

Thompson family home on the common. He had a job with Sears, Roebuck & Co. in Keene. During spare time he helped his father take down the large building on the south side of the common that had housed the Fitzwilliam Savings Bank, P. S. and S. Batcheller's Drug Store and post office. In 1934 he took his family back to New London, where he worked as general manager for Thompson Motor Company on Bank Street. Through the years he enjoyed working with wood, making candlesticks, and later after his retirement and settling in Florida, he carved wooden chains out of one piece of wood. The opportunity came to go into business, and the family moved to Mystic, Connecticut where he operated a Ford agency and garage with a friend, C. Douglas Alves, and after a short time, on his own. Due to the closing of Rossie Mills in Mystic a short time later and beginning of unions, people did not have money for new cars, so late in the summer of 1938 the family returned to Fitzwilliam. Willard bought and ran Blodgett's Garage and gas station on the south corner of Routes 12 and 119. In 1940 he converted a 1935 hearse into a bus, taking students to Keene High School, at a charge of \$2 a week. By 1942 he had purchased a commercial bus and operated the Blue Line bus service, with a route set up to bring defense workers to Troy Mills and on to Keene, New Hampshire. In 1940 he built a diner on the north side of the garage that his wife, Marjorie, and daughter, Ruth, ran. In the fall of 1943 Willard and Marjorie separated, with Marjorie and Ruth staying in the family home behind the garage on Rindge Rd. that Willard had bought when it became available after he bought the garage. In September of 1946 their divorce became final. He was director of civil defense, Fitzwilliam Town Clerk from 1947 until 1961, and was a School Board member from 1952 through 1954. He moved the diner to the south side of the garage and used it as an office, after selling the garage to his son-in law's parents, Cedric and Annie Fisher. An addition to it became a shop for woolens from the Troy Blanket Mills, and later it became the What-Knott Shop. During the summer, on Saturday evenings, his parents ran auctions behind the shop. In 1952 he built and operated the Blodgett Bowling Center and shooting gallery just south of the woolen shop until 1953. He remarried 21 November 1956 after the death of his mother. A small addition to the rear of the building that had been the diner, produced a small apartment where they lived until his retirement in 1961, when they went to Peterborough to live. In 1964 they moved to Phoenix, Arizona expecting the climate to improve his health, which did not happen, so they moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1965. When the RLDS Church wanted to expand the church grounds, Deerhaven, in Paisley, Florida, he moved north to live on the grounds and help people who bought plots of land there and needed assistance in establishing a home. He obtained permits, etc. for wells, electricity and to erect homes. His second wife died in 1973, at which time he made contact with his daughter, Ruth, after many years of no communication. He made several trips to Massachusetts for visits, and Ruth and Bob visited him in Florida every year until Bob died in 1984. When Ruth remarried in 1988, she and her husband, Donald Washburn, went to see him. When they moved to Florida in 1990, she took a more active role in helping him. Due to the gradual loss of sight, Willard had to give up his license to drive and his home in Deerhaven. He entered an efficiency apartment in the HUD College Arms Towers in Deland, Florida. He enjoyed being able to see Margaret Delory and Mary Gordon, two other people from Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire living there, also. While there, he spent many hours over a period of several years researching the history of the College Arms Towers, the Fish Memorial Hospital, just across the street, and the life of Henry Deland, the founder of the city, John B. Stetson, co-founder of Stetson University in Deland, and Judge Bert Fish, a philanthropist who left a legacy for the city in his many civic activities. His findings were printed in booklets, and pictures he found, enlarged and framed, and given to the city of Deland, the Deland Library, Stetson University, The Deland Historical Society and the Lake Helen Library, another town founded by Henry Deland. Friends from Deerhaven picked him up each Sunday to go to church and other functions. He walked 5 miles almost every day until he was 95. Then in 1997, his loss of memory at times made it very difficult for him to be on his own, as he wished. He entered an ACLF in Port Orange, Florida where he celebrated his 98th birthday in September the following year. Just a few days before Christmas he suffered a stroke that hospitalized him over the holidays. His two granddaughters had come to Ormond Beach to spend the holidays with their mother, Ruth, so he was able to see them. Two days after Christmas he was taken to a nursing home where he died at 6:02 on 05 January 1999 with his daughter holding his hand.

#### More About WILLARD MANCHESTER BLODGETT:

Burial: 28-August-1999, Pine Grove Cemetery, Fitzwilliam, Cheshire Cty., New Hampshire

#### Notes for MARJORIE JESSIE ALFORD:

Marjorie was the second child, and first daughter, born to Charles W. and Jessie Teare Alford in London, Ontario, Canada on 04 May 1901. She had her education in the London schools, and graduated from the high school secretarial course and went to work for a group of lawyers. Several years later, her hearing failed, so she had to give up her secretarial job and become a bookkeeper, living at home with her parents. She enjoyed sports, playing basketball on the Western Ontario Women's Basketball team, which played under men's rules at that time. She also played on the London Women's Softball team. She enjoyed riding in the sidecar of her father's motorcycle. She was a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on Maitland St. in London. She was the church organist and active in church functions, including attending reunions at the church grounds at Erie Beach. While visiting friends at the RLDS Reunion Grounds in Onset, Massachusetts, USA the summer of 1924, she met Willard M. Blodgett. When she married him 25 April 1925 in London, Ontario, Canada and moved to New London, Connecticut, she took out her first papers for