

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, January 23, 2017

The Records of Maine: Flora Jane Record Tileston (1847-1939) was a musician and school teacher in Mechanic Falls, Maine, when Freelan Oscar Stanley, one of the famous twins, landed there to teach school and establish a company to manufacture mechanical drawing instruments. They were married in 1876. I have not been able to establish whether Flora was married before to a man named Tileston, or whether Record was her mother's maiden surname, but obviously she was a part of the greater Record family. I think there were a lot of Records in Maine.

Flora and "Freel" (F. O.) Stanley, by 1899 prominent in Newton, Massachusetts, society due to the success of the Stanley Dry Plate Company, were the first in an automobile to climb the carriage road to the top of Mount Washington on August 31 that year. Starting in 1903, they were prominent in the development of Estes Park, Colorado, culminating with the opening of the Stanley Hotel there in 1909 and the charter of adjoining Rocky Mountain National Park in 1916.

When I was a meteorology student in the Army Air Force program at M.I.T. in 1943-44, a man named Frank Record, himself a graduate of this program several months earlier, was one of my instructors. A very quiet, good looking man in his mid-20s, he was an excellent instructor. Some of our instructors were lieutenants like he was; some were civilians. As our course was coming to an end and those of us still "left standing" were about to graduate and be commissioned, we had to pass a military test as well.

Individually, each of us "Aviation Cadets" (a rank widely used for those in training programs) was called before a panel of four, including Major Ratliffe, in charge of the Air Force's meteorology program at M.I.T., Jackson Reynolds, one of three lieutenants who ran the military program, another man whom I can't remember, and Frank Record. Reynolds was a "good guy" who we had known on a daily basis, Record was a quiet instructor, and the other two were more intimidating. About five of us were scheduled at a time, and each stood in line outside the Major's office until we were called. Some days before this exercise, we had filled out a questionnaire asking what strengths we might possess to augment our weather forecasting. I had written "geography" or something similar. As we waited outside, we were "scared to death."

The door opened, and I was called in, came to attention in front of the panel, and announced my name and serial number, 11111269. Questions came from individual members of the panel. Most were about officer responsibility, weather forecasting, and the like. Then came geography questions: Where is Groton, Connecticut; where is Watervliet, New York, etc.? I had no trouble with these. Then came "Where is Livermore Falls?" "I don't know, Sir" was the answer. There was a discernable snickering among the panel members. Livermore Falls, Maine, was the home town of Frank Record. Livermore Falls, it turns out, is about 25 miles north of Mechanic Falls, the early home of Flora Stanley.

In July 1945, more than a year later, I flew my first weather mission from Guam with Dalton Newton's B-24 crew. It was a routine mission with good weather, but we were required to send coded weather radio messages back to 20th Air Force Headquarters (Guam) every hour. These would include the time, our geographic location, the estimated wind velocity at the surface of the ocean (obtained from appearance of the white-caps), wind direction (obtained from our navigator), barometric pressure adjusted to sea level, temperature, and cloud cover. On a perfect day, there would always be cumulus clouds from late morning until dusk. These kept us company, as the huge body of water below and the sky above were the only other things in view. The base of these clouds was usually at the same elevation, with the billowing effect as the day progressed determined by heating from below. The condition of the clouds was a part of our hourly report.

When we landed about 6:00 P.M., the observer (myself) was taken in a jeep to the weather station at 20th Air Force Headquarters where we gave an oral report and turned in our recording papers. On my very first mission, who was in charge of the weather station there? Frank Record. All day, I had reported the base of the cumulus clouds at 4500 feet. He said: "Marshall, are you sure it was not more like 2500?" I said I thought I was right at

4500. He asked me to check it again on my next flight, and, sure enough, 2500 feet was much closer to being correct. Since we flew normally at 8,000 feet, ascending and descending were the only times the cloud base could be checked accurately, and ascending early in the morning the clouds had not yet formed. I saw Frank Record a few times after that, but he was assigned to 20th Air Force headquarters and not a member of the 55th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron.

In 1995, our Meteorology Class at M.I.T. had a 50th reunion there (it was actually 51 years since our graduation). A good number of the class, possibly 30%, returned, along with a few of the instructors. Frank Record was supposed to attend the main banquet, but I didn't see him. I wanted to talk "old times" and remind him of my errors, first in not knowing of his home town, and second, the height of cumulus clouds over the Western Pacific.