



The Diary of Jared Nash

Edited by Jack Sanders

Red Petticoat Press

Copyright 2018 by Jack Sanders

ISBN

First printed in September 2018

Published by Red Petticoat Press, 91 Olmstead Lane, Ridgefield, Connecticut, 06877

For more information, visit www.sandersbooks.com or email jackfsanders@gmail.com

Introduction

What was everyday life like in small-town New England in the 1800s? A mid-1860s diary of a middle-aged farmer in Ridgefield, Connecticut, provides many insights into a 19th Century farming family and probably into what life was like throughout the first half of the century and perhaps even the late 18th Century.

The diary, with entries in pencil for every one of the 730 days of 1865 and 1866, describes – in the sparest of terms – the farming and social activities of Jared Nash and his family. Jared, about 40 years old when the diary opens, lived on Silver Spring Road opposite St. John’s Road, a stone’s throw from the New York State line in Fairfield County, Connecticut. He lived with his parents, Charles and Roxy Nash; his wife, Emily; and their daughter, Emmie. During the course of the diary, his second child, Charles S. Nash, who grew up to become one of Ridgefield’s leading citizens, was born.

The Nashes were what might be called subsistence farmers; they were primarily interested in growing enough crops and raising enough livestock to survive on, and sold relatively little. They grew corn and rye, raised turkeys, kept some cattle and pigs, had an apple orchard, and grew many kinds of vegetables. To bring in extra income they sold a little of their crops, as well as butter, an occasional pig and cow, chicken or turkey, some wool, and perhaps some firewood. They made railroad ties in winter and sold them in spring. Emily was a seamstress and worked at home on sewing shirts for local manufacturers.

Although records in the Ridgefield Town Hall indicate that Jared was a shoemaker by trade, little of shoemaking is mentioned in the diary, but much mention is made of farming the family’s spread at Silver Spring and of the simple but important chores of keeping up the household.

“The true Yankee farmer was a professional Jack-of-all-trades,” wrote W. Storrs Lee in *The Yankees of Connecticut*. “He had horses, cows, sheep, fruit trees, grain fields, and vegetable plots, 50 acres of pasture, and twice as much woodland... It was a challenge to generations of families, a noble undertaking, successful and then unsuccessful.” Money was handy, but, as Eric Sloane once wrote, “in those days wealth was not measured in cash. Rather was it measured in a person’s ability to make use of what nature provided and the manner in which he stored up against the stark days. Most things around a farm were traded, so there was little need for cash. Bank accounts were rare; one’s entire wealth was usually invested in the farm.”

Some money could be important especially if one had a mortgage to pay off. Mortgages were uncommon, and those that existed were often between family members. However, farmers wishing to expand their property or, as could easily happen, survive after a disastrous growing season might have to borrow money.

Perhaps by today’s standards the Nashes’ was a life on the border of poverty. It was a hard life, with many trials and tribulations, failures and successes. Charles Nash, for instance, went bankrupt in 1842 and lost much of his property. Abram S. Nash, his cousin, declared insolvency in the 1870s and lost his home. Elizabeth Nash Grumman, Charles’ daughter, was only 25 years old when both her husband and a year-old son died within two weeks, leaving her a widow with two other children, and she soon had to sell her home and move away. Diarist Jared Nash himself lived only 45 years before dying of tuberculosis.

That the Nashes survived the trials of 19th Century rural New England is a tribute to their way of life, which combined hard work with close family ties. They did not give up and when problems arose, family helped. Charles’ father, Jared, rescued him from bankruptcy and his daughter, Elizabeth, loaned him a sizable amount of money late in his life – presumably to survive on. Throughout the diary, we see examples of one family member helping another. When Emily is ill following the birth of Charles S. Nash, sisters and neighbors help out at the

house. Jared N. Olmstead, Jared Nash's cousin, is always assisting with plowing, and Silver Spring farmers like Munson Hoyt and Daniel Bennett frequently lend a hand – and the Nashes help them out in turn. Father, though in his early 70s, is always aiding family and friends.

Such cooperation was tradition among farmers in New England. But it was especially critical during the period of the diary. The Civil War was still underway when the diary begins, and many of the young men who might have worked on farms had gone off to war. In 1860, Ridgefield's population was 2,200 people. About 200 men from town served in the Civil War – nearly 10% of the town's population, including women and children. (By 1870, the population had fallen to 1,900 as many younger residents sought their post-war fortunes in states to the west.) Almost all the people who assisted the Nashes were too old to be soldiers – as were the Nashes themselves.

Cooperation extended beyond family and friends. The Nashes and many of the people who associated with them were active in their community. Virtually every office in town government was held at one time or another by someone or other who appears in the diary. There were selectmen, school committee members, tax collectors, highway surveyors, haywards, constables, members of the Board of Relief, state representatives, and even fence viewers. They believed in community service, and that meant participation in the town's government.

The diary usually limits itself to family-related activities and makes almost no mention of news of the day, such as the Civil War, the assassination of Lincoln, or town politics. Deaths of family friends are noted, visitors are recorded, trips are briefly described; but only very occasionally is there reference to a non-family event, such as the burning of a block of stores in Norwalk or the collapse of a dam at Titicus. And there is almost no commentary on anything except the weather, which, typical of farmer diaries, is recorded every day.

Most of the interest in the 206-page diary, written on four-by-six-inch pages, lies in its cataloguing of the day-to-day tasks that had to be performed to

keep farm and family going. The diary's descriptions, though brief, of everyday life of a 19th Century farming family collectively give a fairly comprehensive picture of a small agricultural community – the way life was for most of New England country folk of modest means at this time.

During the course of the diary, more than 100 people are mentioned, most of them Ridgefielders, but many from Wilton, Norwalk and South Salem where the Nashes had relatives or friends. Collectively, their lives spanned more than a century, some of them having been born in the late 1700s while others lived into the early 1900s.

* * *

By 1865 when the diary opens, farming was undergoing a revolution, with the invention and production of many labor-saving agricultural machines. However, it is doubtful that the Nashes, with their modest means and small spread, had incorporated many of these modern conveniences into their farm work, and many of the techniques and tools employed by the Nashes were probably the same as those used by Ridgefield farmers a century earlier.

In fact, it was the coming of mechanization that helped spell doom for many New England farmers, whose small fields, often surrounded by rock walls, could not make efficient use of the big new machines. Such equipment was much better suited to the Plains of the Midwest, and consequently many New Englanders gave up their inefficient farms or switched almost exclusively to dairy farming. Or they moved westward to take advantage of those flatlands.

In the diary, we are probably witnessing some of the last years of the Nash farm, whose land had been agricultural for nearly a century and a half. Because of Jared's early death and the lack of any other close family members interested in farming, ownership of the spread left the family in the 1870s. By the late 1920s, most of its fields and woodlands had been acquired for the Silver Spring Country Club, whose 18-hole golf course opened in 1932.

Also of interest in the diary is Jared's use of language – the words, phrases, and colloquialisms of the period. Although Jared's entries are usually brief, different and sometimes colorful phrasing is employed. It is probably very close to the way Jared and his family spoke in ordinary conversation.

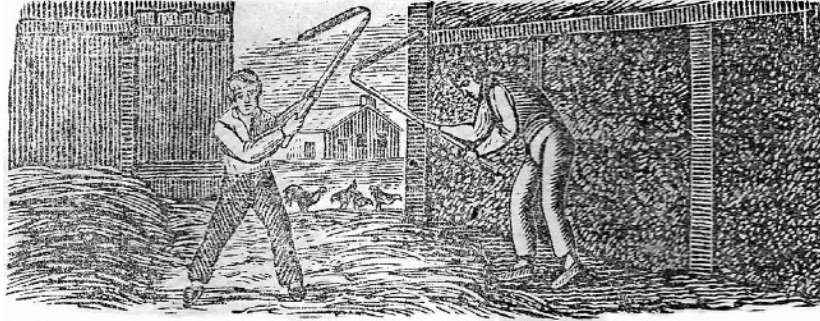
Another interesting thing to observe is the health of the main characters. Jared Nash himself is a somewhat sickly person. He suffers from colds, toothaches, and other problems. It is perhaps not surprising to learn that he dies in 1870 at the relatively young age of 45. His father is rarely recorded as sick in the diary, and outlives his son, dying in 1878 at the age of 84. His mother, also rarely reported ill, was 82 when she died in 1876. Emily, his wife, goes through a difficult period at the birth of Charles S. Nash, and remains in bed for weeks. However, she, too, far outlives Jared, dying in 1901.

* * *

Because Jared's entries are usually very short and matter-of-fact, readers must use their imaginations to catch the mood and color of the events described. To help readers understand what is happening, annotations are provided, based on the study of town records, genealogies, old almanacs, contemporary diaries, agricultural guides of the area, and many other sources. As for Jared's text, punctuation has been added or corrected. When incorrect or variant spellings are used consistently, they have been retained; otherwise, misspellings have been corrected.

Michael Kinslow discovered the diary of Jared Nash in the early 1970s. Kinslow, then a high school student, loaned the diary to this writer, who transcribed the text and then began researching the entries. In the late 1970s, The Ridgefield Press began publishing this annotated version of the diary. However, the series ended before the diary did because of a production problem: A serious paper shortage hit the newspaper industry in 1979, and The Press had to eliminate many non-essential features. When the shortage ended, the shelved project never got restarted. However, the author revisited the project in the 1990s, and this

version of the diary contains many new, updated and extensively expanded annotations. Images accompanying the text are from contemporary almanacs.



1865

1 January Sunday

Clear and cold. Snow blew hard.

(Almost every one of the 730 entries in this diary describes the day's weather. This may seem boring and irrelevant, but to a farmer, the weather was of tremendous importance. For us, knowing what the weather will be merely is a convenience so we'll know how to dress or whether we'll have driving difficulties. To the farmer, weather controlled the kind of day-to-day work that could be performed and, in the long run, the amount of food the family would have and the amount of income; records of it were of great interest. Jared no doubt checked his notes from previous years to see what might be expected in the year to come. The snowfall must have been severe because usually at least one member of the Nash family went "to meeting" or church on Sunday.

(In his diaries in the late 1700s, George Washington invariably recorded the temperatures morning, noon, and night, described the weather conditions, and only then went on to talk of the great affairs of state in which he was involved.)

2 January Monday

Clear, more moderate. Father cut and drew 2 loads of wood.

(Father is Charles Nash, born Dec. 17, 1793, son of Jared and Rachel Olmstead Scribner Nash. Charles' father was obviously the namesake for his son. Jared and Rachel were married July 17, 1793, suggesting that even in the 18th Century, couples could be in a hurry to be wed. Charles was a shoemaker by trade – as was his son – although it is clear from the diary that he was also a farmer of many talents. He was active in the affairs of the Flat Rock – or Ninth – School District, which served children in Jared's neighborhood. Charles served on various committees that acted as a modern school board might. He was also a town official, serving among other things as a selectman in the 1830s. Selectman was among the highest of town offices; the committee of several selectmen collectively acted as a mayor. His holding this office shows he was well-

respected. Charles survived his son, Jared, dying in 1878 at the age of 84. His father was also long-lived, having died in 1860 at the age of 92.

(The wood being cut probably wasn't for immediate use in the fireplace. Wood must be dried or seasoned before it could be burned; otherwise resins would be given off as vapors and would collect on the throat of the chimney. If built up enough, the resins would ignite, causing a dangerous chimney fire. Fireplace wood was selected for the absence of resins and for its hardness – the harder the wood, the longer it would burn and the more energy it would produce. The likes of pines and hemlock were never be used as fireplace fuel because they were too dirty when burned and could lead to chimney fires. Ash, oak, hickory, and maple were common fireplace woods.

(Wood was gathered in winter for several reasons. First and foremost, farmers had the time – there were no crops that needed tending. In winter, it was easier to pull large loads of wood on a sledge or “stoneboat” across the slick snow than drag it across the earth. The winter forests also lacked the thick underbrush that made movement among the trees difficult. Finally, the wood was drier in winter, lacking the sap. Cutting in winter would give it time to season for the following winter's fires. As we shall see soon, though, the Nashes also cut wood for another purpose.)

3 January Tuesday

Clear, quite pleasant for winter. Emily went to the funeral of Uncle Daniel Smith. Father cut some in the woods. He and Emily went down to Comstock's store in the evening.

(Emily, Jared Nash's wife, was the daughter of Gamaliel and Polly Northrop Smith, who lived on West Lane – about a mile to the north. She was born Emily A. Smith around 1832 and married Jared Nov. 12, 1856 when she was 24 and he 31. She died in 1901.

(Uncle Daniel Smith was probably a brother of Emily's father, Gamaliel. He had died Dec. 30, 1864, at the age of 74, and had been a local merchant.

(Comstock's Store was in Wilton on Ridgefield Road – Route 33 – at Nod Hill and Olmstead Hill Roads. It was operated by “James Comstock, grocer” and was the location of the North Wilton Post Office. This was several miles to the south, a pretty long journey for a January evening, but the Nashes had many connections, both family and business, with the Bald Hill section of northwestern Wilton.)

4 January Wednesday

Some snow through the night and this morning. Some sunshine, windy, and squally in the afternoon. Father got some wood.

5 January Thursday

Clear and cold. Father got some wood. He let Daniel Bennett cut a load.

(Daniel Bennett, a farmer who sometimes worked for the Nashes, lived up Silver Spring Road in a small house still standing opposite the entrance to Silver Spring Country Club; Bennetts lived in the house until the 1960s. The place was much renovated after a fire in the 1990s and a new house added to the property. At this time, Daniel was about 70 years old. Here, the Nashes are apparently allowing him to cut some of their own firewood, probably because he had no woodland of his own or as payment for a service rendered. Despite his advanced age, Daniel helps with crops on the Nash farm during the warmer months. He died in 1877.)

6 January Friday

More moderate, some rain in the afternoon and rain all night. Got some wood in morning and picked some chickens. Aunt Clara and Rebecca spent the day here and Jared the evening.

(By picking chickens, Jared may have meant plucking them or simply selecting certain ones for sale or slaughter. “Picking” was an old term for plucking. Note that the next day, the chickens are delivered to Russell Mead.

(Clara Olmstead was Jared’s father’s sister. Born Clara Nash in 1800, she married William Olmstead in 1818; he died in 1836 when he was drowned at the entrance of Norwalk Harbor. One of her children was Jared N. Olmstead, the “Jared” who’s there in the evening. Clara died in Port Chester, N.Y., on March 1, less than two months from this entry. She was 64 at this time.

(Jared Olmstead and his wife Rebecca show up frequently in this diary, and lived on nearby St. Johns Road.

(Jared Nash Olmstead, most often referred to in the diary as “Jared” [and sometimes as J. N. O. or J. Olmstead], was a cousin of diarist Jared Nash. Both Jareds were probably named for their common grandfather, Jared Nash [*see under* Jan. 2, 1865] who had owned Jared Olmstead’s house on St. Johns Road until his death in 1860. In the 2000s, the house belonged to the John Kukulka family, but it had remained in the Olmstead family until the 1970s when Robert M. Olmstead lived there. Born around 1819 in Ridgefield, Jared Olmstead was about 46 years old at this point. He was a farmer but was also one of the town’s leading citizens. He was active in school affairs as early as 1853; one of his tasks – in 1857 – was to collect contributions to build a new privy for the Flat Rock Schoolhouse, which stood nearby on Wilton Road West. He was also elected a town constable in 1863. He was a state representative in 1862 and 1863, and a selectman in 1867 and 1868. Jared died in 1904 at the age of 85.

(Rebecca was born Rebecca Ruscoe in Lewisboro, N.Y., and died in 1886 at the age of 56, making her about 35 years old at this time.)

7 January Saturday

Rain in morning. Made some ice, then snowed and blew verry hard. Grew cold very fast. Father went to Russel Mead in morning to carry chickens.

(Although Jared is a pretty good speller in his dairy, he usually writes “very” with two Rs. Occasional spelling errors in the diary have been corrected; consistently erroneous or variant spellings have been retained.

(Russell Mead was a farmer who lived on Wilton Road East in a house still standing almost opposite Silver Hill Road. A Ridgefield native, he was, like Charles and Jared Nash, active on the Ninth School District committee and was on the building committee – with grandfather Jared Nash – for the new Flat Rock Schoolhouse in 1846-47. He was about 59 years old at this time and died in 1877 at the age of 71. Mead probably bought the chickens, fowl that provided a small income for the Nash family. Or the Nashes may have been donating the chickens – Mead was connected with the family, though not related; his wife was the sister of Richard Dunning, who married the daughter of father’s sister, Clara Nash Olmstead.)

8 January Sunday

Clear and verry cold. Mercury 3 above.

(The standard thermometer, invented around 1650, was a commonplace weather instrument by this time. However, Jared records temperatures only when they are extreme cold in winter or heat in summer.)

9 January Monday

Clear and more moderate. Father getting wood. I went over in the woods in the afternoon twice. Henry Ingersoll and George Smith’s wife here in afternoon.

(Henry Ingersoll is the son of Samuel and Millicent Smith Ingersoll. Millicent, who dies Dec. 25, 1865, is Jared’s first cousin, once removed. Henry was born in Ridgefield in 1825 and died in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1903. His name appears once more in the diary on Feb. 24, 1866.

(George Smith’s connection with the family is unclear as is his identity. Emily Nash, of course, was a Smith, but Ridgefield was loaded with Smiths in the 19th Century. A George Smith, husband of Emma, died Dec. 8, 1884, aged 87, and his wife died in 1896, aged 87. Oddly, they had three children who died young – Emma Jane, George Lewis and Martha Jane – who are buried not with them, but actually relatively close to Jared and Rachel Nash, grandparents of our Jared Nash. This may be just a coincidence.)

10 January Tuesday

Rain through the day. I do not feel verry well.

(Jared here notes, for the first of many times, that he is not feeling well. Such references are probably signs of the problem or problems that led to his early death from “consumption” or tuberculosis only five years later at the age of 45. Had he had the benefit of modern doctors and medicine, his illness might have been detected and he might have lived to the ripe old ages of his grandfather, father and his son.)

11 January Wednesday

Clear, cold and windy in forenoon; more moderate in afternoon. Father helpt J. Olmstead saw trees. Don't feel much better.

(Father's helping Jared Olmstead is another of many examples of family and friends assisting each other with chores – typical of the way people cooperated in the 18th and 19th Centuries. In warmer weather, Jared helps frequently with such tasks as plowing.

(Cold days in winter were the best time for sawing wood; wood saws easier when it's frozen, oldtimers believed.)

12 January Thursday

Clear and cold. Father helpt Jared saw in forenoon. Went to Taylor mill with feed in afternoon. Mother is sick.

(The Nashes, particularly father Charles, frequented a half dozen mills to get their grains like buckwheat and rye ground into flour or, as in this case, to grind corn or stalks into feed for the livestock. Taylor's mill was situated on the Norwalk River just north of the Stonehenge Inn. It was one of more than a dozen mills along the Norwalk River between Ridgefield and Long Island Sound at Norwalk. Imagine the river as a fat power line, providing the energy for these small factories to turn their grindstones. Rivers were an essential “utility” in early American towns, and the fact that Ridgefield gave rise to the Norwalk, Titicus and Silvermine Rivers, and several smaller streams like the Comstock, Cooper, Mopus, and Miry Brooks that could support mills was not lost on the people who settled the town in 1708.

(Here is the first mention of Jared's mother, about whom Ridgefield records tell little and to whom Jared never refers by given name. She was Roxy Keeler Nash, Charles' second wife and a native of Wilton. Born in Wilton April 1, 1794, Roxy Keeler married Charles in 1822, shortly after the death of his first wife, Roxana Nickerson, in 1821. Roxy died here Aug. 21, 1876, at the age of 84.)

13 January Friday

Warmer, some cloudy in afternoon. Emily and Emmie went up West Lane in afternoon. Father went to J.N. Olmstead in morning.

(Jared uses “some” in the colloquial sense of “somewhat.” Some natives of eastern Massachusetts, particularly Cape Cod, still use phrases like “it’s some cold out today.”)

(Emmie, born Emily Louise on April 16, 1860, is Jared’s and Emily’s only daughter. At the age of 40, she married 60-year-old Daniel Smith Sholes, a banker and merchant [*see* Jan. 30, 1865 and Nov. 9, 1866]. Her death record in 1915 calls her Emma, a version of her name she probably preferred to Emily or Emmie.)

(Throughout the diary are mentions of going “up West Lane,” a trip of a little over a mile. Emily, Jared’s wife, was born on West Lane and, after Jared died in 1870, she moved back there. Her mother, a brother and sisters, and her friends all lived there. One of the places she was likely to have visited was the house, the second door down from Olmstead Lane, that in the late 20th Century was the Red Petticoat antiques shop and that was probably then her family homestead.)

14 January Saturday

Snowed all day, but is damp and does not make verry fast.

(“The snow ... does not make verry fast” means that it’s not accumulating very quickly because of warmth, or is not amounting to much. The amount of snow on the ground was very important to people a century ago, as we will see later.)

15 January Sunday

Clear and cold. Abram came here after supper. Mrs. Keeler and Rhoda in evening.

(Abram was probably Abram S. Nash [1822-1906], who was a cousin of Jared, and at this time may have been living in Lewisboro, N.Y. Abram, who appears a half dozen times in the diary, is married to Sarah Gray Nash, and they have a teenage daughter, Jane. Abram, incidentally, was elected a town hayward in 1860. A hayward was an ancient office, somewhat like a canine control officer of today, responsible for catching and impounding stray livestock, particularly swine.)

(Mrs. Keeler and Rhoda are probably Wilton Keelers who lived in a house that stood until about 1945 on Ridgefield Road [Route 33] near the intersection of DeForest Road. According to the late Karl S. Nash, Rhoda was one of seven Keeler sisters who lived in that house. Jared’s mother, of course, was a Keeler.)

16 January Monday

Clear, cold, and windy. Father got some wood.

17 January Tuesday

Cloudy, snowed through the day. Mother went to J. Olmstead.

18 January Wednesday

Clear and cold. Father in woods in forenoon; in afternoon, he went to mill. Emily went to the store with him.

19 January Thursday

Clear and cold. Mercury 2 above. Cloudy towards night. Father getting wood. Emily & Emmie went to Mrs. Keeler's in afternoon. Snowed in evening.

(The Old Farmer's Almanac of 1865 predicted "very cold with high winds" at this time.)

20 January Friday

Clear. Father went to H. Gilbert's mill. Mother went to George Smith's with him. Emily & Emmie went up in the afternoon after her, and Libby Grumman came home with them.

(The Gilbert family mills were on the Titicus River at Saw Mill Hill Road, about three miles north of the Nash farm, and included saw, grist and cider mills. At the time of the diary, Harry Gilbert owned the mills. Father may have been bringing logs he'd cut in his woods to sell to Gilbert, who would turn them into lumber at his saw mill. The Nashes used the Gilbert's mills frequently, but also used Taylor's, Brown's and others, depending on the work needed to be done.

(Throughout the diary, Libby Grumman visits the Nashes. Elizabeth A. Grumman, or "Libby," was born around 1844 and is Jared Nash's niece. Her mother, Elizabeth R. Grumman ("E.R.G.") was Jared's sister. Libby was about 22 years old and was working as a schoolteacher during various periods of the diary. She went on to marry Alonzo Brown of Farmingville, lived here most of her life, and died in 1934 at the age of 90.)

21 January Saturday

Cloudy and looks like snow. Father carried load of wood up to Mother Smith in morning. In afternoon, he went up to Gilbert's mill. Sanford came here in middle of the day.

(Mother Smith was Polly Northrop Smith, mother of Emily. She was the widow of Gamaliel Smith, who died in 1861. It was common for younger members of a family to supply wood for the winter fires of their elderly parents or grandparents. Polly Smith died in 1881 at the age of 87 and is buried in an old Smith cemetery on lower West Lane. Sanford is Charles Sanford Nash, Jared's half brother, who appears frequently in the diary.)

22 January Sunday

Cloudy with little sunshine. Emily went to church in afternoon.

(The church was probably the Methodist Episcopal Church, forerunner of the Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church. It stood at this time at the northwest corner of Main and Catoonah Streets. The handsome building was torn down in the mid-1960s to make way for a commercial building. Services took place both in the morning and in the afternoon. Members of the family generally went to one service or the other, but not both — in earlier times, church-goers often spent most of the Sabbath in church. In the winter the Nashes went to church less frequently than in warmer months; Jared does not go very often in any season. Sometimes Father goes to the Methodist Church at Bald Hill in Wilton. This is the fourth Sunday in January, but the first on which any of the clan is mentioned as going to church.)

23 January Monday

Rain all day.

24 January Tuesday

Clear and cold. Father in woods.

(He's cutting trees.)

25 January Wednesday

Clear and colder. Got load of wood in afternoon.

26 January Thursday

Clear. Emily and Emmie went to Jared's in morning. I went in afternoon after them.

(That's Jared N. Olmstead's house on St. Johns Road.)

27 January Friday

Clear, mercury 2 above. Father carried load of wood to Mother Smith, then cut some in woods. Cold all day.

28 January Saturday

Clear and cold, 2 above. Father in the woods. Jared come and got load of wood for Mrs. Booth.

(Mrs. Booth's identity has not been discovered. A "C. Booth" is mentioned later.)

29 January Sunday

Clear, cold, some windy. Mercury 5.

30 January Monday

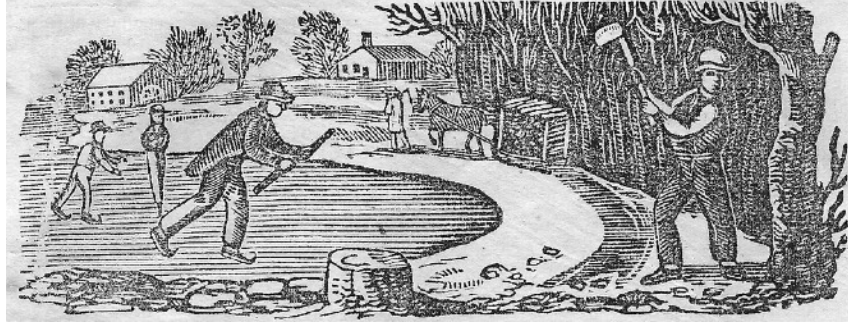
Clear, little more moderate. Father drew some wood and ties. D. Sholes called here; wanted wood.

(The word “tie” can apply to several things made of wood, including rails for fences, sleepers for railroad tracks, structural pieces for houses and barns, and even some type of farming devices. However, they were probably railroad ties. The great expansion of the American railroads in the mid- to late-19th Century required a tremendous number of ties and farmers who owned some woodland could earn a little extra income by cutting trees, especially chestnut, for the railroads. By 1890, railroad ties or sleepers were the largest single use of wood in America. In May, Father will deliver half a dozen loads of ties to the depot. For more about making railroad ties, *see* March 5, 1866.)

(Daniel Sholes’ visit is interesting, only for what will take place 35 years hence. Daniel, who came here from Vermont and was 65 years old at this time, was the father of D. Smith Sholes, who was 25 at this time. In 1900, D. Smith Sholes married Emmie Nash, who was only five years old at the time of this visit. D. Smith Sholes died in 1907, aged 67. Daniel Sholes, who died in 1889 at the age of 89, was a shoemaker, like Jared and his father. The fact that his son was named D. Smith Sholes indicates that perhaps Daniel Sholes was somehow connected with the Smith clan. His wife, Catherine, may have been born Catherine Smith.)

31 January Tuesday

Some warmer, and cloudy toward night. Went with Emily & Emmie up West Lane and spent the day. Father cutting in the woods.



1 February Wednesday

Cloudy through the day. Father sledded home wood. Cleared off in the evening and grew colder.

2 February Thursday

Clear, cold and windy. Father cut in the woods.

3 February Friday

Clear and moderate, cloudy towards night. Drewed some wood and logs.

4 February Saturday

Snow a little before day; cloudy, raw, chilly wind in the afternoon. Father went to J. Comstock, got barrell flour and sugar, pail & broom.

(J. Comstock is James Comstock of the Wilton grocery store mentioned before; he ran the store from 1860 to 1884. The building is now a house at 418 Ridgefield Road (Roue 33).

(The flour was undoubtedly wheat. While local farmers grew such grains as buckwheat, rye, oats, and corn, few grew wheat. Wilton historian G. Evans Hubbard suggests that this was because “the Hessian fly, which damages wheat, was probably a pest in Wilton at this time.” Hessian fly, whose larvae sucked the juices from wheat, first appeared on Long Island in the late 18th Century; it was so called because people thought it had arrived with Hessian soldiers who had fought in the Revolution. Many farmers in the Northeast gave up the crop – despite the fact that no less personage than George Washington himself urged them not to do so. Washington recommended growing yellow-bearded wheat, which was more resistant to the larvae.)

5 February Sunday

Cloudy, squally and growing cold. Emily went to church in forenoon.

(The late Charles Howes of the Howes Private Weather Bureau in Georgetown, Connecticut maintained that early February is the wintriest part of the season in this area. The period from Feb.

4 to 14 in 1865 would seem to bear that out. The Old Farmer's Almanac predicted "Snow" and "Blustering" for the first 10 or so days of the month.)

6 February Monday

Clear, cold and windy. Father got some wood.

7 February Tuesday

Cloudy, wind east, commence to snow 3 o'clock and snowed till after bedtime; then rain until morning. Father cut some sticks for ties down in the west woods after dinner. I went and took the sled down to him. He went early in the morning to Jimmy and got Bill sharpened.

(While this reference to "ties" indicates that the items were not very big, Father was undoubtedly cutting wood for railroad ties – a subject discussed in more detail March 5, 1866.

(Bill is Jared's horse. Jimmy was probably a local blacksmith. In winter the shoes of horses had to be kept very sharp so that hooves could bite into the ice. A horse with dull shoes could slip and injure a leg. Later, horseshoes were equipped with devices called calkins or "calks." A calk was a tapered wedge or cone-shaped piece of iron or steel projecting downward on the shoe of a draft animal to prevent slipping. The late Francis D. Martin said a Ridgefield man invented calks and sought the aid of an attorney to get a patent. However, the attorney, the story goes, stole the patent from the poor Ridgefielder and took it out in his own name. The Ridgefielder was so upset that he went out of his mind and wandered aimlessly around the village the rest of his days, Mr. Martin said.

(The Nashes did not seem to have a yoke of oxen. In the first half of the 19th Century, oxen were more common as farm work animals than horses, but were more expensive to own. Poor farmers relied on draft horses, which could also serve as transportation. When heavy work, such as extensive plowing was needed, Jared N. Olmstead, the diarist's cousin, would often show up with his span of oxen. Between 1850 and 1880, the number of oxen declined in New England as lighter, steel plows came into use, which could be pulled by horses.)

8 February Wednesday

Cloudy through day, verry sploshy going. S. Hurlbutt called to summons Father to go up to court tomorrow to take up J. Bennett for cutting hooppoles. Hurlbutt call after bedtime and told Father he need not go, for Jerry had settled it.

(When we use the word "called" today, it invariably means "telephoned." Here, long before phones, it's in person, and the second time, clearly at night.

(Serenio S. Hurlbutt [1825-1904] was a noted carpenter and one-time partner in the carriage factory that operated in the Big Shop, which then stood at Main Street and West Lane – site of the

First Congregational Church today – and now houses restaurants, shops and offices off Bailey Avenue in the village of Ridgefield. Hurlbutt was collector of town taxes at this time and also from 1885 to 1904. Here he was serving as a constable, elected by the Town Meeting. Charles Nash [Father] may also have been some sort of court official such as a deputy sheriff or constable, charged with escorting prisoners or defendants to the court in Danbury or Bridgeport. This case is intriguing. Apparently, Jeremiah “Jere” Bennett, who lived in the Silver Spring area, had been cutting hoop poles on someone else’s property, and had been arrested or civilly sued for it. And, as Jared notes, the case was settled out of court.)

(Hoop poles were cut in the woods from ash, hickory and white oak saplings, mostly in May, because the wood is then highly soaked with oil and because its bark is loosest then. The poles were used around the farm for many tasks such as rollers for moving heavy loads and for temporary floors under haystacks. There were also split up to make barrel hoops and basket-weaving material; the poles were hammered to flatten them, soaked in water, and then split into the hoops that held the barrel staves together. Perhaps the oddest use for hoop poles, however, was as stiffeners in the colossal, but fashionable skirts women sometimes wore in the 19th Century. A farmer could make some extra cash by selling hoop poles to the local cooper or barrel maker — or maybe even a dress-maker, though probably not in Ridgefield.)

9 February Thursday

Cold, froze up hard. Father drewed some wood; I, ties.

10 February Friday

Clear in morning, some squally. Father went to sawmill in forenoon. Emily went uptown in afternoon.

11 February Saturday

Clear, cold and windy. We got 3 loads of wood from west woods.

(The west woods were near the New York State line, land now part of the Silver Spring Country Club. Much of the Nash farm is now golfed instead of plowed or cut.)

12 February Sunday

Cloudy, cold, east wind, little snow in morning. Verry cold.

13 February Monday

Clear, cold and some windy. Mercury down to zero.

(Anna Marie Resseguie, who lived at the Keeler Tavern on Main Street, reported in her diary entry for this day: “Cold severe, 6 degrees below zero.)

14 February Tuesday

Clear and moderate, 5 above in morning. Rebecca and Libby Grumman came here in the evening. Father cut some wood at the door and I helpt C. Gallagher load some wood.

(Again, Rebecca is the wife of Jared Olmstead. The wood was cut “at the door” probably so that the cutters could be near the warmth of the house. C. Gallagher, perhaps Charles or Charley, was probably a laborer. See next entry.)

15 February Wednesday

Clear in the morning, snow in afternoon, and rain in evening. Father helpt Charly load wood. Emily went in afternoon to her Uncle J. Northrop.

(Charly is probably C. Gallagher, a worker, mentioned Feb. 14. J. Northrop was probably Emily Nash’s mother’s brother – possibly named Jared. Her mother was Polly Northrop before her marriage.)

16 February Thursday

Cloudy in forepart of the day; clear off towards night. Wet, sloppy going. Father had to go to court this afternoon.

(Again, we see Father apparently performing some sort of official function that is not explained. Although Charles Nash held a number of offices over the years, town records do not show him as an official of any sort in 1865.)

17 February Friday

Clear and some warmer. Thawed some considerable. Father cut some at the door; went and cut tree for to make some bars.

(February was a traditional month in southwestern Connecticut for cutting wood that would be used for good building lumber or for fence bars and posts. Some, however, believed that wood would last longer if cut in August.)

18 February Saturday

Lowery, cold chilly wind. Father got one load of wood and done chores.

(Lowery is a variant spelling of the old word, “loury,” which means the sky is dull, or threatening.)

19 February Sunday

Clear and cold wind. Father went up to Mrs. Hoyt’s in the evening.

(Mrs. Anna Hoyt, widow of Isaac Hoyt who had died three years earlier, lived just up Silver Spring Road from the Nashes. Father was probably stopping by for a social visit or offering her some neighborly help. Mrs. Hoyt's son, Munson, often visits the Nashes.)

20 February Monday

Clear. Father in woods. Jared come and told us his mother is sick.

(Jared Olmstead's mother is Aunt Clara – diarist Jared Nash's aunt – mentioned the next day. Rebecca, mentioned Feb. 21, is Jared Olmstead's wife, who was probably arriving at Norwalk on a train from Port Chester where Aunt Clara lay dying – see Feb. 24.)

21 February Tuesday

Clear, Mother went up to Jared's and staid for him to go to Norwalk after Rebecca. She has been down to see Aunt Clara. Father cut some in the woods.

(Mother was probably babysitting for Rebecca's children. She was their aunt.)

22 February Wednesday

Clear in forepart of the day and chilly wind. Got the oxen and drewed home some stick for bars, and ties. N.R. Smith wife and little girl here in the afternoon.

(The Nashes did not have their own oxen, and probably borrowed these from Jared Olmstead. "Stick" is Jared's way of describing the wood that was to be used for fence bars and for the railroad ties that the Nashes produced. It's not clear who N.R. Smith is, although it may have been Nathan R. Smith.)

23 February Thursday

Some rain in morning and it is thawing considerable, so it has spoiled the sledding. Clear off in the evening.

(Snow was appreciated by the farmer then, not cursed as it is by the commuter today. A horse could drag four times more weight on a sled across snow than could a wheeled cart across dirt. Sleds, sledges, and stoneboats made carrying heavy loads over snow easier than any other method of transportation. Thaws ruined the surface for sledding and for driving. Sleighs provided smooth, quick and easy transportation into town while carts and wagons would often become stuck in the mud caused by sudden thaws. In the 19th Century, roads were not plowed to remove snow, but many were rolled to pack and preserve the snow surface.)

24 February Friday

Clear and cold. Father went to Port Chester to see Aunt Clara.

25 February Saturday

Clear in forenoon. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane. Father cut some wood. Rained all night.

26 February Sunday

Wet and foggy in forenoon. Clear off in evening.

(In her diary, Anna Marie Resseguie reports: "A stormy Sunday and such bad walking that very few females attend church. I do not.")

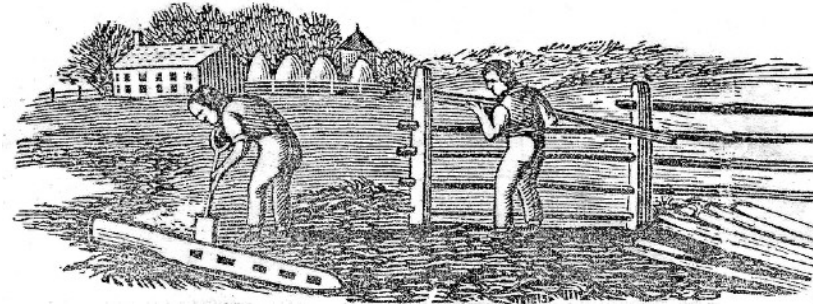
27 February Monday

Clear and chilly, Father cut some wood. Abram had horses & wagon to get to New Canaan.

("Abram had horses" means Abram Nash, Jared's half-brother, borrowed the horses and wagon.)

28 February Tuesday

Cloudy, cold, east wind, little snow this morning. Father went to J. Comstock store in forenoon.



1 March Wednesday

Clear through the day. Aunt Clara died this morning and brought up at night. Father went over to the depot to meet them. Emily went up to Jared's in forenoon and staid untill they come. Mr. Fitch and Abram work here at ties.

(Clara's body was "brought up at night" to the funeral, probably by train. Clara Nash Olmstead was the only major relative of the family to die during the period of the diary. See Jan. 6, 1865, for more information about her. Notice the visits made in connection with the sickness and the funeral. Emily went to Jared N. Olmstead's house because Aunt Clara was Jared Olmstead's mother. Jared Nash rarely tells of such socializing; funerals brought families together, something that was not as easy then as now because transportation was more difficult and longer journeys were usually made only for important affairs. Yet, the day-to-day work of the farming family continues. Mr. Fitch was probably Samuel B. Fitch, who occasionally helped out on the farm, usually working at ties. He probably lived on Wilton Road West, almost opposite what was Allen and Jamie Shafer's house at #162 in the late 20th Century, and was clerk of the Ninth School District in 1866 where he ran into trouble – see under *See under* March 19, 1866.)

2 March Thursday

Cold, cloudy, east wind; snowed toward night and then rain and made ice. Our folks went to Jared's awhile in forenoon. Linus Northrop and Benjamin Smith called here in afternoon.

(Uncle Linus O. Northrop lived on Wilton Road West opposite Creamery Lane. He was a harness maker and shoemaker. Three of his grandchildren were still living when this diary was first transcribed in 1978; Mrs. Thomas Scott of Soundview Road; Francis H. Northrop of Brookfield; and Robert Wright Northrop, a New York City dentist. One of his sons, Caro, was a builder and mover of buildings – in 1887 or so, he moved the Big Shop from the Congregational Church site on West Lane to behind the parking lot on Bailey Avenue where today it holds two restaurants, shops, and offices; see Feb. 8, 1865. Caro served in the state legislature in the 1930s. A native of Ridgefield, Linus Northrop died here in 1914.

(Benjamin Smith's identity is unknown. Several lived in Fairfield County. Both men probably called to pay their respects on the death of Aunt Clara.)

3 March Friday

Rain in forepart of the day. Ira Olmstead, Geo. Hurlbutt & John Wells here in afternoon to tea.

(These men are all visiting in connection with the death of father's sister, Clara, and all have family connections. Ira was Clara's son. George Hurlburt was the husband of Clara Amanda Olmstead, a daughter of Aunt Clara. Jared may have meant James Wells instead of John. James was the husband of Kate Wells, another daughter of Clara. See entry for March 5.)

4 March Saturday

Rain very fast in forenoon. Father went up to Jared's to the funeral. It broke away towards night.

5 March Sunday

Clear and cold, wind. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane. Jared, Rebecca, Sally Ketcham, Kate Wells and Clara Hurlbut here in evening.

(Jared Olmstead of Ridgefield, Sally [Sarah Maria Olmstead] Ketcham, Kate [Catherine Olmstead] Wells and Clara [Amanda Olmstead] Hurlburt of Wilton are all children of Aunt Clara Olmstead. They had all been in town for Clara's funeral at Jared Olmstead's house. Kate probably lived in Orange County, N.Y., where she married James Armstrong Wells in 1855.)

6 March Monday

Clear, some warmer. We cut wood at the door.

7 March Tuesday

Clear. Cut some wood. Our folks went up to Jared's in afternoon. Bluebirds come today.

(Back then, the bluebirds heralded spring's arrival, much more so than the robins seem to today. Their appearance on March 7 indicates the winter of 1865 may have been harsher on wildlife than 1866 when Jared notes the arrival of bluebirds on Feb. 22.)

(Bluebirds were much more common in the 19th Century before the importation of European species of birds that chased these natives out of their nesting holes. The bluebirds also favor agricultural surroundings, such as open field and orchards, few of which are left now in southwestern Connecticut. Today, because of the generally warmer winters, some bluebirds stay here year round, gathering in flocks and spending the cold months in wetlands looking for berries.)

Up on Main Street at the Keeler Tavern, Anna Marie Resseguie notes in her diary on March 11: “I heard bluebirds for the first time Monday the 6th ...”

(Wise farmers loved birds – and went out of their way to attract them. Many species of birds eat the larvae or adult forms of insects that attacked many of the crops the farmers grew. Others feasted on the seeds of weeds that stole nutrients from their fields. Many farmers maintained flocks of pigeons to eat pest insects and weed seeds, and also encouraged wild birds by making birdhouses of dried, hollowed squashes and hanging scores of them from orchard trees. An old straw hat, nailed open-side out to the side of a barn, would usually attract nesting wrens. Insect-eating House Wrens have been observed doing up to 491 feedings of nestlings in a single day!)

8 March Wednesday

Cloudy. The sun come out warm; commence to rain in evening. Cut some wood. Jared & Rebecca here in evening and Sally Ketcham staid all night. Father went after Libby after school. Emmie went with him.

(Elizabeth A. “Libby” Grumman, Jared’s niece, taught at the Flat Rock School, which was situated on Wilton Road West (Route 33), a little below today’s Woodchuck Lane. She had worked there in 1863 for \$2 a week. Men, doing the same job, were paid as much as seven times more than that at Flat Rock. At this time she was probably substituting for an ill teacher [see March 22, 1865.]

(At a meeting of the Fourth School District – the Titicus District – on March 11, 1865, members cast 16 votes in favor of hiring “Miss E.A. Grummun” as teacher for the summer term, and 12 votes for Mrs. N.A. Stuart. Libby, experienced from having taught at least at Flat Rock, was salaried at \$12 per month, with board five days a week, four weeks a month. Women were usually hired to teach the warm-weather classes, designed mainly for girls. Titicus’s summer term began April 1. Men usually taught the winter session for boys who had to work on the farm during the growing season. Male teachers were paid considerably more than females. B.R. Northrop, hired for the winter term of 1865-66 at Titicus, was paid \$35 without board. Libby, rehired in the summer of 1866 was offered \$24 a month without board, but apparently refused. The committee then offered her \$25, which she accepted.

(The sight of Father, nearly 72, and his granddaughter, nearly 5, riding together in a horse-drawn wagon must have been quite charming.)

9 March Thursday

Rain all day. Father carried Libby up and Sally to Jared’s. Sam’l Hawley called here in afternoon. Very muddy.

(Samuel Hawley may have been either a cabinetmaker who had a shop on Main Street or a local butcher.)

10 March Friday

Wind north, some damp & snowy. Cleared up at night and froze up. Father went up to post office.

(Mention of family visits to the post office were infrequent; perhaps trips were made only when a letter had to be sent or word was received that mail had arrived. Here, father may have been taking care of mail in connection with Clara's death – maybe notifying relatives. The post office at this time was on Main Street, about on the site of the Ridgefield Bank building today.)

11 March Saturday

Clear and cold. Father cut wood.

12 March Sunday

Clear and cold wind. Emily not verry well. Father went to the funeral of Mrs. Taylor down to Mr. Edmonds'.

(Urania Taylor, age 87, had died on March 9. A widow and native of the Greenfield section of Fairfield, she may have been related to Mr. Edmonds and to the Taylors who operated the mill – see Jan. 12, 1865. Edmonds was probably R.C. Edmonds who lived on the south side of Silver Hill Road, a little west of Wilton Road West. He and Jared's grandfather, Jared Nash, had served together on the committee that erected the new Flat Rock Schoolhouse in 1846-47.

(Note that one didn't go to a funeral home to attend a funeral, and that these typically took place in the home of the dead person or a relative.)

13 March Monday

Some warmer and quite spring like. We cut and piled wood.

14 March Tuesday

Clear, wind east. Father was up to Jared's in forenoon, around home in afternoon.

15 March Wednesday

Cloudy, wind S S W; commence to rain just dark and rained through the night. Father work at wood.

16 March Thursday

Damp in forenoon. Father soled his boots. He went to C. Smith auction in afternoon. William Olmstead here in the evening. Verry hard wind and some rain from the south west through the night.

(Here is the first mention of the official vocation, as listed on his death record, of Charles Nash, who was a shoemaker. So was son Jared. Through the two years of the diary, there is no hint of whether either Charles or Jared were active at this trade, but they may have kept separate records, such as ledgers, of their professional work. At any rate they were probably not full-time shoemakers and they may have done piecework at home, instead of following the common practice of visiting the houses of their clients to fit shoes.

(Although auctions drew many people and were probably exciting events, they were often unhappy affairs for the person whose property was being sold. He was either in debt or, worse, dead. Auctions were fairly frequently held to pay the debts of an estate or to raise money to pay for the debts of someone who went over his head. Charles Nash had financial troubles in the 1840s and had much of his property auctioned off. Abram Nash, Charles' nephew, had the same fate in the 1870s. No record of this auction, or the identity of C. Smith, could be found.

(William Oscar Olmstead, Jared's cousin, was a son of Aunt Clara; his twin sister was Clara Amanda Olmstead Hurlburt, who visited on March 5. He probably lived in Port Chester, N.Y.)

17 March Friday

Clear. Father went to George Keeler's and PO in afternoon. Verry muddy going.

(Father may have been visiting George Keeler, the harness-maker, to have some work done on his rig. Mr. Keeler, who died in 1881 at the age of 76, had his home and shop for nearly a half century on Main Street. The house still stands at 164 Main Street.

(Spring mud was a dread to those travelers whose wagon wheels could easily get stuck.)

18 March Saturday

Clear, high wind. Work at wood.

19 March Sunday

Clear through the day. Father went to Bald Hill meeting in P.M.

(Bald Hill, a section of northern Wilton, was the site of the Bald Hill Methodist Church. Built in the 1830s, it was Wilton's first Methodist church and was located just north of 823 Ridgefield Road [Route 33], right about where today's entrance to the Bald Hill Cemetery is. The church's final minister – a woman – preached there for the last time around 1937. The building was dismantled a year later. The Nashes had many friends and some family in northern Wilton, and father was probably a member of the church there.)

20 March Monday

Some cloudy in the morning. Then clear and warm. Work at wood. D.W. Olmsted came here in P.M.

(David Whitney Olmstead [1800-1877] was, like Charles and Jared, a shoemaker. He lived in a house at 91 Olmstead Lane [currently owned by Jack and Sally Sanders]. His wife was Emily Grumman, possibly related to Elizabeth R. Grumman's late husband, Charles.)

21 March Tuesday

Clear and verry warm for the time of year. Father went to Norwalk to carry potatoes, and went a clamming. Emily & Emmie walked up West Lane and staid all night. I went as far as Mrs. Hoyt's with them. I piled up wood.

(Ridgefielders are often surprised when digging in the back yard or even out in the woods, to find buried clamshells. Many assume Indians, who regularly made trips to Long Island Sound for shellfish and fish, discarded them. Some may even believe them relics of an ancient time when the sea was much higher than it is now. However, Ridgefielders like the Nashes frequently journeyed to the Sound – less than 15 miles away – to go “a clamming” in the creeks along the shore, and most of the shells found here today are probably leftovers of such meals. Marjorie McKenna, who owned the Nash homestead during much of the second half of the 20th Century, said she found old clam shells on the grounds. Clams were free, plentiful, and good eating – well worth the trip made fairly often by the Nashes. This time, however, Father was also delivering potatoes to a market or perhaps to family.

(This may be the only reference to Nash family members walking up to the West Lane homes of relatives instead of riding. It's “very warm” on this day after the first day of spring and it had been a long, hard winter; Emily and Emmie must have been reveling in the springness of the day. Anna Hoyt lived up Silver Spring Road, in the house just north of the Silver Spring, so Jared himself walked only about a quarter mile while his wife and daughter covered a mile or so. And poor Jared went back to pile wood.)

22 March Wednesday

Some rain in morning, then wind and some squally towards night. I went up after Emily in afternoon, and Father went to the funeral of Sam'l Perry's daughter.

(Isabella Perry, only 20 years old, had died March 20 of typhoid fever. A Fairfield native, she was an “instructor” at the Flat Rock Schoolhouse and died while in her first year on the job. Libby Grumman may have taken over her job when she fell sick – see March 8, 1865. Samuel Perry lived somewhere to the north of the Nashes, for he was a highway surveyor for the town in the West Lane District in 1859.)

23 March Thursday

Some sunshine and very high March wind. Father sawed wood. I work some in woodhouse.

(Farmers liked the blustery March wind because it dried the wood, which was traditionally cut and stacked in this month. The woodhouse was a well-ventilated building where firewood was stored to keep it dry.)

24 March Friday

Cold. High squally wind. Father sawed some wood, then went to Gilbert's mill with feed, to P.O. and to Geo Keeler's with lard.

(Father had a busy day, despite the weather. He had worked at wood, had some corn ground into food for the cows, stopped by the post office, and perhaps gave George Keeler some lard in compensation for the work he had done back on March 18.)

25 March Saturday

Clear most of the day. Drove farrow cow to G. Seymour's and split and piled up wood.

(Farrow means "not pregnant." Jared was driving the cow to Seymour's bull to remedy that situation. G. Seymour may have been George W. Seymour, who was living here in 1860. Seymour was an active official in the Ninth School District at this time.)

26 March Sunday

Clear and cool. I carried Emily up in the morning to go to church. She walked home at night, and Emmie.

(Emily and five-year-old Emmie probably visited family on West Lane after church, and their trek was from West Lane, not from the center of town – which would have been 2 ½ to three miles. They probably got a ride from church to West Lane. Still, people walked much more then than now and, besides, Emily was probably enjoying the passing of winter and the arrival of spring. And they did not have to fear being run down by speeding cars as one, hiking the same route today, would.)

27 March Monday

Clear through the day. Work at wood and piled up ties.

(These were the railroad ties that the Nashes had cut in the winter and which would be delivered to the railroad depot in May.)

28 March Tuesday

Some cloudy in morning, then clear. Father went to Bridgeport to court. I work some at wood. Emily and Emmie went to Mrs. Keeler's in the afternoon.

(Bridgeport was the county seat and headquarters of the county court system. Though it is the largest city in the county, it was also one of the newest, having been created by dividing off a

section of Stratford in 1821. Unfortunately, Father's business in court is not explained, but see entry under Feb. 8, 1865.)

29 March Wednesday

Work some at wood and other notions. Clear, cloudy toward night. Mother and Emily went up West Lane and spent the day.

(Jared uses "notions" in the sense of "odds and ends.")

30 March Thursday

Rain through the day. Father went to Jared's in forenoon. Wind S.W.

31 March Friday

Rain some, wind N.E.; snow some at night. Soled my boots.

(This is Jared's first mention of his craft. He probably waited until the snow season had passed to put on new soles.)



1 April Saturday

Clear most of the day, windy and some squally clouds. Father went to Taylor's mill. I work on meadow.

(It seems fitting that on the first of April, Jared begins planting chores. It is the beginning of the growing season, and Jared is probably starting to clear up last year's dead plants and the rocks that were heaved up the by the frozen ground over winter.)

2 April Sunday

Clear, but cool wind. Went to church with Emily in afternoon. Father went to Bald Hill.

(This is the first time Jared mentions that he has gone to church. Why he goes so infrequently must be left to conjecture. One possibility is that he avoids church in cold weather because his health would suffer in a church building that was not heated. In Father's case, the reference to Bald Hill is probably to the old Methodist Church there. From the wording here, it seems Jared and his dad went to different houses of worship.)

3 April Monday

Clear and pleasant. Father went to mill in morning, then fixt potatoes to carry away. I don't feel verry well; got cold.

(Like many vegetables grown by the Nashes, potatoes store well over winter. Such vegetables were kept in the cellar of the house or in a separate cold cellar which, in winter, kept foods at a temperature above freezing and which in summer kept them cool enough not to spoil. This reference may have been to seed potatoes [see April 8 entry and note]. The next day, the potatoes were driven to Norwalk, probably to a market or a farmers' supply store.

(Potatoes were one of the most important foods produced on the farm. "Potatoes were served three times a day on farm tables, supplemented with peas and parsnips, beets and beans, cabbage and cucumbers from the kitchen garden," wrote W. Storrs Lee in *The Yankees of Connecticut*. However, by the 1860s, they were also a bit of a gamble. The 1862 Old Farmers Almanac observed that "about 20 years ago, this valuable root began to be attacked by disease well known

to be fatal in all parts of the world where it was cultivated. Since that time, it has been regarded as a precarious crop. Though no less important than ever before, it costs more to cultivate it, while the yield is almost invariably less.” The disease is the same that caused the great famine in Ireland [see Oct. 31, 1865]. The almanac recommend avoiding manures that contained dung and instead, to use “ashes, plaster of Paris, pond mud, ditch scrapings, with a mixture of salt.” [See also notes under Sept. 22, 1865.]

4 April Tuesday

Cloudy most of the day. Wind east. Father went to Norwalk with potatoes. Feel about the same as yesterday.

5 April Wednesday

Cloudy through the day. Father went to saw mill twice in forenoon. In afternoon, split up hills.

(In the fields, the hills of soil around last season’s plants had hardened over the winter, and had to be broken up to facilitate plowing.)

6 April Thursday

Cloudy, some rain in afternoon. Father finished one piece of hills in forenoon. I feel better today.

7 April Friday

Cloudy, damp, some rain in afternoon. Done some chores around.

8 April Saturday

Clear, cool, north wind. Father went to Norwalk, carried some seed-potatoes to Randall. Come home around by Hoyt’s Nursery and got apple trees, set them out in afternoon.

(Seed potatoes are potatoes that are allowed to spout at the eyes to produce new plants. This will be discussed under the entry for May 19 when the Nashes plant their potatoes. Randall’s identity is unknown – it may be a store in Norwalk.

(Virtually every farm had an apple orchard. Apples were, after all, long lasting and could be kept over the winter. The fruit could be eaten by man or beast, and was also turned into cider.

(However, apples were unlike the other crops farmers like the Nashes planted. Instead of bearing “fruit” within a single season like corn, oats, or garden vegetables, apple trees took years to be productive. An old Spanish proverb said, “He who plants trees loves others besides himself.” Planting trees in an orchard was a long-term investment in the future and quite often, the person

doing the planting would not live to see the real fruits of that labor. That would be true in Jared's case.

(Hoyt's Nursery in New Canaan remained in business until the last half of the 20th Century.)

9 April Sunday

Clear in morning and froze hard. Cloudy in afternoon and chilly. Emily and Emmie went up West Lane.

(At Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia on this day, General Robert E. Lee signed the surrender document, officially ending the Civil War. Jared mentions nothing of this in the days to come, just as he does not record the assassination of President Lincoln a few days later – see note under April 15.)

10 April Monday

Rain through the day.

(Here and elsewhere, the diary notes an all-day rain, and then nothing else. Rain pretty much shut down outdoor farming activities, but the Nashes probably didn't mind too much. The April showers were providing moist ground for the planting that was about to begin.)

11 April Tuesday

Damp in morning. Some sunshine in middle of the day. Father plowed and sowed some. Emily and I went and got some cowslips. Sold a shoat to Alva Roscoe.

(Father was probably sowing oats or buckwheat, both early crops. A shoat is a just-weaned pig.

(These are not the cowslips of the Old World, but what we today call Marsh Marigolds, the yellow spring flower of wetlands – no doubt, the Nashes' were picked from the fringes of nearby Silver Spring Swamp, where Marsh Marigolds are still found today. These wildflowers were popular for both a spinach-like food and decoration. W. Hamilton Gibson wrote in 1880: "The eager farmer's wife fills her basket with the succulent leaves she has been waiting for so long; for what they'll tell you in New England that 'they ain't noth'n' like cowslips for a mess o' greens'." The flowers were picked to grace tables; they were also often sent to New York City where they were often sold by boys at street corners. The flower's name, incidentally, sounds romantically agrarian, but isn't. Cowslip is from the Old English, meaning "cow slop." That is to say, cow dung. Perhaps the name is more suited to the English cowslip, a barnyard plant that is a member of the primrose family.

(Alva Roscoe was a shoemaker/farmer who lived in Wilton. The census says he was born in New York State and may be related to Rebecca Roscoe Olmstead, wife of Jared's cousin, Jared Olmstead, who was born in Lewisboro, N.Y.)

12 April Wednesday

Wet and damp in forenoon. Cloudy all day. Made a draw in the woodhouse and done some other chores.

(Jared's "draw" was a sled for hauling heavy items – probably including the stones mentioned April 19. A 19th Century farmer was a jack of all trades, and had to possess many skills, including being able to work with wood.)

13 April Thursday

Cloudy in forenoon. Cleared off in afternoon. Work some in garden. Father plowed for oats.

14 April Friday

Clear. Work some in garden. Planted onions and lettuce. Sowed one piece of oats and ridged some potatoes ground. Emily and Emmie walked up West Lane. Father plowed for oats.

(Modern gardeners might wish to take note of the planting dates mentioned in the diary, for they were time-proven safe dates for this region, long before "global warming." A "piece" was a section of a field. "Ridging" is building up long mounds of soil on which to plant the potatoes.)

15 April Saturday

Some sunshine in forenoon, cloudy and rain towards night. Wind south west. Planted potatoes and some onions down the side of the old orchard lane. Father split up hills.

(April was the traditional month for potato planting, an important crop for the Nashes. However, the Nashes waited until May to plant at least some of their potatoes. Farmers usually planted the seedlings [*see note, April 8*] under the waning moon, believing that this would help their growth.

(This is the day many Ridgefielders learned that President Lincoln had been assassinated the night before but this event, like so many others of national import, is not acknowledged in Jared's diary. His is not a record of thoughts and reactions, but a log of family and farming events – the latter useful for planning purposes in the years ahead.)

16 April Sunday

Clear in forenoon; some squally in afternoon and rain just at night. Went up after Emily and Emmie in afternoon.

17 April Monday

Clear. Father went in morning and carried Libby to Titicus. In afternoon he went and carried Mother and E.R.G. to depot. I trimmed apple trees.

(E.R.G was Elizabeth R. Grummun, Jared's sister and mother of Libby Grummun, who appears often in the diary. She was about 44 years old at this time, and was probably living in Brooklyn, N.Y. Mrs. Grummun had been through considerable trials before the diary opened. In 1841, she married Charles Grummun who died six years later, leaving her a young widow with three children. One of them, one-year-old Henry S. Grummun, died two weeks after his father. By 1850, she had to sell her house at Main and Market Streets.

(However, Mrs. Grummun was apparently a sharp and resourceful woman. Her name is found as a witness on various legal documents and by the 1870s, she is living in Brooklyn and loaning her father, Charles, more than \$1,000, a very hefty sum in those days. She later lived in Stamford and perhaps that's where she died in 1901. During the period of the diary, it's not clear where she is living, but she shows up often at the Nash home – frequently in references to trips to the depot. Clearly, she takes the train from New York or Stamford to Ridgefield or Wilton to visit family, including her daughter, Libby. In the diary and in town hall records, her name is variously spelled Grumman, Grummon, and Gruman, but hardly ever Grummun, which is the way she signed it and the way her gravestone, and that of her husband and young Henry, reads at the Ridgefield Cemetery.

(There are at least two schools of thought on pruning apple trees, a necessary project to remove “suckers” that drain the trees of their fruit-producing energy. One theory has it that if the trees are pruned around May or early June, wounds heal more rapidly than they do in early spring. Some apple growers, however, believed this weakens a tree. Those favoring early spring pruning – in March or even December, for instance – point out that there is more time available then for the task, assuming the orchard is on a farm. The Nashes seem to have compromised between the two theories and picked April for the work.

(The “depot” here was probably the Wilton railroad station, which was, for the Nashes, just about as close as Ridgefield Station in Branchville. The station in Ridgefield village was not available until 1870, the year Jared died.)

18 April Tuesday

Damp and some rain through the day. Clear off at night.

19 April Wednesday

Clear, I picked up stone on planting ground. Father got some cold and lame.

(One would think that over the years of planting and plowing fields, the land would be clear of stones. However, each year the plowing of a field and the erosion that later came with rain would

take a little of the topsoil away. Over the years the surface elevation of the field would lower, exposing stones that had once been deeply buried. In addition, each winter, stones that escaped plow and harrow in the field would be pushed up by the frost and eventually surface. Most of these stones were deposited by the last glacier to cover the region; it receded about 20,000 years ago. The stones drawn from the fields were not wasted; they were used to build up walls, fill subsurface drains and patch potholes in roads, among other things.)

20 April Thursday

Cold, chilly east wind, not verry clear; rain just at night. Emily went to church in afternoon. Father much the same as yesterday. I picked up stone in forenoon, got some cowslips in afternoon.

(Jared doesn't say why his wife went to church, but it seems likely that the service was for Abraham Lincoln. Churches in Ridgefield were having memorial services all week to honor the dead President. One wonders why Emily is the only one who went.)

21 April Friday

Rained all night, damp through the day; wind east. Rain again in the night.

22 April Saturday

Wet and foggy in the forenoon, some sunshine in afternoon. I drewed off stone from planting ground.

23 April Sunday

Cold wind, cloud flying all day. Some sunshine.

24 April Monday

Clear and cold. Frost in morning. Went up to Bailey's store and P.O., then drewed off stone.

(Bailey's Store was located in the present Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum office building, then a one-story structure, on the east side of Main Street. Lt. James Dole and Lt. Joshua King, both Revolutionary War veterans, founded the store in 1783. At this time, Lewis H. Bailey owned the store. The business passed through several more hands, including those of D. Frank Bedient, whose name the store long bore at its location on Main Street at Bailey Avenue [named for, and perhaps by, Mr. Bailey], where it was operated by the Morelli family until 1998, when it closed. In the 1860s, it was probably the town's largest store.

25 April Tuesday

Clear and pleasant, some warmer. Draw off stone. Emily cleaned our bedroom.

(Spring cleaning was a custom then, but meant the thorough cleansing of each room, not just the annual tossing out of unnecessary accumulations, one meaning it seems to have taken on in modern times.)

26 April Wednesday

Clear and warm. Picked up stone. J. N. O. plowed for oats. Emily and Emmie went up West Lane in afternoon.

(JNO is Jared N. Olmstead of St. Johns Road, Jared Nash's cousin. He frequently helps with the Nashes' plowing, probably because he has a team of oxen; the Nashes seem to have only a horse, which couldn't handle heavy-duty plowing of fields as well as oxen could. As we often see, family and friends frequently helped each other on these modest farms.)

27 April Thursday

Clear. Jared sowed the oats. I sowed grass seed. Drawed off stone in forenoon, drawed out manure in afternoon. Father got a mess of cowslips.

(The grass was probably for livestock and hay, not for lawn.)

(Manure was not simply the dung of livestock. Manure could have been almost anything used to enrich the soil and feed the crops. Here's a description from *Facts for Farmers* (1866): "Cattle droppings should be mixed with those of horses, to preserve and improve both... Pile it up, mixing muck, sods, weeds, waste straw, salt, and lime to help decomposition, and plaster or charcoal on the surface to absorb and retain the escaping gases, and use a pump to send back all the drainings and other rich liquid, including urine and soapsuds, and old brine, blood, and all sorts of dirty water." Other popular ingredients included hay, stalks, vines, bones, fish, ashes, and meat scraps – even old clamshells. It was much like today's compost – except that it did usually include dung. Lime was often added not only as a nutrient, but also to reduce the often-overpowering stench of rot.

(Aside from dealing with the smell, manuring a field was no simple task. According to one vegetable-growing manual published in 1874, from 50 to 100 *tons* of stable or barnyard manure were needed *per acre* to produce heavy, market-type crops. The Nashes would probably not have spread manure so heavily on their fields since they were probably not planting dense crops for city markets; nonetheless, a lot of manure was needed to keep the soil nutritious. Horse manure was the most valuable type of dung, containing a third more nutrient value than that of cows or hogs.

(The word "manure" is derived from old words meaning to cultivate by hand – *manus* is the Latin for hand.)

28 April Friday

Clear, strong south wind. Drewed out manure in forenoon. In afternoon, Father went to post office. Work in garden.

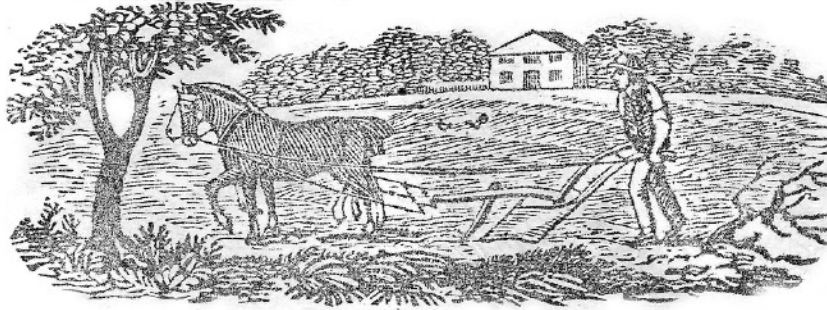
29 April Saturday

Cloudy and south wind. Father went up and got Bill shod. Heavy shower at night with thunder. Work trees in turnip pen.

(Bill, Jared's horse, needed new shoes.)

30 April Sunday

Clear and cold. N.E. wind. Went up West Lane after supper with Emily and Emmie.



1 May Monday

Wet, drizzling rain through the day. Jared commence to plow our planting ground.

(Jared probably used a cast-iron plow, which was a relatively new device but in widespread use by the 1860s. However, many farmers well into the 19th Century insisted on using old-fashioned wooden plows. The first American-made, cast-iron plow did not come on the scene until 1797 when Charles Newbold of New Jersey patented one. Solon Robinson's *Facts for Farmers* (1866) said, "Great as these improvements were upon the old wooden plows, such was the prejudice against them – some even affirming that cast iron poisoned the ground and prevented the growth of crops – that after spending, as the inventor alleged, \$30,000 in a vain effort to get his plows into general use, he gave up the business in despair, leaving American farmers wedded to their idols, the old wooden plows."

2 May Tuesday

Clear. We drew out manure and Jared plowed.

3 May Wednesday

Clear. Drew out some manure and spread it. Laura spent the day here. Emily carried her home. Jared plowing.

(Laura A. Smith [1819-1910] was the sister of Emily Nash. Laura was probably one of the people Emily would visit on her frequent trips "up West Lane." She probably lived with her father and mother in what is now 113 West Lane, the former home of Red Petticoat antiques, just west of Olmstead Lane.)

4 May Thursday

Some sunshine in forenoon. Jared finished plowing orchard in forenoon. Father harrowed in backlot. I worked in garden. Emily cleaned hall and went to PO in afternoon.

(Land on a farm was precious, and a good farmer wasted not a square foot if he could. An apple orchard could also be a planting ground. Here, Jared Olmstead is plowing in the orchard to

loosen the ground to plant potatoes, a crop often mixed in with apple trees. Corn is also planted in the Nash orchard. Note that Jared Olmstead makes ridges or hills for potatoes on May 8, finishes it on the 13th, and then on May 15, Jared Nash plants the potatoes there.)

(A harrow was a wooden device with iron or steel teeth that was dragged by horse along plowed ground to break up clumps in the soil and even it out in preparation for planting. After seeds were cast, dragging a harrow turned the seeds under the soil. Commercial models were available in a variety of forms, but the Nashes probably made their own. Some farmers called them “drags” and some “clod crushers.” *See also* under Sept. 14, 1866 for information on “bush harrows.”)

5 May Friday

Some cloudy in afternoon. Harrowed planting ground in forenoon, mark it in afternoon.

(Marking the ground probably meant laying out what varieties of plants would go where, or simply where the rows to be planted would be located.)

6 May Saturday

I commence to plant. It began to rain, 9 o'clock. Rained the rest of the day. Father went to depot after Mother and E. R. Grummon. Libby come down in the rain.

(Back on April 17, Mother and Elizabeth R. Grummun – diarist Jared Nash’s sister – had gone off by train to some undisclosed destination. Here, they are just getting back, and Libby, Elizabeth’s daughter, comes to the Nashes to see her mother. They may have used the station at Wilton or Branchville – the former was six miles away, the latter, five miles.)

7 May Sunday

Clear, cool and windy. Warmer toward night. Emily got cold.

8 May Monday

Some sunshine in morning. South wind. Father and Emmie went to depot with E. R. Grummon in afternoon. Planted corn in afternoon. Jared ridged for potatoes. Turned young cattle out.

(Elizabeth Grummun is going back to her home.

(The corn planted by the Nashes probably was not the sweet corn we buy for boiling or broiling. It was either fed to the livestock or ground for flour used in breadmaking. Leaves and husks were also ground and mixed with a corn oil-cake to form a feed for fattening chickens, hogs, and cattle. Corn, incidentally, was considered “the most important and the most distinctive

American crop,” according to L.H. Bailey, a 19th Century expert on agriculture. The Nashes planted corn in both field and orchard.

(In ridging, Jared Olmstead was hilling the ground where the potatoes were to be planted.)

(By now, there was enough vegetation in the pastures so that the young cattle, born late in the winter or early in the spring, could be sent out to graze.)

9 May Tuesday

Rain all day. Made crib for dolly.

(This is one of the few “homey” touches to Jared’s diary. “Dolly” undoubtedly belonged to his daughter, Emmie, and had probably been made by Emily.)

10 May Wednesday

Cloudy with little sunshine. Grewed verry wet. Not fit to plant. Fixt bars and abutments south of the rye.

(Jared was repairing the fencing south of the rye field, a traditional spring task and an important one since the fencing kept the livestock out of the crops. The same work is done May 12. Notice that he did not waste a bad day; if he couldn’t plant, he did something else useful on the farm.

(For more about rye, see July 11, 1865, Aug. 25, 1865, and April 12, 1866)

11 May Thursday

Rain in the morning, damp & cloudy all day. Thunder shower at dark. Wind SW.

12 May Friday

Wet in forenoon, cleared off in afternoon. Fixt bars and posts over in the lane and got peabrush, then went up to Bailey’s; got potatoes of Hiram.

(Pea brush was an old New England farming trick for dealing with pea vines. Instead of erecting fancy fences or lattices to support the pea plants, the farmers would take fallen tree branches with plenty of twigs attached to each, and stick them into the pea bed. The vines climbed up and had plenty of support.

(Even Robert Frost, the New England poet, knew and used this trick. In the first stanza of his poem, “Pea Brush,” he wrote: “I walked down alone Sunday after church/ To the place where John has been cutting trees / To see for myself about the birch/ He said I could have to bush my peas.”

(Hiram may be Hiram Seymour, whose wife visits the family later – see June 10, 1866.)

13 May Saturday

Clear and pleasant. Planted corn. Emily and Emmie went up West Lane all day. Jared finishes ridging potatoes.

14 May Sunday

Clear through the day. Father went to the funeral of Nathan Scott.

(Nathan Scott, who died May 12 at the age of 78, was a well-known farmer who lived at the corner of North Salem and Barlow Mountain Roads.)

15 May Monday

Clear most of the day. Dug some in garden, harrowed and mark the orchard and planted some potatoes.

16 May Tuesday

Clear. Planted corn in forenoon. Abram and Patrick began to plant potatoes.

(Patrick, whose name appears occasionally, is apparently a hired hand, quite possibly one of the Irish immigrants whose numbers in Ridgefield were beginning to grow at this time. The English were the first immigrants to this area, followed by the Irish, the Germans and the Italians, although the Germans did not come in the numbers of the Irish and Italians. Patrick helps hoe the potatoes June 29 and plasters on July 4. By helping, Patrick may have earned a share of the potato crop.)

17 May Wednesday

Clear and hot. Mercury 85. Dug in garden and planted south of barn. They finished potatoes.

18 May Thursday

Cloudy, cold, east wind. Drove old cow to L. [?] Seymour's, help Abram plant in A.M. finished digging garden. Rain at night.

(Jared's handwriting of Seymour's initial is unclear. It could be Lewis L. Seymour [1835-1901], a Ridgefield merchant.)

19 May Friday

Wind east. Damp & foggy all day. Sprouted potatoes.

(Seed tubers, taken from the previous year's crop, were kept in the cellar until about two weeks before planting time when they were spread out across a barn floor or some well-lighted place.)

This caused the tubers to sprout in preparation for planting. Among potatoes are varieties for early and late planting.)

20 May Saturday

Wind south. Wet in morning. Some broken in middle of the day. Wet at night. Father went to Brown's mill to get corn samped.

(Brown's mill was in the Vista section of Lewisboro, N.Y. – probably the closest of any mill to the Nashes. It was just off Silver Spring Road, which travels through southwestern Lewisboro after traversing a section of Wilton. The grist and saw mill, operated by Sylvenus L. Brown, stood where there is now a reservoir serving Norwalk – appropriately called Brown's Reservoir.)

(Samp is an old word for coarsely ground Indian corn. Jared probably means his father had the corn coarsely ground, as food for livestock.)

21 May Sunday

Cloudy and wet all day. Father went to Mrs. Hoyt's in evening.

22 May Monday

Heavy rain in morning before day. verry wet, damp & foggy through day.

23 May Tuesday

Some sunshine in afternoon. Father went to Norwalk. D. Patrick brought yearling here to pasture. Made flower bed.

(D. Patrick was probably Daniel *Partrick* – Jared leaving out the “r,” a common mistake with this name. About 60 years old at this time, Mr. Partrick lived on Wilton Road West and was treasurer of the Ninth or Flat Rock School District. He probably contributed some labor to the farm to compensate for using the Nashes' pasture for three months. The heifer goes home on Aug. 21.

(While the Nashes' farm seemed all work and no play, clearly the family – or at least its women – wanted flowers. Bouquets not only brightened the inside of a farmhouse, but helped it smell better.)

24 May Wednesday

Clear and cold. I carried Emily & Emmie up West Lane in morning, then went after them at night. Hoed some potatoes and planted garden.

(From here on through the growing season, we find references to hoeing, the process of churning up the soil around plants to kill the weeds.)

25 May Thursday

Clear. Planted a patch of beans in forenoon. In afternoon, Father went to depot twice with ties.

(Father, who is about 71 years old at this time, must have been a strong and healthy fellow to handle such chores as hauling loads of railroad ties. These were the ties that the Nashes had been cutting in the winter.)

26 May Friday

Clear. Father went 3 times with ties.

27 May Saturday

Cloudy. Wind East. Father went with one load of ties and got some plaster. Libby Grummon come and staid all night. Lewis and Alanon Mead called here. Jared ashed corn. Rain through the night. We made soap.

(What a busy day for the Nash family!

(“Plaster” is plaster of Paris or sulphate of lime, a common “dressing” for farmland of this period, used as we might use lime on lawns today. It was best applied to fields in the spring and, farmers believed, helped supply nutrients to the plants. *The Farmer’s Almanac* [1876] said plaster “is on some soils an efficient and cheap manure while on other soils, it seems to be of little or no value, as no difference can be detected in the crops following its use.” Plaster was also used in the stable and on manure piles “to prevent the escape of ammonia, and thus keep the air sweet and healthy,” said *Facts for Farmers* [1866].)

(Lewis and Alanson, not Alanon as Jared spells it, were from nearby South Salem. Colonel Alanson Mead married Mariah Olmstead of Ridgefield in 1834 and eventually lived in Colebrook, Conn., where he was a state representative. Lewis’s connection with Alanson is unclear, but perhaps they were brothers.

(Ashes from household fireplaces or stoves or from outdoor burning were not waste material then, as they tend to be today. They were valued not only as a fertilizer, as here, but also for obtaining potash in soap making, which, coincidentally, took place later that same day. Little was wasted in those days. In fact, Norwalk once had a whole building for storing ashes – a Norwalk Town Meeting on Jan. 22, 1669 “voted and granted that Thomas Oviet of Milford shall have liberty to set a house by the waterside before John Gregory’s senior to put ashes in.”

(The soap was not much like our modern cakes of scented bath soap. While farmers could – and some did – make hard soap, it took longer and used more resources, and most settled for a soft, liquidy soap. Beef fat and scraps from the eating table, old bones, and anything else containing fat were placed into a large pot and heated. The best grease was skimmed off the top.

Meanwhile, water had been poured through wood ashes, over and over again, much in the way that water drips through coffee grounds in a percolator. This yielded lye water which, when added to the fat, created soap. It was a foul-smelling, generally dirty operation, but it could produce enough soap to last for many months.)

28 May Sunday

Wet and foggy all day.

29 May Monday

Cloudy through the day. Father carried Libby to her school in morning. Done some chores around.

(Libby was Elizabeth A. Grummun, Jared's niece, who was about 21 at this time. She taught at Titicus Schoolhouse and during the week was getting board from someone who lived near the school. She seemed to spend weekends with family on West Lane or, in this case, at the Nashes' house.)

30 May Tuesday

Clear through the day. Work at stone fence and lower lot near street.

31 May Wednesday

Clear and warm. Work on the road. Went up town towards night with Emily and Emmie.

(In the 18th and 19th Centuries, landowners were responsible for the upkeep of the highways bordering their property or in their neighborhood. Town officers, called surveyors, inspected the roads and could order residents into service fixing them. These conscripted workers received 10 cents an hour for their labors. Surveyors were elected by school district. Samuel B. Fitch and James R. St. John, elected at the Town Meeting, were the surveyors in this district at this point in 1865.)



1 June Thursday

Clear and warm. Work in garden and cleaned cellar in forenoon. Finished the fence in afternoon.

(Today and the next, we see more of that spring-cleaning that started back on April 25 with the bedroom.)

2 June Friday

Some cloudy in forenoon. Emily cleaned kitchen; I, sink room. Father went a clamming.

(In the Nashes' old farmhouse, the sink was not in the kitchen, but in a separate room. Sometimes these rooms were actually separate buildings, partly underground. Sources of household water in the 19th Century included outside wells, inside wells, or springs whose water was piped by gravity to the house or sink room. In the case of wells, water was obtained either by bucket or by hand-operated pump. The Nashes had the latter, as we shall see in a future reference.)

3 June Saturday

Clear and warm. Work on the road. Father bought a heifer off G. Seymour.

(G. Seymour, probably George W. Seymour, was apparently a farmer who raised livestock and who lived on Wilton Road West or South Olmstead Lane. The Nashes often drove farrow cows to the Seymour's bull, as noted on March 25 and April 18.)

4 June Sunday

Clear and hot; 87 in shade. We went to go to church and there was not any.

(At 87 in the shade, one could understand why the minister might call off services.)

5 June Monday

Shower in forenoon. Cloudy most of the day. Plowed for rutabagas and to sow corn.

(Rutabagas, a kind of turnip – and often called then “ruta бага turnips” – were a popular livestock feed on 19th Century farms because they kept very well over the winter and could be grown in a variety of soils. Early June was the best time to plant rutabaga seeds.)

6 June Tuesday

Cloudy. Plowed, and hoed corn in orchard in. Set out [ahdig?]. Rebecca here in afternoon. Went up West Lane at night with Emily. She has some vest come.

(Jared’s writing was unclear on just what was planted.

(Emily does piecework sewing at home, apparently receiving boxes of cut-outs, which she sewed into vests. She may have been working for the Ridgefield Shirt Factory, which could have been farming out work at this time. However, the occasional references to the vests’ arriving from somewhere indicate that she may have been working for an out-of-town company. Many farming wives earned extra money for the family by doing contract sewing like this.)

7 June Wednesday

Cloudy. Wind SW. Jared plowed corn and we hoed it. Curtis Betts come here and staid all night. Mother went to Mrs. Hoyt’s in afternoon to get Father’s pantaloons made. Jared commence to plow a piece for buckwheat.

(Curtis Betts, a Ridgefield shoemaker, was a native of Wilton. He died in 1868 at the age of 70. He was probably a friend of Father.

(True pantaloons in the 19th Century were tight trousers, worn for formal occasions, and which had straps passing under the instep to hold the legs down. These were probably just trousers.

(Once more popular than it is today, buckwheat reached its American high point in production in 1866, only a year after this entry was written, when 22 million bushels were grown in the United States. By 1905, only 14-million bushes were produced. A quick crop, it took only eight to 10 weeks to mature, faster than any other grain. Buckwheat was used for both animal feed and for household flour. Although buckwheat pancake mixes today are brown or gray in color, real buckwheat flour is actually whiter than wheat flour. Dairy farmers valued its byproducts because of the high protein content.

(Buckwheat had its advantages and disadvantages as a crop. It grew in poorer soils and, because it grew so densely, it smothered out all other plants. Thus buckwheat was good for “clearing” a field, as farmers used to put it, of weeds and other unwanted plants. However, buckwheat made its demands. “It is ... a tremendous exhauster of the ground – seeming to take double the food from the soil that a crop of oats would do,” said *The Farmers’ Almanac* [1876]. The almanac recommended that a harvest of buckwheat should be followed by “a liberal dressing of manure.”)

8 June Thursday

Clear and hot. Finished hoing in forenoon. Work in garden.

9 June Friday

Clear and hot. Shower towards night. Emily, Emmie & I went to S. Norwalk. Rained most of the way home.

(The family was probably visiting the Walter Quintards; Mrs. Quintard was Emily's sister, Sarah. The Quintards will visit Ridgefield later. Quintard was a prominent name in Norwalk and today, Quintard Avenue in South Norwalk recalls the family.)

10 June Saturday

Thunder shower in morning and showery through the day.

11 June Sunday

Clear. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane in afternoon. Not verry well.

12 June Monday

Clear. Done chores and drewed some poles to fence turnip patch. Emily went to John Benedict toward night.

(Fence work was a common spring activity. Poles or rails for fencing were often made from American chestnut, a common, fast-growing, and very straight tree. They were easy to split, and most of the ties for the rapidly spreading American railway system of the mid-1800s came from chestnut. A blight early in the 20th Century killed most all of the large chestnuts. Young ones still grow in the forests today, but they are doomed by the ubiquitous blight, and die before they become very big.

(John Benedict, a farmer, lived near the corner of Silver Spring Road and West Lane, about a mile from the Nashes.)

13 June Tuesday

Clear and hot. Plowed and hoed potatoes & beans. Went down to Brown's mill with salt.

(The Nashes probably weren't dealing with table salt here, but went to the mill to have chunks of salt ground into a powder that was used as a fertilizer, especially for grain crops. Salt was also both a herbicide and an insecticide in the 19th Century. Putting it on roads or in ditches and gutters kept plant growth down. It was also used on certain maturing plants, whose leaves were dusted with the powder to keep off harmful insects. However, another use of salt was as a wood preservative – farmers would drill a hole into a fence post just above the ground, fill it with salt,

and plug it up. The salt would eventually impregnate the wood, keeping out insects and discouraging rot. Since the Nashes are working at fences here, this may be why the salt is being prepared.)

14 June Wednesday

Some cooler. Wind east. Father drewed some poles and fixt fence. I went to blacksmith. Bill shod.

15 June Thursday

Cloud and cool. East wind. Work at corn ground and went a strawberrying. Heard Stephen Olmstead died last night.

(Stephen Olmstead, another shoemaker, died June 14 at the age of 71. Born in 1794, he was a son of Matthew Olmstead and brother of David W. Olmstead, whose daughter married Emily Nash's brother, John B. Smith. Stephen lived in an 18th Century house at 75 Olmstead Lane, owned for many modern years by Paul and Kathryn Rosa.)

16 June Friday

Cloudy. Soled Emmie's shoes and went to the funeral. Mother and Emmie went to Mrs. Hoyt's.

(The funeral was for Stephen Olmstead.)

17 June Saturday

Clear and hot. Plowed and hoed corn in orchard. Went up to J. Benedict with Emily & Emma. Left there to her mother's to stay all night. Mother went to see Aunt Anah.

(Anah Nash was born with the wonderful name, Gloriana St. John. It was an uncommon name, meaning "glory of God," and apparently she did not like it much, for she was known most of her life as Anah – it was spelled that way on the census. Anah had just had her 80th birthday June 4th and was probably ill; she had only a few months to live. Anah, the widow of Samuel Olmstead Nash, was Jared's father's aunt and thus Jared's great aunt. She was the mother of Abram Nash, who visits often.)

18 June Sunday

Clear and verry hot. Shower before noon, cloudy the rest of the day. Went up after supper after Emily and Emmie.

19 June Monday

Damp & foggy. Made a pair of shoes for Emmie. Sowed corn.

20 June Tuesday

Damp in morning, cloudy most of the day. Emily and I went to Norwalk.

21 June Wednesday

Damp in morning. Sun come out, hot for rest of the day. We hoed corn.

22 June Thursday

Clear and hot. Finished hoeing in forenoon. Work some in garden. Shower in afternoon.

23 June Friday

Clear and pleasant. Father went to mill in forenoon. Mother went to G. Smith's with him in P.M. We fixt pump tube in the well. Emily and I went strawberrying and he went up after Mother, and Libby come home with them. We had peas for dinner today.

(The pump tube was a wooden tube through which round rubber disks on a continuous chain pulled water up from the well.

(Wild strawberries, common in parts of Ridgefield, are tasty. However, few people nowadays seem to take advantage of these free wild fruits.

(Peas were the first fruits of the season's plantings. Although peas were an excellent feed for fattening cattle and hogs as well as a popular soil conditioner, it appears the Nashes grew them mainly for the table – using the leftover vines, of course, for the manure heap.

(Peas were frequently sown in fields and apple orchards to enrich the soil by taking nitrogen from the air and placing it in the ground. "Peas are an excellent crop to prepare land for wheat or any other grain, and may be profitably grown as a manure crop," *Facts for Farmers* said in 1866. "They may be grown for seed after the 10th of June, free from the pea-bug; and a bushel is worth a bushel of corn for fattening purposes, and it does not cost half so much to produce it."

(Today's gardener might be surprised at how many varieties were available back in 1865. *Facts for Farmers* recommended more than a dozen including Daniel O'Rourke, Early Princess, Early Emperor, Prince Albert, Early Kent, Tom Thumb, Bishop's Early Dwarf, Dwarf Blue Imperial, Champion of England, British Queen, and Missouri Marrowfat.)

24 June Saturday

Clear and warm. Hoed potatoes and beans in forenoon. Mowed dooryard and rake it up. Went towards night with Emily and Emmie to J. Benedict and left them up West Lane, to stay all night.

25 June Sunday

Clear. Father and mother went to meeting in afternoon. I went up after Emily & Emmie.

26 June Monday

Father and Emmie went to mill in morning. Rain before noon and most of the afternoon, verry fast some of the time.

27 June Tuesday

Clear. Commence to mow in the clover and mowed north of the house.

(“Make hay while the sun shines,” farmers used to say. In fact, hay was the single most important crop a farmer raised. What was collected during four weeks in early summer would be used for feed the cows and horses for six months in winter – from November through April. Starting here – or perhaps on June 24 with the mowing of the dooryard, the Nashes begin collecting clover for hay. Clover hay had to be cut, gathered in cocks, and housed away from the rain very quickly; wet clover spoiled rapidly. Here the Nashes had three fine days for haying.

(Clover had benefits aside from food for livestock. Clover enriched soil with nitrogen, thus rejuvenating it. It was planted as a rotation crop or with oats and barley. Its flowers provided honey for bees that many farmers kept.

(Red Clover was the most common clover crop – and it still is among the most common types of weed clover found here. There’s hardly a piece of open land that doesn’t have Red Clover growing on it, descendants of the Old World clovers farmers like the Nashes planted so many years ago. White Clover was also grown as a field conditioner and a source of bee nectar, but was rarely used as hay.)

28 June Wednesday

Clear & comfortable. Work at hay. Mrs. St. John here in afternoon.

(Several St. Johns were friends of the family – this one may have been Abigail St. John, the wife of Jared N. St. John, who died Oct. 28, 1876 at the age of 76. Or it may have been Mrs. Bela St. John, mentioned July 30, 1865. One of the founding families of Ridgefield, the St. John clan [called Saintjohn in early records and Sention even earlier] was farming in this part of southern Ridgefield and northern Wilton at least since 1815 and probably much earlier. The Nashes lived on Silver Spring Road, and the next road east is today called St. Johns Road after the St. Johns families who lived there in the 19th Century. Among them were Jared and Abigail St. John.)

29 June Thursday

Clear and warmer. Work at hay. Jared plowed & Abram and Patrick hoed potatoes. Hatty Lobdell & Joshua & Libby G. come here at night after we was abed.

(Hatty Lobdell was either Harriet Eliza Lobdell, born in Ridgefield in 1845 and the daughter of Samuel and Harriet Nash Lobdell. Or she was Harriet Nash Lobdell herself. Joshua was the son of Samuel and Harriet. So Hattie and Joshua are either mother and son, or siblings. Samuel Lobdell, whose death is reported Sept. 23, 1865, was a tailor living in New Jersey.

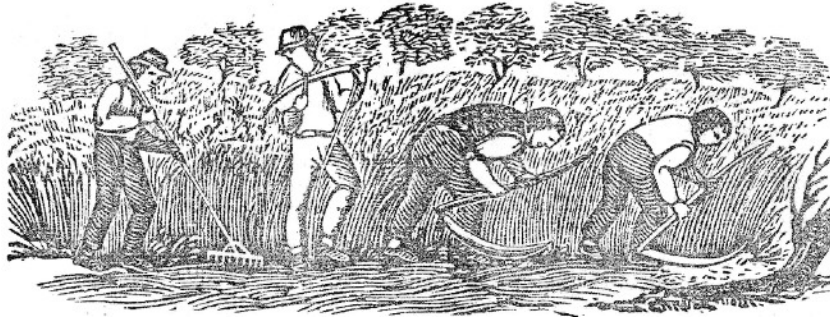
(It's hard to say when the family went to bed, but chances are that it was not too long after dark. On June 29, sunset was at 7:40. The fact that the three guests showed up so late suggests they had probably traveled some distance. If they had been carrying important family news, Jared probably would have noted it. Perhaps Hatty and Joshua had just gotten into town and were visiting old friends.)

30 June Friday

Foggy in morning, then clear and hot. I went and carried the folks up town to go to Salem. Got a pr. of shoes for Emily to Linus Northrop. Got in some hay and plants & rutabagas. Thunder in evening and some rain.

(Salem is the old name for what is now Lewisboro and North Salem, N.Y. However, Jared was probably referring to the village of South Salem, where the friends lived, including his half brother, Charles Sanford Nash. South Salem is part of Lewisboro.

(Linus O. Northrop, a harness maker, probably also made shoes. But why did Jared, a shoemaker and son of a shoemaker, buy his wife's shoes from someone else? Perhaps because Jared's specialty was simpler men's shoes?)



1 July Saturday

Cloudy through the day. Went with Emily in morning to carry her vests, and then hilled corn.

(Jared was building up mounds around the young corn plants. Rain had probably eroded some of the hills or ridges into which the seed was placed earlier in the season. Corn that matures in September often must be supported by building hills around the stalks early in the year. Wind or even the plants' own weight otherwise tends to fell the corn, which has a root system very close to the surface. The hills also protect the roots from the drying effects of the sun.)

2 July Sunday

Cloudy for part of the day, cleared off in afternoon.

3 July Monday

Cleared. Mowed some, finished hilling corn in orchard, and plastered it. Rake up the hay, 29 heaps.

(Plastering was applying lime as a fertilizer that also discouraged some kinds of harmful insects.)

4 July Tuesday

Clear. Carried Emily up West Lane in morning. Then work at hay. Helpt Patrick plaster potatoes.

(For Jared, at least, the Fourth of July was a time for work, not play. The holiday was popular then, but because of the war, celebrations here may have been limited or non-existent. In addition, his wife Emily was six months pregnant. Perhaps a gathering was taking place at the Smith homestead on West Lane. Next year, long after the war has ended, the Nashes did no more on the Fourth – though they did make a trip to see friends in Norwalk on July 3rd.

(This was also a busy time of the year for a farmer who probably didn't want to lose the advantage of a clear and sunny day. Patrick, last name unknown but quite possibly a recent Irish immigrant, had helped Abram plant the potatoes back on May 16.)

5 July Wednesday

Clear. Hilled corn in back lot. Went at night after Emily & Emmie.

6 July Thursday

Not very clear. Finished hilling. Work some at hay. Father went and got plaster. Mother went to Aunt Biar's. Emily & Emmie went to J.N. Olmstead.

(Aunt Biar is probably Biah or Abiah Seymour, daughter of Abraham and Sarah Nash and Jared's great aunt. She lived on upper Wilton Road West and was the widow of Thaddeus Seymour. She died of pneumonia in 1869 at the age of 86, and was probably somewhat infirm at this time. Thus, the visit was probably to an ailing aunt.)

7 July Friday

Clear and hot. Work at hay. Mrs. Holmes and Emily Olmstead spent the day here. Emily carried them home at night. Jared sowed buckwheat. Willy plastered the corn.

(Clear, dry weather was ideal for cutting, collecting and storing hay, which could be ruined by too much moisture.

(Emily was probably Emily Olmstead [1835-1899], a daughter of David W. and Emily Olmstead who lived at what is now 91 Olmstead Lane. She was a dressmaker, and being about 30 years old at this time, probably grew up with Emily Nash, who was about 33 and who'd lived just around the corner from Emily Olmstead before marrying Jared Nash. The visitor could also have been this Emily Olmstead's mother.

(Willie is not identified in the diary, but he may have been Willie E. Duncan, who in 1875 witnessed a family legal document. He was probably a hired hand, but could have been a friend.)

8 July Saturday

Clear and comfortable. Work hay in old barn lot and cut some of the clover next lot back.

(The old barn lot was probably a site of a barn that had fallen out of use or burned long before. This land had been farmed since, probably, the 1730s – more than a century and a third – and there were probably already remnants of old farm buildings.)

9 July Sunday

Clear. We went to church in forenoon. Mother rode to meeting with us, then I went up after her after meeting was out.

(Remember that when Jared is saying “meeting,” it is like our saying “church.”)

10 July Monday

Not verry clear, but some sun in middle of day. Work at hay, got in 27. Mowed & rake 26 heaps. Abram cut rye. Went down to Comstock’s store at night with Abram.

(Twenty seven means heaps or bales or cocks of hay. Abram – probably Abram S. Nash – is probably using a sickle, used in combination with a “grass crook” or “hay crook,” a device that held the top part of a bunch while the sickle cut through the bottom.)

11 July Tuesday

Rain most of the forenoon. Fixt my boots. In afternoon Father went to mill with feed and to factory with wool. Abram finished cutting the rye.

(The factory here was probably Elias N. and John Glover’s woolen factory on the banks of the Norwalk River near the northern corner of Route 7 and Topstone Road. Founded around 1770 by Hugh Cain, after whom nearby Cain’s Hill is named, the mill factory processed, wove, and dyed wool.

(This is the first indication that the Nashes may have had sheep on their farm. However, Jared never mentions sheep shearing as an activity, so Father may have been hauling wool for someone else. Rye was a favorite food for sheep, and especially in the fall, the animals were pastured in the rye field after the crop was cut, so they could graze on the stubble and get strong for the harsh winter ahead — all while providing fertilizer for the soil.)

12 July Wednesday

Cloudy all day. I went a wortleberring in forenoon. Emily went up West Lane with C. Gregory. I went in afternoon with her to David Olmstead. Uncle Abram Nash and Daniel Canfield called here.

(By whortleberries, Jared meant blueberries, varieties of which were called whortleberries. For example, the Highbush or Tall Blueberry, found in this region, is also called the Great Whortleberry. These were undoubtedly wild blueberries – they were not commonly cultivated at this point – and were used to make jam, jelly and preserves. Those, wild strawberries, cowslips, some nuts, and clams from the shore seem to be the only wild foods the Nashes ate.

(C. Gregory could have been Charles Gregory of Ridgefield or one of the many Wilton Gregorys.

(Uncle Abram Nash was not Jared's cousin, Abram S. Nash, who often visits and helps on the farm [he is called simply "Abram" in the diary]. Uncle Abram was Jared's father's uncle, making him Jared's granduncle. He would have been in his early 80s at this time. The entry under July 14 indicates Uncle Abram may have been living in Norwalk at this time.

(Daniel Canfield lived in Lewisboro.)

13 July Thursday

Some cloudy in forenoon. Clear in afternoon. Laid some stone fence. Got in 2 load of hay. Rake one piece of rye.

14 July Friday

Clear and cool. Went to Norwalk to carry Uncle Abram Nash. Father and Jared got in the rye. We mowed some and killed calf.

The calf was probably killed to provide some income – see next entry. Nowadays, a veal calf is raised until about 16 to 18 weeks of age, when it can weigh up to 450 pounds. This one may have been older since its birth is not recorded in the diary.

15 July Saturday

Clear. Work at hay. Got in 3 load. Father went to carry veal to send to Russel Mead. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane in forenoon. We went and got berrys just at night.

(Back in January, Mead, who lived nearby on Wilton Road West, got chickens from the Nashes.)

16 July Sunday

Cloudy with south wind, rain towards night. Went to church in forenoon. We staid up West Lane till after supper. John's folks was down from Carmel. Mother went to meeting with us.

(John is John Betts Smith, Emily Nash's brother. Part of the Smith clan lived in Carmel, N.Y., as did John for a while. In fact, Laura Smith, his daughter, had been born there in 1844.

17 July Monday

Rain verry hard all night. Cloudy in forenoon, cleared off in afternoon. Fixt in waggonhouse to put hay. Went a whortleberring and mowed some. Picked our first cucumbers.

(The wagonhouse, an outbuilding like a garage for storing a wagon or wagons, was evidently used temporarily for holding hay during the haying season. The "fixing" may have been repairing

leaks roof and openings in walls, for the hay had to be kept dry. Or perhaps he meant he was just removing things stored there to make room for the hay.)

18 July Tuesday

Clear. Work at hay. Cleared old barn lot and one back of it. 4 load. Emily went and brought her Mother, D. Olmstead wife and John Smith's wife down here and then carried them back at night.

19 July Wednesday

Clear in forenoon, clouded up and began to rain about 7 o'clock and rained verry fast most of all night. Mowed and got in the old orchard 3 load.

20 July Thursday

Flying clouds in forenoon. Father went up to A. Scott's with butter. Mowed in afternoon south of house. Emily went up town. Laura came here with her and staid all night.

(A. Scott is unknown, but it may have been Amelias Scott, whom the census says was living here in 1860. With a name like Amelias, it would not be surprising that Jared would write simply "A. Scott," since he probably didn't have a clue about how to spell it. Another possibility is that it is Amelia Scott, who was a 43-year-old daughter of Nathan Scott, who had died in May.)

21 July Friday

Clear. Good hay day, got 6 load of hay south of house. Abram helpt us. Laura, Emily & Emmie went a whortleberring. Went and carried Laura home at night.

(This Abram is Jared's cousin, as opposed to Uncle Abram.)

22 July Saturday

Rain in morning. Cloudy and damp through the day. Cleared off at night. Went and got a shoe on Bill and thinned rutabagas.

23 July Sunday

Clear. Emily, Emmie and I went to church in afternoon. Heard John D. Edmond died this afternoon down to his father's.

(Rockwell and other historians have maintained that until the 20th Century, Ridgefield had no lawyers. However, town hall records indicate two lawyers died in Ridgefield in the 1800s. One was John D. Edmonds whose death at the age of 33 occurred on July 23. He was the son of R.C.

Edmonds, who lived near the Nashes on Silver Hill Road. He was a veteran of five months of service in the Civil War during 1861.)

24 July Monday

Lowery in forenoon. Hoed rutabagas and mowed some. Clear in afternoon. Our folks went to the funeral. I rake up the hay and then we got in 2 load.

25 July Tuesday

Cloudy through the day, thunder shower just at night. Finished mowing south of the house and went a whortleberrying with Father and Emily.

26 July Wednesday

Clear. High west wind. Cleared lot south, 2 loads. Mowed some north of house. Emily and Emmie spent the day up West Lane.

27 July Thursday

Clear. Finished mowing. I got in 22 heeps. Rake up 18 more north of the house. Mother went up to Mr. Holmes. I went after her at night.

28 July Friday

Clear and verry hot. Finished getting in hay. We all went up see Libby and she come home with us. Heavy thunder shower about 12 o'clock at night.

29 July Saturday

Clear and hot. Abram cut oats by old orchard lane. We went whortleberrying in forenoon. Done chores in afternoon. Cooked cucumbers for pickles.

(Facts for Farmers advised homemakers in 1866 on pickling cucumbers: "The great art in making good pickles is to have good vinegar. The best vinegar for pickling is made of sound cider. As good vinegar is not always at hand, the best way is to prepare a brine strong enough to bear an egg. When the tub is full of pickles, allow the brine to cover them; then cover them over with cabbage-leaves, and a board and weight to keep them in the brine. For use, freshen in warm water, and put them in a bright brass kettle, with vinegar enough to cover them, and scald them 15 or 20 minutes; put them in jars, and pour hot vinegar over them; flavor them with cloves, mace, black pepper, an onion or two, and a little horseradish and ginger." Yummy!)

30 July Sunday

Clear and some cooler. Wind N East. Bela St. John brought Aunt Lucy here and left her. Emily, Libby & Emmie went after supper to J.N. Olmstead and Abram's.

(Bela St. John was a farmer who lived in northern Wilton. He was married to Aunt Lucy's sister, Esther Keeler, and was Jared's uncle.

(As a given name in 19th Century New England, Bela was quite unusual. Bela was a Slavic or Hungarian name, used by several Hungarian kings; very few people from Eastern Europe were in these parts. Bela St. John's family was using the name in the 1700s.

(Aunt Lucy, who stayed with the Nashes until Aug. 6, was Lucy Keeler Dudley from Wilton. She is a sister of Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared Nash's mother. Her death on May 28, 1866 is reported in the diary.

(Jared Nash Olmstead and Abram Nash lived close to each other on St. Johns Road.)

31 July Monday

Clear. Got one piece of oats and dug bushel potatoes to carry away. Carried Libby to her school in morning; at night, carried Aunt Lucy to Holmes'. Mrs. Mary St. John called here in afternoon. William Osborn and his daughter come and staid all night.

(A "piece" is a parcel or lot of land – one planted space. Mary St. John, a native of Wilton, was the widow of James St. John, also of Wilton. She died in Ridgefield in 1867 at the age of 90. Her connection with the Nashes is unclear but she may have been related to the family.

(Libby Grumman, as we have seen, is a schoolteacher at the Titicus Schoolhouse, still standing on the corner of North Salem Road and New Street. Female pupils were taught in the summer while males, needed to help on the farm, went to school in the colder months.

(Jared Nash and William Osborn are first cousins. William's mother, Nancy Keeler Osborn, was a sister of Jared's mother, Roxy Keeler Nash. Since they stayed overnight, Osborns probably lived in another town some distance away.)



1 August Tuesday

Clear, Father and I went to Norwalk. Dug a mess of clams.

2 August Wednesday

Cloudy in morning, then clear. Went to blacksmith's with Bill in forenoon. Work in garden in afternoon. Emily went up West Lane with me. I went up after her at night. Father got blackberries.

(The entry does not make clear whether father was gathering wild or cultivated blackberries. However, since Jared seems to describe collecting wild whortleberries or blueberries as “a whortleberrying,” and here father “got blackberries,” father was perhaps harvesting a cultivated patch rather than picking in the wild.)

(Blackberries were common in the wild, but many farmers grew them as a crop. They sold in New York for 25 cents a quart around this time, and thus a family with a couple acres of blackberries could fetch a nice piece of change for a few days of picking. In fact, when blackberries were ready for harvest in some areas of the Northeast, all other activity stopped – even schooling – and whole families would work all day and into the night at picking.)

(By the 1860s, there was only one popular cultivated blackberry, and that, in fact came from this area. The New Rochelle or Lawton blackberry was first raised in New Rochelle, N.Y., either from an accidental seedling of a wild variety, or from a plant imported by French Huguenots, who had settled in New Rochelle. However, the chief developer and marketer of these Lawton blackberries was George Seymour & Company of Norwalk, which sold seedlings throughout the country. One farming manual of the era said as many as a thousand berries could grow on a single cane of Lawton blackberries, and an acre of plants could yield a hundred bushels.)

3 August Thursday

Clear and verry hot. Mercury 90. Hoed rutabagas in forenoon. Father mowed around oat stuble. Got the other piece of oats. Thunder shower between 5 & 6 o'clock.

(Stubble was the lower portion of the plants left after the hay or oats were cut and harvested.)

4 August Friday

Clear and hot. Mr. Holmes brought Aunt Lucy here. Done some chores and went whortleberring. Father went to blacksmith's with chains & pork.

(Jared's handwriting of the last word is unclear; pork is a guess, but one which leads to a confusing sentence. Perhaps the pork was in payment for fixing the chains?)

5 August Saturday

Lowery most of the day, but hot. Made clam rake and done chores. Went to Bailey store at night with Emily.

(The Nashes made many of the tools they used. The clam rake may have been fashioned by inserting long pegs or even nail rods through a short wooden bar, and attaching a handle. Because the rake was designed to drag through wet sand to scoop up buried clams, the tines had to be long, but the number of them couldn't be too great or the drag would be too difficult.)

6 August Sunday

Cloudy, shower in middle of day. Carried Emily up to go to church and went up after her towards night. Father & Mother went and carried Aunt Lucy home. Rain just at night and some through the night.

7 August Monday

Cloudy most of the day. Rain in afternoon little while. Went up to Jared's and Mr. St. John in morning. Father dug to settle a rock in oat stable.

(In summer at least, it was easier to dig next to and deeper than the boulder to shift it under the surface than it was to try to remove it altogether. In winter, huge stones were often pulled up and placed on a stone boat and hauled away over the slick, snow-covered surface. Burying a boulder deeper is not a lasting solution because the freezing and thawing of the earth, plus the gradual loss of topsoil, tends to expose the rock again in a few years. "Some farmers prefer to sink the boulders rather than dig them out and haul them off," The Old Farmer's Almanac of 1865 observes in August. "Any way to get rid of them is better than none.")

8 August Tuesday

Clear and some cooler. We all but Father went over to Sanford's. He mowed round by meadow fences.

(The family may have gone to Sanford Nash's farm to help with some work. Sanford often helped at the Nashes' farm.)

9 August Wednesday

Clear and pleasant. Went a blackberrring and done chores around.

(Wild blackberries were being picked.)

10 August Thursday

Clear in forenoon, some cloudy in P.M. Father & I went a clamming.

(Charles and Jared get to try out Jared's new rake, made on Aug. 5. The clamming probably took place in Norwalk.)

11 August Friday

Clear. Sick with the toothache. Daniel come down to tell Emily that a trunk of vests had come and she went up to see about it. Emmie is quite sick towards night.

(Daniel may have been Daniel Smith, brother of Emily, or Daniel Sholes. The vests, in pieces, are for Emily to sew together at home, a source of family income. Arriving in pre-cut pieces, it was like putting together clothing from a kit. Jared's dental problems will last into September. There were no "dentists" in Ridgefield, and the local doctor typically handled serious toothaches.)

12 August Saturday

Clear and cool. Wind. Feel better than yesterday. Father work at stone fence down the old orchard lane. He had a sick turn at night.

13 August Sunday

Clear, cool nights and mornings. Went after supper up West Lane with Emily & Emmie.

14 August Monday

Clear & hot. Father went to Wilton Depot to carry C. Booth and family and I went after blackberries. Then we dug our early potatoes.

(The C. Booth family must have been somehow related to the Nashes or maybe the Smiths and in a town far enough away to require train travel.)

15 August Tuesday

Clear and hot. Had a hunt after 2 year old heifer. She was gone out of the lot last night. Father dug some stone on stuble.

(Father was clearing a field of its rocks.)

16 August Wednesday

Clear and hot. Father went in morning after Aunt Biar and carried her home at night. Work some at fence down the old orchard lane.

17 August Thursday

Some cloudy. Wind east. Work at fence. E. Smith's wife, Phebe Ann, and Laura here in afternoon. Mother went to J.N. Olmsted in afternoon.

(E. Smith was probably from Dutchess County, N.Y. He visits from time to time; on Sept. 29, he will buy a heifer. This is probably a different person from Egbert Smith of Wilton, a butcher whose services the Nashes use.)

18 August Friday

Some cloudy. Work some at fence. Went to Wm. Seymour to get stone augers sharpened.

(William Welles Seymour [1816-1896] was a blacksmith. Stone augers were tools for cutting holes in stone. Sometimes they were used to split the rock (along the line of the auger holes) and sometimes to anchor something into the stone. Here, however, Jared was preparing the augers to drill holes into which blasting powder would be inserted. Note that on Sept. 1, the Nashes “blasted some rocks down the old orchard lane.” As recorded Aug. 12, the Nashes were also working on “stone fence” at this time — what we now often call a stone wall — and they may have used stone from this blasting project as well as from clearing a field to build the fence. Farming in the 19th Century required many skills.)

19 August Saturday

Clear and warm. Work at the fence.

20 August Sunday

Clear and hot. Father & Mother went to meeting in afternoon.

21 August Monday

Clear, hot & dry. Finished the fence in forenoon. D. Patrick come and took his heifer away.

(The heifer of Daniel Partrick [the name is often misspelled Patrick] was probably visiting a Nash bull, perhaps the same bull that the family will sell on Aug. 30 to Jared N. Olmstead. The heifer had been dropped off May 23 [q.v.]

22 August Tuesday

Shower after 12 o'clock this morning. Cloudy, wind NE, rain towards night. Father plowed stubble for rye.

23 August Wednesday

Clear and cool forepart of the day, then flying clouds rest of the day. Father finished plowing stubble.

(In plowing stubble, Father was preparing the fields, just harvested or being harvested, for the fall planting of rye – see Sept. 6, 1866.)

24 August Thursday

Clear and cool. Father work around the rye ground.

25 August Friday

Clear and a little warmer. Father threshed rye. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane in afternoon. Mother went over to Mrs. Keeler's.

(It would be interesting to see – or know for certain – how Father did his threshing. He may have used the age-old method of beating the plants to separate the grain from the husks and straw. If his fields were big enough, he may have used one of the more than 700 different types of threshing machines that were being sold in this country by the 1830s. However, since the Nashes were poor farmers, it's quite likely that the rye was laid on the barn floor and flailed. The mess was what father "cleaned up" the next day. The straw and chaff from the rye was used as feed and barn bedding for livestock.)

26 August Saturday

Clear. Father threshed more and cleaned up in forenoon. Drewed some stone off rye ground in afternoon.

27 August Sunday

Clear. Emily & Emmie went to Church in forenoon.

28 August Monday

Clear. Father work round the fences. Sanford come here before noon.

29 August Tuesday

Clear and warmer. Father went to Norwalk, carried chickens. I pulled beans and did other chores.

30 August Wednesday

Foggy in morning, then clear and hot. Work at rye ground. I went to mill in afternoon. Mother went to G. Smith's with me. Father sold bull to J. N. Olmsted.

(The trip to the mill is not explained, but it may have been to have apples ground into pomace for later pressing into what would become cider. As we shall see, Father made cider on Sept. 2 [q.v.]. Grinding apples was difficult at home and was best done at a mill like Gilbert's mill at Titicus. Pressing the pomace or cheese was then easily done on the farm with a home-made cider press. Remember that the cider here is probably not what we call cider, but instead what we know as "hard cider" – fermented a bit to give it some alcoholic content.

(Jared could also have been bringing rye to the mill to be ground into flour, for he had been threshing it. At Gilbert's mill, both jobs could have been done at once, since the place was equipped for both operations.

(George Smith was a carriage-maker and farmer whom Mother frequently visits. He lived very near the family of Jared's wife, Emily Smith Nash, and may be Emily's cousin.)



1 September Friday

Clear and verry hot. Mercury 87. Blasted some rocks down the old orchard lane.

(Dynamite had not been invented until just about this time, so the Nashes probably used black powder for the blasting. Blasting was a technique for breaking up boulders too large for hauling away or burying.)

2 September Saturday

Rain from 1 o'clock till most noon. Hot & muggy. Father made some cider in afternoon.

(Cider-making, a Connecticut and New England tradition in late summer and early autumn, was an important and tricky task; it wasn't a matter of just squeezing the juice out of apples. The fruit was crushed in a certain way so that the meat was deliberately bruised, usually at a cider mill – such as Gilbert's Mill on Saw Mill Hill Road in Titicus. Bruising and then exposing the crushed apples to sunlight, or at least the air, for the proper amount of time turned the pomace – or apple cheese – a brown color, a change that added a great deal of sugar and richness to the juice. The cheese was then layered on rye straw or on cloth, and squeezed in a wooden press. True cider was then allowed to ferment in barrels; what we call cider today is actually just apple juice. Cider was an alcoholic beverage that was a staple in most households, much as beer and wine are today. Although cider making was carried on commercially to some degree, it was usually a small-scale operation, with neighborhood cider mills and presses serving a community rather than big factories' mass producing for sale through stores. Ridgefield had at least a half dozen cider mills by the mid-1800s, enough to serve the town's needs.)

3 September Sunday

Clear and hot. Went up West Lane in afternoon with Emily and Emmie. Roxanna and Richard come over. She staid over. Damp nights and mornings. Hot and muggy. Real dogs days weather about these times.

(Jared's use of dog days is interesting. A hand-me-down from ancient times, the Dog Days actually extend from July 3 through Aug. 11. The Greeks and Romans knew that Sirius, the Dog Star, rose simultaneously with the sun during this period. They believed that since it was such a

strong star, Sirius added to the sun's heat, making the Dog Days the hottest time of the year. The term came to mean a period of the year that was the hottest and most unpleasant.

(Roxana and Richard are Roxana Nash Walker and her husband, Richard Walker. Roxana was a daughter of Charles Sanford Nash – “Sanford” – who was a son of Jared's father by his first marriage to Roxana Nickerson. She was obviously named for her grandmother. Richard Walker later acquired the Nash homestead and bequeathed it in 1897 to his daughter, Annie Mae Walker, who married Cyrus A. Cornen Jr. in 1900. Cornen later became town clerk, probate judge and treasurer of St. Stephen's Church, but wound up embezzling tens of thousands of dollars from both the town and the church. He skipped town in 1916, but after his death some years later, Annie returned, living with her daughter on Wilton Road West. She died in 1958 at the age of 83.

4 September Monday

Cloudy and damp in morning. Some sunshine in afternoon. Hot. Work at stone fence. Father had a sick turn at night. Bought a pig of Mr. Keeler, \$3.

(The Nashes' purchase of a whole pig for \$3 shows how much the value of things, including the dollar, have changed. Today you can't buy a pound of ham for \$3. Jared must have thought the amount of the purchase interesting since he rarely mentions money in the more than 700 diary entries.

(Back in the 1860s, a typical hog could produce about 400 pounds of meat, plus 175 pounds of rough fat. If the farmer wanted to sell the hog, he could fetch between six and eight cents a pound for the dressed meat. Hog farming was not considered very profitable, and a New York state farmer of this era calculated that it cost him \$322 to raise 10 hogs till slaughter at 40 weeks. If the meat sold at six cents a pound dressed, he would have made \$13 profit. At 7.5 cents, he would have made \$74. Many farmers calculated that they would make more money selling the grain used to feed the hogs than feeding it to the hogs and then selling them.)

5 September Tuesday

Lowery & hot. Work some at wood. Picked hops. Father not able to do any thing. Rebecca come here in afternoon and was sent for. She had company.

(Hops, a vine-like herb that can grow as much as a foot a day, were generally used in flavoring beer. However, the Nashes may have grown the plant for another old-time use – making yeast from a decoction of hops and flour. They could also have sold hops at market to a brewery.

(Hops, incidentally, must have both male and female plants growing in the same neighborhood to survive. They require poles to hold up the climbing plant [“hop” is from the Anglo-Saxon, *hoppān*, to climb], and an area set aside for growing hops was called a “hopyard.” The valued part of the plant was the flower, which was dried and used as a beer flavoring and which also produced

a yellow powder called lupulin, a drug. Small farmers picked and baled the flowers to sell and ship to mills.

(Along Route 33 in Wilton, just south of the Ridgefield line and not far from the Nash farm, was a place called the Hop Meadow. The name was in use as early as 1710 for this large tract, whose first owners included Keelers, Olmsteads and St. Johns. It probably reflected wild hops found growing there.

(The hop, by the way, is closely related to marijuana.)

6 September Wednesday

Lowery and damp in forenoon. Father went and carried Roxanna home. Verry hot in midle of day. Some thunder. Mother went up to F. Meeker's. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane. Walter Quindard's folks was up from Norwalk. I am most sick with toothache. Dug potatoes.

(Francis Meeker [1818-1868], a Norwalk native, was a farmer who lived just north of the Nashes on Silver Spring Road. Walter Quintard – Jared's spelling is incorrect – lived in South Norwalk and was married to Sarah Smith, sister of Emily Nash, Jared's wife. Thus, he was Jared's brother-in-law. A well-known businessman in Norwalk, he was a partner in the carriage-making firm of Quintard and Smith – the Smith was probably someone else in Emily's family. Quintard once worked in the carriage factory in the Big Shop where the First Congregational Church now is on West Lane. This may be how he met his wife, who grew up a quarter mile west of the factory on West Lane. He started his own firm in Norwalk and became successful enough in life to have been selected mayor of South Norwalk.

(The Old Farmer's Almanac of 1865 advised in early September: "Dig potatoes when the skin will not slide if pushed hard by the thumb." See entry for Sept. 22, 1865 for more on potatoes.)

7 September Thursday

Clear. Father and Monson went to Isaiah Keeler's to see Sanders cattle. Then he got Jared's oxen and finished plowing for rye where beans & potatoes [were]. My face no better. Ache day & night.

(Monson is Munson Hoyt, who with his sisters had a farm on northern Silver Spring Road. Jared's handwriting of the word that appears to be "Sanders" is unclear, as is the reference. Father may have been looking at livestock to purchase.)

8 September Friday

Cloudy. Father got out manure & ashes in forenoon. Rain in afternoon and all night. My face is not any better and is swelling up.

(Manure and ashes were being spread to prepare the soil for the fall crop of rye, which was sown a few days later. *See* Sept. 11.)

9 September Saturday

Cloudy all day. Libby and Sarah Smith here in afternoon. Father went to David Hoyt's stone bee. Jared here in evening. I am about same.

(Sarah Smith was wife of Daniel Smith who died Dec. 30, 1864, just before the diary started. Daniel was a brother of Emily's father. Sarah died in 1880 at the age of 89.)

(A stone bee was a gathering of friends, family and neighbors to clear a field of its stones. It seems odd that 150 years after Ridgefield's settlement, there was still land that needed such clearing. However, it may have been a pasture, woodland, or an old orchard that was being converted to a field.)

(David K. Hoyt [1822-1884] had his farm on Silver Spring Road in Wilton, land that is about a half-mile south of the Nashes.)

10 September Sunday

Cloudy and damp all day.

11 September Monday

Damp in morning. Hot and muggy with a little sunshine. Father sowed rye. I feel some better to day. Emily went up West Lane towards night with some vests.

("Now is the time to sow winter grain," advises The Old Farmer's Almanac for early September 1865. "See that the ground is properly prepared by frequent ploughing [*see* Aug. 26 and Sept. 7], and working, and manuring [*see* Sept. 8]. Wheat and rye ought to be in early enough to get a start and enable the roots to get a firm hold on the soil before the hard frosts come.")

12 September Tuesday

Lowery all day. Father done chores. Jared had horse and waggon to carry oats to Norwalk. I feel some better.

(Most of the farmers apparently took their crops to Norwalk, a port from which the grain and vegetables could be shipped to anywhere on the East Coast. And, of course, the main rail line was there, making shipment to New York or even Boston easy. Jared Olmstead may also have been going to Norwalk to visit his brother and sister-in-law, Charles and Mary Jane Olmstead; Mary Jane had just given birth to a son, William, on Sept. 10.)

13 September Wednesday

Cloudy in forenoon. Sunshine in afternoon. Verry hot. Father threshed few oats in morning, then in afternoon we work at stone fence. Mother went to Abram.

14 September Thursday

Wet in forenoon, some sun in afternoon. Father and I went to Comstock's store. Got a bll flour & grocerys and broom.

15 September Friday

Clear. Carried Emily up West Lane and went to the store. Went up after her at night. Cut stalks.

(The Nashes were probably cutting the stalks of corn which, when ground, made good feed for livestock.)

16 September Saturday

Clear and pleasant. Finished cutting stalks.

17 September Sunday

Clear. Father & Mother went to meeting in afternoon. Libby come home with them, then he carried her up again at night.

18 September Monday

Cold, cloudy, damp. East wind. Rake buckwheat in forenoon. Some rain just at night.

19 September Tuesday

Clear and cool. Father & I went to Norwalk to see about my getting a certificate.

(Jared's reference to certificate here and in subsequent entries is unclear. One possibility might be that he was seeking certification from a physician or an official source, stating that he was in poor health and could not perform some function he was being called upon to do. Or maybe he was being certified as healthy enough to perform some task. Perhaps, however, the word simply meant "prescription"; Jared is "feeling poorly" throughout this period and may be getting medicine. Another possibility is that Jared was buying a Gold Certificate, which was a kind of bond that Congress authorized 1863 in denominations of \$20 to \$10,000 to help finance the Civil War. These notes, redeemable in gold at face value, did not earn interest and basically were "paper money" that could be redeemed for gold. These war-financing certificates were issued between 1865 and 1878. However, this possibility seems remote in view of his visit tomorrow.)

20 September Wednesday

Clear and some warmer. Work at clearing of the garden. Rebecca spend the day here. I went up town towards night to see Doct. Perry about a certificate and to see if Libby had heard from Saml Lobdell. He sick.

(The Perry family administered to the health needs of Ridgefield for more than a century, starting with Dr. David Perry, who graduated from Yale in 1772 and died in 1822. He was also a minister at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church just after the Revolution. He was followed by his son, Dr. Nehemiah Perry [1790-1866], and his grandson, Dr. Nehemiah Perry Jr. [1827-1909]. Nehemiah Sr., who lived on Main Street, established the Glenburgh Mills and Chemical Works in Georgetown to produce medicines, spices, and chemicals, such as dyes. "Certainly many of the doctor's wares brought happiness to the housewife and efficacious remedy," wrote Historian George L. Rockwell. Bottles that held Dr. Perry's patent medicines are dug up from time to time from old dumps around town. One of the most famous of his medicines was "Demulcent Compound for Coughs and Colds." When Dr. Perry died Feb. 19, 1866, the Nashes attended his huge funeral. In 1865, Dr. Perry is quite ill and Jared is probably seeing his son, Dr. Nehemiah Jr., who took over his father's practice. Nehemiah Jr.'s office and home were two doors south of the Keeler Tavern on Main Street.

(Samuel Lobdell, who lived in Newark, N.J., and will die on Sept. 25, had been a Ridgefield tailor and was married to a Nash.)

21 September Thursday

Clear. Picked up some apples and done chores. Got a few butrnuts.

(Butternut, also called white walnut, is a species of walnut much appreciated by earlier Americans. The wood was widely used for making furniture because it was fairly soft, easy to work, and dried to a rich brown color. The nuts were used as food and to manufacture various dyes and stains. American Indians and early settlers ground butternuts and boiled the meal into water to obtain an oil, which floated to the top. This oil was used as butter, as a substitute for mother's milk, and for almost anything requiring fat.

(Note that Jared "picked up" the apples. These were probably windfalls, which were often used for cooking or cider. See April 8 for notes on apples.)

22 September Friday

Clear and warm. Father made cider in forenoon. In afternoon, we dug potatoes.

(September and October have many entries about digging potatoes, which was an important crop on the Nash farm that not only provided the family with food, but also brought in a little extra income. Potatoes were an ideal vegetable, easy to keep in the cold cellar well into the winter, and easy to obtain seed plants from to use for the next season's crop. G. Evans Hubbard, in a history of

Wilton farms in the mid-19th Century, said that “potatoes were grown by almost everyone.” In 1860, about 50 bushels per farm were being raised in Wilton. Digging them was not easy work, notes the 1865 Old Farmer’s Almanac: “Digging potatoes is rather back-achy work to be sure, but it must be done. Some folks turn out by a plough, and save the hardest of it. The potato-digger is a useful tool, but ’tisn’t every body who can have it.” *See also* notes under April 3, 1865.)

23 September Saturday

Lowery; wind south east. Dug potatoes in forenoon. Went to Doct. Perry’s in afternoon and got a certificate. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane with me. I have a bad cold. Got a letter from Newark, saying they don’t think Samuel will get well.

24 September Sunday

Cloudy with a little sunshine in afternoon. I do not feel any better than yesterday. Amos Smith, his wife, and Libby called here in evening. I feel quite poorly to night.

(Amos Smith [1804-1872] was a farmer who in 1838 married Esther A. Lee [1814-1888] of Farmingville District. Their home was on Main Street at the north corner of Gilbert Street, but they also operated the Smith Tavern, situated on the site of the present Ridgefield Library. The tavern was not only a watering hole, but had an upstairs hall that was popular for assemblies and dances in the 19th Century. Amos is Jared’s first cousin – Jared’s mother, Roxy Keeler Nash, was the sister of Amos’s mother, Sarah Keeler Smith. Libby – Elizabeth Grummun – and Amos Smith were first cousins, once removed.)

25 September Monday

Cloudy & damp in forenoon. Shower after dinner. Benjamin Brinkerhoff come here afternoon and told us Samuel Lobdell died yesterday morning 1/2 past four and was to be burried tomorrow at two o’clock. Father made preparations to go down. I am sick to day with a cold.

(Benjamin Brinkerhoff, who just two months earlier had been discharged as a sergeant with three years of service in the Civil War, was another shoemaker, one of nearly a dozen involved in the diary. He probably lived on lower West Lane near Cedar Lane. A native of Bedford, N.Y., he married Esther A. Smith of Ridgefield, quite possibly related to Jared’s wife, Emily. Why he brought the news of Lobdell’s death is unclear, but apparently Samuel – who used to live in the village – had moved to Newark, N.J.

(Samuel Lobdell, about 46 at the time of his death, was the husband of Harriet Nash, Father’s daughter by his first marriage. Lobdell had been a Ridgefield tailor, according to the 1850 census. He married Harriet Nash in 1840, and they had by 1850 five children including Joshua, mentioned June 29, 1865. Headstone records do not show a Samuel Lobdell buried here; perhaps he was

buried in Wilton or South Salem. It is also possible that Lobdell died of injuries sustained in the war; however, a check of Civil War databases uncovered no “Samuel Lobdell” among the more than one million people who served.)

26 September Tuesday

Clear and pleasant. Father started for Newark. Willy Olmstead went to Wilton depot with him. I feel some better to day.

(Willy Olmstead is probably William Olmstead, son of Aunt Clara Nash Olmstead. He was Jared’s first cousin.)

27 September Wednesday

Clear and pleasant. I feel quite smart to day so that I done some chores and took care of things.

(Although a 40-year-old man, Jared was not the head of the household – a common situation in the less mobile and more family-oriented days past. Here, Father was in New Jersey and Jared “took care of things.”

(“Smart” was used in the sense of feeling good.)

28 September Thursday

Clear and some warmer. Dug potatoes. Father got home from Newark about 5 o’clock.

(Today, a Ridgefield resident would think nothing of driving to Newark, which, if it weren’t for the traffic, would be about an hour and 20 minutes away. For Father, however, the trip could have taken most of the day, and involving at least one ferry ride — there were no bridges across the lower Hudson River back then.)

29 September Friday

Clear and warm. We dug potatoes. Went to post office. At night Emmie went with me to get a certificate from Dr. Lynes. Egbert Smith come and bought two-year-old heifer.

(It’s not clear who Dr. Lynes is. While there was a Lynes family in Ridgebury, none of its members has been referred to as a doctor in local histories or other records. He may have practiced in Norwalk, Wilton or South Salem. However, it is interesting that this is the third time that Jared has sought a “certificate” and apparently the third doctor he approached for it.

(Egbert Smith was a butcher in Wilton; the Nashes were probably selling the heifer to him.)

30 September Saturday

Clear and warm. Gathered apples, buttrnuts and pumpkins. Laura spent the day here. Went at night and carried her home. Emmie went with her to stay all night.

(“Blue jays and squirrels know a little of getting in corn as well as you, and it’s best to fly round and look out for your own crib,” says The Old Farmers Almanac of 1865 at this time. “Winter apples ought to be picked now. Take care. Don’t shake so hard. Pick off all you can by hand. Get a bruised one into a barrel of apples and see if it don’t start fermentation and spoil the rest before you know it. I tell you it pays to pick ’em off one by one, and handle them gently too.”)



1 October Sunday

Clear and pleasant. Went up after Emmie at night.

2 October Monday

Clear in forenoon; flying clouds in afternoon. Went up to town meeting in A.M., then dug potatoes. Growing cooler.

(The town meeting was the Annual Town Meeting for 1865 at which the usual business of electing town officials, hearing reports, and approving taxes was conducted. The meeting set a town tax rate of one cent on the dollar and a highway tax of 1 1/2 mills. Jared did not own much on the Grand List [the town's tax base] — a horse [“Bill”], worth \$75, and one cow, \$20. Thus, his town tax was all of 95 cents and his highway tax, 14 cents. Jared's father, Charles, owned the house, valued at \$600; 44 acres of land, \$950; three cows, \$100; and one watch, \$1; for a total assessment of \$1,651. His annual property tax was \$16.51 and his highway tax, \$2.47, for a total of \$18.98. There was also a small school tax, levied by the Ninth School District. It may not seem much money to us, but \$20 to small-scale farmers like the Nashes was a lot. It was the equivalent of about \$330 today.)

3 October Tuesday

Clear and cool. White frost. Went down to Wm. Hoyt's before breakfast after some meal, and then gather's beans. Father threshed some oats, and went to the fair.

(See notes under Oct. 6 to learn about a William Hoyt.)

4 October Wednesday

Wet in morning, cloudy, raw, cold wind. I done chores. Father threshed some, then he and mother and Emmie went to fair.

(The Ridgefield Fair and Cattle Show took place each year from 1858 to 1881 in late September or early October. By this time it had its own fairgrounds, complete with permanent buildings, on Wilton Road West, about opposite Olmstead Lane. It was a typical country fair, with exhibits of products, produce and livestock, plus awards. In fact, an old awards list contains 31

categories for ribbons: field crops; grains; grass seed; vegetables; fruit; floriculture; bread; dairy; honey; preserved fruit; pickles; cakes; wines; ladies' industrials; fine arts; musical instruments; domestic products; farming utensils; poultry; sheep; swine; oxen; draught oxen; working oxen and steers; milch cows and heifers; thoroughbred stock; fatted cattle; stallions; colts; family horses; road horses; plus trotting races.

(While such fairs were fun, they also functioned as agricultural "conventions." Farmers got to see some of the latest products – and mid-19th Century agricultural markets were booming with new machines, tools and seed varieties for the farm. They could hear lectures on improved farming techniques. They also got to chat with a wider group of farmers, and could discuss and critique some of the modern-day advances and discuss shared problems. At a fair, "they saw, gathered up in a small compass, what was going on in the farmer's world, and this within a single day or two," said an 1860s book on farming. "Thus, they accumulated a fund of knowledge which they could not have acquired had they remained at home.")

(Emily, being very close to giving birth, and Jared, probably wishing to be near her, stayed at home while their daughter went to the fair with her grandparents. However, Jared and Emily managed to go the next year – *see* Sept. 19, 1866. Anna Marie Resseguie, in her diary entry for Oct. 6, 1865, observes: "The Fair closes, having been inferior to that of former years, though as many or more strangers were present. Horse racing seemed to form a great attraction. Mr. [Edward J.] Couch's collection of [stuffed] birds was an object of special interest, and the chief one.")

5 October Thursday

Cold windy and some cloudy. Carried some feed to Brown's mill and then carted stalks.

6 October Friday

Clear, some warmer. Dug potatoes in orchard. Went to P.O. just at night. Chas. S. Nash born.

(This almost passing reference to the birth of Jared's first and only son seems strange, as does the routine buckwheat threshing the next day. In the diary, the birth announcement is inserted between the entries for Oct. 6 and 7, almost as if Jared forgot to write it down in all the confusion that no doubt reigned. Charles was probably born late in the evening of the 6th, after Jared had already made his entry for the day. Note, too, that the birth of their child is the first indication in the diary that Emily had been pregnant for most of the period of the diary.

(Charles Smith Nash was named after Jared's father and the family of Emily Smith Nash, his wife. This was a common practice then, and especially among Nashes – Abram St. John Nash and Samuel Olmstead Nash are examples of middle names representing the mother's side of the family.

(Charles hardly knew his father, for Jared died five years after his son's birth. After Jared's death, Emily apparently remained at the Nash homestead for a while, for she was taking care of her father-in-law until shortly before his death in 1878. She may also have been living off and on with the Smith family on West Lane.

(At age six, Charles started attending Flat Rock School and later went to West Lane Schoolhouse. His teacher in both schools was Miss Jeannie E. Holmes. As an older boy, he boarded at the home of William H. Gilbert, from whom he learned the carpenter's and building trades. Charles took over Gilbert's building business and later went into partnership with William F. Hoyt – perhaps the same William Hoyt mentioned in the Oct. 3 entry. As “Nash and Hoyt,” they erected many houses, including the mansion at Main Street and King Lane.

(Charles had a “judgment [that] was sound and practical, and his counsel could always be depended upon,” The Press said at the time of his death on Aug. 9, 1929. He was the town's first fire chief, had a Boy Scout troop, was a member of the Pilgrim Lodge of Odd Fellows, served on the Board of Burgesses for the old village borough for many years, was a director and vice-president of the First National Bank and Trust Company of Ridgefield, a director of the Ridgefield Savings Bank, and a trustee of the Methodist church. He was a Democrat. In 1901, he married Mabel F. Bishop, daughter of Levi W. and Mary A. Bishop, at the home of the bride in Lewisboro. His children were Hilma Augusta Nash and Arnold Bishop Nash, both now dead.

(Charles Nash's death in 1929 was the lead story in The Ridgefield Press that week. The paper commented that Mr. Nash was a “highly respected and leading citizen.” It added: “Mr. Nash was always regarded as an earnest student and was a discriminating reader of the best literature. He possessed a wonderful memory and nothing of any value was ever lost to him.”)

7 October Saturday

Clear, white frost. Emily confined this morning. Threshed buckwheat. Emmie went up West Lane and staid all night.

8 October Sunday

Clear. Went up after Emmie and Laura come home with us. Went at night and carried her home. Rhoda is here to take care of Emily. She is quite smart.

(Rhoda may be Rhoda Keeler of Wilton. Except for the somewhat more frequent visits by friends and relatives, the birth of Charles does not seem to be occasioned by much change in Jared's day-to-day life, as subsequent entries will show.)

9 October Monday

Clear and warm. Drove heifer to Egbert Smith's and had half quarter of her. Then cleaned up buckwheat. Went in evening up West Lane and stopped at Abram. His girl & mother is sick.

(Egbert Smith, a Wilton butcher, killed and cut up the heifer. While Jared apparently sold the heifer to him, he took a share of the meat for himself.)

10 October Tuesday

Clear and warm. Finished gathering apples and done some chores.

(The apples were probably for cider, to be made Oct. 12.)

11 October Wednesday

Clear and pleasant. Pick and shelled half bushel corn to grind. Fixt to make cider. Mother sick with cold. Father not verry smart.

12 October Thursday

Some cloudy, high wind and growing cold. Father made cider. Aunt Anah died this afternoon. Mother about the same.

(Anah St. John Nash, a Wilton native and a widow, was 80 years old at her death. She was the daughter of Samuel and Glorianna Gregory St. John. In 1804, she married Samuel Olmstead Nash. She was sister-in-law of Jared Nash, the father of Charles and grandfather of diarist Jared. Thus, Jared was her grandnephew. She probably lived with her son Abram S. Nash on upper St. Johns Road.)

13 October Friday

Clear. We done some chores. I went up to Abram's after dinner. Mother a little better. Emily gaining some.

(Emily is recuperating from the difficult birth of Charles S. Nash. It will be more than a month before Emily can even go outside.)

14 October Saturday

Clear in morning, clouded up in afternoon, and looks like rain. Wind south. Father and I went to the funeral in P.M.

15 October Sunday

Rain most of the day. Wind North East, blew hard.

16 October Monday

Flying clouds, cold wind, some sunshine. Father threshed rye. I cut some wood and done chores.

17 October Tuesday

Clear and pleasant. Father went to Norwalk to carry pigs. He sold to Mr. Bissell for \$20. Laura come here in afternoon. I carried her home at night.

(Mr. Bissell was probably a Norwalk merchant. Like others paying visits during this time, Laura Smith is probably helping with the housework while Emily is recuperating. She was Emily's cousin.)

18 October Wednesday

Cloudy, rain at night. I picked corn in orchard. Father threshed.

(It's unlikely Jared or his family ate "corn on the cob." He was picking corn for storage in the corncrib as prime food for the livestock and for grain that could be ground into flour or "corn meal." He was also looking for the best ears to use as seed corn for next year's crop. These ears were stored in a cool, dry place till the spring. Few small farmers back then would consider buying seed corn. Many farmers shucked their corn at the same time they picked it — actually, before they picked it. Using a tool called a husking peg, they stripped off the husks while still on the stalk. The stalks, with husks intact, were also used as livestock feed.)

19 October Thursday

Cloudy. Strong S.W. wind. Father threshed. J.B. Smith's wife here in afternoon. I carried her home at night. Rain in evening.

(John Betts Smith's wife was Elizabeth Smith Smith (*see* Notes on People). Perhaps it was a sort of male chauvinism – or maybe dislike of Mrs. Smith – that caused Jared to refer to her as the "wife" of someone. He surely knew her given name, for John Smith was his brother-in-law.)

20 October Friday

Missing from Press clipping

21 October Saturday

Cold and windy. Picked corn.

(Jared was picking corn for storage in the corncrib as food for the livestock and as grain that could be ground into flour. But he was also looking for the best ears to use as seed corn for next

year's crop. These ears were stored in a cool, dry place till the spring. Few small farmers would consider buying seed corn.)

22 October Sunday

Clear, more moderate.

23 October Monday

Clear in afternoon. Picked corn. Emily not verry smart.

24 October Tuesday

Clear and cold. Finished our corn. Went up to Doct. Perry's brought Mother Smith home and carried her back at night.

(The hazards of short diary entries are demonstrated here. This entry sounds as if Mother Polly Northrop Smith was at the office of Dr. Nehemiah Perry Jr. [see Sept. 20, 1865] for treatment, went home, then went back for more. But this was two events: Jared went to Dr. Perry's office on Main Street, probably to get medicine for his wife or to summon the doctor to visit his wife. Then he stopped by the Smith homestead to pick up Mother to bring her down to the Nash house. That night, he brought her back to her West Lane home.)

25 October Wednesday

Clear and pleasant. Some warmer. Got wood in to woodhouse. Doct. Perry called to see Emily. Her breast broke this morning. Father took waggon wheels up to shop to have them fixt.

(It was not uncommon for a woman who had recently given birth to have an abscess that would break.)

26 October Thursday

Clear. Father got wheels. I went over to Sanford's, carried butter. Laura come down, carried her home.

(Laura, Emily Nash's sister, was helping with household tasks while Emily was recuperating. She comes again Oct 28.)

27 October Friday

Cloudy, chilly east wind. Went up town and over to Salem. Stephen Smith & wife here in afternoon.

(Salem is South Salem, where Jared had friends and relatives, and sometimes visits a blacksmith. Stephen Smith was probably a relative. For instance, Jared had a first cousin named

Stephen Smith; Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother, had a sister, Sarah, who married Amos Smith, and their son, Stephen, lived in Ridgefield for several years in the 1850s, and then moved to Michigan. Perhaps this Stephen, with his wife, Marcia, was visiting in the area and heard of Charles Nash's birth. Marcia's family was from New Milford; Stephen's, from Wilton.)

28 October Saturday

Rain through the night and in morning, cloudy most of the day. Went to Gilbert's mill in P.M. Laura come home with me and staid over Sunday.

(The visit to Gilbert's mill was probably to have corn ground into meal, or perhaps apples into pomace for cider.)

29 October Sunday

High winds & some flying clouds. Sanford, Jane & Charly come over. Jared & Rebecca, Munson, and girls here in evening. Baby weighed 11 pounds.

(Friends of Jared and Emily are calling on them to see the baby, now that Emily is apparently feeling a bit better. Here Jared starts recording the baby's weight, which he'll do about once a month and usually on a Sunday.

("Sanford" pops up at various times in this diary – see Jan. 21, 1865, Oct. 29, 1865, and Nov. 10, 1866, for instance. He is Charles Sanford Nash, called Sanford to distinguish him from Charles Nash, his father – and Jared's father. Charles Sanford Nash was born in 1817, a son of Charles and Roxana Nickerson Nash. Thus, he was a half brother of Jared Nash, born about 1825 to Charles and Roxy Keeler Nash. The 1850 census shows a Charles S. Nash living in Lewisboro. By the 1860 census, he is called simply "Sanford Nash." Jane is probably his wife, and Charly, his son. However, Charles S. Nash is buried alone at the Ridgefield Cemetery. The July 2, 1897 Press noted that "Sanford Nash of Flat Rock died at his home Wednesday" and said more information would appear the next week. But none did. Jared and Rebecca Olmstead, who lived on St. John's Road, are also cousins of Jared Nash. Munson is Munson Hoyt, a farmer who lived a little north on Silver Spring Road.)

30 October Monday

Cloudy most of the day. Father went in morning, carried Laura home and went to Bailey's store. Then drawed stone and finished fence south of potatoe ground.

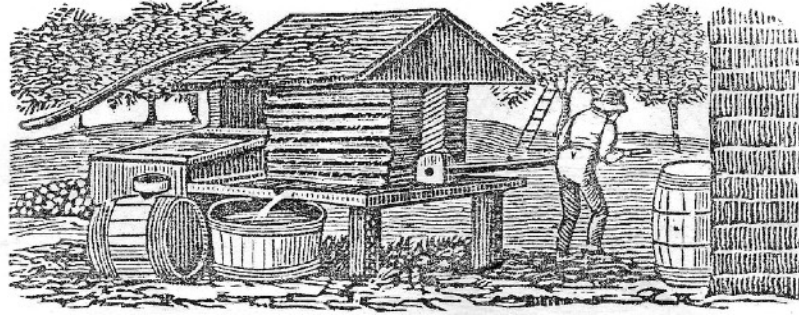
31 October Tuesday.

Cloudy and damp. Commence to rain at 2 o'clock in afternoon. Rain untill evening. Thomas Fitzgerald come here and ditched north of the house. Father work with him. Heard there was a fire at Norwalk last night. Burrals block burnt.

(The Nashes lived in an area of much wetland; Silver Spring Swamp, then called New Pound Bogs, was right across the road from their house. The ditch was undoubtedly designed to help drain land, perhaps to help keep the cellar dry; the family had a lot of trouble with water in the cellar. On Nov. 16, Father had to fix the drain, but on Feb. 25, 1866, water came in the cellar and in April, the Nashes rebuilt the drain system.

(Thomas Fitzgerald, a native of Ireland, was a laborer who died in 1882 at the age of 69. He lived on West Lane, almost opposite Olmstead Lane, where Smiths and Grummuns lived. The Irish Potato Famine of 1845-47 sparked more than a million Irish to immigrate to these shores. The first Irish family in Ridgefield was probably the Brophys, but people named Casey, McGlynn, FitzSimmons, Quinn, Murphy, Kelly, and Cahill soon followed them. Many descendants of these early Irish immigrants still live in Ridgefield.

(It seems unusual that Jared should make mention of a fire in Norwalk when he rarely notes events in Ridgefield. However, Jared and his family had close ties with Norwalk where both friends and family lived, and he undoubtedly knew this block of stores.)



1 November Wednesday

*Clear and quite warm and pleasant. We work at old apple tree wood at the door.
James & Matilda here in evening. D. Smith here to.*

(By “at the door,” Jared means in the dooryard, the area just outside the back door. The Nashes frequently cut wood there during the winter because it was handy to the house – and warm. Apple is one of the sweetest smelling woods to burn in a fireplace, and was much prized.

(James and Matilda are St. Johns who lived nearby on St. Johns Road – see Dec. 5, 1866. D. Smith may be Daniel Smith, Emily’s brother.

2 November Thursday

Cloudy. Rain some in afternoon. Thomas come and they finish the ditch.

(“They” probably refers to Thomas Fitzgerald and Father.)

3 November Friday

Clear and some warmer. We drawed stone, filled in the ditch. Went towards night up town. Carried Emmie up West Lane and left her to stay all night.

(While it may seem silly to fill in a ditch that took a couple of people a few days to dig, the technique was employed widely and, to a degree, still is, to drain fields and other land. A ditch, filled with rocks in effect becomes a pipe because the water flows around the passages created by the stones. The rocks and stones prevent the “ditch” from filling in and the whole thing can be covered with earth, although many stone drainage ditches were not covered. Variations of this technique are called a dry stream, rubble drain or a French drain. A similar technique is employed when septic systems are installed today. The pipes in the fields, where wastewater is returned to the earth, are surrounded with stone, enabling the fluid to flow smoothly into the soil over a wider area than possible with just perforated pipes. Over time stone drains eventually filled in and became clogged with soil and needed to be dug up and cleaned out, a laborious project. Sometimes when digging in the yard of an old house or in an old field that is now a subdivision, people will

find long lines of buried rocks looking as if they were underground stone walls; these are old drainage ditches long ago forgotten.

(Keeping planting fields well-drained was important. “Have you drained any of your land?” asked *The Old Farmer’s Almanac* in April 1872. “You can plough drained land, you know, a week or two earlier than land that holds the water. There’s no mistake about it: it pays to drain, and then to plough deep and work the soil thoroughly.”)

4 November Saturday

Rain all day, quite fast in afternoon. Rhoda left after dinner. I went up to Mrs. Hoyt’s in morning.

5 November Sunday

Cold, flying clouds, and verry high wind. Snowed in the evening, enough to whiten the ground. Natallia came with me to try to find a girl. After supper went up after Emmie. John come home with us.

(Natalia Hoyt was the sister of Munson Hoyt, the farmer who often helps the Nashes and whose own farm was on Silver Spring Road, just north of the Silver Spring itself. She was helping Jared find someone to do household work while Emily continued to recuperate from giving birth. Natalia, about 44 years old here and a native of Lewisboro, lived to be 88 and never married. Her simple but touching obituary in *The Press* in 1909 said that “Miss Hoyt had been a resident of Ridgefield for a long term of years, and resided with her brother, the late Munson Hoyt, Silver Spring Road. She was one of those who extended to all that old-fashioned hospitality which was once a part of all the early communities. She was the last survivor of a large family...”

(John is probably John B. Smith, Emily’s brother.

(Anna Marie Resseguie at the Keeler Tavern confirms Jared’s weather report in her own diary entry for this day: “First snow falls at evening so that the ground looks white.”)

6 November Monday

Clear. Ground white snow and froze hard. Father went to try to find a girl in forenoon. Drawed 4 load of stone for ditch.

7 November Tuesday

Cold, windy, clouds. Got rutabagas and turnips. Had Mrs. Brigs here to wash to day. Mary Jane come down in morning with Jared. Father sent some buckwheat to mill.

(Both the rutabagas, a kind turnip, and the “turnips” themselves were root crops grown not for the table, but the barn. Because they kept for long periods and were highly nutritious, they made excellent winter feed for cows, sheep, pigs, and other livestock. They were much more popular

among English farmers than American, but the Nashes apparently liked them as a feed crop. An 1866 farmers' manual said "turnips have some fattening qualities" and that cows fed turnips produce "really good beef."

(Rany Briggs was apparently the "girl" hired to help with housekeeping. She lived in Ridgefield in the 1860s, but little else has been learned about her. Mary Jane is probably Mary Jane Batterson, daughter of Coleman Batterson, who lived just north of the Nashes on Silver Spring Road. Her mother will die soon.)

8 November Wednesday

Clear and cold. Froze hard. Mercury down to 17. Work some at filling ditch in afternoon. Laura came down in morning and staid all night.

9 November Thursday

Clear and some warmer. Work at the ditch. Laura stay overnight.

10 November Friday

Cold and windy. Went up town, carry Laura home and rutabagas to Sholes'. Then we finished ditch. Emily come down stairs.

(Charles Nash was born on Oct. 6 and this seems to be the first time Emily was strong enough to leave her bedroom. No wonder so many people were helping out.)

11 November Saturday

Clear and cold. Father went and got Bill shod in forenoon. Went to mill in afternoon. Got buckwheat flour. I went up town at night. Laura come home with me, staid all night. Rebecca and Mary Dunning come here in afternoon. Got apples in cellar.

(As noted earlier, Bill is a horse owned by Jared, one of only two pieces of taxable property he had. The other was a cow.

(Rebecca Olmstead and Mary Dunning were sisters in law. Mary was born Mary H. Olmstead in 1834, and was the wife of Richard Dunning, whose occupation at the time of his marriage in 1855 was listed as "musician," a rather unusual profession for a Ridgefielder in those days. He played the bugle and instructed the Ridgefield Band, founded in 1838 and well known in the area. Mary, about 31 at this time, was Jared's first cousin. A daughter of William and "Aunt" Clara Nash Olmstead, she was a sister of Jared N. Olmstead, who appears often in the diary, and of Willy Olmstead, who appears occasionally. Rebecca Olmstead was the wife of Jared N. Olmstead. The apples were being stored in the cool of the cellar for winter use. For more on buckwheat, *see* June 7, 1865 note.)

12 November Sunday

Not much sunshine, but pleasant and cool. Went after supper and carried Laura home.

13 Thursday Monday

Clear and pleasant. Finished getting turnips and done some chores. Mrs. Briggs washed here.

14 November Tuesday

Clear and warm. Done chores. Father down to Comstock store and exchanged turkey with Legrand Keeler. Emily Olmstead called here in afternoon.

(Legrand Keeler, about 41 years old, was a farmer who was probably living in northern Wilton's Nod Hill section at this time. He died in Ridgefield in 1879. Legrand Keeler's son, Samuel [1845-1932], was a prominent Ridgefielder and one-time owner of *The Ridgefield Press*. A Yale-educated lawyer, he had his office in New York City to which he commuted daily by train for more than 60 years! It would be interesting to know what was exchanged for the turkey.)

15 November Wednesday

Clear, warm and smoky. Put bottom in pail. Got pignuts. Father and mother went to Mrs. Hoyt's and he went over to Nyard's to get Bill shoe fixt. Laura came down at night to stay all night. Emily went out doors to day.

(The pignut Jared refers to is probably the fruit of the pignut hickory [*Carya glabra*], a tree that grows 90 or so feet high. The egg-shaped nuts were sometimes sweet enough to eat, but most people ignored them, either because of their usually bitter taste or the extremely hard shell. In fact, the name suggests the nut was suitable only for pigs. However, Thoreau once wrote of gathering pignuts in November: "I am partial to the peculiar & wholesome sweetness of a nut, & I think that some time is profitably spent every autumn in gathering even such as our pignuts," he wrote in his diary. "Some of them are a very sizeable rich looking & palatable fruit. How can we expect to understand nature unless we accept like children these her smallest gifts, valuing them more as her gifts than for their intrinsic value. I love to get my basket full, however small & comparatively worthless the nut. It takes very severe frosts, & sun & wind thereafter, to kill & open the shells, so that the nuts will drop out. Many hold on all winter."

(In the end it's not clear whether Jared was gathering them for the family — or for his pigs.

(The word transcribed here as "Nyard" is unclear in the text; undoubtedly, father went to a blacksmith. On Feb. 7, Bill went to "Jimmy" to get his shoes sharpened.

(Emily's walk outdoors was her first since Charles' birth five weeks earlier. The smoke mentioned here might have come from burning off fields and from burning leaves and fall brush – see Dec. 3, 1865 note.)

16 November Thursday

Clear and warm. Got wood in to wood house. Father fixt mouth of cellar drain. Went at night and carried Laura home. Emmie went with me.

17 November Friday

Damp & foggy. Helpt Jared move a roof. Then went to mill and carried rye. Left it.

(The reference to moving a roof is probably to a portable roof on posts, used to cover hay or wood to protect it from the rain. The mill was apparently busy, so Jared left the rye for milling when time was available.)

18 November Saturday

Clear and warm. Father made cider for Abram. I picked some baberries.

(Jared probably refers here to the Northern Bayberry [*Myrica pensylvanica*], which was popular from early colonial times for making candles that did not easily bend, did not melt in summer's heat and did not cause smoke – but did give off a pleasant scent. The berries were boiled to produce a dirty green fat or wax that floated to the surface, was skimmed off, and was reheated several times to clarify it to a transparent green. The berries were so valuable that some communities fined people for picking them too early in the season. “The pungent and unique scent of the bayberry, equally strong in leaf and berry, is to me one of the elements of the purity and sweetness of the air of our New England coast fields in autumn,” wrote Alice Morse Earle. While Jared may have gone south a bit to pick the berries, since they are more common near the ocean, Ridgefield is well within the range of this species.)

19 November Sunday

Cloudy, wind east with little rain in middle of the day.

20 November Monday

Cloudy. Wind east. Cold & chilly. Father bought a yearling heifer of F. Meeker for \$27. Picked pr of chickens and turkeys.

(That's Francis Meeker, who had a farm a little north of the Nashes on Silver Spring Road. The chickens and turkeys were being picked to bring to Norwalk two days later, either for family there or to sell, along with some crop items. It is not clear whether the Nashes carried the fowl live or killed and dressed.)

21 November Tuesday

Rain all day. Wind east. Made a stove brush. He fixt harness.

(A stove brush was used to clean the caked soot from the wood-burning stoves and their stovepipes, which by the 1860s had replaced fireplaces as the source of household and cooking heat in most homes. Note the many little projects the family is undertaking in November in preparation for winter – making the brush, repairing a pail and a drain, the harness and the ladder, cutting wood, grinding axes, and getting grain milled. With the harvest completed, there’s time for such jobs. “He” was father.)

22 November Wednesday

Cloudy, wind S. west. Sprinkle some through the day. Father went to Norwalk, carried butter, potatoes, chickens and 2 turkeys.

23 November Thursday

Drizzling snow in forenoon. Cloudy all day. Father and Mother went up to Jared’s in afternoon.

24 November Friday

Some sunshine. Carried corn to mill to Gilbert’s. Went to Taylor’s and got rye flour in afternoon. We went to Harry Keeler’s ground axes.

(Taylor’s is probably Davis Taylor’s gristmill, which was on the Norwalk River along Stonehenge Road in eastern Ridgefield. Different mills specialized in grinding certain things; evidently, Taylor’s was known for rye while Gilbert’s handled corn.

(Harry Keeler, formally known as Henry D. Keeler, lived in Lewisboro. He was the town blacksmith and his home was what is now the Horse and Hound Restaurant on Spring Street in the village of South Salem. Apparently the axes needed more work than could be handled by the basic sharpening stones that the Nashes might have.

(As we shall see, the wood-cutting season was beginning and by January, the Nashes were cutting almost daily. Wood, of course, is what kept folks warm in winter. Some of what they cut may have been allowed to age and dry out – to “season” – for use in the next winter. Other wood may have been logs that had already seasoned and were ready to be cut and split into firewood-sized pieces)

25 November Saturday

Cloudy in forenoon, some sunshine in afternoon. I went up town, got some leather. Father cut in woods in forenoon. Fixt ladder & done chores in P.M. Daniel Smith here in evening.

(As mentioned earlier, although he doesn't seem to practice it as a business, Jared's trade was shoemaking. Here, he acquired leather probably to make some boots for himself – mentioned Dec. 4 – and probably for the shoes for other members of the family. Shoemaking was a typical wintertime activity, something to do when the weather was bad and when the farm could not be worked. Daniel Smith is Jared's wife's brother.)

26 November Sunday

Clear through the day.

27 November Monday

Clear. Father threshed oats. I cut some wood and picked baberrys. Mrs. Briggs come and washed.

(Monday was, indeed, wash day.)

28 November Tuesday

Clear and cool. Drawed 2 load of wood and picked bayberry. He threshed.

29 November Wednesday

Cloudy, cold; chilly east wind. We cleaned up oats in forenoon. Father threshed. I went up to Hurlbutt's after some meat.

(Hurlbutt's Market was established, probably in the 1840s, by David Hurlbutt and stood on the south side of Market Street near Main Street. David Hurlbutt died in 1858 of a head injury he received when a cow he was about to butcher attacked him. At this time the store was being operated by David's son, Sereno S. Hurlbutt, who was mentioned earlier in the diary in his job as constable. The business closed in 1904 when Sereno died.)

30 November Thursday

Cleared off in forenoon. Warmer and pleasant. Done chores in forenoon. Picked some baberrys in afternoon. Father finished threshing oats.



1 December Friday

Rain in morning before day, then broke away and blew and grew colder. We cleaned up the oats.

(Father has just been threshing the oats, probably in the barn, leaving a mess of leftover chaff.)

2 December Saturday

Cold in morning, then more moderate; some sunshine. We upact the colledge. I went after dinner and carried Emily up West Lane to stay a few days.

(“Upact the colledge” is an effort at transcribing Jared’s unclear handwriting here. Perhaps they unpacked something. Emily, still recuperating from the birth of Charlie, will spend some time with her folks on upper West Lane.)

3 December Sunday

Quite moderate. Thick smoky air. Went after supper up to George Smith’s with mother.

(The smokiness in the air may have resulted from farmers’ burning off their fields, a process that not only got rid of stubble but also added nutrients to the soil. In the village, where there were lawns and trees, leaves were probably also being burned. However, if the breeze was from the south – and Jared says the weather was “moderate,” typical of southerly winds – the smoke may also have come from pollution, such as factories and residences burning coal, in the New York City area. The weather was apparently remarkably warm, for Anna Marie Resseguie says in her diary, “Father went to church without an overcoat yesterday. I wore a Neapolitan bonnet with comfort.”)

4 December Monday

Damp & foggy. Work at my boots. In afternoon we picked some turkeys. Mrs. Briggs washed to day.

(Notice Jared's rare mention of his shoemaking craft – "work at my boots." With the crops in, he and his father, also a shoemaker by trade, had some time to do such work. When he finishes his boots, he will work on a pair of shoes for his daughter – *see* Dec. 7.)

5 December Tuesday

Clear most of the day. Work some at my boots. Father went to Norwalk, carried turkeys.

(He was probably selling the turkeys to a local merchant for use in the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday – *see* Dec. 7. However, he might also have been delivering them to family members.)

6 December Wednesday

Clear and cold. Froze quite hard. Finished my boots. Father went to Bailey's store after copper nails. Dressed some chickens for Thanksgiving.

(The Nashes probably used the copper nails for fastening the sole to the body of the shoe. Although the Nashes raised turkeys, chickens were their meal for the holiday, which was then in December – *see* below.)

7 December Thursday

Snow and some rain through the day. Work some at a pr. of shoes for Emmie, Father soled his shoes. Did not have any company to keep Thanksgiving.

(President Andrew Johnson had declared Dec. 7, 1865 "National Thanksgiving" to celebrate the Union victory in the Civil War. Thanksgiving as a holiday had been celebrated as early as 1777. At first the holiday was in December, and eventually at other times of the year. After 1815, the officially proclaimed holiday disappeared – President Thomas Jefferson reportedly disliked the celebration. However, in 1863, when the nation was in the throes of war, President Lincoln declared the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving. There were a few deviations from the November date – such as the 1865 and 1869 celebrations – but it was not until 1941 that the last Thursday in November became federal law. Between the lines one can read Jared's disappointment at having no guests for the feast. Perhaps the bad weather kept some family or friends away.)

8 December Friday

Clear and cold. Mercury down to 14. I work at fitting Emmie's shoes. Father sledded home some old appletree.

(Again, apple was considered one of the finest firewoods – long-burning and nicely scented. The snow and rain of Dec. 7 and temperatures well below freezing made the surface of the ground ideal for hauling loads with a sled or sledge.)

9 December Saturday

Clear and some warmer, 23. Finished fitting Emmie shoes. In forenoon went up town after some stove rods and after Emily and Emmie. Cloudy towards night and snowed some in evening.

(“Stove rods” may have been the equivalent of grates, to hold up the wood or coal being burned in the stove. “Stove” was originally a Middle English word for a hot steam room, sort of like a sauna, and by the 1500s, the term got transferred to the device used to heat the room. Thus, “stove” in much of the 19th Century referred to devices to burn wood to heat the house, not cook food. An average farmhouse in this period may have had two or three wood-burning stoves used only for heating. It was not until late in the 19th Century that stove also began to apply to a cooking device. *See also* Dec. 11.)

10 December Sunday

Clear and moderate. Abram & Sarah were in evening. Babe weighed 13 ¾.

(That’s Abram and Sarah Nash, who lived on St. John’s Road. Abram is Jared’s first cousin.)

11 December Monday

Clear most of the day. Went up town and made stove rods. Then we got a load of wood. Rhoda and Hulda here in evening.

(As the weather gets colder, obtaining wood from the Nash stockpile and cutting logs for same becomes an almost daily task. The family probably used wood-burning stoves instead of fireplaces for most of their heat; by this time, wood stoves had replaced the fireplace for heating in many homes. Rhoda and Hulda may be cousins, perhaps Keelers, maybe from northern Wilton.)

12 December Tuesday

Damp & foggy in forenoon. Rained some in afternoon and all night. Butchered hogs and Jared’s beef here. Abram, Munson and Meeker helpt us. Mrs. Brigs helpt in house.

(Late fall was one of the traditional times for butchering – the other time being early spring. December was particularly handy because the Nashes could keep the meat in the guaranteed cool of the cellar or barn all winter and well into the spring. Butchering was a big event that brought Nash family and friends together, almost as if it were a “bee.” Abram Nash, Munson Hoyt and probably Francis Meeker, all from the neighborhood, assisted with the work.)

13 December Wednesday

Clear and some windy. Cut out meat and tried leaf fat. I went and carried some meat to Jared and up West Lane.

(The fat of a carcass was almost as valuable as the meat. Much of it was used, as we have already seen, in making soap and in producing tallow for candles, among other things. However, “leaf fat” was highest quality fat; most of it was found in the area of the kidneys. Used to make lard, the leaf fat was chopped up, placed in a kettle in small pieces, and boiled for hours over a low fire or until all the fat was “rendered” or extracted from the tissue. Lard was extensively used in cooking and baking.)

14 December Thursday

Clear and some colder. Took care of meat and made sausages.

(Sausages were more than simply a tasty way to serve pork. Leftover cuttings were combined with pork fat to use as much of the butchered pig as possible. Little was wasted in those days. Moreover, spices and salt added to the meat tended to make it last longer. There is no indication whether the Nashes smoked their sausage, another method for extending the meat’s shelf life.)

15 December Friday

Clear and cold. Mercury 14. Done chores around and shut up outside cellar doors.

(The 14-degree temperature definitely signaled the coming of winter, and the time to finish any last sealing of the house. One of the things Jared may have done that day is piled leaves around the house’s foundation, a technique for insulating against winter blasts that could otherwise leak in between the dry-laid stones.)

16 December Saturday

Clear and cold. Mercury 12. Went up town. Emily went with me. Father cut down oak tree down side of old orchard and lane.

(It is probably a good sign that Jared’s wife, Emily, went with him to town, perhaps to shop for something. She may be almost fully recovered from the difficult birth of her son, Charles, on Oct. 6.)

17 December Sunday

Cloudy, raw, chilly. Mercury 16. Father & Mother went to Rufus Keeler’s. His little boy died ½ past 11.

(Winter was rough on the very young and Willie Keeler died of the croup, a malady common in children that affected their ability to breathe. He was only two years old. Rufus Keeler, his wife Ruth, and his family lived in the West Lane district. A farmer, he died in 1888 at the age of 64. Ruth lived to be 80 and died in 1910. The three are buried together in Ridgefield Cemetery. Strangely enough, it was a bad season for Willie Keelers. Less than three weeks earlier, Willie B.

Keeler, aged three months, had died in the Ridgebury section of town. The two are the only Willie Keelers buried in Ridgefield.)

18 December Monday

Cloudy, wind east. Father went to Gregory's mill with feed. Mrs. Briggs washed here.

(Gregory's mill was on the Norwalk River in Wilton, a little north of the village.)

19 December Tuesday

Some snow and then rain and made ice. Foggy and damp. Went to the funeral. Nell Batterson wife died this afternoon.

(The funeral was for Willie Keeler, who died two days earlier. Mary J.E. Batterson, only 19 years old and a native of Bridgeport, died of "dropsey of the brain," today known as encephalitis. Town records also report that on Dec. 8, a "Batterson child" had died. No given name of the child, nor names of the parents, were noted and the child, a male, was probably a newborn. It is possible that Mary Batterson died of complications from the birth of her child. Coleman Batterson, probably related to Nell, lived just north of the Nashes on Silver Spring Road.)

20 December Wednesday

Cloudy all day. I worked at Emmie's shoes. Laura come down and spent the day. Carried her home at night.

21 December Thursday

Snowed and rain in morning. Then clear off with high wind and grew cold. Finished Emmie's shoes.

22 December Friday

Clear and cold. Mercury 12. Fixt Emily's shoes. Picked a turkey and carried it up to Jared for Mary Jane. Father went and carried Cole's father to the funeral.

(Mary Jane is the sister-in-law of Jared N. Olmstead, and was married to Charles Olmstead, Jared Olmstead's brother. Thus she was a niece of Charles Nash, diarist Jared's father. Sometimes it's amazing — not to mention confusing — to see how many people that members of the old settler families here were related to back then. Mary Jane and her husband lived in Norwalk. She may have been ill, for she dies in May 1866 — though her death is not mentioned in the diary! It sounds as if the turkey that is going to Mary Jane is for Christmas meal. But, reading the diary, one might wonder whether Christmas even occurred that year — *see* Dec. 25. Cole is Coleman Batterson, who lived just north of the Nashes. They were going to the funeral of Mary Batterson, who had died Dec. 19.)

23 December Saturday

Clear. Mercury 6. Father went and got Bill sharpened in morning. Then we sawed logs down old orchard lane to make a stoneboat.

(A stoneboat was a sled, made of thick planks and used for hauling stones, boulders, wood, and other heavy loads. As mentioned before, winter was the ideal time for pulling big loads from fields because the snow reduced friction so much that boulders virtually unmovable in summer could be pulled with relative ease in winter. Bill, the family horse, was getting his shoes sharpened so they would cut into and grip the icy surface of the frozen ground. Bill probably would pull the stoneboat.)

24 December Sunday

Snow till 10, then rain fast all day and took snow most off.

25 December Monday

Clear and quite warm. Went and carried Emily up West Lane and left her. Then went up to Bailey's store, got gallon oil and chimneys for lamp. Heard Milly Ingersoll was dead.

(This is a surprising entry, by modern-day standards at least. Christmas was apparently not the holiday for the Nashes – and at least one merchant – that it is for most of us today. At least some of the Nashes were Methodists and a Methodist minister, who graduated from Yale Divinity School and who's taught the religious subjects at several universities, was at a loss to explain why Jared would make no mention of the feast and why a general store would be open for business on the day.

(Bailey's was a general store that was in the building now housing the Aldrich Museum on Main Street. Commercialism apparently existed then, but not in the gift-buying sense that it does today.

(Millicent Smith Ingersoll, 68, the widow of Samuel Ingersoll, was a daughter of Amos and Sarah Keeler Smith of Ridgefield. She was born on Nov. 13, 1797, and was married Feb. 1, 1824. Jared's mother was Millicent's mother's sister; thus, Jared and Millicent were first cousins. Samuel was a grandson of the Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll, who served as minister of the First Congregational Church in Ridgefield from 1740 to 1778.)

26 December Tuesday

Clear in morning, then fogged up and damp the rest of the day. Father & Mother went to the funeral. Not verry cold.

27 December Wednesday

Rain until afternoon, then it partly broke away.

28 December Thursday

Cloudy, cold, raw, east wind. Went up after Emily in forenoon. Father helpt Jared, butchered hogs. Rain some in afternoon.

29 December Friday

Clear and pleasant. Cut some wood. Father & Mother went to Mr. Holmes in afternoon, & father went to post office and Bailey's and got a new Almanack for 1866.

(For most 19th Century farmers, the two most important printed documents were the Bible and the current almanac. The former gave spiritual advice while the later helped with the more mundane aspects of everyday life. The almanac told the basics, such as the risings and settings of the sun and moon and the phases of the latter – important when a farmer was planning a harvest and needed to work at night under a full moon. Agricultural almanacs, such as the still-published Old Farmers Almanac, advised on the best times to plant, reported new farming techniques, and offered tips for homemakers. Many contained humorous anecdotes and bits of history. By the 1860s, there were at least half a dozen almanacs in circulation in the Northeast. The Old Farmers Almanac was the most famous and perhaps the most widespread. The New England Almanac and Farmer's Friend was printed by a number of companies – author David Daboll produced the main body of data and text, selling it to local printers who in turn sold ads around it and put their own names and addresses on the cover. Various manufacturers also offered almanacs to help sell their products. Among them was A.L. Scovill & Company's Almanac, which provided basic almanac data, but whose text was largely devoted to describing illnesses and how they could be treated with such Scovill products as Dr. Wm. Hall's Balsam for the Lungs, Dr. Mott's Vegetable Liver Pills, or Dr. Baker's Pain Panacea. Dr. J.C. Ayer and Company produced Ayer's American Almanac, offering descriptions of and testimonials for Ayer patent medicines. The Lodi Manufacturing Company in New York published The Farmers and Planters Almanac, which helped it peddle its fertilizer products. Even religions had almanacs; for instance, The Methodist Almanac published in New York City contained both practical and spiritual advice, and plenty of ads for organs, prayer books and life insurance. In the process of doing research for this diary, the editor has acquired dozens of 19th Century almanacs from as early as 1806. All provide interesting insights into life in the 1800s.)

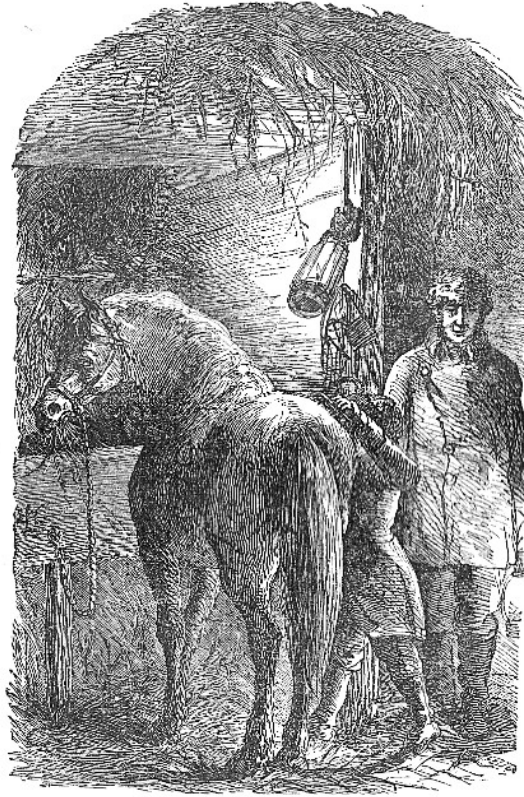
30 December Saturday

Snowed all day. Wind N.E. Harry Nash called here, wants to buy a cow. Stopped snowing in the evening.

(Harry Nash may have been Henry W. Nash, a tanner who lived in the southeastern part of Wilton. Or he may have been Harry Nash, born 1819 in Ridgefield, who married Jane Eliza Northrop. His relationship, if any, is not yet known.)

31 December Sunday

Clear and moderate in morning. Clouded up in afternoon and come up foggy in the evening.



1866

1 January Tuesday

Some rain and wet. Snow gone off some. Father went up town. Cow calved.

(On a small farm with limited resources, the birth of a calf required a decision, especially in winter when it had to be sheltered: Would it be worthwhile raising? *Facts for Farmers*, published in 1866, recommended: “Use judgment in selecting such heifer calves as are to be reared. Select only those whose mothers are good milkers and whose sires have come from good milking stock. At the same time, the calf itself should have those characteristics that indicate an aptitude to develop good milking qualities, viz.: small, fine head, rather long in the muzzle; bright eyes; thin, tapering neck; small, well-shaped legs; long body; large hind quarters, set wide behind; soft skin; fine hair – the color of which is immaterial; and above all, the milk-mirror or udder-veins should be large and well developed.” See Feb. 12 for the Nashes’ decision.)

2 January Tuesday

Cloudy and some colder. Sledged home wood from old orchard lane and carried log to saw mill for a stone boat.

(As mentioned Dec. 23, 1865, the stoneboat is a sled designed to carry heavy loads, especially over snow. The saw mill will cut thick boards for the stone boat. The Nashes were preparing for a lot of work in the woods in the weeks ahead, which was typical for this time of year.)

3 January Wednesday

Snowed a little in morning before day. Cloudy. Father went to Harry Nashes. George Hurlbut's folks and Jared Olmstead called here.

(George Hurlbutt of Wilton, also mentioned March 3, 1865, was a carriage-maker. He was married to Clara Amanda Olmstead, daughter of Clara Nash Olmstead, who was a sister of Jared Nash's father, Charles.)

4 January Thursday

Cleared off in forenoon. Father cut in woods. Grew cold towards night.

5 January Friday

Clear and cold. Mercury 3 above. Father went to Gilbert's mill with corn.

6 January Saturday

Clear, cold, 12 above. Went up town with Emily in forenoon. We sawed some wood in afternoon. J.B. Smith come and got old cow to keep.

(John Betts Smith was Emily Nash's brother. The Nashes may have been making room for their calf by giving away their "old cow.")

7 January Sunday

Baby weighed 15. Snowed some in morning, then cleared off in middle of day and grew cold & windy. Snow blew. Mercury 12 above in morning and 5 below at night and growing cold.

8 January Monday

Clear and verry cold and windy. Mercury 16 below in morning and 4 below at night.

(Although there's plenty of cold weather ahead, this is the lowest temperature recorded during the two years of Jared's diary. In her diary, Anna Marie Resseguie of the Keeler Tavern reports that Jan. 8 was "the coldest day old Dr. Perry ever remembers. Mercury 21 degrees below zero." And the next day, she says "the papers stated that the cold of yesterday exceeded any in 60 years." In her diary, written in Washington, D.C., Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, wrote on Jan. 8: "This day has been astonishingly cold. My windows were completely frosted when I got up, a thing I have seldom known ... We had the felicity this morning of finding our new water pipe

burst at intervals all the way from the top to the bottom of the house. No water of course, how long this persecution will continue I cannot judge and tonight when I attempted to light the gas light, that was in the same condition.” Needless to say, without plumbing, the Nashes did not need to worry about frozen pipes.)

9 January Tuesday

Clear and cold, some wind. 2 above in morning, 15 at night. Father went to Jared's, got two bush. corn.

(The Nashes may have been running low on feed.)

10 January Wednesday

Clear and windy, 15 above. Father oiled harness.

(The harness was probably for the horse that would draw wood with the stone boat.)

11 January Thursday

Clear and more moderate. We cut some in the woods in forenoon. Clouded up towards night.

12 January Friday

Cloudy. Snowed some in morning. Father went up town in forenoon. In afternoon, we sawed up some logs down in the woods.

13 January Saturday

Quite warm and pleasant. Father went to Norwalk.

(The weather was finally nice enough for Father to visit family down in Norwalk.)

14 January Sunday

Clear. Some cooler, but pleasant. Grew cold in afternoon. Mercury 12.

15 January Monday

Clear and cold. Mercury 1 above. Father traded old cow, got two yearling heifers with Harry Nash. He drove old cow down as far as Comstock's. Clouded up in P.M.

(Comstock's was a store in Wilton at the intersection of what is now Route 33 and Olmstead Hill Road. Harry Nash clearly lived beyond this point; if it was Harry W. Nash, the tanner who was acquiring the old cow for her hide, then the cow had to go another five miles or so to reach Harry's farm near the intersection of Westport and Chestnut Hill Roads. Keep in mind how cold it was as father, about 72 years old, walked the six-mile round trip to Comstock's and back home.)

16 January Tuesday

Snow after 12 o'clock, then some damp the forepart of day. Father went 6 times with the sled after wood. Cleared off towards night.

(Clearly, Father at 72 was a very strong man. He is gathering uncut wood to be chopped and seasoned for next year's firewood, or to be sold for lumber or railroad ties. He is taking advantage of the frozen, snow-covered ground that made pulling the loaded sled, probably by horse, a lot easier than it would be in warmer temperatures.)

17 January Wednesday

Clear most of the day. Work in woods. Drawed home 5 loads. I went and carried our folks to Jared's in morning. Went after them at night.

(In winter, most of the male Nashes' time is spent gathering wood. Actually, besides doing maintenance work and keeping the livestock fed, there was relatively little else to do on the farm in mid-winter. Father and Jared may also have been working at their trade, shoemaking, but the diary gives no indication of this.)

18 January Thursday

Some sunshine and quite warm. Work in the woods. Went 3 times sledding with going off.

(By "sledding going off," Jared means the snow is melting in the warmer weather, making the sledding of loads of wood difficult.)

19 January Friday

Quite warm. Sledding about gone. Went in forenoon 3 times and down to sawmill.

(The Nashes are probably selling some of the better wood for lumber or ties.)

20 January Saturday

Foggy and damp through the day. Father went up town, got the clock from Linus Northrop's.

(Linus O. Northrop, a shoemaker and harness maker, lived on Wilton Road West just below Main Street. Jared doesn't explain what the clock is doing at the home of Northrop who may have been related to Emily Nash through her mother, Polly Northrop Smith.)

21 January Sunday

Clear and cold. Some windy. Mercury 12.

22 January Monday

Clear. Mercury 11. Done some chores. Father went to Hoyts in evening.

(This is probably Munson Hoyt and family who lived a half mile up Silver Spring Road, just north of the spring.)

23 January Tuesday

Clear. More moderate. Went up to Scholes and spent the day. Holmes folks here in afternoon.

(Jared's daughter, now five years old, will marry D. Smith Sholes, now about 25. The wedding takes place in the year 1900, some 35 years in the future. Sholes's first wife, Elizabeth Talmadge of New Canaan, had died in 1885. D. Smith Sholes (1839-1907) was a leading citizen who was a president of the Ridgefield Savings Bank, and a postmaster. When he died, Emily's brother Charles S. Nash — baby Charley in the diary — serves as the executor of his estate, which he leaves entirely to Emily. At this time in 1866, the Nashes are probably visiting his father, Daniel, who lived on West Lane. The Holmeses are not identified, but many Holmes families lived in southwestern Ridgefield and northwestern Wilton.)

24 January Wednesday

Some sunshine. We shod the sled. Abram had horse & wagon to go to Norwalk.

(Metal bands were nailed onto the wooden runners of the sled to make the runners durable; hence, they were "shod" like a horse. Abram Nash "borrowed" the horse and wagon for the trip.)

25 January Thursday

Some snow before day, then some hail; wind east, raw, chilly. Made some ice in the trees.

(In other words, Ridgefield had a small ice storm.)

26 January Friday

Work at wood. Drewed 5 loads. Pick some chickens to send by Russell. Clear, not verry cold.

(Jared probably refers to Russell Mead, a farmer who lived on Wilton Road East about opposite Silver Hill Road. The previous January, the Nashes also sent him chickens and in July, some veal. The food may have been gifts from the Nashes to an old friend who was poor – see Jan 28 – or Mr. Mead could have simply been buying the meat from the Nashes. Mead was connected with the family – see Jan. 7, 1865.)

27 January Saturday

Clear. Went 4 times and went to sawmill once.

(Jared went four times to the woods for lumber and-or firewood.)

28 January Sunday

Clear in forepart of day. Went after supper up West Lane with Emmie for a sleigh ride. Father went to R. Mead's in evening.

(Here is one of the very rare places where Jared mentions doing something that's purely and simply fun.)

29 January Monday

Cloudy. Work in woods. Drewed 4 load. Went to saw mill once.

30 January Tuesday

Cloudy, little storm in evening. Work at logs. Drewed 2 loads.

31 January Wednesday

Clear. Carried Emily up West Lane in morning to stay all night. Work at logs over backside. Father went to sawmill.

(Jared apparently means the backside of the woods or perhaps the backside of their farmland, much of which is now fairways and greens at Silver Spring Country Club.)



1 February Thursday

Clear. Work in woods. Went to sawmill.

2 February Friday

Some colder, squally. Clouds a flying. In woods in forenoon. Went to P.O. and after Emily in P.M.

3 February Saturday

Clear and cold. Work some in woods. Went and got Bill shod.

(Bill, of course, is Jared's horse. It had been doing a lot of work lately, hauling wood, and needed new shoes.)

4 February Sunday

Clear. Some flying clouds. Cold, mercury 8 above in morning. 14 at night.

5 February Monday

Clear. 6 above in morning, 12 at night. Got Jared's team and went to sawmill. Drewed home a little wood.

(Notice that Jared isn't finding much to record in the diary. The dead of winter didn't offer much in the way of variety. Wood gathering was the chief chore. There were few visitors and little visiting. The fact that Jared Nash had to get Jared Olmstead's "team" of horses indicated that he must have had an unusually heavy load that his own horse, Bill, could not handle.)

6 February Tuesday

Clear and cold. 12 above. Father went up town in forenoon.

7 February Wednesday

Clear and cold. 4 above. Done chores. Clouded up in afternoon. Baby weighed 16.

8 February Thursday

Damp. Made ice on trees. Wind E.

(Ridgefield apparently had a sizable ice storm Feb. 8 and 9. Ice storms today can be disasters, bringing down power and phone lines and causing many traffic accidents. Back then, they were mostly curiosities – there were no utilities to damage and no traffic to speak of. And wise farmers did not plant trees too close to the house. In fact, as will be noted below, the iciness allowed the use of a sleigh, which could handle heavier loads than wheeled wagons.)

9 February Friday

Made some snow & ice. Father went to Gilbert's mill with a sleigh. Most sick with a cold.

(Father was probably getting corn, oats or other grains ground into feed for the livestock. Farmers stored grains until needed because they lasted longer in raw form. Once ground, the feed would spoil more quickly.)

10 February Saturday

Foggy & damp. Father went up to mill again after his feed. Mother went to Jared's with him.

11 February Sunday

Foggy in morning, some broken in afternoon. Thawed ice all off and about used up the sleighing.

12 February Monday

Rain all day. Father went to E. Smith's with a calf.

(That's probably Egbert Smith, who would butcher the calf for veal. Such may have been the fate of the calf born back on Jan. 1.)

13 February Tuesday

Clear and cooler most of the day

14 February Wednesday

Clear in morning, then clouded up and storm some. Father went to the funeral of Doct. Perry and John Hurlbutt. Emily went in afternoon to John's. Rain fast in evening and most all night.

(Feb. 14, 1866 was a sad day in Ridgefield. Dr. Nehemiah Perry Sr. had probably been the most popular 19th Century doctor in town and with his son, Nehemiah Jr., had served the Nashes. Nehemiah Sr.'s father, Dr. David Perry, may also have ministered to the family [See Oct. 24, 1865]. In her diary, Anna Resseguie, who lived at the Keeler Tavern, had been noting the decline of the doctor. "His sufferings are intense," she says Jan. 10, 1866. "Dr. Perry has the dropsy and is growing weaker," she says Jan. 16. "As Dr. Perry lingers, I got in at evening to see dear Sara [Perry]. I heard her father's voice and his groans," she says Feb. 11. He died the next morning.

(Anna Resseguie also records the unusual mishap, decline and death of John Hurlbutt. "Hear today that John Hurlbutt, who went with the Band to Bethel by way of Danbury, while in the latter place was bitten by a lion belonging to the menagerie," she writes Feb. 1. "He put his hand in the cage, being first assured by the keeper that no danger attended the act, and was bitten." On Feb. 3, she reports, "Hear that lockjaw is feared for Mr. Hurlbutt ... His sufferings were such that 50 drops of morphine were given him without affording relief." On Feb. 11, she goes to the Hurlbutt house a block north on Main Street. "I call at the door to inquire after him and find that he is a corpse. He died about 7 o'clock this evening." She adds: "It is believed that if John Hurlbutt's wound had been soaked immediately in warm water and ashes, instead of being plunged into cold water as it was, all would have been well. The bite was in the wrist."

(There were back-to-back funerals for Perry and Hurlbutt. Dr. Perry's was at 11 and "by 10 before, carriages were coming into the street from all directions to that it seemed more like a day at our Annual Fair," Anna Resseguie wrote. "The stores were closed, the church was filled." She noted that Dr. Perry "with his father, had ministered to the people as physicians for 100 years." "The longest procession followed the remains to the grave that was ever known in R-d," she added. Later, "as the procession returned from the burial of Dr. Perry, the bell announced the time for Mr. Hurlbutt's funeral."

(John Hurlbutt was a son of David Hurlbutt, who operated Hurlbutt's Market of Market Street. His brother, Sereno S. Hurlbutt, appears in the diary Feb. 8, 1865.)

15 February Thursday

Clear and high wind. Grew cold, 14 above, at night. Father went to the funeral of Grace King. Rebecca, Mary Jane & Jared here in afternoon.

(Grace King had died Feb. 13 at the age of 57. A native of Ridgefield and single, she was the youngest child of Lt. Joshua King, a Revolutionary soldier who escorted Major John Andre to the gallows, and a founder of a general store that lasted more than 200 years – most recently as Bedient's Hardware. He lived near the corner of Main Street and King Lane, where his daughter also lived, probably with her brother, Joshua Ingersoll King. Grace King was the third prominent village resident to die that week, no doubt causing many Ridgefielders to think twice about the transitory nature of life.)

16 February Friday

Clear, cold and windy, 3 above in morning. 10 at night. Work some at wood.

17 February Saturday

Clear and cold, 8 above in morning. More moderate.

18 February Sunday

Went up West Lane with Emily. Rain towards night.

19 February Monday

Rain all day. Verry wet.

20 February Tuesday

Clear and pleasant. Father went to Taylor's mill. We work at some wood. He get 2 brooms from John Holmes.

(Jared may be referring to John W. Holmes of Titicus, a New York City native who was listed on his death record as a laborer, but was probably also known for making brooms. Holmes served as a "musician" in the Civil War and was wounded and captured at Chancellorsville in 1863. A year later, he was discharged. He died in 1885 at the age of 62.)

21 February Wednesday

Clear, not verry cold. Father, Mother & Emmie went to see Aunt Lucy. I work some at wood.

(Aunt Lucy may be Lucy Keeler Dudley; see May 27, 1866, when Aunt Lucy dies.)

22 February Thursday

Clear and pleasant. We work at wood. Gathered things to make a syrup for Emmie. Quite muddy. Bluebirds came.

(Gathering "things" meant collecting already stored herbs, or winter dried leaves of herbs in the field, for some kind of medicine for whatever ailed Emmie – probably a sore throat and cough. This indicates the Nashes still practiced folk medicine.

(The arrival of the bluebirds was the first sign that spring was not far behind. Despite all of Jared's reports of cold, the winter of 1866 was apparently somewhat milder than 1865, when the bluebirds showed up on March 7. Nowadays, winters have become so mild that many bluebirds winter over – living mostly in the swamps where they find berries for food. It is not unusual for Ridgefielders to spot local flocks of them in November, December and January. Although they

have gone through a period of being threatened by lack of nesting places and invasion of competing European species, bluebirds are doing fairly well today, thanks largely to the erection of many bluebird boxes. Flocks of robins, incidentally, are also found all winter long in Ridgefield.)

23 February Friday

Clear through the day, foggy and rain in evening. Work at wood.

24 February Saturday

Damp & foggy. Rain towards night. Henry Ingersoll & Mr. Holmes called here in forenoon. Rain hard in evening.

(Henry Ingersoll, who visited Jan. 9, 1865, is a first cousin, once removed, of Jared, and may be related to the late Grace King, who just died.)

25 February Sunday

Clear and cold. Froze some. Water has come in cellar.

(Apparently there had been a lot of melting of snow and ice. This, with all the rain, caused flooding. Consequently, on April 10, father and an assistant will begin digging a new drain for the cellar. Notice that Jared uses the word “cellar.” He would never say “basement.” In a house, the cellar was the space underneath for storing things while, back then, the basement meant only the structure, usually stones, supporting the house and chimney. A cellar, incidentally, could also be above ground.)

26 February Monday

Clear and cold. Mercury 8 above. Father carried 1/2 cord of wood to Lucy Rockwell. Then we work at wood at the door.

(Lucy Rockwell may be the “Aunt Lucy” – see Feb. 21.)

27 February Tuesday

Snow most all day.

(There’s nothing like a snowstorm to keep people indoors, even back then.)

28 February Wednesday

Some sunshine. Father went to Norwalk, carried some potatoes, rutabagas, beans, butter and eggs. Meeker & wife here in evening.

(Potatoes, rutabagas and beans were vegetables that could be stored in the cold cellar. These and the dairy items were probably all dearly desired foods in the city of Norwalk by late February, especially after a snowstorm, and Father was undoubtedly supplying some market – and perhaps some family members.

(Farmers had to be careful when transporting butter. The Farmer's Almanac in 1876 advised: "The sun should never be allowed to shine on butter. More butter is injured from the farm house to the village store and in transportation by careless, unthinking or willful parties than from all other causes combined. The farmer has an easy and effectual remedy, an old umbrella for a shade, green grass or wet flannel or any other substitute whereby a rapid evaporation can be effected for the cooling arrangement, and you can carry butter for miles to market in good condition.")



1 March Thursday

Cloudy through the day. Work at wood.

2 March Friday

Lowery all day. Work at wood.

3 March Saturday

Foggy and some damp. Father went to sawmill. I got stone boat plank. Quite muddy.

(Apparently the stone boat, the heavy duty sled that the Nashes had made in January, was already in need of repair from all the work that the Nashes had been doing.)

4 March Sunday

Windy and squally. Clouds with some snow. Not much sun.

(March is coming in like a lion.)

5 March Monday

Cold, high March wind. Father helpt Jared skore ties.

(As mentioned earlier, the many farmers earned extra cash by making ties or sleepers for railroad tracks during the winter months. Until the 1940s most railroad ties were hand-hewn by men working in pairs – here, Father and his nephew, Jared Olmstead. Straight hardwood trees that were not too wide – around a foot across – were felled and cut into eight-foot, six-inch lengths. Jared sometimes calls these “sticks.” To work on a tie, the wood was placed at right angles on a pair of logs to raise it off the ground. Bark was peeled off with bark spuds or barking irons, tools that looked something like shovels. The workers snapped or marked a line down the log to delineate where each side would be; this was called the “cut line.” Then, using a felling ax, a worker would chop into the side of the log about once every six or eight inches; the cut would be only as deep as the line that had been scored for the side, and the process was called “cutting to the score.” This is probably what Jared meant by “score ties.” Once the side had been scored, the worker could use a broad axe to walk down the side of the long, chipping away the scored pieces.

This was called “hewing to the line.” People who did this work for a living were often called “tie hackers.”)

6 March Tuesday

Clear and windy. Father helpt Jared in forenoon, finished his ties. Then we cut wood at the door.

7 March Wednesday

Windy & cold. Work at wood. Baby weighs 17 3/4.

8 March Thursday

Cold and windy. Father went to Sanford's. Emily went to her Mother's. I went after her at night.

(Sanford is Charles Sanford Nash, Father's son by his first marriage.)

9 March Friday

Cold, windy. Work in woods in forenoon; at the door in afternoon.

10 March Saturday

Cold, clear and windy. Work some at wood.

11 March Sunday

Cloudy, south wind, some rain just at night. Father went over to Sanford's after E. R. Grumman.

(E.R. Grummun was Elizabeth R. Grummun, Jared's sister.)

12 March Monday

Some rain through the day.

13 March Tuesday

Quite warm, some sunshine. Went to blacksmith's to get Bill shod. Father work in woods in afternoon.

14 March Wednesday

Cloudy and damp, foggy.

15 March Thursday

Cloudy. Work in woods in forenoon, some at bar post in afternoon.

(The Nashes were beginning to fix fences, a typical early spring chore. Bar posts were the vertical posts into which the rails or “bars” were fitted. Late winter and early spring was the time farmers usually repaired fences. Sound fences were important for holding in livestock that, if escaped, could trample valuable crops.)

16 March Friday

Rain through the day.

17 March Saturday

Some clear. Cold and high wind.

18 March Sunday

Clear and cold. Froze up hard. Father went to Bald Hill meeting in afternoon.

(Father went to the services at the Methodist Church at Bald Hill along Route 33 in northern Wilton. The church was abandoned in the 1930s. The fact that Jared mentions this event suggests it was unusual. It also suggests that Father either went to another church so regularly it was not worth mentioning, or rarely went to church.)

19 March Monday

Lowery. Drawed some sticks for ties in forenoon, made stone boat. Father went to S. Fitches and Jared's.

(Apparently the first stone boat had been beyond repair, suffering from the heavy transporting work to which the Nashes put it during the winter. Father was probably visiting Samuel Fitch and Jared Olmstead to ask them to help with ties – see next entry.

(Samuel B. Fitch, who probably lived on Wilton Road West, had been the manager and tax collector of the Flat Rock School District in 1865. Later in 1866, it was apparently discovered that Fitch either failed to collect the school taxes he was supposed to, or he had pocketed some or all of the money. In November 1866, the school district met to see if it could get people to contribute to the taxes Fitch failed to turn in, but the motion failed. Fitch seems to have disappeared from the Ridgefield scene after that. A farmer, Samuel B. Fitch was probably born in Wilton, where a couple of generations of Samuel Fitches had lived. Fitch is an old and respected family in Connecticut and Fairfield County. Thomas Fitch IV of Norwalk, quite likely related to our Samuel, was governor of Connecticut from 1754 to 1766; his son, Thomas the Fifth, is reputed to be the inspiration for the colonial ditty, Yankee Doodle Dandy.)

20 March Tuesday

Cloudy, wind east. S. Fitch & Jared work here at ties. Storm some just at night.

21 March Wednesday

Trees covered with ice. Foggy and damp. Thawed ice off. Daniel brought Emily some vests.

(Daniel Sholes or perhaps Daniel Smith, Emily's brother, was delivering a load of cut cloth which Emily, a seamstress, would sew together into vests to earn money for the family.)

22 March Thursday

Clear and cold. Cut some wood. Went up to see James St. John. He is sick. Father went to Norwalk.

(James St. John, who probably lived on St. Johns Road, may have been the James R. St. John who served as a teacher for the Flat Rock School at times during the 1840s and 1850s. He died in 1896 at the age of 71.)

23 March Friday

Clear in morning, south chilly wind. Went with E.R.G. to Titicus towards night. Snowed and rain before we got back. Cut some wood.

(Elizabeth Grummun – E.R.G. – may have been visiting her daughter, Libby, who taught at Titicus School at this time. The schoolhouse today is the American Legion headquarters at the corner of New and North Salem Roads.)

24 March Saturday

Rain through the night. Cleared off and windy. Father went to Bailey's store in afternoon.

(As mentioned earlier, Bailey's store on Main Street still exists — as the second story of the office building for the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art. Lewis H. Bailey owned the general store. In 1880, the business was moved to Main Street and Bailey Avenue, where it eventually became Bedient's Hardware.)

25 March Sunday

Snowed in morning 3 or 4 inches, then cleared off. Windy. Snow flew. I am most sick with a cold.

26 March Monday

Clear and cold, high wind, mercury 14. Piled up ties. Snow blew hard.

(Just the day before he was “most sick,” and now he’s out in windy, 14-degree temperatures, piling railroad ties; no wonder he died at 45.)

27 March Tuesday

Clear, some windy. Work in woods in forenoon. Richard & Roxanna here in morning and spent the day. Rebecca here in afternoon.

28 March Wednesday

Clear and some warmer. Clouded up towards night, snowed in evening. Father went to auction to Purdy Sherwood’s.

(Purdy Sherwood was a Wilton farmer, who had died on June 5, 1865. The auction may have been ordered by a court to settle his estate. Such auctions were fairly frequently held, especially when a person or estate was insolvent. A native of New Castle in Westchester County, Purdy Sherwood was born in 1808 and married Sarah Lockwood, also of New Castle but of Norwalk stock. They lived in Wilton from at least 1835 until 1859, during which time they had 12 children.)

29 March Thursday

Rain until 3 o’clock. Made barpost.

30 March Friday

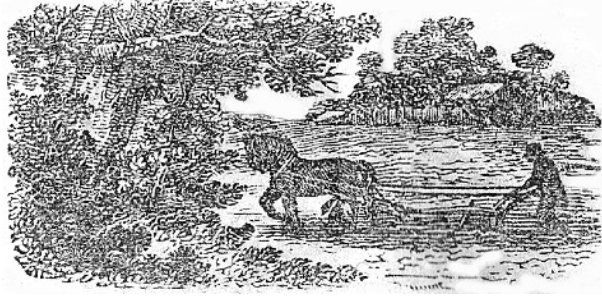
Clear and cold, some wind. Went up West Lane with Emily. Carried vest and spent the day.

31 March Saturday

Cloudy, south chilly wind. Father sowed clover seed in morning, went to auction in P.M. to Aaron Northrop. Rain fast towards night. I cut wood.

(Here we have mention of the first sign that the growing season has finally arrived after what seemed to be a fairly harsh winter – and a cold March. Clover, a very hardy crop, was the first seed to go into the ground and was used both as food for the few cattle the Nashes had, and for renewing the soil through the nitrogen that clover provides. Oats, the next crop to be planted, won’t be sown until April 18.

(Unlike Purdy Sherwood, Aaron Northrop was still alive; he died in 1880 at the age of 69. A shoemaker, he had a very modest home. He probably had declared insolvency – bankruptcy – and his property was being sold to pay off his creditors.)



1 April Wednesday

Clear and springlike in morning, then flying clouds.

2 April Tuesday

Cloudy, east wind. Drove farrow heifer to N. Seymour's. Went to election in afternoon.

(The farrow – unpregnant – cow was about to meet Mr. Seymour's bull. The "election" was a Town Meeting that authorized the selectmen "to release from taxation all sums of money that may be loaned to said town from the state, town and highway taxes." The meeting had been called "to make provision by tax or otherwise for the payment of notes held by individuals against [the] town." The debts were probably in part incurred in support of the Civil War. The town's indebtedness in 1865 was about \$42,000, a lot of money for a small town with few public services.)

3 April Wednesday

Clear and warmer. Split wood in the woods. Father went to Norwalk carried E.R. Grumman. Sanford come here in forenoon. Heifer calfed at night.

(Obviously, not the same heifer that went to Seymour's.)

4 April Thursday

Quite warm. Work at wood. Went to blacksmith. Emmie went West Lane. Laura come home with us.

5 April Friday

Pleasant and warm. Drewed two ties & some levers. Hewed ties. Carried Laura home at night.

(By levers, Jared probably meant strong poles used to lift and move the ties or other heavy objects. For instance, when a farmer wanted to remove a large rock from a field, he would often pry it out with one of these lever poles, braced against another pole lying at right angles to it on the ground.)

6 April Friday

Quite warm, some showery. Hewed stick for sleepers for stable floor. Carried Mother & Emmie up to Jared's in afternoon and then went after them.

(Like other things made of wood, flooring needed to be replaced from time to time. Sleepers were the support beams. It's quite possible that the beams had rotted over the years – as will be noted on April 10, moisture was probably a problem at the Nash farmstead.)

7 April Saturday

Some rain in afternoon. Wind east and chilly. Father finished hewing sleepers. Babe weight 18 1/2. Kate Dunning come to see Emmie in afternoon.

(Kate Dunning is probably a little girl, daughter of Richard and Mary Dunning – Mary was an Olmstead, who was related to Jared. This is a rare mention of a child visiting a child. The Nashes' daughter, Emmie, is about six at this time.)

8 April Sunday

Snow through the day. About a large as any through the winter.

(April snowstorms in these parts are not unusual. On Easter Sunday, April 4, 1915, a good-sized storm hit Ridgefield, accumulating nearly a foot.)

9 April Monday

Clear, cold and froze hard. Father went to Taylor's mill. I went to see Abram. Snow mostly gone, only north of fences. Father went to see Tomas.

(Remember that the term "fences" includes stone walls, and the shadow cast by the walls keeps the ground cooler. Tomas or Thomas was a laborer, as we will soon see, and Father was making arrangements to hire him.)

10 April Tuesday

Clear, chilly, east wind. Thomas and Father work at diggin cellar drain. I went to Wm. Seymour's to get pick sharpened.

(The high water table of spring, plus the melting snow, was having its effect on the Nash cellar. Back on Feb. 25, the diary noted that water had come in the cellar. Marjory McKenna, a 20th Century owner of the house, said that in the 1970s she and her husband Arthur still seasonally got water in the cellar. They appreciated knowing that the problem was nothing new. *See also* April 17.

(William Seymour was a Ridgefield blacksmith. The pick was needed for the drain project.)

11 April Wednesday

Clear most of the day. Thomas come and they finished diggin about midle of forenoon. Daniel come, brought Emily some vests.

12 April Thursday.

Clear and pleasant. Carried Emily up to her mother's, then went after her at night. Work at stone, on rye stuble, and fence.

(Jared was probably removing stones that had been pushed up in the rye field by the winter freezing of the soil; he may have used a lever made back on April 5. He's getting the field ready for Jared N. Olmstead, who will show up to plow in two days. Jared probably was adding the stone to weak or low spots in the stone fence.

(It is interesting that in neither 1865 nor 1866 does Jared specifically mention the planting of the rye seed. The harvesting, beginning July 17 this year, is noted in some detail. Rye was a crop that was generally planted on poor soils – in field that had been worn out. For more about rye, *see* May 10, July 11, and Aug. 25 in 1865.)

13 April Friday

Wet and foggy and some rain in forenoon. Broke away in afternoon. Work some at stone.

14 April Saturday

Clear in morning, then south chilly wind. Work some at fence. Father & Emmie went to Wilton Depot after Libby Grumman. Jared commence to plow our stalks to sow.

(Libby Grummun probably took the train from Norwalk to Wilton and may have been visiting her mother, Elizabeth R. Grummun, in Brooklyn, N.Y. Jared Olmstead is plowing under last year's stalks to prepare the field for seeding.)

15 April Sunday

Some cloudy but pleasant. Father went at night and carried Libby up to Amos Smith's.

(Amos Smith Jr. lived at the north corner of Main and Gilbert Streets. It appears that he was providing board for Libby Grummun who was teaching at the nearby Titicus School. While school districts didn't pay teachers much — and women invariably earned less than men, the districts typically provided a place for their teachers to live, often with families of pupils.)

16 April Monday

Rain most of the day, wind E.

17 April Tuesday

Some sunshine. Drewed stone for cellar drain. Went to sawmill.

(As explained earlier, a drain consisted of a ditch filled with stone, allowing the water a smooth flow through the ground.)

18 April Wednesday

Cloudy, wind east. Jared sowed oats. We set barpost and work in drain.

(The previous year, oats were sown on April 14.)

19 April Thursday

Clear and warm. Work at filling up drain. Heard John H. Olmstead's wife was dead.

(Maria Whitlock Olmstead, only 30 years old, died that day of "placenta praevia" – a complication of pregnancy. She and John Henry Olmstead were married Oct. 26, 1859. The Olmstead genealogy indicates she had no children who survived her.)

20 April Friday

Clear and warm for the time of year. Finished the drain. Mother went to Jared's in P.M.

21 April Saturday

Not verry clear. Father sowed grass seed for Jared in forenoon. Emily and I went to the funeral. Rain and thunder towards night.

22 April Sunday

Quite warm and pleasant.

23 April Monday

Rain most of the day, thunder in evening. Father went to Norwalk, come around by Hoyt's Nursery.

(The previous year on April 8, Father had picked up some apple trees at Hoyt's, a commercial nursery that operated in New Canaan until well into the 20th Century.)

24 April Tuesday

Cloudy, cold, high wind. Father went up town in A.M. Got stone augers sharpened. Got some cowslips.

(Some boulders were just too big to haul away from a field. A stone auger was a drill for stone, used to make holes into which blasting powder was placed. The blasting will take place May 16. In 1865, the Nashes had their augers sharpened Aug. 18 and blasted on Sept. 1. Cowslips are Marsh Marigolds, a yellow-flowering, large buttercup of spring swamps. The greens were eaten like spinach and the flowers displayed. In fact, some thrifty farmers would pick bunches of cowslips and bring them to a nearby city, selling them on the street to people anxious to see flowers after a long, hard winter. Many used to grow in the nearby Silver Spring Swamp as well as other wetlands, but they don't seem as common today as they were even 40 years ago.)

25 April Wednesday

Cold and windy. Frost in morning. Father got Jared's team and plowed for oats in potato ground. I planted some peas.

(The Nashes' planting dates were time-tested; amateur gardeners may wish to take note of some.)

26 April Thursday

Cloudy, cold and windy. Frost this morning. Father finished plowing. I drew out 12 loads manure.

(The manure, of course, was used for preparing fields for the spring planting.)

27 April Friday

Clear and more moderate. Father sick. I went to Gilbert's mill with feed in P.M. Heard Francis Church was dead.

(Francis Church was born in Ridgefield in 1821, son of Samuel and Jane Keeler Church. His sister was Esther St. John, wife of Bela St. John, a Wilton farmer who appears in the diary from time to time and was probably related to the family. By 1850, Francis was living in New York City where he worked as a merchant and where he died.)

28 April Saturday

Clear and warmer. Father is better, so we sowed the oats.

29 April Sunday

Clear, high wind. Emily went to church in A.M.

30 April Monday

Clear. Fixt potato ground in orchard. Emily and I got cowslips.

(It must have been a sweet scene as the husband and wife picked wildflowers and greens in a nearby swamp. In the entire diary, Jared mentions only a half dozen things that he and his wife do together; this is one.)



1 May Tuesday

Some cloudy in morning; rain some towards night. Finished ridging potatoes ground and planted some.

(The ground had to be built up around the potato plants.)

2 May Wednesday

Rain all night, snowed in forenoon enough to cover the ground. Cleared off in afternoon. Windy.

(Snow in May must have sent shivers down the spine of Ridgefield farmers. It's very unusual, yet Jared is rather matter-of-fact about it.)

3 May Thursday

Cloudy, cold and windy. Drawed out manure. John cut bean poles. I went carried them up.

(Beanpoles would support the bean plants in the field or garden. Farmers without much land loved beans because a lot of plants could be grown in a small area, thanks to the poles that allowed them to climb. Beans were also an easy vegetable to preserve by canning so that they would be available for eating next winter. John Smith, Emily's brother, probably came down to cut the poles from saplings or tree branches in the Nash woods, and Jared took them to John's West Lane house.)

4 May Friday

Cold and windy. Some frost. Drawed manure in forenoon, planted potatoes in afternoon.

5 May Saturday

Some sunshine, but high wind. Finished planting potatoes. Went up town towards night. Got new hoe and some mackerel. Carried Emily up to stay the night.

The mention of mackerel is unusual in two respects: Jared rarely mentions buying food and mackerel, a fish that spoils fairly quickly, did not become popular as a food fish until later in the 19th Century.

6 May Sunday

Clear most of the day. Carried mother to meeting in afternoon. Went up after Emily after supper. Our cows all gone, could not find.

(Escaping livestock was always a problem in agrarian communities, for the animals could do extensive damage to crops. For nearly two centuries, the town elected fence viewers, neighborhood officials whose job was to make sure farmers kept their fences in good repair so livestock did not stray. Ridgefield also elected pound keepers whose job was to round up stray livestock and keep them in a pound until the owner retrieved them – presumably, paying a fine for the service. Ironically, Charles Nash, Jared’s father, maintained one of the town pounds along Silver Spring Road near the Wilton line. A pound consisted of a fenced-in area where the strays were held until their owners retrieved them. In the 18th Century, the pound was locked, and the person in charge was called “the keeper of ye pound key.”)

7 May Monday

Clear, some warmer. Father found the cattle. Jared commence to plow our planting ground. Spread manure and got some on garden. Charly weighed 19 ½.

8 May Tuesday

Clear and some warmer. Went in morning and got bill shod down to Bald Hill. Plowed garden. Helpt Monson mark planting ground in afternoon. Jared plowing.

(The Nashes seem to use various blacksmiths to handle different smithing jobs. Bald Hill in northern Wilton along Route 33 is where a Methodist Church, used by at least some of the Nash family, was once located. Jared probably was helping Munson Hoyt set up a garden or field at the Hoyt farm a half mile north of the Nashes on Silver Spring Road.)

9 May Wednesday

Rain in morning, some broken in afternoon. Father went to Norwalk. Jared finished plowing. Turned [undecipherable] cattle out. Skunk blackbirds come today.

(The skunk blackbird, another name for the bobolink, was so called because of the bird’s solid black front and face, and its white – as well as yellow and black – back. Bobolinks were also called May-birds for their habit of arriving in the North during that month. It was quite a trip, too, for most of them spent the winter in South America. Some farmers, especially in the South, hated bobolinks because huge flocks of them would descend on fields and consume their grain crops.

But up north, they tended to be less numerous and more loved, famed for what one writer described as “a bubbling delirium of ecstatic music that flows from the gifted throat of the bird like bubbling champagne.” Another authority called the bobolink simply “the handsome and rollicking minstrel of the meadows.” Today, they are virtually unknown in these parts because woodland and subdivisions have taken over most of the ridge meadows that they, and other beloved species such as the meadowlark, once frequented.)

10 May Thursday

Clear and pleasant. Father harrowed planting over twice. I went to Bailey’s store, got rope for pulleys. Then work in garden.

(Jared means that father ran a harrow over the ground twice. The harrow used by the Nashes probably consisted of a wood and metal frame with spikes protruding from the bottom. Bill, the horse, would drag the contraption over the recently plowed planting ground to smooth out the earth, breaking up the clumps of soil. This was the final preparation for planting. Pulleys and rope were used to lighten a variety of tasks, such as lifting heavy bales of feed.)

11 May Friday

Clear and warmer. Work some in garden. Father bushed planting ground. We mark it one way. Emily and I went to church in afternoon. Sold hog to J.N. Olmstead, \$16.

(Bushing was the process of harrowing trenches in which the seed would go.

(This is one of the rare instances when Jared goes to church. And it’s a Friday! The reason for their unusual attendance at church on Friday, May 11, has not been discovered; *The Methodist Almanac* for 1866 offers no clue.

(That hog fetched a good price; \$16 then equaled about \$200 of 2007 money. Notice how Jared is somewhat suddenly but briefly recording prices – see subsequent entries for both buying and selling. One wonders why. The difference between a hog and a pig will be discussed June 15, 1866.)

12 May Saturday

Clear and warm. Finished marking and planted. Munson helpt in forenoon. Daniel Bennett in afternoon. Mother sick.

(Daniel Bennett lived north of Munson Hoyt on Silver Spring Road. It was typical for even subsistence farmers to have extra help during the busy planting and harvesting seasons. However, in these cases, Bennett and Hoyt were probably not charging for their services. As we have seen in other cases, such as Jared N. Olmstead’s frequent helping with plowing chores, neighbors assisted one another. On May 21, Jared went up the road and helped Daniel Bennett plant his garden. The neighbors probably also shared the fruits of the crops they grew.)

13 May Sunday

Warm, strong south wind. Rain just at night with thunder.

14 May Monday

Clear, cool and windy. Plant in forenoon. Daniel Bennett helpt. Sold my calf to Abram for \$8.75.

(Four years later Abram Nash declared insolvency and much of his property was sold to pay his debts. One of the few things that weren't sold was a cow, probably the one Jared sells him here. \$8.75 back then translates to about \$110 today.)

15 May Tuesday

Clear and cool. Work north of the house in forenoon. In afternoon Father went to Wilton to mill with corn. Got a bbl. flour; \$12.

(You would think that the Nashes would be producing all of their own flour, but wheat was not one of their grain crops. As discussed under the Feb. 4, 1865 entry, a pest called the Hessian fly was widespread in Connecticut, and many years earlier, most farmers had stopped growing wheat because crops were so likely to be damaged or destroyed by the insect. Instead, corn, oats, and buckwheat seemed to fill their fields. Thus, Father bought wheat flour at the mill while getting his corn ground for feed.)

16 May Wednesday

Clear most of the day. Work north of house, blasting rock. Emily been sick 2 or 3 days with a cold and Emmie, too.

(They were probably removing rock to expand field or improve the field that was to be plowed May 19. Blasted rock was probably used for the stone fence, mentioned May 18.)

17 May Thursday

Wet in morning. Damp all day. Wind east. Cold.

18 May Friday

Damp. Work some at fence in afternoon. Went up town. Libby come home with me. Mother not verry smart.

(The stone blasted two days earlier was probably being used to fix, or enlarge, stone walls. Smart, of course, is used in the sense of healthy. In other words, she was under the weather.)

19 May Saturday

Cleared off in forenoon. Had Jared's team, plowed north of the house in forenoon. In P.M., drew off stone from rye stuble. Went to Bayley's after drops for Mother.

(Though he usually spells it correctly as Bailey's, Jared for some reason here varies the spelling of the Main Street store. He was picking up some sort of patent medicine for his ailing mother.)

20 May Sunday

Clear and pleasant. Libby and I went to see Aunt Lucy. Mother is quite poorly.

(Mother may have been doing poorly, but Aunt Lucy was worse. She died a week later; mother lasted until 1876.)

21 May Monday

Clear most of the day and pleasant. Went and carried Libby up and work in garden in forenoon. In afternoon, helpt Daniel Bennett plant.

(Libby probably went back to Titicus where she taught at the schoolhouse. Notice that Jared is now helping Daniel Bennett who helped him on May 12 and 14.)

22 May Tuesday

Cold, windy, clouds flying. Planted north of the house. Carried Emily up West Lane and went after her. Get six shad of Abram.)

(American Shad [*Alosa sapidissima*] was a spring treat, prized for its delicious flavor – *sapidissima* means “very tasty.” Like the salmon, it is an ocean species that returns to the rivers to spawn. The “shad run” in Connecticut began in early April and lasted through May and provided many farmers with fresh fish. It was once a huge industry in Connecticut. Commercial fishermen would join farmers along riverbanks to net the passing fish. They were easy to catch, wonderful to eat, and often salted for winter consumption. However, shad runs in much of Fairfield County disappeared in the 1800s when industries began building dams across the rivers. The dams powered mills, but blocked the shad. Today, efforts are afoot to remove many of the old dams that impede the flow of streams so that the shad and other once-native inhabitants can return and help revitalize waterways.)

23 May Wednesday

Cold, some frost. Planted garden and work at stone fence on rye stuble. Jared Olmstead from Redding was here to dinner.

(Notice how cold the spring has been. May 23 is late for frost.)

(Jared Nash makes it clear that this is not his cousin Jared N. Olmstead, who lived nearby on St. John's Road. The Redding Jared Olmstead's connection with the Nashes is unknown. This Jared, who was born in 1793 in Ridgefield, was probably a distance cousin of Jared's wife through the Olmstead or Betts families.)

24 May Thursday

Cold, frost this morning. Some sunshine. Work on the road. Father sold pig to Linus Northrop.

25 May Friday

Some sunshine, thick air. Work some on road in forenoon, at fence in afternoon. Emily cleaned our bedroom.

(Remember that in those days, there was no highway crew to go around fixing roads. While the town would hire help for major projects such as building new roads or fixing bridges, bordering property owners were responsible by law for basic highway upkeep. Considering the rough winter and the wet spring, and the high water table of the area, Silver Spring Road was probably a muddy mess.

(Coincidentally, the Annual Town Meeting on Oct. 1, 1866, will appoint cousin Jared N. Olmstead and Russell Mead as surveyors of highways for the Ninth School District. These were town officials who checked the condition of roads and could order bordering landowners to repair routine problems.

(Emily has begun full-scale spring cleaning, scrubbing everything. Homes heated with fireplaces or wood stoves were apt to be sooty by the end of winter, requiring some heavy cleaning. However, the diary entry shouldn't be interpreted as meaning that Emily didn't regularly give the bedroom a routine cleaning.)

26 May Saturday

Clear, some warmer. Father went to Norwalk. I made flower beds.

(Charles Nash probably went to Norwalk because of the death that day of Mary Jane Olmstead. Born Mary Jane Lockwood in Norwalk in 1830, she married Charles Olmstead, son of William and Clara Nash Olmstead. Clara was a sister of Charles. Mary Jane was only 35. It's odd, though, that Jared did not mention the death.)

27 May Sunday

Rain steady till afternoon, then damp. Thunder shower at night.

28 May Monday

Damp in morning, then some sun. Grew cooler and high wind. Father went after plaster, then we got peabrush. Had word come that Aunt Lucy died yesterday morning.

(Plaster here is plaster of Paris, commonly used then as a soil conditioner, as we use lime today. Peabrush consisted of tree branches, probably ones that had fallen during the winter. Inserted into the garden soil, they provided an excellent arbor or support for the pea plants.)

(Aunt Lucy was Lucy Keeler Dudley of Wilton, a sister of Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother. Born in 1782, she married Major William Dudley, a farmer in northern Wilton. In 1865, she had stayed with the Nashes for several days.)

29 May Tuesday

Commence to rain 11 o'clock, rained rest of the day. Father and mother went to the funeral. Mother staid all night. I sprouted potatoes.

(Jared probably spread the seed potatoes on the barn floor to allow them to sprout before planting them.)

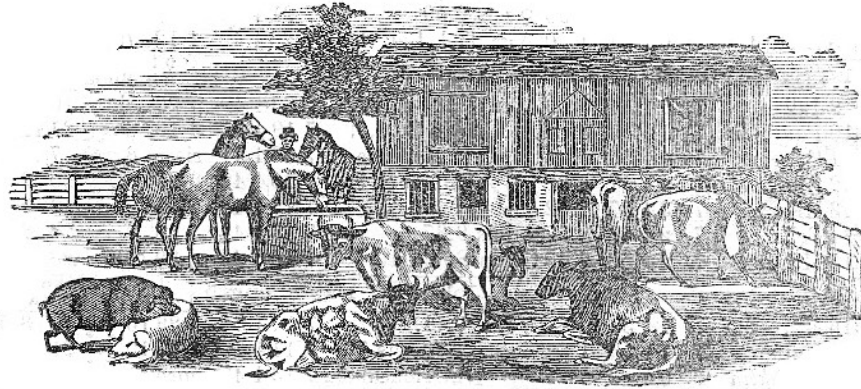
30 May Wednesday

Some sunshine. Work at fence in A.M. In P.M., Father went after Mother. I ashed corn.

(That is, he put ashes from the winter and spring fireplace or stove fires on the corn as a fertilizer. Wood ash is high in potassium, encouraging flowering and fruiting in many kinds of alkaline-loving plants. It also contains phosphorous, manganese, iron, zinc and calcium. American Indians also used wood ash. For instance, ashes were the only fertilizer used by the Powhatan Indians of Virginia when they planted corn. Ashes were also used in gardens to discourage slugs.)

31 May Thursday

Clear, work at fence. Jared commence to plow for buckwheat. Emily cleaned halls.



1 June Friday

Clear. Finished ashing corn and work at fence. Emily cleaned front room. Father went at night up town to pay taxes.

(The year before, Charles Nash's taxes consisted of \$16.51 in property tax and \$2.47 in highway tax. Jared's property tax was all of 95 cents – his only assessable property was a horse worth \$75 and a cow worth \$20. Taxes were probably the same this year.)

2 June Saturday

Damp in morning, then some warmer. We work at fence.

3 June Sunday

Rain through the day. I do not feel verry well; got some cold.

4 June Monday

Damp & foggy. Father drawed off stone in forenoon. Jared finished plowing for buckwheat.

5 June Tuesday

Damp and muggy. Father went to Bailey's store, got him coat and hat. Some broken at night.

(It was partly cloudy that night. That fact stood out because the waxing moon was nearly full.)

6 June Wednesday

Shower towards morning, damp and foggy. Father went to Norwalk, carried two pigs. Commence to make soap.

(Soap-making was a spring and late fall activity. In spring, fat was obtained from the scraps left over from winter's eating; in the fall, leftovers from the slaughtering were used. You had to do it outside, primarily because the smell was not the sweetest. First, ashes from the winter's fires were boiled in a cauldron to obtain lye; the ashes were allowed to settle while the lye was skimmed off the top. Then the lye and fats were mixed together and boiled to the consistency of mush — resulting in soft soap. If some salt is added and the mush is poured into molds, harder bar soap could be made.)

7 June Thursday

Cloudy. Carried Emily up West Lane and went after her at night. Plowed to sow corn.

8 June Friday

Clear in morning, some rain towards night. Commence to hoe potatoes. Father hurt his ankle in the woods, so he cannot get around much.

9 June Saturday

Cloudy most of the time. I plow and hoed potatoes. Emily went to the funeral of Oliver Smith's wife.

(Pauline Smith, wife of Frederick Oliver Smith, was only 25 years old when she died on June 7, possibly in childbirth. She was a daughter of Enos and Sarah Northrop Miller. Her husband, also born in 1840, lived until 1914. They were married June 16, 1864. Emily Smith Nash was probably related to Pauline or Oliver, either through his Smiths or her Northrops. Pauline has a beautifully engraved gravestone in the Scott Section of the Ridgefield Cemetery, but unfortunately it fell over some years ago and at last inspection, was still lying on its back. Oliver's gravestone has also toppled, but his went face-down which means it cannot be read. Oliver was probably a farmer, but later in life worked as a clerk at a store in Danbury.)

10 June Sunday

Cloudy most of the day, cleared off towards night. Jared & wife and Hiram Seymour wife called here after supper.

(Hiram Seymour was Jared's first cousin, once removed. His wife was Margaretta Pike, a Fairfield native who was 60 years old at this point. The Seymours lived on upper Wilton Road West.)

11 June Monday

Clear and pleasant. Finished hoing potatoes. Sanford & Jane come over and spent the day. I set out Dhalias. Father foot getting better, Rany help our folks wash.

(Notice that Monday was washday. Rany is Rany Briggs – earlier identified as “Mrs. Briggs” – who helps out at the house sometimes. For instance, she had helped out last fall when Emily Nash was recuperating from the birth of her son.)

(Sanford was Charles Sanford Nash, half-brother of Jared Nash. Jane was Sanford’s wife.)

12 June Tuesday

Clear, hoed corn. Father went to mill with salt.

(“Stir the ground about the garden crops, the beets, the early potatoes, and the corn if it is smart enough to have got up,” said the Old Farmer’s Almanac in June 1872. “Nothing like stirring things up this month.”

(Chunk salt was milled not only for kitchen use, but also for use as an insecticide and herbicide. Salt was also given to cattle.)

13 June Wednesday

Some rain through the day. Went to Geo. Keeler’s afternoon to get a pr. cockeyes.

(Cockeyes are pieces of harness hardware that connect the traces to the collar. George Keeler was a harness-maker whose shop was on Main Street near the Keeler Tavern.)

14 June Thursday

Damp and cloudy. Father sowed plaster on oats. Hoed some in P.M.

15 June Friday

Cleared off in morning. Hoed corn. Rany helpt clean bedrooms. Sold 2 pigs to John O. St. John for \$10.

(John Osborn St. John was possibly related to the Nashes. A carpenter, he lived in the Redding section of Georgetown, and was a founder of the Methodist Church in Georgetown in 1839. He was also an active abolitionist, and maintained a station on the Underground Railroad, helping slaves from the South escape to northern New England and Canada. He was a founder of the Georgetown Antislavery Society, whose creation in 1838 nearly caused a riot. Redding historian Charles Burr Todd reported that when members had their first meeting on a Monday night at the Baptist Church in Georgetown, a mob outside “was so violent that the meeting was adjourned until Tuesday evening. All through Tuesday there was great commotion among the enemies of the cause, and this culminated in the evening, when a mob composed of men and boys, some with painted faces and some wearing masks, surrounded the church and assailed it with stones, clubs and hideous outcries. Being dispersed by the citizens, the band betook itself to quieter mischief. Dr. Hudson drove to the meeting a beautiful milk-white horse, and on that night his tail was sheared so closely that it resembled a corn-cob; and other outrages were committed.

(Notice that on May 11, Jared sold a “hog” for \$16, but here, sells two pigs for only \$10. Pig was a term for young swine, weighing less than 125 pounds or so. A typical hog at the time of slaughter would weigh 260 or more pounds. Thus, it was much more valuable as food, and a lot more food – and effort – had been put into it.)

16 June Saturday

Clear and warm. Finished hoeing. Planted south of barn. Work in garden. Fixt poles on fence north of oats. Mr. Holmes and his wife here in afternoon.

(The identity of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes is unclear.)

17 June Sunday

Cloudy through the day, commence to rain in afternoon. Rained verry hard all night.

18 June Monday

Damp in forenoon, some broken in P.M. Emily carried up vest and went to get jacket for Emmie.

(Remember that Emily sews together vests from precut pieces to earn money for the family. Jared perhaps meant “vests” here.)

19 June Tuesday

Clear and pleasant. Father went to Norwalk, dug a mess of clams. I do not feel verry well, not able to do any thing. Uncle Ben Sey(mour) called here in afternoon.

(Benjamin Seymour and his wife, Eliza, lived in Wilton. He was a shoemaker. They had a daughter, Jane, who was about 41. Benjamin was about 70 at this time. Why he is “Uncle” is unclear, but it probably has to do with the relationship of his wife, Eliza, with the Nashes or the Smiths.)

20 June Wednesday

Clear and cool. Father ashed potatoes and plastered corn. I feel about the same as yesterday.

21 June Thursday

Clear and warmer. Finished plastering corn in A.M. Plowed and sowed some corn in P.M. I feel a little better.

22 June Friday

Clear and warm. We hoed garden in forenoon. In afternoon he work in cellar. Went up West Lane with Emily and up town. Got a trunk of work and money.

(“He” is father. Emily got a trunk of vest parts to sew together and also got paid for past work.)

23 June Saturday

Lowery most of the day. Father carried ½ cord of wood to Nancy Jennings. Then we hoed potatoes. Libby and Hatty Lobdell come here after dinner and staid all night.

(Hatty Lobdell was probably Harriet Lobdell, daughter of Samuel and Harriet Nash Lobdell; Samuel had died Sept. 25, 1865. Hatty’s mother was a daughter of Father and his first wife, Roxana, and thus is Jared’s half-sister. Nancy Jennings may have been a widow living in Ridgefield; the wood may have been a gift.)

24 June Sunday

Clear and hot. Went and carried the girls up town after breakfast. Emily and I got some strawberries.

(“The girls” refers to Libby Grummun and Harriet Lobdell, who were both in their early 20s. Strawberries were undoubtedly wild ones.)

25 June Monday

Clear, hot. Mercury 90. Finished hoeing potatoes and commence in the corn. Rebecca & Kate Wells here in afternoon.

(Jared rarely mentions temperatures, especially hot ones. He must have been impressed with 90 in June. The heat wave continues for three days. Interestingly enough, the Farmer’s Almanac of 1866 had predicted “very warm and clear” weather for the end of June.)

26 June Tuesday

Clear and hot. We hoed corn. Our folks went to Jared’s in afternoon. Mercury 89.

(Sounds as if it was too hot for them to work in the fields.)

27 June Wednesday

Clear, hot. Mercury 88. Hoed corn. Light showers at night with some rain all night.

(Cool weather is arriving – note the temperature reports disappear.)

28 June Thursday

Lowery and some rain. Father went to Taylor’s mill in P.M.

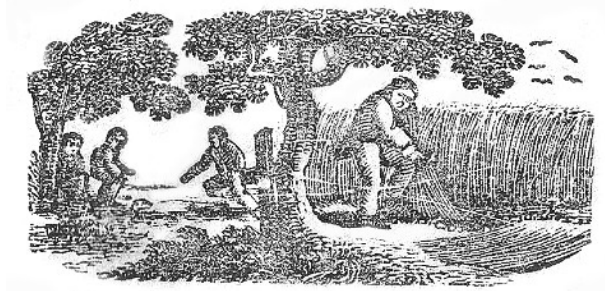
29 June Friday

Clear. Finished hoeing corn and work some in garden. Carried mother up to Geo. Smith's. She staid all night.

30 June Saturday

Clear. Work in garden in forenoon. Shower in afternoon. Jared commence to crop for buckwheat. Father went up after Mother and to Gilbert's mill to get corn ground.

(“To crop” meant to remove old plants from the ground.)



1 July Sunday

Clear & pleasant. Went to church with Emily in forenoon; to meeting with Mother in afternoon.

(This is one of the few times that Jared mentions his attending church – and he does it twice in one Sunday. Roxy Nash, his mother, was a member of the First Congregational Church. Emily and Jared, like Jared’s father, may have been Methodists.)

2 July Monday

Clear and warm. Went to get Bill shod in forenoon. Done chores in afternoon.

3 July Tuesday

Clear & hot. Went to South Norwalk with Emily & children.

(They probably visited family there – perhaps the Quintards – for a pre-July 4 celebration.)

4 July Wednesday

Clear in forenoon, clouded up and rain just at night. Carried Mother to Mr. Holmes’ and Emily up West Lane and went after them. Emily stayed all night on account of the rain. We planted rutabagas.

(Visiting seemed to be the chief activity for the Nashes’ Fourth – picnics may have been involved. But Jared still takes advantage of the weather to get some work done.

(While the diary does not reflect it, either because the Civil War dampened the 1865 celebrations and rain 1866’s, the Fourth of July was a much celebrated holiday in the 19th Century and typically included dances, lectures, special church services, picnics, and – of course – fireworks. Ridgefield had fireworks displays on the Fourth at least by the 1850s and probably much earlier.)

5 July Thursday

Clear and warm. Went up after Emily in morning. Bela St. John and wife called here to dinner. Jared sowed buckwheat. I have got a lame wrist. Father mowed the dooryard. Had our first peas for dinner.

(The late winter and relatively cool spring showed in the pea crop. The previous year, the Nashes were eating their peas by June 24. Bela's wife, Esther Keeler St. John, was a sister of Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother.)

6 July Friday

Clear and hot. Mercury 90. Went up town in forenoon. Helpt Emily put down oilcloth in hall.

(Oilcloth was laid down like a rug, serving as a sort of linoleum.)

7 July Saturday

Clear, hot; 95 at noon; 80 at sundown. Father went clamming. Charley weighs 20 $\frac{3}{4}$.

(Clam-digging was a refreshing, hot-weather activity. The Farmer's Almanac had predicted "hot and dry" for this period.)

8 July Sunday

Clear, hot; mercury 92. Went after supper up West Lane with Emily. Heavy thunder shower and strong wind just sundown.

(The Nashes lived before the existence of daylight saving time. By their clock, sunset that day was 7:33 – today it would have been 8:33. Sunrise, of course, was an hour earlier, too – 4:36. That means it was starting to get light around 3:45 in the morning! However, time by the clock was not critical to life on a small 19th Century farm, and was needed only for rare appointments, and meetings of church or government. Families generally went to bed not long after sundown, rising with the sun to take advantage of the light and not waste lighting energy on candles or oil.)

9 July Monday

Lowery and cooler. Father went to depot 3 times with ties. Got bbl. plaster and grindstone.

(Father was delivering railroad ties that the Nashes had made in the winter from trees in their woods. Plaster was for treating the fields. The grindstone was for sharpening tools. Father probably used the money gained from the sale of the ties to buy these supplies.)

10 July Tuesday

Lowery in forenoon. Father went twice with ties. Emily went up town in afternoon.

11 July Wednesday

Clear. Mercury 80. We commence to hill corn.

(The Nashes were following an old tradition, aimed at supporting the growing stalks. But some 19th Century farmers did not hill corn. “Corn doesn’t need hilling,” said The Old Farmer’s Almanac in 1865. “The roots run a great ways, and ploughing after the first hoeing is apt to break them badly and do more harm than good. Better get a cultivator.”)

12 July Thursday

Clear and hot. Work at corn.

13 July Friday

Clear and hot; 92, and 85 after sundown. Finished hilling and plastering it.

14 July Saturday

Clear, hot and dry. Commence to mow a little. Amos Smith wife and Libby here in forenoon; then we all went to Jared’s in afternoon. I went up town.

(The season for mowing hay had begun. Libby may have been living with the Amos Smith family on Main Street while teaching at Titicus School.)

15 July Sunday

Clear, hot, 92. I found a few whortleberries.

(By whortleberries, Jared probably meant what we call blueberries.)

16 July Monday

Clear and hot, 94. Mowed old orchard, got in 2 load.

17 July Tuesday

Clear, hot, 97. I mowed some in old barn lot. We got it in and the rest of old orchard. Father cut rye. Some rain in evening at bedtime.

(It’s nearly 100 degrees out and Father — who was about 73 years old — was still in the fields, working away.)

18 July Wednesday

Clear and hot, 91. Father finished the rye after dinner. We rake and got in 5 shock rye. Then there was a heavy thunder shower.

(A shock was an upright bundle of cut grain plants.)

19 July Thursday

Lowery in morning, then clear. Father went down to Norwalk with butter. I went a whortleberrying with Emmie. In afternoon, went up West Lane with Emily.

(Butter was apparently another farm product that the Nashes sold in the city.)

20 July Friday

Some sunshine. Mowed some in old barn lot and got in rye.

21 July Saturday

Cloudy & damp through the day. Went up town in afternoon. Emily went with me to John Benedict.

(John Benedict was a farmer who probably lived at the corner of Silver Spring Road and West Lane, about a mile north. He may have been somehow related to Emily or was just an old family friend. He had two wives who were Olmstead sisters. The three of them, plus a child, are buried in the small Seymour Cemetery on South Olmstead Lane.)

22 July Sunday

Not much sunshine. Went to church in A.M. with Emmie. Emily was up West Lane with us and [Mother, Nate? – entry is unclear] went to meeting after supper. I went up after Emily.

23 July Monday

Cool and comfortable. Verry good hay day. Finished old barn lot & mowed some north of old nursery.

24 July Tuesday

Clear and warm. Work at hay north of old nursery. Mowed & got in 33 heaps.

Remember the old adage: “Make hay while the sun shines.” In other words take advantage of an opportunity while it lasts. Jared did just that, literally. Tall grass (and often other plants) was being cut, dried and hauled to the barn where it was stored to feed cows and horses in winter.

25 July Wednesday

Clear in forenoon, showery and thunder in afternoon. Mowed north of Stephen Lot in forenoon.

(Farm lots were frequently named for earlier members of the family or for former owners. It's not known who Stephen was or whether that was a given name or surname.)

26 July Thursday

Clear. Finished north of Stephen lot.

27 July Friday

Finished off north of nursery. Laura come down last night and went a whortleberrying. Carried her home at night.

(Laura is Emily's sister, Laura Smith, who lived on West Lane near Olmstead Lane.)

28 July Saturday

Not verry clear. Mowed west of old barn lot and rake up 22 heaps. Shower before noon and one just at night. Libby come in afternoon, staid all night. Rebecca and Jared here in afternoon for tea.

(Rebecca and Jared N. Olmstead, that is.)

29 July Sunday

Clear. Went to church in forenoon with Emmie. Libby went up with us. Mother went to meeting.

(Jared and his six-year-old daughter must have looked sweet, going to church together.)

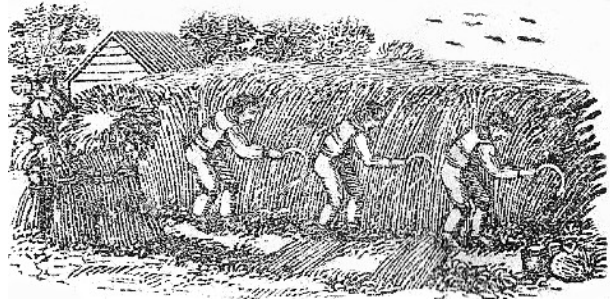
30 July Monday

Clear. Work at hay west of barn lot. John Smith's wife and Laura from Carmel called here in morning.

(These are New York State relatives of Emily Smith Nash, Jared's wife.)

31 July Tuesday

Clear. Finished hay west of old barn lot and mowed some north of house. Jared cut oats.



1 August Wednesday

Clear. Finished mowing. Clouded up and rain some in evening.

2 August Thursday

Finished getting hay and one piece of oats. Daniel Bennett helpt us in afternoon. Sanford's folks come over a whortleberrying.

(Perhaps that was Sanford's his wife, and his daughter, Roxana. A reminder that when Jared speaks of whortleberries, he is referring to blueberries, a couple of native varieties of which grew wild in Ridgefield.)

3 August Friday

Hoed rutabagas. Father helpt Jared rake oats. Went up town with Emily towards night.

(Oats are another feed for farm animals like horses and cattle. The straw from the oat plant was used as bedding for barn animals.)

4 August Saturday

Clear in morning. Father and I went a claming. Heavy shower just after we got home.

5 August Sunday

Clear and some cooler. Emily & Emmie went to church in afternoon.

6 August Monday

Clear, cool & windy. Work at abutments and set bar posts south oat stubble.

(It's not clear what Jared meant by abutments. He may have been referring to the corners of stone walls — where one wall met another. These junctions might deteriorate because of the small contractions and expansions of the rocks over the seasons or the general effects of weathering. However, typically, there would be wooden fencing, such

as a stakes and rails fence, over the stone wall to make the enclosure higher. In a stakes and rail fence, two stakes cross each other at intervals of eight to 10 feet to hold up rails — and each other. He may have been referring to the stakes as abutments.)

7 August Tuesday

Clear. Carried Emily up West Lane to spend the day. Went after her and went to Bailey's. Got a new hat & whip.

8 August Wednesday

Clear in forepart of day. Jared cut our oats. Work some in garden.

(Cousin Jared N. Olmstead of St. Johns Road may have had a horse-drawn reaper for cutting oats.)

9 August Thursday

Rain and damp all day. Lockwood Osborn, wife and Mr. Holmes called in middle of day.

(Lockwood Keeler Osborn was the son of Nancy Keeler Osborn and Asahel Osborn. Nancy was a sister of Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother, and thus Lockwood was Jared's cousin. Lockwood may have been living in the Midwest, and was back visiting family; his Aunt Lucy Keeler Dudley had died at the end of May.)

10 August Friday

Clear. Got in oats in afternoon. D. Bennett and Jared helpt us.

11 August Saturday

Clear. Went to Gilbert's mill in morning. Father carried half cord of wood to Nancy Jennings. Got some blackberries. Emily Olmsted & girl spent the day here.

(Emily Olmstead, wife of David Whitney Olmstead, and her daughter, Emily, lived on Olmstead Lane and were probably, like Emily Nash, both seamstresses for the same company, doing piecework at home. It's interesting that Jared says "Emily Olmsted & girl." Could he have meant the younger Emily showed up with a child she was taking care of for someone, or does he mean Emily the mother, shows up with Emily the daughter – writing as if she were a small child. She was, in fact, about 31 years old – hardly a "girl" by today's standards for the word.)

12 August Sunday

Clear and hot. Emily & Emmie went to church in forenoon.

13 August Monday

Rain most of the day. Dug a few potatoes. Father went up to mill after the feed.

14 August Tuesday

Damp in morning, cloudy all day. Father went to Norwalk. I made pr. shoes for Charly and went a blackberrying.

(Those were probably the first shoes for Charly, now age 10 months. It would be interesting to see what they looked like.)

15 August Wednesday

Rained through the day. Father threshed some rye.

(Threshing would have taken place in the nice, dry barn.)

16 August Thursday

Clear, cool and windy. Work at fence in forenoon. Went with Mother to see Libby. She is sick. Charly was quite sick at night.

17 August Friday

Clear. Work at fence in forenoon. Went to Taylor's mill in afternoon.

(This may have been the old gristmill that operated south of Great Pond in the vicinity of the old Stonehenge Inn off U.S. Route 7)

18 August Saturday

Clear. Work some at fence. Went up and got Mother Smith & John's wife and carried them home again at night.

19 August Sunday

Cloudy, rain towards night.

20 August Monday

Clear. Work at fence north of back lot next to orchard. Father went up to mill. Emily went to Amos Smith's with him.

21 August Tuesday

Clear. Work at fence. Rain some before morning.

22 August Wednesday

Work at fence. Daniel Bennett helpt. Clear most of the day.

(Bennett, who lived up Silver Spring Road opposite the country club entrance, was probably a hired hand. At his death in 1877 he was described as a “laborer.”)

23 August Thursday

Scott commenced to thresh and it began to rain and drove us off. Rain the rest of the day.

(Scott was probably a hired hand, perhaps one of the Scotts who lived down by the Wilton line. The year before, Abram helped with threshing oats in late July. Being small-scale farmers of modest means, the Nashes probably used the age-old method of threshing, employing a flail to separate the seed from the chaff and straw of the plant. The flail was two long sticks joined by a leather thong and was used to beat the plants.

(Oats fed livestock as well as people. A byproduct of oats was its chaff. Many farmers of modest means slept on mattresses filled with chaff instead of feathers, springs or man-made materials. The chaff would be changed about twice a year and was better than other materials, which usually contained sharp, uncomfortable pieces. “Keep a sack or two stuffed full of oat-chaff in a dry place and then filling is always at hand,” said a contemporary edition of *The Farmer’s Almanac*.)

24 August Friday

Clear. Scott come & finished threshing our oats. Our folks went up West Lane & spent the day. Emily went up town. Shower just at night.

25 August Saturday

Clear. We work at fence. Very cool nights & mornings.

26 August Sunday

Clear. Emmie quite complaining with sore throat yesterday and today. Father and mother went to meeting in afternoon.

27 August Monday

Clear. Went up to Doct. for Emmie. Work at stone. Dug some potatoes. Doct. come to see Emmie. She is some better. Hiram Kellogg and a Mr. Nash called here.

(Many of the older readers remember the day when physicians made house calls. This instance, of course, is long before there was a telephone to summon a doctor, so Jared had to drive into town

and arrange for a visit. He probably summoned Dr. Nehemiah Perry Jr., who lived two doors south of the Keeler Tavern and was a third generation Ridgefield physician. The Nashes apparently liked and respected him and his physician father; when Nehemiah Sr. died Feb. 19, 1866, the Nashes attended his funeral.

(Hiram Kellogg, a Ridgefield native, was a local farmer, and lived on West Mountain Road, just east of Old West Mountain Road. In 1848 at the age of 26, he married Mary Gilbert, 21. His son, Hiram J. Kellogg, was a well-known Ridgefielder of the late 19th Century and served as first selectman in 1888. Apparently the Mr. Nash was not a relative or anyone Jared knew.)

28 August Tuesday

Lowery. Father went to Norwalk.

(It's a shame Jared doesn't tell the purpose of the trip. Perhaps Charles Nash went "a claming" as he will on Sept. 18. Quite possibly the route followed by Charles Nash was simply to head south on Silver Spring Road to Valley Road in New Canaan, and on into the Silvermine district of Norwalk. Silver Spring Road was the northern end of an old and rather straight north-south route between Norwalk and Ridgefield.)

29 August Wednesday

Cloudy & damp in afternoon. Work at stone fence.

30 August Thursday

Clear and hot. Father went up town in forenoon, work at fence in P.M. Mother went to J.N. Olmstead's. Sold two heifers to Amos Smith.

(See July 14, 1866 for Amos Smith.)

31 August Friday

Rain in morning. Fix my boots. In A.M. went up town. In P.M. Emily went to her mother with me.



1 September Saturday

Hot, damp & muggy. Cleaned up oats in forenoon. In P.M. set out strawberries plants. Wind south west.

(Strawberries are not often thought of as an old-fashioned Connecticut farming crop, but this fruit has been cultivated since the 1300s in Europe. New World strawberries were known as early as 1624 and were sent to Europe. A 17-year-old Frenchman named Antoine Nicolas Duchesne presented King Louis XV with a variety he had hybridized in 1764. By Jared's time, many cultivated varieties were available.)

2 September Sunday

Cloudy, wet and warm, southerly wind.

3 September Monday

Clear. Finished cleaning up oats, then work at fence. Warm and pleasant.

4 September Tuesday

Hot and muggy. Some rain. Made a pr. shoes for Charly, and some fence.

(It was just Aug. 14 that Jared made the last pair of shoes for his son. Either the boy is growing quickly or dad is building up a collection of shoes.)

5 September Wednesday

Damp. Sun come out. Hot. Work at fence in forenoon. Went down to auction at Edward Rusco's estate and got Bill shod.

(Bill is Jared's horse. The Rusco – sometimes Rasco or Roscoe – family was well-established in Wilton and Ridgefield by the late 1700s and members were still living here in the 21st Century. Since there is no Ed Rusco in the Ridgefield vital records, he probably lived in Wilton.

(Notice that Jared does not mention acquiring anything at the auction. He probably couldn't afford it. Like many farmers, he may have gone to the auction out of curiosity to see who would pay how much for what.)

6 September Thursday

Clear and some cooler. Carried Emily up to her Mother's in morning, and then drew off some stone. Went up to Gilbert's mill and brought Emily home. Father commenced to plow stuble for rye.

(Father was probably plowing under the remains of the corn crop, both for the nutrients that the rotting plants will provide and so the ground could be planted with rye – which they will do Sept. 13 – for a fall crop. Rye withstands cold well and its grain was ground into flour for bread. Farmers also planted rye to keep the ground covered over the winter. It could be harvested in spring or plowed under to provide nutrients for the soil. Sheep and other livestock foraged on rye.)

7 September Friday

Some shine in forenoon, cloudy and rain before night and through the night. Father plowing. Mother sent to Linus Northrop's.

(“Some shine” is a pleasant term. Harnessmaker Linus O. Northrop was an uncle of Emily Nash, Jared's wife.)

8 September Saturday

Clear. Father finished plowing before noon. I mowed weeds in turnip pen. In afternoon, went to mill. Emmie went with me. Libby come home with us.

(A “pen” was probably needed to keep pigs from rooting up the tasty turnips.)

9 September Sunday

Clear. Went and carried Libby up in morning. Went to church in afternoon with Emily & Emmie.

(Sometimes Jared uses the old-fashioned term, going to meeting, as in Aug. 26, 1866, while here we see a more modern phrasing of the activity.)

10 September Monday

Clear and cool. Drewed off some stone and harrowed over ground.

(Jared was probably using the harrow — an implement employed to pulverize soil, break up crop leftovers, and uproot weeds — on the oat fields.)

11 September Tuesday

Drawed out manure & Father threshed in forenoon. Rain in afternoon.

12 September Wednesday

Clear. Father carried oats to A. Resequie. We picked up apples. Jared and I made cider in afternoon. Laura spent the day here. Emily carried her home.

(Farmers had two reasons for collecting windfalls: Preventing future damage to apples and avoiding waste. Here's what the Old Farmer's Almanac said in September 1872: "It's about time to pick those early apples. I don't like to see the windfalls lying round on the ground, for every one has a grub in it that will go into the ground, to come out again in another form next year, to eat your crop as it did this." Windfalls were perfectly fine for making cider, which was a chief use of apples in the 19th Century. Remember, too, that cider then was what we call "hard cider" – it was the beer and wine of the American farm. If the windfalls were really wormy, farmers let their pigs loose in the orchard to eat them.

(Abijah Resseguie [1791-1887] ran the Ridgefield Hotel – what is now the Keeler Tavern Museum. The oats were probably for feeding his own and visiting horses.)

13 September Thursday

Clear. Sowed the rye and harrowed it over twice.

(Harrowing was also employed to cover newly planted seed – see May 4, 1865.)

14 September Friday

Lowery. Harrowed over with a bush and sowed grass seed in forenoon. Burned weeds in turnip pen. Shower with thunder towards night.

(Harrowing over with a bush meant that Jared smoothed off the ground, made rough by the previous deep harrowing, by dragging a light harrow, which was made of bushes.

(The grass seed is probably not lawn plantings, but grass that was used to keep the fields from drying up over the winter. Plowed under in the spring, it also became a "green fertilizer.")

15 September Saturday

Clear, cool, NW wind. Jared cut & we rake buckwheat. Emily got a bad cold.

16 September Sunday

Clear and cool. Father & Mother went to meeting in P.M.

17 September Monday

Lowery in morning. Some sun rest of day. Father threshed rye. I done some chores.

18 September Tuesday

Cloudy most of the day. Father and I went a claming. Rain all night.

19 September Wednesday

Cloudy through the day. Emily, Emmie and I went to the fair. Rain through the night.

(This was the Ridgefield Fair and Cattle Show, an annual event that could draw as many as 6,000 visitors in one day. A typical country fair, it gave farmers a chance to show their tops crops, but more importantly, a chance to see some of the latest equipment and other agricultural innovations, and to get together with fellow farmers from through the region. In her diary, Anna Marie Resseguie wrote under Sept. 18 to 20, 1866: “Days of our annual Fair; rainy, small attendance, inferior display.” The previous year’s fair ran Oct. 3 to 6; *see* Oct. 3 and 4, 1865; this is confirmed by Resseguie’s diary. The date may have been moved to September to avoid the possibility of frost’s killing or damaging produce planned for exhibit; Jared’s entry for Oct. 2, 1865, just before the fair opened that year, reported a “white frost.” For many years the fair took place where Veterans Park is today, but an official fairgrounds was set up along Wilton Road West, opposite Olmstead Lane, around 1865 and continued to be used until 1881 when the fair was discontinued — possibly because the Danbury Fair became so dominant in the region. The fairgrounds included an official race track for horse racing.)

20 September Thursday

Wet & foggy. Father threshed rye.

21 September Friday

Hot, muggy, wet & foggy. Father threshed. I am sick with a cold. Rain in the night.

22 September Saturday

Clear, cool and windy. Father cut stalks. Jared had Bill to go to Florida to pick apples. I am no better.

(In other words, Jared N. Olmstead borrowed Jared Nash’s horse named Bill to ride over to the Florida School District of Ridgefield, where there was apparently an orchard – probably owned by a relative or friend. Olmstead may have been picking to help the orchard owner bring in his or her crop or he may have been picking for himself, although Bill would then probably have to have been pulling a buggy.)

23 September Sunday

Clear. I feel no better than yesterday. Jared & Rebecca here in evening.

24 September Monday

Some cloudy. Looks like rain toward night. Father went to Taylor's mill in morning; then cut stalks.

(The mill trip may have been to get the rye, threshed the previous week, ground into flour. The entries this week offer a glimpse at typical farm chores in late September, when crops are being harvested and processed. It is a very busy season and a bad time to be "sick with a cold" as Jared reported on Friday, the 21st.)

25 September Tuesday

Cloudy & damp in A.M. Father soled his shoes. In P.M., he cuts stalks. I feel some better.

26 September Wednesday

Rain fast most of the day. Mother sick with a cold.

("Fast" meant heavily.)

27 September Thursday

Clear & windy. I feel quite smart. Mother is some better. Father finished cutting stalks.

28 September Friday

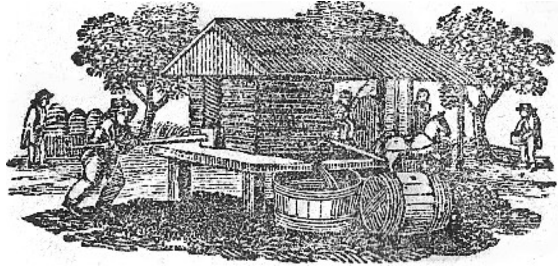
Clear. Carried Emily up West Lane to spend the day. Father finished threshing rye.

29 September Saturday

Clear. Dug potatoes north of house & cleaned up rye. Rain in night.

30 September Sunday

Clear. Went to church in P.M.



1 October Monday

Clear. Father went to Comstock store in morning, got corn in P.M. Went down in woods, made hog trough. Emily got swelled face.

(The trough may have been made from carving out a wind-fallen tree found in the woods. Dozens of conditions can cause facial swelling; one wonders what Emily's was. It appears not to be serious, for it's not mentioned again, and Emily is riding around within three days.)

2 October Tuesday

Clear most of the day. Went in morning to Gilbert's mill, then picked up some apples for cider. Mrs. St. John here in afternoon.

(Gilbert's mill was at Titicus, on Saw Mill Hill Road. The Nashes may have been using the services of the cider mill there – see Sept. 2, 1865 for a discussion of cider. Mrs. St. John may be Matilda St. John, wife of James R. St. John, or her mother in law, Abigail St. John, wife of Jared N. St. John. See also July 31, 1865 for another St. John possibility.)

3 October Wednesday

Clouded up in middle of day, then cleared off and grew cooler. Dug some potatoes and picked some winter apples.

(Winter apples ripen in the middle to late fall, store well, and reach their best flavor after weeks or even months of storage. Thus, they were ideal for providing fruit in the dead of winter. Picking or buying them was a common October tradition in much of the Northeast.)

4 October Thursday

Clear & cool. Dug potatoes. Amos Smith's wife & Mary Ferris spent the day here. Mary staid. Emmie and I went up at night to Gilbert's mill.

(Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother, had a sister, Mary Keeler, who married Seth Ferris and who died in 1861. Seth and Mary Keeler Ferris had a son, Stephen Gould Ferris, who was Jared's first cousin and who married Mary Ann Beers in 1838. She would then have been Mary Ferris, and she lived until 1906 when she died in Norwalk. Mary Ann also had a daughter, Mary Augusta

Ferris. Mary Augusta was married to the Rev. Joseph Woolley by this time, and their daughter, Mary Emma Woolley, was born in 1863 in Norwalk. Mary Emma Woolley – Jared's first cousin, twice removed – grew up to become the first female student admitted to Brown University, and later served as the president of Mt. Holyoke College from 1901 to 1937.)

5 October Friday

Clear. Froze hard this morning. Dug potatoes. Emily & Mary went to call to Linus Northrop's and around West Lane.

6 October Saturday

Clear and pleasant. Frost. Threshed buckwheat. Shaw and Ed Benedict helpt. Went at night to carry Mary Ferris down to Legrand Keeler's.

(See Nov. 14, 1865)

7 October Sunday

Clear & pleasant, some warmer. Charly is one year old and weighs 21 1/2. Father & Mother went to meeting in afternoon.

(This is a somewhat more extravagant mention of Charly than the four words that announced his birth in 1865.)

8 October Monday

Clear and warm. Gathered apples in turnip pen.

9 October Tuesday

Clear in morning, then clouded up. Wind west. Gathered some apples. Father went and carried load of apples to cider mill.

10 October Wednesday

Cloudy. Wind west. Father made cider. I done chores.

11 October Thursday

Some sunshine, but chilly. East wind. Finished gathering apples. Carried Emily up West Lane to spend the day.

12 October Friday

Cold. East wind. Some rain through the day. Cleaned up buckwheat. Made a pr.shoes for Charly. Father hooped a bbl. for Mr. Edmonds.

(That's the third pair of shoes he's made for Charly since Aug. 14. Hooping a barrel involved putting metal bands around the staves. Although he was a shoemaker by trade, Charles Nash was also a farmer of many talents. Robert C. Edmond, a farmer, lived nearby on Silver Hill Road.)

13 October Saturday

Cloudy, with little sunshine in afternoon. Wind NE. Dug potatoes.

14 October Sunday

Cloudy, cold, chilly. North E wind. Some rain in P.M. Emily & Emmie went to church in forenoon.

15 October Monday

Clear. Some windy. Dug potatoes.

16 October Tuesday

Clear & pleasant. Dug potatoes. Emily and I went to Mrs. Hoyt's in evening.

(This is probably Mrs. David Hoyt – see Sept. 9, 1865.)

17 October Wednesday

Clear. We finished diggin potatoes. Emily went up West Lane and to Edwards, Smiths.

18 October Thursday

Clear, we all went to Sanford's but Father.

19 October Friday

Clear and warmer. Got in stalks. Father went up to carry in his list.

(The "list" may have been his property list, used by the tax collector to figure the Nash property tax.)

20 October Saturday

Clear, warm and verry pleasant. Gathered some pumpkins and done some other chores.

(Pumpkins were grown not only for family food, but also to feed pigs and cattle. The Farmer's Almanac in 1876 advised: "Pumpkins are excellent food for cows in the fall. They come too late in the season to increase the quantity of milk very much, but they will improve it in richness and the butter in flavor and yield. They should not be fed too lavishly, especially at first. Fifty pounds of

ripe pumpkins per day, in two feeds, could be economically used.” The 1872 almanac said in November: “Pumpkins are an excellent feed for stock of all kinds this month.”)

21 October Sunday

Clear through the day. Father had quite a sick turn after breakfast.

22 October Monday

Cloudy, strong south wind, rain in evening. Mended Emmie shoes and done chores.

23 October Tuesday

Clear and pleasant. Father and I went to Norwalk & Westport.

(Traveling to Norwalk and Westport, both to the south on Long Island Sound, was quite a trip, involving perhaps 30 miles.)

24 October Wednesday

Some sunshine, growing colder. Picked some corn. Father went down to saw mill towards night.

25 October Thursday

Clear most of the day. Father went to sawmill in morning. I carried 1/2 cord of wood to John B. Smith. Emily and I went to J. N. Olmstead in evening.

(The reason for the trips to the saw mill is, unfortunately, not given. John Betts Smith was Emily’s brother – see July 16, 1865.)

26 October Friday

Not verry clear, froze quite hard. Gathered pumpkins in forenoon. Emily went up town. Father carried load of apples to cider mill in afternoon.

27 October Saturday

Clear most of the day. Father made cider.

28 October Sunday

Clear & pleasant. Went to church in A.M. with Emily & Emmie.

29 October Monday

Cloudy, strong south wind, some damp in forenoon. Picked corn in afternoon. Went up town just at night. Emily went up West Lane with me.

30 October Tuesday

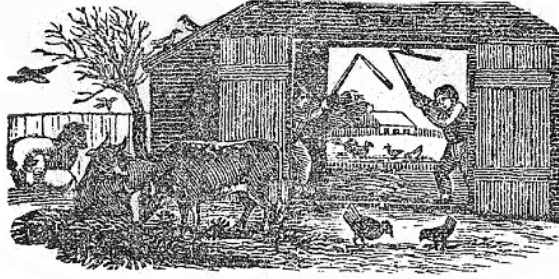
*Rain verry hard after 12 untill 10 o'clock this morning, then cloudy rest of the day.
Carried Gilbert's dam off.*

(This is an interesting entry. According to George Rockwell's *History of Ridgefield*, the dam serving the Gilbert mill burst in September 1868. Jared's entry indicates Rockwell was incorrect — and indeed many regional newspapers reported that the dam broke in 1866. The fact that Rockwell did not give an exact date suggests he was not certain of just when the so-called “Titicus Flood” occurred. Here's his description of it from his 1927 history:

(The Titicus Flood occurred in September 1868, caused by the bursting of the dam on New Pond. The Gilbert brothers, Aaron B. and William H., built this dam in order to store water for their mill farther down in Titicus. People predicted that the pond would never fill up. On the day of the cataclysm, Aaron Gilbert had been called away. It was raining in torrents and a great volume of water was pouring over the dam, and William Gilbert went over to look at it, as he had some fears whether it would stand. There was a tremendous rock on the west end of the dam that the Searles brothers, Andrew Jackson and Lyman, who built the dam, had drawn in with a team of oxen. Mr. Gilbert had just returned from an inspection of the east side of the dam, as the thought that end would go first if the dam should break. He had scarcely reached the west side, and was standing upon the above mentioned rock when he felt it teeter beneath him. He jumped off just in time, as the dam at that moment burst at this point, and a great torrent of water poured down the valley. The flood was four or five feet high and it went across the first field at an angle. The few witnesses related that the column of rushing water resembled a tidal wave. As the waters struggled through the broken dam, they fairly leapt. The flood carried away the barn of Bradley Edmond...; also David H. Valden's office which was built across the stream; cleaned out every vat in the tanyard and deposited boards, timbers, fence rails and skins of half-dressed leather across the flat beyond the road. Charles Smith 2nd lived in the house by the bridge, afterward the home of John D. Nash. Mrs. Smith's mother was downstairs in the basement kitchen baking bread. Her daughter called her, and she came up stairs just in time, for she had barely taken her foot from the last step before the flood carried away the stairs, as it flooded the basement. After the waters subsided, the basement was a sight. Pork, butter, potatoes, lard, were all mixed up together. A singular incident occurred. A basket of eggs was raised by the flood and floated around on top of the water. When the flood subsided, the basket was found deposited on the top stair, which had not been torn loose, and not an egg was broken. One of Mr. Smith's rubber boots was left in the cellar and another was found down on the flat where the waters had carried it. Philip N. Smith, son of Charles, saw the flood coming and rushing out, unhitched a horse that was standing in front of the store. The horse would have been drowned had it remained at the post. The first fence beyond the Smith's was unharmed, while the second fence was completely demolished. Jacob Legrand Dauchy, who at the time lived on North Street, and was an eyewitness of the flood, relates that the waters “roared like an earthquake.”)

31 October Wednesday

Clear. We picked corn.



1 November Thursday

Clear, froze some. Pick corn in forenoon. Went to a town meeting in P.M. to dissolve the 13th School District.

(The growth of the village prompted the town fathers around 1850 to create the 13th School District, consisting of the area around southern Main Street, upper Wilton Roads East and West, and including parts of the Center, Whipstick, Flat Rock and West Lane Districts. The schoolhouse, which had 36 students in 1860, was on the west side of Main Street, just north of the Wilton Roads split. The district was informally called the “Bell District,” purportedly because the schoolhouse was the only one of 15 in the town that had a bell.

(In 1865, the schoolhouse burned to the ground, and town fathers were faced with the expense of building a new school – the cost of which would have to be borne by people within the district. The penny-wise Ridgefielders within the Bell District and the four districts from whom Bell was taken felt that the smart move was to dissolve the district and send the kids to the Whipstick, Flat Rock, West Lane, and Center School Districts. Some of those probably needed more “customers” for their schoolhouses anyway.

(On Nov. 1, 1865, a special Town Meeting had voted 17 to 12 to dissolve the 13th district. Some people didn’t like the idea, and there was something about the meeting itself they didn’t like either. Opponents to dissolution petitioned another Town Meeting for Dec. 2 to rescind the action, but that meeting wound up doing nothing. Opponents then threatened a lawsuit. The issue festered for months. In October 1866, a group of people who’d favored dissolution of the district petitioned another town meeting, explaining that “a vote was passed [Nov. 1, 1865] which is claimed by some not to express all that was intended in accordance with the call for said meeting, and there being persons who appear disposed to make a cause for litigation which may be long and bitter, tending to destroy the peace that should exist in society, and the causes still existing which make it necessary and desirable that said District be dissolved beyond all cavil, therefore we the petitioners, legal voters of the town, respectfully petition you to call a special Town Meeting for the purpose of dissolving and setting said 13th School District to the Districts from which said District was taken with their lines and boundaries as they were before the formation of said 13th School district, by a vote clear of all legal objections...” Signers included Jared Nash, Jared N.

Olmstead, Henry D. Partrick, Robert D. Edmond, Samuel B. Fitch, and Benjamin K. Northrop.
The meeting reaffirmed the earlier action, and the Bell District disappeared.)

2 November Friday

Clear, more moderate. Picked corn.

3 November Saturday

Clear in forepart of the day. Pick corn

4 November Sunday

*Clear in morning, then cloudy and chilly. Went up West Lane with Emily and to P.O.
Hoyts' girls here in evening.*

(Probably David Hoyt's daughters – see Sept. 9, 1865.)

5 November Monday

Clear & cold all day. Froze hard. Finished picking corn, got in beets.

(Beets, turnips, rutabagas, and cabbages, all cold-hardy, were the last of the “crops” to be picked. They were kept in the cellar and could be eaten through the winter.)

6 November Tuesday

Clear and cold. Got in turnips.

7 November Wednesday

Clear, little more moderate. Finished getting turnips and rutabagas.

8 November Thursday

Clear & moderate. Se[?] up apple tree. Dug dahlias. Helpt Jared butcher a hog.

9 November Friday

Clear and pleasant. Father carried buckwheat to mill. Emily went up West Lane with him. I went after her, carriage rutabagas to Sholes.

(David Sholes; see Jan. 30, 1965)

10 November Saturday

Clear. Father went over to Sanford's in forenoon, then went to mill in afternoon. I trimmed rutabagas and got them in cellar.

(“Sanford,” half brother of Jared, pops up at various times in this diary – see Jan. 21, 1865, Oct. 26, 1865, Oct. 29, 1865, for instance. He lived in Lewisboro.)

11 November Sunday

Cloudy, cold, chilly east wind. Rain some through the night.

12 November Monday

Not much sunshine. Got apples into cellar & done other chores.

13 November Tuesday

Clear. Got wood in woodhouse.

14 November Wednesday

Clear, some cloudy in afternoon. Father & Emily went to New Canaan.

15 November Thursday

Cloudy and some rain through the day. Rain hard all night.

16 November Friday

Cloudy. Father went to sawmill in afternoon. I went up to Jared's.

17 November Saturday

Clear. Father & Mother went to Pimpawaug and come home by Ridgefield Depot.

(Pimpawaug is what is today called Cannondale, a section of Wilton located along the Danbury and Norwalk rail line. The Nashes probably had family or friends there. Ridgefield Depot was the old name for Branchville. It would seem as if Jared's parents took the train back, but it's more likely that Jared is just describing the route they took by horse and carriage. A direct route from southern Silver Spring Road to Cannondale — both then and now — is a complicated combination of many back roads, and it might have been easier to travel up the old turnpike — today's Route 7 — then take Branchville Road to the center of town to get home.)

18 November Sunday

Some sunshine. Went to church in afternoon and had Charly baptized.

19 November Monday

Cloudy, south chilly wind. Father went to Gilbert's mill in morning, then went again towards night. Emily went up town with him. We fixed around underpinning some.

(Jared may have been working on the foundation of the house or barn. It's also possible that Jared was banking up leaves or straw against the sides of the house foundation, especially on the north side, an old technique that helped insulate the foundation from the winds and cold temperatures of winter – see Nov. 26. Many old houses, particularly those like the Nashes' that were built in the 18th Century, had dry-laid foundations — stones with no mortar holding them in place. In warmer seasons this was good for ventilation of the house, but in mid-winter, it meant frigid drafts.)

20 November Tuesday

Some rain through the night. Cloudy & wet in A.M. Broke away at night. I went to Ben Bailey's store in afternoon.

21 November Wednesday

Cold, flying clouds. Father helpt Jared fix his cellar drain. Done some chores and stop the roof or tried to.

(They apparently had a leak. In the weeks that follow, many pre-winter chores are undertaken.)

22 November Thursday

Snowed in forenoon, enough to cover the ground. Then wet and some snow in afternoon. Work at a little waggon for Charly.

(His son may be just starting to walk, and what toddler – even today – wouldn't love to have a wagon to pull, or be given a ride in?)

23 November Friday

Damp, drizzling, snow through the day. Went up town with Emily in P.M.

24 November Saturday

Clear and froze up this morning. Went with Emily to Norwalk to get her cloth for a cloak.

(See Nov. 30, 1866.)

25 November Sunday

Cold & squally with snow in forenoon. Some sunshine in P.M. Emily & Emmie went up West Lane in P.M.

26 November Monday

Clear and cold. Bank up around cellar. Dug some parsnips. Father helpt J. N. St. John butcher beef in P.M.

(Many old houses had dry-laid stone foundations with little or no mortar. Thus they were leaky. This was fine in summer, when it helped keep the cellar aired out, but in winter, it made the house drafty and cooler. To provide an insulating layer around the outside of the foundation, leaves and other plant waste were banked up against the building.)

27 November Tuesday

Clear and more moderate. Father drawed 3 load of wood. I done chores. We covered up strawberries. Father and I went to Mrs. Hoyt's in evening.

28 November Wednesday

Cloudy, wind SW, not verry cold. Some rain in P.M. We took hog up to Hiram Seymour's. I went to Linus Northrop's, got some morocco for Charly shoes. Father got more wood. I pick turky & some chickens. Heard Capt. Grumman was dead.

(Hiram Seymour lived on Wilton Road West; *see* June 10, 1866. Morocco was soft leather, so called because it was originally made in Morocco from goatskins tanned with sumac. Samuel B. Grumman, a shoemaker, died Nov. 26, 1866, at the age of 85. A native of South Salem and a widower, Mr. Grumman had been a militia captain at the time of the War of 1812. He lived on West Lane almost opposite Olmstead Lane, and would have been a local neighborhood personality for Emily Smith Nash, Jared's wife, who grew up on West Lane just west of Olmstead Lane.)

29 November Thursday Thanksgiving Day

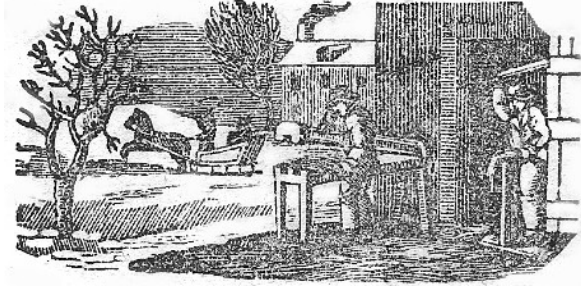
Damp & foggy through the day. Work some at Charly's waggon.

(Though they no doubt had a feast involving that turkey and those chickens, Jared strangely does not mention anything about the holiday, except in the heading for the day. For more on Thanksgiving, *see* Dec. 7, 1865.)

30 November Friday

Rain through the night, cold, squally clouds flying all day. Went up town in afternoon with Emily to see about her cloak, and got a shoe on Bill.

(Apparently, someone is making the cloak for Emily from the cloth acquired at Norwalk Nov. 24.)



1 December Saturday

Clear most of the day and high wind. Father went to Gilbert's mill. Emily went up West Lane to get a dress fitted. I went after her in afternoon. She left both children home.

2 December Sunday

Clear and pleasant, but cool. Emily went up to Jared's in P.M. She and Father went to Coleman's & Meeker's in evening.

(Francis Meeker lived just up Silver Spring Road, near the spring. Perhaps he was ill, for Meeker was to die of consumption less than two years later, Sept. 8, 1868, at the age of 50. Coleman is Coleman Batterson whose farm was just north of the Nashes'.)

3 December Monday

Clear and pleasant. Father went to Taylor's mill with buckwheat. Sanford come home with him.

(As we will see tomorrow, Father was leaving a load of buckwheat seeds at the mill to be ground into flour. Buckwheat is not a wheat, but a plant closely related to knotweeds or rhubarb that has small, brown seeds that are considered highly nutritious. Buckwheat does well in poor soils such as were found in Ridgefield and grows quickly; 19th Century farmers typically raised two crops a season. While many farmers like the Nashes grew buckwheat to feed to their livestock and poultry, the seeds, ground at the mill, were also used for making coarse breads, pancakes and cereals. Today, its most popular use seems to be as an ingredient in pancakes or crepes, which the French call galettes.)

4 December Tuesday

Cloudy, commence to rain just before noon and le[?] blew verry hard most of the afternoon. Broke away in evening. Father went to mill and got buckwheat flour.

5 December Wednesday

Clear and pleasant. We got a little wood in forenoon. Went to town in P.M. with Emily to get her cloak cut. James & Matilda here in evening.

(These are both people that Jared would have grown up with in the neighborhood. James R. and Matilda St. John probably lived on St. Johns Road with James's father, Jared Nash St. John and mother, Abigail St. John. A farmer, James died Oct. 15, 1896 at the age of 71, making him about Jared's age. Matilda was born Oct. 22, 1827, daughter of Matthew Keeler and Sally Ann Smith who may have lived at the south end of St. John's Road next to the pond. She died on her birthday in 1910, aged 83. Jared Nash St. John was born July 27, 1791 in Norwalk, a son of Silas St. John and Sarah Nash.

6 December Thursday

Cloudy through the day, rain some in evening. Father went to sawmill, then he and Mother went up to Jared's. I picked some baberrys and made shoes for Charly.

(Here Jared is using the Moroccan leather purchased a few days earlier.)

7 December Friday

Clear and warm. Went and carried Emily & children up West Lane and got Bill shod. Father went and carried 3 turkys to G. Haight and brought Emily home.

(George Haight, who died Feb. 15, 1912 at the age of 84, was described in his death certificate as a gardener. He probably worked late in life on nearby estates. In 1866, there was not much, if any, call for gardeners in Ridgefield, for the era of the wealthy "summer people" had not yet begun; he may have been a farmer or laborer. Neither his place of birth nor the names of his parents were known at the time of his death.)

8 December Saturday

Damp & foggy, rain in afternoon.

9 December Sunday

Some sunshine. Emily and Emmie went up to Jared's and Abram's to see boys. Wet & muddy travelling. Now a days, does not freeze any more.

(The boys were probably babies, but see Dec. 12. Jared is complaining about the lack of freezing. Hard ground was easier to travel over than muddy.)

10 December Monday

Clear and colder. Froze some. Fixt to butcher.

(He meant he was preparing to butcher.)

11 December Tuesday

Clear, cold and pleasant. Mercury 16. Butchered hogs and beef. Abram, Jared and James helpt. Rhoda helpt in house. Went in P.M. carried beef to Jared and J.B. Smith.

(Butchering was clearly a family and friends affair. J.B. Smith is Emily's father.)

12 December Wednesday

Clear & cold. 16. Cut & salted meat. Tried lard & made sausage. Went with Emily to Abram's in evening. His baby is dead.

(Edward O. Nash, five days old, died Dec. 12, 1866 of convulsions. He was born Dec. 5, son of Abram S. Nash, 44, and Sarah A. Gray, 39.)

13 December Thursday

Clear. Mercury 16. Went to Abram's to the funeral and up to Gilbert's mill with feed. Father took care of meat. They tried tallow.

(Used for soap and candles, tallow was made by "trying" or boiling fat from the recently slaughtered animals. Several layers of fatty material formed, and the topmost was the finest – the tallow – which was scooped off. Soap was made by heating the tallow with lye and water. Tallow candles were smoky, but cheap and reliable. The simplest way to make them was to hang strings from a stick, dip them into the hot tallow, let cool, dip again, and again, and again the same way, until enough tallow had built up in layers on the string to create a candle. Beeswax, more expensive, made a finer, less smoky candle.)

14 December Friday

Clear, more windy. Mercury 16. Shelled some corn. Emily went up West Lane and up town. Father hooped a tub for Jared N. Olmstead.

(Father's many skills apparently included making tubs by fashioning staves — wood for the walls — and banding them together with a metal hoop. The process was very much like making a barrel.)

15 December Saturday

Clear and cold. Mercury 11. Father went and carried hide to Valden and over to Sanford's. I cut some wood. We exchange turkeys with James St. John.

(David Harvey Valden ran a tannery at Titicus – see story of Titicus Flood under Oct. 30, 1866. At the tannery, the hides from the recent butchering would be made into leather, a process using

chemicals made from bark, as well as scraping, that takes many months. While there, Jared may have picked up some finished leather to make shoes for the family, and probably some for sale. He was, after all, officially considered a shoemaker.)

16 December Sunday

Cloudy, chilly, east wind. Commence to snow at noon and snowed the rest of the day. Damp & made some ice through the night.

17 December Monday

Snowed untill middle afternoon, then broke away in evening.

18 December Tuesday

Clear. Father helpt J. N. St. John butcher hogs in forenoon. In afternoon, he and I went up town.

19 December Wednesday

Cloudy, more moderate. Father got some wood with a sled.

(Since the ground was covered with snow finally, the sled was needed for the first time this season. Farmers often appreciated the snow for such tasks for it was easier for oxen or horses to draw wood over slick snow via the runners of a sled or sledge than it was to drag logs or use wheeled carts. Heavy-load jobs, such as hauling large stones, often awaited the arrival of snow to make transporting them easier.)

20 December Thursday

Clear, cold & windy, snow flew. Mercury 16 this morning, grew cold all day down to 3 above at night. Father helpt Jared butcher hogs. We are all most sick with colds.

21 December Friday

Clear and cold. Mercury 4 below this morning, quite moderate in afternoon. Emily went up and Laura come home with her. There was a house burnt up by Ed Northrop's.

(Edward W. Northrop, a shoemaker, lived on West Lane in the house between High Ridge and Parley Lane. It is odd that Jared makes no mention of the name of the occupant; perhaps it was a small cottage rented to a family he did not know. Also odd is that Anna Resseguie, who lived nearby in what is now the Keeler Tavern Museum, makes no mention of this fire in her diary.)

22 December Saturday

Cloudy most of the day and moderate. Father went to Hiram Seymour's and got his hog and drove down here. Father went & got some wood in afternoon. Come up damp in the evening.

(See Dec. 25 for the reason for the hog's visit.)

23 December Sunday

Damp rain in afternoon and through the night. Took snow most all off.

24 December Monday

Cloudy and some damp most of the day. Cleared off in evening. Emily went in morning and carried Laura home.

25 December Tuesday

Clear, not verry cold. Emily went to church. Emmie went up West Lane with her. Boiled up cattle's feet for neats foot oil. Father drove Hiram's hog home.

(As in 1865, Christmas seemed to be a day of little celebration, certainly compared to modern times. A year ago, the Nashes went to the store to buy lamp oil and lamp chimneys on Christmas Day and no one went to church. This year, at least Emily attended services. And as if to emphasize the non-celebration of the day, Jared performs one of the less pleasant tasks of his work-a-day life. Neat's-foot oil was used to preserve leather, such as in shoes that Jared, as a shoemaker, would fashion. The oil was made from the bones of the lower legs and feet of cows that had been slaughtered; "neat" is an old word for cattle, so the term means "cattle's-foot oil."

(The hog that father drove back to Hiram's was probably a boar visiting — and "servicing" — the sows.)

26 December Wednesday

Clear and pleasant. We cut some wood and brought into wood house. Father hooped for Mrs. Keeler.

(Father may have been putting new bands on barrels or tubs — see Dec. 14. Or he may have been cutting hoop poles — see Feb. 8, 1865.)

27 December Thursday

Rain before day, then snowed all day. Towards night grew cold and blew verry hard from north all night. Mended Emmie's shoes.

28 December Friday

Not verry clear. Cold and windy. Snow all piled up, verry unpleasing to be out. Work at a pr. of shoes for Emily. Mercury 19 in morning.

29 December Saturday

Clear and moderate. I have a lame shoulder with rumatizm.

(Jared catalogues yet another ailment from which he suffers!)

30 December Sunday

Emily & Emmie went up to Jared's in middle of the day. Father went to meeting in afternoon. Clear and pleasant.

31 December Monday

Cloudy, wind East. Snowed all the afternoon. Father went over to the Boughtontown store. Jared here in evening.

(Perhaps Father was picking up the 1867 almanac; see Dec. 29, 1865.)

(With this entry, Jared's two-year diary ends, and so does this weekly series on Old Ridgefield. We hope you enjoyed learning a bit about life in the mid-19th Century Ridgefield. A version of the complete diary may be found on RidgefieldHistory.com.)

Notes on Diary People and Places

- Abram:** *See* Abram S. Nash.
- Aunt Biar:** *See* Abiah Seymour.
- Aunt Clara:** *See* Clara Nash Olmstead.
- Aunt Lucy:** *See* Lucy Keeler Dudley.
- Batterson, Coleman:** A farmer who lived just north of the Nash family farm on Silver Spring Road¹.
- Batterson, Mary:** Mary J.E. Batterson dies Dec. 19 1865 at the age of 19, probably of complications from childbirth². She is the wife of Nell Batterson. She is not recorded as being buried in Ridgefield.
- Batterson, Nell:** Nelson Batterson was the son of Coleman Batterson (*q.v.*). In the 1850 census, Nelson was six years old, making him about 21 at the time of his wife's death³.
- Benedict, John:** Emily visits him June 12, 1865 and July 21, 1866. He was a farmer who lived near corner of Silver Spring Road and West Lane. John Benedict, son of Ezra and Maria Dreamer Benedict, was born Aug. 16, 1821. He married Harriet Olmstead, who was born July 9, 1818 in Ridgefield and died there March 28, 1850. They were married July 2, 1845. After Harriet's death, he married on April 2, 1851 her sister, Sarah W. Olmstead, who was born Nov. 2, 1813 and died in Stamford, Conn., March 8, 1862. The two Olmstead sisters were daughters of Walter Olmsted, born Sept. 28, 1784 and died Nov. 19, 1834. He married on Jan. 1, 1813, Fanny Rockwell (born Oct. 25, 1794, who was a daughter of Thaddeus and Mehitabel (Smith) Rockwell. After her husband's death, Mrs. Olmsted married on Nov. 20, 1840, Aaron Northrop. She died in Stamford Jan. 12, 1871.⁴
- Bennett, Daniel:** A farmer who lived on Silver Spring Road in a house almost opposite entrance to the Silver Spring Country Club, Daniel Bennett was a Ridgefield native who died June 14, 1877 at the age of 82.⁵ He often helps at the Nash farm, and the Nashes sometimes help at his.
- Bennett, Jerry:** Mentioned Feb. 8, 1865. Apparently, Jeremiah Bennett, who lived near today's 430 Silver Spring Road, had been cutting hoop poles on someone else's property, and had been arrested or civilly sued for it. And, as Jared suggests, the case was settled out of court. He was about 43 at time of diary and was listed in the 1850 census as being a shoemaker. Deed descriptions⁶ speak of a Jere Bennett as being a bordering landowner. In 1876, Jerry and his wife, Adeline, and four of his sons were arrested as burglars; he and two sons were sent to prison; the others were either not guilty or not prosecuted.

- Betts, Curtis:** Curtis Betts, a Ridgefield shoemaker, spent the night of June 7, 1865, at the Nash home. He was a native of Wilton. He died in 1868 at the age of 70. He was probably a friend of father.
- Bill:** Jared's horse. No genealogy available.
- Bissell, Mr.:** On Oct. 17, 1865, "Father went to Norwalk to carry pigs. He sold to Mr. Bissell for \$20." Several Bissell families were living in Norwalk around this time. Identity unknown, but he was probably a merchant.
- Booth, C.:** "Father went to Wilton Depot to carry C. Booth and family" on Aug. 14, 1865. Unknown connection, though probably related to the Nashes or the Smiths.
- Booth, Mrs.:** Jared Olmstead gets wood for her Jan. 28, 1865. A "C. Booth" is mentioned later.
- Briggs, Mrs.:** Rany Briggs helps out at household starting on Nov. 7, 1865 and also shows up for spring cleaning in June 1866, when she is called just Rany. The 1860 Census lists "Rany Briggs" as a Ridgefielder. The 1860 census of Wilton lists a Claybone Briggs, born in Virginia, 12 years old, who is living with the Aaron Lockwood family.
- Canfield, Daniel:** Daniel Canfield was from Lewisboro – probably a neighbor of Abram S. Nash, who also lived there at this time. His wife was named Sally.
- Charly I:** Charles S. Nash (1865-1929), Jared's son.
- Charly II:** See "Jane." Possibly Charles Nash, son of Abram S. and Jane Gray Nash. Or Charles S. Nash Jr., son of Sanford Nash.
- Church, Francis:** Francis Church was born in Ridgefield in 1821,⁷ son of Samuel and Jane Keeler Church. One of his brothers was Bela St. John Church (born 1817) and he may have had a son named Bela St. John Church⁸. In the diary, Jared occasionally mentions Bela St. John, who was a Wilton farmer. Jane Keeler's twin sister, Esther, was the wife of Bela St. John of Wilton.⁹ Both Jane and Esther were born in Wilton. Francis probably lived in Wilton; Jared mentions Francis Church's death on April 27, 1866, but the death isn't recorded in Ridgefield records.
- Cole:** See Coleman Batterson.
- Daniel:** See Daniel Smith #2. Daniel delivers vests March 21, 1866
- Diarist:** Jared Nash. See Introduction.
- Dudley, Lucy Keeler:** "Aunt Lucy" appears from time to time in the diary. She stayed with the Nashes from July 30, 1865 off and on until Aug. 6, and her death is noted on May 28, 1866. Lucy Keeler was born in Wilton on April 27, 1782, a daughter of Stephen and Hannah Marvin Keeler¹⁰. She married Major William Dudley, who was a farmer in northern Wilton. She was the sister of Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother.
- Dunning, Kate:** She comes to visit Emmie on April 7, 1866. This may be the only reference to a child visiting another child. Kate is probably the daughter of Richard and Mary Henrietta Dunning (*below*).

Dunning, Mary: She visits Nov. 11, 1865 with Rebecca Olmstead, wife of Jared N. Olmstead – they are sisters in law. Mary Dunning was born Mary Henrietta Olmstead in 1824 in Wilton, a daughter of William and “Aunt Clara” Nash Olmstead¹¹. Mary, who was about 31 at this time, was Jared’s first cousin and was a sister of Jared N. Olmstead (*q.v.*). She had a brother William or Willy Olmstead (*q.v.*). In 1855 in Ridgefield she married Richard Dunning, whose occupation was listed as “musician,” a rather unusual profession for a Ridgefielder in those days. He played the bugle and instructed the Ridgefield Band, founded in 1838 and well known in the area. Richard Dunning was born in 1814 in Wilton, the son of John and Lydia Dunning. His father was a wheelwright¹². There is no record of Richard or Mary Dunning’s death in Ridgefield so they probably moved away. Richard Dunning’s sister, Mary Ann, married Russell Mead (*q.v.*), who also appears in the diary. Richard and Mary may have had a daughter, Kate (*q.v.*)

Edmonds, John D.: Jared mentions the death of John D. Edmonds, a Civil War veteran and a lawyer, died July 23, 1865 at the age of 33. John enlisted as a volunteer in the Civil War with the 20th Regiment of New York Volunteers, April 23, 1861, and was discharged only a few months later, Aug. 2, 1861.¹³ No reason has been discovered for his short term of service. His death record in town hall calls him a lawyer.

Edmonds, Mr.: mentioned March 12, 1865: *See* R. C. Edmonds.

Edmonds, R.C.: Robert Chauncey Edmonds lived on the south side of Silver Hill Road, a little west of Wilton Road West. He is mentioned as Mr. Edmonds on March 12, 1865, when Urania Taylor’s funeral is at his house, and he is mentioned again when his son, John, dies July 23, 1865. He and Jared’s grandfather, Jared Nash, had served together on the committee that erected the new Flat Rock Schoolhouses in 1846-47. He died Dec. 2, 1884, aged 83, and is buried at Ridgefield Cemetery next to his wife, Abby Darling Edmonds, a native of Redding, who died April 29, 1898 at the age of 94. They were married here Nov. 5, 1823 (the town record calls him “Chauncey Edmonds,” leaving off the Robert.) They had a daughter, Mary, who died in 1867 at the age of 21, according to headstone records. The death of their son is recorded in July – *see* John D. Edmonds. Robert’s grandfather, Robert, whose father was from Scotland, was born in Dublin, Ireland, and came to this country in 1754, and eventually wound up in Ridgefield where he died at the age of 93¹⁴.

Emily: Jared’s wife; *see* Emily Smith Nash.

Emmie: Emily Louise Nash (1860-1915), about five, Jared’s daughter.

E.R.G.: *See* Elizabeth R. Grummun

Father: *See* Charles Nash.

- Ferris, Mary:** Mentioned as visiting Oct. 4, 1866, with Amos Smith's wife. Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother, had a sister, Mary Keeler, who married Seth Ferris and who died in 1861. Seth and Mary Keeler Ferris had a son, Stephen Gould Ferris, who was Jared's first cousin and who married a Mary Ann Beers in 1838. Mary Ann Ferris lived until 1906 when she died in Norwalk. Mary Ann had a daughter, Mary Augusta Ferris. Mary Augusta had married the Rev. Joseph Woolley by this time, however, since her daughter Mary Emma Woolley was born in 1863. Mary Emma Woolley – Jared's first cousin, twice removed – grew up to be the first female student at Brown University, and later became president of Mt. Holyoke College from 1901-1937.¹⁵
- Fitch, Samuel B.:** He helped on the farm. *See* March 1, 1865. His family may have been from Wilton, though he was clerk of the Ninth School District in 1866. Father went to see him March 19, 1866, and he came to the Nashes the next day. Samuel P. Fitch was surveyor of highways in the Ninth School District in 1864.¹⁶ On Dec. 16, 1864, Samuel B. Fitch was elected "committee and collector" of taxes for the Ninth School District. Minutes indicate he functioned as the district committee until Sept. 4, 1865. On Nov. 17, 1866, a special district meeting took place "for the purpose of instructing or authorizing the collector to collect the School tax (of last term) of Samuel B. Fitch and to do any other business necessary to be done in regard to the same." However, at the meeting, when a motion was made "that Mr. Fitch's rate be raised by subscription from the district," the motion lost and the meeting was dismissed.¹⁷ It appears that Fitch failed to collect part or all of the taxes he was supposed to. Whether he was just negligent or whether he pocketed money is not indicated.
- Fitzgerald, Thomas:** Thomas Fitzgerald, a native of Ireland, was a laborer who died in 1882 at the age of 69. He helped on the farm Oct. 31, 1865. He lived on West Lane, almost opposite Olmstead Lane, and next to Libby Grumman's place
- Gallagher, C.:** Mentioned Feb. 14, 1865. Probably Charles Gallagher, a laborer. No record found. *See also* Feb. 15, 1865.
- Gregory, C.:** This person, mentioned July 12, 1865, may have been Charles Gregory of Wilton, a farmer.
- Grummun, Elizabeth A.:** "Libby," a frequent visitor, is Elizabeth A. Grummun. For instance, on Jan. 20 and May 27 in 1865, "Libby Grummon" comes to visit. She is Elizabeth R. Nash Grummun's daughter and diarist Jared Nash's niece. Elizabeth was born around 1844 and was about 21 or 22 at the time of the diary and was a teacher at the Titicus and the Flat Rock schoolhouses. She eventually married Alonzo B. Brown (1839-1895), a Ridgefield native and son of Solomon Brown of Farmingville, who was a railway postal worker.¹⁸ They lived in Mt.

Vernon, N.Y., until Mr. Brown's death. She then returned to Ridgefield where she lived until around 1930 when she moved back to Mt. Vernon to live with her daughter in law, Mrs. Arthur Brown. She died in August 1934 at the age of 90.¹⁹ She may have lived on Peaceable Street just west of the intersection of Peaceable Hill, where a "Mrs. E. Brown" lived in 1912²⁰

Grummun, Elizabeth R.: "E.R.G.," as she's often called in the diary, was diarist Jared Nash's sister, Elizabeth R. Nash Grummun. She was the daughter of Charles Nash by his second wife, Roxy Keeler (his first wife Roxanna Nickerson died in 1821, and Elizabeth was born in 1822). Although no birth record has been found, this relationship seems certain because: 1. Elizabeth R. Nash married Charles Grummun in 1841. When Charles died a few years later, Charles Nash and his father, Jared Nash, served as administrators of his estate²¹. 2. Charles C. Grummun, the son of Charles and Elizabeth Grummun, is living with Charles and Roxy Nash in 1850.²² 3. Elizabeth R. Grummun, her husband and child are buried right next to Charles and Roxy Nash at the Ridgefield Cemetery.²³ She was born in 1822²⁴, married Charles Grummun Nov. 10, 1841,²⁵ but he died Aug. 6, 1847, only 29 years old.²⁶ Two weeks earlier, on July 31, 1847, their year-old son, Henry S. Grummun, had died²⁷. On Dec. 24, 1847, Elizabeth R. Grumman was appointed guardian of their two children – Elizabeth A. Grummun (*q.v.*), 5, (called "Libby") and Charles C. Grumman, 7.²⁸ She died 1901.²⁹ She may have been a seamstress. She became professed member of the First Congregational Church in 1840.³⁰ Charles and Elizabeth lived in a house at the north corner of Main and Market Streets, possibly the one still standing there today, now owned by the town.³¹ The house was right across Market Street from Hurlbutt's Market. She sold the place in 1850 to Rufus H. Pickett,³² who lived there and had a cabinet shop just down Market Street from the house³³. She later lived in New York City and Stamford – and possibly died in Stamford. When Charles Nash (*q.v.*) transferred all his property to his father, Jared, in 1842 to handle his insolvency problems, Elizabeth R. Grummun and Harvey Smith signed as witnesses.³⁴ In 1875, Charles Nash mortgages his farm to Elizabeth R. Grummun, who is then living in Brooklyn, N.Y.³⁵ The mortgage was for \$1,070, interest free until after Charles and Roxy Nash's death. It indicates that Elizabeth was a person of some means by then. In 1882, after both Charles and Roxy have died, Elizabeth quit claims to Richard R. Walker for \$1,000 her interest in the family homestead.³⁶ Walker was the husband of Grummun's niece, Roxana Nash. By then, Elizabeth was living in Stamford. Walker had acquired an interest in the farm in 1876. Elizabeth's husband may have been a son of Caleb Grumman, whose daughter, Emily, married David

W. Olmstead. Both David and Emily Olmstead appear in the diary. The family name is spelled Grumman, Grummon, and Grummun in various sources, but the gravestones say Grummun and, in March 25, 1850, guardianship report, Elizabeth clearly signs her name Grummun, the rarest of the three spellings today.

- Hawley, Samuel:** Mentioned as a visitor March 9, 1865. There was a Samuel Hawley who was a cabinetmaker with a shop on Main Street and, according to the 1850 census, a Samuel Hawley who was a butcher.
- Hiram:** Mentioned May 12, 1865; maybe Hiram Seymour (*q.v.*)
- Holmes, Mr.:** He brought Aunt Lucy on Aug. 4, 1865. Father goes there Dec. 29, 1865. He visits June 16, 1866. *See below*
- Holmes Mrs.:** She visits July 7, 1865, with Emily Olmstead. Esther Smith Holmes, daughter of Amos Smith, died Sept. 6, 1887, age 81.³⁷
- Holmes, John:** On Feb. 20, 1866, Father buys two brooms from John Holmes. This is possibly John W. Holmes of Titicus, a New York City native who was listed in his death record as a laborer. Mr. Holmes served as a “musician” in the Civil War and was wounded and captured at Chancellorsville in 1863.³⁸ A year later, he was discharged. He died in 1885 at the age of 62.³⁹ The 1860 Census shows a John F. Holmes living here.⁴⁰
- Hoyt, David:** Father went to a stone bee there Sept. 9, 1865. David K. Hoyt [1822-1884] had his farm on Silver Spring Road in Wilton, land that is about a half-mile south of the Nashes’ land.
- Hoyt, Munson:** Munson Hoyt was a farmer who lived north of the Nashes on Silver Spring Road, just north of the Silver Spring. He appears often in the diary and was a good friend of the Nashes. Munson lived with his mother, Anna Hoyt (called “Mrs. Hoyt” [*q.v.*]) and his sisters Natalia (*q.v.*) and Orrilla. Anna Hoyt⁴¹, was the widow of Isaac Hoyt, who died in 1862⁴² (A Hoyt genealogy incorrectly says he died in 1865⁴³.) Anna died Jan. 11, 1872, aged 81. Buried next to them in Ridgefield Cemetery is Munson Hoyt, died Oct. 30, 1906, aged 79,⁴⁴ as well as Orrilla, who was born April 14, 1823 and died March 11, 1893. Isaac Hoyt was a native of Wilton while his wife, *nee* Anna Hoyt, was from Lewisboro.⁴⁵ Munson and his sisters had a brother, Andrew, who was living at Sioux Valley, Union County, Dakota Territory, by 1875 when he quit claim interest in the family property.⁴⁶ Andrew was living in New Canaan by 1906, probably with his grown children. Munson’s name appears both as “Monson” such as Sept. 8, 1865 (and so spelled even in legal documents) and as Munson (Dec. 12, 1865). The man signed his name Munson.⁴⁷ Munson bequeathed his estate to his sisters⁴⁸, but only Natalia Hoyt was still alive by his death. According to Munson’s will, Jared N. Olmstead (*q.v.*) was supposed to be the executor of the estate, but Olmstead died before Hoyt did. The court

appointed D. Smith Sholes (*see* David Sholes) as the next executor, but he died in 1907 before the estate was settled. When Isaac Hoyt died in 1862, he owned 125 acres and buildings, mostly along Silver Spring Road.⁴⁹ The value was nearly \$7,000. In 1909 just the homestead and 12 acres was sold to Mary and Smith Remington for \$1,575. Today, that property would probably worth more than one thousand times that price. The house, though, has been much modified and modernized, and little is left of the original 18th Century structure that Isaac Hoyt and his offspring knew. Over the years Munson Hoyt served in various town offices, including surveyor of highways in the Seventh School District – West Lane (1859, 1861, 1866)

Hoyt, Mrs.: Emily and Emmie walked up West Lane March 21, 1865, but Jared went only as far as Mrs. Hoyt's. Father went there Feb. 19 and May 21. Mother and Emmie went there June 15, 1865. This was Anna (Mrs. Isaac) Hoyt, mother of Munson Hoyt (*q.v.*). Mrs. Hoyt was apparently a seamstress for on June 7, 1865, Mother went there "to get Father's pantaloons made." There may have been two houses on the Hoyt farm – Mrs. Hoyt and her two daughters, Natalia and Orrilla, may have lived in one while Munson lived in the other.

Hoyt, Natalia: Sister of Munson Hoyt, daughter of Isaac and Anna Hoyt.⁵⁰ Born in Lewisboro, Natalia lived with her brother Munson, and sisters Orrilla and Nancy in a house on Silver Spring Road north of the Nashes. She never married and died May 24, 1909, at the age of 88 from complications of a broken hip.⁵¹ Her obituary observed that "Miss Hoyt had been a resident of Ridgefield for a long term of years, and resided with her brother, the late Munson Hoyt, Silver Spring Road. She was one of those who extended to all that old-fashioned hospitality which was once a part of all the early communities. She was the last survivor of a large family and was aunt of Aaron G. Hoyt of Ridgefield."⁵²

Hoyt, William: On Oct. 3, Jared "went down to Wm. Hoyt's before breakfast after some meal." W.M. Hoyt lived on Ridgefield Road (Route 33) in Wilton. Another lived in South Salem, but died in Ridgefield. William R. Hoyt lived in Ridgefield. Charles Nash, born Oct. 6, would as an adult go into business with a William F. Hoyt.

Hulda: *See* Rhoda.

Hurlbutt, Clara: Probably the wife or sister of George; mentioned March 5, 1865 as a visitor after the death of Aunt Clara Nash.

Hurlbutt, George: Mentioned March 3, 1865, as a visitor after the death of Aunt Clara Nash, George Hurlbutt was the husband of Clara Amanda Olmstead, daughter of Clara Nash. He was a Wiltonian – the 1850 census describes him as being a 19-year-old carriage maker, living with the large Sherman Cole family in Wilton.⁵³ Nearby the Coles was the

family of William B. Hurlbutt. George also visits Jan. 3, 1866 with Jared Olmstead.

Hurlbutt, John: On Jan. 31, 1866, John Hurlbutt stuck his hand in the cage of a lion at a Danbury menagerie or circus. He was bitten severely on the wrist, contracted tetanus, and died Feb. 11, 1866.⁵⁴ Seven years earlier, his father, David Hurlbutt, was gored to death by a cow he was butchering. His brother was Sereno Hurlbutt (*q.v.*).

Hurlbutt, Sereno S.: (1825-1904) was a noted carpenter and one-time partner in the carriage factory that operated in the Big Shop⁵⁵, which then stood at Main Street and West Lane (site of the First Congregational Church today) and houses restaurants, shops and offices off Bailey Avenue. Hurlbutt was collector of town taxes during the period of the diary⁵⁶ and also from 1885 to 1904. At this time he was serving as a constable, elected by the town meeting. Charles Nash (Father) may also have been some sort of court official such as a deputy sheriff, charged with escorting prisoners or defendants to the court in Danbury or Bridgeport – *see* Feb. 8, 1865. Hurlbutt also owned and operate Hurlbutt's Market⁵⁷ on Market Street, having taken it over after the death of his father, David (*see under* John Hurlbutt above)

Ingersoll, Henry: Henry S. Ingersoll, who visits Jan. 9, 1865, and Feb. 24, 1866, was born in 1825, the son of Samuel Ingersoll and Millicent Smith Ingersoll (*q.v.*). His mother dies Dec. 24, 1865. Henry and Jared were first cousins, once removed. He probably lived in Brooklyn, N.Y. His brother, Horace, lived in Manhattan.

Ingersoll, Milly: Millicent Smith Ingersoll, 68, the widow of Samuel Ingersoll, was daughter of Amos and Sarah Keeler Smith of Ridgefield.⁵⁸ She was born on Nov. 13, 1797, and was married Feb. 1, 1824, and died Dec. 24, 1865. Jared's father was Millicent's mother's brother; thus, Jared and Millicent were first cousins. Samuel, collector of the port of New York, was a grandson of the Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll, who served at minister of the First Congregational Church here from 1740 to 1778. Their son, Henry (*q.v.*), visits twice. They also had a son, Horace, who does not appear in the diary.

Jane: On Oct. 29, 1865, "Jane and Charly come over" with Sanford. She is the wife of Charles Sanford Nash (*q.v.*). On June 11, 1866, "Sanford and Jane" come over. *See* Jane E. Nash.

Jared: Appears frequently. *See* Jared N. Olmstead

Jennings, Nancy: Father brings a half cord of wood to her on June 23 and Aug. 11, 1866. A Nancy Rowe Jennings was married to Zebedee Jennings, and lived in Ridgefield in 1852 when Mary Frances Jennings was born.⁵⁹ A Nancy Jane Jennings Burns, buried at Ridgefield Cemetery, died Dec. 3, 1900, age 77 years, three months, wife of James H. Burns.

Jimmy: Possibly a blacksmith; mentioned Feb. 7, 1865.

- J.N.O.:** See Jared N. Olmstead.
- John:** See John Betts Smith.
- Keeler, George:** Father goes to George Keeler's on March 17, 1865. He was a harness-maker, and Father was probably visiting him to have some work done on his rig. Keeler, who died in 1881 at the age of 76, had his home and shop for nearly a half century at what is now 164 Main Street. On March 24, Father brings lard to Geo Keeler's. On June 13, 1866, Jared gets a pair of cockeyes for a harness from Keeler.
- Keeler, Harry:** Harry Keeler, formally known as Henry D. Keeler, lived in Lewisboro.⁶⁰ He was the town blacksmith and his home was what is now the Horse and Hound restaurant on Spring Street in the village of South Salem.⁶¹
- Keeler, Isaiah:** Father went there to see cattle on Sept. 7, 1865. He was a farmer who lived in northern Wilton, possibly off Whipstick Road in the area of what is today called Tito Lane. Isaiah was the father of LeGrande Keeler (*q.v.*) and the husband of Lucy Watrous Keeler.⁶² A Lucy Waterous was born in Ridgefield on March 26, 1776, daughter of John and Hulda Scott Waterous.⁶³ They may have been the Watrouses who lived up Silver Spring Road in a house that was later Munson Hoyt's place. (Watrous or Waterous later was commonly Waterhouse.)
- Keeler, LeGrand:** LeGrand W. Keeler was involved in a turkey exchange Nov. 14, 1865. He could be son of Isaiah (*q.v.*) and Lucy Watrous Keeler⁶⁴. About 41 years old, he was a prominent farmer who was living in northern Wilton in the Nod Hill section at this time – *see* his parents. He was a selectman of Wilton in 1871⁶⁵. He died in Ridgefield in 1879. He married Sept. 17 1844 Catharine Lockwood⁶⁶. LeGrand Keeler's son, Samuel (1845-1932) was a prominent Ridgefield attorney and one-time owner of The Ridgefield Press⁶⁷. A LeGrand Keeler is buried at Ridgefield Cemetery – died Feb. 8, 1879, age 56/1/8. His wife was Violet Scofield, died March 19, 1878, age 43/2/22. This LeGrand had an earlier wife, Sarah E. M. Keeler, who died Feb. 15, 1862, age 31. Ridgefield vital records show LeGrand Keeler died Feb. 8, 1879, age 56/1/8. He was born in Ridgefield, son of Nehemiah and Polly Keeler.
- Keeler, Mr.:** The Nashes buy a pig from him on Sept. 4, 1865.
- Mrs. Keeler:** She visits with "Rhoda" on Jan. 15, 1865. Probably from Wilton. *See also* Jan. 20, 1865. Mother goes there Aug. 25, 1865.
- Keeler, Rufus:** His boy, Willy, dies Dec. 17, 1865, at the age of two. Rufus Keeler, his wife Ruth Gray Keeler, and his family lived in the West Lane district. A farmer, he died at the age of 64 in 1888. Ruth Keeler, daughter of Jonathan Gray, a native of Weston, and Fannie Keeler, birthplace unknown. She was born March 25, 1829 in Wilton, and was 80 years old when she died Feb. 25, 1910.⁶⁸

Ketchum, Sally: Sally “Ketchum” is a visitor March 5, 1865, after death of Aunt Clara Nash. She came with Kate Wells and Clara Hurlbutt, her sisters. She stays around and is at house March 8. On the 9th, she goes “to Jared’s.” Sally Ketcham is Sarah Maria Olmstead, a sister of Jared N. Olmstead. She married Anthony Ketcham⁶⁹ on Feb. 14, 1844.

King, Grace: The funeral of Grace King is recorded Feb. 15. She had died Feb. 13 at the age of 57. A native of Ridgefield and single, Grace King was born on April 16, 1809, the youngest child of Lt. Joshua King. Lt. King was a Revolutionary soldier who escorted Major John Andre, the spy, to the gallows. Lt. King was a founder of a Ridgefield general store that lasted more than 200 years – most recently as Bedient’s Hardware. He lived at the corner of Main Street and King Lane, where his daughter also lived, probably with her brother, Joshua Ingersoll King. In all, she had nine brothers and sisters. Five of the 10 children of Joshua King and Ann Ingersoll never married.⁷⁰

Laura: See Laura Smith.

Libby See Elizabeth A. Grummun.

Lobdell, Hatty: “Hatty Lobdell & Joshua & Libby G. come here at night after we was abed,” says Jared June 29, 1865. Libby and Hatty visited June 23, 1866. Samuel Lobdell (*q.v*) had a wife and a daughter, both named Harriet. His wife was Harriet Nash. He also had a son, Joshua. Samuel dies Sept. 25, 1865 (*see below*).

Lobdell, Samuel: The death of Samuel Lobdell is reported Sept. 25, 1865, and father goes down to Newark, N.J. apparently to get the body. Samuel – who used to live in the village – was married to Harriet Nash, father’s daughter by his first wife, Roxana Nickerson. The Lobdells were apparently living in Newark. Samuel Lobdell, about 46 at the time of his death, had been a Ridgefield tailor, according to the 1850 census. He married Harriet Nash on Nov. 1, 1840, and they had five children by 1850: Charles N., Joshua H., Harriet E., Arvilla, and a girl whose name could not be deciphered from the census report. Also living with them was Morris Canfield, 20, also a tailor. Headstone records do not show a Samuel Lobdell buried here; perhaps he was buried in Wilton or South Salem.

Lynes, Dr.: Jared and Emmie went to get a “certificate” from him. No record yet found.

Mary Jane: On Dec. 22, 1865, Jared carried a turkey to Jared O. “for Mary Jane.” See Mary Jane Olmstead.

Mead, Lewis and Alanson: Lewis and Alanson Mead, who grew up in South Salem, visit the Nash home May 27, 1865. Alanson married Maria A. Olmstead of Ridgefield in 1834. Born Sept. 27, 1805 in Greenwich, Alanson was son of Eri and Esther (Benedict) Mead, of South Salem, N. Y. He was a colonel in the 38th Regiment, New York State Militia,

from 1830 to 1838, and moved to Colebrook, Conn., in 1859. There, he served in the Connecticut State Legislature. Maria was the daughter of Nathan and Martha Watrous Olmsted of Ridgefield.

Mead, Russell: A farmer who lived on lower Wilton Road East, Russell Mead was active in the Ninth School District. He died in 1877 at the age of 71. He was married April 28, 1830, to Mary Ann Dunning. The Nashes provide him with chickens in January 1865 and 1866. Mead was connected with the family. His wife was Mary Ann Dunning, daughter of John and Lydia Dunning of Wilton. Mary Ann's brother, Richard Dunning, married Mary Henrietta Olmstead, daughter of William Olmstead and Clara Nash Olmstead (*q.v.*). Clara Nash was Father's sister.

Meeker, Francis: Francis Meeker (1818-1868), a Norwalk native, was a farmer who lived just north of the Nashes on Silver Spring Road. Mother visits him Sept. 6, 1865.

Monson: *see* Munson Hoyt.

Mother: *see* Roxy Keeler Nash

Mother Smith: So called Jan. 21, 1865. *See* Polly Northrop Smith.

Munson: *See* Munson Hoyt.

Nash, Abram: Abraham or "Uncle Abram" Nash was father's uncle and Jared's grand uncle.

Nash, Abram S.: Abram St. John Nash may have lived on northern St. Johns Road in an old house still standing opposite and between South Olmstead Lane and Serfilippi Drive. A shoemaker and farmer, he appears a half dozen times during the diary – *see* Oct. 13, 1865, Nov. 10, 1866 and Dec. 12, 1866 in particular. He was married to Sarah A. Gray (1827-1912). Mormon records say Abram St. John Nash was born in Ridgefield Feb. 9, 1822, son of Samuel Olmstead Nash and Glorianna "Anah" St. John Nash⁷¹ – *see* Anah Nash. An Abraham S. Nash, age 28, was living with Anah Nash, 64, and female, in 1850⁷². Jared and Abram are first cousins, once removed. On Feb. 21, 1870, Abram declared himself insolvent⁷³ – unable to pay his debts of \$675 – and appointed Jared N. Olmstead (*q.v.*) to settle his debts using "any real or personal estate of every name and description." He lost his home and many of his belongings; the most expensive thing he was left owning was a \$35 cow. Abram held various town offices over the years including hayward (1860) and surveyor of highways for the Ninth School District (1861).⁷⁴ Abram died July 14, 1906, according to cemetery records⁷⁵.

Nash, Anah: Mother went to visit her June 17, 1865. She was probably ill. Anah Nash was 64 years old in 1850⁷⁶ and was living with Jerry P. Nash, Silvia Nash, and Abraham S. Nash, then 28 and a shoemaker. Anah Nash was born Glorianna St. John June 4, 1785 in Wilton, the daughter

of Samuel St. John and Glorianna Gregory. She married Samuel Olmstead Nash on Jan. 5, 1804⁷⁷. Her death is mentioned in the diary on Oct. 12 as “Aunt Anah died.” The next day, Jared says: “I went up to Abram’s after dinner.” Both this reference and the 1850 census placing Abraham S. Nash and Anah Nash in the same household indicates Abram was the son of Anah. (Glorianna clearly changed how she wanted to be known, preferring Anah and using that name when the census agent came.) Anah had three children, two of whom were dead by this point – including Sylvia. But a Catherine Nash (1808-81) married William Osborn.

Nash, Charles: Father of diarist Jared Nash, Charles was about 72, a farmer, and shoemaker⁷⁸. He was born in Ridgefield⁷⁹ in 1793 and died May 26, 1878 of cancer. He was 84 then.⁸⁰ He was a selectman in 1833, 1834, 1848, 1849, and 1850⁸¹. His father Jared was selectman in 1835 and 1836⁸². He held other offices such as, in 1860, surveyor of highways for the Ninth School District. Despite his position of respect in the community, Charles had serious financial problems and in 1842, declared himself insolvent and unable to pay debts of nearly \$877 – a sizable sum then – and lost his home and much of his property.⁸³ He appointed his father, Jared Nash, as the person to oversee the dispersal of his property to his sundry creditors. David Gedney purchased his homestead, probably at auction, for \$924, but Charles later inherited his father Jared’s place on Silver Spring Road. He was married first to Roxana Nickerson, and by her had at least two children mentioned in the diary: Charles Sanford Nash and Harriet Nash Lobdell. His second wife was Roxy Keeler, mother of Jared. Bedini reports that “a town pound was maintained at Silver Spring near the Wilton line by Charles Nash who lived at the corner of Silver Spring and St. John Roads.”⁸⁴ In his will, dated May 12, 1877, Charles Nash left his grandson, Charles Smith Nash, \$50, and his granddaughter, Emily L. Nash, \$25, plus his “feather bed and bedding consisting of sheets, bolsters, pillows, and quilts sufficient to complete a bed,” and left the rest of his estate to be divided equally between his daughter, Harriet M. Lobdell, and his daughter-in-law, Emily A. Nash. Jared N. Olmstead is appointed executor. Witnesses are D. Smith Gage, J. Cullen and Y. A. Hefft [?].⁸⁵

Nash, Charles: Charley, son of Jared, the diarist. *See* Oct. 6, 1865 for biography.

Nash, Charles Sanford: (1817-1897), half brother of Jared, is a farmer in Lewisboro. He is first mentioned Jan. 21, 1865 as a visitor. He was probably called Sanford to distinguish him from Charles Nash, Jared’s father. Charles Sanford Nash was born in 1817, a son of Charles and Roxana Nash. Thus, he was a half brother of Jared Nash, born about 1825 to Charles and Roxy Nash. The 1850 census shows a Charles S. Nash living in

Lewisboro. By the 1860 census, he is called simply “Sanford Nash.” No doubt, this is the same person. Charles S. Nash is buried at the Ridgefield Cemetery along with his daughter, Roxana Nash Walker, and her husband, Richard R. Walker. The July 2, 1897 Press noted that “Sanford Nash of Flat Rock died at his home Wednesday” and said more information would appear the next week, but none did.

According to town hall records, Charles Sanford Nash died June 30, 1897, at the age of 79 of “pericarditis.”⁸⁶ Ridgefield Vital Records note that on Dec. 27, 1886, Roxana Walker, daughter of Charles S. Nash, died at Flat Rock, aged 43 years, seven months – *see under* Roxana and Charles Walker. In 1900, Annie Walker married Cyrus A. Cornen Jr., a 21-year-old oilman from Pennsylvania. They settled here, but Cornen, who became town clerk, probate judge, and treasurer of St. Stephen’s, stole huge amounts of money from the church and town, and disappeared in 1917, presumably moving to Pennsylvania. After her husband’s death, Annie Cornen returned to Ridgefield, “living with her sister, Mrs. William R. Keeler, at the Keeler homestead on Wilton Road West, and moved with her to Bradford (Vt.) when she went to make her home with her daughter, Mrs. Forrest St. John.”⁸⁷ She died in January 1958 in Bradford. On Oct. 29, 1865, “Sanford, Jane and Charly come over.” On June 11, 1866, “Sanford and Jane come over and spent the day.” *See* entry for “Jane Nash.” Did Sanford have a son child, Charly? The latter seems most likely, based on a legal notice placed in the March 12, 1879 Ridgefield Press by a Charles S. Nash Jr.: “NOTICE – This is to certify that my wife, Amand E. Nash, has left my bed and board without cause or provocation and I hereby forbid any person or persons harboring or trusting her on my account as I will not pay any debts of her contracting. CHAS. S. NASH Jr. March 6th, 1879.” The Ridgefield Press also reported, “Chas. S. Nash Jr. brought into our sanctum last Tuesday one half dozen stalks of rye, measuring six feet, five inches. This rye was grown on the farm of Mr. Sanford Nash, Flat Rock District.”⁸⁸

Nash, Emily Smith: Jared’s wife, *nee* Emily A. Smith (ca. 1832-1901), about 33, seamstress. She is the daughter of Gamaliel and Polly Northrup Smith, who lived on West Lane near Olmstead Lane. Probate records show that Emily, by then a widow, took care of Charles Nash, her father in law, between September 1876 – just after his wife died – and March 1878, two months before he died.⁸⁹

Nash, Emily Louise: (1860-1915), “Emmie,” around 5 and 6 during the diary period, is Jared’s daughter. At the age of 40, she married 60-year-old Daniel Smith Sholes, a banker and merchant (*see* Jan. 30, 1865 and Nov. 9, 1866). Her death record in 1915 calls her Emma, a version she probably preferred to Emily or Emmie.

- Nash, Harry:** He wanted to buy a cow Dec. 30, 1865; unknown, but possibly Henry W. Nash, a tanner who lived in Wilton at the corner of Westport and Chestnut Hill Roads (Route 33 and 53).⁹⁰ Or he may have been Harry Nash, born 1819 in Ridgefield, who married Jane Eliza Northrop⁹¹. They may have moved to Norwalk. Jane Eliza Northrop Darrin was born about 1823. They had a child, Sarah Eliza Nash, born Aug. 11, 1845.⁹²
- Nash, Jane E.:** “Jane” was Sanford’s wife *See also* entry above under “Jane.” Charles Nash’s estate paid Charles S. Nash (“Sanford”) and Jane E. Nash \$200 “for labor” between June 19, 1875 and March 20, 1876. Sanford and Jane were probably taking care of Sanford’s parents – or at least, Sanford’s mother, Roxy, who died in August of 1876.⁹³ Emily A. Nash took over the caring duties after Sanford and Jane. Sanford is buried alone at the Ridgefield Cemetery. Is it possible Jane was from South Salem, where Sanford and Jane lived in the 1850s and 1860s, and that she is buried there? She is not listed in the cemetery index in the Lewisboro town history.
- Nash, Jared:** The diarist. (1825-70), age about 40, farmer, shoemaker. *See* Introduction.
- Nash, Roxy Keeler:** “Mother” of diarist Jared Nash (1794-1876), about 72 at the time of the diary, homemaker. She died Aug. 21, 1876, of “infirmities of old age,”⁹⁴ and her death record says she was 84 years old and born in Wilton. That would have made her birth year around 1792. The Keeler Genealogy says she was born April 1, 1794.⁹⁵ She was Charles’ second wife; his first wife, Roxana, died in 1821. They must have married within a year of Roxana’s death. Roxy, a daughter of Stephen Keeler and Hannah Marvin, was born in Wilton. Her health seems to be good during the period of the diary, though she is probably too frail to deal with the infirmaries of the family, such as her daughter-in-law’s long recuperation from the birth of Charles Nash. Unlike her Methodist husband, Roxy Nash was a member of the First Congregational Church; she professed in 1832.⁹⁶ (Many members of the Keeler clan were Congregationalists.)
- Natallia:** *See* Natalia Hoyt.
- Northrop, Aaron:** Father goes to an auction at his place March 31, 1866. A shoemaker, Aaron Northrop died in 1880 at the age of 69. He, then 39, and his wife or sister, Mariah, 46, lived with Harvey Northrop, 42.
- Northrop, J.:** mentioned Feb. 15, 1865 as Uncle J. Northrop. He was probably Emily Nash’s mother’s brother – possibly named Jared, since her grandfather was also named Jared. Her mother was Polly Northrop before her marriage.
- Northrop, Linus [O.]:** Visits with Benjamin Smith on March 2, 1865, and on June 30, 1865, Jared got a pair of shoes for Emily from him. They sell him a

pig on May 24, 1866. On Sept. 7, 1866, mother went to visit him. The son of Josiah and Rebecca (or Rhuanna) Reed Northrop, he was born 9 Jun 1830⁹⁷ and died Feb. 12, 1914⁹⁸. He married Margaret Wallace Holmes on Sept. 25, 1856⁹⁹. He was a shoemaker and harness maker who lived at 381 Wilton Road West in a house just below Main Street. He was a state representative from Ridgefield in 1886¹⁰⁰. Bedini says of him “among the best known of the harness makers...was Linus O. Northrop, who operated a shop behind his home on Wilton Road West until his death in 1914.”¹⁰¹

Olmstead, Clara Nash: (1800-1865) Aunt Clara is the sister of Jared’s father, Charles Nash, and dies on March 1, 1865 in Port Chester, N.Y. She is the mother of Jared N. Olmstead. Her husband, William, drowned in Norwalk Harbor in 1836. Her son, William, visits March 16, 1865. Jared Nash, her father, calls her “Clarry” in his will.¹⁰²

Olmstead, David W.: David Whitney Olmstead [1800-1877] was a shoemaker who lived in the house at 91 Olmstead Lane owned in 2007 by Jack and Sally Sanders. His wife was Emily Grumman, probably related to Elizabeth Grumman (*q.v.*), who grew up on nearby West Lane. She was the daughter of Caleb and Hester (Dault) Grumman. They had four children: John H. (*q.v.*), Elizabeth, Emily, and David¹⁰³ (who died as a teenager). Caleb and Hester Grumman may have been the parents of Charles Grumman, who married Elizabeth R. Nash, the Libby or E.R.G. who appears often in the diary.

Olmstead, Emily: An Emily Olmstead visits the Nashes on July 7, 1865 with “Mrs. Holmes.” It could have been Emily [1835-1899] who was a daughter of David W. and Emily Olmstead (*see above*). She was a dressmaker, and being about 30 years old at this time, probably grew up with Emily Smith Nash, who was about 33 and who had lived just around the corner from Emily Olmstead before marrying Jared Nash. The visitor could also have been Emily Olmstead’s mother, Emily; for on Aug. 11, 1866, Jared mentions a visit by Emily Olmstead and “girl.” Emily, the daughter, never married.

Olmstead, Ira: Mentioned March 3, 1865 as a visitor after the death of Aunt Clara Nash Olmstead (*q.v.*), Ira Olmstead was a son of Clara Nash Olmstead.¹⁰⁴

Olmstead, Jared (from Redding): Jared Olmstead from Redding visits the Nashes on May 23, 1866. Born Feb. 14, 1793¹⁰⁵, he was the son of Jared and Hannah Betts Olmstead of Ridgefield and was a cabinet-maker.¹⁰⁶ Hannah Betts was the daughter of Gideon and Rachael Betts of Ridgefield, and was born May 10, 1755¹⁰⁷. His father, called “Jared Olmstead, Esq.,” died May 28, 1825, aged 72. Hannah died the next year, age 71. Between the Betts and the Olmstead connections, visitor Jared was probably a distant cousin of diarist Jared Nash.

Olmstead, Jared Nash: (ca.1819-1904) About 46, a farmer, town official, and a cousin of diarist Jared Nash, Jared Olmstead was the son of William and Clara Nash Olmstead. He held many offices in the town: He was a state representative to the General Assembly in 1862 and 1863 and a selectman in 1867 and 1868¹⁰⁸, a constable (1855, 1863), surveyor of highways (1859, 1862, 1866, 1867), member of the Board of Relief (1861, 1864);¹⁰⁹ and active in the Ninth School District affairs. His wife is Rebecca Roscoe (*q.v.*). Sometimes called “J.N.O.,” but usually just “Jared,” he lived what is now 90 St. Johns Road at the curve just south of Windy Ridge. This house remained in the Olmstead family until the 1970s! This had earlier been the home of Jared Nash, father of Charles Nash and grandfather of diarist Jared Nash. According to an inventory of Grandfather Jared Nash’s property at the time of his death in 1860, the farm consisted of more than 110 acres plus a house, barn, and cornhouse.

Olmstead, John H. and Maria: On April 19, 1866, Jared mentions that “John H. Olmstead’s wife was dead.” Maria Whitlock Olmstead died that day of “placenta praevia,”¹¹⁰ a complication of pregnancy in which the placenta is too low in the uterus and can cause hemorrhaging. She was only 30 years old. Maria was born in Ridgefield on July 24, 1835, a daughter of Joseph and Polly Smith Whitlock.¹¹¹ She married John Henry Olmstead on Oct. 26, 1859.¹¹² No children survived her. John Henry was a son of David Whitney and Emily Grumman Olmstead.

Olmstead, Mary Jane: On Dec. 22, 1865, Jared Nash picked a turkey and delivered it to Jared Nash Olmstead “for Mary Jane.” Mary Jane Olmstead was Charles Nash’s niece and Jared N. Olmstead’s sister-in-law. Born in 1830 in Norwalk, daughter of Charles and Mary Emeline Brown Lockwood, Mary Jane Lockwood married Charles Olmstead on Dec. 8, 1850, in Port Chester, N.Y.¹¹³ Charles was a son of William and Clara Nash Olmstead (*q.v.*) as was Jared N. Olmstead. Mary Jane is probably not well, for she dies May 26, 1866 in Norwalk (the death is not mentioned in the diary, but Jared does note that Father traveled to Norwalk that day). Charles subsequently marries Nannie Ells Taylor.

Olmstead, Rebecca: She is the wife of Jared N. Olmstead. Born Rebecca Ruscoe in Lewisboro, she died Jan. 26, 1886 at the age of 56, making her around 35 at the time of the diary.

Olmstead, Stephen: The death of Stephen Olmstead, another shoemaker, is mentioned June 15. He died June 14 at the age of 71. Born in 1794, he was the son of Matthew Olmstead and brother of David W. Olmstead, whose daughter married Emily Nash’s brother, John B. Smith. Stephen lived on Olmstead Lane in the house owned for many years by Paul and Kathryn Rosa.

- Olmstead, William:** William Oscar Olmstead was a son of Aunt Clara Nash Olmstead (*q.v.*) and twin brother of Clara Amanda Olmstead Hurlburt (*q.v.*), who had visited on March 5. Born April 9, 1832, he was Jared's first cousin and probably lived in Port Chester, N.Y.
- Osborn, Lockwood:** He and his wife visit with Mr. Holmes on July 9, 1866. Lockwood Keeler Osborn was a son of Ashahel and Nancy Keeler Osborn.¹¹⁴ Nancy Keeler [1780-1812] was a daughter of Stephen and Hannah Marvin Keeler¹¹⁵, and thus was a sister of Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother. He is Jared's cousin.
- Osborn, William:** Visits with his daughter July 31, 1865. Jared Nash and William Osborn are first cousins. William's mother, Nancy Keeler Osborn, was a sister of Jared's mother, Roxy Keeler Nash. Since they stayed overnight, the Osborns probably lived in another town some distance away. William was born in Ridgefield on April 19, 1812, a son of Asahel and Nancy Keeler Osborn.
- Patrick:** Jared helped "Patrick" plaster potatoes on July 4, 1865; Patrick and Abram had helped plant potatoes May 16, 1865. He may have been a recently arrived Irish immigrant.
- Patrick, D.:** He brought a yearling to the Nashes to pasture May 23 1865. Probably Daniel *Partrick* – Jared leaving out the "r," a common mistake with this name. About 60 years old at this time, Mr. Partrick lived on Wilton Road West and was treasurer of the Ninth or Flat Rock School District. He was married Eliza Esther Keeler. Daniel Partrick was town hayward in 1862.
- Perry, Isabell:** Isabell Perry, only 20 years old, had died March 20 of typhoid fever. A Fairfield native, she was an "instructor" at the Flat Rock Schoolhouse and died while in her first year on the job. She is not buried here, though her father was probably living here at the time of her death. She had been hired Oct. 17, 1864, at \$12 a month to teach the winter session. Libby Grumman may have taken over her job when she fell sick – *see* March 8, 1865. It's not clear who Samuel Perry (*q.v.*) was.
- Perry, Dr.:** The Perry family administered to the health needs of Ridgefield for more than a century, starting with Dr. David Perry, who graduated from Yale in 1772 and died in 1822. He was a minister at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church just after the Revolution. He was followed by his son, Dr. Nehemiah Perry [1790-1866], and his grandson, Dr. Nehemiah Perry Jr. [1827-1909]. Nehemiah Sr., who lived on Main Street, established the Glenburgh Mills and Chemical Works in Georgetown to produce medicines, spices, and chemicals, such as dyes. "Certainly many of the doctor's wares brought happiness to the housewife and efficacious remedy," wrote Historian George L. Rockwell. Bottles that held Dr. Perry's patent medicines are dug up from time to time from old dumps around Ridgefield. One of the most

famous of his medicines was “Demulcent Compound for Coughs and Colds.” When Dr. Perry died Feb. 19, 1866, the Nashes attended his funeral. In 1865, Dr. Perry was quite ill and Jared is probably seeing his son, Dr. Nehemiah Jr., who took over his father’s practice, which was located in the Perry home, two doors south of the Keeler Tavern. Samuel Lobdell, who lived in Newark, N.J., and died Sept. 25, was probably a member of the old Ridgefield Lobdell family, but his birth is not recorded in old Ridgefield records.

Perry, Samuel: An entry on March 22, 1865, mentions that Samuel Perry’s daughter had died – *see* Isabella Perry. A Samuel Perry was elected surveyor of highways in the Seventh School District in 1859¹¹⁶, indicating that he lived in the West Lane School District.

Quintard, Walter: Walter Quintard, mentioned Sept. 6, 1865, lived in South Norwalk and was married to Sarah Smith, sister of Emily Nash, Jared’s wife. Thus, he was Jared’s brother-in-law. A well-known businessman in Norwalk, he was a partner in the carriage-making firm of Quintard and Smith – the Smith was probably someone else in Emily’s family. Quintard once worked in the carriage factory in the Big Shop where the First Congregational Church now is on West Lane – which may be how he met his wife, who grew up a quarter mile west on West Lane. He started his own firm in Norwalk and became successful enough in life to have been selected mayor of South Norwalk

Rany: *See* Rany Briggs.

Rebecca: *See* Rebecca Olmstead.

Rhoda: *See* Mrs. Keeler. She shows up Oct. 9, 1865, shortly after Charles Nash is born. She also visits with Hulda on Dec. 11, 1865. She visits the Nashes to take care of Emily on Oct. 8, 1865.

Richard and Roxanna: They visit Sept. 3, 1865, and March 27, 1866. Unknown, but *see under* “Roxanna and Richard.”

Rockwell, Lucy: Father carries a half cord of wood there Feb. 26, 1866. Connection unknown.

Roscoe, Alva: On April 11, 1865, the Nashes sold a shoat to Alva “Ruscoe.” Alva Roscoe lived in Wilton.¹¹⁷ Rebecca Olmstead, wife of Jared Nash’s cousin, Jared N. Olmstead, was born Rebecca Ruscoe, but her family was from Lewisboro. Perhaps Alva was a relative of Rebecca. Alva lived next door to John St. John (*q.v.*) In 1850, when he was 21, he had a wife, Julia A?, who was 19.¹¹⁸

Roxanna and Richard: *See* Roxana and Richard Walker.

St. John, Bela: On July 30, 1865, “Bela St. John brought Aunt Lucy here and left her.” He also visits with his wife July 5, 1866. Bela St. John was a farmer who lived in northern Wilton. He was married to Esther Keeler, sister of Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared’s mother, and was thus Jared’s uncle. He was probably the son of Bela and Martha Northrop St. John¹¹⁹, and

was about 38 years old when he visited. These St. Johns were an old Wilton and Norwalk family, probably related to the Nashes through Aunt Lucy Keeler Dudley (*q.v.*). Hurd's History of Fairfield County says "Bela St. John, M.D., son of Bela St. John, practiced dentistry several years in Danbury."¹²⁰ *See also* Francis Church.

St. John, James: On March 22, 1866, Jared says: "Went up to see James St. John. He is sick." Jared typically uses "up" and "down" to indicate north and south so James probably lived north of him (there were two James St. Johns living to the south in Wilton in 1850). A James R. St. John died of phthisis – a wasting away of the lungs, such as from tuberculosis – Oct. 15, 1896, aged 71 years, nine months. He would have been around the same age as Jared.¹²¹ James R. St. John was a teacher in the Flat Rock School district.¹²² On Feb. 14, 1856, James, 31, married Matilda Keeler, 26. Both were born in Ridgefield. Clinton Clark performed the ceremony. Matilda was the daughter of Matthew Keeler and Sally Ann Smith. She was born Oct. 22, 1827 and died Oct. 22, 1910, on her 83rd birthday.¹²³ James R. St. John was surveyor of highways in the Ninth School District in 1864.¹²⁴

St. John, John O.: Jared sells John Osborn St. John a pig for \$10 on June 15, 1866. (*See also* under Alva Roscoe). St. John probably lived in the Redding section of Georgetown, for he was an organizer in 1839 of the first Methodist Protestant church in Redding, which was situated in Georgetown. The congregation was organized at a meeting held at the house of Sturges Bennett. "The following officers were chosen. David Nichols, chairman, John O. St. John, secretary. John O. St. John was duly elected clerk of said society, and the oath was administered by Walker Bates, Esq. John O. St. John was also elected Treasurer of said society."¹²⁵ Mr. St. John and Charles Scribner built the church building that year. John O. St. John was an avid abolitionist, and was also treasurer of the Georgetown Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1838 – it was one of the first such societies in Connecticut. It was not, however, a popular organization, and Todd reports that when members had their first meeting on a Monday night at the Baptist Church in Georgetown, a mob outside "was so violent that the meeting was adjourned until Tuesday evening. All through Tuesday there was great commotion among the enemies of the cause, and this culminated in the evening, when a mob composed of men and boys, some with painted faces and some wearing masks, surrounded the church and assailed it with stones, clubs and hideous outcries. Being dispersed by the citizens, the band betook itself to quieter mischief. Dr. Hudson drove to the meeting a beautiful milk-white horse, and on that night his tail was sheared so closely that it resembled a corn-cob; and other outrages were committed."¹²⁶

Samuel Perry's daughter: *See* Isabell Perry.

Sanford: *see* Charles Sanford Nash

Scott, A.: Unknown person, but possibly Amelias Scott, shown on the 1860 census.

Scott, Nathan: Father goes to his funeral May 14, 1865. Scott, a well-known local farmer, died May 12 at the age of 78 and had lived on North Salem Road at Barlow Mountain Road.

Seymour, Abiah: The person called "Aunt Biar" on July 6, 1865, is probably Biah or Abiah Seymour, who lived on upper Wilton Road West. She was the daughter of Abraham and Sarah Nash – Jared's great grandparents – making her Jared's great aunt. The widow of Thaddeus Seymour, she died of pneumonia April 5, 1869 at the age of 86,¹²⁷ and was probably somewhat infirm at this time. Thus, the visit July 6 was probably to an ailing aunt. The Olmstead genealogy says she was born April 21, 1782 and married Thaddeus Seymour. It says she died Nov. 13, 1862¹²⁸ but her headstone says April 4, 1869¹²⁹ and town hall records, April 5. She had six children, including Hiram L. Seymour (*see* Hiram Seymour below).

Seymour, Benjamin: Visits June 19, 1866. Benjamin Seymour and his wife Eliza lived in Wilton. He was a shoemaker. They had a daughter, Jane, who was 25 in 1850. Benjamin was about 70 at this time.¹³⁰ Why he is "Uncle" is unclear, but it probably has to do with the relationship of his wife, Eliza, with the Nashes or the Smiths.

Seymour, G.: On March 25, 1865, Jared drove a farrow cow to G. Seymour's. On June 3, Father bought a heifer from G. Seymour. Possibly George W. Seymour, living in Ridgefield in 1860¹³¹. He was born April 10, 1837 and died Nov. 20, 1896¹³² and is buried, with a bunch of other Seymours, in the Ridgefield Cemetery. Seymour was the "committee" or manager of the Ninth School District in 1866 and 1867.

Seymour, Hiram: Maybe the "Hiram" mentioned May 12, 1865. *See* June 10, 1866, when Hiram's wife pays a visit with Jared and Rebecca Olmstead. Hiram was 45 years old in 1850 and had a wife named Margaretta¹³³. They had several children and lived on Wilton Road West, opposite and north of St. John's Road. Hiram died Oct. 1, 1887, aged 81, and Margaretta, Nov. 9, 1877, aged 72.¹³⁴ Barbour's index says she's Margaret Pike, and they were married Dec. 26, 1830. Her (probably) sister Elizabeth married a Richard B. Pike in 1838.¹³⁵ Margaretta Pike was born in 1804 in Fairfield, daughter of Lt. William Pike and Molly Thorp Darrow.^{136 137}

Seymour, William: Jared went to see him to get a pick sharpened on April 10, 1866. William Seymour, then about 49 years old, was a blacksmith and native of Wilton¹³⁸. He probably lived on Olmstead Lane.¹³⁹ On June 25, 1868, the Rev. Francis Russell married William W. Seymour, 52, to

Mary E. Dauchy, 38. He was a blacksmith, born in Wilton. She was born in Carmel, N.Y. He was a widower, she single.¹⁴⁰

Sherwood, Purdy: Father goes to an auction there March 28, 1866. Sherwood had died June 5, 1865. A native of New Castle in Westchester County, Sherwood was born in 1808 and married Sarah Lockwood, also of New Castle but of Norwalk stock. They lived in Wilton from at least 1835 until 1859, during which time they had 12 children.

Sholes, Daniel: Nashes visit Jan. 23, 1866. Daniel Sholes (1800-1889) lived in the West Lane district. Daniel, who came here from Vermont and was 65 years old at this time, was the father of D. Smith Sholes, who was 25 at this time and who was the town's probate judge in the 1870s. In 1900, D. Smith Sholes married Emmie Nash (*q.v.*), Jared's daughter, who was only five years old at the time of this visit. D. Smith Sholes died in 1907, aged 67. Daniel Sholes, who died in 1889 at the age of 89, was a shoemaker, like Jared and his father. The fact that his son was named D. Smith Sholes indicates that perhaps Daniel Sholes was somehow connected with the Smith clan. His wife, Catherine, was probably his second wife; for Daniel Sholes married Clarry Beers in 1825 and she appears to have died in 1837. Catherine Smith Sholes was born in Ridgefield on July 11, 1807¹⁴¹, daughter of Daniel and Phebe W. Smith, and died June 13, 1891,¹⁴² age 83.

Smith, Amos: Amos Smith Jr. (1811-1872) and Jared Nash are first cousins. Amos was a farmer who in 1838 married Esther A. Lee (1814-1888) of Farmingville District. Their home was on Main Street at the north corner of Gilbert Street, near where his parents, Amos Sr. and Sarah Keeler Smith, had also lived. In 1850¹⁴³, Amos Sr. and Sarah, then 81 and 76 respectively, had their granddaughter Laura Smith, 16, living with them; Laura's parents, John and Lucy Keeler Smith, had died a year apart in the 1830s. Amos and Esther were living nearby with Sarah M. Smith, age 7. Amos Sr. and Sarah also had a daughter, Millicent Smith (*q.v.*), who married Samuel Ingersoll. Milly Ingersoll's death on Dec. 24, 1865, is recorded in the diary. Jared's mother, Roxy Keeler Nash, was Sarah Keeler, mother of Amos Jr.; thus, Jared was a first cousin of Amos Jr. Amos Smith's wife and Libby visited July 14, 1865. Various legal documents involving Elizabeth R. Grummun, Charles Nash's sister, such as mortgages in the 1870s, use Amos Smith as a witness; Amos and Elizabeth were first cousins.

Smith, Benjamin: Mentioned March 2, 1865 as visiting with Linus Northrop. A Benjamin Smith was born in Ridgefield around 1782, son of Benjamin and Hannah Stebbins Smith.

Smith, C.: There was an auction at his or her place March 16, 1865. Identity unknown. No death or probate records on an auction have been found.

Smith, Catherine: *See* Catherine Sholes under Daniel Sholes.

- Smith, Daniel:** “Uncle Daniel” of Jan. 3, 1865 funeral is probably the brother of Emily Smith’s father, Gamaliel. He was 74 at his death, was a local merchant, and is buried in Ridgefield Cemetery. His wife, Sarah (*q.v.*), died April 19, 1880 at the age of 89 and is buried next to him.
- Smith, Daniel #2:** On Aug. 11, 1865, “Daniel come down to tell Emily that a trunk of vests had come.” This may be Daniel Smith, brother of Emily. It might also be Daniel Sholes (*q.v.*) “Daniel Smith” comes Nov. 25.
- Smith, E.:** *See* Egbert Smith.
- Smith, Egbert:** On Aug. 17, 1865, “E. Smith’s wife, Phebe Ann,” visits. Later in the diary, an Egbert Smith visits. An Egbert Smith and his wife Phebe Wilber were living in Dutchess County, N.Y. in the first half of the 19th Century. The relationship to the Nashes is unknown. Another Egbert Smith, a butcher, was a selectman in Wilton from 1870 to 1873¹⁴⁴; his wife, however, was Harriet. Nonetheless, it seems likely that Wilton Egbert Smith is the one who is involved in any livestock transaction, such as Sept. 29, 1865, when Egbert Smith buys a heifer.
- Smith, Emily:** *See* Emily Smith Nash.
- Smith, Gamaliel:** Gamaliel Smith, Emily Nash’s father, died Feb. 15, 1861 – before the diary begins. A shoemaker, he was 73 years old and had been born in Ridgefield¹⁴⁵. His parentage is unknown. However, a Gamaliel Smith died in Ridgefield Jan. 5, 1782, probably the son of Samuel Smith 3rd and Mary Smith.¹⁴⁶ The 1850 Census shows Gamaliel Smith being married to “Mary,” age 56.
- Smith, George:** Mentioned Jan. 9, 1865; possibly another brother of Gamaliel Smith, who was father of Emily. 1850 Census shows a George Smith, then 18 and a cabinetmaker, son of Henry and Ann Smith, who lived very close to the Gamaliel Smith homestead. Father and mother visit G. Smith June 23, 1865; Mother visits him on Aug. 30, 1865 and again, Dec. 3, 1865, and spends the night June 29, 1866. Henry and Anna Smith are buried virtually next to Uncle Daniel Smith (*q.v.*) and his wife, Sarah. A George Smith died Dec. 8, 1874, age 87 years, 8 months. His wife, Emma, died Nov. 21, 1896, age 87 years, 1 month. George and Emma had at least seven children, five of whom died young. They are buried near Amos and Sarah Smith (who died in mid-1850s)¹⁴⁷
- Smith, John Betts:** “John’s folks was down from Carmel” on July 16, 1865. John’s wife and Laura from Carmel visit July 30, 1866. John is Emily Nash’s brother and part of the Smith clan lived about 15 miles away in Carmel, N.Y., as did John for a while. John was born April 2, 1829. In 1850, he was 21 and living on West Lane with his parents¹⁴⁸. The Olmstead Genealogy says he married Elizabeth Olmstead on Nov. 23, 1859 and a daughter, Caroline Elizabeth Smith, was born Feb. 4, 1865, but the event does not show up in the diary¹⁴⁹. Elizabeth Olmstead was

the daughter of David Whitney Olmstead and Emily Grumman Olmstead, who lived just off West Lane on Olmstead Lane, and was born Feb. 21, 1833.¹⁵⁰ However, Ridgefield vital records indicate that John B. Smith married Elizabeth Smith on Feb. 26, 1843. Ridgefield records also say that Elizabeth Smith, widow of John B. Smith and “daughter of Gamaliel and Mercy Smith,” both Ridgefield natives, died on West Lane on April 10, 1883, age 61 years, 9 months and 23 days. That would indicate she was born in Ridgefield June 17, 1821. The parentage may be an error; perhaps Samuel, not Gamaliel; thus, she could be the daughter of Samuel and Mercy Smith, who were a Ridgefield couple that died a week apart in 1880 – Samuel at age 83, and Mercy, 82.

Smith, Laura: About 46 years old, Laura Smith is a sister of Emily Smith Nash, and lived on West Lane. She often visits the household, especially when Emily is recuperating from the birth of Charly. Laura Smith died Jan 2, 1910, age 90.9.4. Born in Ridgefield March 29, 1819. Both her parents were born in Ridgefield, but their names are not given in the records.

Smith, N.R.: His wife visits Feb. 22, 1865. Could it be H.R. Smith? As in Henry? Or is it Nathan R. Smith, son of farmer Nathan Smith, who was 60 years old in 1850.

Smith, Oliver: He is Frederick Oliver Smith, (1840-1914), a Ridgefield native. Emily goes to the funeral of his wife, Pauline, on June 9, 1866. Possibly a farmer then, he later became a clerk in Danbury. He never remarried.

Smith, Pauline: Pauline Smith, nee Miller, was the wife of Frederick Oliver Smith. She died June 7, 1866, possibly in childbirth, and Emily goes to her funeral June 9. Born in 1840, daughter of Enos and Sarah Northrop Miller, she married Oliver in 1864. Both are buried in Scott’s Cemetery and both their gravestones have toppled over.

Smith, Phebe Ann: See Egbert Smith

Smith, Polly Northrop: Polly Smith was the mother of Jared’s wife, Emily A. Smith Nash. The widow of Gamaliel Smith, she is first mentioned Jan. 21, 1865. She was born in Ridgefield on March 20, 1794, a daughter of Jared and Eunice Betts Northrop,¹⁵¹ and died May 13, 1881. She is buried in an old Smith cemetery on lower West Lane. The 1850 Census calls her “Mary.”

Smith, Sarah: She visits Sept. 8, 1865 with Libby Grumman. She may have been the Sarah Smith who was the widow of Daniel Smith (*q.v.*) who died Dec. 30, 1864, just before the diary started. Daniel was a brother of Emily’s father, Gamaliel Smith. Sarah died in 1880 at the age of 89. However, she may also have been Sarah M. Smith, daughter of Amos (*q.v.*) and Esther Smith of Main Street, who would have been about 21 years old at this point. On Sept. 24, 1865, “Amos Smith, his wife, and Libby” visited the Nashes, so it’s possible Sarah is their daughter.

- Smith, Stephen:** On Oct. 27, Stephen Smith and his wife visit. This may have been Jared's first cousin. Roxy Keeler Nash, Jared's mother, had a sister, Sarah, who married Amos Smith, and their son, Stephen, lived in Ridgefield for several years in the 1850s, and then moved to Michigan¹⁵². Perhaps this Stephen, with his wife Marcia, was visiting in the area and heard of Charles Nash's birth. Marcia's family was from New Milford; Stephen's, from Wilton
- Taylor, Mrs.:** Her funeral is mentioned March 12, 1865 as being at Mr. Edmond's place. Urania Taylor, age 87, had died on March 9. A widow and native of the Greenfield section of Fairfield, she may have been related to Mr. Edmonds and to the Taylors who operated the mill – *see* Jan. 12, 1865. Edmonds was probably R.C. Edmonds who lived on the south side of Silver Hill Road, a little west of Wilton Road West. He and Jared's grandfather, Jared Nash, had served together on the committee that erected the new Flat Rock Schoolhouse in 1846-47.
- Uncle Abram:** *See* Abram Nash.
- Walker, Roxana and Richard:** They visit Sept. 3, 1865 and March 27 1866; this is Roxana Nash Walker and her husband, Richard. Roxana was born in Ridgefield May 27, 1843, a daughter of Charles Sanford Nash and an undetermined mother. She was thus Jared Nash's niece. She married Richard Walker and she died Dec. 27, 1886, at "Flat Rock," aged 43 years, seven months. Richard R. Walker was born on March 5, 1841, probably in New York City. She and Richard Walker had two children, one of whom was Annie Mae Walker, who inherited the Nash farm on Silver Spring Road after the death of her father Nov. 5, 1890¹⁵³. She married Cyrus A. Cornen Jr. of Ridgefield in 1900. In 1916, Cornen, then the town clerk, probate judge and treasurer of St. Stephen's Church, was caught stealing thousands of dollars from church and bank accounts. He quietly left town, but after his death some years later, Annie Cornen returned to Ridgefield, "living with her sister, Mrs. William R. Keeler, at the Keeler homestead on Wilton Road West, and moved to Bradford (Vt.) when she went to make her home with her daughter, Mrs. Forrest St. John."¹⁵⁴ She died in Jan. 19, 1958 at the age of 83. Cornen's father and grandfather were both prominent and wealthy Ridgefielders in the 19th Century.¹⁵⁵
- Wells, John:** Mentioned March 3, 1865, as a visitor after the death of Aunt Clara Nash Olmsted. Probably James Armstrong Wells, who married to Kate (Catherine Olmsted) Wells, mentioned March 5 as a visitor. James and Kate were married March 15, 1848, in Chester, Orange County, N.Y.¹⁵⁶ Kate was a daughter of Clara Nash Olmsted (*q.v.*)
- Wells, Kate:** *see* John (James) Wells.
- Willie:** He plastered corn July 7, 1865. Unidentified, but may be Willie Olmstead – *see* Nov. 11, 1865. In an 1875 deed for the farm from

Charles Nash to his son, Charles S. Nash, one of the witnesses was Willie E. Duncan; the other was D. Smith Gage.¹⁵⁷

The Places

- At the door:** At the dooryard, probably just outside the back door of the house.
- Bailey's:** Bailey's general store, in what's now part of the Aldrich Museum. *See* April 24, 1865 and Dec. 29, 1865.
- Bald Hill:** Bald Hill is the section of Wilton along northern Route 33 (Ridgefield Road). For many years, the Bald Hill Methodist Church stood there, and members of the Nash family attended services at this church.
- +Brown's Mill:** Nashes had salt ground there June 13, 1865, and went there with feed Oct. 5, 1865. Sylvenus L. Brown operated grist and saw mills in the Vista hamlet of Lewisboro where Brown's Reservoir is today. The site is just off Silver Spring Road shortly after it meanders into New York State after traveling through Wilton.¹⁵⁸
- Church:** *See* Jan. 22, 1865. Probably the Methodist Church.
- Comstock's Store:** On Ridgefield Road (Route 33) in Wilton at Olmstead Hill Road, operated by James Comstock.
- Depot:** Mentioned from time to time, such as April 17, 1865, the depot is probably the Wilton station. For the Nashes, it was as close – perhaps closer than – the Ridgefield Station at Branchville. (Service from the village station in Ridgefield was not available until 1870.)
- Factory (wool):** On July 11, 1865, Father went “to factory with wool.” The factory here was probably Elias N. and John Glover's woolen factory on the banks of the Norwalk River near the northern corner of Route 7 and Topstone Road. Founded around 1770 by Hugh Cain, after whom Cain's Hill is named, the mill factory processed, wove, and dyed wool.)
- Gilbert's Mill:** *See* Jan. 21, 1865. During the period of the diary, Harry Gilbert operated the grist, cider and saw mills along Saw Mill Hill Road at the Titicus Village.
- H. Gilbert's Mill:** *See* Jan. 20, 1865. H. stands for Harry.
- Gregory's Mill:** A saw mill in Wilton along today's Route 7, just north of the Route 33 intersection. Gregory also had a cider mill there. Today, there is still a saw mill on the site. Father went with feed Dec. 18, 1865.
- Hoyt's Nursery:** Mentioned April 8, 1865, located in New Canaan.
- Hurlbutt's:** Hurlbutt's Market on Market Street – see Sereno Hurlbutt.
- Nash farm** was on Silver Spring Road, opposite St. John's Road. By 1875, when Charles Nash mortgages the farm to his daughter, Elizabeth R. Grummun, the farm consists of at least 45 acres, but was probably larger since not all the land appeared to be included in the mortgage. The main property then was described as bounded north by Augustus Ri(t)ch, Edwin Benedict's wife, and Roxy Nash; east by James R. St.

John, land of wife of Edwin Benedict, and highway; south by Hiram L. Seymour; west by Joshua I. King, Daniel Partrick, heirs of Irad Hawley, and Jere Bennett. Also, 15 acres bound south by heirs of Jared N. St. John, and all other sides by highway.¹⁵⁹ Also in 1875, Charles Nash sells his son, Charles S. Nash the farm, including 30 acres, “reserving the use of the above described property during the natural lives of myself and wife. Also that the said Charles S. Nash is to cancel the mortgage now on said property of ten hundred and seventy dollars.”¹⁶⁰ A year later, Charles S. Nash quit claims the property back to Charles,¹⁶¹ and Elizabeth R. Grummun quitclaims her interest to Charles, thereby canceling the mortgage,¹⁶² and then Charles and Roxy transfer five acres to Grummun.

Ninth School District included most of Wilton Road West, lower Wilton Road East, St. John’s Road, lower Silver Spring Road, and Silver Hill Road. The schoolhouse was located on Wilton Road West, Route 33, near the sharp curve just south of Woodchuck Lane. The Nashes and many of the others mentioned in the diary, such as Jared N. Olmstead and Russell Mead, were active in the operation of the school.

Taylor’s Mill: A grist mill situated on Norwalk River just north of Stonehenge Inn. Nashes get feed ground there Jan. 12, 1865. Father goes there April 1, 1865 and other times. On Nov. 24, he got rye flour there, after going to Gilbert’s mill with corn. Operated by David Taylor.

“Up West Lane” meant the Smith homes on West Lane, between Olmstead Lane and Silver Spring Road, where Emily grew up.

¹ Beers Atlas of 1867

² Ridgefield Vital Records

³ 1850 Census

⁴ Olmstead Genealogy

⁵ Ridgefield Vital Records (RVR)

⁶ Ridgefield Land Records (RLR) 26/83 of 1875; Charles Nash takes out mortgage with daughter, Elizabeth R. Grummun.

⁷ IGI

⁸ I had reported this in 1979, but my source is unknown.

⁹ Keeler genealogy (by Wesley)

¹⁰ Marvin genealogy

¹¹ Olmstead Genealogy

¹² 1850 Census

- 13 Rockwell
- 14 History of Ancient Woodbury.
- 15 Dotty Kinnun, e-mail, August 2001
- 16 Town Meeting Records, town hall
- 17 Records of the Ninth School District
- 18 Press, Jan. 18, 1895
- 19 Press, Aug. 16, 1934
- 20 Whitlock's map
- 21 Probate Court records
- 22 1850 Census
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Headstone Inscriptions
- 25 Barbour
- 26 Barbour and Headstone Inscriptions
- 27 Headstone Inscriptions says July 31, but vital records indicate Aug. 21.
- 28 Probate Court records
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Concise History of First Congregational Church
- 31 Deed descriptions plus Clark's map of 1856, showing Rufus Pickett home; sold to him by E.R.G.
[RLR 19/324, Aug. 28, 1850]
- 32 RLR
- 33 Clark's Map of Fairfield County
- 34 Ridgefield Probate Records
- 35 RLR 26/83
- 36 RLR 28/425
- 37 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 38 Rockwell
- 39 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 40 1860 Census (no sheets)
- 41 IGI
- 42 Headstone Inscription and probate records.
- 43 Hoyt Genealogy, page 437

- 44 Headstone Inscriptions
- 45 Ridgefield Vital Records for Natalia Hoyt
- 46 RLR Feb. 20 1875, Vol. 26 p 465
- 47 Ridgefield Probate Records
- 48 *ibid.*
- 49 *ibid.*
- 50 Hoyt Genealogy
- 51 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 52 Ridgefield Press, May 27, 1909
- 53 1850 Census
- 54 Resseguie diary
- 55 Bedini's Ridgefield in Review
- 56 Town Meeting Records, town hall
- 57 Bedini
- 58 Ingersoll Genealogy
- 59 Pardee Genealogy
- 60 1850 Census
- 61 History of Lewisboro
- 62 Lockwood Genealogy
- 63 Barbour
- 64 Lockwood Genealogy
- 65 Hurd
- 66 *ibid.*
- 67 History of Fairfield County by D. Hamilton Hurd, 1881, and Notable Ridgefielders
- 68 RVR
- 69 Correspondence with Roger O. Olmsted, family genealogist, Dec. 7, 2000.
- 70 Ingersoll Genealogy
- 71 IGI
- 72 1850 Census
- 73 Ridgefield Probate Records
- 74 Town Meeting records, town hall

- 75 Headstone Inscriptions
- 76 1850 census
- 77 Colonial Pa. Families, <http://www.icubed.com/~ldill/index.html>
- 78 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 79 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 80 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 81 Rockwell
- 82 Rockwell
- 83 Ridgefield Probate Court records
- 84 Ridgefield in Review, page 36
- 85 Ridgefield Probate Records for Charles Nash.
- 86 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 87 Obituary, Ridgefield Press, Jan. 30, 1958, page 2A.
- 88 Ridgefield Press, June 9, 1882
- 89 Ridgefield Probate records for Charles Nash.
- 90 1850 Census and Beers
- 91 LDS Ancestral File Anne H. Sanford
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Ridgefield Probate Records for Charles Nash
- 94 RVR
- 95 Vol. 1, page 90.
- 96 Concise History of First Congregational Church
- 97 Headstone Inscription calculation
- 98 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 99 IGI
- 100 Rockwell
- 101 Bedini, page 168
- 102 Will drawn Jan. 19, 1850 and filed in Ridgefield Probate Court
- 103 1850 Census
- 104 Correspondence with Roger O. Olmsted, family historian, Dec. 7, 2000.
- 105 Abridged Olmstead Genealogy

- 106 1850 Census
- 107 Abridged Olmstead Genealogy
- 108 Rockwell's History of Ridgefield
- 109 Town Meeting Record Book, town hall.
- 110 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 111 Olmstead genealogy
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 Lockwood Genealogy
- 114 IGI
- 115 Keeler Genealogy
- 116 Town Meeting Records, town hall
- 117 1850 Census
- 118 1850 Census
- 119 Descendants of Reinold and Matthew Marvin
- 120 History of Fairfield County by D. Hamilton Hurd, 1881
- 121 Headstone Inscriptions
- 122 Minutes of Ninth School District
- 123 RVR
- 124 Town Meeting Records, town hall
- 125 Todd's History of Redding, pages 120-21
- 126 Todd, pages 137-38
- 127 RVR
- 128 Olmstead Genealogy
- 129 Headstone Inscriptions
- 130 1850 Census
- 131 1860 Census
- 132 Headstone Inscriptions
- 133 Headstone Inscriptions
- 134 Headstone Inscriptions
- 135 Barbour
- 136 IGI

- 137 Fairfield Families (she's Margaret, bapt. 1805 there)
- 138 1850 Census
- 139 Beers Atlas
- 140 Ridgefield Vital Records
- 141 Headstone Inscriptions
- 142 Ridgefield Vital Records; also Ridgefield Press, June 19, 1891
- 143 1850 Census
- 144 Hurd
- 145 RVR
- 146 RVR
- 147 Headstone inscriptions.
- 148 1850 Census
- 149 Olmstead Genealogy
- 150 Olmstead Genealogy
- 151 IGI
- 152 Noble Genealogy by Lucius Boltwood
- 153 Filed 1897 on the Ridgefield Land Records, vol. 35, page 159.
- 154 Press Jan. 30, 1958, page 2A
- 155 Haight's History of St. Stephen's Church
- 156 Correspondence with Roger O. Olmsted, family genealogist, Dec. 7, 2000
- 157 RLR 26/501, dated July 24, 1875.
- 158 Beers
- 159 RLR 26/83
- 160 RLR 26/501 dated July 24, 1875
- 161 RLR 26/535
- 162 See right after.