

WHAT CUMBERLAND MEANS TO ME

By Riley Soule

On September 7th, 1949, my great-grandparents, Florence and Dale J. Butterworth purchased a thirty acre farm in Cumberland, Maine. The purchase was one that Dale's father heavily scrutinized due to the condition of the farm, the nation's suffering post WWII economy, and the lack of industry in the surrounding communities. However, in the end, Dale's father lent him the money to buy the farm because he was able to convince his father that there was more to the property beyond the rough exterior and poorly maintained land. Dale believed the farmhouse, the land, and the community in which it was a part of would be the perfect place to raise a family. Dale would prove to be right. He and Florence raised five children and lived in that very same farmhouse for the remainder of their lives surrounded by four generations of family.

For sixty-seven years "the farm" served as a gathering place for my family. The heart of our family lies deep within the memories built in that house and in this community. I am extremely fortunate to have grown up living in a new home built on my grandparent's original farmland. My grandfather, Dale, fondly referred to as Pa, was an amazing historian and story teller. I spent countless hours listening to the stories of the early years, what Cumberland used to be like, and the people who laid the foundation for what our town has become. Often when I am out on a run or drive I recall the stories my grandfather shared and imagine the old store at Poland's Corner, or the one room schoolhouse across from the Tuttle Road Church, attended by my grandfather and Aunt Susan, the King's highway with the hum of 295, and the apple trees that used to line the farm property. These stories provide me with a first-hand perspective that deepens my connection to the Cumberland community. I feel so fortunate to have been the recipient of this amazing gift.

Like my grandparent, aunts and uncles, and father before me, I too, have my own memories and will have stories to tell of my home and town and look forward to sharing "how it was" years from now. My roots are deeply planted in this community, it is part of my fabric, it has made me who I am. Moments that hold a special place in my life like driving the golf cart and tractor around the farm, the Cumberland Fair, a sporting event at the beautiful Twinbrook Park, ice cream at Food Stop, treks out into the wooded lot along the stream, and many more. As I prepare to leave this town to head off to a new adventure I know it is the town, the people, and the experiences I have had here in Cumberland, Maine that have prepared me for my next adventure!

Riley Soule, Class of 2017 Greely High School, will be attending Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania this fall.