscoe C. Todd with his horse and sulky.

But the most unique use of ice was its use as a track for horse races. Each shoe had several iron wedges about an inch wide and about an inch high (or deep). The first races were held on straight-a-ways on the river. Horses came from great distances, including a gray named "Northern Barron". Then a circular track was used on nearby Chubb (Cedar) Lake. (Imagine the thickness of ice required to absorb the impact of several trotting horses!). And finally a circular dirt track was constructed on Woodcock land near our home, sprayed with water and iced over in winter and used as a dirt track in summer. The wheels of the sulkies were replaced with runners in winter. Spectator tickets were sold for the races but we kids didn't (and couldn't) pay.

'Twixt winter and spring, when snow melted during the day and it froze at night, the sap rose in the sugar ("Hard") Maple trees before they leafed out. There were some maple trees along Main Street between the sidewalk and the road and some residents "tapped" (drilled a 1/2" hole into the sapwood, and inserted a spigot) the trees in front of their homes and hung buckets from the spigots. Sometimes they forgot to empty the buckets before school let out and we ran to be the first to the buckets from which we drank (after lifting them off the spigot hook). The sap the resident was able to save was boiled on the kitchen stove until it thickened to syrup.

The industry was important enough in our county that students were let out of school one day in season to visit the "sugar bushes". A sugar bush is a farm wood lot that contains sugar maples, and a "sugar house". These buildings housed large (perhaps 3' wide and 15' long) galvanized evaporative troughs set over fire boxes in which wood was burned to boil the sap. One end of the building was open, and in the gable roof was a cupola through which the rising steam could escape. In off seasons the farmers cut a large supply of wood to boil the sap. A gathering tank mounted on a sled was drawn by a team of horses from tree to tree, the buckets emptied into the tank, which in turn was emptied into the evaporative troughs in the sugar house. Some of the syrup was thickened and stirred to form maple sugar - either soft, put up in wooden tubs, or little hard cakes.



Gathering sap at Bullock's sugarbush

We drank the sap, some of the warm syrup, and some of the thickened syrup was poured in ribbons on the snow to form a chewy "wax". This was called "sugaring off". The combination had a rather laxative effect and the next day in school hands were frequently waving for permission to visit the out-houses. (Also called "Wax on Snow")

But "sugaring off" was not confined to the season when sap was "running", for we sometimes brought a dishpan of snow into the house and "sugared off".

Dad built a removable storm entry for the back door for winter and in this small enclosure, during at least one winter, a barrel of apples was stored. The protection, and the heat escaping from the kitchen, kept them from freezing, and they were delicious. Other foods that have a lasting memory:

Sometimes for dessert we would have one Babe Ruth bar (5cents at that time), cut into bite sizes, which would serve for the three or four of us at home.

And sometimes for a light meal we had boiled rice with sugar, cinnamon and milk - always good.

At least once my mother cut up cabbage, Dad placed a layer in a large crock, added salt, and I had the job of tamping each layer down - for sauerkraut.

While in Mexico Mom had learned about chili, but since beans didn't agree with one or both of them, she made it with elbow macaroni, and this became the favorite treat for all of our family. When Walter or Carl returned home for a visit there would always be a large pot simmering on the stove, and it improved with each warming-over until gone.

A water bucket, filled from the pump just off the back porch, sat on a shelf just inside the pantry door, with a dipper from which we all drank.

One fact, related at a much later date by Walter, was that Mom made herself undershirts from flour sacks. I have no personal memory of this but it well illustrates the frugality my parents exercised from necessity.

The photograph on the right shows Frank and Helena Klemann Casanova with two of their four sons, Gilbert and Carl.

After he installed the furnace in the cellar, at bedtime in winter Dad would bank the furnace with coal and then sit up to let "the gas burn off" before closing the draft to hold the coals overnight.



Helena, Gilbert, Frank and Carl Casanova

A mile toward Gouverneur the railroad crossed the Oswegatchie, and the woods between the far side of the trestle and the mine were called the "Northern Ore Woods". It was there that my parents repaired in summer for blackberries, black caps, red raspberries and gooseberries. This was before the days of slacks for women, but my Mother would don



Frank berrying with family. See railroad bridge in background.

overalls over her dress for that pursuit. One time I decided that I didn't want to go and they set off without me. They were not gone long when loneliness set in and I ran to catch them before they reached the trestle. Dad asked if I had locked the house, which of course I had not, so he hiked back to do so. What a brat!

I remember the first Negro I ever saw, for there were none in our area. What someone with a uniformed chauffeur was doing in our poor village is beyond my ken. Maybe someone with an Adirondack camp heading home and stopping to visit with Doc Campbell, for the car was parked near there. This man was leaning against a pipe railing that stood between the sidewalk and steps leading to a basement - perhaps beneath the Grange Hall. (An I.O.O.F. Hall stood on the other side of Main Street. My father, Walter and Carl were active

Masons, and Mother a member of the Order of Eastern Star.)

A couple of us kids hung on the pipes on either side of the man pretending not to notice him but stealing sideways glances. No words were spoken.

These pipes, and a similar railing leading up the steps to the P.O. may have been manufactured smooth for that purpose, but they had been polished by hands sliding along them for many years and by kids swinging on them.

When I was about 5 my mother took me with her to visit her brothers and sisters in Chicago, Bessemer, Antigo, Racine, and Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Uncle Carl in Chicago, Aunt Minnie in Bessemer, Aunt Netty in Racine, and Uncle Pete (and his son Bob) in Antigo. Uncle Carl was the only wealthy member of the family and when he died (before the 1929 stock market crash) he left my Mother \$10,000. While at Stella Mines they gained a life-long friend in a visitor to that project, Naroush De Taube (sounds French, but he was Russian). By the time of her inheritance, he had a seat on the N.Y. Stock Exchange. She asked him to invest her \$10,000, and he bought Safeway Stores, Santa Fe RR, and McCord (which made auto radiators and other auto parts). When Mom died each of these stocks was split four ways. I never followed stock prices, but some time before Gilbert died (1/23/88) I calculated the value of her \$10,000 investment at that time and it was over \$100,000 so that may be a small indicator of economic growth in this Country.

I remember when my parents acquired their first radio - a Stewart-Warner. The speaker in a heavy metal frame shaped like a mantle clock, was separate and sat on top of it.

I liked to make "boats" by using Dad's saw to put a point on a short piece of board. My father didn't like his tools handled the way I used them, so Mom asked him to put together a set of tools for me. That set wouldn't cut butter, I did make myself of some use in one way though. From down at "The Cove" I dragged home cedar rails from a dilapidated fence, propped them on a saw-buck, used a buck-saw to saw them to stove lengths, and split the lengths for kindling - all of which I enjoyed.

"The Cove" was an almost doughnut shape of back water of the river which filled at high water and released water when the river was low. The steep banks had been used as a dumping ground at various times and one time down there with Henry Rogers, Hank spied a set of small deer antlers, half buried. I feigned disinterest but after we returned home I hiked myself back down there and retrieved those treasured antlers! (An early indication of a devious character!). I mounted them on a plaque and had them on the wall of my room in the attic in Syracuse - at least through high school. As I think back now, those antlers were covered with velvet, which I peeled off. The buck must have been taken illegally - out of season.

A rowboat went over the dam in town and smashed its prow. Bill Cleland retrieved it, cut off the point square and nailed on a board. We brought it down the river to the Cove and I spent many hours drifting on its surface discovering various forms of aquatic life - including a paramecium? (Can one be as large as a marble?)



"The Cove" on the Oswegatchie River in Edwards



First school in Edwards to offer all 12 grades. Located on east Main St.

All 12 grades of the Edwards school were in a two story frame building now long gone. I believe a small church now occupies that site. Grades 1-6 occupied 3 rooms on the ground floor, grade 7 & 8 a room on the second floor, and high school the rest of that floor. In the first minutes of the first day of school Mrs. Finer played a march on a wind-up Victrola, and we marched single file around the room. (I think I grinned while marching.)

For arithmetic Mrs. Finer sat facing the class and held up what we would now call home-made "flash" cards with problems like $1/3$ and call upon the students by name for the solutions. When called upon I scratched my head and must have screwed up my face because Mrs. Finer mimicked me - probably to my embarrassment.

Dr. Taylor must have retired or died by this time because at least on one occasion the teacher marched our class to Dr. Adams' office in his home - I suppose for a general quick check-up. A stocky boy from the mines was one of the first examined - in the privacy of the doctor's office with the teacher present while the rest of us waited our turn. When he came out we asked what had gone on in there and what the doctor said. He chuckled and said: "Too much fat on the balls".

I had had blueberry pie for lunch and when it came my turn the doctor was momentarily taken aback by the color of my tongue.

In the third grade at Christmas time the teachers of at least two rooms combined for a Christmas program in our room, resulting in most students doubling up at desks. I believe some of the high-school students had acquired some 6 to 8" (or longer) lengths of glass tubing through which they blew bird-shot, and one of these had fallen into my hands - maybe via Gilbert - and I was seated in the rear row. Inez Manzoloti and her little brother Johnny shared the desk immediately in front of me and I blew a shot into the back of Johnny's neck. He started crying and Inez started waving her hand for a teacher and I figured I was in for it. Fortunately for me there was a good deal of confusion and the teachers were busy and by the time things quieted down and the program began Johnny had stopped crying and Inez had dropped her hand.

Nov. 22, 1996

Doris is here from Arvada, CO for a visit. She is 83 now, and tells me a fact of the Edwards school of which I have no memory. The Russ family moved to Edwards from Canton when Doris was a sophomore in high school. She was dismayed at the rickety frame building but especially by the fact that all students drank from a dipper in a bucket - she doesn't remember whether there was a bucket in each room or even if it was inside or outside. I have no memory of that. I have a vague memory that there was a well and hand pump in front of the school, probably pretty close in front of the entrance steps. Maybe we drank from our hand under the pump spigot.

Those were simpler times. The make of cars was plainly lettered on the front of the hoods - just ahead of the hood ornament - some simple, some ornate. And all the cars in our town were made in the U.S. One of these read Chevrolet, and one of my associates called it Chevrolay. Dumb kid. It plainly ended in et. (Now-a-days I read the words on cars and I not only can't guess the make but I have no idea of the country origin.)

I have already mentioned the movies in the Town Hall. Those occasional cowboy movies were the only scenes of violence I was exposed to, but for some reason a cowboy hauling off and socking a bad guy on the chin with his fist got my imagination working, and one day when Hank and I were standing close together on his front porch, without any warning I socked Hank on the chin and took off on the run. Hank was fairly stout and could not catch me and I guess by the next day had forgotten about it. Now I think, if the small amount of violence I was exposed to would have that kind of effect on me, it's not surprising that some of today's kids, exposed to a thousand times more violence (and much greater violence than socking a guy on the chin) would be inspired to try to act out something they have witnessed.



The "Opera House" - upstairs auditorium in Town Hall where movies were shown.

Mr. Gregory was the head of the Edwards National Bank. His son Hubert was my age and had a subscription to a nature magazine. I'd go over to his house and we

would go up to his room and cut animal and bird pictures out of his magazine.
How nice!

Ena Aunger taught grades 5 and 6. She would give an assignment to grade 5 and then move over to the other side of the room to teach 6. When I'd finish my assignment I'd listen to what was going on over there. Ena would keep an eye on us and asked me why I wasn't working and I'd say I was through. One day when she posed a question that no one in 6 could answer, she called on me and when I had the right answer she moved me into 6 and let me complete those two grades in one year.



One day Ena directed the attention of the classes to a bird outside. I believe it was a White-throated Sparrow, and I couldn't understand why she found it of interest. At that time the only attractive birds for me were the pictures of Blue Jays (and perhaps a Cardinal?) on the covers of lined school pads. Little did I realize that in later years they would become of profound interest and would consume a substantial portion of our lives.

At the left is a photograph showing part of the collection of birds carved by Thelma Casanova, Frank's wife.

The 7th and 8th grades were taught by Dorothy Brown (later to marry Arnold Dean and to purchase and reside in the girlhood home of nephew, Stuart Casanova's mother.) My desk was second from the rear and behind me sat two older girls, probably taller than other girls in the class. There was considerable whispering between them and one day after much whispering one dropped something and as I turned to see what it was she snatched it up and asked me if I had seen it. I hadn't but years later, I still wonder.

But there in the 8th grade I made a wonderful discovery. At the base of the rear wall of the classroom was a bench-high cabinet, and in it were many issues of Cornell Rural School Leaflets, on many different natural history subjects. No teacher ever used them while I was in school and I must have helped myself to some that interested me, for I still have some.

One day during the lunch hour another boy and I were the only ones in the room and for some reason we began throwing blackboard erasers against the high ceiling, leaving chalk dust marks up there. Principal Guy Hall came into the room and asked who had done that. We both professed ignorance and he left. Then I got cold feet wondering what the consequences would be if he found out, so I screwed up my courage and went into his office and confessed. I have no memory of his reaction.

In January, 1931 my mother made a rail trip to the Los Angeles area to visit her mother and brother William. On the 15th she sent me a picture post card from Albuquerque, writing: "This place looks just the same as when Papa and I were here 25 years ago. Only it is quite cold now. Love, Mama". On the 19th, a picture postcard of Rainbow Bridge - mailed in L.A., writing: "I didn't actually see this rock as it was back from the railroad. When you get big you must come out here and see the wonders of nature" (And years later Thelma and I had a memorable trip to Rainbow Bridge before Lake Powell made it easily available to thousands.)

My mother had a friend from New Jersey who owned a summer place on the road to Fine (perhaps backing up to the River) which included a souvenir shop. At some time during these early school years my mother took me there for a visit, though I have no recollection of how we made the trip, for my parents never owned a car. The Will Chapins (their daughter married Lathan, begat Gretchen, who married Lee Meldrim. Widow Lathan remarried, to Harrison Lumley, father of Earl) who owned and operated a grocery store on Main Street, owned a touring car - maybe with a canvas top and snap-on side curtains with celluloid windows - and on a few occasions took us for a Sunday ride - say to Hermon. Bread was delivered to their store in large, light re-usable crates, and the emptied crates - usually two - were set out on the sidewalk at the front of the store where they provided seats for loungers, perhaps joined by the proprietor in slack periods, to contemplate and discourse upon the passing scene

It may have been the Chapin's cottage at Trout Lake that my parents sometimes rented for a week in summer. I have four memories of it. Kerosene lamps provided the light and one night a Whippoorwill called from so close to a corner of the screened porch that its eyes reflected the lamplight. And Walter used a drinking glass to carry kerosene to start a fire in the wood stove. I got up in the night thirsty and filled that glass with water. Sick! Drinking water was obtained by running a bucket hung from a pulley which ran on a wire anchored in the lake and pulled back up to the porch with a line. By this time I could swim a little. The air must have been brisk because over my swim-suit I had a blue wool turtle-

neck sweater that I thought made my skinny frame pretty "macho" - a word to come into usage several decades later - as I set off in a rowboat. Pulling off the sweater I dove from the rear seat of the boat and when I came up the boat was drifting off smartly toward the little island that is southern-most in the line of islands that separate the "Little" from the "Big" Lake. My swim to catch that boat was the longest I ever made.

Will and Maggie Chapin in front of their grocery store on Main St.



But back to the souvenir shop: the items that took my eye the most (which seems odd for a grammar school boy) were wooden bowls turned from tree trunks with the bark still intact around the edges. But my Mother could not afford one of those so she bought for me a varnished Tomahawk cut from thin hardwood with a picture of an Indian head on the blade. (I think that may still be in existence in the family passed down through Stuart!) But anyway, I'd like to think that that early interest in turned wooden bowls presaged interest in later life.



The grocery side of Padgett's store

Now after that parenthetical reference to Chapin's store, I should mention the other stores in town. Padgett's - a double store with groceries on one side and dry goods on the other. The main attraction on the grocery side was a peanut butter machine. Whole roasted peanuts were weighed to order, poured into a hopper, a little tin man on top was animated and appeared to be doing the grinding, and the butter was exuded into a waxed cardboard container. Good! In the window on the dry-goods side one Christmas was a small china Blue Jay for about 39 cents which I bought for a gift for my Mother. I think I was a shy a penny for which I had to ask her. Or maybe I had 40 cents and told Padgett to keep the change - which intrigued my Mom when I told her of it.

I believe there were two Bullock's stores - one near the hotel where we bought fire works - crackers of all sizes, round torpedoes, sparklers, volcanoes, Roman candles, and sky rockets. (One Fourth one of our sky rockets started a grass fire in a corner of the cemetery across the road and Carl ran over and put it out with his bare hands - why not his feet I do not know!) The other Bullocks was Royce, where I bought those Blue Jay pads. (Note- The first Bullock store mentioned was Art Boulet's Red & White store beside the hotel.)

Frandy DuLac had a small butcher shop between the Town Hall and Dr. Campbell's (father of Lela Brown), Ab Clark had a drug store (?) and dry goods (?) on the other side of the Town Hall, and Etta Raymond had a small store near Chapins and sold penny candy.

Best of all, John Milan (Spanish immigrant) had an ice cream parlor on the corner, where the road turned toward Gouverneur. (He lived upstairs over it). I can remember my mother taking me there at least once for a treat. But my first Coca Cola was during the first year of high school in Syracuse - 5 cents for a glass at a drug store soda fountain.



John Milan's ice cream parlor in 1956

A Mr. Edison (the only Jew in town, unless Junky Rothenburg who later acquired the hotel was also Jewish) had a furniture store between Chapins and Ab Clark. Once he called me in and gave me a box of caps for my cap pistol. Another time a side-show came to town and set up below Eastman Hill. There was one exhibit I particularly wanted to see and ran into Mr. Edison and asked him for the loan of a dime and he obliged. When I told my Mother she was shocked and gave me the dime to return to Mr. Edison. At the show I had also stepped on the tine of an upturned pitch fork which pierced my tennis shoe and foot. She applied salt pork to that.

Halloween brought smearing of store windows with some white substance (Bon Ami ?), rattling them with "tic-tacs", made by notching the rims of sewing-thread spools, using a nail for an axle, and a string wound around the center to rotate the spool. The older boys once stole a farmer's buggy and hoisted it atop one of the outhouses at the school.

There were 3 churches in town: Catholic, Methodist, (both of which had parsonages and full-time pastors) and Universalist, which could not support a full-time pastor and which we attended. Nearby Canton, the County seat, was the home of St. Lawrence University and a Universalist Theological School, and students from that school conducted our services. One of them, a handsome fellow with a fine voice sang "Let me live in a House by the Side of the Road and be a Friend of Man" in service, and "Capt. John McPherson cursed the day he put to sea" in an entertainment at the Town Hall - to the delight of the girls. He brought me a fossil shark's tooth from the University. I did not enjoy Sunday



Early picture of Universalist (Union) Church on corner of Main & Church St.

School where we were given little cards of biblical characters in white robes and beards, and copper, silver, or gold buttons for attendance, and to sit through church service with my parents afterward, on unpadded church pews was even worse. That church is now gone, its site occupied by a small village park, but when we last saw it about 1978 the bell hung from a low mount on the corner.

I don't know whether I remember the incident, or only remember my Mother telling about it, but a boy (and Doris and I both think it was Gilbert) put his tongue on the iron loop handle of the freight wagon at the depot and it stuck there. I suppose it would take a teakettle of very warm water to get it unfrozen!

The only alcoholic beverage in our house was at Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Years when there was a wine with dinner -- port or muscatel. I don't remember at what age I was given a taste but I'd guess about 12.

By this time I had a paper route for the Syracuse Journal (maybe 30 or 40 customers) and Ed Adams delivered the Watertown Daily Times to at least twice that many from his bicycle. On winter nights with deep snow the train bringing the papers from Gouverneur was sometimes quite late and we had a long wait for it. On one such occasion Ed turned loose the loudest explosion I've ever heard and we both laughed so hard over it that Station Agent Mott Meldrim chased us both outside.

On April 22, 1924 my parents had opened a savings account in my name with a \$5 deposit in the Edwards National Bank. By 1929 it has grown to \$23, and I must have started delivering papers that year because regular deposits of two to five dollars began about bi-weekly. By March 4, 1933 I had \$102.99. I had started keeping a Boy Scout diary that year (the only year I kept one until Thelma and I married) and on March 6 I noted that Pres. Roosevelt had closed the banks on Sat. March 4. On March 13 I noted that "over 100 banks in different cities will open tomorrow", and on the following day that 6 banks opened in Syracuse, and if a depositor had good reason, substantial sums could be withdrawn.

On Nov. 29 the teller recorded a 29% waiver in my bank book, reducing my account to \$70.29, and on Dec. 1 the bank issued a Certificate of Participation, certifying my right to receive from the Trustees my share of certain assets not to exceed \$1.30. By May 14, 1942 the account had increased to \$89.88 and I closed it. There is no record that I ever received the \$1.30. On March 28, 1950 the same Trustees (Harry Webb, Grant Webb and Charles Adams) wrote to me (in Young, AZ.) that they had liquidated all assets and enclosed a check for six cents "which represents your share of the final distribution make a total of \$15.5% paid upon the 29% waived by you."

So as I figure it depositors in that bank lost one-quarter of their savings. It must have been that bank closure that brought about the creation of FDIC.

Sometime during those grade school years the Woodcocks, who owned a large farm and feed-mill, gave each student a certificate for one share of stock in their company (which I still have - its probably worth a fortune now) They also had a little pine seedling nursery in their garden and gave me several Scotch Pine seedlings which I planted along the fence behind our barn. When I last saw these about 1978, one of them was a tree of considerable size.

That June of 1933 I finished grammar school and Gilbert finished his freshman year in the College of Business Administration at Syracuse University - the first of the four brothers to attend college (Walter and Carl had 1-year "business college" education.).

Walter, Mary and Stuart were living in Fairfield, Conn. (and invited me to spend most of the summer with them. By July 1 of 1933 Walter had taken us for a 15 minute ride in a Ford Tri-Motor airplane, probably the first flight for any of us, because on that date Dad wrote me a letter commenting on my report of the flight. He also wrote of the hot weather in Edwards, and that Gilbert had a summer job at Balmat. He enclosed 3 dimes that I had requested, and closed with good advice. On the 17th he wrote that he had fun berrying for several days, that work was progressing on the State road between the bank corner and Little Scotland and that Mama was at the church to help tie a quilt for some one. "Carl is still at the Scout Camp." Peas were finished, but harvest of beans just starting, and cucumbers and corn-on-the cob to come.

I also have four undated letters from Mom. Gilbert had gone with the Russ family (he would later marry Doris) to Jones Pond on the 4th and got a terrific sunburn. She had received my report card from Dorothy Brown with the low mark of

85 for writing. "you see your writing leaves much to be desired". Ain't that the truth !

Sept. 10, 2000 Recently I have been re-reading "The Joy of Reading", by Charles VanDoren. In the three pages he devotes to Robert Frost he quotes the poet: "One could do worse than be a swinger of birches" and that stirred a memory long forgotten. Maybe "swinging birches" was common in the Northeast. It was taught to me by Gilbert who would say: "Let's go swing birches". The idea was to climb high enough in a paper birch that the tree would bend over and lower one quite gently to the ground. There were clumps of birches between our house and the river, on land that probably belonged to the railroad, and that was where we "swung". My memory is that I probably selected trees five or six inches in diameter, while Gib, who was older and heavier probably chose trees somewhat larger. Anyway, now I'll have to try the library for Frost's poem "Birches".

Sept. 11, 2000 - Sure enough, the poem takes up almost two full pages in the volume I found and gives an accurate portrayal of the process, including some of the discomforts. The line quoted above is the final line.

Some other lines:

"I like to think some boy's been swinging them

I should prefer to have some boy bend them -- (rather than the snow)

Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,

Whose only play was that what he found himself,

So was I myself a swinger of birches"



Left - Frank climbing on Fairview Cemetery gate - age about 3 yr



Frank E Casanova



Frank and Gilbert Casanova



Frank E. Casanova (on left) with his nephew, Stuart at the Trout Lake camp.



Frank E. Casanova (on right) with his nephew, Stuart Casanova, at Frank's home, Carefree, AZ in November 2004.

Biographical Sketch by Stuart Casanova in 2005

Frank Edward Casanova was born in Edwards in 1919. His parents were Frank Nicolas Casanova (1869-1943) and Helena Klemann Casanova (1881-1955). They lived in the house opposite the Fairview Cemetery.

Frank N. Casanova was the Mine Captain at the Edwards zinc mines from 1915 until his retirement.

They had four sons:

Walter (1902-1980) who married Mary Kerr (1900-1989). Mary Kerr's family lived next door to the new Post Office in Edwards. They had a son Stuart.

Carl (1906-1960) who married Marion Deveroux (1905-1977). They ran the Bowling Alley in Edwards and from 1947-1960 lived in the house opposite the Fairview Cemetery. They had a daughter Nancy.

Gilbert (1912-1988) who married Doris Russ (1913-). They both graduated from the Edwards School in the Class of 1930. Gilbert was a CPA in Syracuse. They had son Roger and daughter Carol.

Frank E. (1919-) who married Thelma Reynolds. After he finished 8th grade in Edwards, the family moved to Syracuse, NY. Frank graduated from the Syracuse University School of Forestry in 1940. He was a Lieutenant in the US Army during World War II. He pursued his interest in wildlife and the outdoors as a Ranger with the US Forest Service in Oregon, Arizona and Pennsylvania until his retirement in 1974. They both have a great interest in birds and Thelma is a very accomplished bird carver. They now reside next to the Tonto National Forest near Carefree, Arizona.



Edwards School - First and Second Grade - 1925

Top row -- Everett Glasford, Frank Casanova, Henry Payne, Harry Guiles, Charles Lennox.

Second row -- Harry Hern, Claude Williams, Edward Adams, Genaro Auriello, Pompey Auriello, Walter Baxter, Johnny Manzolati, Donald Baxter, Max Lanphear.

Third row -- Mrs. Finer, Katherine Duchano, Doris Blackburn, Eleanor LaRock, Marjorie Maxiner, Helena Robinson, Louis Curcio, "Budgie" Collier.

Bottom row -- Lucille Collier, Edith Hern, Helena Freeman, Marion Harmon, Edna Williams, Marion Blackburn, Inez Manzolati.