

Growing Up in Stanton

Ryman Herr



Ryman Herr at the Bouman-Stickney Farmstead, April 2015

Photo by Barbara Krasner

Courtesy Readington Museums

The way Ryman Herr heard it, his family came to the area around 1860 because an ancestor became more interested in race horses and work horses in the Mennonite community. Herr's great-grandfather was the local minister of the Whitehouse Methodist Church. His grandfather became an attorney and practiced in Flemington ca. 1920, where he had a farm on the outskirts of town and ice ponds. His father, Charles Ryman Herr, delivered milk, ice, and eggs in town as a child. Herr's grandfather, Henry Burdette Herr, became country prosecutor and country judge.

Charles Ryman Herr attended Reading Academy in Flemington until his expulsion for placing a chemical in the school furnace, causing the school to close. He attended "cow college" (Michigan Agricultural College) and graduated in 1915 as part of the Army ROTC program. He volunteered for service in World War I and was a lieutenant in the infantry. In France in 1918, ignoring the effects of mustard gas, Lieutenant Herr took command of his unit when the company commander was killed. He ended up a major and was decorated with the Croix du Guerre for extraordinary heroism in France in 1918.

He married Anne Cowles in 1925. Ryman Junior was born the following year. Ryman Herr, Senior, like his father, had acquired three farms along the road from Stanton to Lebanon. The family went and camped in tents. There was a horseback-riding group, and in the course of the weekend rides, they found his farm a mile north of Stanton with a 40 x 40 stone house, a circular dairy barn with a silo in the middle. The farm horses and cows ran wild and the fields, too, with blackberry bushes. The Herrs redid the house with various extensions, a three-car garage, and the young stock—young heffers from the three dairy farms down below.

In the 1930s, the family moved from Flemington to this 200-acre farm, Stonehenge, in Stanton, where Herr continues to live. He became active with cattle and hay-making. In Stanton, Herr attended a one-room, eight-grade, one-teacher school (where the church playground stands today). The schoolhouse had a big stove in the room and two outhouses in the back, one for boys and one for girls. To get water, children had to go outside and work the pump.

Herr does not recall any local police. Model T Fords were plentiful, abandoned in the woods and other spots, available for \$2 each. The Sears Roebuck catalog offered a kit that could convert the chassis into a wagon and this became a small business venture. Every year the Herrs made a round-trip through Round Valley, no license. Stonehenge still has two Model Ts. He says, “The highest use of the farm is for the annual family reunion and for the grandchildren to visit, feed the cows, and drive the antique tractors.”

Herr laments that today nobody knows what to do with cows that leave their pasture. The secret, he says, is to leave the gate open and gently nudge them back toward the gate and the pasture. It is also important, he insists, to not get the cows excited and running. He recalls growing up that whenever a cow died and the veterinarian would come to perform an autopsy, Herr’s father gathered his two boys to sit and observe. In this way, they would come to know that death is a fact of life.

Herr went on to attend Princeton University and Yale Law School. Both he and his brother, Cowles, practiced with their father.

At 90, Herr has much to reflect on. He says, “Stanton is God’s Country with open air and many community events and a fine place to live, an excellent place to bring up children.”

Henry Robert “Bob” Arduin



Bob Arduin at his home on Dreahook Road, May 2015

Photo by Barbara Krasner

Courtesy Readington Museums

Born in 1923, Henry Robert “Bob” Arduin has lived in Stanton, in fact, off and on at the same address on Dreahook Road since 1924. The property had initially comprised fifty acres; it’s now down to fourteen. Bits and pieces were sold off during the Depression as a way to “get through it.” Bob’s parents made the move from Manhattan to Stanton in response to escalating rents in the city. They owned a clothing manufacturing company and moved the machinery to Stanton while keeping a showroom in New York.

His mother would come out to Stanton on weekends and Bob recalls the trips when he accompanied her. They were defining moments for him, because at Penn Station a tri-motor airplane was on display, the first kinds of transports that could go cross-country. Using a ramp, he could look into the plane. He also remembers how the conductors used to play with him. A neighbor and his wife looked after him when his parents were in New York. One time when his father went to the Stanton station to pick up his mother, Bob was left in the horse and buggy. The horse took off. Bob jumped out of the buggy. Sears Roebuck sold a kit for cottages and outbuildings

and the Arduins bought one to build their three-car garage. At one time, the property had a walk-through for the buggies and horses. There were sheds for the animals. The family owned a Model T. Arduin attended Stanton School and the teacher, Mrs. Bushfield, told Mrs. Arduin that Bob was going places. And he did. He worked all over Europe as an industrial designer for airplanes, including the Concorde.

As a child, he carried a sandwich in his pocket and his parents' advice to behave himself, and set off over the stone fence on the property, past the barns to get to school. He attended that school through the eighth grade and then attended Flemington High School before entering military service. He had always wanted to fly a military airplane. He started flying at the age of sixteen. After serving in the military, where he flew another twenty hours, he went to Solberg and earned his license. He learned, though, that flying a transport plane required round-the-clock hours and he decided to take an industrial engineering course in Newark. He began as a transportation designer in New York City.

It was always a relief to him to come back to his house on Dreahook Road after commuting to and from the city.