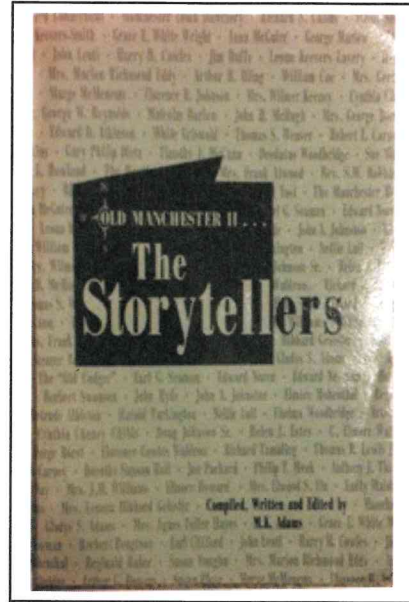


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*Storyteller: Violet Shearer Reid  
as told to Barbara Potterton, June 1989*

### GOING, GOING... THE AUCTIONEER FAMILY

Vi Shearer Reid was born in Manchester in 1908. She went to the one-room schoolhouse in the Oakland section of Manchester for the first five years of school. She skipped the sixth grade and went to the Union School for 7th and 8th grades. Vi's mother was a teacher. After high school, Vi worked at the Hilliard Mill in Buckland.

Most of the neighbors in the Oakland section worked in the mills. The Superintendent of the mill lived in a big house on the hill above the mill. His name was Campbell. There were no organized social activities at the mill. The sections of

Hilliardville and Talcotville had their own stores; but there were also people who toured the area selling their wares: George Brown was the butcher, Lyman's delivered milk, Fred Jones was the grocer, and Sam Southswift took orders.

Vi's husband's business started with his father who came from Scotland as a bound-out boy (indentured servant) and worked for Lee Hayes and hung around a livery stable at Charter Oak Park in Hartford. One day the auctioneer didn't show up for work, and Mr. Reid took over. He started selling farm animals, and then met C. Elmore Watkins who was a financial manager for an estate. That started him in antique

sales. Bob Reid, started work as an auctioneer in 1908, Ray Reid started in 1928, and Gordon Reid started in 1938.

The Reids operated the Strawberry Auction on Charter Oak Street, with Ray as the auctioneer and Vi as his secretary. The bank had charge of finances. It was a wholesale business—big trucks came from as far away as New Jersey to buy truck loads of crates of strawberries. They liked Bolton strawberries because they were firm and rode well. When the farmers started to sell from their farms, the buyers stopped going to the auction. Vi said the auction helped the farmers during the depression, but the farmers didn't stick together well.

The Reids also sold chickens and horses by auction at Steve Pearl's place on Woodland Street. They conducted many farm auctions selling livestock, machinery and household goods.

Vi Reid said she could remember that Ray Reid went to school for the first day, left school, hid somewhere, and finally went home. His father drove him back to school with a whip in back of him.

