



Carla J. and Norman L. Messier

Norman Messier: “The Guy To Get To Move A Building”

In the 1920s, Aime Messier, a farmer in Derby Line, VT, along with his son Joseph moved a few houses during wintertime each year over the ice with horses and skids. After WWII, Joseph relocated to the Barre-Montpelier area and set up a small fabrication shop. He continued moving buildings part-time and worked on various inventions. One was a locking hook for pegboards.

Since he did not have the financial means to purchase new items or modern equipment, Joseph moved buildings using miscellaneous and various items he could find built for such purposes. “You did not want to tell him that something could not be done, as that was the perfect motivation for him to prove to you that there was always a way to do anything,” said his son Norman Messier. This is a virtue he instilled in his children, which explains where Norman

gets his determination and drive, according to his wife, Carla.

Joseph soon brought his twin sons, Norman and Joseph Jr, into moving buildings with him. They remember helping their father with projects at the young age of five years old. Although Joseph worked hard and diligently, it was always a struggle for him to meet the financial needs of a family of seven children; consequently, the sons continued to work with him until his death in 1974. Norman then took the helm of the moving business part-time while Joseph, Jr enlisted in the military.

By 1977, Norman had developed the company into a full-time business. He expanded the business as he could afford new equipment and continually searched for better, safer and more efficient ways to do the many aspects of moving

buildings. As a result, the business grew over the years, as did his reputation.

Not only did Norman improve his equipment, techniques and skills, he worked hard and consistently to meet project deadlines, came in on budget of the price given the customer and became known in Vermont as “The Guy to Get to Move A Building.”

In fact, one project superintendent commented to Norman that he always liked working with him and his crew because they had a pleasant attitude, were always working hard, and the project was always on time or ahead of schedule.

At its peak, Messier House Moving and Construction Co. was handling from 60 to 65 projects year. The jobs included over-the-road moves, on site moves, jacking, shoring, rigging

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and some light crane work. Plus, moving a number of unique structures such as covered bridges.

During this phase of the business, Norman's two sons, Norman, Jr and Jason, joined him during summers and on special projects between school, sports and college.

Asked to list some of the more memorable projects he has done, Norman mentioned The Barre Granite Museum. It was an old granite manufacturing building 295' x 150' which had to be lifted for a new foundation and was developed into a museum about the Granite Industry in Vermont (see Volume 20, Number 3; April 2002)....

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Moving a model home @ 1998 from the lodge area of the Jay Peak Resort to the residential area for homes.



This structure was originally a welcome center at the Killington Ski Resort in Vermont. After relocation the building now serves as a golf club house.