

I met Arnie and Sally as a child. I was walking on a railroad bed called the Acton Railroad. The rails and ties had been removed and the rail road bed went from Nashua to Acton MA. It was a great place for kids to walk on, and families used to have a place to go and get exposure to nature.

There was a forest and Salmon Brook which weaved thru the area. Granite block arches went over the brook. Majestic, a time when the American economy was based on progress and hard work.

The kids would gather together and walk thru the area. And there were two people picking mushrooms along the bed. I went over and asked them if they were going to eat the mushrooms. Enthusiastically they began telling me and the kids about foraging for mushrooms. We thought these people can eat them.

Over the years we would always see them foraging. And become more aquatinted with them. The Bensons and the NH Mycological Society. We became friends, and when I moved to north Nashua with my parents, Sally and Arie would come to get me to go foraging. It was fun. I couldn't tell the difference from one mushroom to the other for most of them but learned some of them. Had the Audubon Field Manual of mushrooms. But they still looked rather hard to identify.

Arie used to call the unidentifiables as LBN's. Little Brown Mushrooms. He had various cultures. There were species that had medicinal properties and had been used across the globe.

Over the years, Arnie and Sally would come to get me and we would go foraging mushrooms. Arie was a professor of mycology at the University of Lowell. I would gather mushrooms with them. Arie would identify them and I would culture them. Over a few years had numerous cultures. It was the early days of the commercial mushroom industry in the northwest. Some of the cultures got contaminated, others were very healthy. As we moved from place to place, many died, but several dozen survived. My hopes to get commercial mushroom cultivation going in Maine.

NH and Maine had similar environments and forests. When I moved to Maine, I had hoped to get the area at my grandparents growing wood and ground species. Unfortunately, we moved again. Then again, and again. Finally in Hancock, I was able to start to work on my venture again. I did not know that there would be obstacles.

1. According to Maine State officer Pratt. All mushrooms were illegal except those sold in stores.
2. The Maine State Police Officers wanted money.

I was falsely arrested for growing non-existent mushrooms. According to Pratt, it was a mushroom 'factory.' Welcome to Maine.