



The Good Old Summertime



"Wild flowers were plentiful in the woods near the school, wild roses, lady slippers, indian pinks, shooting stars, blue bells and those little blue violets and may flowers, red and yellow foxes."

Raspberry Island (Nagawicka Lake) The Island was a paradise for all the boys. Memories of the excursions to it are the sweetest ones of my boyhood days. We used to go fishing there, go in swimming, pick raspberries and spend the whole day.

You remember our picnic over in Baker's Woods across the pond (Mill Dam) with the Pope girls and Julia Proudfit. And our walks down to the lower mill with the girls on their way home from school. Those were happy days.

Fish and clams. Pickerel were the largest of our fish or as the Indians called them "Muscalonge". There was an old man named Southard who did nothing but go fishing. He used to catch what he called walleyed Pike (the best eating fish in our lakes) Hod. Plumley, one of the Father's men, speared a pickerel that weighed 25 pounds. I saw this fish when the men brought it in suspended on a spear pole resting on their shoulders and the tail dragged on the ground.

Twin Pickerel. Father built a boat which he named the "Twin Pickerel" consisting of two long canoes docked over and between which in the center was a paddle wheel, turned by cranks on each side, propelled by man power. The boat was launched in the upper Nemahbin Lake and father made several trips seated on a chair on the deck. It was simply a play thing and an expensive one. Another unprofitable experiment, as they had to go as far as Concord for logs, nine miles. The fore wheels were the largest. Two men to each wagon and it used up a day to get a log. They would straddle a log with the wagon and at each end was a "snatch block" and chains to hoist up the log. It was a success as far as handling a log quickly was concerned, but the cost of the lumber was more than it's value. Under the high driver's seat was a lunch box.

I'll mention old dog "watch". Father used to say he was a good dog and that was all he was good for. He once carried a turtle 9 miles from Concord to Delafield and digging a hole in the orchard and burying it".

"You will remember the "May day picnic" in the woods north of school.....At the tables we had ice cream which was a new thing to Conrad Kreutz who called out, "Mr. De Koven, your pudding's frozen".

Nelson C. Hawks - Letters to his Sister Fanny

