

Sledding on Station Hill

By Roy W. Moger
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Sixty years ago, during the First World War, we young people in Roslyn enjoyed a winter sport which is practically impossible now to accomplish and almost impossible to believe in this day of salted roads in winter, and truck operated snowplow-sanders.

Then, when the automobile was new, it was left in the garage when the snow came. My father's car was put up on jacks. The water was drained from the radiator. The brass was coated so it wouldn't tarnish, and the entire car was covered with a tarpaulin for the winter months. There were few automobiles or auto trucks on the roads for us to worry about.

When the snow came, the sled was king. Deliveries were made by horse and sleigh. Baker Brown on East Broadway had a bakery sleigh. Craft's People's Meat Market had a butcher sleigh. Joshua T. Hicks' General Store had a delivery sleigh. These delivery sleighs were drawn by one horse. The lumber-yard sleds were drawn by teams of horses.

I can remember hitching a ride on the baker's sleigh, driven by Harry Brown, the baker's son. I would run after it, once it was under way, and attach my sled rope to the rear runner of the bakery sleigh and then sit on my sled and have the bakery sleigh pull me along the road. Harry did not like this and would try to get me to unhitch my sled.

When I didn't do what he said, he would lean over the back of the bakery sleigh and try to hit me with his whip. I was prepared for such an eventuality and had a long rope attached to my sled which I could let out so that my sled fell behind out of reach of his whip. If he stopped his sleigh, I would let go my end of my rope and pull it loose, pick up my sled and run. He could not chase me as he could not

leave his horse. The trick was to attach my sled without him seeing me, then keep in close to the bakery sleigh so that he would not know I was there.

It was not the delivery sleighs, however, that really attracted us. It was the lumber sleds drawn by teams of sturdy horses which brought the lumber from the freight station to the lumber yards in the village. Hicks' Lumber Yard was located on the west side of the creek and the Conklin, Tubby and Conklin Lumber Yard was on the east side of the creek in the village. When the harbor was free of ice, lumber was brought in by schooner or barge. During the winter, however, when the harbor was frozen, lumber had to be brought in by freight car.

The freight yard of the Long Island Railroad was located south of Orchard St. on the west side of the tracks. The lumber sleds would go from the lumber yards to the station empty and return down Station Hill, as we called what is now Railroad Ave. and Main St., loaded with lumber. The packed snow on the road made Station Hill a perfect place for all the young people of the area to coast.

Can anyone today, who did not participate in this sport on Station Hill, imagine the fun we had? We would hook our sleds, one behind the other, in a long line behind an empty lumber sled going up the hill and enjoy the ride up to the station. Once at the top, we unhitched our sleds and raced each other back down the hill, where we waited for the next empty lumber sled going up the hill.

As soon as school was out at 3 o'clock, we raced home for our sleds. We had until 5 o'clock, or until the last load of lumber was taken down the hill to enjoy this very special sport. The work day at these lumber yards was from 7



LUMBER SLEIGH on Main St. in Roslyn Village, circa 1910.

a.m. to 5 p.m., with an hour's rest for lunch beginning at noon. This was still the work day in 1925 when I worked for the summer as a yardhand at the Hicks Lumber Yard (now Nassau-Suffolk Lumber and Supply Co.).

The 12 o'clock whistle was a very welcome sound. There has never been a sound to equal it. It takes five hours of hard steady labor to really appreciate it.

(Ed. note: The above story is part of a series written by Roy Moger, a life-long resident of Roslyn who has for many years served as a trustee of the Village of Roslyn and village historian. He is also the author of "Roslyn Then and Now." This story and the others published recently in the Roslyn News have copyright date of 1980.)

Reminiscences of My Roslyn
Boyhood