

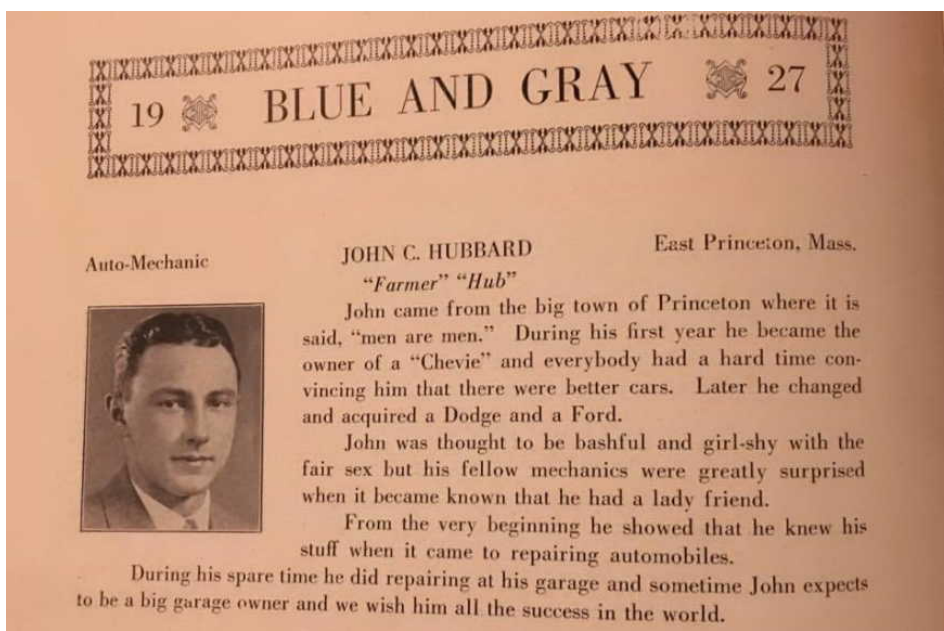
## Then & Now - Hubbard's Garage

100 Main St, East Princeton MA 01517



*As it looked at first opening in 1932*

In the middle of the depression in 1932, my Uncle John Hubbard (25 years old) son of Elmer and Lizzie Hubbard of Princeton, started Hubbard's Garage.



In 1933 when he was starting to get too busy, he invited his brother, my father Charles (24 years old) to join him in the garage. My father, my mother Elinor, and 2 year old me were living in the Tatnuck section of Worcester. My father was lucky to have a job and was working at Bowker-Hamblin-Malmquist installing heaters in rich people's cars. He was glad to move back to work with

*Automobiles were in their blood. Both Uncle John & my father graduated Worcester Trade School in 1927 - 1928 respectively.*

his brother. Therefore, we moved to Wyman's pond in Westminster into a cottage owned by Frank Wiggin's senior, my father's sister's husband. When cool weather returned, we rented the house owned by Vera Whitcomb on the Onion Patch pond to the left of the garage.

When things got busier, Uncle John hired a man from Finland to work at the garage and we rented him a room in our Onion Patch house. He lived with us and worked at the garage for a couple of years until moving on.

A little while later, they hired Thurston "Stubby" Rice who worked at the garage the rest of his life.

About 1943 when my father became fire chief, they added two bays to the garage for a fire truck and an ambulance.

From the late 1930s until the mid 1970s, the Garage had a contract with Jim Jeffries Transport Company of Sterling to take care of their trucks and we were on call 24/7 to repair and tow their vehicles.



*Shirley's Father, Charles*

From the late 1930s until the early 1970s, we also had an agreement with Sunnyside Motors in Holden for selling Ford cars and trucks. We would facilitate the buying of new cars (showing and filling out the papers) and any car taken in trade we would get to sell from our garage.



During the war 1942-1945, my father and Uncle John built a fire truck for Princeton and a wrecker for the garage.

From the 1950s until 1970s, they also had a School Bus contract with Princeton Select board. Stubby Rice drove the bus every school day

In the early 1970s, Fred and I started to rent and sell camping trailers from the garage. We would also fix and install towing hitches and truck caps.



*My father, Fred, and Stubby Rice*



*The garage as it looked near the end in October 1979*

Abbott to come join the company and he did.

After WWII, Clayton Rice (Stubby's younger brother) was hired as a welder and mechanic. He worked at the garage for five or so years before taking a job in the mills in Fitchburg.

In 1960, Uncle John died suddenly. My father needed help so he asked my husband, Fred



*Inside Garage 1940 - Bill Brooks*

Over the years there were many other mechanics who worked at the garage and kept the business going.

Many high school boys worked at the garage after school and on vacations. They would pump gas and do odd jobs and some oil changes. Bill Brooks, Gene Counts (Bill Brooks brother-in-law), Leo Hurme, nephew Wes

Anderson, and son Rick.

Leo Hurme worked at and out of the garage repairing and selling snowmobiles, lawn mowers and the like.

Secretaries and Bookkeepers were all in the family-my mother, my sister Joan, and finally me.

My parents, my husband, and I ran the garage until 1981 when we sold it to Bib and Dick of Sterling.

Hubbard's Garage was an active business for 49 years.

**The Above Was Written By Shirley Hubbard Abbott and Fred Abbott Spring 2022**

For many years, Princeton used the land behind the garage as a town landfill.

### **Summer 2022 Update:**

Dick Stewart and his partner Bib, officially took over operation of the garage on October 1, 1980.

At that point, they changed the garage name to Town Line Garage. To improve the service they could provide, they increased the available lifts from 2 to the 5, which is what they have today.

In the early 1990's Dick bought out his partner, Bib, and became sole owner of the business and building.

Another change they made was the conversion of the two bays on the left end of the garage, that at that time housed 2 fire trucks and an ambulance/inspection sticker station, into a convenience store. This conversion was done once the fire/emergency vehicles were moved to the new East Princeton Fire Station.

After running the garage and convenience store for a few years, Dick sold the Convenience Store business in 2015, and which he now leases to the current owners.



*Notice the 2 Bays on the left end, which once housed a fire engine and an ambulance. Today, they have been converted into convenience store.*

Dick plans to continue running the garage business, and when he is ready to retire, he hopes to sell the business and property.

After an interview with Dick Stewart (the current owner), during the summer of 2022, additional images were added from the PHS collection by William "Bud" Brooks.