

RUTH KEELER  
ON THE KEELER ALBUM (circa 1912)  
Interviewed by Richard B. Koser

RBK = Richard Koser

RK = Ruth Keeler

. . . .Regarding pictures particularly those of the keystone bridge, entering Keeler Lane.

RBK: ... Album. And how did this come into existence, . . . the album?

RK: My grandfather must have had these taken. My grandfather was H. Hobart Keeler.

RBK: He lived here, in this house?

RK: Yes.

RBK: Do you know who the photographer was?

RK: Hartland, Hartland in Ridgefield

RBK: Okay, and was there any particular occasion for taking it?

RK: I don't think so. My grandfather just happened to, . . . liked to have photographs taken. He was always having photographs of himself, and his wife, and when my sister and I came up, his children, that was one of the things we had to do, was to go and have our pictures taken.

RBK: Okay, it's dated 1912, about.

RK: About, I'm just going by the ages of ?. .....I don't recognize my own voice.

RBK: No, that's the problem with these machines. Picture entitled, *The Lane in October*. This is Keeler Lane.

RK: And these are the trees that were planted by my great grandfather to celebrate the Centennial.

RBK: What was his name?

RK: Floyd Keeler.

RBK: Floyd. Okay. That be 1886, 1876.

RK: [laughter] The sundial was also in celebration. That has the 1876 on it.

RBK: Where's the sundial?

RK: Sundial's right out here in front of the house.

RBK: In front of Keeler Homestead. This view is looking toward North Salem.

RK: That's right. Looking north.

RBK: Now Keelerville never had a post office per se but was simply, commonly known as Keelerville.

RK: Because there were so many Keelers around.

RBK: Okay. Photograph, *Above the River Meadow*.

RK: Well, now this is looking down toward North Salem. There's 116 here and you're looking down. Again, you're looking, you're looking north east.

RBK: Okay, so this is from the top of the hill over there.

RK: No it's from here. It's from, yes, I guess you're right.

RBK: If that's northeast, that's the road towards Ridgefield isn't it?

RK: But we're looking down from here. Look you're looking, you're looking from here.

RBK: Correct. Towards the Ridgefield Road then. Alrighty. If you see something you like here, or especially want to show.

[Inaudible]

RBK: Here's *A Shady Corner*. Where is the corner?

RK: That is down. . . that is . . . it is, well, they're all changed you see . . . It's the . . . It is where. . . this would go.

RBK: This Keeler Lane right here?

RK: No, No, no, no, we're down on 116 here. And this is the . . .

RBK: Is that Baxter Road?

RK: No, This is Chaffee's house here. This is where.... This is going to Wallace Road and this is going to Ridgefield. See?

RBK: Okay, so this is where the road, 116 goes north?

RK: No, No. This is where 116 . . .

RBK: I mean where, 121 goes north and 116 goes . . .

RK: No, N. This doesn't go up Peach Lake. This is. No no this is down. Oh, yes, I guess that is what I'm saying it is. No that isn't Gonella's . . . this is beyond that. And this is Wallace Road that goes past the Catholic Church.

RBK: Okay. So to the left is Wallace Road and the right 116 continues and Chaffee.

RK: No it is not his house. No this side of it. The one that has never been fixed up He's in the process of fixing it; it's in kinda bad shape Of course I could be wrong, too,

[Aside: they are talking about the Brooks house, now owned by Daros.]

RBK: *Where the Roads Meet.*

RK: Now, where are we? These are the things that get me because everything has been so changed around. Now this is where, it comes down 121 because that looks like the, that house that's on the corner, that sits back that's opposite the arch.

RBK: Yes it does.

RK: So the arch could be over here, see.

RBK: To the Left.

RK: And, that was owned by Lockwood at that time.

RBK: That's the farmhouse across from the arch then.

RK: That's right.

RBK: So this is Route 116 and away from us is heading west and it's just where 116 joins 121.

RK: Yes.

RBK: Okay

RK: There's the Catholic Church.

RBK: It's now Lucas' home. Isn't it? Is that the one?

RK: Oh no. Now wait a minute. Oh, they have the Universalist Church. Yes, this is the Lucas's, they have the Universalist Church.

RBK: Here's *A January Morning in Midwinter.*

RK: That's very handsome. This house is no longer there, that was on the corner there.

RBK: That's at the far right. Who's was it?

RK: It was, it was . . . it was last owned by . . . I'm not sure who's it was originally, maybe it belonged to Cross maybe it was, because it was beyond, just beyond the Balanced Rock, beyond the antique shop, and it was a little house there.

RBK: This is east of the antique shop?

RK: Yes, it was on the bad curve that Paterno had taken out.

RBK: So the antique shop would be there . . .

RK: This is what was known as the river meadow. This is the barn there that Kass . . . that's in back of the house that Kass bought.

RBK: So Baxter Road would go off over here.

RK: Yes, over here. It's a rather nice photograph, isn't it?

RBK: Yes, I was taken with it.

RK: How do you like my coffee?

RBK: Delicious, it's real.

RK: There's the Quaker Meeting house.

RBK: The Quaker Meeting House, which is burnt down recently. Do you remember what it dated back to?

RK: Quaker Meeting House?

RBK: Yes.

RK: That's one of the very early ones, I think 1762, or 3 . . . . one of the very early meeting houses.

RBK: Okay. Let's do this. *The Old Picnic Grove in October.*

RK: Yes, that's in

RBK: Where was the grove?

RK: That's in, that's up in Vails, up at Peach Lake.

RBK: Peach Lake. Do you happen to know who this person is?

RK: Haven't the remotest idea. [laughter] I couldn't possibly tell you.

RBK: I just wondered if the models in the photographs were Keelers also.

RBK: No.

RK: Now there you.

RBK: Now here's old Salem Center.

RK: That's right, that's the, that was the . . .

RBK: Lobdell General Store at one time. Now the courthouse.

RK: Yes

RBK: Okay.

RK: And this is the house next door. There you have the . . . .

RBK: What number . . . is this the Wood Path in October (Keeler Woods) or is that Keeler Woods?

RK: I don't have the remotest idea. Wood Path in October.

RBK: Number 2, which would be number two?

RK: Well this is, this is below Turkey Hill. This is, *Old Academy at Salem Center*. No, this is, this is down below Turkey Hill. No this would be the wood path in.

RBK: Turkey Hill is over by the herb farm, isn't it..... Whitman.

RK: That's right.

RBK: And that was formerly Mills.

RK: That's right.

RBK: And the wood path, does that mean path through the woods.

RK: This one.

RBK: Oh, I'm sorry, below Turkey Hill . . . Again no recognition of . . . .

RK: No, I don't know who the devil it is.

RBK: This is the one I want to use.

RK: That's Turkey Hill. Would you like to have somebody. . . . I'm afraid I can't recognize anybody. But there's your. I think these are very nice.

RBK: We're going to use these too. This is . . .

RK: That's Helen Whitman.

RBK: Helen Whitman's place, birthplace of Ogden Mills. Is that one of the local boys that made good, somewhere?

RK: Now, don't tell me you don't know about Ogden Mills.

RBK: Tell me about Ogden Mills.

RK: He went west and made a fortune. He was one of the bankers.

RBK: Where, San Francisco?

RK: Started off in San Francisco, went nation-wide. Came back to NY. Really made it. Oh, No, he was a , no, he did it with trading, money, and he became a banker. Yes, you help yourself you'll be right on top of us. . . . get into trouble there.

RBK: Love boxes. They love boxes.

RBK: Sarah Bishop, we've covered. *Road on the way to Port of Missing Men.*

RK: That's up, that's up. I'm not absolutely certain which one that is, but . . .

RBK: It's one of the internal roads

RK: Yes

RBK: Okay. Mountain Lakes Camp. Tea House has been covered.

RK: And there's Sarah Bishop rock.

RBK: Hold in abeyance also,

RK: There's some more roads going in there.

RBK: I like, the reason I chose this one was for the nice stone work and the fact that there's a carriage on it, which lends interest.

RK: Now, I think these are Vails here.

RBK: Alright, we're referring to the picture of the two boats in dock on a lake with a lady and two children.

RK: And those are Vail children, I would guess, that was probably Arthur and Earl Vail.

RBK: The lady?

RK: And their mother!

RBK: Name?

RK: She would be Mrs. Arthur Vail.

RBK: Okay, and is this Peach Lake?

RK: That's Peach Lake.

RBK: Okay.

RK: My guess that's what . . . .

RBK: The same?

RK: There they are!

RBK: Alright. Now, . . .

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End interview of Ruth Keeler by Richard Koser going over the Keeler pictures for the December 1980 bulletin.