

Turner Family Memories by Connie (Turner) Tefft, 83 years old.

“Here are some of my family memories. I lived with my Mom and Dad, Gladys (Schumacher) & Steb Turner, and my five brothers, Steve, Frederick “Mike,” Wesley and Walter Turner, in the old Turner homestead in South Lancaster until I was eighteen [in 1939]. I went to Lancaster public schools, attending grade school at the Narrow Lane district school in South Lancaster and later the Lancaster High School on the Town Green at Lancaster Centre. I also attended Worcester Trade School where I took up hairdressing but never did work in that field. My mom was a teacher and my Dad was a blacksmith. The blacksmith shop was across the street from the house on Sterling Rd. His father also was a blacksmith. I remember my Dad making his own horseshoes on a forge and nailing them on the horses’ hooves. He wore a heavy leather apron so the sparks wouldn’t burn him when he shaped and pounded on them. The sparks would fly wildly with every blow of his busy hammer. He had a big office there too and as the boys grew older he hung their skis, sleds and skates on the wall. My Dad also went to some of the wealthy people’s estates, such as the Thayer’s and Parker’s, and shod their horses there. He had a helper named Clarence Richardson that went with him in his beach wagon.

In 1934, several years after my youngest brother Walt was born, Aunt Emily (my great aunt) died and left my mother some money [\$1000] and she bought a cottage at Spec Pond. So we spent our summers there for a good many years until my Dad got sick. My Aunt Elsie and Uncle Oscar Neithardt also had a cottage nearby. My Aunt Helen and her kids, Stan, Betty, Coral and Bill Payne, came every summer from Connecticut.

After Dad became sick, my Mom, Dad and Walt moved to Florida where my Mom got a teaching job. My Dad died there in 1947 at 57 years old and my Mom and Walt came to live with my husband, my two children and me in Clinton, MA.

My five brothers were all in the US Army Air Force. The three oldest ones were jet pilots and two of them were also into ski jumping. I well remember my parents, brothers and I all going out to watch Steve compete in the Lancaster Outing Club’s annual ski jump on nearby George Hill every Feb. 22nd. Steve, my oldest brother, was shot down and became a prisoner of the Germans for over 2 years. He stayed in the Air Force and was stationed in Colorado as a Colonel. He and another pilot were returning a plane from California when the plane had an electrical failure and they crashed into the mountains over the base where they were both stationed and were killed. Steve was 41 years of age. Bob flew over the Hump in China and became a Captain. Freddie “Mike” was also shot down in Czechoslovakia but survived the crash and made it to an American base after walking 10 days. When he got out of the service he joined the Air National Guard and was chosen among ten fliers from New England to practice dive-bombing maneuvers at Eglin Field in Florida. On the third day out the wing came off of his plane while he was in a dive-bombing test and he crashed. He was only 27 years old with a wife and two children when he was killed.

Bob and Walt Turner married sisters, Ilse and Erna Fricke. Bob and Ilse had three children and a business of his own with his wife Ilse. He was golfing on the Cape [Code] one weekend and dropped dead on the course. He was 51 years old. Walter and Erna had two children. Walt had been a sergeant in the US Army Air Force, which he’d been in from 1948 to 1952. He died in 1983.

Wes was married with three daughters. His wife, Lillian, had cancer and passed away at age 56. H remarried and died of a heart attack at 63 years of age.

My Mom remarried to Herb Estabrook when she was in her 60's, after Dad died, and lived to be 71 years of age. She had heart disease and many strokes, one of which took her from us. My Mom loved to sew and she made all of my clothes when I was young and took in sewing when she came to live with me after my Dad died.

I married Joe Tefft in 1939 and we had a daughter, Jackie, and a son, Greg. They both married. Jackie had two girls, Kim and Andrea Lozier. Jackie divorced and brought her daughters up alone. They both married but have no children. Andrea divorced and has her own beauty shop. Kim and her husband, Peter McDonald, own McDonald Realty in Leominster, MA. They have a lovely beach home at little Neck in Ipswich, MA. They live in Lunenburg and Jackie works for them and lives upstairs over the business in Leominster. Our son Greg married Marsha Dodge and they had a girl and boy, Ericka and Matthew. They were on vacation when our son met with a diving accident and died about two weeks later from a severe severed spinal cord. He was 31 years old. My granddaughter Ericka, 30 years of age, is married. My grandson Matthew is 27 years and is single. My husband died at age 81 from Parkinson's and heart disease. He had been a faithful member of the Clinton Baptist Church for most of his life."