

# Reminiscences of My Boyhood in Roslyn

## Napoleon Forget's Blacksmith Shop

By ROY W. MOGER

(Ed. note: For your holiday pleasure, the Roslyn News is pleased to present the first of a collection of short stories written by Roy W. Moger on his boyhood in Roslyn during the first quarter of this century. Mr. Moger, who taught for many years in this community, serves as Roslyn Village historian and as a member of the Village of Roslyn Board of Trustees. He is the author of "Roslyn Then and Now.")

Before I was old enough to go to school and later during school vacations, I had a standing invitation to accompany Billy Jenkins, our hired man, to Napoleon Forget's Blacksmith Shop on the east side of Main St., in Roslyn.

The blacksmith shop stood just south of 153 Main St. It was a large two-story building. There was a paint shop for wagons on the second floor, but I never ventured there. The ground floor was the place to be. That was where the forge was located. It was a very busy place, an extremely fascinating place for a young boy to spend the morning.

Billy would tell my mother at breakfast time, while eating in the kitchen, that Dick, our carriage

horse, needed to be taken to the blacksmith shop to have a shoe repaired. Mother would give her consent. Then Billy would ask if I might go along, too. Permission would be granted after some discussion about my safety, and my being cautioned to behave myself, keep away from the horses, and out of the way of the blacksmith.

We would leave right after breakfast, hitching Dick to the cart and hastening to the blacksmith shop. There, we would spend the rest of the morning waiting for Dick to be shod. Yes, the shop was a busy place, but not so busy that it took all morning for the horse to have a shoe repaired or replaced. No matter how early we got there, however, even if we were at the head of the line, Billy always graciously allowed anyone who arrived after us to go ahead of him.

In this way, he could have time to talk to his friends, share the local news, discuss crops, what fish were biting in the creek (pronounced "crik") and who the new people were who had just moved into the area, etc. This kept Billy busy while I watched the blacksmith repair iron parts, shape a horseshoe to a horse's hoof, and then nail it in place. I watched the forge glow when he worked the bellows, and the iron

become cherry red when he held it in the fire.

Then the horseshoe would be quickly dipped in the tub of water which stood on the floor near the forge. There would be a hissing noise and steam would rise from the water when the hot iron was dipped in the water to temper it. All this was very exciting to a small boy who lived alone with his mother and father and had few neighboring children to play with.

In any event, both Billy and I would spend a busy morning at the blacksmith shop, he catching up on the local gossip and current news, and I watching the wonders of the blacksmith's art. Eventually, Mr. Forget, the blacksmith, would call to Billy that it was time to take care of Dick if we were to get back home in time for lunch. Dick would have been unharnessed from the cart and brought into the shop, his shoe repaired. We would be off on our return trip home, hurrying to get there in time for lunch or before the clock in the clock tower struck 12.

I can hear my mother saying, "I just don't understand why it takes so long to shoe a horse." Billy would mutter something about how busy Mr. Forget was, while I would hurry off to wash my hands for lunch and, of course, never answer my mother's question.

### A LITTLE EARLY

To the Editor:

May I suggest that the photograph on the front page of The Roslyn News, dated Dec. 13, 1979, titled "Roslyn Remembered" might better be dated circa 1896 instead of 1880. This photograph was taken near the corner of East Broadway and Old Northern Blvd. (formerly Willow St.) looking west. On close inspection, one can see the Roslyn Clock Tower approximately in the center of the picture. The Clock Tower is the clue to this suggestion, for it was not completed until December, 1895, so that the picture could not have been taken until the late fall or winter of 1895-96.

It might be helpful at this time to list several clues for dating street scenes of Roslyn before and after the turn of the century:

1. Telephone poles, from 1887.
2. Roslyn Clock Tower, from 1895.
3. Electric light poles, from 1900.
4. Trolley tracks, from 1908.
5. Fire hydrants, from 1910.

Caution, there are several postal cards of this period that have had the telephone and light poles removed to "improve" the picture. Example: See Clock Tower on pages eight and nine Roslyn Then and Now."

Roy W. Moger,  
Village Historian

• 9-7-79  
Patricia M. Moger, a 1975 graduate of Roslyn High School, daughter of Roy and Elizabeth Moger, was awarded a bachelor of arts degree at the ninth annual commencement of Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass. on May 26.

The subject of her advanced independent study, submitted as a graduation requirement, was "A Portrait of a Creative Learning Environment: the Four- and Five-Year Olds' Class, Friends Seminary, New York." Patricia will be teaching first grade at Westbury Friends School in September.

Her father, Roy W. Moger of Roslyn returned to Amherst College May 31 through June 3, for the