

The Old Telephone

Did you hear the telephone ring on this cold Easter morning? The advancement in telephone technology has brought, step by step, a new day and age from the dial phone forward to the press button and to the now common cell phone. What I want you to recall is if that old phone up on that shelf did ring. I hope it did because it will carry me back some 80 years if only in my imagination.

My journey to yesterday would stop on Easter morning in 1936. On that day I was only a little short of my 6th birthday. Sure I was old enough to answer the telephone in our Marshville, NY home. I so wanted that telephone to bring me a special invitation on this long ago Easter. Was it my imagination that the phone was ringing? I grasp this instrument in my right hand, take the receiver from its hook and place it near my ear. Sadly I now knew the phone had not rung. What I hear is a real live operator saying number please. "Is that you Aunt Evelyn?"

This was yet a time when operators, who were often known to callers, staffed the switchboard in offices like the one at Canajoharie, NY. One of these operators was actually my Aunt Evelyn. I felt free to tell her I did not know my Grandma Barshieds number at Seebers Lane. Could she connect me with Grandma?

Easter day was special on the Barshied family farm. I wanted to be sure I would get there to hunt those colored eggs, receive a chocolate bunny and eat Grandma's famous meal. You say "did you get there?" Let's open Grandmas diary for that day and get the answer in her own words.

April 12, 1936, Easter Sunday, cloudy but no rain - all went to church in p.m. - went to Marshville Church - Willis Jr. spoke a piece. Mary, Elmer, Willis, Margaret + Willis Jr. all were here to supper. 74 eggs (each day, even Easter, the number of eggs was recorded)

Grandma's diary omitted, besides herself, five others who would have been at the supper table on that long ago Easter. We will add them for her. There was Grandpa William Barshied, my father's brother, Albert, his wife, Aunt Florence, their daughter, Doris and father's sister, Aunt Carmeta. So this was the cast of characters of this story. Grandma Augusta Shineman Barshied, departed from this life on June 27, 1940 at age 68 years. All the rest of the cast of characters of this story, except for this writer, have passed beyond the sunset.

Now the old telephone is forever silent, just a reminder of a day and age that was so very different from the one that we now live in.

Willis Barshied Jr. (Skip), Stone Arabia, Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015