

Making a Living on the Farm at Cassidy Lake



Peter Cassidy
August 2019

Cassidy Lake is rural farmland. The nearest village, Norton, where there is a rail station, is 9 miles, the nearest town, Sussex, 15 miles away, and the nearest city, Saint John, 40 miles away. Making a living there was challenging. Studying the family history we conclude the Cassidy family, like their neighbors, weren't rich, but they weren't poor either.

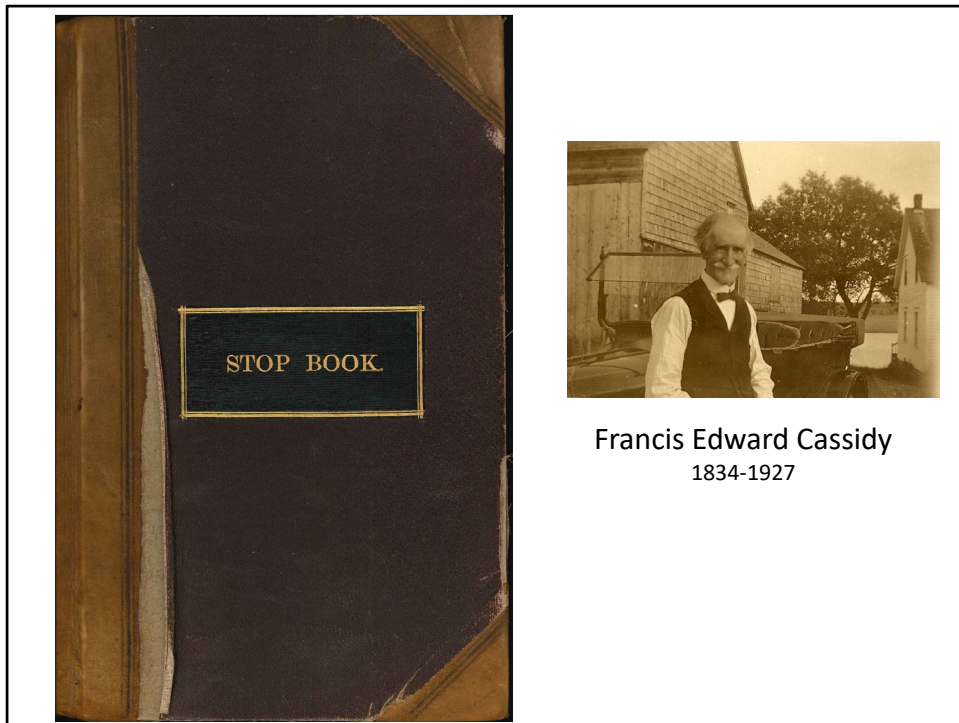
The Port in Ireland where William grew up was a poor fishing village of about 50 residents. Here the Cassidys were shipbuilders and carpenters, not fisherman or farmers. We believe William and Jane probably brought a little money with them to Canada in 1819 by virtue of the fact they bought property at the head of Kings Street in Saint John shortly after they arrived. It's pretty certain it was not a lot of money they brought with them because, four years later in 1823, William had to take out a loan of £40 (the equivalent of about \$5,000 today) to purchase 150 acres at Cassidy Lake.

The Cassidys of Cassidy Lake were an energetic and creative lot...

- They needed to be creative
- Area is not great farmland
 - Hilly and rocky
 - Thin layer of topsoil
 - Large acreage planting difficult
- Came from family of shipbuilders, carpenters, and cabinet makers



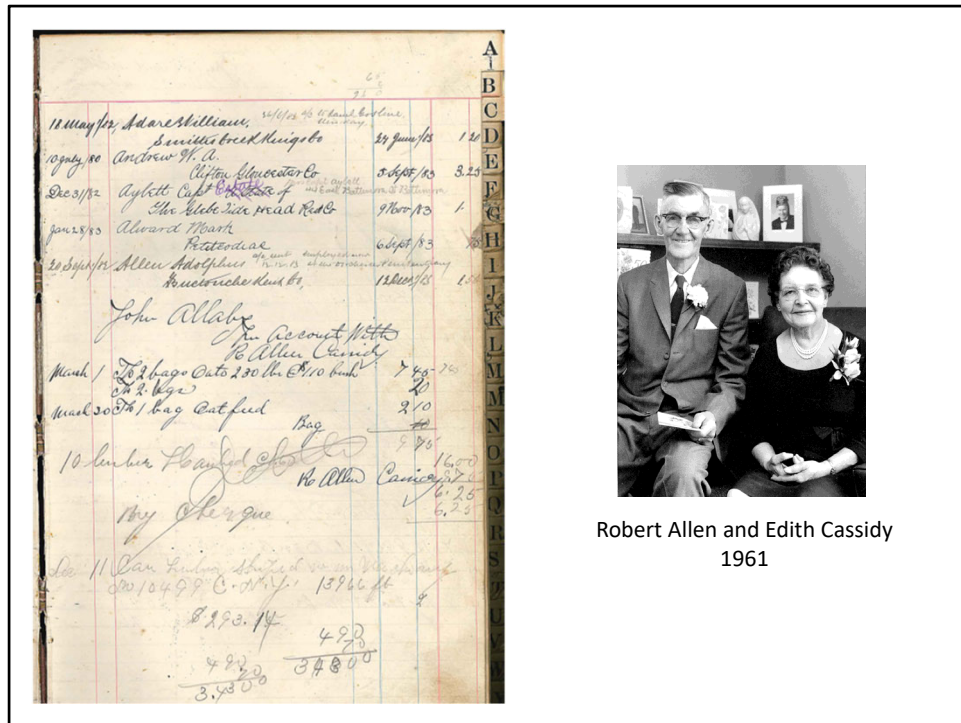
So how did they make a living at Cassidy Lake? The Cassidys of Cassidy Lake were an energetic and creative lot and they needed to be. While we refer to the homestead as a farm, as farmland goes it is not great. The land is hilly and rocky with only a fairly thin layer of topsoil much like The Port area they left back in Ireland. Thus, Cassidy Lake does not lend itself to large acreage farming. It's interesting to note that William came from a family of shipbuilders, carpenter and cabinet makers, not farmers. Therefore it is not surprising that the family income came from a variety of sources. We get a good insight into the accounting detail of their lives from accounting records they kept of farm and cheese factory operations in the early 1900s. The "Shop Book" as it is titled, is an interesting collection of notes and financial transactions made by initially by Francis Edward Cassidy and later by his son, Robert Allen Cassidy. Multiply these amounts shown below by 13 for an approximation of the value in today's dollars.



The first real break in the mystery of the plane that landed on Cassidy Lake in the winter due to an engine problem came from this book.

It's called a STOP BOOK. We think that's a typo on the part of the printer and my great-grandfather, Francis Edward, got it for a bargain price. It's actually an account book in which they kept records of farm operations and of the family operated cheese factory. The first entries were made by Francis Edward starting in 1880. The majority of the entries were made by my grandfather, Robert Allen, from 1917 until 1942.

I inherited this family heirloom when my dad died in 1993.



Robert Allen and Edith Cassidy
1961

At first glance the entries do not appear to be very inspiring. It's clear these guys were not CPAs. Here is a typical page. It's more a note book of transactions than an accounting register. My initial assessment was that it was not very informative and I put away in a closet. That was 24 years ago in 1993.

In 2016, after getting tired of it being in the way, I decided to give it one last look for anything of value. I'm not a pack rat, so it was potentially going to the trash. After careful study, to my surprise, I found it was a treasure trove of information.

This bound book is a journal of income and expenses for the farm at Cassidy Lake and its associated cheese factory. We believe the title of the book is a typo and should have been something like "Shop Book". If so, then they probably got the book at a good price. The printer's name does not appear anywhere in the book.

There are a few entries from 1880 to 1883 (p 1, 15, 29, 77, 121, 149, 171, 195, 223, 249, 263, 279, 319) which, based on similarity of the handwriting, were probably made by Francis Edward Cassidy and relate to some nationwide activity; perhaps a subscription service associated with his church work. It's notable that while Cassidy Lake is a remote location, the reach of the Cassidy family was not constrained.

Most of the journal entries were made by Robert Allen Cassidy from 1917 to 1951. This content organization is a bit random. While the book is letter tabbed, it is not

consistently used that way. It's used more like a notebook with some pages used for scratch notes. For example, on the left inside front cover, we find the March 1926 cream records while the April 1926 cream records on page 6, and fertilizer used by Allen is on the right inside front cover page. Studying the book's contents reveals some interesting insight into life at Cassidy Lake in the early 1900s.

Cassidy Enterprises



- Farming
- Lumbering
- Furniture and Cabinet Making
- Cheese Factory
- Financial Services
- Public Employee
- Telephone Service
- Other Opportunities

Farming

Account of Cows and Other Stock

Account of Ceres and other shrubs		
1930		
1931		
Jan	Cereus sold	1900
Feb	Cereus sold	13 45
Mar	Cereus sold	57 65
April	Cereus sold	78 65
May	Cereus sold	48 87
June	Cereus sold	211 82
July	Cereus sold	45 00
Aug	Cereus sold	75 00
Sept	Cereus sold	50 65
Oct	Cereus sold	75 00
Nov	Cereus sold	82 00
Dec	Cereus sold	62 00
1932	Cereus sold	50 00
1933	Cereus sold	42 50
1934	Cereus sold	42 50
1935	Cereus sold	42 50
1936	Cereus sold	42 50
1937	Cereus sold	42 50
1938	Cereus sold	42 50
1939	Cereus sold	42 50
1940	Cereus sold	42 50
1941	Cereus sold	42 50
1942	Cereus sold	42 50
1943	Cereus sold	42 50
1944	Cereus sold	42 50
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1969	Cereus sold	42 50
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1971	Cereus sold	42 50
1972	Cereus sold	42 50
1973	Cereus sold	42 50
1974	Cereus sold	42 50
1975	Cereus sold	42 50
1976	Cereus sold	42 50
1977	Cereus sold	42 50
1978	Cereus sold	42 50
1979	Cereus sold	42 50
1980	Cereus sold	42 50
1981	Cereus sold	42 50
1982	Cereus sold	42 50
1983	Cereus sold	42 50
1984	Cereus sold	42 50
1985	Cereus sold	42 50
1986	Cereus sold	42 50
1987	Cereus sold	42 50
1988	Cereus sold	42 50
1989	Cereus sold	42 50
1990	Cereus sold	42 50
1991	Cereus sold	42 50
1992	Cereus sold	42 50
1993	Cereus sold	42 50
1994	Cereus sold	42 50
1995	Cereus sold	42 50
1996	Cereus sold	42 50
1997	Cereus sold	42 50
1998	Cereus sold	42 50
1999	Cereus sold	42 50
2000	Cereus sold	42 50

	1919	1920	1921
Milk	\$881	\$735	\$439
Cream	295	369	314
Pigs	300	284	285
Veal Calves	75	91	75
Beef Cows	212	50	118
Heifers		125	
Maple Syrup	75	75	
Apples	10	18	
Potatoes	25	144	
Oates & Buckwheat	25		
Total	\$1898	\$1891	\$1242

X13 for Today's \$

Mixed farming was the model at Cassidy Lake. They had a the usual cows, pigs, chickens and ducks. In later years they added geese. None of these animals were raised in great numbers but were sufficient for the family's food needs and to sell in the local market. One limiting factor was the need to provide shelter during harsh Canadian winters. The barn had room for about 20 cattle plus a few pigs during the winter. Corps consisted of the usual garden vegetables as well as oats and buckwheat which were essential sources of feed for the horses and other farm animals. The following excerpts from the farm accounting book section *Account of Cows and Other Stock* show how much income they received from the sale of:

Farming (cont.)

90

Account of Hens 1919

Jan 14/19	100 Eggs laid 271 @ 33¢	18.42
Feb 14/19	100 Eggs laid 314 @ 33¢	13.30
Mar 14/19	100 Eggs laid 444 @ 33¢	14.66
Apr 14/19	100 Eggs laid 488 @ 33¢	16.06
May 14/19	100 Eggs laid 527 @ 33¢	17.39
Jun 14/19	100 Eggs laid 527 @ 33¢	17.39
Jul 14/19	100 Eggs laid 527 @ 33¢	17.39
Aug 14/19	100 Eggs laid 527 @ 33¢	17.39
Sep 14/19	100 Eggs laid 527 @ 33¢	17.39
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Nov 14/19	100 Eggs laid 527 @ 33¢	17.39
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Total		173.90

Total for Year 173.90

Account of Hens

	1919	1920
Eggs	\$162	\$177
Roosters	15	3
Chickens	50	47
Pullets	14	
Hens	7	34
Ducks	2	
Total	\$252	\$261

X13 for Today's \$

Eggs sold from \$0.37 to \$0.70 per dozen, the price being higher in the winter months. There are no expenses associated with this activity. It is interesting to note there are several entries of chickens, rooster, and hens marked as "ate" as opposed to "sold". Does this mean a chicken that ends up on the family dinner table is recorded as a sale? No eggs are marked as "ate" nor are any items in the *Cows* account so the meaning of "ate" is a mystery.

Farming (cont.)

Arthur Barrett
In Account with
W. Allen Cassady

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
April 24	One ton hay @ 14.00	14.00		14.00
May 26	One ton hay @ 14.00	14.00		28.00
June 1	Trip to Sussex with car	3.00		31.00
June 15	Trip to Titusville with car	3.00		34.00
April 29	By Cash		34.00	0.00
July 10	By Cash		5.00	5.00
Sept 29	By Cash		10.00	15.00
Feb 12	By Cash		5.00	20.00
July 21	By Cash		4.00	24.00
Sept 29	By Cash		10.00	34.00
Feb 12	By Cash		5.00	39.00
July 21	By Cash		4.00	43.00

Accounts with Mr. Arthur Barrett

April	One ton hay	\$14.00
May	One ton hay	14.00
June 1	Trip to Sussex with car	3.00
June 15	Trip to Titusville with car	3.00
Total		\$34.00
Mr. Barrett paid for his purchases over time as follows:		
April 29	Cash	\$10.00
July 10	Cash	5.00
Sept 29	Cash	10.00
Feb 12	Cash	5.00
July 21	Cash	4.00

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Lumbering

1891-1900

Date	Description	Amount
June 26, 1922	Car #13229 Grand Trunk 2X3 Spruce	16,349 ft \$320.11
July 15, 1922	Car #70204 Pere & Marquette 2X4 Sized	20,040 ft \$380.10
July 15, 1922	Car #67701 Boston & Maine 2X6	14,998 ft \$275.75
Aug 30, 1922	Car #199735 New York Central 2X4 Sized	12,100 ft. \$198.55
Dec 11, 1922	Car #10499 N.Y.	13,966 ft \$293.14

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Dec 11, 1922	Car #10499	N.Y.		13,966 ft	\$293.14

X13 for Today's \$

Trees on the farm were a good source of hard and softwood. Besides providing lumber for construction of the homestead buildings and church, they were a source of wood for furniture the Cassidys made and sold. Logs cut on the farm were hauled to a mill at Upham for cutting into lumber. Stan talked of using a team of horses and sled to haul loads of logs in the winters of the 1920s. Much of the lumber was then hauled to Norton for shipment by rail to customers.

Lumber was sold to wholesalers and to individuals. We see records of carloads being shipped to markets in places like New York and Boston.

Furniture and Cabinet Making

- William
- Francis Edward
- Thomas
- Woodworking shop at farm
 - Foot-powered wood lathe
- Examples
 - Church windows and furnishings
 - Table at Grand Lake Cottage



This was a good source of income. They had a good size workshop attached to the barn which included a foot-powered wood lathe that was still operational in the 1940s. We see examples of their handiwork in the church windows and furnishings. It is interesting there are no entries for this type of work in the accounting record. This may be due to the fact that this record starts in 1916 when Robert Allen was running the farm. While his father, Francis Edward was a skilled cabinet maker as were some of his sons, Robert Allen was not.

Cheese Factory

- Co-op arrangement
- Allen Cassidy paid
 - \$50 as manager
 - \$2.50 as worker
 - Cheesemaker paid \$100/mo



1919 Results

Milk Received	343,926 lbs
Cheese Made	33,014 lbs
Total Value of Cheese made	\$9231.46
Total Cost to Manufacture	\$907.89
Proceeds Coming to Patrons	\$8323.57

X13 for Today's \$

The cheese factory was probably the family's biggest enterprise. It was a co-op arrangement. Farmers supplied the milk for cheese making and were paid according to the profits from cheese sales. We get an idea of the scale of the cheese factory operations from the 1919 results.

A portion of this proceeds would go to the Cassidys based on the milk they provided.

Allen Cassidy was paid at the rate of \$2.50 a day when he worked in the cheese factory. In 1919 he earned \$34.50. He was also paid \$4.00 when he hauled wooden boxes for the cheese from Norton. He was also paid \$4.00 for a trip to Sussex to get the car fixed. This implies the family car was a cheese factory business expense.

In 1921 the cheesemaker was paid \$100/month for 5 months work. A helper \$25/month for 1 ½ months and the secretary (Allen Cassidy) a salary of \$50. In 1924, the secretary's salary was increased to \$100.

Financial Services

No.	Name	Amount	Date
1	Samuel L. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
2	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
3	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
4	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
5	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
6	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
7	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
8	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
9	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
10	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
11	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
12	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
13	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
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22	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
23	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
24	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
25	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
26	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
27	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
28	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
29	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
30	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
31	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
32	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
33	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
34	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
35	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
36	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
37	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
38	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
39	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
40	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
41	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
42	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
43	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
44	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
45	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
46	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
47	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
48	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
49	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
50	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
51	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
52	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
53	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
54	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
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64	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
65	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
66	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
67	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
68	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
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76	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
77	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
78	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
79	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
80	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
81	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
82	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
83	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
84	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
85	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
86	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
87	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
88	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
89	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
90	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
91	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
92	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
93	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
94	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
95	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
96	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
97	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
98	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
99	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26
100	John A. Smith	\$50.00	Jan 1/26

- Personal Loans
 - 1926
 - 33 notes at Provincial Bank of Norton
 - 30 notes at Royal Bank of Canada, Sussex
- Loans for 3 months
 - \$30-\$100

X13 for Today's \$

It appears Allen Cassidy carried notes for people in the community. Exactly how this worked is not clear. In 1926 Allen had 33 notes at the Provincial Bank in Norton and 30 notes at the Royal Bank of Canada in Sussex. The loans were all for 3 months and ranged in value from \$30 to \$100 with the majority being in the \$30-\$50 range. Included in the list of note holders were F.E. Cassidy, Allen's 92 year old father, Allen's wife Edith, and their son, Stanley, age 14.

Public Employee

- Allen Cassidy, School Superintendent
- Collected School Taxes

Arthur Barrett & Annie Barrett		Boston	273
School tax			
1926			
June 30	To School tax (Annie Barrett)	7 90	
" 30	To School tax (Arthur Barrett)	2 20	
Nov 1	By Cash	8 40	
	Balance due	4 40	
Dec 15	To School tax (Annie Barrett)	13 50	
" 15	To School tax (Arthur Barrett)	3 35	
March 30	By Cash	21 15	
	Balance	6 15	
J. W. Smith			
July 1	To Cash	15 00	
Nov 1	To Cash	5 00	
Dec 1	To J. W. Smith	20 00	
Dec 1	By Cash	30 00	
Aug 30	By Cash	15 00	
Aug 30	By Cash	11 00	
Sept 6	By Cash	16 00	
Sept 14	By Cash	15 00	
Sept 6	By Cheque		25 00

X13 for Today's \$

Telephone Service

- Private line to Sussex
- Likely for lumber business



Apr 29, 1917	Fred Tuibe	Telephone to Norton	\$0.45
Jun 2, 1917	Andrew Campbell	Telephone messages	\$1.10
Jan 2, 1918	Thomas Brown	Telephone to Norton	\$0.45
Aug 25, 1919	Hubert Tabor	Telephone message	\$0.45
Oct 5, 1921	Matthew Cassidy	Telephone to Norton	\$0.45
Oct 22, 1921	Frank Avines	Telephone message Norton	\$0.90
Feb 15, 1922	Charles McCarron	Telephone message	\$0.75
Jun 9, 1922	Charles McCarron	Telephone	\$0.25
July 7, 1922	Matthew Cassidy	Telephone to Petitcodiac	\$0.55

X13 for Today's \$

We know they had phone service to the farm in the 1920s. In a letter written in the 1970s by Allen R. Cassidy to his granddaughter, Anne Renwick, we learn the telephone line ran 11 miles to Sussex. It went the short way through the woods rather than follow the road which would be a distance of 16 miles. So this is a private line to the Cassidy farm house.

We believe it was primarily used to support the cheese factory which sold its production in distant markets such as Saint John and Halifax in 1917 (p 35). The Cassidys were also shipping lumber to Boston in 1918 (p 0) and the telephone would certainly be helpful in those transactions. Being the only phone in the area, we see numerous instances of phone call charges. On page 5 Frank Avines paid \$0.90 to call Norton, 9 miles away, on Oct. 22, 1921. Matthew Cassidy, R. Allen's brother, is also charged \$0.45 for a telephone message on Oct. 5, 1921 to Norton. On page 116 we see included in the cost of supplies for the cheese factory in 1924, \$2.95 for telephone messages. The going rate seems to be \$0.45 for a local call, equivalent to \$5.00 in 2015. Phone calls were expensive in those days.

Eventually the phone line was removed. We don't know when but it was gone by the late 1940s including the telephone poles. Clearly the poles and copper wire had good value and should not go to waste.

Other Income Opportunities

76 *Robert Crispin*
Robert Road account 1925-

Sept 16	To 36 ft deal for 8 ft by 8 ft bridge	9.00	
Sept 16	To 1 ft by 1 ft deal for 8 ft by 8 ft bridge	1.00	
Sept 28	To 3 ft 10 in 2 ft 6 in 30 ft 3 ft 10 in	6.00	
Sept 28	Albert Allard's 1 day work	1.00	
Sept 28	William Caldwell 1 day work	1.00	
Sept 28	R. G. Canine 1 day work	1.00	
Sept 30	Settled to day work Crispin	1.00	
Nov 4	To 1 day work Allen and Albert		
Nov 4	Albert or Campbell Bridge		
Nov 28	Albert Allard 1 day work		
Nov 28	To 1 ft 10 in 2 ft 6 in 30 ft 3 ft 10 in	5.00	
Nov 28	To 1 day work Allen and Albert	5.00	
Nov 28	To 1 day work Albert Allard	1.00	
Nov 28	To 1 day work Allen Canine	1.00	
		14.00	
		14.00	

Paul

- Road work
- Boarders
- Work for neighbors
- Haul stuff for people
- Etc.

Proof you can make a good living on the farm at Cassidy Lake



Francis Edward Cassidy
c. 1925



Cassidy Lake Homestead
c. 1950

Here we see the evidence of the standard of living the Cassidy's attained.

Francis Edward is well dressed. They own a car. It looks like a Ford Model T that would cost about \$300 in 1925 (about \$4000 in today's dollars) and a definite luxury in that day.

They have a nice house, a large barn complex that includes an enclosed garage for the car, sitting on about 250 acres of land.