

## **My Memories of Anna (Seen) and Elton May**

By Gordon Youngman



**Anna and Elton May**

Elton May was born in 1902 to parents William and Jennie May. He also had a younger sister Blanche. The family lived on Route 350 near Eddy Road. Anna Seen was born in 1903, the eldest of eleven children, to parents Abram and Diana Seen. Anna and Elton married in 1923 and moved to Walworth on Rochester Road, which is now 2200 Penfield-Walworth Road. Their daughter Esther was born in 1928.

Elton started a garage business in the building just west of the home. I believe this was in the 1920's. In the early 1930's, they opened an ice cream parlor in the front room of the building. At that time my family lived across the street so this was handy for my brother Bill and me to sneak across the street with our pennies or, if lucky, a nickel to get our candy or ice cream. Little did I realize that in less than 20 years Anna and sometimes Elton would be working for me in my store.

I'm not sure of the date but probably in the late 1930's that Anna and Elton started May's Greenhouse and Florist Shop. They soon had a flourishing business selling plants to the local farmers and gardeners as well as flowers for all occasions. Sadly, around 1954 Elton had a heart attack and was forced to give up the business. At that time, Milt and Charlotte Bradshaw were interested in the business and, having houses of same value, they exchanged homes and

purchased the greenhouse. Through this deal, Anna and Elton became our neighbors, as the house was right next door to our store. Katie and I felt blessed as Anna was always showering us with home-baked goods, homemade cooking, and canned goods. Elton always had a wonderful garden and kept us well-supplied with fresh fruit and vegetables. One day Elton asked our daughter what she would like him to plant in the garden for her and at the age of four she replied "I would like a row of succotash", this being her favorite vegetable. Another perk of having Anna and Elton so close was having them as handy baby sitters. Marlene and Kathy always looked forward to going to Aunt Anna and Uncle Elton's.

Anna worked, sometimes part-time and other times full time, in our variety store from 1949 to 1974. After their business was sold, Elton helped at the store doing carpenter work along with other handyman jobs. He built many display stands and put up a lot of shelving when we added to the store in 1965. Elton was on the road a lot selling supplies and giftware to other greenhouses around New York State. After a few years of traveling, Elton decided to leave his job and started an antique shop in the little store that was next to the old Masonic Hall. Elton stayed there until the building was torn down in 1968. After that he moved the business to his garage at 3574 South Main Street. Anna and Elton moved to that location in 1958 and we purchased their home next to the store.

Through their lifetime, Anna and Elton were very active in many of the town organizations. They were lifetime members of the Walworth Baptist Church and Walworth Chamber of Commerce. They were not just members, as they always did much more than their share of work. Anna was very active in the Boys in Service Club during WW II and the Korean War. Elton was a deacon of the church, served many years as town tax assessor, and served as a fire commissioner as well. Anna spent countless hours keeping scrapbooks and photo albums of Walworth. These are now displayed at the Walworth Historical Society museum for everyone to enjoy.

One last thing I would like to mention before I close. I knew Anna and Elton for over 40 years and worked and socialized with them almost on a daily basis. In all this time I never heard them raise their voices or show any disrespect to each other or to anyone else. They were great friends and mentors to Katie and me, as well as to many others. Anna passed away in 1974 and Elton in 1977.