

The following is from The Saga of An Oldtimer, an Oral biography of Percy S. Christie by Mary J. Williams. These sections are about Percy's friendship with my grandfather, Eben Smith. - Karen Smith Howell

What else did you do in Calais to occupy your time besides running a tourist home?

Well, I farmed a little, cut some wood, and managed to keep busy 'bout all the time. Eben Smith was one of our near neighbors and he and I used to play pool a lot. I remember one night we was talkin' politics and Eben was a strong Democrat, and we was talkin' about Franklin D. Roosevelt. Eben says, "I wouldn't say this to anyone else but you, but he's the old So and So that's got this country goin' bad."



Eben and I had a little woods contract together out to Lloyd Hill's to cut pulpwood for the Passamaquoddy. Eben had his truck and I had a horse and a chain saw, so we signed up. One day in particular ... it was near Spring ... and I was cursin' everything. What a bunch of nuts we was out there workin' in the slush and water, trees dripping', snow fallin' down our necks, and kept on ravin' steady on the way back out to where Eben was cuttin', so he couldn't help but hear everything I said. When I come out to him, he says, "Do you know something? Every word you said is true!"

I think I enjoyed workin' with Eben more than anyone. So we cut our firewood over to his lot, and when we got through we cut down my woodlot. I says, "When we cut my woodlot I don't want such a mess left as you got around here. I want all the limbs and everything cleaned up right. He never said nothin'. Well, we started, and all at once he was over in a corner, a little piece away from where I was workin', and he brought over a little stick, O, 'way smaller than my little finger, and he says, "I don't think it's any sense to run that up any further, do you?" That's just the way we got along.

Eben was quite a feller, too, for everything that was around like a bird or a squirrel. They'd come down out of a tree chittering when we'd be eatin' our dinner, and he'd always fire them a lot of his dinner. One day he went home, he got hurt some way or other, but not too serious (he was workin' by himself), and I could see where he'd been eatin' his lunch, cause I was haulin' with the team; so he didn't come back for two, three days. And when he did come back he moved a stick that jammed one of my finers, and it turned all black. He says, "What did that?" and I says, "You done that yesterday." And he says, "I didn't get half as much the matter with me, and I took a week off." That's the way we got along.

We did O.K. I think at that time we made, O, maybe \$50 a week for each one of us; at that time pay wasn't too much.

When he put in his garden, I wanted all his garden stuff (tops) to feed the cows, corn when it went by, carrot tops, he wanted me to clean 'em up. But he wouldn't let me have the corn until it was hard as a rock. He said it was just good eatin' then. And I says, "I'll buy you a bag of cracked corn like I get for the horse, and I'll feed yours to the stock, see?" We had quite a lot of fun.

Eben had a tree, an apple tree, that grew up in back of his house, between that and the river, and he thought it was goin' to be littered with apples. Bime-by it got big and it flourished out and was a great tree, and Eben had been blowin' what great apples he's goin' get, so he tasted one ... they was no good! They didn't suit him at all. Mrs. Smith and Maurice and I was in the kitchen. Maurice tapped his mother on the shoulder and says, "Look out the window. Look out there!" Eben was down on his knees with a bucksaw cuttin' his tree down, see? Mrs. Smith says, "What's that man doin' now?" but that was Eben, if he didn't like something, he got rid of it.

I'd go down there and I'd want to see Eben, and I'd say, "Where's the Old Man?" Mrs. Smith would say, "Who are you referring to? He's younger than you are!"



I worked for Eben before his mill burned and he would saw out stuff, and he told me that every time he pushed that lever ahead he made fifty cents, and every time he pulled it back, he made fifty cents, and he could hire me all day for two dollars, see? It was awful handy, that mill he had there. When I bought the woodlot out there from Miss Dyer, I cut some of the great big pine. In fact, I cut one that paid, one tree, that paid for the whole hundred acres. That's right. They was a lot of big pine there that was thirty-three inches across or thirty-six inches across the butt and they were perfect. Eben couldn't saw anything that big and he'd have to chop the last three inches off and swear about it, but anyway Rutherford Weatherby, he bought the boards, and that's what they did, they come to \$100, that one tree. Foster Higgins told me I shouldn't buy that woodlot. He said there wasn't nothin' on it, and he knew because he'd stole everything on it, off. But he was wrong, they was piles of stuff on it. No doubt still is. I bought the woodlot from Miss Dyer, and the house lot, too. There was 85 acres in that. After we got the house built, Miss Dyer and her sister used to come down, and they was pretty proud of the house built on their father's old place. Miss Dyer was a school teacher in Wakefield Mass. She was o.k.