

## Saglio Saga... Leaving and Arriving

by Frances Saglio Dogan

My parents, Dominic Frank Saglio and Giovanna Trossello Saglio, immigrated to the United States from Northern Italy at the turn of the twentieth century. It was a time when many of their friends and relatives were coming to America, the Land of Opportunity, leaving poverty behind and looking forward to a more promising and prosperous future. It was a step that must have taken much fortitude and courage, but one that had the cooperation and emotional and financial support of family and friends.

They came here at a time when there was no government aid available to immigrants ...no welfare programs, no food stamps or farm subsidies ...nor would they have accepted such charity had it been offered. They were brought up to be self-reliant and to provide for their own future. Their one great shame would have been "going to the poor house," the one provision that was made for older people who had no means of self support. They came here to better themselves ...for opportunities, not hand-outs. They may have been poor, but they were literate, ambitious and proud.

To get to the States, they had two options. Companies wanting cheap labor would sponsor an immigrant in exchange for many years of hard work and servitude. That person was practically destined to be forever poor and under the rule of, and indebted to, a "padrone" or boss. Many Southern Italians, because of their depressed economic situation, chose this option. The Northern Italians, however, who were often somewhat better educated and in a more favorable economic position, wouldn't even consider doing that. Instead, without hesitation, they chose the second option ...to rely on and help each other. My parents were of that group.

The ship's "passage" (steerage class) at the time cost approximately \$50, so the earliest

arrivals worked hard and saved. When they had repaid their own sponsors and accumulated an extra \$50, they sent it back to their family or good friends who then came to the States and in turn repeated the process. Thus, the whole family was finally together again, and as family and friends banded together a replica of the original town was formed, but in a new land with much better prospects. It was in such a community that I grew up.

Some 85 years ago the residents of Glastonbury's John Tom Hill section were mainly Northern Italian immigrants who were struggling to make a living and pay off a farm mortgage. Our parents were part of that hard-working, awesome group. Transportation was by horse and buggy, and our social events were mostly with friends and neighbors who clung together with the same language and customs they had in the "Old World," and who became our extended family.

There were no locks on the doors, and we children walked in and out of our neighbors' homes, seldom bothering to knock. In turn, we knew that they were well aware of every step we took, so we wouldn't have dared do anything that would disgrace or embarrass our parents or family. Mama always maintained that "it takes a whole village to raise a child," and there is indeed much to be said for extended families.

In our early youth our horizons were mostly within this small community. It was a happy and satisfying life as I remember it, but this was America, and in the long run our Americanization was somewhat impeded by our scarcity of social contacts outside of the small school we attended, and by our close-knit neighborhood.

Frank Saglio (his first name, Dominic, was hardly ever used) boarded the S.S. *Furst Bismark* on January 26, 1899, from a small vil-

lage in Northern Italy, Cuccaro, Piemonte. He arrived at Ellis Island seventeen days later, on February 11, 1899, with nine dollars in his pocket. He immediately found work at a hotel in New York City. From there he went to Glastonbury, Connecticut, to work for the "Peach King," J. H. Hale, who had orchards in Connecticut and Georgia. Within a short time he became foreman of the Hale Farm, and eventually sent back to Fubine, a neighboring village in Italy, for his bride-to-be.

Unless you were fortunate enough to have an eligible and desirable "girl-next-door," courting required time, money and transportation, all in short supply. In a farming community even the girl next door could be miles away, so theirs was an arranged marriage ...not uncommon in those days. After a brief correspondence and an exchange of photos, my parents-to-be found each other to be acceptable and had agreed to marry.

Who the "matchmakers" were for my parents, I do not know, but in all likelihood they were Luigi and Antonia Pero. Mr. Pero and my father worked together at the Hale farm, and through Antonia they were cousins as well as good friends. In addition, the Peros originally came from Fubine, Piemonte, my mother's home town. And she stayed with them until the wedding day.

My father must have paid at least part of her transportation. But when Giovanna arrived in Glastonbury, he was thoughtful enough to assure her that if she had second thoughts about marrying him, she need not feel obligated ...and he would understand. She arrived in the States March 27, 1904, and they were married exactly two weeks later on April 10, 1904. The ceremony was performed in the Peros' home by a Catholic Priest from St. Augustine's Church in Glastonbury, Fr. Francis M. Murphy. The Peros were recorded as witnesses.



**Dominic Frank Saglio (1871-1952) as he appeared in 1903 when he was 32 years old. This is the photograph that he sent to his prospective bride Giovanna Trossello during the process of arranging for her emigration to America and their marriage which took place in 1904.**

*[This is the first in a series of nine articles by Mrs. Dogan about her life in Glastonbury. Mrs. Dogan, now 100 and still active, wrote a book for her family, published in 1994, from which these articles are excerpted. For more information or to join the Historical Society, please call 860-633-6890. Our email is hsglastonbury@sbcglobal.net, our website is www.hsgct.org and we are on Facebook.]*

## Saglio Saga ...Mama

by Frances Saglio Dogan

Giovanna (Joanna) Trossello was born in Fubine, Piemonte, Italy, on March 31, 1881, the youngest of seven children. Her father was the village baker. When Giovanna was three years old her mother died of pneumonia, and from then on her young life was destined to be difficult. Her father soon remarried a woman who was childless, intolerant, and demanding of his children. Giovanna at that young age was especially vulnerable and easily hurt, so she had a most unhappy childhood.

One incident that stayed in her memory forever happened when she was four years old. Every day Giovanna had to comb her stepmother's long hair over and over and over again with a fine-tooth comb. One day the neighboring children were outdoors playing and she wanted to join them, but her stepmother insisted on having her hair combed as usual. Giovanna combed, but with tears rolling down her cheeks. When her stepmother saw the tears she became very angry that this ungrateful child should resent doing this small service for her, so swore in retaliation that never again would she touch Giovanna's hair.

At four years old, Giovanna was too young to care for her long thick hair by herself. For many weeks it went unwashed and uncombed until it became a tangled mass, with her scalp full of sores. When she finally saw her elder married sister who lived eight miles away in the next village, the sister had no choice but to chop Giovanna's hair short and gently try to get her scalp clean. After that it became possible for Giovanna to comb through her own short hair, and by the time it grew long again she

was bigger and continued to care for it herself. But true to her word, her stepmother never again touched it.

Giovanna was very bright and finished the course of study at the village school at a very early age, but any continued education involved going away to a boarding school, and that was financially out of the question for the peasant class, especially in those hard times. So every day she joined the laborers who walked a couple of miles to the farmlands to work in the vineyards or till the fields. The work was dirty and hard and the pay was hardly enough to live on.

The "good times" were few. During the almost 23 years she lived in Fubine, she only visited two or three neighboring towns until she went to Genoa to board the ship taking her to the States. Those were towns within walking distance and likely even smaller than her own.

I have often wondered how a bright, unadventurous, sensitive but shy person like my mother could have left her home and country to endure the hardships of traveling across an ocean in the rough spring seas to a country whose language she didn't speak, and a marriage to a recommended but unknown man who was nine and a half years older than she was. It had to be sheer desperation ...and she did say that whatever she was coming to couldn't be worse than what she was leaving behind.

And so, four days before her 23rd birthday, after more than three weeks of sea-sickness on a very rough and terrifying ocean voyage on the steamer C. D. Milano, Giovanna arrived at the train depot in Hartford, Connecticut, not knowing a word of English, wearing a sign around her neck on which was written her name

and final destination. There she was to be met by her husband-to-be, Frank Saglio.

Unfortunately, Frank had missed the Glastonbury-to-Hartford trolley that would have gotten him there on time to meet her train. When Giovanna disembarked at what was to be the happy culmination of this grueling trip, there was no one there to meet her. She was devastated. Not knowing how or where to turn for help, utterly exhausted, confused and terrified, she sat on a bench in that dingy railroad station for nearly two hours, a most pathetic figure, sobbing her heart out.

After what felt like a miserable eternity and at her lowest point ever, Frank finally arrived. He introduced himself, explained his delay, then took her to Glastonbury where she arrived still wearing the plaque. The Peros, relatives of Giovanna's and friends of Frank's who apparently had helped him arrange the marriage, met them at the trolley stop and took her to their home. There she stayed for the next two weeks, recuperating, getting acquainted with her "intended," undoubtedly helping Mrs. Pero with her chores, and psychologically preparing for her wedding day. What humiliation she endured ...and what courage she had.

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**Giovanna Trossello (1881-1964) as she appeared in 1903. She was tall for a woman (over 5'7") and slender at a time when buxom was popular. She was very fair, blue-eyed and had light brown hair. This is the photo that Giovanna sent to Frank when they were arranging for her immigration and their marriage which happened in 1904.**

## Saglio Saga...Children

by Frances Saglio Dogan

If it is indeed true that opposites attract, my parents' marriage must have been preordained. Papa was fun-loving; Mama was serious. He was the life of the party with a sparkling personality; she was quiet and hardly noticeable in a crowd. He confident; she was a worrier. He was able to cope with and shrug off disasters; she would be dejected for days. But those were personality differences.

They also had much in common, the most important being intelligence, the acceptance of hard work, a sense of thrift, a desire to improve their station in life, and dedication to an education for all of their children. They had an affectionate relationship and got along uncommonly well. I seldom heard them bicker or quarrel, but if Mama had any grievances she likely would have kept them to herself, that being her nature.

The first 10 years in the States must have been as difficult for my mother as any she had ever endured in Italy. She spent the first nine of them pregnant, while working hard throughout that time taking care of the house and children and, in addition, cooking and doing laundry for the boarders they kept.

However, there must have been some satisfaction in being a wife and mother, and being mistress of her own home, humble though it was at that time. There were also small pleasures. My father always arose early to start the fire in the wood stove and serve Mama a hot cup of coffee in bed. Neither of my parents ever expressed any desire to return to their homeland.

There were nine children born into the family...a birth each year from 1905 through 1912: Charles, John, Dante, Mary, Hugo, unnamed twin girls who died when born prematurely, Henry and Frances (myself). Dante was the first to die, living only a few days. My sister Mary, however, lived four-and-a-half months and that was a very sorrowful loss for my parents, especially my mother. So five of us survived with an age span of eight years between the eldest and the youngest.

Because my father had been in the States longer and was the breadwinner, he had learned to speak and understand English. He capably handled outside matters and family emergencies, and with five active children there were many emergencies, including two bad ones. My

brother Jack fell off a roof and cracked his skull. That involved a long hospital stay while a permanent metal plate was inserted in his head.

Another emergency occurred on June 2, 1917 when my brother Hugo, at age nine, was accidentally shot through the head leaving him totally blind for the rest of his life. There was a long stay in the hospital. In 1918, Hugo entered the School for the Blind in Hartford. At age nine, he not only had to cope with blindness, but had to adjust to institution living and conquer homesickness.

Hugo's blindness changed life in the Saglio home. His courage, fortitude and ability set an example for all which was hard to follow but impossible to ignore. His siblings became more aware and considerate. They thought to push their chairs back in place, direct "left" or "right" if necessary, and not leave doors ajar.

Among other things, Hugo learned to read and write Braille and to type. He did so well that he was encouraged to attend public school so that he could start competing in a sighted world. He graduated from Weaver (public) High School in Hartford with distinction, and went on to earn his A.B. from Amherst College, achieving Phi Beta Kappa, then received his A.M. from Harvard University.

Before he finished his education and long before computers became popular, Hugo was his family's source for information. We had only to ask, no matter the subject, and he spewed out the information! We also turned to Hugo to recommend a good lawyer, broker or doctor and for advice. It was Hugo who suggested "Arbor Acres" as the name for the family farm.

Hugo completed his education during the Great Depression. Jobs were practically nonexistent, yet he was seldom idle. He typed, tutored, sold insurance, was a ghost writer, taught in a community college, etc., etc. He was over-qualified for most of his work, but he met his adversities and took them in stride.

In 1945, Hugo met and soon married his wife Helen and from then on his luck changed for the better. He went on to hold a number of interesting and responsible positions, his last one being Director of Communications Services for the Connecticut Department of Economic Development.

Hugo's accident had a big impact on his family and one wonders how everyone would have turned out had it not happened. Family re-



**In 1934, Mrs. Dogan arranged to have this picture taken as her Christmas gift for her family. She is seated between her mother and father who are in the arm chairs. Behind them are her brothers, left to right, Henry, Hugo, Charles and John.**

sources that would have gone to sending the other brothers to college were used to support Hugo. But by staying on the farm as it expanded from fruit and vegetables to poultry, they all became multi-millionaires.

Hugo's situation had a big impact on my life. We all read aloud as a family, but when Hugo required special reading for a book report or some other assignment, I was the reader, especially during vacations. I read Shakespeare and Dickens long before they were assigned in my own classes. Hugo bolstered my self-confidence and encouraged me to go on to college as did some of the friends and teachers he brought home.

We read together for the better part of a year and a half after I graduated from college dur-

ing the Great Depression when jobs were unavailable. I had a business degree, and during that time Hugo attempted to round out my education with philosophy, literature, history and economics. I set my sights higher not only because he introduced me to some of the possibilities, but also because he himself accomplished so much.

*[This is the third in a series of nine articles by Mrs. Dogan about her life in Glastonbury. Mrs. Dogan, now 100 and still active, wrote a book for her family, published in 1994, from which these articles are excerpted. For more information or to join the Historical Society, please call 860-633-6890. Our email is hsglastonbury@sbcglobal.net, our website is www.hsgct.org and we are on Facebook.]*

## Saglio Saga...John Tom Hill

by Frances Saglio Dogan

In the fall of 1915, eleven years and five surviving children after my parent's marriage, they moved from the Hale Farm to John Tom Hill, also in Glastonbury. They had worked hard and saved money to send for my father's family (his parents Carlo and Francesca, his brother Philip and his niece Antonietta Coggiola) who all arrived in New York on March 21, 1910. My uncle Philip then worked and saved for two years, and in 1912 he married Josephine Cerrina Gotta, a widow (thereafter our "Auntie Pina").

My parents and Philip and Pina combined their savings and as partners bought, with the help of a mortgage, a large farm which my father (Frank) had located on John Tom Hill. It consisted of about 185 acres, a 16-room house, barns, sheds, stable, out-house, etc. Mr. Hills, the previous owner, was a Williams College graduate and more a scholar than a farmer, so was more than willing to leave the tilling of the soil to the new immigrants.

It was agreed between my father and uncle that Philip would immediately move out to John Tom Hill with his wife and parents, while Frank would stay on at the Hale Farm to keep money coming in while crops were started to generate income from their own farm. Uncle Phil took my eldest brother, Charlie, with him as at seven or eight years of age he could already be of help. He also took Hugo, age three, to whom he had become attached while living with my parents.

Uncle Phil and Auntie Pina worked from sunrise to sunset, and occasionally even by moonlight, to plant crops and orchards...and my grandfather Carlo also helped. My grandmother had never done manual work and was not in the best of health, so spent most of her time in a rocking chair darning socks and other family clothing. I don't know that she even con-

tributed to the cooking, but she possibly helped a little in the kitchen as Auntie Pina spent so much time outdoors.

Eventually the new crops began to provide some income, so my father gave up his Hale job and, with the rest of his family, moved out to the farm as a working partner. In theory this should have worked, but in practice it did not. Uncle Phil had been running the farm for a couple of years and felt entitled to be boss. My father, on the other hand, was the older brother, had been providing the working capital, had the larger investment, and had been the foreman and big boss on a much larger farm. He wasn't about to take orders from his kid brother. Papa tried to lighten the situation with humor, but finally they locked horns.

Inside the house there was another clash. Auntie Pina had been queen in her own kitchen, as had my mother in hers, so there was conflict. In addition, Pina was childless and resented the additional food that five children consumed, especially we three younger ones who were not yet big enough to work outdoors.

The brothers decided to divide the farm, and they pulled straws. My father drew the smaller acreage on the west side of the road, about 85 acres with no buildings on it, and my uncle remained in the stone house on the east side with 100 acres of land, and money changed hands to make up the difference. My grandparents preferred to live with their younger son Philip as there would be no children to disturb them. In the meantime, since there were two kitchens in that large house, our family moved to the other wing and set up separate housekeeping. There we stayed while our new house and barn were being built across the road in the spring of 1917.

Our new house, though not grand, was an eight-room colonial with attic and cellar and



**The Saglio family home on Marlborough Road as it appeared in 1932, shortly before it was expanded. It was built for the Frank Saglio family in 1917.**

an attractive front porch, hot and cold running water, and an indoor bathroom containing a water flushed toilet. It was the only indoor bathroom in our entire Buckingham School area. Not even all city homes had them in 1917, so we felt very privileged. (A couple of years later our third grade class was asked to draw floor plans of our homes. Henry and I included the bathroom, which at the time was still referred to as "the toilet." The teacher called us up to her desk and questioned us about that little room. She couldn't believe that we actually would have a toilet inside the house.)

Some of our parents' dreams were beginning to materialize. They and their children were now on their own farm, in a spacious modern house with hot and cold running water in the kitchen, laundry room, and indoor bathroom. A water tank connected to the kitchen range supplied the hot water for us. We also had a telephone,

but as yet no electricity. It would be years before rural electrification would become available. All of this was many steps up from my parents' childhood homes; they could, for instance, relax in their own comfortable living room instead of congregating in the stable, as was the custom out of necessity in Italy because the animals provided heat. For that matter, it was a big improvement over the quarters we had occupied at the Hale Farm.

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## Saglio Saga... Our Own Farm

by Frances Saglio Dogan

In the spring of 1917, my father had a new house built for his family and we started our own farm. The new barn was a beauty and quite large. The stable was on the lower level, entered from the back of the building, and had stalls and stanchions for cows, oxen and horses. The barn for storing feed, tools, harnesses, wagons etc., occupied the middle level, and its impressive sliding double doors faced the road.

The drive to the middle portion of the barn was sloped, and was always referred to as "the barn hill." The top floor was the hayloft. It was equipped with a forklift to convey the hay from the outdoors for storage, and a chute for pitching it down to the stable when needed. Indoor stairs connected all three levels. It was well designed and my father was very proud of it.

The new buildings put my parents greatly into debt, but they were equal to the challenge and my father was an optimist. We children were getting older and able to help out, and there was always a job for even the youngest one. Many a time we had to miss school to help plant or pick strawberries, sort peaches, pick grapes, or whatever needed doing, and we never questioned the need for it. We were not unique in this as the other families on John Tom Hill also depended on their children for help.

We youngsters tended to take our work in stride as it was our way of life and we had experienced no other. Most of the jobs were fairly hard but had compensations, either in the feeling of participating in a family endeavor, being needed, enjoying the company, or a sense of accomplishment when the work was completed. However, one job that stands out in my memory didn't have any of these redeeming features.

Early each spring, when the March winds were still sweeping over John Tom Hill, blowing ferociously and chilling one's bones, my father and brothers plowed and harrowed a large

field, then marked in long straight furrows for the new strawberry plants. These plantings, soaked in water, had to be separated one by one, then neatly laid about one foot apart in the furrow, root side facing the excavation. The grown-ups, including my mother, then followed with trowels and planted them.

Starting from age six or seven, the placing of the plants was deemed a suitable task for Henry and me. The theory presented was that we were short, so didn't have to bend far; therefore we wouldn't get a backache. Whether we bought that or not is irrelevant as we had no choice. It was a job well within our capabilities and we were needed, so we were kept out of school to help.

At the end of the day there was row upon row of neatly planted strawberries which would soon spread, flower, then fruit, and would provide a crop for market and another income...but we were too tired and cold to take comfort in any contribution we may have made. Early March on John Tom Hill is still bitter cold. We bragged that when there was no breeze stirring within miles and miles, there was always one on the Hill. However, this was no breeze...this was a bitter biting wind cutting through to the bone.

I still shiver when I think of those days. Working with wet plants, no gloves, frozen fingers, and insufficient warm clothing with that wind whipping through you was sheer agony. Even our feet were numb, which made walking painful. We didn't feel exploited...we just felt physically miserable. Fortunately it lasted only a couple of days, but dreaded ones. No wonder we hated to miss school!

Our teachers understood the situation and cooperated. That is why the school year runs from September to June. In an agricultural society the children were needed at home for the harvesting season, usually the summer months.



**The Saglio family home on Marlborough Road as it appeared in 1938 after it had been expanded and the farm had come to be called Arbor Acres.**

Although that need is hardly applicable today, the educational system has not yet changed its schedule to conform to changed society and needs.

Peaches and apples provided the family's greatest income, but the spring crops of strawberries, peas, etc., were the most welcome because by springtime the cash supply was always dangerously low. Eventually cauliflower became another big crop and source of income. But our vineyard was also one of my father's interests. Not only did it provide a crop for market, but it supplied the grapes to be stomped every fall for his year's supply of wine and grappa.

Little by little our farm began to prosper as did the neighboring farms. One of my most vivid and cherished memories is of John Tom Hill in the springtime. Hillside after hillside was

covered with fruit orchards, with all the trees in bloom...peach blossoms, apple blossoms, pears, plums and cherries...one hillside pink, another white or almost purple, or shades in between.

Spring after spring we were treated to this beautiful awesome sight, and each year we enjoyed both the beauty and the fragrance anew. How could we not be moved by such a gift from nature? We never took it for granted.

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## Saglio Saga... Growing Up

by Frances Saglio Dogan

I, the ninth and last child, was named for my father's mother and my mother's dear elder sister, both named Francesca. My mother Americanized it to Frances so it wouldn't sound Italian. My middle name was for my father's sister Angelina, who had died so young. Here again, that was not American, so she shortened it to Lena. Instead of Francesca Angelina Saglio, I became Frances Lena Saglio. No one would mistake it for a WASP name, but for those times it was an improvement.

We were admonished not to "talk with our hands," a habit typical of many foreigners, but which Mama attributed specifically to Italians. These fascinating and expressive hand gestures often used in their homeland to emphasize or illustrate a point were likely their chief means of communication in America (a substitute for speech) until they learned the new language.

This was apparently true of our boarders at the Hale farm, but strangely enough, I don't remember either of my parents excessively gesticulating, nor for that matter, any of our neighbors...but by the time I was growing up it is probable that most of them already had at least a fair command of English. In any event, due to Mama's foresight, talking with our hands was a habit we five children never acquired, thus avoiding at least that embarrassment.

Mama's personality may have been overshadowed by her husband's, but she was the one Henry and I looked for the minute we entered the house. "Ma...We're home! Where are you?" And if she happened to be out in the field and there was no answer, it was a terrible let-down. We hurriedly changed out of our school clothes and went looking for her.

When we came home from school, we always had chores to do. The constant ones for Henry were feeding and watering the chickens and filling the wood box...jobs I often shared. If there were dishes in the sink or an unmade bed, that was my responsibility. As much as Mama hated unwashed dishes, she would purposely leave them so I could be doing indoor instead of outdoor work.

She was very conscious of her often chapped, rough hands and wanted to spare mine. She even bought Ivory Flakes for my dish washing instead of the usual Oxydol or Fels Naptha, because Ivory was advertised as being pure and kind to your hands. When I did work outdoors, which was quite often, she insisted I wear a straw hat to avoid sunstroke...but she was re-

ally trying to protect my complexion.

She would also wind my long straight hair around rags so I could have corkscrew curls, and occasionally she would even improvise and use the stove poker as a quick curling iron. I have since wondered if her careful attention to grooming my hair could have been consciously or subconsciously related to her own childhood trauma.

In the early days, with the combination of farm work and being confined to our small community transportation-wise, it would have been natural to have a sameness to all the days in the week. However, that wasn't the case in our house. Neither we nor our neighbors went to church on Sunday. This had nothing to do with my father being an agnostic/lapsed Catholic, and had most to do with lack of transportation.

The Buckingham Congregational Church was the closest to us...about five miles from our house...and eventually that became our church, although Papa also observed that had our nearest place of worship been a synagogue, we would as likely have embraced the Jewish faith. My father was very open-minded. He had his own beliefs, but did not impose them on anyone else. He felt that if Heaven was your destination, there were several roads leading there, and it mattered not which one you took.

If our Sundays weren't set apart by attending church, they were distinguished from workdays by a white damask tablecloth. Although we were in the country, Mama had certain standards that she insisted be maintained. During the week the men came in from the fields and ate over an oilcloth covered table, but Sundays were different.

Before Papa's garden flowers started blooming, the meadows would be full of wild flowers. Mama would send Henry and me out to gather a bouquet. We had no vase, so put them in a bowl or drinking glass...and there was Mama's colorful centerpiece. Then she would spread the sparkling white cloth over the oilcloth, and we knew it was a special day. The tablecloth was always laundered on Monday, ironed on Tuesday, and ready for the next Sunday.

In the late 1920s, Michael Aglio, who was a few years younger than Henry, was living with the Grassos who had moved into the house across the street from us. The Grassos were good to Mike, but he spent more and more time visiting our house where there was younger company, and he looked up to Henry who was



**In 1925, elaborate exercises such as this were used to teach good penmanship in Glastonbury schools. This drawing was done by the author as an eighth grader in the old two-room Buckingham School.**

nearer his age than anyone at the Grassos. When Mike finished grammar school, he asked if he could come to live with our family and work for us. My parents said he could come live with us, but only if the Grassos were in favor of it.

They readily agreed, as Mike had been one extra mouth to feed and had been taken in out of charity. And so it was that Mike became a member of our family and lived with us from age 14 into his 30s when he married Marion Andrews. He worked mostly with Henry in the poultry branch of the business and was paid throughout all his years until his retirement. A house was built on the farm for him and Marion where they continued to live even after Mike retired.

In time, Mike's brother Sam also joined our family. He was not happy with the relatives he

was living with and they were happy to be rid of the extra responsibility. Sam, who had recovered from TB, was given lighter work to do, driving cars and running errands, until he, too, married. At that point he started his own radio and later television repair business. After that he was seen less frequently but always warmly remembered.

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## Saglio Saga... School

by Frances Saglio Dogan

In the fall of 1918, I was six and started first grade in the Buckingham School. My brother Henry, a year older than I, had slept through first grade the previous year (the teacher thought he was so cute she couldn't bear to awaken him), and had not been promoted ...so Henry and I were in the same grade from then on.

The major reason Henry slept through first grade was that we had no set bedtime. Henry and I, being the youngest, were usually the first to go to bed, but we were never told when to go. Although as youngsters we required more sleep than the others, we delayed going upstairs. We surely didn't want to miss the conversation. Also, our rooms were dark, dimly lighted only by the kerosene lamp in the hall ...and during the winter the rooms were very cold.

Once I entered school and Henry and I were both in the same grade, he had to forego those daily naps for fear I might get ahead of him. Also, by then he was one year older so presumably needed less sleep, but it is also possible that with both of us having to get up so early in the morning we willingly went to bed earlier.

Attending the Buckingham School started the expansion of our horizons. Now we not only knew the children in our own community, but also had friends from the communities of Buckingham and Addison. While our John Tom Hill friends were all of Italian descent, those from Buckingham were mostly from old Yankee families, and the Addison group was a mixture of Yankee and several other nationalities, none of them Italian, and all of them at least second-generation Americans. Theirs were the mothers who came to our school programs and picnics, and I sometimes envied them and wished my parents could so participate.

Our transportation to school those first few years was on a wagon bus we considered quite luxurious. It was drawn by two horses, had built in benches the length of each side so that we children sat facing each other, and a little heater in its belly with a small register in the center of the bus floor. The opening for inserting and starting the firewood was outside underneath the bus. It also had a smokestack, as the little stove generated more smoke than heat when and if it had a fire in it. The kids from Addison must have been envious because their bus was

not as fancy as ours, and they dubbed ours "The Peanut Roaster."

Our consolidated school had two classrooms, with one teacher and four grades in each. Grades one through four were in the "Little Room," and five through eight in the "Big Room." This did not refer to the size of the room, but to the size of the pupils! There was a hall for each room with pegs for our coats. You hung your coat on the peg, put mittens, hat and lunch box on the shelf directly above, and your overshoes on the floor directly underneath.

The teachers had a rugged schedule. There were approximately forty children in each room, roughly ten to the grade. The day started by calling the class to order, and we then saluted the flag and recited the Lord's Prayer. The classes, by necessity, were usually combined so that half the time you studied the last part of the book before the first section. It could have been confusing except that it was very likely you had already absorbed some of this by osmosis when it had been presented to a previous class.

A few studies, such as penmanship and music, could involve the whole room at the same time, and must have been a help to the teacher. Our singing included patriotic songs America, Yankee Doodle, The Star-Spangled Banner, America the Beautiful, and Columbia the Gem of the Ocean ...as well as Christmas and Thanksgiving songs, Stephen Foster's songs, Home Sweet Home, and, of course, rounds like Row, Row, Row Your Boat and Three Blind Mice. We sang with gusto!

Instead of the 80 students in our grammar school, we had over 300 in high school. Our building was about four years old with 12 large classrooms and an auditorium large enough to accommodate the entire student body. I now had to move from room to room to a different teacher for each subject.

I rode to high school in one of the first motorized busses in the nation ...a 1917 Ford. We started at 7:15 in the morning and following a circuitous route on unpaved, bumpy dirt roads, arrived at the high school a few minutes before nine. Starting at 3:15 p.m. the procedure was reversed.

With my father, for academic work, A was expected, B was tolerated and C was unaccept-



**This is the two-room school on Hebron Avenue that the author attended from 1918 - 1926.**

able. D and F weren't even mentioned. Papa scrutinized every mark on our report cards before signing them. When I got a C once in a housekeeping course where I foolishly complained to the teacher that I didn't need to learn dishwashing in school because I had been washing dishes ever since I was big enough to climb on a box in front of the sink, I had some explaining to do. I think Papa sympathized with me and signed the card, but chided me for being too outspoken.

We had no cafeteria in our high school, and I don't exactly remember where we ate. Sometimes we congregated at the end of the hall and I do remember sitting on the lawn in favorable weather. After lunch, we often walked to Glastonbury Center where there was the Glastonbury Department Store. Here I occasionally bought silk stockings (nylons were not yet available) and the Franklin Drug Store where on special occasions I ate ice cream.

In 1930 when I graduated from high school,

the times were both good and bad. The farm was prospering, but my father was one of many who in 1929 lost heavily on his investments. Ever practical, in evaluating my options, I chose a business major so that I could teach high school commercial subjects or, if that failed, I could get into the secretarial or accounting field. I attended Bay Path Institute in Springfield, MA, graduating in 1932. Bay Path was not a prestigious school but it was well known for the quality of its preparation and was a happy choice for me.

*[This is the seventh in a series of nine articles by Mrs. Dogan about her life in Glastonbury. Mrs. Dogan, now 100 and still active, wrote a book for her family, published in 1994, from which these articles are excerpted. For more information or to join the Historical Society, please call 860-633-6890. Our email is hsglstonbury@sbcglobal.net, our website is www.hsgct.org and we are on Facebook.]*

## Saglio Saga... Henry and the Poultry Bonanza

by Frances Saglio Dogan

We always raised chickens for eggs and table use, starting with what could be called a "barnyard flock" sheltered in a piano box. In 1923, as the farm prospered, my father had a very nice large chicken house built and increased the size of his flock so that now, in addition to fruits and vegetables, he also had eggs for sale.

Henry was 15 years old when he and I completed the eighth grade. Our older brothers, Charlie and Jack, were already established in heavy farm work, plowing, pruning and spraying, among other things, so to Henry naturally fell the job of taking care of the poultry. That kind of work seemed made for him since he wasn't a bit enthusiastic about dirt-farming.

Because we had so many chickens, we were good prospects for the feed salesmen from the various grain companies. It was Henry to whom they talked, encouraging him to expand the poultry end of the business by sharing knowledge and advice with him. Henry was a good listener and readily absorbed new ideas and procedures.

At an early stage, when the hens were laying about 25 dozen eggs a day for market, it was my job every night to "candle" them. Each egg was checked for blood spots by putting it up to a hole in a light enclosure and slowly rotating it. The strong light behind it enabled one to see right through the shell and detect any imperfections. I did this every night throughout my high school years, going through at least two big basketsful. Working with both hands, I became very speedy at it.

Soon the poultry division of the farm started expanding. It had become feasible to hatch eggs in quantity, which required incubators, then brooders to keep the newly hatched chickens warm, which in turn required more buildings and equipment. As with any new enterprise, this needed financial support before any profits could be shown and for many years the other farm income supported this new venture.

The next step was to hire a geneticist to help improve the breed. At this point the farm had

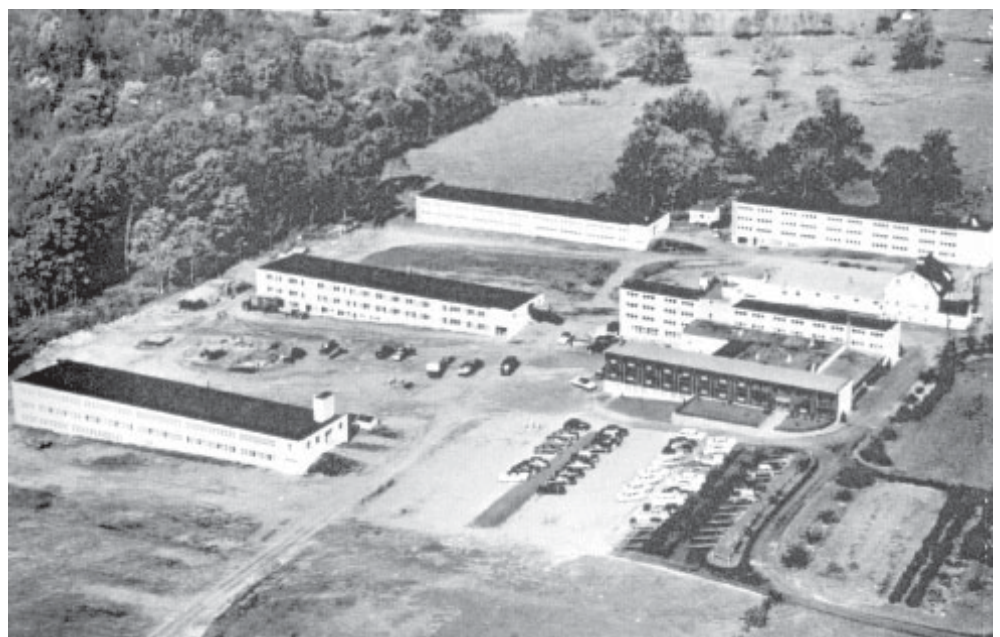
Rhode Island Reds and White Leghorns, which were skinny but good egg producers. The object was to cross-breed for a meaty chicken that laid lots of eggs. Simplistically, this was done by first selecting the most outstanding and healthiest hens and roosters from their various flocks, leg-banding them for identification, and then, in individual pens, confining about ten or twelve of these hens with one rooster for fertilization.

The laying parent-stock hens were trap-nested (a nest with a trap door that shuts when the hen enters to lay her egg) and the nest periodically was checked to release the trapped hen and simultaneously label the egg for incubation by recording the mother's leg band number. The subsequently hatched chick would be banded with a new coded number which was recorded on carefully kept charts. These steps were repeated generation after generation, producing an impressive genetic record for each and every fowl. This was a long and painstaking process, especially before the computer age.

The most important and productive endeavor was laboratory research. This undertaking I have no knowledge of and is, in any event, restricted information as poultry breeding is a highly competitive field. The outcome of these efforts was a chicken of the type and quality for which they were striving. They named the new breed White Rocks, which I believe later became known world-wide as Arbor Acres White Rocks.

The farm was on its way to fame and fortune! The poultry operation expanded and research continued, contributing further to improving the quality of poultry as well as decreasing the time to raise chicks to maturity. Soon most of the farming was down-scaled or eliminated entirely, and the poultry breeding became the major endeavor and source of income.

The business became Frank Saglio & Sons when a partnership was formed between my father and three of my brothers, and then renamed Arbor Acres. When the partnership was



**This aerial view shows the Arbor Acres complex as it appeared in 1953. From humble beginnings—through hard work and great vision—the Glastonbury venture developed into an internationally renowned business with 9,000 employees and branches in 53 countries.**

dissolved and a corporation formed in 1954, it became Arbor Acres, Inc., with plants worldwide and in many states in the U. S.

From humble beginnings there developed a multi-million dollar business with 9,000 employees and branches in 53 countries. For a time, Arbor Acres furnished approximately 80% of the chickens consumed in the world. The business brought New World methods to the Old World. What was taken away in potential from Europe in 1899 when my father came to America was returned one-hundred-fold with the establishment of overseas branches. Appropriately, the firm's European headquarters, "Chicken City," was established in Italy.

In 1964, an 82% share of Arbor Acres, Inc was sold to International Basic Economy Cor-

poration, a Rockefeller family company, for a reputed \$22 million. My brothers Charlie and Jack retired and built homes nearby on John Tom Hill. Henry stayed on as president and then served as chairman of the board. He had become a prominent poultry breeder, internationally renowned in his field.

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## Saglio Saga... Beginnings and Endings

by Frances Saglio Dogan

At the end of June 1932, I graduated from Bay Path Institute having earned certification as a teacher of commercial subjects. The country was in a deep economic depression and no teaching positions were available. My blind brother Hugo was in the same predicament so we both returned home to Glastonbury unemployed, somewhat embarrassed and in low spirits.

Hugo suggested that we make the best of a bad situation by continuing our studies at home which we did together. In November 1933, some of Hugo's Amherst College professors suggested he move to Amherst as a tutor. I had done some substitute teaching but full-time teaching positions were still at a premium.

However, I had the option of secretarial work and through the effort of Fred Briggs, Hugo's former high school teacher and his good friend, I finally got work in the Stenographic Department of the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hartford. I found lodging with two elderly "maiden ladies" who lived several blocks from Phoenix ... a good healthy walk. I went home almost every weekend, did my laundry, helped Mama and dated occasionally.

I had worked at Phoenix less than two years when Fred Briggs asked me to work for him. He had given up teaching and was speculating on the stock market with a "fool proof system." Fred was the eternal optimist, full of ideas and a very convincing talker. My brother Charlie, with his usual wit, dubbed him "Sky Blue Briggs." I went to work for Fred, charting stocks and maintaining his office in Hartford. Fred was a gambler at heart and soon his losses far exceeded his gains. I wasn't aware how serious the situation was until it was too late. Fortunately his wife Laura still had her job and kept their accounts paid up, but I was out of a job.

It didn't take me but a few weeks to find work, this time with Pratt & Whitney at a facility in Hartford. In the fall of 1936, I was working there in the Production Department as secretary to Mr. Hout, the Production Manager. He told me one day that he had hired a University of New Hampshire Electrical Engineering graduate whom he thought would work out pretty well. A few days later Edward Dogan reported for work ... clean-cut, tall, handsome, dark blond hair and a mile-wide smile. WOW! I was quite impressed. Eddie was somewhat shy but friendly.

He frequently mentioned his fiancée so although I was somewhat disappointed that he was already "spoken for," I was very much at ease with him. I was more relaxed around married and attached men because I subconsciously felt they wouldn't misinterpret my natural

friendliness. After some time, I learned from mutual friends that all was not going well with his engagement and also that he didn't think it wise to date a coworker. His fiancée ... they had been college classmates ... had decided that he wasn't yet earning enough to marry her.

Eddie had a steady job and thought that he earned enough to get married. When his fiancée returned to New Hampshire early, leaving him alone on his birthday, he invited me to a movie. From then on, I became his "convenient date" as we became part of a group of five or six couples. In the summer of 1937, we submitted our vacation preferences. It just happened that Eddie's second week coincided with my first week.

During his first week Eddie went to New Hampshire to see his fiancée but she had met someone else ... a young doctor ... and broke off their engagement. Now Eddie felt free to return to Hartford and propose to me, and I didn't hesitate in accepting! Neither Eddie nor I wanted a big wedding so we got married two days later, on Saturday, August 7, 1937. Eddie's parents were very pleased that he had found someone who made him happy but, to put it mildly, my family was very upset that we had eloped.

Soon after our marriage, Eddie was hired to teach electrical engineering at Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) in Pittsburg and we moved there. Here our daughters were born, Diane in 1938 and Ginny in 1941. Eddie had joined the National Guard in his high school days and then the ROTC in college. In December 1941 when the U.S. entered World War II, he was a second lieutenant in the Army Reserves. On July 9, 1942, he reported to Philadelphia for active duty in the Signal Corps and Diane, Ginny and I went along.

In July 1943, Eddie was assigned to a then unknown overseas destination and I and our daughters moved in with my parents in Glastonbury. Their house had been expanded during the 1930s to accommodate my brother Charlie and his family. By 1942, Charlie's family lived in the addition and my brother Jack and his wife of one year, Clara, were living with my parents. There was adequate space for me and the girls, so we became part of a large family living in that house. It was wartime, housing was scarce and everyone was making sacrifices. I tried to do whatever was needed to help with the household work.

I had been home only two weeks when Mr. Knox, Glastonbury's Superintendent of Schools came out to see me and offered me a teaching position in the high school commercial depart-

ment. Although a year too young, they would make an exception and accept Diane in first grade. The family encouraged me to take it and volunteered to look after Ginny while I taught. We saw it as a contribution to the war effort.

The war ended in August 1945 and, after a two-and-a-half year separation, Eddie arrived back in Connecticut on December 5, 1945 from New Delhi, India where he had been stationed. I continued teaching until mid-year to make the transition easier for my replacement. In June 1946, I returned to Glastonbury for high school graduation because the senior class had dedicated the yearbook to me.

In January 1946, Eddie resumed teaching at Carnegie Tech so our family of four returned to living in rented housing in Pittsburgh. In July 1946, Eddie, who had always been in the Army Reserves, was offered a Regular Army commission which he accepted and he was assigned to the Carnegie Tech ROTC Department. Army assignments are normally no longer than three years' duration. Thus in 1949, he was reassigned to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey and we moved there. As I had in Pittsburgh, I did a lot of substitute teaching there.

After a year in New Jersey, Eddie was selected to go to Washington, DC for training as a military attaché. He was to be posted to Switzerland, but with the Korean War at its height, he was instead assigned there. Eddie wanted to make sure that we would be well settled in case anything happened to him, so we bought and fixed up a modest house in Manchester, about 12 miles from Arbor Acres. I was asked to substitute at Manchester High School which turned out to be three months of steady teaching. School was hardly over when Mr. Knox called me about an opening at Glastonbury High School and, in September 1951, I was once again teaching there.

Eddie was on his way going through Japan to Korea when a general whom he had served under spotted and requisitioned him, so he remained in Yokohama where we could join him. I had to sell the house and resign from my teaching job. Saying good-bye to Papa and Mama was terribly hard. Mama was in her early 70s and not in the best of health and Papa, suffering from the effects of a stroke, was failing fast. I was sure we would never see him again.

As it turned out, he died on April 10, 1952 on the day we finished driving to Seattle, Washington to board the ship taking us to Japan. It was very hard for me, but I decided not return to Glastonbury to be with the family for his funeral.

In September 1953, after the girls and I had lived 17 months in Japan, Eddie had orders for



**The author Frances and her husband Eddie in a picture taken in late 1937, four months after they were married. It was made as a Christmas gift for their families since they were not present at the wedding.**

Fort Monroe, Virginia. Until December when we were assigned housing there, the girls and I stayed again in Glastonbury. In 1956, Eddie was ordered to the Pentagon and we rented an apartment in Alexandria, Virginia. By this time, Diane was studying at Cornell, University and Ginny was in high school.

We were three years in Washington before Eddie received orders to Heidelberg, Germany. While we were in Germany we were able to travel widely in Europe. In September 1962, Eddie began a tour of duty in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. In June 1964, I spent some time in Glastonbury taking care of Mama who had been in the hospital. Once again, I was aware of the friendly and concerned Italian community in which I had grown up. Hardly a day passed when one of them was not visiting my mother.

Mama died on September 3, 1964 at age 83. After that we sometimes visited in Glastonbury but it was as a "guest" of one or another of my brothers and their families. They were always cordial and made us feel welcome, but it was not the same.

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