Tales from Two Rivers V

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edited by John E. Hallwas and Alfred J. Lindsey

A Publication of

Two Rivers Arts Council
College of Fine Arts Development
Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois

Library of Congress Card No. 81-51362

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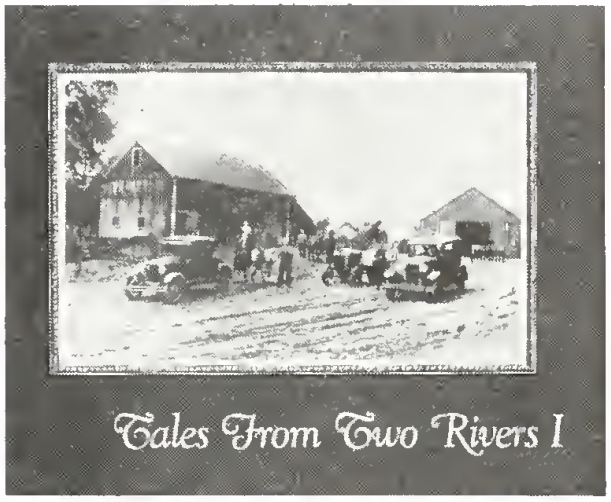

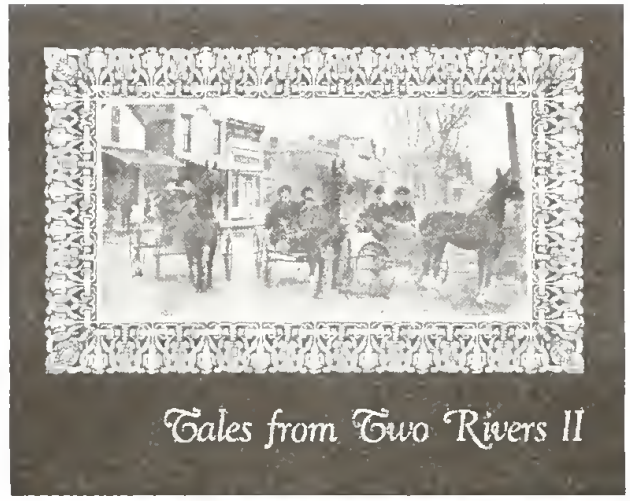

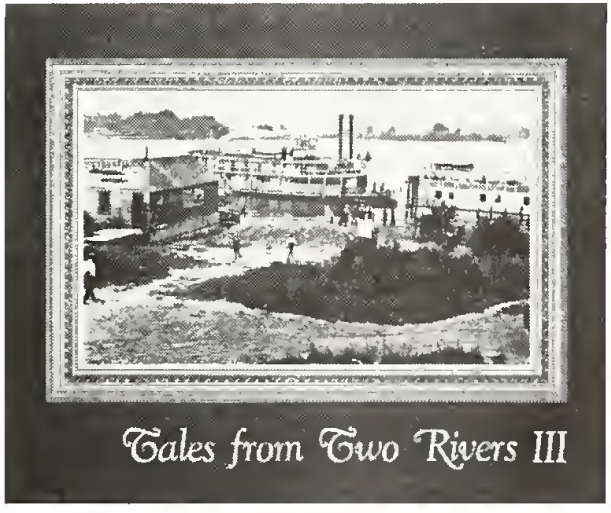

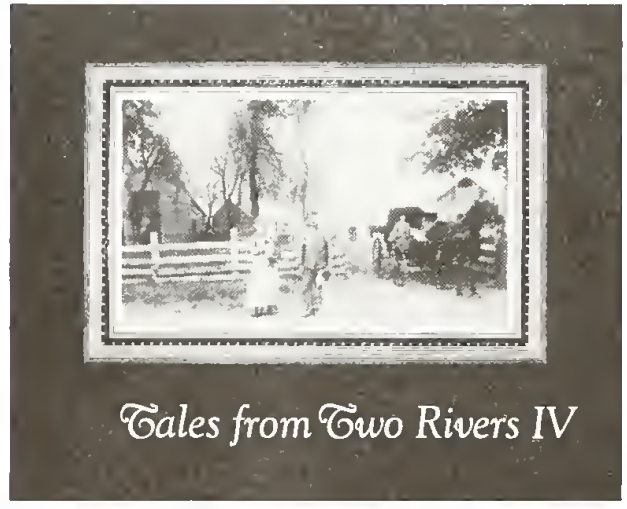

The stories contained in *Tales from Two Rivers I, II, III, IV,* and *V* were selected from manuscripts submitted by Illinois authors, over sixty years of age, to annual *Tales from Two Rivers* writing contests. This documentation of the social history of early Illinois as written by those who lived it is sponsored and published by the Two Rivers Arts Council, with partial funding by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. These books have been sold nationally beginning with Tales I in 1982, and are also available at local outlets and through the TRAC office. Phone 309/758-5442.

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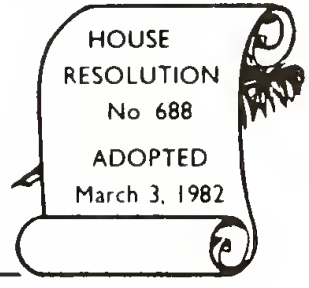
Acknowledgements

"RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 82ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we do hereby recognize, applaud, and congratulate the Two Rivers Arts Council for preserving the history of Illinois through *Tales from Two Rivers* . . ."
House Resolution No. 688, Offered by Rep. Clarence Neff, Adopted March 3, 1982.



"RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE 82ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we commend the *Tales from Two Rivers I* contributing authors, the Two Rivers Arts Council, the Illinois Humanities Council, the Illinois Arts Council, and Western Illinois University College of Fine Arts Development for producing this book that will serve as a record of Illinois rural history; that we express to those individuals who were involved in the project our deep appreciation and thanks for their inspired and fruitful efforts, and that we wish for them continued success in their latest endeavor, *Tales from Two Rivers II* . . ."
Senate Resolution No. 441, Offered by Senator Laura Kent, Adopted March 31, 1982.

Illinois Community Education Association honored the Two Rivers Arts Council at a Statewide Project Showcase for its *Tales from Two Rivers* project in 1986.

The Congress of Illinois Historical Societies and Museums presented the Two Rivers Arts Council a Superior Achievement Award for its publication, *Tales from Two Rivers IV*, in 1988.

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"There rise authors now and then, who seem proof against the mutability of language, because they have rooted themselves in the unchanging principles of human nature."

Washington Irving

"In every man's writings, the character of the writer must lie recorded."

Thomas Carlyle

I Community Life 1

1 Community Life

COMMUNITY LIFE

Communities have changed dramatically in the twentieth century. Countless towns that were once thriving places have declined, and others have grown so much that older residents can hardly believe they are living in the same community where they grew up decades ago.

And the changes that have come over Illinois towns are not simply a matter of economics. Early in the century most communities were isolated, except perhaps for the railroad that connected them to the larger world. Trips by car were an infrequent adventure on often difficult roads. And the national news seemed remote from everyday life. No wonder many small-town newspapers reported very little of it.

People were focused on life in their own community. Local organizations thrived, community-wide activities were well attended, people neighbored intensively, and children grew up with a deep sense of belonging. Many an older person has returned to the town where he or she was raised, only to find that the sense of community that once pervaded the place has dissipated over the years. Smaller towns can still be wonderful places, but people live there in greater isolation than they did decades ago.

In contrast, a strong sense of social interaction is conveyed by the memoirs in this section of *Tales from Two Rivers V.* James B. Jackson's recollection of the village of Brooklyn in the 1930s is a case in point. He depicts a very close-knit community: "We were all bound together by the school, the stores, the Masonic Lodge, the church, and the Domestic Science Club. We were completely interdependent." Jackson himself was an outsider, but he apparently fit in quickly as he became acquainted with the local families.

Lodges and societies once thrived in small towns, providing much-appreciated occasions for social activities as well as outlets for common interests. Jackson recalls the Brooklyn Masonic Lodge, which he was expected to join, and did. At greater length, Lillian D. Miller describes the activities of the Turkey Hill Literary Society, which was simply "a group of farm folks gathered together to learn, share, teach, play, and laugh." It was obviously an extension of family-type interaction among the residents of a rural area who had little but themselves to draw upon for entertainment and edification.

Community-wide activities were always exciting in towns where little happened for most of the year and entertainment was always scarce. So, it is not surprising that Louise Gibb Milligan has sharp memories of the Biggsville Homecoming Picnic. Likewise, when the "march king," John Philip Sousa, came to Monmouth, that was surely the event of the decade for local people. Martha K. Graham's mother told her, "Don't ever forget this day," but it was surely an unnecessary reminder.

Most socializing was of an informal sort, not related to a local event, and for these memoir writers, who were children decades ago, the most memorable times were often centered around fun outdoors. Ruby H. Bridgman recalls "the city," a Roodhouse park that was "the hub of social life for the surrounding area in the summertime," and Louise Parker Simms and Sidney Jeanne Seward recall coasting and ice skating, which were the most common winter activities in most small towns.

There is a tendency to idealize the past, to remember only the good times, for they are apparently more important to our sense of identity. But community life is not always wonderful—nor was it years ago. Living well in a particular place takes effort and engagement. Gloria L. Taylor reminds us of that as she recounts her initial loneliness in Springfield and her gradual development of new friends there—friends who later had an enormous impact on her life.

Perhaps that is the deepest truth about ourselves—that despite our American devotion to individualism, self-realization is never an individual matter. We are shaped by our social interaction. Hence, nothing is more important than the quality of our community life.

John E. Hallwas

THE BROOKLYN COMMUNITY

James B. Jackson

When I was a student at Western Illinois State Teachers College in 1928, I knew, vaguely, that Brooklyn lay on down Crooked Creek a few miles to the south and east. But that was all I knew about it. After I had graduated, Claire Talley, a former debate team partner, told me he was moving from Brooklyn to Littleton High School as principal. He suggested that I apply for the position of principal in Brooklyn. Alvin Roberts had been a member of that same debate team and he urged me to go for it. He had preceded Tally in the job and we all thought the old team spirit might just land the job for me. It did. I got the job at $900 per year. That was in 1936. My wife and I stayed there four years and both our children were born there. I still keep in touch with several elderly men and women who were my pupils in that wonderful little two-year high school where I added four years of higher education to my hard-earned B.Ed.

Brooklyn was a close-knit community made up of the tiny unincorporated village and the surrounding area for which it was a center. We were all bound together by the school, the stores, the Masonic Lodge, the church and the Domestic Science Club. We were completely interdependent. No one bought anything away from Brooklyn if it was to be had at Fred Irwin's or Glanden Lance's general store. The little filling station next to Lance's pumped 15¢ gas for every one in town and served coffee, sandwiches and pie for those who had the cash for such fare. If you didn't have ready cash, you could always get credit. Estie Daniels cut everyone's hair in his tiny 10' x 12' shop. Once I had a teacher send Estie's ten-year old boy over to have four months' growth of hair removed, and before nightfall the story was all over town. Estie and I had a good laugh over it and several other kids' parents sent them for a trim before the "Perfessor" nabbed them.

Believers and non-believers alike supported the last remaining church and Sunday school. The preaching was poor but earnest. The best men's Sunday school teacher I ever met was one of the two town drunks, a well-educated and charming man. Hoelscher's big building next to Estie's barber shop was a repair garage in the pre-hard road days. The "hard road" changed everything in Brooklyn. It was built in about 1930: Hwy. 101, running from Augusta through Brooklyn and Littleton to connect with Highway 67 some eight miles north of Rushville. No one ever referred to it as Highway 101. The hard road became the main street from west to east, a full 3/4 of a mile. Then it crossed Crooked Creek Bridge just below the dam and snaked on across the bottoms and the hills and the prairie farms to its undramatic end. The right of way took several feet off most of the lawns and adjacent property. The old hitching racks in front of the business places were gone forever. There was barely room on the shoulder to stop a car in front of the stores. The porches with their sheet iron roofs were within spitting distance of the pavement. There was a loafer's bench at Lance's. Irwin's was too close to the road to permit one. But there were chairs inside around the stove so we always had a place to visit with our neighbors.

There was one long street that ran south from the center of town. About half the houses in town were on this street and half along the hard road, perhaps thirty in all. The only other streets were very short. One led back to the old mill on the north side and the other one cut one block south and one block east to join the long south street. No street had a name except on the plat that had been made in about 1830-1835.

The Ladies Aide Hall sat next door to the church and was the center for all community affairs. The junior-senior banquet was prepared and served by the ladies in the hall. The pupils' mothers donated the food. The principal's wife went to the Extension Classes in Rushville once a month and brought back materials for the Household Science Club. She also taught the

classes: slip covering, sewing, canning, nutrition, etc. The attendance was good. Twenty to thirty women of all ages came for the companionship as well as the instruction. When money was needed for the church, we all donated food. The ladies prepared a feast and we all went and bought back our own chicken or ham or vegetables or dessert. There was a bit of friendly grumbling, perhaps, but never an outright refusal.

The Masonic Hall was small—not only the hall itself, up above Fred Irwin's store, but in total membership. Even so, practically all of the leaders of the larger community were members in good standing. Although never stated aloud, it was generally understood that the high school principal, the "Perfessor," automatically would petition for membership and that he would be automatically accepted. And so I became a member of A.F.A.M. The Masons did not throw their weight around, but anything the masons backed generally succeeded. Once a year we had Ladies' Day and they, the ladies, honored us with a lovely dinner at their hall which they prepared and served.

The Post Office sat between the filling station and Lance's store. The mail came in by car or, in times of bad roads, by horse and buggy, from Plymouth via Birmingham. All mail for Brooklyn residents had to be picked up at the Post Office, either at the counter or a private box. The building was almost the same size and shape as Estie Daniels' barber shop. The Post Mistress made the living for three beautiful daughters and a fine little boy. Her husband worked when he was able; but he, like the Sunday School teacher, was a heavy drinker and his income was far from steady. These two good men served as excellent object lessons and they succeeded in making a complete "teetotaler" of me.

When I first saw it, I wondered why there was a lattice-work gazebo in the corner of the school yard. I soon found out that it was a bandstand. Long out of use, it stood as a silent reminder of the pre-hard road days when Brooklyn had its own fine little band of musicians that held Saturday evening concerts all summer long. It was still in pretty fair condition, and we had not yet heard of the word "graffiti."

The town's founding fathers believed that the Lamoine River would be navigable and that Brooklyn would grow to be a metropolis. The dream never became a reality, but the Village of Brooklyn did and the community developed into one of strongest in the Two Rivers area. This was due in large part to the quality of the early settlers and their descendents who have stayed on to become the third and fourth generation leaders. The families became related through inter-marriage, and there were few, if any, family secrets. It was an open society and it was easy to overlook the faults and shortcomings of such close friends and relatives. I knew of only one petty crime, the theft of a bucket of oats from "God Boy" Walker's bin by a poor man who needed it for his chickens. He was caught in the act and thenceforth was known as "Oats." His wife later ran off with a hard road man, leaving Oats the burden of raising a pair of fine boys, ages seven and three. He did his duty without a whimper and kept the respect of his neighbors. It was a great place for nicknames—"God Boy" was Walker's favorite oath.

Chalk Curtis must have had a name, too. Chalk—now there was the real town character. He had a wife in Macomb who refused to live in his shack at the dam. He visited her often and regularly. He shared her meager relief supplies. I was her case worker in 1934-35. But Chalk's home was the creek bank, the old mill, and the loafer's bench in front of Lance's store. He was a fair-to-middling blacksmith and had a forge and some tools at the mill. In an emergency he would fix, or try to fix, a broken part, sharpen a plow share or a mower blade. When I drove into town with our old piano in a borrowed trailer, I stopped at the store to get help unloading it. Chalk was sitting there and recognized me at once. His greeting was loud and hearty. I responded in kind. After the banter had run long enough, I said: "Chalk, if you won't tell any lies about me, I'll not

tell the truth about you." The men on the bench roared and they all came trooping to put the big old upright in the house we'd rented a block up the street. When our little boy was just a yearling, I'd take him to the store with me, and Chalk and the other men would take care of him while I did the trading. The baby chewed contentedly on Chalk's old pocket knife and the men seemed to enjoy the baby as much as he did them.

We had one maiden lady who was a retired teacher. She kept an eagle eye on the "Perfessor" and the three women teachers and seemed to be frustrated when she was not able to find much to complain about. She had a brilliant mind and a good education, but she was eccentric. Six days a week, rain or shine, she walked the two blocks to the store and bought a pint can of kerosene for her lamps which she kept burning all night. Only the business places and a few wealthy residents had private electric generators. Most of us were content to clean chimneys and trim the wicks on our oil lamps. They do make a nice soft light!

The other maiden lady was the mother of one of our outstanding citizens. She had reared him in a day when single mothers were all too often made to wear their own invisible scarlet letter. Not so in this case. She worked hard and raised her child without help. And she did a good job of it. He and his family were a credit to a self-sacrificing woman. She went to church regularly and worked for any one needing help with house work or babies or sick folk. Her son and her grandchildren honored her just as the rest of us did. But she was a shy and self-effacing person.

Today, Brooklyn is almost a ghost town. There are no stores. The Post Office is closed and mail is delivered on Rural Route #3 from Plymouth. The high school is long since gone. The bus takes the kids, my former pupils' grandchildren, to Rushville. Members of the old families, the Walkers, Reeses, Hoelschers, VanDivers, Blackburns, Morgans, Lances, Lewises and many others, still live in their old homes and work the old farmstead. And I am quite sure there is still a strong bond of community that lives on as the sparse traffic moves swiftly past the dilapidated buildings and the drivers have no reason to slow down. Brooklyn-on-the-Lamoine lasted about a hundred and fifty years. The community of Brooklyn still lives.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN BROWNING

Helen Sherrill Smith

National disasters took longer to be reflected in our small-town than in the great population centers, but eventually the Depression reached us in Browning. Since commercial fishing and hunting provided the daily income for many of our people, we began to feel the depth of the problem when orders from city markets began to lessen, giving fishermen lower prices for the catch. The market owner's inability to sell could mean no pay at all. This shortage meant less business for the stores and other related businesses, so the pinch began to be felt by all.

Before long our handsome little bank went into receivorship, loans foreclosed, and only the thriftiest of merchants survived. Teachers took pay cuts; the railroad workers were laid off; soon the Works Progress Administration became the biggest employer. Despite all the jokes about the laziness and time wasting of the W.P.A. workers, there were people who worked hard for their pay. And while there were make-do projects, worthwhile work was also done. City streets were repaved, public parks established, small rivers and creeks cleared and deepened, water pumping stations and sewage systems repaired and rebuilt.

My father went to work every day, keeping the fish market open, although on some days all his work consisted of

dipping off the dead fish from the live boxes. Although he went to work regularly, he was paid only when there was business to warrant it. My older brother Donald fished when there was a market, drove for the local physician, Dr. Childs, repaired guns and motors. My eighteen-year-old brother Dale worked on the W.P.A.'s Barberry gang—hard grueling work through hills and hollows grubbing out the bushes which carried over spores of a rust disease which could destroy wheat fields. I did housekeeping and child care; my mother and younger sister operated the local telephone switchboard.

None of this brought in very much pay, but all together, we were in better condition than many of our friends and neighbors. My brother Lewis, who had married and started his family while working for the railroad, lost his job there and hunted, fished, and did day labor for anyone who needed a strong willing worker, helping local farmers during their busy season. He finally secured work on the W.P.A., which qualified his family for government surplus foods, which by then were being distributed in our county.

While wages were low (even in good times, my father was paid $3.00 for a twelve to fourteen-hour day) food prices were also low. A trip to the nearest Kroger or A & P store would fill the back seat of the car for five or six dollars. Coffee was 3 lbs. for 49¢, bacon 14¢ per pound, sugar 5 lbs. for 29¢, bread 9¢ per loaf. My pay for cooking, cleaning, laundry and child care ranged from $2.00 to $2.50 per week. But I could buy lovely shoes for $1.49, hose for 19¢, cotton dresses for 98¢, slips for 49¢—that is, when there was money left over for such buying.

When I secured work for the W.P.A. I worked on the garden and canning crew, preparing food to be used in the school lunch program sponsored by the government. This group worked hard, and when I headed the lunch program, I worked for some time with one helper, a middle-aged man who had never worked in a kitchen, and who claimed to have just one gear, "slow and steady." Together we served lunch to seventy-seven people five days a week, everything prepared from scratch including the bread of the day. Also, all the cleaning was done by the two of us. I was paid for eight hours but often worked ten or twelve, just to keep the project going. Strange as it may sound to today's workers, I was lucky to have the job. Shorter hours and better pay than housekeeping! But I didn't find the jokes about lazy W.P.A. workers funny at all!

Somehow, those of us who lived then have many good memories of those times. Everyone was suffering to some degree; no one in town was really affluent. There was a spirit of togetherness, and we all shared whenever we could with those who had less. A good friend, whose family's income was whatever the father could make from fishing and the oldest son's pay sent home from the Citizen's Conservation Corps (at $30.00 a month, room and board, clothing, healthful outdoor work, it was the salvation of many young men, teaching them work habits that stood them well in later life), had a hard time managing. Yet whatever food was left from their supper was carried across the alley to a family of three who had even less income. My father handed out fifty cent pieces in early morning to men at our back door who needed to put breakfast on the table for their children. Not every day—he didn't always have it—but when we could, we shared.

Three meals a day were always put on the table—not always what we would have liked, but always food there. In living in Browning, we always raised a lot of vegetables, and canned the surplus, as well as all the fruit available. We had peach and pear and cherry trees; plums from neighbors yard's were free for the picking, apples the same. We had gooseberry and currant bushes and rhubarb plants; blackberries were plentiful in the hills, as were walnuts, hickory nuts, pecans and hazelnuts. Fresh fish were always available; sometimes there was turtle and frog legs. Rabbits, squirrel, quail, pheasant and wild duck graced our table in season—and sometimes out of season. Mother always had a few laying hens in the chicken

yard and some young fryers in early summer.

Rent for service on the telephone exchange was often subject to the barter system, so in winter our mother often received good country sausage, a side of bacon, or ribs and backbone from freshly butchered hogs. Sometimes she was offered a hog's head, which kept Mother and Grandmother Lewis busy for days, cooking, chopping and grinding its various parts, giving us mince meat for holiday pies, also souse, scrapple, and head cheese for the table.

Much of the meat we had was served with vegetables and sauces and gravies so as to serve more with less. And any leftovers were shared with neighbors and relatives. Our satisfaction was enriched by thinking of others' needs being filled.

Since there was little cash money for recreation, what we did have was more valued. The radio was as important to us then as the television is to today's generation. It even had some added values, in that one could listen while working, not of necessity being glued to the box. We had news, sports, soap operas; Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Amos and Andy, One Man's Family—with the added bonus of letting our imaginations picture them as we wanted them to look. And of course, there was always music.

The young people played cards twice a week or so, contributing plates of fudge and bowls of popcorn. We went to square dances, we ice skated, and we sometimes chipped in 5¢ each for gas and six or more of us piled into a Model A Ford and went to Astoria where a mid-week double feature cost 15¢, pop and popcorn 5¢ each, hot dogs 10¢, hamburgers 15¢. So 50¢ would give you a big evening of fun.

In the summer, Happy Spillers would haul his big truck full of people to the Bader reservoir for a whole evening of water fun and play. And during State Fair week he carried a load of us to Springfield with blankets and bales of straw for seats, at $1.00 for adults, 50¢ for kids. We packed our lunches, ate in the WLS country music tent, looked at all the free exhibits, and rode home tired but happy.

When reading this, it doesn't sound like we really suffered in the Depression. We worked hard, we lived on much less than we had been accustomed to, but we never were faced with the hopelessness which city people had to endure. To have hungry children and nothing but city sidewalks and streets to see, no way to get even a piece of fruit or a piece of cornbread except by handouts, must have brought total despair. In our small town there was such a sense of togetherness, of sharing, of making the best of what we had, that most of our memories were not bad ones. We survived with strength reinforced by having shared the essential goodness of the human spirit. We believed that things would change for the better, if we just endured. The real damage was transitory and the positive aspects helped us look forward to a better future. What reads in the history books as a great disaster was for us, a lesson in survival, in sharing, in making do with what we had, in appreciating friends and enjoying small pleasures. The values we learned then have made our later lives in Browning more meaningful.

THE RISE AND FALL OF POSSUM HOLLOW

John Singleton

The writer of this story about a small blip on the screen of local history spent his childhood years in a community that no longer exists—Possum Hollow. In the exact center of Swan Township, Warren County, lies the now quiet valley that is bisected by a stream named Swan Creek. In the early to mid-1800s a vein of coal of some 24 to 30 inches in thickness was discovered underlying the hills which bordered the valley. The availability of, and easy access to, this resource attracted

miners and their families to settle and establish their homes in the immediate area. The demand for coal increased and the little settlement grew, prospered, and came to be known as Possum Hollow. Several dozen houses and miner's cabins surrounded the country schoolhouse, officially named the Possum Hollow School. At the peak of its prosperity, the community's population reached about three hundred souls—or so we are told by members of the Warren County Historical Society. In a stretch of about one mile, numerous small slope mines, sometimes termed "dog-holes," penetrated under the hills on both sides of the valley. To this day there is still some evidence of the old mines in the slack piles"—tailings of clay, slate and some fine coal left from the mining. Nature is gradually healing these scars.

As all things must end, the beginning of the end of Possum Hollow came in 1870, when the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy built a rail line from Bushnell to Monmouth. Unfortunately, it was laid one and one half miles south of Possum Hollow, through the village of Youngstown. Youngstown flourished, as did the neighboring village of Swan Creek, located two miles to the west; Possum Hollow started a slow decline. Population of the community continued to shrink and, just before the end of the century, Possum Hollow School was closed. Students still living in the district then went to the new consolidated schoolhouse which was built in Youngstown.

In 1915, when I was two years old, my father purchased the small farm that was in the center of Possum Hollow. The old schoolhouse had stood on the southeast corner of the property, and I well recall seeing the outline of the old foundation. In my earliest recollection, there were a total of four houses in the valley, plus three others located on the hilltops overlooking the valley. It was there that I spent my childhood years, along with two sisters, one brother and my parents until our mother died when I was twelve years old. All of us children attended the Youngstown school from first grade through tenth. A two-year high school and a compact gymnasium were on the second floor of the building.

A happy childhood it was, what with fishing in Swan Creek for chubs, sunfish, and once in a while a catfish, in the summertime. In the Fall, squirrels were plentiful in the timberlands on each side of the valley. In Winter there were rabbits to hunt with a trusty .22 and a trap-line to run before and after school. In between kid chores, we could sled on the hills and skate on the ice in the creek.

As Possum Hollow declined, so Youngstown blossomed. In the middle 1920s, along with the school, it boasted three general stores, a church, two barber shops, a post office, a library, a blacksmith shop and an auto sales and repair business. In addition, there was the rail-related business of the depot, freight house, elevator, stockyards, and coal shed.

Once again, transportation was cause for change here as it has been in many other instances. In 1925, the "hard road"—now U.S. 67—was built three miles to the west of Youngstown. The new road and the growing development and use of automobiles started Youngstown on the pathway "off into the sunset." Now it has no railroad, no church, no school and no business of any kind. Just a few houses by a crossroad, quietly awaiting the lot that is befalling so many small towns all over the country.

For the last thirty-plus years we have owned the small acreage that is the heart of Possum Hollow and which includes the site of the old schoolhouse. Sometimes we park our travel trailer there and enjoy the peace which fills the valley. By day the quiet is interrupted only by bird songs and the ripple of the creek. At night we can listen to the barred owls; sometimes a whippoorwill or the coyotes give a concert. Though they are mostly nocturnal, deer can be seen once in a while. Beavers now inhabit the creek and wood ducks use some of the nestboxes we have installed. Possum Hollow rests in peace.

THE TURKEY HILL LITERARY SOCIETY

Lillian D. Miller

When someone mentions a literary society, it is natural to form a mental picture of a group of students or intellectuals or perhaps genteel ladies gathered together for the purpose of furthering their scholastic culture.

Not so, the literary society of my childhood days. While the members were gathered for the purpose of increasing their knowledge, they were not exactly scholars. Rather, it was comprised of farmers, their wives and children—from babes in arms to teenagers. Some were older couples, some "just marrieds," plus many keen minded "old timers." And, believe it or not, all were active members.

Many and rich, happy and nostalgic are the memories we have carried through the years of the Turkey Hill Literary Society, for that was our official name. We all lived in a rural community called Turkey Hill, so named by the Indians who first settled here, because of the huge flocks of wild turkeys that made their way to this ridge at sundown to roost in the great oaks growing there in profusion.

The society's bi-monthly meetings were held in the Turkey Hill Grange Hall, which was centrally located and very well suited to meet our need. The lower floor housed the Turkey Hill Grange Hall School. The upper floor served as the meeting place for the grange and for other community meetings. There was a large stage at one end of the hall which lent itself beautifully to the plays, skits, minstrels, and other forms of entertainment that were part of our "programming."

It was interesting and educational to watch and listen to those taking part in the program and a great thrill from time to time to be a participant. Our meetings were held at night after the farm chores were completed for the day. We children felt quite "grown up" to be allowed from home after dark. The horses looked like ghosts in the moonlight as we climbed into the buggy, but if the weather was warm, we would walk the three-mile round trip. Later, of course, the Model T replaced the horse and buggy.

Soon after arriving, the chairman's gavel would fall and we were "called to order." Group singing usually opened the meeting, followed by solos, recitations, skits, a guest speaker or entertainer, and usually a debate. Sometimes our teacher would show us off by letting her pupils furnish a number. Even the pre-schoolers took part. One such number by a little lad is well remembered. He was dressed in his Sunday Best complete with a huge red bow-tie. His little recitation ran something like this: "How can I cut bread without a knife; How can I get married without a wife?" He stood there straight and proud, not missing a word. When finished, he gave the audience a very surprised and frightened look and ran weeping and screaming from the stage.

Another time one of our upper grade girls, cute and small, recited a very lengthy poem without error. When we returned that night Mother said, "If that little girl can memorize such a long poem, there is no reason I can't." We soon found out she could and she did. I remember her standing on the stage reciting such old-time poems as "Gone With a Handsome Man," "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight," "Whistling in Heaven," "Betty and The Bear," and many others. One day I came in from play to find her in the kitchen peeling potatoes. She seemed to be talking to herself and the table where she was sitting held a row of potato peelings neatly lined up. Of course, I asked her "Why?" for I was a very "Why, What, and When" kind of child. I found this was her method of making sure she did not skip a stanza of the lengthy poem she was memorizing, for each peel represented a verse.

At almost every meeting there was a guest speaker to enlighten the farmers on new and better agricultural methods. And, to be sure, the inevitable debate could not be overlooked. A timely and instructive topic was always chosen. Usually

there were four debaters but if the topic was heavy, there could be six. The Turkey Hill Literary Society had some members with decided opinions. Some were "Hot Heads," and others were "Die Hards," which made our debates most exciting. Believe me, neither young or old slept during a good debate. We might have nodded a bit, but sleep?—NEVER! One of the men debating an economic issue remarked that a woman often threw out more food with a spoon faster than a man could shovel it in. Consequently, the debate went far beyond the original participants, for it drew the wrath of the women, who had their say and put the men in their place. Another time one of the men declared that husbands were killed more often by their wives using their skillets and serving fried foods than by succumbing to illness—and another battle of the sexes followed! The women also had debating teams, but they were less exciting than those put on by the red-faced, fist making, and loud-yelling men.

From time to time, it was necessary to raise some expense money, which was accomplished by combining necessity and entertainment. A box social would be scheduled, and for weeks prior there would be much planning and preparation by the women—first the food and then the most important of all, decorating the box.

One year the social was scheduled for a few weeks before Christmas. Mother covered her box in white, bound it with red ribbon, and placed one pretty red Poinsettia across the top. She showed it to Dad and told him to take a good look so he would be sure to buy her box. Came the big night and Dad had forgotten everything he had seen except that Mother's box had boasted a red flower. It so happened that one of the young girls was also holiday minded and had placed several Poinsettias across her green box. Her beau, like Dad, remembered only that her box had a Poinsettia decoration. When Mother's box was put up for sale, Dad and the young man started wildly bidding against each other. Other young men who had conspired to run up the girl's box joined in the bidding, which added to the excitement. It was Dad who finally bought the box, and while he did accidentally get the right one, it was at a price that made the treasurer smile.

The Turkey Hill Literary Society was a forerunner of the Farm Bureau, Four-H, and other farm organizations. It was made up of a group of farm folks gathered together to learn, share, teach, play, and laugh together. There were no status barriers, no "each one doing his own thing," no generation gaps, and no lack of communication. The memories of these meetings as they touched each individual are still cherished by the very few and very old "Literarians" who are still around.

BIGGSVILLE'S HOMECOMING PICNIC

Louise Gibb Milligan

As I recall now, my whole summer seemed to revolve around the Biggsville Homecoming Picnic. It was held the last Thursday and Friday in August for years. Finally, to satisfy the carnival company, one more day was added.

As a small child I waited impatiently for the big week, for the picnic really started early for me. I watched daily for the first signs of the carnival's arrival, especially the Merry-Go-Round. When the men had it erected, they had a trial run, and everyone around had a free ride. The first ride of the first day was also free, and I never aimed to miss a free ride. It was always assembled in the southeast part of the park. When I was about twelve, my father and three neighbors bought an old Merry-Go-Round. They ran it for one summer to get back what they had invested and then turned it over to the town. Elmer Robbins kept it running, and Holmer Beebe was ticket taker. I can still hear the calliope playing "When You Wore a Tulip." The price of the tickets was five cents. The year my father was

co-owner we all got a free ticket to ride. How smug we felt getting to ride free.

The first stand to arrive was the Schultz's from Morning Sun, Iowa. They had the same spot, northwest of the Merry-Go-Round, close to a big tree. They had a small son with them. Their drawing card was white taffy, which they pulled over a big hook, fastened to the tree. Mr. Schultz was tall and lean. Katie was real short with an Oriental look. She wore enormous amounts of make-up. They came many years before their scandal. Katie had an affair with a young farm hand. One night he climbed a ladder to a second floor bedroom and shot Mr. Shultz. Both Katie and her boyfriend were sent to prison. The Burlington *Hawkeye Gazette* published the whole trial; at that time it made scandalous reading and I never missed a word.

Just north of the Schultz's were the carnival throw games. The roadway behind the high school was used for parking for the carnival company. The north side was taken by carnival shows. There was even a Girlie Show, which did not last long after the women discovered why their men were all heading for the northwest corner of the park. Some of the carnival games gave Kewpee Dolls for prizes. These dolls are now collectors items. The south side was left for the churches' eating stands. There was also the peanut-popcorn wagon, anywhere it would fit.

One of the big events was getting your clothes ready for the big occasion. We needed a minimum of four outfits. We wouldn't think of wearing the same outfit twice. The year I started to high school I went to town and got a new dress and a gray pleated skirt and a pink sweater. What joy! My first store bought clothes!

Finally, came the big day and its parade. The parade started at the depot when the ten o'clock train arrived from Burlington, carrying the Burlington Municipal Band, all splendid in their red uniforms. All the entries were in position with Uncle Billy Stevenson, in his buggy pulled by his white horse "Fanny," leading the parade. The route was from the depot to the picnic grounds. Waiting cars, filled with basket lunches to be eaten later on the school grounds, lined all the streets.

During the afternoon folks visited and then headed for the west side which had been left for the band stand with its red, white, and blue bunting. The seats were row after row of cement blocks and planks, loaned by the lumber yard. The band played twice in the afternoons. Sometimes there were speakers, mostly politicians, including William Cullen Bryan and Gov. Len Small. There were Japanese tumblers and the "Ride-of-Death," a motorcycle leap from one ramp to another. Then there was the ball game held on the diamond one block south of the park.

Homecoming really meant homecoming as people arrived from everywhere by train and car. Among these were Hervey Fuller with his drum, Charlie Kilgore with his fife, and Hugh Smith and his squeeze box. My uncle, Dave Gibb, joined them with his calf rib bones.

At night there were programs from the band stand. These programs ranged from talent shows to pantomimes.

The American Legion conducted a bingo game on the north side, with Indian Blankets as prizes. My husband and I were lucky and accumulated quite a few of these. We were also lucky the first year of the drawing. The Picnic Committee raffled off several items to finance the picnic. We bought one twenty-five-cent ticket and drew the first prize. It was a chrome and enamel drop leaf kitchen table and four chairs finished in red and white. It was the nicest piece of furniture we had in the house.

The South Henderson United Presbyterian and Methodist churches had eating stands. They served meals as well as hamburgers, hot dogs, pie and ice cream. One year a stand was selling a dipper of ice cream, dipped in chocolate and topped with a pecan half, while the barker chanted, "Cold as ice, sweet as honey, tickles all the way down and makes you feel funny."

It must have bombed as they never came back.

I had friends from Galesburg and Monmouth, who came down on the train, to stay during the picnic. Mother fed us all for supper and sometimes dinner. We all gobbled down the fried chicken, potato salad and cake, never giving a thought to the hours she spent over the cook stove fixing it. We all came, children, grandchildren, and friends.

After they moved the picnic to the ball diamond, it was never the same. Those great days of anticipation and elation are gone forever.

THE MARCH KING COMES TO MONMOUTH

Martha K. Graham

The county newspaper printed it in big ads, and bills tacked to telephone poles proclaimed it: The famous John Philip Sousa and his world-traveled military band would be coming to Monmouth to give a concert. The people of Warren County and adjacent counties were ecstatic. No one of such universal fame as John Philip Sousa, the March King, had appeared in Monmouth within anyone's memory. He was America's most famous composer of band music. People, high or low, whistled and hummed his famous march tunes: "The Washington Post March," "Semper Fidelis," "The Stars and Stripes Forever," and many more.

Our family would go, of course, no matter how expensive the tickets might be. My mother got out her favorite album of Sousa's marches and played them all. But the piano couldn't do justice to them—no trumpets, no drums, no clarinets, no flutes and piccolos. She loved a parade: the marching bands invariably stepped lively to Sousa's stirring marches. From childhood, Mother had gathered a fund of information about Sousa and his bands, and she made sure that we listened well to every enlightening thing she had to say about them. She told us that if women could be bandmasters, she would have tried to be one. But she had to settle for a piano and a family—not that she was sorry.

When the great day came, my mother, my Aunt Millie, my grandfather, and my brother and I (about 8 or 10 then) excitedly crowded into our Rambler touring car, and with father driving, set off from our home town of Roseville for the twelve-mile trip to Monmouth.

It was a fine day, but the dust stirred up in clouds by cars on the road settled so thickly on our dress-up clothes that Father had to stop and snap on the side curtains. We could see only dimly through the isinglass windows, but the dust diminished. When the tires hammered on the mile or so stretch of brick pavement south of Monmouth's city limits, I knew we were almost there.

Monmouth had roped off a block of brick-paved street just south of the old stone courthouse, and had set up a huge tent, with a big platform at the east end. Inside the tent were plank seats and folding wooden chairs from undertaker Lugg's establishment, among others.

We were early enough to find good seats about a quarter of the way back from the stage. Soon there was not a vacant seat, and people were standing all around the outside of the tent where the canvas sides were rolled up. People were excited and happy. This was an *occasion,* and they had put aside the work-a-day world to celebrate. They looked around at the crowd, called to friends and visited together, waiting.

There was an announcing blare of trumpets, and the celebrated band marched onto the stage and took their places in fine military order. In navy blue dress uniforms, their band instruments shining, they were a sight to behold. Then up the steps to the platform came the world-famous bandmaster, the March King. The cheers were deafening.

Sousa was then well past middle age, but he leaped up those steps as if he were a young man of twenty. He radiated energy. Everything about him was spotless white—white hair under his white, gold braided military cap, white, straight-clipped mustache, white uniform with elaborate gold braid, and white gloves. His rimless glasses gleamed.

He acknowledged his rousing reception with military bows, then lifted his white baton. His music seemed to come straight out of that baton. It was magic.

Most people, I think, enjoy a concert of music that is familiar to them. Every march played that day must have been familiar to everyone there, even the young children. The audience sat entranced, and, as each march ended, the applause seemed to go on forever.

My mother pointed out an instrument that stood out because it was white among all the brass. It was a kind of tuba, with its large white bell jointed so it could face forward instead of upward, as a regular tuba does. She told me it was a Sousaphone, named in honor of the famous bandmaster.

As the glorious afternoon went on, the formal military stance of the performers relaxed a little. Band members smiled. Sousa smiled. It was as if they could not help responding to such an appreciative audience in such a friendly atmosphere. Too, most of the people were keeping time with head, hand, or feet. Such a sight must have amused and pleased the band members. The great Sousa, back turned, missed this effect his music had on all those midwesterners from so many different walks of life.

All too soon the wonderful concert was over. The band marched off the platform and down the steps like a military regiment. We hurried out, hoping to catch another glimpse of the blue uniforms and the spotless white one, but they were nowhere in sight. No doubt they were being spirited away to the city of their next concert.

Monmouth had given them a rousing welcome and rapt attention. I was sure that they had liked us, as we had liked them, and that made me feel proud of Monmouth for hosting such marvelous musicians. They, world travelers, and their famous March King had actually trod the streets of our modest county seat, and, to us, had hallowed the very bricks of the pavements they walked on. I am safe in saying that such unabashed idolatry had not been known before, and has not been known since, in Monmouth or in Warren County.

Sousa was a great man, universally loved and admired, whose stirring music warmed the hearts of many people, not just those select few who profess to know what music is all about.

In after-concert euphoria, we stopped at a stand and had vanilla ice cream cones all around. Mother said to my brother and me, "Don't ever forget this day." I never did. The scene is as clear in my mind as if it had happened yesterday.

THE CITY—AT ROODHOUSE

Ruby H. Bridgman

When someone in Roodhouse, even today, says he is going to The City, he does not mean he is going to a large metropolis. He is going to a park located about 3 or 4 miles southeast of town. The name originated from the fact that this was formerly the old city reservoir. Prior to 1918, the people had used this reservoir for their "city" water even though its disagreeable odor and other impurities limited its use. Bathing, washing, and watering were the main uses of it. Many people had their own wells. In the backyard of our home was a well with a pump for drinking water, and, in addition, there was a pump on the back porch for cistern water which was used for washing. The old C. and A. Reservoir was originally used by the railroad, but the water from it coated the steam engine boilers.

Therefore, it became necessary to find a new water supply. The people of Roodhouse and the railroad began a cooperative project to make Bishop Spring, which was about eight miles north and west of Roodhouse, the new source of city water.

Dynamite was used in the excavation of the spring as well as a four-inch plunger-type pump, later increased to the size of eight inches. For power for pumping, threshing machines were used. During the excavation a strange phenomenon occurred. Unusual fish, with a rainbow variety of colors and highly sensitive to light and sound, appeared and were identified by authorities as fish unable to see. They were probably from an underground lake. A huge group of workers helped in building reservoirs, retaining walls, pipe lines, pump houses, and living quarters for employees. These workers and the volunteer "clean-up squad" were jubilant when on January 7, 1921, the first water from this pure natural spring came through the city main.

The C. and A. Reservoir was abandoned, but it acquired a unique, revitalized aspect. The City became the favorite "swimming" hole for Roodhouse and the surrounding communities, especially White Hall. There was no need for a Country Club because The City was a renowned mecca for all ages. An in-town as well as an intertown social life revolved around The City, and this led to dating and to many marriages.

The City was a large lake with a shallow sandy area that gradually led to quite deep water. There were two rafts, one which had a high diving board. A bathhouse with dressing rooms and showers also included a snack bar. On the railing fastened to the bathhouse was a wringer from an old fashioned washing machine, which was used to wring the water from the bathing suits. On the other side of the lake was a lovely wooded area used for picnicking and camping.

During the 1930's The City reached its height as the hub of social life for the surrounding area in the summertime. At that time "Our Bunch," as my girlfriends and I called ourselves, went to The City every day, many times walking and carrying food for an all day picnic. We began a system of meticulous planning of the menu after one disastrous occasion when we all brought bananas. Many times we would carry skillets and pans and cook a breakfast of bacon and eggs. One memorable night at a slumber party, we decided to sleep in our bathing suits and then go to The City. Since bathing suits then were made of wool, we did more scratching than sleeping before we arose at 4 a.m. to start our trek to the reservoir.

A woolen bathing suit provided a situation highly embarrassing to me but thoroughly enjoyed by a young boy on the raft. During the winter, the moths had nibbled tiny holes in my suit. They were practically indiscernible until evidently a chemical reaction with the water caused great gaping holes to appear. This happened just as I was climbing out of the water onto the raft. I looked down, gave a screech, and bolted for the bathhouse, leaving the boy howling with laughter sprawled on the raft. Red-faced and frantic I ran with my hands crossed like two fig leaves in front of me.

Often we would plead for the use of a family car with the promise of hours of household chores for its use. An old Chrysler, an ancient, but still grand Oakland, and an antique red Essex could match these small cars today for mileage. We would "pile into" one of them, "pool" our pennies, and drive to the filling station operated by Tom Coffman in the north end of town. We would hold up one finger and say, "Fill it up, Tom." He would laugh and, I'm sure, put in a few more drops of gasoline than the one gallon for which we paid.

After our first all day session in the spring, we would all come home painfully sunburned after lying on our tummies on the raft most of the day. My mother, who always wore a sunbonnet and thought a girl's skin should be delicately white, would admonish me severely. Usually a very gentle person, she would say, "You knew better than this. I have absolutely no sympathy for you whatsoever," all the while tenderly patting

sweet cream on the smarting back of her lanky daughter who was moaning with pain. My pitiful pleas of "Aw, Mom, not now, Puleeze . . ." were to no avail.

I drove out to The City a year ago and was delighted with the recent renovation. I looked dreamily across the lake and visualized us with our bathing caps stuffed with candy bars (for a later lunch) on top of our heads, "dog-paddling" to the raft that was located in the deeper water.

"Well", I sighed," as they say, 'Them was the days!'"

COASTING ON THE MARTIN STREET BRIDGE

Louise Parker Simms

For the first twenty-four years of my life, I lived at 401 East Martin Street in Abingdon. This is only one block east of the Burlington Northern Railroad, formerly the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy (CB&Q) Railroad. Consequently, the sights and sounds of the railroad were very much a part of my early life.

One of these familiar sights was the Martin Street Bridge over the railroad. This bridge with its long approaches was the source of pleasant memories—memories of moonlit winter nights when the bridge was crowded with young people and adults who found the east side of the bridge an ideal place to coast when the ground was covered with snow.

In addition to a number of regular sleds that held one or two people, we always had two or more toboggans made by my father, Jimmie Parker, a blacksmith, and his brother, Orlie Parker, who also had a blacksmith shop in the same block as my father's.

These toboggans would hold about six people, who straddled the long center section and placed their feet on the "running boards" on each side. The "driver" steered with an automobile steering wheel which was mounted on the front. Runners, as I remember it, were made of wood covered with steel.

There were always a few young men who would eagerly give the loaded toboggan a "running push" to get it started down the hill going east. Soon the snow would become so packed it was like a sheet of ice. Then the fun started. Toboggan drivers (and occupants) had a contest to see how far the vehicle would go before it stopped. The farthest anyone ever went was to Austin Avenue, which is a little more than a block from the railroad.

Of course, the slick, packed snow did not make climbing back up the hill easy. Many fell on the way up, but everyone had on so much warm clothing that no one was ever injured when they fell.

My parents, who were always part of the coasting crowd, left their outside basement door unlocked so all those who wished could warm themselves by the coal-fired furnace.

Martin Street Bridge is not good for coasting now, since vehicle traffic is too heavy on the street which leads to Knox County Road 23. But traffic was much lighter in the 1920's, and there were plenty of people waiting their turn to coast down the hill who could signal a warning if a vehicle approached. We now have many more automobiles, and our lifestyles have changed. But when I was a kid we had some pleasures which compensated for the lack of cars—and coasting on the Martin Street Bridge was one of them.

THE ONCE IN A LIFETIME NIGHT

Sidney Jeanne Seward

A teepee of flame shot high from the bonfire on the Rock Island side of the river. People huddled around the blaze warming themselves. It was a beautiful night, and out on the ice young and old were skating, with steel blades clamped onto their shoes. In those days skates were held on by a leather strap slipped through the metal heel and buckled around the ankle. Clamps fitted on the toes of the shoes and were screwed onto the soles with a key. If the skates were not secure, a nasty fall could result. Shoemakers liked the winter days because they did a lucrative business replacing soles ravaged by the tearing jaws of the skate clamps.

It had been exceptionally cold that year of 1916-17. For days throughout the winter the temperature had hovered near zero. Now the Mississippi River was deeply frozen—so deep that even heavily loaded drays could safely cross to Davenport, Iowa, on the ice.

My family did a lot of walking in those days. Summer or winter we walked to wherever we were going. Fortunately for me, my father was a tall, strong man and I made a lot of the journeys on my father's shoulders.

We had started out from home that starry night at my father's urging. Neither my mother nor I knew where he was taking us. All he would say was that we must dress warmly. I remember that Mother had a wine colored velvet hat and a black, plush coat. That night my father wore his long, dark overcoat and a cap with earmuffs. I remember wearing a sweater under my blue velvet coat. A scarf was wound around my face and over my velvet bonnet. White, knitted leggings protected my legs from the cold. On my hands were white mittens connected by a long, crocheted string that ran around the back of my neck and down each sleeve with a mitten poking out of the end. My white, rubber boots had a bright, red tassel on the front. When we reached the river, we joined the crowd near the fire. We were cold after our long, twenty-block walk and the heat of the roaring fire was welcome.

Soon my father, laughing, swung me back up on his shoulders and said, "C'mon, honey, let's go walk on the water!" With the stars twinkling overhead, we three ventured out on the gleaming river ice. We walked from Rock Island, Illinois to Davenport, Iowa and back again! When we were well out toward the middle of the river, Dad swung me down onto the ice so that I, too, walked on the frozen water.

From shore to shore the river was the scene of spontaneous carnival. A team of roan horses pulled a sleigh filled with merrymakers toward the Iowa shore. The sleighbells on the horses' harness mingled with the happy shouts of skaters. Some were cutting figure eights, and others were playing a game of crack the whip. The last child in the long whip always seemed to be the smallest, trying to prove he was old enough to play the rowdy game. Poor little sod! He never had a chance of hanging on. That night he went sailing off the end of the line and down the river. Mother was frightened as the child careened away from the group. "Oh, John," she cried, "what if he hits a patch of soft ice?" Dad reassured her with the reminder of how long the river had been frozen and how brutally cold it had been.

We were west of the government bridge as we made our crossing—that same wonderful bridge that now spans the river from the Rock Island Arsenal to Davenport. (It is the only bridge in the world having train tracks above and vehicular traffic below that turns 360 degrees.)

As we returned to Rock Island, we heard the long, mournful sound of a train whistle as it carefully approached the bridge. We waited at the bonfire until the train had safely made its noisy crossing. The sound of wheels grinding on the tracks and cars crashing together carried far out over the countryside.

Two plumes of smoke rose into the starry sky—one from

the steam engine on the bridge, one from the fire on the bank of the river. From every person gathered there, small wisps of steam rose as their breath met the cold, night air.

It was a special night, a-once-in-a-lifetime night, a night to remember. And it was seventy-five years ago.

MY SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN SPRINGFIELD

Gloria L. Taylor

When I moved to Springfield to accept the first job of my life at the Illinois State Library, I was young and lacking in experience. I was qualified for the position, but I was short on general knowledge. I had never had to manage my life before, and I was used to living in a big city. I did not know any one in Springfield, and I could instantly see that life was not moving in the "fast lane" as it was in my home town, Chicago. I was small physically, and so was my pay check. Because of my lack of experience, I felt that the pay check was fair. But I was not happy there.

I rented a one-room furnished apartment, and after the rent was paid the balance of my money went for long distance calls or trips back to Chicago to be with my friends. I spent very little on food, and I walked to and from work. My problem was loneliness. After a couple of months of this I was more than ready to start making foot tracks along the highway leading back to Chicago.

Just at this time a woman who lived in the community started to visit me. She taught me how to cook on the small stove in my apartment. This saved me money. She also taught me that a pot of beans would feed me for several days. She showed me where the day-old bakery was located, and she often invited me along with some of her other friends, to her home for dinner. I began to manage better because I wanted to invite them to my place.

My new friends and I began to go to interesting places around town. They were not glamorous, neon-lighted places like the ones in Chicago, but they were interesting and steeped in local history. I always did like that kind of thing, but I had forgotten about it. My trips back home became fewer, and so did the phone calls.

At this important time in my life I felt like a piece of rough metal being hammered into fine steel. It was truly the turning point in my life. As I became more familiar with the community I realized that there were others less fortunate than I was, and that I could be more useful with my life. For the first time I was able to commune with my soul. I had never before known that I had a depth within me which I had never used.

One day a lady in Springfield told me about a two-month-old baby girl who was at the hospital. She was born with serious problems and did not have long to live. I wanted to fill what time she had left with love and comfort, so I legally adopted her. I named her Angel Celeste. She was in every way a celestial angel, and we had great times together.

However, when she reached the age of two years she showed signs of not feeling well. The doctors in Springfield and Chicago could not help her. I had a friend whose husband was an expert pediatrician, so I took the baby to him. On our fourth day there, when I was looking out of the window wondering what to do next, I suddenly noticed that the sun had lost its glow, the trees looked dark and strangely tall. A swarm of black birds suddenly flew up from the barren trees and soared across the dark skies. My heart was pounding against my chest, and I was stricken with fear to the depths of my very being. I went to the bed and I saw that my little Angel had passed away. It is impossible to tell how sad and lonely I felt.

I learned another lesson that day, how to accept heart-ache, how to hold up through the experience of ultimate sorrow.

I also learned how wonderful it is to have real friends. My friends in Springfield offered their help and stayed close by me during that difficult time, both day and night. They were an inspiration to me.

I shall always be thankful for having such wonderful neighbors. They taught me sympathy and strength. They were the making of me. All that I know or ever expect to learn, all that I have done, or ever expect to accomplish, I owe to those people. They are what made Springfield my home town.

II The Roaring Twenties

THE ROARING TWENTIES

The Twenties was an era of rapidly changing values and considerable social conflict, of individualism and anxiety, of lawbreaking and frivolous nonsense. It was arguably the first decade of the twentieth century—that is, the first to be characterized by twentieth-century values and problems.

Women won the right to vote with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919, and Ruth Rogers remembers the excitement of that first visit of her mother and grandmother to the polls. But women in the 1920s also wanted to do much more—attend college, work outside the home, and enjoy a less restricted social life. Some also wanted to dance the Charleston, drive a car, and perhaps smoke cigarettes and drink cocktails as well. In short, women wanted to enjoy the same social life as men. So, the rebellious "flapper" appeared, wearing bobbed hair and a short skirt.

As the number of cars multiplied and movies brought a glamorous world to everyday people, there was a restless questing for good times. Young people began to throw off the shackles of tradition and attempt to rewrite the rules of social behavior. No wonder Madge Bates Dodson looks back on the Twenties as a wonderful era of "new freedoms, great music, exciting dances, and happy times with friends."

But Prohibition forces had succeeded in passing the Eighteenth Amendment, forbidding the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, so men and women alike broke the law in unprecedented numbers as the illegal liquor traffic soared. By 1922, half a million Americans were involved in bootlegging, and organized crime had begun to realize enormous profits.

The memoir writers in this section recall a variety of experiences with bootleggers and speakeasies. Madge Bates Dodson recalls visiting a speakeasy in Quincy, for example, and Helen Sherill Smith describes a floating bar and casino that brought good times to people along the Illinois River. The memoirs by Irene Vander Vennet and Sidney Jeanne Seward recall humorous bootlegging incidents, but F. Mary Currie's piece is just the opposite—a frightening account of a barn dance that ended with a terrifying police raid.

The conservative reaction to bootlegging and the "new morality" was predictable, and it was especially forceful in small towns and rural areas where good country life seemed to be invaded by immoral city values. Many people became frustrated and fearful, inflexible and authoritarian. Revivalism flourished as preachers attacked the deadly poison of "modernism," and the Ku Klux Klan spread throughout the rural Midwest, intimidating drinkers, Catholics, Jews, and others. No wonder Lillian Nelson Combites declares that "There was much about the Roaring Twenties that was not good" as she recalls the Klan in her area.

Writings about the 1920s are so often focused on lawbreaking and frivolity that we tend to forget that the lives of most people were seldom touched by those things. Mary I. Brown asserts that "the new hard-surfaced roads" had a greater impact on her family than either the Eighteenth or Nineteenth Amendment, and that was surely true for most other families in downstate Illinois. The increasing mobility brought by cars and hard-surfaced, all-weather roads did much to end rural isolation, but it also initiated the decline of farm-center communities, as Ralph Eaton points out at the close of "Augusta's Turkey Trot." By the end of the decade, people in ever-increasing numbers were shopping and visiting regularly at the county seats and such larger communities as Peoria, Quincy, and Springfield. For that reason, the Twenties was a pivotal period of cultural change in Illinois, as it was throughout much of America.

The wonderful closing memoir in this section, "Roaring Softly: The Twenties in Lebanon" by Grace R. Welch, offers a kind of corrective to many other, more exciting accounts of the Roaring Twenties. After all, what we say about life in the Jazz

Age is commonly what our culture tells us was important then, but, in reality, everyday affairs—the joys and sorrows of family and community life—had greater significance for most people. They always do.

John E. Hallwas

THE KID FROM THE ROARING TWENTIES

Armour F. Van Briesen

Any kid who was growing up in the "Roaring Twenties" will tell you that it was the most interesting and exciting decade of the century. The country had pretty well recovered from the World War and it was a happy time. People were strumming ukuleles and dancing the Charleston along with drinking bathtub gin. Girls wore long-wasted dresses with short skirts and little bowl-shaped hats. Young men wore wide-bottom trousers and lumber jackets. College boys wore coonskin coats, and gangsters could be identified by their black overcoats and light grey hats.

New things were happening all around. The first national radio broadcast came from KDKA Pittsburg. Zippers were first introduced on women's overshoes. Air-mail routes were established and beacon lights were installed every forty miles to guide the air-mail flyers at night with their arc-lights across the sky. Charles Lindbergh was the hero of the day, and when talking pictures came out, new fabulous theaters and hotels went up in the large cities. People became conscious of the underworld when the Valentine's Day Massacre happened in 1929, and the stockmarket crash later in the year caused the happy times to limp into the 1930s, and by June, a 1930 high-school graduate could not find a job.

By 1920, the soldiers who had returned from Europe were getting married to the sweetheart they left behind, and some of them brought a bride over from France. New houses were being built for them and would have indoor plumbing and electricity. Factories were also making furniture for these new homes. Thirty-five cents an hour was considered a good wage.

There were no frozen or fast foods in the stores of the Roaring Twenties. Just staple items were on sale as people cooked from scratch, and such items as potato chips, chili, and other big items of this day were seldom served. There were no drive-ins or fast food places around either. There were hot-dog stands in the parks and on street corners. Restaurants cooked everything from scratch: potatoes were peeled and mashed in the kitchen and brown gravy was made from meat drippings. Home made pies were served for dessert.

There were lunch rooms that served short orders and sandwiches. Most of the sandwiches were ham or cheese. Hamburgers had not yet caught on and there was a good reason. The meat coolers in the markets were not very efficient and after the meat was cut and on display for a day, it was discolored. It was then ground into hamburger and sold three pounds for a quarter. It was cheap food for a family. Even if it was slightly tainted, it was still eatable. It was something a person wouldn't order if he was getting a sandwich. It took the eating places a long time to convince people that their meat was fresh ground beef, but after people caught on, the hamburger became a popular food. Most of them sold for 5¢ or 10¢ with trimmings.

If a kid was lucky and his folks thought he earned it, he would get an ice cream cone every second day and a bottle of pop once a week. There were some good soft drinks on the market: Wilson's Old Crow ginger ale was made in Rockford, Illinois and there was Green River, Cherry Blossom, and of course Coca-Cola. There were no Pepsi, Royal Crown, or other colas on the market.

The Roaring Twenties were great for kids in the country or in a small town. The community pool was the old swimming hole and the kids were always healthy. The boys wore overalls and went barefoot to school. They did not want to be city slickers. Parties were held at school and the churches, and hot cocoa was served in the winter and lemonade in the summer. There were no cans of pop. A teacher could go to teacher's college for one term and a six-week summer course and then could get a job teaching for $50 per month.

The Roaring Twenties would not have been near so exciting if it had not been for Prohibition. No sooner had the

Volstead Act taken effect when stills were springing up all around. Kids were playing bootlegger and gangster and using the new words such as hootch, moonshine, blind pig, etc. Small town doctors and druggists soon had things going too. A doctor or druggist could get alcohol for medical purposes so the doctor would write out a prescription and the druggist would fill it in a bottle, slightly diluted and with a little coloring, and label it "Cough Medicine." The doctor and druggist both got a profit and many women wondered why their husbands kept a bottle of cough medicine in the barn.

A speakeasy or blind pig could be found anywhere from a church basement to an apartment on Park Avenue. When saloons were closed up, roadhouses opened up for dine and dance. There was often a bootleg operation going on. If a raid was expected, the cargo was often buried in the backyard or the bottles broken. A broken bottle could not be used for evidence. In the big cities, there were big operators and gang wars, increasing all through Prohibition. Al Capone and Bugs Moran made a name for themselves and rocked the country with the famous Valentine's Day massacre of 1929.

The plain-Jane cars were becoming dream-boats. A Model T Ford could be bought for as little as $280 and most kids knew how to drive them. Hudson-Essex was the world's largest producer of axles and the world's third largest manufacturer of cars.

School-kids always knew what was going on in the world from hearing the grownups talk of the "Teapot Dome Scandal" of the Harding administration, and then "Silent" Cal Coolidge, who was worried about people buying on the installment plan and having too much debt. Also, he was worried about the increase in crime and the many gang wars.

Hoover proclaimed in his inaugural address that the country was on the dawn of the most prosperous time ever known. His cabinet were wealthy bankers and business men like himself, but they could not prevent the stockmarket crash, the closing of banks, and the Depression.

The kids of the Roaring Twenties, like me, have fond memories of the days when everybody made do with what they had and the government was a small operation. They were golden years.

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ROARING TWENTIES

Madge Bates Dodson

My school days took place in the Twenties at Maplewood School in Camp Point, Illinois. I'm not sure how "roaring" they were, but they were exciting nonetheless. In 1923 I was twelve years old and ready for high school. I still had long curls. The movies that I saw showed the girls with "bobbed" hair and short skirts. I had to do something about my hair. My mother finally consented to let me have the curls cut off. I went to the local barber shop. The barber not only cut off my curls, he shingled the back up to the crown of my head. Now it was really "bobbed." I went home and gave my doll, who had long curls, a haircut. Now she looked just like me. My mother was not happy about our looks, but I felt right in style.

My girlfriends and I were great silent movie fans, and we had our favorite stars. I had all their pictures pasted in a large book. Camp Point had a movie theater on the second floor of the Baley Opera House. A musician always played the piano during the movie. They chose their music according to what was happening on the screen. In fact, the stage, dressing rooms, and curtain are still there but in very bad shape. The admission was 25¢ for adults and 10¢ for children. Later the price went up to 35¢ and 15¢. Some of the movies we saw in those years were *The Vanishing American*, starring Richard Dix, *Beau Geste* with Ronald Colman, *The Last Frontier* with William Boyd, and

Daddy starring Jackie Coogan. Once in awhile we were able to see a movie in Quincy, Illinois. They had several theaters. Some of them were the Star, the Orpheum, the Family, and the Belasco. When the new Washington opened in Quincy, Illinois, it looked so beautiful to all of us. In 1927 the father of one of my friends took four of us to the Washington to see Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*. The conversation was silent, but the music and songs were in sound. The movie was so sad. We all cried and loved every minute of it. The first talking movie was made in 1928.

Four of us girls formed a fan club for Richard Dix. We met at each other's homes, played cards, talked about our "idol," and ate popcorn and fudge. We also tried to learn all the latest dance steps. My folks had an old Victrola with the big horn. Another girl had a player-piano. We loved to dance to *Chloe, Some of These Days*, and *At Sundown*, to name a few. We managed to learn the Fox Trot, Charlestown, and the Waltz. Naturally we called ourselves the A.O.R.D.s, the admirers of Richard Dix. I still have an autographed photo of him.

In the early Twenties, the "hard road" was built through Camp Point. It is now known as U.S. 24. What a thrill to be able to travel to Quincy on a paved road. We could hardly wait for Dad to take us for a ride in our car. The car was a Model T Ford touring. In the summer, very breezy. In the winter, the side curtains were buttoned on, and you hoped they wouldn't come loose in zero weather. It was a big occasion to drive to Quincy Christmas shopping. Mother would heat bricks to keep our feet warm and cover us who were in the back seat with a comforter. I believe my Dad had some kind of a heater in the front seat.

In 1926 my sister Bess and her husband came to visit before they started for California. They had a Model T Ford coupe. They planned to drive to California and with their gear and camp along the way. In fact, that is just what they did. I don't remember how long the journey was, but it took a long time in 1926. While in Camp Point, Bess and I took a trip to Quincy. We went on the morning train. After arriving in Quincy, we ate lunch and then went to see the movie *Peter Pan* starring Betty Bronson. After the movie we went to the Quincy Hotel for dinner. It was very impressive to my eyes. There were formally dressed waiters, and there was lots of silverware on the tables. After dinner we went to another movie. It was *The Merry Widow* with Mae Murray and John Gilbert. Then we went back to Camp Point on the late train. What a day! I talked and bragged about it for months, and sixty some years later I still remember that day.

In the twenties, the CB&Q railroad had at least four or five passenger trains running daily between Chicago and Quincy. Also, there were many freight trains. Camp Point had a huge water tower next to the tracks by the depot. Many times the trains going through stopped and took on water. The reservoir south of town supplied water for the tower. There was a pumping station there and that was owned by the railroad. My family lived in the west part of town near the tracks. This area was called "Dublin," so-called because many Irish families lived there when the railroad was being built. The old Catholic church stood on ground a block back of our house. The old church is gone and a new one was built far away from "Dublin." A cousin, Clarence Thomas, was an engineer on the CB&Q. Whenever he went through, he would really blow the whistle. We would all race outside and wave.

In my junior year (1927), my brother Bill sent me money to buy a prom dress. I was in seventh heaven, of course. I couldn't believe my good fortune. My folks took me to Quincy shopping. I purchased a lovely dress in shades of green taffeta. It had an uneven hemline, short in front and longer in back. It was beautiful. The bodice buttoned in back at the neckline with a long bow hanging down. Where it buttoned, it made a small triangle and showed my bare back. It was so daring (or Roaring?). In fact, it was so daring my mother sewed a piece of lace in the triangle. I wasn't allowed to be "Roaring" after all.

This was also Prohibition time. By the time I was eighteen, I had sneaked a few puffs on cigarettes and tasted a little homemade wine. I also knew who was making home brew, wine, and "rotgut" whiskey. Once we actually dared to go to a "speakeasy" in Quincy. Our boyfriends took my girlfriend and me. We really thought we were being very daring, and I guess we were. We were scared to death the cops would raid the joint while we were there. The boys knocked on the door and gave the password. We entered and were escorted to the basement where we sat around a kitchen table and sipped on some kind of red drink. I don't know if it was a sloe gin or poor wine.

The Roaring Twenties for me was a great time. There were new freedoms, great music, exciting dances, and happy times with friends. I still enjoy the music and dancing. Everyone was optimistic about the future. We thought our country was the greatest and was going on to bigger and better things. The stockmarket crash of 1929 put an end to those dreams for some time. The Roaring Twenties were over.

IF YOU WERE A FLAPPER IN 1922

Audrey Ashley-Runkle

It is the summer of 1922. If you are a teenage girl wanting to get along with your life, you would want to dress like other young women who were having good times. In order to look "keen," "groovy," like "the cat's meow," and "in the swing of things," you would dress like a flapper.

Undergarments would be a brassiere that flattened out the bust line, panties or Teddies, and a knee-length slip. The Teddy was a panty item that you stepped into. You wore a support belt for your hose also. It was a narrow belt with four long supporters that would reach to your hose–or some had six supporters, for front, side, and back.

Hose was usually silk and expensive, and the silk ran easily. Your hose might be Japanese silk, artificial silk, fine lisle, or cotton. Hose had seams, sometimes starting at the toe, but later starting at the heel. In 1922, girls had to straighten their seams from time to time.

Your shoes would be low-heeled slippers, or for dress, you might wear high-heeled shoes.

You would have to have a white, accordion-pleated, knee-length skirt. The pleats in the medium crepe would be small and run from the waistband back to the narrow hem. With this skirt you would wear a mere nothing of a sleeveless blouse.

Your hair would be cut short. In most cases you would have to get it cut in a man's barber shop. (Men were not comfortable with women in their shops). You might wear bangs. Many girls did. On occasion you might have a marcel at a beauty parlor. The marcel iron was a two-pronged iron heated on a small canned heat stove. You would have waves around your head. At home you could curl your own hair with kid curlers. Such a curler was about four inches long, made of kid leather with wire inside. You would roll up your hair on these and let them set for an hour or more. You could use a curling iron yourself and heat the iron by placing it at the top of a lighted lamp chimney. For color you could use henna or peroxide.

You tweezed your eyebrows until they became a fine line a la Marlene Dietrich. You also pursed your lips to make them "cupid's bow" lips like Betty Boop and Clara Bow. Your manners became what you saw at the movies.

Dressed like this you would be ready for dancing, say, at the Country Club. At the club, you would dance every "set" played by the band. The band would have at least one saxophone, trumpet, trombone, set of drums, piano and string bass or guitar. It would play the latest tunes, including foxtrots, waltzes, and perhaps Charlestons. You would know all the

words to the music. Since all windows of homes and clubs were wide open to relieve the summer heat, people all around would listen to the band as the music wafted on the air. Around one o'clock the dance would end with "I'll See You in My Dreams".

Next day you would be criticized for being a bit wild, and your mother would be on the spot for letting you go to dances when you were only sixteen years old. But it would be worth the criticism to share the fun of being a flapper in 1922.

THE FLORENCE DANCE HALL

Margaret L. Cockrum

During the Twenties, after the construction of Route 36 had made wandering about at night more feasible, one enterprising Pike County resident who had a bit of land bordering the Illinois River decided to provide a meeting place for the pursuit of interesting night life–a place where the boys with their family "flyers" could take their girls with their boyish bobs and their straight, short, long waisted dresses for a night–if not on the town, at least on the village. So, the Florence dance pavilion was built.

It was a low, round, or perhaps octagonal building, reminiscent of the roof over a merry-go-round, and I seem to remember that it was painted orange. It was built on the narrow sandy plain between the bluff and the river, with brave disregard for any wandering rattlesnakes. It must have been at least a slight additional attraction that anyone not too busy with the music and dancing could watch the riverboats as they churned their way up and down the river.

Of course, from time to time high water would lap around the edges of the building, and the measure of a flood was "How close is the water to the Florence Dance Hall?" The spot was suspected of being "wet" with more than river water, but since alcoholic drinks were illegal in the early days of the dance hall, bootleg liquor must have been passed around surreptitiously rather than openly. The surrounding community regarded the place with considerable suspicion, and the line between "wild" and respectable was drawn with the question, "Does she go to the dance hall?"

In an effort to placate the community, picnic tables were installed and gradually the more staid residents of the county began to meet there for picnics–in the daytime, of course.

THE TWENTIES IN MCDONOUGH COUNTY

Lillian Nelson Combites

I remember a good deal about what went on in the 1920s in McDonough County.

As to women voting in the Twenties, it was a settled issue by then. I never knew of any women in an official capacity, only a Post Mistress. I do remember the parties running for an office coming to the door to talk to my mother, vying for a vote. They always gave each of us a candy bar and the men a cigar. Candy bars only cost 5¢ then. As we only had two brothers, and they didn't smoke, I don't recall the price of cigars. They were given candy bars too. We hardly had candy, only when we paid the grocery bill and the grocer gave us a generous sack of candy free. If we ever could spare any sugar, my sister would make fudge. When we had sore throats, we made vinegar candy (a hard, clear candy) to suck on. We did look forward to election time. Mama never voted for the party, but for the individual.

A big issue then was women cutting their hair. All women wore long hair with braids wound around their head, on top of their head with buns, or on back of the head. Then the

craze of short hair came and men and women had a battle of the sexes. Some women came to my mother as they wouldn't be caught in a man's barber shop. I remember one of our school teachers came and my mother cut her beautiful hair. Her husband was so angry with her they almost separated. For a long time they had bad feelings. Times have really changed. Now men go to women's salons and get hair styled and permed.

There were also bootleggers in the Twenties. I know this to be a fact as some lived across the street. All day, even in summer, the smoke poured from the chimney and the smell was in the air. At all hours cars came and went with men. Sometimes they were so drunk, they fell asleep and sat for hours. We were afraid to be out at night in our own yard. Nothing was ever done to them. There were others around, but no one complained.

There was a man about a half block from us that drank so and got raving crazy–"snakes in his boots" they called it. You could hear him all over the neighborhood. His children would hide out in the shed and the stepmother crawled out the bedroom window and came to our house and stayed until he passed out and slept it off. She finally left him with their two children and returned to the town she came from. His children left home when they were old enough. He continued to drink until he died. Years before, my father had been an alcoholic and had committed suicide, leaving five children under ten years of age, and I wasn't born yet. The price of drinking was high for my mother and her six children who grew up without a father.

We also had the Klu Klux Klan. One night when mama was up with the toothache, cars stopped down the street around this man's house. Hooded men got out and crossed over to his home and set up a cross and lit it. Mama got us up out of bed and we watched it burn. This was a warning he had better mend his ways or pay the consequences. It never did any good. Later they came again and burned another cross. It was real scary for us children.

Yes, the Klu Klux Klan was very active in McDonough County. They met at my sister's boyfriend's folks' farm north of Sciota. She went to one of the meetings. There were also some KKK groups around Blandinsville and Stronghurst. It was so unfair as some members we knew were as bad as the ones they were criticizing. One Klan member we knew drank and beat his children and kicked his wife. I don't know how long the Klan was active, but fortunately it finally disbanded.

There was much about the Roaring Twenties that was not good, and I'm glad those things are gone.

WHEN WOMEN VOTED IN 1920

Ruth Rogers

My family lived in Fulton County, in the Barnes School District, which is in Lee Township. This is east of Bushnell, Illinois. My mother, Ida Wheeler Murphy, was a school teacher. She had been since 1909. She was an unusually independent woman for her time and she was very interested in history. So, of course, her interest turned to the plight of women. I can remember hearing her talk and talk about women not being allowed to vote. I sometimes suspected that the men in our family were not so thrilled to hear her lamenting about this big interest of hers. Then, in 1920, women were given the right to vote. At the age of nine, I did not understand the full importance of the event. I did not know about the historical background, nor the strength of the women and some men who had fought through the years for the rights of women.

Everything was excitement that morning. My mother said history was being made. She said the Armistice had settled things for many countries, but what was happening all over the United States, that day, would affect all women for all time.

The women in our family were going to vote for the first time. My mother had managed to get herself and my grandmother, Elizabeth Laneuy Wheeler, registered to vote in this great 1920 election. Grandma grumbled and growled about going to the election, but finally went along with mom in the matter. Remembering my mother, I'm sure she wished my sister, Myrle Murphy (Rouse), and I were old enough to add two more votes to the cause.

My grandfather, Joseph Henry Wheeler, a Civil War veteran, then in his late seventies, must have felt a little like President John Adams, who feared "petticoat government," as he walked into that small Virgil School building. In those days, school was dismissed in the buildings where the elections were held. The little wooden cubby holes, with a curtain over the front, to give the voter privacy, were set up in one corner of the school room. The teacher's desk was used for voter checking and picking up the printed ballot. To the side on a little table sat a locked box with a slot in the top, in which to drop the marked ballots. Everything was much the same as country and small town voting is done today. The big difference was that all election officials were men. Remember, women were not allowed in our countries' election places until after the second Tuesday in November, 1920.

I'm glad my mother saw fit to take her children. I have a memory of an important event. Today I can't remember what my grandfather said about taking his women to an event where previously only men had been allowed. But he was a smart man; he could talk to a politician, a preacher, or a tramp with equal ease. However, when my grandmother "made up her mind" about something he would retreat to the silence and pleasant safety of his barn's entryway. However, this day he just brought us to vote. My bachelor uncle, William Wheeler, my mother's brother, who lived with us, wasn't so kind. He was always teasing, but that day he said angry, unkind things to Mom, and Grandma and refused to go along with us to vote for Warren Harding for president.

Nevertheless, women had obtained a victory. All her life my mother never failed to exercise her right to vote. Little did we know on that cold day in November what a long, hard battle it would be for women to obtain other freedoms and eventual equality.

THE ROARING TWENTIES IN BROWNING

Helen Sherrill Smith

The decade from 1920 to 1930 were rip-roaring years, both in the world around us and the country and towns we lived in. The world was putting itself back together after a world war; the country was leaning toward isolationism; farmers were beset by high tariffs and crop surpluses. Men, hardened by the trials of war, wanted better working conditions while employers fought unions, and federal courts crushed strikes by injunction. The Klu Klux Klan increased membership in the Midwest as well as in the southern states, promoting attacks upon Catholics, Jews, Negroes, and foreigners, creating a reign of terror in its wake. But "Big Business" prospered, with stock speculation and real estate booms soaring into the bull market of the last years of the decade.

In our area of river towns with their in-built tendencies to play as hard as they worked, the era of more money, the Model T Ford, canned food, more ready-made clothing, outboard motors, electric washing machines and irons, and the feelings that good times were due us after the terrible war, led to a lighthearted attitude.

The young, swept up in the more permissive attitudes and with the freedoms of cars, music from radios, and sensational newspaper accounts of high living society debs, motion

picture stars, and murder trials, shocked the older generations with short skirts, rolled down hose, and bobbed and shingled hair. Galoshes, those utilitarian four bucklers to wade through snow, became a fashion item, worn unbuckled and flapping open, a real fashion statement.

But in our town, the most traumatic event of the Twenties was the Eighteenth Amendment, passed in 1919, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor. People in Browning had voted the village dry since early days, but that did not mean no drinking. Fishing folk, who fought the elements daily, believed freedom to drink, if they pleased, was a God-given right. So river towns drank illegally. Gangsters took over the bootlegging business, especially in the big towns. In smaller towns like Beardstown, enterprising householders cleared out basements and put in a bar, some tables, and a juke box–and so local speakeasies were born. Some real liquor was brought in, but a lot of the home brewed variety was sold as well. Stills were set up and "white lightning" produced; beer could be set up in stone jars and soon bottled, and anyone could produce drinkable wine or bathtub gin in a few days.

Browning had no real speakeasies where one could set in a social atmosphere and drink, but potent drink was available. Home brewed beer was common, though not for sale. But a few entrepreneurs made a business of it. There was a large white house on the road to the river where one could most always buy a pint at the back door; a cabin boat at the river bank where a constant card game was in session also had liquid refreshments. A house on stilts up river from town was visited by fishermen who often arrived home in a happier state than when they started their day. And a couple in a cabin boat near a creek mouth up river made excellent wild grape wine, sold only at the door, a dollar a gallon. So Prohibition did not necessarily mean dry.

The most glamorous result of the Eighteenth Amendment in our area was that a local promoter bought a very large houseboat, and equipped it with a bar, lounge, dining room, sleeping rooms, and a large casino. A floating hotel, with liquor and gambling, was always available. If the local citizenry got a little hostile at such goings on, the *Mazel* was just moved up or down river until the fuss died down. Since it could moor off shore, local authorities could have little if any jurisdiction over what went on there.

During hunting season, when the town was flooded with rich Chicagoans who came by car and by train to enjoy the plentiful supply of ducks on good hunting grounds with many competent guides available, the floating hotel had its busiest days. Some of the would-be hunters found it more pleasant to just stay there and buy ducks to take home. Word got around that a number of the regulars at the *Mazel* were reported to be gangsters and mobsters who enjoyed their stays as a vacation from the pressures of Chicago life.

Excitement, money flowing, more work for more people, and the element of danger–good times for Browning and Beardstown while the *Mazel* was in operation.

But like many enterprises, it finally came to an end. The promoter, enticed by the thought of even bigger profits, took himself to Chicago where the real money was. So long as he played the fringes, things went O.K. But then he stepped into taking over a shipment of contraband which infringed on one of the "Big Boy's" territory. After a couple of days and nights hiding out in the middle of a lake, our man had seen more danger than he'd counted on and came home sadder and wiser. By then, the *Mazel* had been closed down and the stock-market crash of 1929 was imminent. The Roaring Twenties was coming to an end.

SHINE RAID AT A BARN DANCE

F. Mary Currie

The Time: 1923. The Place: The country and horse lot at Noah Sorrel's place, in the woods above East Fork Creek. I, sixteen-year-old Grace Sullens, was there to share in the barn dance with dozens of country folks.

It was a Saturday night in July, and we were all ready to frolic. Except for hat collections for the neighbor-musicians, it was all free. Called ear players, these were whoever showed up with an instrument, fiddle, guitar, or five-string banjo–or even two sticks to beat time.

The pay came to Noah, a poor scratchin' farmer, who sold moonshine whiskey to keep him and his kids a-goin. His "Pap," Ole Man Jake, lived with him. Raised in Ole Kentuck, he was a fine hand with the mash, people said. Good whiskey in Prohibition times. So, the free crowd poured in for fun and dancing and hid the more-money-to-spend town-people, slipping in for illegal booze.

In a pink organdy ruffled skirt and black shiny pumps, I stood in a bunch of other floaty-skirted girls, while four couples to each set was arranged. Eight sets, each with its sing-song caller, were sorted into pairs, while the music boys whanged and tuned. Hay bales with blankets over them, under the lower eves, made seats for the watchers. Quilts behind these took care of the little nappers. Gas lanterns hung from the rafters. Hay covered the hay hole. The only way in and out was two farm ladders at the big loft door.

Suddenly, the noisy clamor hushed and rhythm music started. The foot-tappin' hand-clappin' kind. We dancers began to sway and jig in the figures swung out by our various callers, all shook up in the fun.

After an hour of this high-steppin' fast-swinging on this hot July night, everybody rested a spell, to wipe sweat and get our puff back. Myra Smith, an older out from town girl, grabbed my hot elbow. "Let's get a cool drink at the pump," she said, "Bucket in the barn is flat." So down the ladder we went out to the horse pump.

There, surprised, I looked around. Tied horses with buggies stood all around. There were a few cars, no people. The quarter moon was low in the west. It made dim light in the dusty fog-like air. The haunting smell of the wild honeysuckle mingled with the horse lot dust. The taste of the pumped drink in the tin cup was good. The only sound was the Whippoorwill call down on the creek below us, and the Katydids sawing away in the trees.

The tinkle of the barn started. We turned, but melting out of the dust suddenly, there was a man with a gun in a crooked arm. "Fast back up the ladders, Gals," he said. We needed no push. We, flew, one on each ladder, up the rungs. He followed. "Likely to be shootin'," he muttered. A strange man, he plunked down at the doorsill, rifle pointing out, his feet on the first rung of the ladder.

Another strange man with a rifle appeared at the top of the other ladder. We were all as still as the barnyard. We huddled like sheep, all staring. "Keep fiddlein'," he gestured with the gun, "You all keep dancin', nobodys comin' and nobodys goin' out til told."

We near ones could see a large badge shining on his suspender. We looked at each other and minded, stepping into our couple's sets. He set his feet on the ladder, gun pointing out. The music guys got going with a hard beat, Turkey-in-the-Straw stomper. The groups picked up the jiggin' rounds and away we went. But the bounce and firey steps had blown out. We were scared. This had to be a moonshine raid. Yells came from below. We all stopped and headed for the door. The man waved us back with his gun. Nope, it's safe in here. Bang! Bang! went two barrels of a shotgun. Noah's five hunting hounds squalled, just boo-hooing; then the whine of flying rifle bullets, several of them.

We froze in our footprints. That was our neighbors, Noah, his teenage sons, Jim, Joe, and Tom, and ole Grandpap, all those bullets was flyin' at down there, and from the roar of the shotguns, was being returned. Shaking, I grabbed Dave, the closest one, in a near death hold. Everybody did.

Wife and mother, Kate Sorrels, was seated on a bale nearby. She sat stiffly up, hand pinched white on her palm leaf fan, lips pressed to an invisible line, foot still tapping. I felt proud for Kate, but looked the other way. Her stabbed dark eyes throbbed, it hurt so. Time went slow amongst us in the barn.

Outside, thank God, no more shootin'. Car doors banged, motors roared. Then, his sheriff's star flashing, came a man off the ladder. We huddled back. For us, HH wuz always bad news. "Mis Sorrel," he looked us over, paralyzed our speech. Kate, tall and sharp-angled, stood taller and looked at him square straight. "Me, Sir?", no quaver in her chin. "Brace up, Mis Kate," he said to her. "Noah got a gut hit. He went fast to the Vernon hospital. Boy Jim, with a shoulder hit, got took too. Sorry, but Noah, he knew the law, been warned before."

Starch gone, Kate crumpled. "He knowed, t'was the onliest way to git livin money." She started towards the door explainin', "With no crops t'was honest trade he figured. Good Kentucky shine he made. They allus were back to git more."

No talking amongst us as we filed down the steps. Pearl and me stepped on the little iron steps, and got up in our buggy. Brother Clyde untied ole Buck from the lot post, and we settled on our knees to drive the four miles to our farm.

Only ten-thirty. We clopped down the dusty road, unrolling a gray foggy ribbon behind, with the setting moon in the west, sparkling through. Saying nothing. Big sister, Pearl, said, "Don't be goin' out with Mirey. They claim she's a fast one." I laughed, "Sure is, she jumped into that loft 'fore I wuz half way."

Noah and Jim recovered, but the law destroyed all his bootleg booze and mash-making equipment. That ended our barn dances there.

A VISIT FROM THE KU KLUX KLAN

Jean Courtney Huber

My father and mother, William A. and Florence Hughes Courtney, had moved from New York to the Midwest in the 1900s. In the '20s, they lived in a double house on 16th Avenue with their two daughters, Helen and Elizabeth. My birth was but a few short weeks away. In desperation to move his family into a bigger house, my father bought a home on 13th Street and 6th Avenue, East Moline, in what my mother called "the middle of the prairie." In May of that year I was born.

Mother hated being so far away from St. Anne Church, the activity of the town, and her friends, but living near one's work was important to my father's livelihood because we didn't have a car.

My father worked at the John Deere Harvester Works. His uncle, J. J. Courtney, one of the early superintendents at Deere & Company, Moline, Illinois, had encouraged his four nephews, Tom, John, Dave, and Bill, to come to Moline where they could get jobs working for Deere. Three came and worked for Deere. Dave stayed in Chicago.

Living close to work was important those days when it came to transportation. Near the corner on 6th Avenue, my father could walk to work across the prairie, along the railroad tracks, and in the backway to his office in a few minutes.

As I grew older, I was allowed to take my father his lunch. I followed the patch through the prairie, calling to the meadow larks, picking buttercups, dark blue violets, a bunch of what the Angel girls called "snot flowers," and a dandelion or two. I'd hunt four-leaf clovers and find a rare jack-in-the-pulpit, making a wildflower bouquet for my father's desk.

Mother would watch from our front porch as I bobbed through the prairie, my mop of bright red hair peeking through the long grasses. A brown rabbit would hop by or a garter snake would slither by touching my foot. I'd jump and end up stepping

in sandburs. I'd bend over to dig out the sandbur and Mother would call to me. I'd yell "Sandburs." She knew my problem.

I'd limp along the tracks, the Burlington I think, then I'd walk the cool rails, and skip the ties, counting or making up rhymes as I walked. The stones between the ties slowed me. I was fascinated by their glitter and filled my pockets with the shiny ones.

At the factory door, I entered to a chorus of "Hey, Red, what color's your hair?" The workers stopped to pat me on the head or walk me to my father's office where I left his lunch sack.

I loved going there, not just for the attention, but because my father and the workers showed me the machines. They would lift me up to see the dark oil pouring over moving machine parts or show me how a new tool worked. I knew about tool rooms before I ever had a doll. The clank of heavy metal and the ring of a clanging hammer were the "rock and roll" of those days for me.

At night I was not a good sleeper so I got up and looked out the big window over my bed. In warm weather, I swung it open and looked south into the trees watching the mystical shadows made by the moon.

I heard a boat whistle to the north, distant and haunting. I knew a paddle wheeler was struggling against the current, heading up river. I'd run to the bathroom, swing open the window, and, stand on the toilet seat looking north. I could see the moonlight reflecting from the light-painted decks and the outline of the dark smoke from the boat's stack. I could sleep after it left, dreaming of its voyage.

One day when I took my father his lunch, things seemed different. The men were sitting outside, their backs against the brick building, their greasy work caps turned backwards, their tired faces grim, their eyes turned downward. Their "Hey, Red's" were silent. I felt lonely, unloved. I hurried to my father's office, left his lunch, and lingered a bit hoping for an explanation. I got a kiss, but no answer.

I ran most of the way home. When I arrived in my yard, I found some white-painted criss-cross sticks that looked like they had been set afire.

"Look what I found behind the big tree," I told my mother.

"Did you tell your father about this?" she asked.

"No, I just found them when I came home."

My two older sisters saw me holding the sticks and were abuzz with whispers. Not a word was said to me about the sticks, not even at supper time.

Bedtime came early that night. I couldn't sleep so I looked out my bedroom window. It was pitch dark out. When I heard voices outside, I went to the bathroom, climbed on the toilet seat, swinging the window open as I went. No one in sight. Then a deep blast of a boat whistle. The paddle wheel was coming, but I couldn't see the boat or the river's edge or the old man's shack.

The churning of the paddle wheels and water reached me as the boat was almost directly north of me. I could see a fire on the banks of the river, almost hear it crackle in the night's stillness.

I ran to wake my folks. My dad got dressed and left quickly. My sisters joined my Mom and headed outside. I stayed at my bathroom perch where I could see the most.

Now a huge cross burned, not unlike the small white charred sticks I found in our yard. I was worried. My father was heading for this danger.

The reflection from the fire lit up the river boat, its crew now waving burning torches to light the area, yelling toward the shack to warn the old man.

Before my father returned, I heard a car come up the alley. I could see faint white shapes illuminated by our house lights. The occupants, hidden by white sheets, yelled names at my mother and sisters. "Dam Cat-licks! Get out!" They drove close to where my mother and sisters were standing, calling out

as they went. My mother, a five foot-one inch lady, stood her ground. She held her head high and never moved an inch nor replied to their taunts.

I could hear footsteps as my father returned from the cross-burning. He was furious. But he was a quiet man. I knew he would settle things in the bright light of the day–in his own way.

I was back in my bed wondering why anybody could hate someone for their religion. When he returned, my father told of a cross being burnt in the yard of the Polite family. One of their sons had worked for him. They lived just across 13th Street. He'd had enough, he said. It would stop. He wouldn't be intimidated, nor did either of my parents consider our neighborhood any one's in particular.

Next day my mother handed me my father's lunch.

"Is it ok for me to go?" I asked. I got a big smile and a "Yes."

I followed the path through the prairie. I wasn't as confident as my mother. Would I now get catcalls because I was a Catholic or was there a prejudice against red hair? I wasn't sure.

I entered the same factory door as always.

"Hey, Red! What color's your hair? Where'd you get those green eyes? Did that temper come with your red hair?" I knew then my father had won. There'd be no more crosses burned in our neighborhood.

A BABYSITTING INCIDENT IN BOOTLEGGING DAYS

Irene Vander Vennet

It was an exciting time for me, many years ago, when I received permission from my mom to babysit several blocks from my home. I often cared for the children across the street when their parents went to an early evening movie. But my parents felt I was too young to go anywhere far from home. This particular evening our neighbor called and asked if I might sit for a friend of theirs for about an hour. Mom never made snap decisions so she said she would think it over and return the call soon.

She called me aside and told me of the request, asked if I felt I could handle the job responsibly. I assured and reassured her, and when I heard her make the call to tell them I could, I felt very grown up.

Mr. Bea, my charge's father, came shortly before eight to drive me to his home. There I met Bobby, age 5, and Suzanne, age 7. Their mother told me they enjoyed listening to stories or liked someone to read to them. She said that they would be back in about an hour and she would see to the bedtime on their return. Mr. Bea picked up a large box and off they went.

I sat Bobby and Suzanne close by me on the sofa and, at their request, continued to read a book their mother had started to read to them the night before. I'll never forget the name of that book–*The Bobbsey Twins by the Deep Blue Sea.*

About fifteen minutes later, Bobby slipped off of the sofa and asked me to wait a minute as he had to go to the bathroom. Away he went. When I thought Bobby had been gone long enough to complete his mission, I thought I'd better investigate the delay. I went to the bathroom door and called:

"Bobby, are you all right?" No answer.

"Stay calm," I told myself, and called out again. Still no answer. I tried the door; it was locked.

"Bobby, unlock the door," I said in my sweetest voice;

"it's time for the treat your mom left, cookies and milk."

"Just a minute" came a frightened little voice. Then came the sound of sloshing water.

"Ah," I told myself, "typical child–so much fun to play in water." The lock turned, the door opened, and before me stood a naked, smelly little kid. He looked very white and like any little boy caught in the act. "What happened Bobby?" I asked him. Suzanne was right behind me and filling in the information in a loud voice.

"You're going to get spanked when Daddy gets home" and continued on. "Dad makes special water in the bathtub he has to test for someone and we're not supposed to go near the tub when it's in there."

Now Bobby added, "I only wanted to taaa....." and no more words came out of his mouth . . . only the special water and most of his supper. Was it? Could it be? It smelled a lot like the alcohol that mom used to rub on the boys' sore muscles when they played ball. No matter, I had to help Bobby. I bathed him off (not in the bathtub), put on his pajamas and robe, and settled him once again beside me on the sofa and started to read. In no time, my little drunk was fast asleep.

Five to nine a key turned in the front door and Mr. and Mrs. Bea walked into the room.

"What a peaceful scene," said Mrs. Bea. "Bobby fast asleep and our Wide-Awake up and chatting as usual." Chatting she was, words tum-bling out like autumn's falling leaves.

"Bobby was a bad, bad boy tonight–he got into the special water tub and got sick–he said he had to go to the bathroom and when he stayed too long, Fran went into to see if he was all right–he had locked the door but he did open it when she told him to–but he was all undressed and he smelled awful–and then–he THREW UP. . ." she fairly shouted.

Mr. and Mrs. Bea stood like mute sentinels just staring at me and then at each other. Mr. Bea attempted to speak, but only a feeble "uh, ah, I, uh, I..." then nothing. I realized their embarrassment and came to their rescue.

I picked up my coat and said, "Could you please take me home now: I have much Latin to translate before I go to bed." I know Mr. Bea was relieved and hurried both of us out the door.

He talked and questioned me the entire ride home: "Did I like school? What subject did I like the best? How did I like Latin? (he never cared for it)," and on and on until we stopped at my home.

Then he reached into his billfold and handed me a crisp dollar bill. (A dollar for an hour?) I told him my charge was 25¢ an hour.

"Well worth a dollar," he said, " and THANK YOU!" He saw me to the door and, as soon as I stepped inside, he hurried off of the porch and into his car.

The family was gathered, as usual, in the living room. And when I held out my dollar bill, they all cried out: "Wow, a dollar an hour!"

Then Mom asked: "How'd it go tonight, dear? Were the children good?"

I took off my coat and related my evening at the Bea's home. As I was telling my story, I noticed the eye communication that was going on between Mom and Dad, and it confirmed my earlier thought. Yes, I had cared for a child who had bathed in a bathtub of gin.

THE TIME OUR CHICKENS GOT STONED

Sidney Jeanne Seward

By 1921, Prohibition was in full swing in Rock Island. The saloons on Second Avenue had all closed their doors. No longer did people on the way to the street car stops have to walk around drunken men lying on the sidewalks, in the gutters, or

on benches in that green oasis of the downtown area, Spencer Square Park (now the site of the Rock Island Post Office).

That year, too, is memorable for me as the time my father was raising Leghorn chickens as a hobby and new neighbors moved in next door.

The Eighteenth Amendment was in effect. Drinking or selling alcoholic beverages was prohibited. Oh, there were people who circumvented the law and made their own booze–but not my parents' friends, of course! My folks had signed Temperance cards, as had most of their friends. By signing the cards, they took an oath not to drink alcoholic beverages.

The people who made their own liquor were called "Moonshiners" and "Bootleggers." They used all kinds of dodges to escape the law. They built stills and hid them in the woods or in their cellars. One man I have heard about had a still hidden in the rushes near a creek. When the booze was ready, he bottled it and took it back to his home place where he buried it in his cornfield. The story goes that when his customers asked for liquor he'd say, "Oh, I think I can dig up something for you."

My school was near a house where shades covered all the windows. Though no one seemed to live there, many men furtively knocked at the door, received something in a brown paper bag, and quietly went away. Rumor had it that a still was hidden in the house and the many visitors were buying bottles of whiskey.

Early that summer, new tenants moved into the house next door to us. At first I was excited about their coming. They had three children and I had never had playmates in the neighborhood. It wasn't long until we all realized that there was something strange about these people. They seemed surly and unfriendly. Their language included words that I had never heard before and that I instinctively realized I shouldn't be hearing now. The parents yelled at the children a lot. After a few offers of friendship, my family limited their conversations to "good morning" or "nice day."

I didn't really mind not having children to play with. There was a lot to keep me busy in my own backyard.

These were the "good old days" when you could have farm animals in the city. Many people still had horses and it was not unusual for people in thickly populated areas to have, back of the house, a shed where a cow was kept.

That summer, five hundred white Leghorn chickens dotted the green lawn in back of our house. When Dad appeared with the feed pan, they gathered around him clucking happily. I liked to hold the chickens and stroke their soft, white plumage. They would come to me and cluck to be taken up. All but one. I had to watch out for a big rooster who would stick his neck out, ruffle his feathers, spread his wings, letting the tips drag on the ground, and charge me, pecking at the backs of my legs and even jumping up to peck my bottom!

Now these weren't just any old chickens. These were prize winning birds. Dad had raised them himself. Most of them had been hatched from very special eggs in an incubator in our basement. When the time came, Mother and Father would take me downstairs so that I could watch the tiny chicks peck their way out of the shell. It was such a struggle for them! I always felt that I wanted to help, but Dad told me that working to get out of the shell was what made each one strong enough to survive without that protective covering.

When the chicks first emerged, they were wet and bedraggled, but soon they dried off and turned into charming, little, yellow balls of fluff. I was always allowed to very gently hold one of those tender bits of new life in my cupped hands.

Dad watched his chickens carefully as they grew from chicks to pullets and cockerels and, finally, to mature hens and roosters. He chose the most perfect birds to go to poultry shows. I remember how happy he was when his entry won first place in its class. At one show, his rooster won best of the show and Dad received an ornate silver loving cup.

One morning after my father had gone to work, Mother

and I looked out the window and saw the chickens all lying on their backs, little feet straight up in the air, yellow bills sagging open to show a sliver of pink tongue. Mother rushed to the phone to tell Dad that all the chickens appeared to be dead or dying.

Dad hurried home, running up the steep 17th Street hill. By the time he reached the house, worried and out of breath, the chickens were beginning to revive. Combs drooping, they staggered around the yard.

Dad investigated and found, just inside the fence, what remained of a pile of mash thrown there by our new neighbor who had been making whiskey.

Apparently, our prized flock had all eaten the mash and then, like the inebriated men of pre-Prohibition days, had passed out.

My teetotaling parents were the owners of five hundred drunk chickens!

ROUTE 67 BECOMES A HARD ROAD

Mary I. Brown

During the 1920s, booze, legal or otherwise, was a stranger to our home, and it was years later before women in our family exercised their right to vote. Thus, neither of the constitutional amendments of the decade touched our lives. But I will tell you what did–the new hard-surfaced roads!

Today's population has no idea of the inconveniences endured by people previous to the coming of cars and hard roads. I have a vague memory of the old putt-putt, pop-pop steam engine and grader occasionally used to make roads more passable. Cars were not many on the roads in summer. In winter they were put up on blocks in a shed, if available. People made their way into the villages on foot or by buggy or wagon, with mud sometimes hub or axle deep. They would continue by train when travel was necessary. This necessitated overnight plans. Sometimes there were individuals available, who hauled people and drayage from place to place for a fee. Updating those services must have been the stuff dreams were made of. The coming of oil and gravel on secondary roads was in the distant future.

You can imagine the excitement when news came that plans were in the works for a hard road through our area. Len Small was responsible for the building of more hard-surfaced roads in Illinois than any other governor.

Our section of road was really going to happen. That became *the* topic of conversation when people met. We lived north of Manchester, just off the existing main county route. Designated the Mississippi Valley Highway, it wended its way from Manchester, in eastern Scott County, to Murrayville, the neighboring village in southern Morgan County. The telephone poles along the route was banded in color–white, orange, and green–with M.V.H. painted (one letter on each band) in a slanting pattern. In following the railroad, as was planned, the new route-to-be left M.V.H. and would intersect it at several railroad crossings between Manchester and Murrayville.

In due time, we heard of engineers and surveyors moving into both villages. One such person was M. J. Benscoter who married a Murrayville woman and remained in the area, to later become head of Morgan County's road system.

Road workmen secured room and board with townspeople. I recall a few places that had room and board available to the public. Individuals having space were happy to accommodate ones wanting rooms.

At the south end of our lane was where the hard road would come out of Manchester at an angle. It was learned there would be an underpass at the railroad track. A local man, Carol Brown, was hired to do work there. He worked with a team of

horses and a hand-operated scraper, trying to eliminate problems where an old spring (water) had erupted. Surveyors, with their equipment in hand, continued their work around him.

Just up the track was where the country neighborhood kids crossed on their way to school. We were a wide-eyed bunch watching the interesting processes going on, on "our turf."

Soon we began to see large earth-moving caterpillar machines making their cuts. Where needed, the crews with dump wagons and mules made fills and did leveling. When up to the surveyor's specifications of grade, that group moved on and set up a short distance away, to do the same thing at that location.

Form setters moved in next. When the sections of reinforcing steel mesh were being put in place, we were so fascinated that we lingered too long at our crossing and had to run to avoid being tardy at school. That season ever-muddy boots and splattered coat-tails were with us when it rained.

Model T dump trucks hauled in the mixed concrete in small batches. Our dad told us that it was loaded from a temporary way-station beside the railroad tracks on down the line.

I do not recall the actual completion of our section. It must have come after the closing of school that year.

In the fall when school opened, the pavement was there. Men were raking, leveling, and seeding the shoulders. One thing which is still done today was the straw put on to cover until the grass grew.

This section of road was first designated Route 67 (south). Not too many years later a new road was built to the east of Murrayville, going south. It became new 67 (south) and our route from the overpass bridge and the intersection then became 267 (alternate).

The first ride I took on our new good road was destined to be in a procession for the funeral of a favorite aunt, Miss Bessie Rea.

It was soon to be the road I traveled each day while I attended Murrayville High School for four years.

We later believed that a mistake was made by the people who maneuvered the hard road route through the main streets of Manchester and Murrayville. In a few years, many cars appeared. Travel became so easy and common that people (being as we are) sped right on through to the neighboring cities of Jacksonville, Springfield, and Alton, to the south. Our local business places dwindled and only a few have survived.

AUGUSTA'S TURKEY TROT

Ralph Eaton

My wife says that "Turkey Trot" sounds like a dance. Well, figuratively, the people of Augusta were dancing in their street that day–dancing on brand new concrete streets!

But, permit me to back up just a bit, to explain why these people were so jubilant. I can recall, for instance, that the spring of 1928 was a very wet one! My family, consisting of my parents, my older brother, Wayne, and myself, lived approximately four miles southeast of Augusta on what was, then, the main road from Augusta to Brooklyn. It was also known, earlier, as the old Waubonsie Trail. The road was neither paved nor gravelled, so any cars that ventured over it in the spring quite often wound up stuck, either in the ditch, or right in the middle of the road. It was not at all uncommon for my father to hitch up his team of horses to pull some brave traveler out of a mud hole. Wayne was in the sixth grade and I in the fourth during that muddy spring of 1928. We walked a mile to and from Highland School. We walked the fence rows as much as possible, but we couldn't avoid the sea of mud altogether. The mud would stick to our overshoes and become so heavy that we

could hardly lift them! More than once, I've had mud rub from boot to pantleg and actually work its way on the inside of the pantlegs all the way up to the crotch!

One evening that spring, when Wayne and I got home from school, our folks were not at home. Since it was so muddy, they had gone to Augusta with a team and wagon to deliver cream and eggs and buy groceries. They had expected to be home by the time Wayne and I arrived home from school. They rode a spring seat on the double side boarded wagon. Just as they reached the center of Augusta, which was also a sea of mud, something startled the horses! They bolted suddenly. My mother was thrown back into the wagon, leaving her shoes on the footboard on the front of the wagon. Dad was thrown off the wagon into the mud and the bolting horses pulled the rear wheel of the wagon right over his body at the rib cage. He was wearing a suede leather jacket and I can still vividly see that two-inch-wide track of the wheel across the back of his jacket when they finally arrived home after dark that night! Fortunately, some kind soul caught the horses and no one was injured but for a sore rib cage for a couple of days.

Experiences such as these were rather commonplace before the days of paved streets and hard roads. So, when the streets of Augusta were paved for the first time between October 14th and the first week of November of 1928, the merchants and village trustees planned a gala celebration.

The hard road west of Augusta, from West Point to Bowen to the west edge of Augusta, was all poured in 1927 by Peter Simons and Sons of Quincy, reaching the west edge on November 3, 1928. The CB&Q viaduct was not yet completed. Details had to be worked out. B. G. Swanson, the mayor, finally got them resolved the next year by putting up some of his personal funds. Ironically, Mayor Swanson was to be struck and killed by a CB&Q train at this same viaduct crossing sometime after its completion.

I attended the gala celebration which was held on Saturday, November 24, 1928, known as the Turkey Trot. The weather was bright and crisp–a beautiful day for late November. Festivities were scheduled from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. People came by train and car (the roads were drier then). Cars were not permitted to park in the immediate business district, but they seemed to be everywhere else to this nine year old! The crowd was estimated at between 2,500 to 3,000 people, which must have included just about everyone in the town of just over 1,000 and the entire rural population for several miles around! It had been announced that turkeys, geese, ducks, guineas, and chickens would be donated by the merchants. Please keep in mind here that November, 1928, was during the days of economic depression, especially for farm folks. How were these fowl distributed–by drawing a number or a lottery? Not at all! They were tossed from the tops of the two story buildings to the excited crowds below!

The turkeys, of course, were the choice prizes–and right at Thanksgiving time, too. There were three turkeys donated by the merchants that day. The first was to be tossed from the top of the F. M. King & Sons Department Store at the west end of the pavement. This store is now known to Augusta's present residents as the Red Fox Grocery. Down came turkey number one into a frenzied crowd to a terrible fate. Credited with the win was Kenneth "Joe" Lord who was then, I believe, a husky high school youth. But Joe didn't win without a scrap! Young boys piled on that poor turkey as football players after a pigskin! The turkey didn't last long! What Joe really came out with was a *dead* turkey minus two drumsticks and a wing! It wasn't a pretty sight!

A few other fowl were tossed from various buildings with less severe results. Then, the second turkey was to be released–this one from near Pitney's store (now Pitney Park) on Center Street. But, some rules were laid down this time–this was to be a "Mother's Turkey." Only ladies were permitted to gather beneath the spot of release. And, it went as intended. This

turkey was caught by Mrs. Lloyd (Goldie) Belden of the Pulaski area. Her son, Harold, who still farms in the Augusta area, was a very small boy then. Some other fowl were released from that same location. Pekinese ducks can't fly very well, but I remember one flying clear across the street trying to avoid the outstretched hands beneath, but he never reached the ground!

The third, and last, turkey of the day was released, as I recall, from above B. B. Crain's clothing store. This stood approximately where the State Bank of Augusta is today. This poor bird met the same general fate that the first turkey had. The Augusta Eagle identified the winner as "a big man–out of town." I'm afraid that, in fact, there were several "winners."

In all, there were three turkeys, eighteen ducks, eleven guineas, five roosters, and several hens released from building tops that day. I remember one Rhode Island Red hen that really entertained the crowd. She was released from over Weinberg's Hardware. She was tossed out, but alighted on one of the CIPS highline wires (they are still there). She was, perhaps, fifteen feet out from the top of the building. So, someone got a long pole and, very carefully, poked her back side which they could just barely reach. But she wasn't about to come down into that mob of humanity! She clung to that wire and swung with it, bobbing her head up and down to maintain her balance. She entertained the crowd for probably fifteen minutes and many of us were hoping that, somehow, the chicken would win, for we would cheer her each time she was pushed for a wire swinging ride. But, finally, as she swung toward the building, a poke from the pole dislodged her, and she flew into the waiting grasp of someone below.

The finale of the festivities was the "greased pig contest." For this event, a large human circle was formed approximately the width of the street, just east of the intersection. Contestants were to weigh a certain amount–as I recall, around 250 pounds or more. The idea was that it was really supposed to be for fat men. A ninety-pound shoat was thoroughly greased–I thought, then, with axle grease, but it may have been lard–and released into that circle. Whoever caught the pig got to keep it. It didn't last long. Some tall, raw boned man, who probably did meet the weight requirements, captured the pig without difficulty. I never did think that was fair–I wanted to see some of those fat fellows (yes, I could name some of them, but won't) wrestle with that pig!

So, the festivities ended, and a new era had begun! The next summer, grading and paving east of Augusta, on Route 101, began. The hard road didn't go past our place, but hundreds of dump trucks did, hauling sand, gravel, and cement to the mixer. Dust got six inches deep on that dirt road! Pouring of concrete started at the county line two miles east of Augusta on September 3, 1929, and went west to Augusta. The tenth annual Livestock Show was held that year on September 11, 12, and 13th. I rode in our touring car with my mother on September 11th over that new hard road from which the protective straw had just been removed. What an exhilirating experience!

Never again could such an event as Augusta's Turkey Trot take place. Nor should it! In this day and age, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have a field day in chastising those noble merchants and city fathers who were so delighted to finally see progress in their little town that they wanted to celebrate. They saw it as the dawning of a day when the growth of their community was assured. What a sad turn of events it has been that the very thing that they celebrated would facilitate the movement of people *from* the community, rather than *into* it!

MY AIRPLANE RIDES IN THE 1920s

Burdette Graham

One nice sunny day in 1927 we saw a biplane land in our pasture, which at that time was almost one half mile long. The cows were off to one side, and the pilot had to land as he was almost out of gas. Of course, me being just one year out of high school, and my eight brothers and sisters were all younger then I, we all rushed to the plane to find out the trouble.

We brought him to our gas tank and he took two five-gallon cans to the plane. I don't remember whether he paid for the gas or not, but he offered to take me for a ride, which I gladly accepted. He took off and flew around over the farm a few times, then landed. While going along on the ground the prop picked up a piece of old fence wire and threw it into the wing. Only a small hole in the wing, and this did not seem to worry the pilot at all. Where the wire had hit the prop, a small notch about one inch long and one quarter deep and about six inches from the end of the prop was discovered. The pilot thought it might unbalance the prop, but he started it up and there seemed to be only a slight vibration–at least that was his comment.

He took off and headed for Havana. In the news the next day we heard that a plane had made a forced landing near Havana because part of his prop had fallen off. We never heard anything more of this plane, but I was glad I took my ride before he hit the wire.

Soon after this time my neighbor, Glenn Sayers, and a friend of his had a plane and were flying all over. Something happened to destroy this plane, either a crash landing or a wind storm. In order to rebuild it, they wanted me to join them as a partner to furnish the cash for repairs. For this they would teach me to fly. My main source of money was from my dad, for work I did on the farm. He thought it a bad idea, so I never learned to be a pilot.

I did fly a few times with Roy Pearce, Macomb's pioneer aviator. He had his plane on his farm northeast of town, and he also flew from the airport just south of the turn toward Industry. I flew alone with him two times and had nice rides around the Macomb area. One Sunday afternoon, Scratch Trotter went with me for a ride with Roy Pearce. For some reason, Roy decided to show us how a plane could roll over and make a loop, dive a ways and then level out. He did a few of these stunts and then landed. When we got out of the plane, I was glad to be on the ground. Scratch looked as white as a sheet, and he could not walk without help. He was so sick that he could not eat the rest of the day–and maybe the next.

That was my last airplane ride. After the stunt flying which made Scratch sick, I just did not care to fly anymore.

Two years later, Roy Pearce also had his last plane ride. While taking off from that same field, he hit some trees and was killed.

Now that I look back on them, I realize that my early experiences reveal how dangerous flying was in the Roaring Twenties. Perhaps that's why Lindbergh seemed like such a hero.

ROARING SOFTLY: THE TWENTIES IN LEBANON

Grace R. Welch

In my town, the Twenties didn't roar; they whimpered, and we scarcely noticed. Lebanon was then and still is a community of less than 3,000 people, harboring a small college, McKendree. We read about bathtub gin and gang warfare, but most of us went quietly about our own business. Mine in those days was growing up and getting an education.

By 1920, my father was ready to make a move from the busy mining town where he had started his medical practice in

1908 to his old hometown where he could give me the advantages of an agricultural community and a good small college. One of my grandmothers had worried about the foreign element in Benld, but while we were there none of us had seen any violence or kidnapping.

As the new decade rolled in, then, I found myself in the seventh grade in a new town where I knew only one girl who lived behind my grandmother's house. As we played together at recess in the seventh and eighth grades, I found a best friend who lived across the street from me, and, scattered through three grades, six more friends who would last a lifetime.

As we moved into high school, the boys began to appear at our frequent Saturday meetings at someone's home. No agenda was ever planned; we simply enjoyed being together. It was not unusual for a parent or two to arrive for a straggler, but many times we walked home in pairs with no fear of being on streets alone after dark.

Music was an important part of those days. Most of my friends sang, and sometimes I accompanied them on the piano. Often our Saturday evenings ended with a sing-a-long, indoors around the piano or outside in lawn chairs or swing. Irving Berlin's tunes were favorites, but we sang "Three O'Clock in the Morning" or "After I say I'm Sorry" or "I Wonder What's Become of Sally?" with equal abandon. We also knew many of the show tunes from the musicals we occasionally saw at the Municipal Opera in St. Louis, like "Desert Song."

McKendree College had an Interscholastic Day every spring, a Saturday when athletes and "intellectuals" from area high schools competed. Solos, quartets, and declamations made up the literary events, with eliminations in the morning and a program at night featuring the top three in each category. "Asleep in the Deep" was often a winner for an aspiring basso who could show off his low notes. Carrie Jacobs Bond's sentimental songs appealed to the girls, and Poe's "Telltale Heart" always appeared among the declamations.

Clothes and hair in that period were often a reflection of the fads and fashions of the day. After all, we were only twenty-five miles from St. Louis where many of us shopped regularly, making the trip by street car. Alas, our tendency to shop in the same stores resulted once in three party dresses alike. My best friend and I had each shopped with her mother, but we came home one day with identical taffeta dresses, except that hers was yellow and mine was peach. Since we liked each other, it didn't matter. We had a shock, though, when another classmate turned up with the same "robe-de-style" in white for graduation.

Hem lines were going up and down during our high school days. Once when very long skirts were stylish, Mother bought me a coat which reached to my ankles. Before she got around to shortening it, I managed to slip out to a basketball game before she saw me. She saw me come in, though, and the next day she cut off the extra length.

Long hair, in my case two long braids which I sometimes wound around my head, was cut by the local barber when bobs became the fad. He was a very slow, very gentle old man who moved with exasperating precision. When he ran the clippers down the back of my neck, I felt sure he was going right on down my spine. I didn't have a permanent until I finished college, but many of the college girls did. One whose hair was so bushy and thick that no one wanted to sit behind her at the movies had to put up with boys throwing chewing gum into her curly coiffure.

The negroes, as we called them then, were old familiar families whose children went to the same school we did. But at the movies, they had to sit in a special section, down front and on one side only. None ever appeared in the downtown ice cream parlor or drug store.

We knew of a schoolmate's older sister who came back home with a baby and no husband, and was promptly thrown out by her prim and proper parents. We heard, too, of people who drank too much, in spite of Prohibition, but we were

untouched by all of that. We didn't even dance, although there was a dance-hall in town. Our junior and senior proms were banquets served by the Home Economics class. A few of the boys smoked, but we girls frowned on that. I must admit, though, that a few of us tried smoking Cuban, medicated cigarettes, in the dark one night when we were ice-skating. And there was a time or two when a boy broke into the Home Ec. Lab when we were practicing a play to sample the vanilla.

My best friend and I made fudge after school at least once a week, never worrying about the calories. My home project for cooking class was making desserts. Our hired girl and my mother stood around wringing their hands because I wouldn't let them help, but I turned out Brown Betty and baked custard and fresh oranges with coconut–which we ate.

None of our crowd was overweight, perhaps because we walked everywhere. Although the school was eight or nine blocks away, we always came home for lunch, and sometimes went back in the evening for games or practice. One Halloween I walked to a party in the gymnasium, alone, because I didn't want anyone to see my costume. My dad had helped me design a pumpkin to wear–cloth spread over a wire frame which ended at my knees. The wire around my knees hampered walking more than I anticipated, but I couldn't have sat in a car even if one had been available. My dad always had evening office hours, and my mother didn't drive.

We accepted all the events and inventions of that period as normal, only mildly exciting. I remember watching the course of Lindbergh's flight across the ocean in a St. Louis department store window, and sometimes we saw movies in one of the lavish palace-like houses in the city–Loew's State or the Ambassador–hummed Gershwin tunes, or listened to far-away programs on the radio. But in those growing-up years such things were no more exciting than our own basketball games, the Junior-Senior Banquet, and graduation.

III Books and Reading

BOOKS AND READING

Reading is no longer highly valued by the young. Television (including VCR movies) is more exciting than books, and most children, sooner or later, have almost unlimited access to it. No wonder teachers today lament the decline of avid book readers and the unwillingness of most students to do their reading assignments.

This situation is very unfortunate. Watching TV is a passive activity. It does not require the mental engagement–the concentration, imagination, and applied intelligence–that reading does. And even with a satellite hookup that pulls in one hundred channels, TV offers only a small fraction of what is available in books. Much of what the world can teach can never be learned by the non-literate–those who refuse to read.

Decades ago things were different. Reading offered a world of wonder and entertainment to the young, whose lives were otherwise limited to encounters with familiar people in well-known places. So, many children fed their curiosity, opened their minds, and increased their sensitivity to others through books. Thinking of them, one is reminded of the fine short poem by Emily Dickinson that conveys the spiritual impact of reading:

> He ate and drank the precious words,
> His spirit grew robust;
> He knew no more that he was poor,
> Nor that his frame was dust.
>
> He danced along the dingy ways,
> And his bequest of wings
> Was but a book. What liberty
> A loosened spirit brings!

The memoirs by Alice Krauser, Nelle Shadwell, and Ruth Gash Taylor attest to the important influence that books can have on someone's life. All three of them have traveled far in the pages of books, and they also view reading as an important thread of continuity that connects their childhood with their later years.

The various pleasures of reading are presented in several of these memoirs. For example, Wilmogene Stanfield loved fiction—even more than movies–because, as she says, "as I read, I was living every movement and thought with every character." For her, the magic of empathetic identification with others made reading endlessly fascinating. In contrast, Audrey Bohannon has always liked "a well-spun tale," although much of her reading has also been a quest for knowledge. Clarice Stafford Harris has enjoyed "the enchanted world" of books since the third grade, and she also reminds us that where you read can be a memorable part of your reading experience.

Other kinds of reading also had a big impact on youngsters years ago. One of the memoirs is devoted to pulp magazines, those now-vanished purveyors of exotic adventure. Richard Thom recalls the role they played in his development as a reader. Likewise, Phyllis T. Fenton remembers the Sunday comics, which are still around but do not fascinate today's youngsters as much as today's adults who have read them since they were young.

Perhaps the richest evocation of the world of reading decades ago is Marie Freesmeyer's account of the books, magazines, and newspapers that filled her life as a child. And she also recalls a once-common activity that perhaps did more than anything else to stimulate an interest in books–reading aloud. That was also an important kind of shared experience for her family, as it was for many others.

But the most touching memoir in this section is surely Stella Hutchings' account of a man who was denied access to the fascinating world that the authors here have so enjoyed. Her

father, Frank Howard, was uneducated and illiterate, but he raised a family that not only received diplomas but knew the importance of reading and learning. That is more than many literate parents in our own time have managed to accomplish.

John E. Hallwas

BOOKS! THEY'VE ENHANCED MY LIFE

Alice Krauser

I don't know when I learned to read, but I know it was before I started to school. In my early memories reading was something one did like eating and sleeping, and I have no recollection of anyone teaching me how to do it.

There were always books in our home, and I often saw my father with a book in his hand in the evenings when farm work was done or on Sundays or during stormy weather when outdoor work was impossible.

When I started to school at Hickory Grove, northwest of Macomb, I remember we were taught the sounds of the letters, and this was called *phonics*. It seemed so unnecessary to learn the sounds for I already knew the words, but I went along with the idea because I loved the first grade teacher, Beulah Graves, a beautiful, gracious woman.

When I was in the lower grades, sometimes I wanted to read books that had bigger words and nicer pictures than my little books, so when I could manage to get an upper grade book, I would read it, and if someone seemed to be watching me, I would pretend I was only looking at the pictures. I was afraid the "big kids" might laugh at me for thinking I could read their books. The library at Hickory Grove was a bookcase, and through the grade school years, I read all the books in it even though I didn't always understand what I was reading.

I went to high school at St. Mary Academy, a girls' boarding school at Nauvoo. I remember one of the incentives to work hard was that if one's grades were high enough one didn't have to take the semester exams and could go to the library. It was wonderful to be able to read anything I wished for hours at a time.

My early interest in reading led to a lifetime of wonderful experiences with books. Some of them I shall never forget. History did not seem interesting to me until I read *The Tree of Liberty* by Elizabeth Page. This novel of colonial times gave me such a vivid picture of the problems and turmoil of that era that I still think of that story when I see countries of the Third World struggling to govern themselves. The *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* also fascinated me. In my mind, I went along on that marvelous expedition, seeing our country before it was settled.

I gained an understanding of the Indian viewpoint in conflicts with the white men and an appreciation of the character of their leaders from a book, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown. When I read Wallace Stegner's books, *The Angle of Repose, The Spectator Bird*, and *Crossing to Safety*, I lived the excitement, joys, frustrations, and heartbreaks of his grandparents and gained an appreciation of what it had meant to be part of the development of the West.

Scientific research sounded important but dull to me until I came across *Curious Naturalists* by Niko Tinbergen. Reading it allowed me to share the difficult, painstaking, yet thrilling experiences of scientists as they added to the world's knowledge. The books by Thor Heyerdahl, *Kon-Tiki, Fatu-Hiva, The Ra Expeditions*, opened to me the world of the oceans–with their myriad forms of life–through the descriptions of his voyages, which sought to establish how the earliest people of the Old World came to the Americas. While reading Richard E. Byrd's book, *Alone*, I realized the courage needed to overcome the risks and difficulties of exploration as he added to the world's knowledge in describing the winter he spent alone in Antarctica.

Insight into the dark side of life came to me when I read *Darkness at Noon* by Arthur Koestler. This book made me aware of the horrors of imprisonment and the strength of the human spirit.

One summer I went to Panama on a "banana" boat to visit friends living in the Canal Zone. This trip opened a new world to me, but I felt I had had only a glimpse of it. When I

returned, I read all the books our public library had on that area. *Panama* by David Howarth gave me the story of the Spanish and their lust for the riches of the New World. This book put life into the small remaining part of the Spanish Trail, which I had seen. This trail across the isthmus had been used to transfer by muleback the pearls of the South Sea Islands and the treasures of the Incas to the Spanish galleons which waited on the Atlantic side. *The Path Between the Seas,* an account of the creation of the Panama Canal by David McCullough, made my trip through the canal an even more exciting experience than it already was. All of this has given me an interest in and a sympathy for the people of Central and South America as they struggle with the problems that plague them.

In much the same way, after a trip to Africa, I turned to books in order to travel once more that interesting continent, which I would, most likely, never again have a chance to visit. *Out of Africa,* by Isak Dinesen, and a more recent book, *Shamba Letu*, by Kate Wenner, gave me an understanding of the indigenous people that I had seen on my trip but had had no opportunity to mingle with. Joy Adamson's book, *Born Free*, and the books that followed it gave me an understanding of the way of life of lions. I could imagine that the pride of lions we saw one day near the road, resting and ignoring our van, could have been descendants of Elsa. And the elephants–I again experienced the thrill of seeing them when I read *Among the Elephants* by Ian and Orea Douglas-Hamilton.

My interest in and knowledge of the outdoors and my desire to experience it firsthand have been enhanced perhaps more by the books of Virginia Eifert than by any others. Her *Journeys in Green Places*, which I have read and reread, always leaves me enchanted with the natural world as she describes its changing aspects, its beautiful wildflowers, and its minute insect and plant life.

Birds are my special interest, and I have enjoyed many books about them. Sandhill cranes will always be special to me after reading *Sandy* by Dayton O. Hyde. He tells of a crane that lived on his farm and thought she was a member of his family. And I realized that one can see and enjoy birds almost anywhere when I read *Birding From A Tractor Seat* by Charles Flugum.

Through the years, books have brought me pleasure, relaxation, inspiration, and knowledge. They have enhanced my life.

TRAVELS IN THE REALMS OF GOLD

Nelle E. Shadwell

Books were not plentiful in the small village of Funkhouser, Illinois, during my school years. From 1924 through 1931, our school library consisted of perhaps sixty or seventy books, which I read over and over. My developing love of reading caused me some problems, however.

I remember particularly a bright spring day during fifth or sixth grade. I had finished my lessons and asked permission to read a library book until time for spelling class to begin. I chose a book called *Arlo, A Little Swiss Boy*. I was deeply engrossed in Arlo's adventures when I became conscious of laughter from my classmates. I looked up to see everyone looking at me. The teacher was giving us our spelling words. I slammed the book and grabbed my paper to write my words, but the teacher had no compassion for an avid reader. "No, Nelle," she said firmly. "You go on and read your book. You can take a zero for today's lesson." My heart was broken, since I always made a hundred in spelling.

That wasn't the only time I got in trouble over my intense love of books. I had checked out Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* on one occasion. I thoroughly enjoyed it. When I returned it, a classmate was standing by the teacher's desk and

asked if it was a good book. I heartily recommended it, so she asked the teacher if she could check it out next. The teacher said she could and my classmate walked off with the book. Two weeks later, the teacher came to me and said, "Nelle, you have *David Copperfield* out and it is overdue." I said, "Oh, no. Ellen checked it out the day I brought it back." The teacher said, "Did you, Ellen?" To my surprise, my friend replied, "No, I didn't." The teacher told me I would either produce the book or I would pay for it.

My mother, Amanda Stewart, was not one to be pushed around. When I told her what the teacher said, she responded, "I am not paying for the book and that's that! " For a couple of weeks, I had a rough time at school. I was miserable. Then one day, to my surprise, Ellen walked in with the book. "My mother had laid this up on top of a cabinet so my little brother couldn't reach it," she explained. "We just found it last night." I never heard a word of apology from the teacher for the grief she caused me over her own poor record-keeping.

The final and most devastating experience with this teacher came when my classmates and I were helping to clean the book cabinet. We were all discussing good books. I said, "Some day I want to have a library in my home." The teacher broke out in laughter. "*You* with a library?" I was crushed.

This incident formed a permanent scar. Many years later, after I was married and had a family, I saw this woman in a store in nearby Effingham and could not resist the desire for revenge for my childhood pain. I walked up to her and identified myself. "Do you remember once I told you I was going to have a library in my home and you laughed at me?" She replied that she did remember the incident. I said, "Well, I now have over a thousand books." I walked away feeling very proud of myself for my determination and for confronting this demon from my past.

The encounter was many years ago. I now have over two thousand books and I can see things more clearly in retrospect. What I should have done is to thank her, for without her opposition and scorn, my determination to keep reading good books and to collect them in my home might not have happened.

My love of books has extended to my four daughters. One of them wrote a story once, in which she said, "My mother always read us good books. I think she used to diaper us with one hand and hold *David Copperfield* in the other." Yes, I read *David Copperfield* to them–unabridged! I even read the *Bible* (King James version!) to them in its entirety. I wondered, as I read, why didn't I remember, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you?" instead of seeking revenge?

In his poem, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," John Keats said, "Much have I traveled in the realms of gold, / And many goodly states and kingdoms seen." In a lifetime of reading poetry, classic novels, biographies, and travel books, I can truly say with him, "Much have I traveled in the realms of gold." But it all started with a small girl who loved to read in the one-room Funkhouser schoolhouse many years ago.

I NEVER MET A BOOK I DIDN'T LIKE

Ruth Gash Taylor

As soon as I knew what words were, I was a reader. My first book was *Four Little Cottontails at Play* by Laura Rountree Smith. It had a bright orange oilcloth cover with a dark green border and red lettering. All these years later I remember the bad little rabbit, Snubby Nose, who "cried, and he screamed, and he howled" when things didn't go right.

Santa always brought me a book. Early gifts were A *Girl's Book of Treasures* and *Arabian Nights*, which I loved. I also cried my way through *Black Beauty*.

Soon, my appetite for reading was insatiable, and it was

a long time between Christmases. So, I turned to my father's books. He favored Zane Grey, Harold Bell Wright, Jack London, and John Fox, Jr. Thus, I read Rid*ers of the Purple Sage, The Rainbow Trail, Call of the Canyon, Shepherd of the Hills, The Calling of Dan Matthews, The Sea-Wolf, White Fang,* and *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine.*

Charles Scofield of nearby Carthage had written two books, so Dad bought them and I read both–*Altar Stairs* and *A Subtle Adversary.* The latter book had a story line about the evils of alcohol. (The Rev. Mr. Scofield had married my parents.)

A special favorite was In *the Days of St. Clair,* in which Hester Lovelace, a rich plantation owner, bribed Indians to massacre settlers and carry off her rival, a poor girl. The hero, aided by his faithful slave and a Shawnee named Silverheels, eventually rescued his sweetheart, and they lived happily ever after. At the time, I simply thought it was an exciting story. Now, I realize that I absorbed a lot of history as I read about Arthur St. Clair's governorship of the Northwest Territory in the late eighteenth century.

One book led to a Christmas present, when I was nine, that has never been equaled for me. I had read C*aptives Three* by James A. Braden. The story dealt with Clay and Nell Castle and Fred Fravel, three youngsters who had to fend for themselves during an Indian uprising. The book ended with a sentence about a copper-colored arm stretching from the bank to halt the canoe in which the children hoped to quit the scene of their misfortunes. The reader was then instructed to read about the continuing adventures of the three in a sequel, *The Cabin in the Clearing.*

I was inconsolable. We did not own the sequel. So, I walked three and one-half miles from our farm to Warsaw to ask for it at the library. "No," said Miss Bell. "I don't have the book. Besides, Indian stories are not suitable reading for a girl."

The Great Depression was upon us. I knew Mother, by then a widow, could not afford to buy the book. But Christmas came and *The Cabin in the Clearing* was under the tree. I was thrilled.

Years later, Mother told me she had ordered the book at one of the Warsaw drug stores, expecting it to cost no more than 30¢ or 35¢. When the book came, the cost was unheard of–60¢. After much scrabbling in her pocketbook–as purses were then called–Mother could locate only 49¢. She was acutely embarrassed. Then Mr. Brinkman looked at the book again, and said, "Bless my soul! I read that 4 as a 6. The price is 40¢." Blessings on him, indeed.

Every Saturday afternoon I walked to town to check out as many books as Miss Bell would let me have, usually no more than three. She introduced me to Gene Stratton-Porter's works, and I reveled in *Freckles, A Girl of the Limberlost, Keeper of the Bees,* and *Laddie.*

When I was in high school, a classmate lent me *St. Elmo.* I was fascinated by the Byronic hero, reclaimed from sin by the heroine's cautious affection and ardent prayers. The highlight of my teens was visiting Alabama and seeing the Mobile home of *St. Elmo's* author, Augusta J. Evans.

I also devoured Charles Lindbergh's *We,* Richard Halliburton's travel books, and Osa Johnson's accounts of experiences she and her husband, Martin, had with animals in Africa.

In high school, too, a girl, the daughter of a minister, said she would give me a Bible if I would promise to read a chapter every day until I was through both testaments. I kept my promise.

Thomas Gregg's huge *History of Hancock County* held me enthralled. Since then, no one has ever been able to convince me that novels are more exciting than history.

I read *Thaddeus of Warsaw* because I was told the book inspired the residents of Spunky Point to change the town's name to the more genteel-sounding one of Warsaw. And, of

course, it was a point of honor to be familiar with John Hay's *Pike County Ballads*. He was Warsaw's most illustrious citizen.

As a child, I often heard Mother recite Will Carleton's "Over the Hills to the Poor House." It haunted me. When I was earning my own money, I bought Carleton's *Farm Ballads* and *City Ballads*.

When my piano teacher and her mother were getting rid of unwanted possessions, they gave us several boxes of books. It was like giving me the key to Fort Knox. One of the books was *Shacklett* by G. Walter Barr of Keokuk. Warsaw was a thread in the story. I was quite impressed because the volume was autographed. It was the first autographed book I had ever seen.

Most people probably think the wheel was man's most important invention. I like to believe that the momentum for civilization got under way with the development of books. I know I've loved every word that I have read, from Louisa May Alcott to Zechariah.

FICTION, MY FIRST LOVE

Wilmogene Stanfield

In 1930 when I was seven, our second grade class from Oak Street School visited the Taylorville library. It was hard to believe there could be so many books in the world. Shelves reached away above our heads, and every shelf was filled with books, big ones, thin ones, red, brown, and green ones.

Each of us was allowed to check out a book. I can't remember the title or the author of mine, but I was certainly impressed by the story. It was about an old lady who owned a small grocery store. The lady and a little girl just my age were good friends. One day the lady, who was waiting for her grandson, a sailor, to come home for a visit, had to leave for a short time. The girl said she would mind the store for her. While she was alone, a young man in a sailor suit came in and tried to rob the store.

I have forgotten how the brave little girl, just my age, prevented the robbery, but when it was all over, she was asked how she knew the robber wasn't the lady's grandson. She said it was because his eyes were brown, and she knew all sailors had blue eyes.

Living in central Illinois and never having seen a sailor in uniform, nor even a ship for that matter, I truly believed all sailors had blue eyes. The book had said so, and I thought anything printed in a book was true.

Years later, during World War II, of course I saw sailors on the college campus, in stores, and in church. I discovered they did not all have blue eyes. I had also learned the difference between fact and fiction.

Once when I was at home for Christmas break, I met a young man who had lived across the street from me when we were children. We had remained friends through high school. Neither of us had plans for that evening, so we went together to a dance.

He had dark brown eyes. When I told him about my childhood mistake, he laughed a lot and gave me a button from his Annapolis uniform.

The button reappears from time to time when I am rearranging keepsakes and jewelry. I always smile, remembering my first library book and a sailor with brown eyes.

My mother did not like for me to get books from the library because they might have germs. I did not check out a second book for several years, but I had many books of my own during my childhood. They were the best part of my life.

For years my friend Ruth and I gave each other a new *Bobbsey Twins* book every Christmas and for our birthdays. We read them before exchanging them as gifts. If someone in our family gave us new ones, we lent them to each other. Between

us, we kept up with all the twins' activities, and by the time we outgrew them, we must have read the entire series, probably fifty volumes.

For very young readers there were *Cricket* and *Honeybunch* stories. I loved them. As I grew, I lived through many adventures with *Grace_Harlowe* and *Nancy Drew*. I borrowed my brother's adventure books, *The Black Arrow*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and the *Hardy Boys*.

I read and reread *Heidi* and the Alcott books, laughing and crying with *Little Women, Little Men, Jo's Boys, An Old Fashioned Girl, Eight Cousins, Rose in Bloom*, and my favorite, *Jack and Jill*. I lived every adventure and every sorrow in every book. My parents could never understand why I laughed aloud while reading. I cried, too, but I never let anyone see me.

In high school I fell in love with George Gordon, Lord Byron. Didn't every girl? I even read a thick book about him. While I preferred stories to poetry, I thought "To Julia" must be the loveliest love poem ever written, even better than Shakespeare's sonnets.

To get credit for second year high school Latin, we were required to read two classics–in English, thank goodness. I read *The Vestal Virgins* and *Quo Vadis*. A few years later I saw *Quo Vadis* come to life as a movie and was deeply moved. Usually I enjoyed reading a book more than seeing it as a movie because, as I read, I was living every movement and thought with every character, and I sensed things differently than they appeared on the screen.

Mother signed up for me to receive books by mail when I was in high school. It wasn't the popular Book-of-the-Month Club, but was a club that provided me with a book every month for several years.

They were my first really grown-up books: *Kings Row, The Sun Is My Undoing, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, The Razor's Edge,* and many more. My favorite World War II story was *Assignment in Brittany*.

When *Gone With the Wind* was published, there was a waiting list at the library. I didn't get to read it before the movie came to Taylorville. After seeing the movie, I didn't bother to read the book. I would have missed the thrill of becoming part of the drama as I read.

Then came college and a whole new perspective. No longer could I become the characters and laugh and cry as they did. I was required to analyze them and write papers about them, telling why the author chose to develop a personality in a particular way and how that choice made the story a classic. It was an interesting procedure, but I did not feel comfortable nor was I ever at home with it.

After graduation in 1945, fiction was only an infrequent, friendly visitor. After a stint as a news reporter, there followed marriage, a family, and twenty-four years of teaching second and third grade children to read and write stories.

In 1984, upon retirement, the first thing I did was to read twenty books of fiction, many of them old friends. They made me realize why fiction had been my first love so many years ago.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF A BOOKWORM

Clarice Stafford Harris

I discovered the world of books when in the third grade at the North Central Grade School in Dixon, Illinois. My teacher, Miss Diviney, instilled in me a joy and love for books that has been with me these sixty years.

Each day, if we were well behaved, she would lay aside her work to say these magic words, "Class, you have been very good today. Put aside your things and I will read more of the Bobbsey Twins to you." For half an hour, or until the dismissal bell rang, we enjoyed the exciting tales of those mischievous

twins. It took a month or more to finish one book but only one or two times of "No reading today" to shape up our class, for we were all intrigued with the antics of the twins.

Our home was in the Assembly Park, once a religious youth camp. However, it was seldom used for this purpose at this time. All of the cabins were sold and privately owned. Our place had once been the locker and club house for a golf course. We had a very large yard with an empty field adjoining it. At the far end of the field grew an old pine tree with wide and spreading branches. It was a delightful place to grow up in, and I lived there until I was eighteen and married.

In the summer when it was warm and nice outside, I did my reading lolling on a blanket under a shade tree or in a nest hollowed among the tall grasses in the center of the field. There I hid from the world, my nose buried in a book or magazine provided by a neighbor.

I also had another quiet spot for reading during the cooler and the rainy seasons. This was in the back seat of our old touring car, if Dad was not using it. It had side curtains and roomy pockets in the doors where I could store my reading material. No one ever disturbed my books, but I lost several when Dad traded the car in for another one. I also lost a good reading place.

In my freshman year of high school I discovered the library, and what a bountiful discovery it was for a book-hungry young girl. If only I had applied myself as ardently to the books provided for my education. In the library, I discovered the books of John Fox, Jr., and I was so impressed with his *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* that I changed my quiet reading places for the sticky branches of the old pine tree. Pithy as it was, it had a heavenly aroma, and the soft whisper of the breeze through its branches was a lovely and soothing combination for pleasant reading.

Just as in that book, my pine tree had a niche where a lover's note could be hidden. At my age I had not yet discovered boys, so I did not have a lover. I did not want one, nor did I have the wiles to get one to have a tryst with. Therefore, no lover's notes were ever exchanged.

In winter when my quiet places were cold and barren, after school and chores, I curled up with my book on the long window seat in our living room, oblivious to the bleak world outside my window or to the disturbance of my younger siblings, totally engrossed in an enchanted world until daylight faded and I could no longer see. I did no reading by the light of the lamp at night, for I needed glasses and there was none to be had until much later. I did have to do homework in the evening when Dad could, very reluctantly, help. I am afraid my school work suffered because of the dim lighting.

My world as a confirmed bookworm has been super wonderful. Today I collect many of the books that I read in my tender years. They contain so many lovely memories.

THE JOY OF READING

Audrey Bohannon

Reading has been one of my favorite pastimes since the age of five, when I first discovered Dick, Jane, and Spot and their exciting adventures. I loved it! Whereupon I then embarked on an insatiable reading quest to learn all I could find out about anything and everything. It has given me much pleasure along the way.

Of course, it goes back a bit farther than that. The stork by whom I was delivered did me a stupendous favor by depositing me in the bosom of a family of readers. Along with mother's milk, I was nurtured on tales of Mother Goose and tasted the magic of the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. The latter, along with a slim volume of Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's*

Garden of Verses, are two of my treasured mementos of childhood. Later I adventured with the Bobbsey Twins, followed Alice into Wonderland, and I improved my outdoor skills with the Campfire Girls. Being a tomboy and ever a lover of mysteries, I also enjoyed the intrepid escapades of the Hardy Boys, Tom Sawyer, and Huckleberry Finn.

I volunteered to work in the library in both grade school and high school because it gave me first access to new additions—naturally I read all the books that were of interest to me as soon as possible. They were not very large libraries in a one-room grade school and small-town high school! But oh! when I got to college and worked in the library there, I was in Seventh Heaven. I was always happy to shelf-read (a task others often tried to avoid) and, believe me, it took me quite a while!

In high school most of my allowance was spent on paperback Pocketbooks which were just beginning to be published and could be purchased for twenty-five cents. Thus began my collecting of favorite authors through the years, an inexpensive way of obtaining all of their books. At one time or another I have been a member of every book club that has come down the pike; however, the current price of hardback books has put an end to unlimited purchases.

My reading tastes are very eclectic. I have read the Bible through in its entirety several times, not even skipping the "begats"; and one winter when I had pneumonia and measles in rapid succession, I read the entire set of the Book of Knowledge encyclopedias. I have even been found in the midst of meal preparation absorbedly perusing the label on a can of creamed corn or keeping a load of wash waiting while I studied the ingredients. This being so, after half a century plus, my library fills one large room and spills over into all the other rooms of my house, and my mind runneth over! My books range over every conceivable subject, from leather-bound classics to reference books on "How To." I suppose that much of my library would be classified as escape literature–murder mysteries (which I adore with a purple passion), spy stories, gothic romances, and historical novels. I also have an extensive section on parapsychology, psychology, Atlantis, Flying Saucers, Lost Continents, and other esoteric subjects.

I have many favorite authors: the list would be almost endless. Some of the ones I read over and over again are Helen MacInnes, John J. McDonald, Shakespeare, Jane Roberts, Carl Sandburg, Agatha Christie, Alexander Dumas, Leslie Ford, Rex Stout, Mary Stewart, Victoria Holt, and Robert Heinlein. The truth is, I like any author who can grab my attention with a well-spun tale and take me out of my ordinary world into his or her world. I am constitutionally unable to lay down such a book until I've finished reading it. Fortunately, I can now save these books until I have ample time to savor them. I turn off the telephone, muffle the doorbell, lock the door, and curl up in my favorite old armchair (which has shaped itself to my body after years of use) and totally immerse myself in that book!

Few things in life have been as satisfactory and given me as much pleasure as books. Reading is a happening, an experience, where one's mind is touched by another and one feels as though one has met an old and valued friend. Now that I am not as physically active as I once was, I read and re-read my favorites; and each time I discover something I have missed in former readings. I have also acquired a plethora of knowledge which I'll probably never have a practical use for, but what matters to me is the knowing. And the acquiring was pure joy.

That is why I read.

PULP MAGAZINES

Richard Thom

I wish that I could say that great literature ignited some latent interest that resulted in a lifetime love affair with reading, books, and libraries. My earliest authors included L. Frank Baum and his delightful Oz adventures, Edgar Burrough's Tarzan and Pellucidar series, Horatio Alger's stories of success through hard work and pluck, anything about King Arthur and his brave knights, Richard Halliburton's exotic travels and Deep River Jim's trail book.

However, after paying homage to these authors I must confess that my first reading inspiration was not from any book at all, but rather several pulp magazines which, after being discarded by my father, were claimed by me.

The rise and fall of the pulp's popularity took place during my lifetime, which began in 1922. The dimensions of the pulp magazines were the same, the size of a National *Geographic*. But the pages were of thick gray paper, similar but of poorer quality than newsprint, which is why they were referred to as pulp magazines. The paper's texture was so rough that I don't recall ever seeing them in outhouses where catalogs and newsprint routinely made their last useful contribution. Frugality discouraged the use of toilet tissue and the lack of pipes in a pit toilet made the use of bulky paper feasible if not comfortable. The cover was in color and featured a scene filled with action. The pictures inside were black and white illustrations.

Each magazine specialized in a specific interest, such as railroading, detective stories, western adventures, and fantasy. My dad's two favorite pulps were *Argosy* and *Adventure*, which contained stories of general adventure. After he was through with the magazines I colored the black and white illustrations with my crayons and sometimes with water paints.

As I learned to read, my interest in coloring decreased and I started to read the stories. They held me spellbound. Peter the Brazen, who made Indiana Jones look like a sissy, roamed the world on missions fraught with enormous dangers and enemies that he routinely overcame.

I don't remember too much romance but once in a while some lady was saved from a fate worse than death. My dad, when I inquired about this, told me that I would have to be older to understand this condition. My mother didn't even answer me and said, "Henry, Richie shouldn't be reading your trashy magazines." Since I didn't have any sisters to advise me, I asked the girl that I walked with to school about the fate that was worse than death. She didn't know either but said the worst thing she could think of was being barefoot in a room full of snakes and those June bugs that crack when you step on them.

My favorite stories were written by George Surdez and were about the French Foreign Legion. The stories concerned heroic exploits in the North African desert, where legionnaires fought Bedouin, Tuareg, and Rif tribesmen.

Those legionnaires were really tough, and I knew all about them from these stories. The officers were the top graduates of the military school at St. Cyr. The legionnaires were recruited from countries all over the world. The soldiers wore hobnailed boots without socks. I made my cap resemble the Legion kepi with neckpiece by sticking a white handkerchief over the back of my head under the cap.

The Bedouin tribesmen were very savage. In one story, the tribesmen silently spread opium paste inside the soldiers' shoes while they slept. The next day during the march the drug was absorbed through the skin, causing hallucinations. The soldiers wandered into the desert to die of thirst. This type of mischief was common from the wily tribesmen.

That story got me interested in opium, which my mother didn't appreciate as many of her poppy blooms were ruined in my unsuccessful research.

Legionnaires knew how to have a good time when they

returned to the fort after being in the field fighting. They would go to the bistro and drink cognac, play cards, gamble, and visit with the ladies that hung out there. I wanted to do that too.

The years passed and I moved on to other reading. The pulp magazines faded out with the rental books, three days for a dime. *Argosy* and *Adventure* later appeared briefly in a new but disappointing version, with glossy paper and slick photos, that didn't capture the loyal audience of old.

I wish I could see a few old pulps, but apparently they have vanished. The local librarian had never heard of them when I tried to find some specific facts that were vague in my memory. I feel like Rip Van Winkle: I seem to be the only person who remembers that wonderful era of the pulp magazines.

THE COMICS IN THE 1920s

Phyllis T. Fenton

In the middle 1920s my juvenile reading included the comics. The *Chicago Tribune* comics reflected the insular security of the Midwest middle class and were really humorous, at least to children. The daily *Tribune* printed four picture strips in black and white, but on Sunday the "funnies" were in spectacular color on a full page.

As we sprawled on the living room floor to read them, we giggled and chuckled with the Gumps, a family of no chins but some odd sounding names–Chester, Min, Andy, baby Goliath, and Uncle Bim. Then we held our breath while we read Orphan Annie, the cliff hanger. Annie had large ovals for eyes and a dog named Sandy. She also had a penchant for getting into personal hazards, at which time roving Daddy Warbucks miraculously appeared to snatch her from peril.

Comic strip pranksters like Smitty, Perry Winkle, and Kayo were street-wise kids who sulked about school and slipped through the chinks of parental discipline–like no kid on our block could ever get away with.

We also loved the freedom and impudence of Harold Teen, the callow youth in the raccoon coat who loafed at the corner drug store and whistled at a girl named Lillums.

Our favorite comic strip character was Skeezix, the infant found on a doorstep on Valentine's Day in 1922 by a bachelor named Uncle Walt, who then raised him. Skeezix grew through the years as we did, and today, if he's still around, he's a grandfather, while Orphan Annie is still twelve years old.

Orphan Annie and Harold Teen soon became WGN radio series during the five to six o'clock children's time slot. But we always liked them better in the newspaper, where we could see them. The comics were fascinating for us back in the twenties–long before television gave us the world of the packaged image.

READING FOR PLEASURE AND INFORMATION

Marie Freesmeyer

Reading for pleasure and for information were both very important to most farm families during the early decades of this century. At that time much emphasis was placed on oral reading, both at school and at home. Daily Bible reading was common in many homes. This was enhanced by one's ability to read well orally and to comprehend when reading silently. Both skills were stressed because reading was our chief way of gaining knowledge and, also, our greatest pleasure.

Having had parents who had taught school and four older brothers, I inherited many textbooks at all reading levels. We were blessed by having many books in our home, both fact

and fiction. Most of these books had been Christmas gifts. They ranged all the way from *Mother Goose Rhymes* to *Captain Cook's Voyages*. Some of the ones that were most common in the households of that era were *Aesop's Fables, Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales, Pilgrim's Progress, Uncle Tom's Cabin,* and *Children's Bible Stories*. Many homes also had biographies of great men such as Lincoln, Washington, Columbus, DeSoto, Longfellow, Emerson, Roosevelt, McKinley, and Bryan.

I read and often reread most of the books mentioned above, but the ones I remember best are *Black Beauty, Little People of Japan, Eskimo Children*, and *Aunt Martha's Cornercupboard* (a book filled with informative articles about the many things founds in our cupboard–salt, pepper, sugar, cinnamon, tea, coffee, etc.). The textbooks were mostly readers. They ranged from the McGuffey Readers, which my parents used, to Barnes Readers, which were still in use at that time. McGuffey Readers included stories which stressed moral values and principles of character to be either emulated or shunned. Along with Ray's Arithmetic and McGuffey Readers, we had readers which were informative in many areas. One of these that I still own is called I*nstructive Reader, or A Course in Reading in Natural History, Science, and Literature*. Another, which my eldest brother, Avery Wilson, used when he attended Hardin School in 1905, is *A Progressive Course in Reading, Fifth Book*. These elementary readers were not a collection of entertaining stories, but, as their names signify, they were filled with information. Early reading textbooks instructed the student in science, history, geography, and literature. Most of them also gave specific instructions on oral reading, dealing with such topics as correct pronunciation, pitch, tone, inflection, and emphasis. The fifth grade reader named above would make an adequate text for a course in reading in our present-day secondary schools. Having read several of these early textbooks, I can understand how my father, W. S. Wilson, who taught from such books, was able to read aloud to us on winter evenings, and hold our rapt attention for hours.

My appetite for reading was whetted by my parents reading to me and by the great amount of oral reading that I heard from others. My own endeavors began with my personal magazine called *Little Folks*. This magazine contained a two-page story which had all the concrete nouns pictured. With the aid of the many pictures, I was able to supply the missing words and "read" the story for myself.

School was always interesting and challenging for me because of the many books there–which were few by today's standards. The *Primary Reader* contained many poems which were read and reread until they were memorized. Later we studied many great poets and their works. Probably most of those of my generation can still quote some of the poetry that they learned from those early readers.

Magazines were very important to farm families during the early part of the century. Very few of these families subscribed to the more sophisticated magazines, such as *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Some that we took and were common in farm households were *Capper's Farmer, Farm and Fireside, Prairie Farmer, Comfort*, and *Youth's Companion*. The first three were strictly farm magazines, but they contained something of interest to each member of the family. My father read them from cover to cover, even the advertising.

Comfort was one of several inexpensive women's magazines. It contained recipes, stories, household hints, patterns, and such like. I liked to visit in homes where they subscribed to *The Ladies' Home Journal*. That magazine had a page of paper dolls with a complete wardrobe. Given this page and some scissors, I could entertain myself for hours while the adults visited. Once I had acquired these paper dolls and pasted them on cardboard, I spent my happy hours dressing them in various costumes by bending the small tabs left at the shoulders.

The Youth's Companion, as the name implies, was a

magazine for teenagers and young adults. There were only a few such magazines published, and I'm sure many young people in Illinois looked forward to receiving this interesting periodical as much as we did. It contained many interesting stories, one of which was a serial that always ended at the most exciting point and left us eagerly awaiting the next issue. The stories in this magazine were the ones our father read aloud to us as we sat around the dining table on cold winter evenings.

All Calhoun County citizens were familiar with the Mississippi River and the steamboats that regularly plied the river. Therefore, the writings of Mark Twain were among the favorites there. There was no public library where such books could be borrowed, so most of them were purchased by some family in the neighborhood and loaned to others. When we procured a new book, either by purchase or by borrowing, several of us vied for it. The argument was sometimes settled by having Papa read it aloud after supper.

Another book which I recall hearing my father read was *Slow Train Through Arkansas*. This book was hilarious. Papa would have to stop frequently and have a good laugh before he was able to continue reading. One passage stayed with me through the years, probably because it was repeated many times by some member of the family when one of our vintage cars stalled on a hill or in mud or snow. When this "Slow train" stalled, the conductor would call out, "First-class passengers keep your seats; second-class passengers get out and walk; third-class passengers get out and push."

During the era before television or radio, the daily paper was of utmost importance. It was the only medium for obtaining national and international news. My father subscribed to the St. Louis daily paper, *The Globe Democrat*, if I recall correctly. He was intensely interested in political issues and world events, so he thoroughly read, enjoyed, and usually discussed the articles which he read.

For local news most families in the county subscribed to the *Calhoun Herald* which was published weekly at Hardin, the county seat. Each village and many communities had a correspondent who contributed news items to be included in this paper. It has continued to the present time very much as it was during the early part of the century. Other county papers have been published for short periods of time. In 1915 C. C. Campbell and A. B. Greathouse began publishing the *Calhoun News*, also a weekly paper that is still fulfilling its original purpose.

With the abundance of books, magazines, and newspapers readily available today, more reading is being done, but probably few are reading as much as many people once did. I don't believe the blessing of having good reading material is appreciated as much as it once was. Family reading hours have given way to hours of watching television. Our old classics are being neglected for modern types of literature. I'm sure my peers will agree that the poems written by the earlier poets, which rhymed and could be memorized so easily, are far superior to the modern free verse. I regret that the lives of our grandchildren have not been enriched by the wonderful literature that we enjoyed years ago.

MY FAMILY'S STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION

Stella Howard Hutchings

As I look around my home at shelves overflowing with the books that I treasure and at tables stacked with far more magazines than I can get read before the next issues arrive, I pause to wonder why reading is so important to me.

For the answer, I look back nearly a century. My parents grew up in Scott and Greene counties of Illinois, in poor but respected homes. Both, by today's standards, were underprivileged as children. My dad, Frank Howard, was reared by his

mother and step father, Mary and Oscar Walls. Both Mary and Oscar could read and write, but didn't consider that a blessing. Therefore, they did not send Mary's three sons, Chris, Oatis, and Frank, to school. They lived in the Lovelace School district in Greene County, but Mary thought that the mile-and-a-half walk to school was just too much for the boys. If there was a law enforcing parents to send children to school, Mary and Bub Walls ignored it. The three Howard boys grew up illiterate. In later years they found it hard to forgive their parents.

My mother was born in the northern part of Greene County in 1885. Her parents were Irvin and Serilda Law. The baby was named Hattie Agnes. Serilda died when little Hattie was two. Grandfather Law kept his family together. His four older daughters cared for Hattie and kept house for their father and brother William. As she reached school age, Hattie attended school first in Glasgow and later in the one-room country school west of Glasgow. It was called the Zion's Neck school. By the time she had finished fourth grade, Hattie had to assume most of the care of housekeeping. Her brother William had married, gotten divorced, and then moved home with his small daughter, Edith. So Hattie had to give up school to care for Edith and the home. During her fifteenth summer, Hattie had the entire care of the household and her little niece. Then her beloved father became ill and needed care, too. He died in the early fall.

Five months past her sixteenth birthday, Hattie Law and Frank Howard were married. They began housekeeping in a tenant house near Winchester on a farm where Frank worked. They kept Edith with them. Later, after I was born, my dad took a farm job for James Lovelace, north west of Patterson, Greene County. Uncle Jim (as we always called him) and his daughter, Melissa, lived in a very neat home across the road from the Lovelace School. We lived in a small house a fourth-mile down in the wooded pasture. It was the only home I remember having until I was a teenager. It was a wonderful place to grow up close to nature.

When I was only five and a half years old I started school; I was a very bashful child. Except for my sister, Gladys, and brother, George, I'd had no one to play with except once in awhile when a neighbor child might come for an afternoon visit. I was scared to go, but Mother and Dad had talked so much about the wonders of school that I knew I was supposed to like it, so I did. But the most wonderful thing about it was the books. I'd never seen so many. Miss Lora Hahn was a lovely, gracious teacher. Right from the start she let me handle those lovely books and look at the pictures. I think she must have been a good teacher for primary kids. Very soon I was able to read and there were many little books for beginning readers.

A new child was added to our family every two years, and we all loved school and books. We would carry our books home, and Mother would read them aloud in the evenings. Dad listened intently with us. I remember that he especially enjoyed the series of Deerfoot stories. Deerfoot was a young Indian brave who befriended white pioneer boys and helped them in their projects.

People in the community thought that, of course, the Howard kids would be through with school when they finished the eighth grade at Lovelace, and be available for work in homes or on farms. But no, Frank Howard was determined that his children would have all the education he could get for them. Many laughed at the idea of a poor man with a large family even thinking of such a thing, but Dad wanted us all to get high school diplomas. By the time for school to start again, Dad had arranged for me to live in Patterson in the home of his cousin, William Ford. I was to work for my board, share a room with the Ford daughter, Ruth, and go to high school. Miss Edith Hyatt was the principal.

I didn't fit in well with the students. I was very homesick, and I was very self-conscious about my home-made dresses and having no money for treats, as my classmates had. But

there again were many books, so when I wasn't studying I was reading. Never once did I even think of dropping out of school.

Then Dad rented forty acres of good farm ground in the Illinois River bottom, borrowed money for a good team of young horses, and moved to a small pasture place on the road that separated Greene and Scott counties. We were still in Greene County and Lovelace district. My brothers and sisters now had to walk one and a half miles through wooded pastures to school. We were five miles over dirt roads to Patterson and the high school.

For my second year of high school I went to Blue Mound in Macon County and worked for my board with a cousin on Mother's side of the family. Again, I was very homesick and went home for the summer. Dad bought an over-sized buggy and a very old pony for me to drive to Patterson for my third year of high school in Patterson. It was only a three-year high school, so even though I graduated, I wanted to return to Blue Mound for my last year. Dad helped me do that too. Before graduating, I had passed the examination for a teacher's certificate, and had been hired to teach in a one-room country school in Christian County, just a mile from Blue Mound. My salary was a fabulous one hundred dollars for an eight-month term.

Dad was very proud of me, and of my brothers and sisters. Gladys finished her high school in Blue Mound and began teaching in Macon County. George rode horseback to Patterson, graduated, then got his fourth year in White Hall. Earl graduated from White Hall, too. Soon after, he was killed in a hunting accident.

Glenna finished two years of high school in Patterson when our parents moved again. This time to western Greene County, almost on the bank of the Illinois River, directly across from the village of Pearl in Pike County. Dad and Mom could see no way to get both Glenna and Carl enrolled in a high school. He owned no car and there were too many miles to get over. There was a good school in Pearl, but the river was between. Glenna would be a junior and Carl a freshman. They had to get across that river. He borrowed a row-boat from the man who operated the ferry. "Peelie" Jones also taught them how to row, how to ride the waves, and to always have a target on the opposite bank to head for, and to always keep in sight of the railroad bridge. They had many exciting times and a few dangerous experiences during that winter.

The next year the family moved back to a farm near Alsey. Carl graduated from Alsey and went to Winchester for his final year of high school. Glenna worked for her room and board in White Hall. A new law had been passed and Glenna could not get a teacher's certificate by writing an examination as her sisters had done. She borrowed money and enrolled in the state university in Normal. After two years of skimping and cooking her own meals, she had earned a college degree and gotten a license to teach.

At last Dad was ready to give up trying to farm small farms with horses in the age of cars and tractors. He sold out and bought a small home in Drake, midway between Patterson and White Hall. Mom and Dad were content. Of course, their lives had been filled with hard work and problems, and they had buried three sons, Loren as a baby and both George and Earl as young married men. But two remaining sons and three daughters were married and rearing families. All were well respected citizens. And all had completed high school, except Buell. He had earned the respect of the community when he quit school at the time that the levy broke and flooded the river bottom farms. He wanted to help our parents because they had lost their entire crop. He never returned to school, but he had a useful life.

Dad had always felt humiliated because he was illiterate. But to me, he and Mom had every right to be very proud of their achievement. They are both gone now, but they left a love for reading and books, and a desire for diplomas and college degrees, that made an enormous difference in the lives of their children.

IV Unforgettable People

UNFORGETTABLE PEOPLE

It is fascinating to consider humankind. Philosophers, theologians, and writers focus on all aspects of men and women that captivate the imagination and interest. One thing is clear: Every person has the capability of accomplishing great good and shameful evil. Thought by humanists to be basically good and by conservative theologians to be basically evil, human beings remain an enigma. Thus, the argument rages, as it has done since the beginning of recorded history: What is the nature of humankind?

And this query leads to a myriad of other questions. What is admirable in people? What is base? What makes them special? What is there to love? What is there to hate? What makes people unforgettable?

The questions grow and proliferate. It is to these questions and others that the writers of the memoirs addressed themselves in presenting and analyzing their favorite and unforgettable people. The resulting verbal portraits present many fine, admirable individuals. Indeed, an affirmation of people, those they present, is apparent. It is comforting to read of such worthy persons and their capacity for love and right action. It is also captivating to note the richness of their characters. In like manner, it is quite revealing to note the integrity and character of those who wrote the memoirs.

To whom do the ten writers turn their attention? For all but one, relatives are the most interesting characters they have known: three wrote about their grandfathers, one about her mother, two about their fathers, and two about their aunts.

In writing of her grandfather, Dorothy Van Meter recalls her loved one's hard work and love. Eleanor Bussell provides an indepth characterization of her grandmother, while Ruth Rogers speaks fondly of her remarkable grandfather, who was, in fact, like a father to her.

In a touching, exquisite memoir, Martha K. Graham recalls her grandfather, an extraordinary man who loved his family dearly and who was a person of great quality. Joe Adams' father was a new American who was a master craftsman as well as a good and decent man.

Doris Nash wrote an unforgettable tribute to her mother, in which she said:

> For over sixty years, I have copied this extraordinaryn lady in many ways, and I have used her methods for raising my own children. I live many miles from her, but she lightens my heart each time I drive to Grout Street, enter the small house, and see her happy welcoming smile.

Eva Watson and Effie Campbell wrote tributes to their aunts. Eva shares how her Aunt Mary built her self-confidence, and Effie told of an aunt with an "undaunted spirit" who was a perfectionist in all things.

Ruth Taylor tells of a woman who was not lovable and who put up with no foolishness whatsoever. Included is the intriguing tale of her murder and the eventual solution to the crime. Betty Hardwick shares the life of a fine, noble lady of courage, Helen McClay, whose response to tragedy is summed up this way:

> Helen's sorrow was deep but her faith in her God kept her going, and, as always, she was every inch a lady. Helen McClay's spirit was never broken, and she never gave up or became embittered.

Included in these memoirs are compelling character studies of ten people. Nine of them were wonderful, loving people; one was not–but even she demonstrated an indomitable will. In these portraits, there is much that is admirable. Such people offer models for a nation sadly in need of them.

Alfred J. Lindsey

C. H. KING OF ROSEVILLE

Martha K. Graham

For many years my father C. H. King (Herb King, as everyone called him) was a blacksmith in Roseville. To be a blacksmith was to know everyone in town and in the county around for miles.

On my way home from grade school, I often stopped at his shop to watch him at work. The smell of horses and leather, the heat of the forge where he fired horseshoes and other metals until they were red hot, the clang of the heavy hammer on the anvil where he shaped horseshoes to the horses' hooves, the acid smell of red hot metal being plunged by heavy tongs into cooling water—all these are as clear to me as if they were happening this minute.

Any kind of horse might be in the shop—farm work horses, ponies, driving horses, riding horses, even race horses (one called Minor Heir was owned by someone in Monmouth).

My grandfather, Perry McCaw, a carpenter, was always there building cabinets and other things made of wood to a customer's order. There were always men waiting around and talking. They took no notice of me.

A wink from my father was the only way I knew that he knew I was there. He didn't stop work. On the knee of his leather apron he took up the horse's foot, pared down the hoof, made a horseshoe to fit the horse's hoof, and finally nailed it on while the horse stood quite still.

While work was going on I could look around at things, if I stayed out of the way. Sawhorses stood around loaded with waiting saddles and leather harness straps. From the walls and the rafters hung hundreds of horseshoes like so many bats hanging in their cave. The walls were hung with cabinets whose drawers and doors held nails, nuts, bolts, hammers, saws, files, chisels, and all kinds of metal equipment. On a shelf, a Seth Thomas clock chimed the hour, its mahogany case blistered by the heat. Under the shelf was displayed a collection of fancy, whimsically designed horseshoes that my father had made for fun. Captain's chairs stood around for the customers' convenience, with a spittoon or two alongside.

No matter how often my grandfather wielded the push-broom, the floor was always oily and dirty with sawdust strewn with metal filings and woodshavings, horseshoe nails, and other things that caught a child's notice. I would stir up the sawdust, collecting horseshoe nails for my friends and me to take to the railroad tracks for flattening when the frequent trains went through. Those nails with their thick tops made fine miniature swords and scissors.

It was always very hot in the shop, no matter what the weather outside, so my father always wore a sleeveless undershirt leaving his muscular arms bare. Seeing him, I was always reminded of "The Village Blacksmith," which we had memorized in school. "The smith, a mighty man was he." Indeed, I was proud of such a father.

Sometimes farmers brought in plows for him to sharpen, and other machinery to be repaired. One awful day, a blade slipped as he was sharpening it and cut his leg to the bone. I was not there to see it.

One ghastly night my father's shop, a frame building, burned to the ground. His only consolation was that no lives were lost. He immediately rebuilt on the same spot. That concrete block building still stands and has served Roseville in several capacities since its beginning as a blacksmith shop.

Much as my father loved horses, he fell in love with the new automobiles when they took the country by storm. Gifted in the understanding, the working, and the repairing of machines, he could fix anything, and soon he was doubling as an automobile mechanic. He was aware that the automobile would inevitably make his work with horses obsolete, yet he owned one of the first automobiles in Roseville, a St. Louis, and later a Rambler. Spoofing the unreliability of the early automobile

engines, there was a popular song of the day called "Get Out and Get Under." More than once my father "got out and got under" when he took the family out for a joy ride. He kept a kit of wrenches and repairs handy for just such emergencies.

Competition from several new Roseville garages made my father decide on another kind of business—plumbing. He knew that he would have to pass a stiff examination which involved mathematics and the practical application of certain plumbing skills. He had been able to acquire only a fourth-grade education before his father had kept him out of school to do a man's work on their farm, so he was quite concerned about the examination.

Many a night we two sat at the round dining table, I with my homework and he with his correspondence course on plumbing. Together we figured out the mysteries of 3.1416 (pi) and what uses plumbers could make of it.

My father regularly sent in his correspondence assignments, and when he had successfully completed the course, a Mr. Entrikan of Monmouth, a Master Plumber, checked him out on the practical skills of the plumbing business. How proud we were of his success when he received his Master Plumber License. He framed it and hung it in his place of business. (I still have that framed certificate with its gold seal of approval, and it is a pleasure just to look at it.)

At that time, plumbing was not the lucrative business that it is today, so after several years as a plumber he cast about for something better.

It happened that the home-owned Roseville Telephone Company needed a manager who could understand the intricacies of a telephone switchboard and do a lineman's work as well. The Board of Directors knew that my father could fix anything, so they hired him. Once more the dining table was piled with books to study, this time without benefit of a correspondence course.

My mother, good at figures, helped with the office bookkeeping. She prepared our noon meal before she left for work each morning, and left it to cook slowly in an electric All-Day-Cooker, a new gadget that my father had brought home. She enjoyed the company of the several telephone operators, among whom were Goldie Reed, Ethel Mink, Millie Hoffnagle, and Inez Watson.

Two parents working, unusual at that time, was frowned on in certain circles. My mother had to drop out of some social activities. Her working hours did not coincide with meeting times of some organizations. But the King family was happy, and prospering.

Suddenly, the Great Depression descended. The Roseville Telephone Company, in order to survive, had to merge with other small companies. My father's services had to be dispensed with, and my mother's, too.

From that time on, for the rest of my father's life, and of the lives of those of his generation, everything was all "downhill." He worked at whatever he could find to do, and set up a repair shop at home. Often his customers could not pay. He kept a strict account of his income and his expenses in a small notebook. (I still have this little book. It is a heartbreaking testament of one family man's struggle to survive in the Depression years.)

My father's household grew from five to ten, as it became necessary to take in relatives who could no longer adequately support themselves. He lost the house we lived in, remodeled another, and lost that. Finally, he rented a large old house with room enough for his dependents. The only breadwinner besides himself was my Aunt Millie McCaw, who continued to work at cut wages in Bennett's Dry Goods Store, which had been sold to other owners, and who took in sewing. She made all our clothes, turned my father's shirt collars, and patched and mended. My father planted a big garden, as always, and my mother, as always, "put up" the surplus. The ten of us did not even come close to starving. Neither did the tramps (who must have had our house marked) who ate many a well-filled plate of food as they sat on our back porch steps.

My father's relief and joy knew no bounds when he finally found a job as a garage mechanic, working in his old blacksmith shop. When his employer put in plow sharpening and other such services to farmers, once more he had use for his blacksmithing skills. Things seemed at last to be looking up, and he was glad to work long, steady hours.

But things for my father had come full circle. One extremely hot summer day, hard work in the overpowering heat of the shop was too much for him. Carleton Gossett of Roseville came into the shop that day and found him sitting there helpless, unable even to speak, and knew that he had had a stroke. My father was aware of this last tragedy that had befallen him. No one knew how long he had been sitting there waiting for help to come, nor what his thoughts must have been.

My father was a man of high intelligence, integrity, ingenuity, and determination. He was gifted in the understanding of things mechanical, in drawing, in original thinking, and in inventions. He was versatile, adaptable, and creative in many ways. I have wondered what his life would have been like if he had had the advantage of higher education.

Like most Roseville people, my father saw everything that he had worked for swept away and could do nothing about it except to work when he could and to endure. Determined to carry on at work too exhausting for a man of his age, he died trying to save those dependent on him.

On the wall beside his telephone, my father had hung two small wooden plaques, one of Washington, one of Lincoln (I still have them.). Below them was this motto:

> Be thou not false unto thyself,
> And it must follow as the day the night,
> Thou can't not then be false to any man.

He saw this motto every time he lifted the receiver off its hook. No truer words could have been said about the way he lived his life.

DONA DONUT, UNFORGETTABLE GIVER

Dorris Taylor Nash

Dona, a lanky, freckled offspring of a Baptist preacher, learned early in life about hard work. Nicknamed "Donut" by schoolmates, her school days were over due to a near fatal mysterious lung disease. Among her family photographs is a picture of a gaunt twelve-year-old face peering at a camera with her clothing loosely hanging on her shrunken figure. Her family wanted a picture of the child before she died. But she lived, crediting her Irish background and prayers to God for survival. As a teen, she worked hard in cane fields during hot Illinois summers to further the family sorghum molasses venture. Believing she was the homely one in the family, she was surprised when a very handsome man named Irven Fisher from nearby Belltown asked her to be his wife. They married in 1923.

Marriage brought years of hard work for the couple. They lived as tenant farmers for awhile and then Irven got a factory job. Ten babies arrived the first twenty years, and Dona buried four of her children in her lifetime. Two died as infants: Gene, the happy-go-lucky son, died in an auto accident as a young husband, and Jo Ann, unable to cope with the breaking up of her marriage, committed suicide.

Christmas always makes me remember Dona's efforts to put holiday cheer in her house. Money was scarce for so many years, but the live tree always was decorated with popped corn garlands and twisted strips of red and green crepe paper. A honeycombed bell always hung from the ceiling light in the middle of the room. I still think true Christmas colors are red and green.

The family motto was "make do with what we have," so the vegetable garden, the cow in the small barn on the back of the lot, the flock of chickens in the small hen house, and the pig raised and butchered each winter provided good food and nutrition at her table each day. She opened her home to any

relative who needed a temporary home and never seemed to mind the crowding the family put up with to make room for a guest.

During the 1930s, her kitchen door was almost a daily target by the occupants of the local hobo jungle a couple blocks away by the railroad tracks in White Hall, Illinois. No hungry man was turned away, and whatever the family was eating the hoboes got a share of. One day as she was sweating and diligently scrubbing away on the washboard under a tree in her backyard, a hobo walked around the house and asked for a meal. It was nearly noon.

Receiving a plate of beans and corn bread, the wash day menu, he ate hungrily and then, seated on the porch steps, began to answer questions about his travels. He told her he and his wife had been diamond hunters in South America in part of the Amazon River basin. When asked if he found diamonds, he replied in the affirmative.

Looking at the hard working woman, fanning herself with a folded newspaper in an effort to cool off, he said, "I like your face, ma'am. Your high forehead tells me you are honest, so I am going to show you something. I will trust you not to tell what I have with me. Have you ever seen a real diamond?"

On seeing the negative shake of her head, he continued, "One day my wife's horse kicked up a big diamond in some sand along the Amazon. We had to share our find with the Brazilian government, but we smuggled that one out of the country. Later I had it cut up into several smaller stones and polished. They are my security when I quit roaming the country. I will show you some of them."

Reaching down into the hidden recesses of his clothing, he removed a roll of cloth from a dark pouch. Unrolling several layers of cloth, he revealed four stones, probably two carat weight each, sparkling in the noon day sun, and Dona saw the first diamonds in her life.

She asked why he was bumming when he had that kind of security and he replied that his wife had died shortly before and he was trying to cope with loneliness by moving around. Strangely enough he even told Dona his name and his hometown name downstate. Fifteen or so years later, Dona's son Pat brought a co-worker home from a munitions plant at East Alton, Illinois. He mentioned his hometown and it was the same as the hobo. She asked the young man if he knew John Chance in his town. He said John Chance lived alone, kept to himself, and nobody knew much about him except that he seemed to be able to look after himself.

Dona didn't tell that he probably was living off diamonds, for she had promised not to tell. It gave her a good feeling to know he had finally settled down and made a home for himself at last.

With all her daily chores, Dona found time to devote to her children. Stories were told, games played, and right and wrong was taught. Grout Street, where she lived, was three blocks long and was kid heaven as nearly forty boys and girls, including a few who drifted over to play from Porter Avenue, gathered in the three-acre plot of ground across from her house. She kept an eye out for fair play, settled arguments, wiped bloody noses, showed the kids how to slog a softball across the pasture, and sent home any kid that created trouble or wouldn't play "fair." Tin can shinny was a popular game if the kids could sneak the game when she wasn't watching. Tin can shinny was a form of street hockey with a tin can representing the puck. The best part of the game was getting a couple of tins cans smashed and bent to clamp onto the soles of their shoes so they made a clatter during the game. She paddled her kids once in awhile for tearing off shoe soles with the tin cans. New shoes were scarce at her house.

Dona gave much of her time and self to anyone who needed her. The barnyard, chicken house, and garden put food many nights on neighborhood tables. Clothing was exchanged, and she helped to sit at nights with a sick child other than her

own. She had an inner strength that helped her through each day and whatever problems it brought her.

At age forty, she gave birth to her last child and then gave a lot of help to her children who were married. She took care of every newborn grandchild who came along. It was simply taken for granted that Dona would be there to help.

In her forties, she was appointed chairman of the local VFW Auxiliary Christmas drive and held the position for over twenty years. She talked people into donating, and all her family at one time or another assisted in carrying the Christmas donations to the homes of the needy on Christmas eve. I recall my husband coming back from his trip with her one year laughing heartedly at a question from a four-year-old boy who had never seen anyone but her bring Christmas to the house. He clutched my husband's hand to get his attention, looked up seriously in his face, and asked, "Is her Missus Santa Claus?"

Dona's spirit and health began to fail in her seventies following the death of her beloved Jo Ann. Her grief was soul deep and the light went out within her. It grieved her family to see her become a victim of strokes and serious heart disease. She is eighty-five now and she must sit and let others do for her. Her memory span is short and sometimes she doesn't recognize her sons and daughters when they come home. She is so beautiful with her Irish blue eyes still bright and smiling under her silver white hair. Her family sees beauty in her worn face and they recognize the inner love of this woman who has given all her life to help and do for others. She put family first, friends second, and herself last. She is an avid television wrestling fan, getting excited when dirty wrestling occurs and whooping with glee when her favorite wrestler wins. Her family gets quite a chuckle out of her enthusiasm.

"To know Dona was to love her." I am so thankful I was around to know her during my lifetime. I saw her tears when she buried her children. I watched her feed the hoboes, I saw the diamonds, too, and helped carry Christmas gifts for her to the poor and even donned a Santa suit once when her Santa didn't show up. I absorbed her Irish sense of humor, her talkative nature, and witnessed her delight when she finally got an automatic washer and dryer when she was sixty years old. I learned that if you don't laugh at life you sure will cry a lot and that God takes care of all of us in His own way and time.

Dona's small green cottage no longer rings with the sound of children except on holidays when the clan gathers. She uses a walker to move around and spiritedly gives her husband an argument when she doesn't agree with him. Some of her funny remarks are family treasures.

For over sixty-six years, I have copied this extraordinary lady in many ways, and have used her methods for raising my own children. I live many miles from her, but she lightens my heart each time I drive to Grout Street and enter the small house and see her happy, welcoming smile in response to my saying, "Hi, Mom, I'm home again!"

EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE AN AUNT MARY

Eva Baker Watson

When we're bogged down in a project that seems impossible, when our morale takes a nosedive and our wheels begin to spin, we all need a special someone to say, "OF COURSE you can do it!" That someone for me was my Aunt Mary. For who knew better than she about overcoming obstacles, about making the most of opportunities?

Aunt Mary Trovillion Musgrave, born in the late 1800s, grew up on an isolated farm near the small Southern Illinois village of Brownfield. She was the daughter who "stayed home with Mother" after all the others had fled the nest for higher learning and marriage. Her formal schooling ended with the

eighth grade in a rural school, but this did not stunt her education or the development of a pattern of industry and creativity that enriched her life and the lives of others.

In her teens she shared her artistic talent by leading an art class for other young people in the community. Later, for a time, having a natural bent for figures, she served as assistant cashier of the First Bank of Brownfield. Approaching middle age, then, she was appointed postmistress there. Ten years she held this office, walking two rugged miles daily, morning and evening, rooming and boarding near her work only when the weather was its worst. Our family lived close by and we thought it was a treat when Aunt Mary would spend the night with us.

In the post office position, her horizons broadened. This small office served the village's one hundred citizens and two rural routes. With Aunt Mary in it, it became a bustling place, not because of mail that came and went by I.C. Railroad and two carriers, but because of the extras she inaugurated. Postal duties required Aunt Mary's presence, but didn't fill her time, so she used unoccupied hours to provide other services.

The world of reading was opened to local people with the lending library Aunt Mary established with books brought in from the State Library in Springfield. The nearest public library was ten unpaved miles away, so readers of the community were delighted with this convenience. Aunt Mary also did retailing–sold gift items, millinery, and magazine subscriptions. With her love for people, her friendliness and graciousness to her patrons, she soon became everyone's beloved "Miss Mary."

I, who had never had a job and was just out of high school in the middle of the depression and had no chance to attend college, was thrilled–and scared–when she made me her assistant. Even though such responsibility was frightening, especially when I was left alone there, Aunt Mary simply said, "Of COURSE you can do it!" And I did. Her trust gave my self-confidence a needed boost.

Sandwiched in all this activity was Aunt Mary's avocation: writing. In every spare minute she pecked away with two fingers at her old Oliver typewriter, and features with her byline soon began appearing in an ever-growing number of publications. Then came upheaval.

Election results put her on the wrong side of the political fence and suddenly she no longer was postmistress. This proved to be a plus for her, for now she could write all the time and her writing career burgeoned.

It was not long afterwards that Cupid came calling on Aunt Mary. Romance entered her life when the Reverend J. A. Musgrave, pastor of McKinley Avenue Baptist Church in Harrisburg, came courting. This was a love match from the start and she was his happy bride at age fifty.

My deeply religious Aunt Mary found fulfillment as a minister's wife. Later when Mr. Musgrave was made announcer and coordinator for the WEBQ daily radio program, the Baptist House, she became his assistant.

After only a few years of happiness, Aunt Mary was left a widow. She then was appointed to fill her late husband's place at WEBQ. There her influence took on a new dimension and she touched many other lives as her compassionate voice spoke daily to a broad range of listeners in Southern Illinois and Kentucky for twenty-five years.

All through these changes in her life, Aunt Mary continued turning out human interest features, news stories, and poems for *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, The St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Kessinger's Midwest Review, The Paducah Sun-Democrat, The Golconda Herald Enterprise, The Evansville Courier and Press*, and a number of other publications.

When I began my amateur writing career more than twenty-five years ago, Aunt Mary was my mentor, encouraging me in this as she always had in other ventures. After her death, it was inspiring to me to realize she again was urging me on, this time in a legacy. She willed to me her large office desk and her

electric typewriter. As I use them today I hear her still saying, "Keep writing! You can do it!" She lives for me now, unforgettably, a symbol of encouragement.

Everyone should have an Aunt Mary.

MEMORIES OF GRANDMOTHER THOMAS

Eleanor H. Bussell

My memories of Grandmother Thomas reach back about seventy years. One of my very first recollections is the delicious meat pie that Grandmother served at the round dining-room table on a Sunday when my father and mother and my younger brother, Jim, were my family and we four were at Grandmother and Grandfather Thomas's home on the edge of town for Sunday visiting.

Surely, I must have been about four when I sat on catalogues placed just so on a chair to raise me high enough to sit at the table with the grownups. Grandmother would come bustling to the table, I remember, carrying a big blue and white pan (the forerunner to the ceramic casserole, I am sure) and set it in front of Grandfather for the serving. There was a crusty light brown cover punctured with slits that gave off a fragrant aroma inviting us all to pass our plates to the head of the table. After the meat pie that had a side dish of Grandmother's yellow tomato preserves, I think there was more often than not pie for dessert.

Grandmother knew that her son-in-law, my father, was a great lover of pie–pumpkin, apple, cherry, or custard–just as long as it was pie. Of course, the children drew slim slices as it was unwritten there were two sizes of pie. My father was generous with his praise and complimented his mother-in-law by saying something like, "Mrs. Thomas, your pie is very good" (with emphasis on the very) and everyone around the table would laugh in a contented, well-fed way.

Grandmother walked very fast–or so it seemed to me. She usually whistled in an undertone between her teeth as she sailed about the kitchen–to the stove to get another heavy flatiron and then back to the ironing board that, because it was legless, was laid with the wide end resting on the dining table and the smaller, rounded end resting on the back of a kitchen chair. And she almost always whistled when she came in from the back room or summer kitchen with a big crock of milk she wanted to skim. It never occurred to me to ask why Grandmother whistled between her teeth that way. Children of my time (circa 1916-17) did not ask such inquisitive things of their Grandmother.

Grandmother Thomas wore sunbonnets. Usually they were blue and white checked gingham. Some of them may have been calico, but always the predominant color was blue. Often the sunbonnet matched her apron. And, they were always the same style–those made with a gathered shawl which flowed over her shoulders and gave protection from the sun as she worked in the garden. Of course, Grandmother made her sunbonnets and starched the wide brims. Whenever she stepped outside she wore her sunbonnet, whether to the garden or to step down the hillside to milk the cow.

Her garden had the finest, sweetest strawberries. Once when I was very small and was visiting for a few days at Grandmother's during the strawberry season, I was fed a big bowl of strawberries with yellow cream poured over them for being obedient and taking a nap. I felt rather special and rewarded.

Grandmother did not have a cream separator as we did out on my father's farm. She poured the milk from the pail into large brown crocks (two gallon size they must have been) and let the cream rise. Then she skimmed off the cream and poured it into a squatty pitcher for its place on the round dining-room

table. I was fascinated to watch Grandfather pour the thick cream into his coffee and then to pour some of the portion from the cup into a deep saucer to cool it to drinking temperature. I presume the reason it fascinated me so was because I never saw my father saucer his coffee.

I have a recollection of one of my visits when a dark-skinned man came to the back door and wanted milk and eggs. Grandmother gave him some brown eggs and put some milk in a tin syrup pail. She said the man was a Gypsy who was "travelling through." Later, my mother told me the Gypsies frequently camped at the foot of the hill nearby and were known to be "light-fingered." Grandmother said they always asked her for food even though she was quite sure they had inspected the hens' nests before they came to the door. However, I never heard her openly accusing them of stealing. It was Grandfather's opinion that they stole whatever they could before they came to ask for any.

Grandmother was a great knitter, too. She knitted socks and mittens and caps and scarves by the dozen. All her grandchildren from infancy and through grade school years received either a pair of mittens or a pair of socks for Christmas. Every grandchild could count on it. Those mittens had a knitted yarn string attached to each cuff. The string went through the coat sleeve so that the mittens dangled and gave no excuse to the wearer for losing either one or the pair. I regret to say a half century later that this grandchild did not appreciate Grandmother's mittens. Today I recall the ubiquitous mitten string whenever I lose a glove.

Grandmother was a wonderful woman, talented in so many ways, from knowing how to make a poultice to treat a bee-sting to the making of the best sugar cookies anyone could eat. The rabbit- and chicken-shaped cookies that she fashioned always had raisin eyes. Her cookies were always so plump and tasty. She used buttermilk in the recipe, I remember hearing my mother say. Sometimes she sprinkled a little bit of sugar over the top of the cookie just before they were popped into the oven of the old ironclad range. And then she sometimes served graham cracker "sandwiches" filled with either lemon or vanilla flavored frosting. I also remember that when we children went to Grandmother's we were forbidden beforehand to ask for cookies or anything to eat. We children were at that time brother Jim and little sister Libby and me. We were instructed to wait until Grandmother said briskly, "Well, who wants a cookie?" She usually added that she baked them fresh after she got the churning done that morning.

Of course, we wanted a cookie. And we ate carefully with nibbles so as not to spill any crumbs. If it were summer and some of the other grandchildren were also visiting, we took our fat cookies or the frosted graham crackers out to the side porch where we could eat without fear of dropping crumbs on the red and white carpet in the sitting room.

Grandmother laid the carpet at the Thomas home, too. She had the same red and white carpet pattern in the sitting room, in the parlor (which was seldom used), and on the stairs. Nor did any leftover pieces go to waste. Those smaller pieces worked just dandy for chair seats, especially on the kitchen chairs. One of my treasured souvenirs is the carpet-tack hammer with a slot near the base of the handle to hold the entire tack while another was being tacked into place. Not only is it a genuine antique, but has additional sentimental value because it was Grandmother's tool.

And Grandmother could do the double feather-stitch embroidery beautifully and evenly. She made splashers for the bedroom washstands. Her favorite pattern was a graceful swan embroidered among red floating lily pads. Off-white muslin was the material and the swan was framed in double feather stitching–always in red.

She embroidered a muslin coverlet using the same red embroidery thread. She made blocks, with each block containing a simple object such as a cup and saucer, a chair, a vase of

flowers, and so on–drawing out each pattern herself. In one corner block, the date of the embroidery was stitched in. And the blocks were set together with the double feather-stitch. She made that coverlet in 1891, the year my mother was born.

I won't forget the cold rainy morning in early May when Grandmother died. There had been a hard storm in the night and Grandmother just couldn't get her breath, Grandfather said. The lightning had damaged the telephone line, and he walked into town to the nearest telephone to call a doctor. But it was too late to get help for Grandmother. The same storm had damaged the phone lines out at our farm and Grandfather could not reach us. About 7:30 in the morning, a neighbor drove his team and wagon into the yard to give my father and mother the news. He had intercepted the jangling phone on the party line and had talked with Grandfather.

It was a home funeral. Grandmother was laid out in the not-often-used parlor. She was dressed, I remember, in a black-rusty silk–her very best dress. I can't recall having seen her wear it often. Usually I saw Grandmother in neat calico prints and a blue and white checked apron. I do not recall the minister's text nor who was the minister. I believe he was from the Congregational Church as that was the church my grandparents affiliated with. It was the first large funeral I recall attending. The little Thomas home on the east edge of town was a somber place with a lavender bowed wreath hanging on the front door. I recall that we children came home to the farm after the funeral in a horse and buggy. I believe my mother stayed in Lacon that night. I remember there were muddy roads and Dad left the little car there for mother while he drove the buggy home as there were chores to do. I was old enough to get the supper with Dad's help.

It was a sad funeral and people all around were so quiet and spoke in hushed voices. I believe that we children harbored sober thoughts about the chicken- and rabbit-shaped sugar cookies that Grandmother would no longer stir up after she had done the churning of the morning.

Grandmother was born the next to the last day of 1852. She died in early May, 1929, at the age of seventy-six.

MY MOST UNFORGETTABLE PERSON

Ruth Rogers

When I was sixteen months old my father left us. Left us, left my mother and me, alone in an old rundown country house with no food and no means of transportation. My mother, seven months pregnant, walked the mile and a half over the hot dusty roads, pushing me in a baby buggy, to the newly built home of her parents. There we found a warm welcome for all of us and it remained so until the death of my grandfather when I was fifteen years old. As we girls grew up, our grandparents were more like parents and our own mother, who taught school, was like an older sister.

This grandfather, my most unforgettable person, was a Civil War veteran of Company 13, 103rd Regiment of the Illinois Volunteer Infantry–brave, strong, honest, compassionate, forthright, a good provider, good to all who came into contact with him, a hard worker, and generous with his time and his money. On and on I could go with adjectives to describe this grandfather who became and is the most unforgettable person in my life. He died on October 21, 1925.

To you, my reader, it may seem that he lived a very quiet uninteresting life. Wrong! In reality his life was active and he lived each day as if it were a new adventure. He also had the ability to include others in this exciting journey.

At seventeen years of age, he ran away from home to join the Yankee army to preserve the Union and to free the slaves. His parents, farmers from the Fairview, Illinois area, were so

concerned about him, the oldest of their eight children, they traveled from home to Peoria, Illinois, by horses and a wagon, to tell the recruiter that their son was not old enough to be a soldier. He had already enlisted when they arrived and had gone home to get ready to be gone for a time. They missed him again. He had already left, to be gone for three and a half years.

He left home a boy, returned a man, afraid of nothing for the rest of his life. He was not afraid to live; he was not afraid to die.

He did not belong to a church; however, he upheld and lived the same values as Christians. He loved his neighbors, he helped the poor, and he gave meals to and bedded down tramps who came through the country. His compassion and kindness extended to the grandchildren he sheltered.

He sat between us at the table, helping two little folks. He dressed us when we were very small. He doctored us when we were sick. He cheerfully helped my aging grandmother care for us; after all, they were respectively sixty-five and seventy when I was born.

He instilled a love of reading and respect for history in me. Each evening after supper, we sat at the dining room table. With a little girl on each side of him, he helped us do our homework. Patiently and carefully he taught us reading, spelling, and arithmetic. He was smart!

Homework done, he read to us. First from the biography of Sherman, his general in the Civil War. Then, to our great delight, Peck's Bad Boy. He knew how to balance our reading program from serious to fantasy. Peck's Bad Boy would do some irrational unrestrained things, which we would never have dared to do. As the episodes continued for several years, we were given stretches of imagination and release in our own lives which might never have happened otherwise. So, we were guided into a lifelong love of reading.

My most unforgettable person knew how to turn work, hard work, into play. My sister and I would help him work; then we could slide downhill, skate in winter, or swim in summer. A special treat was the weekly trip to town to shop and do errands. We always got to buy something, a bit of candy, a pencil, or something we had been wanting. You see he taught us to work hard when there was work to be done and to play equally hard. We developed a feeling of satisfaction in work well done, sprinkled with activities which are fun.

Occasionally my grandmother would become angry at us for some act of naughtiness and would threaten to "skin us alive!" if we did it again. Grandpa would lead us away to the barnyard, to the pasture, or to the creek and would soon have us running and laughing with our dog. We felt safe and happy; we knew our grandma would never "skin *us* alive."

I never did hear my grandfather say a bad word about another person. He would tell my sister and I to love other people and they would love us. He helped me grow up in an atmosphere of love, "loving our neighbors as ourselves." He truly believed and lived this.

He knew how to keep his land green and luscious–by rotating crops and by raising many cattle. He used natural fertilizer. His farm was a joy to behold–a safe refuge.

During his lifetime he became affluent, with hard work and careful money management. He raise cattle and shipped them by the railroad car load to the International Stockyards in Chicago. After he had been to Chicago, he had many funny stories to tell.

When I was twelve years old, he bought a new 1923 Ford car and paid cash for it. He was proud of the new car, but never did learn to drive it. I did. My mother was the family chauffeur. Fascinated, I watched her start it, push in on the clutch to get it into gear, and start. I watched her guide it and turn the steering wheel to turn a corner. It didn't seem much different to me than pulling on the bridle of my horse–either turned when you pulled or turned. So, one day, tired of waiting for my mother to get ready to go to town, I found myself out along the road

where the car was parked. All at once I found myself behind the wheel, turning the key, pressing on the starter, and pushing in on the clutch. I was soon turning into the lane which went to a neighbor's house. All went well until I came to the end of the lane. Oh! Horrors!! The gate was closed and I realized that with all my great knowledge of driving, I hadn't noticed how to stop it. Needless to say, I drove right through the gate. Fortunately for the new car, the gate was old and brittle, the boards broke and flew in all directions, not leaving a dent or scratch.

Into a pasture I drove. The daisies were a healthy crop that year. I made a road in them as I drove around and around in the pasture. Finally, I ran out of gas and came to a thankful stop.

By this time our neighbors had telephoned my grandfather, who hadn't missed me or the Ford. He came after me! As we walked home he just said, "Well if you're bound to drive, you'll have to be taught how to do it right." That was part of his philosophy. He was not angry: He just understood that a young person was growing up.

At thirteen, I remembered beginning to cast my eye around at the boys, just as most girls do. Instead of seeing one of the boys my own age, my eye landed on the cousin of one of them–a fellow ten years older than myself. After a few Saturday night strolls around the downtown square in Bushnell, my grandfather talked to me. He said, "Now, Ruth you don't want to go with that old buck. Now do you?" He didn't say right out "You can't go with him. I wouldn't permit it." He asked me. Expressed that way of course, I didn't. "Old Buck" really turned me against the fellow; now I can't even remember what his name was. I never took another walk with "Old Buck" and got pretty selective about my boyfriends.

I've often wished my children had an unforgettable grandfather like Joseph Henry Wheeler to help them in their growing up process.

TO GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE I WENT

Dorothy Van Meter

Grandma Gerson lived in the big, white, two-story house down the road from us. A long porch stretched across the front of the house. A comfortable swing hung from the ceiling, and above the porch was a balcony, unused, but decorative. Several sturdy trees were in the front yard, and in the backyard were all kinds of fruit trees. I remember eating succulent apricots and pears when they were ripened to perfection. The cherry trees were loaded, and Grandma had buckets to can. In the backyard there was a smokehouse for curing hams and bacon, and a chicken house. Grandma named each chicken. Considering this familiarity, I don't know how she could enjoy cooking those wonderful chicken dinners, but she did.

When I was five years old, we left our farm in southwestern Jersey County and moved to Wood River. My father entered the real estate business. Standard Oil Company had begun operating, and it was a good time to begin this occupation. I don't remember much about the move. I entered school soon after, and the fall stretched into winter, into spring, and then it was summer! It was then that I went to visit Grandma.

My Aunt Alice, Uncle Frank, and Uncle Addison were all at home. Everybody worked hard. I can remember Grandma getting everyone up before dawn. She did not need an alarm clock to awaken her, but the boys had to be prodded. She grabbed her kitchen broom, and with the handle she would rap it against the ceiling. The boys had an upstairs bedroom directly above hers. "Boys, Boys," she would call, "it's time to get up." The boys arose out of desperation.

Early rising had its rewards. I remember the complete stillness which was broken at dawn. The birds began chirping, the cows started mooing, and Grandma's spirally rooster began crowing. The sun, a brilliant, shiny ball of fire, had signaled that a new day had begun. Buckets of water had to be pumped

for the thirsty cows, and grain would be needed to feed them as well as the hogs and chickens. Also, it was a good time to weed the garden.

The highlight of my visit to Grandma's was when the threshing machine came. It was a huge, black monster. I was impressed by its enormity. It reminded me of a train. It huffed and puffed and belched columns of black smoke as the wheat was separated from the straw and loaded into waiting wagons. Its shrill whistle could mean many things–to summon the men from the fields, dinner time, or back to work. However, Grandma had a dinner bell–a big bell on a post which called the men to dinner.

It was fun to watch the men come in from the fields. The hot sun and active work made them sweaty. The man who operated the threshing machine had coal dust all over his face and clothing. Benches were lined up near the well, and on the benches were wash basins and Lava soap. Some of the men held their heads under the pump and had the added bonus of a shampoo. Others scrubbed their faces with the Lava soap, and all felt refreshed and ready for dinner.

The men usually ate their dinner in shifts because the table was not long enough to seat the entire crew. As the men entered the house, they were greeted by one of the women waving a towel to "shoo the flies away." Also, hanging from the porch and kitchen ceilings were strips of Tanglefoot fly paper. The flypaper always did a good job.

Once seated, the men were faced by a table overburdened with food.

I liked to urge some of the men that I knew to try a piece of my cherry pie. I was about eight years old at the time. I remember my Grandma's patience. Even though she had been very busy in her pantry rolling out pies, she let me have a wad of dough for my very own. The dough felt good in my hands, and I rolled and stretched the dough again and again. I'm sure that the men who ate my pie bit into a crust that was tough and unpalatable, but they told me that it was delicious, and the unwarranted praise made me happy. After the meal was finished, the leftover butter and milk were put in an empty molasses bucket and lowered by rope into the well to keep them fresh. There was no refrigeration at that time.

I remember Grandma's kitchen. It reached from one end of the house to the other. At one end, a pump, bucket, and dipper stood handy. At the other end, there was a cot where a weary one might rest. The pantry was a small room off the kitchen where Grandma stored her baking utensils and supplies. Large bins held sugar and flour. Grandma rolled out her pies in the pantry and mixed her marvelous angel food cakes; many times she used the whites of goose eggs.

As Grandma worked in the pantry, she sang. She enjoyed singing and sang enthusiastically. I remember her singing a favorite, "We'll never say goodbye. For in that land of joy and song, we'll never say goodbye."

Grandma also sang as she ironed. Her irons stayed hot on the cook stove. One iron could replace the other as it cooled. The irons were made to glide more easily by being rubbed over a bar of bee's wax.

The big house was always clean and neat in spite of the many various chores that had to be performed. My favorite room was the parlor, a small room that was reserved for company. The walls were papered in a large floral design. Heavily starched lace hung from rods above the windows. I was captivated by the organ sitting in the corner. However, I was disappointed because when I pulled the stops, a mournful discordant sound was emitted, not at all like the melodious tones I had expected.

Grandma's lace doilies decorated every room. These were crocheted in her spare time. She also knitted and braided rugs from scraps. Beautiful quilt designs were cut and assembled from scraps of material. Much of the clothing that the family wore had been sewn by her.

Grandma was also a candy maker. At Christmas we all received some of her divinity and chocolate creams.

Her abilities were endless. The routine tasks in her life were lightened because of her faith in God. She praised Him as she sang the old hymns, "Work, for the Day is Coming" and "God Will Take Care of You."

Today we are concerned with a search for self-fulfillment, but Grandma didn't search for it. She never knew it was her right. Self-fulfillment came to her naturally. She had work to do, and she did it. She was at peace with the world. She was fulfilled!

THAT CHARACTER HAPPENS TO BE MY AUNT

Effie L. Campbell

"You don't have to be rich to be clean. Anyone can buy a bar of soap." That was the old cliché my Aunt Mina lived by. I think she was one of the most fastidious persons I've ever known.

She prided herself on being properly attired for any occasion. And for "best," she always wore hat and gloves and usually a navy blue or dark-colored dress, with perhaps snow-white collars and cuffs of lace or organdy. By the time I got to know her, she had bobbed her wavy black hair and wore it in a neat, combed back style the way my mother wore hers. Aunt Mina was my mother's eldest sister.

Mom was the youngest of ten children, only seven of whom survived childhood. My grandmother died shortly after her birth, and Aunt Mina, who was a teenager at the time, took over the household duties and the rearing of the younger children. And that was before the turn of the century when housekeeping was hard, back-breaking work–carrying water from a well, heating it on a wood-burning stove, scrubbing clothes on a washboard, and hanging them outdoors, even in wintertime when "long johns" froze so stiff they resembled a row of Ichabod Crane's "headless ghosts."

Their home was in Brown County, near Mt. Sterling, but as they grew up the family drifted away. Our family settled near Beardstown; Aunt Mina and Uncle Guy lived in Rushville.

All went well for us until my father died in 1926, and the farm was sold. Then, with five kids still at home, Mom moved us into Beardstown. And from then on, it was uphill sledding–especially when the Great Depression came knocking at our doors. But it was during that time that I became better acquainted with my Aunt Mina.

We had sold the family Dodge, and had to depend on "Shank's mare" to get around. So, when we saw Aunt Mina and Uncle Guy it was when they came driving over in their Redbird Overland. Uncle Guy never learned to drive. It was Aunt Mina who chauffeured the Redbird, and she was a "nervous" driver.

All passengers riding with my aunt were cautioned to sit quietly and keep their voices down while the car was in motion. Otherwise, any disturbance could get on Aunt Mina's "nerves" and cause her to have an accident. I remember once how my little sister Marcella got into the car with her doll, and looking into the dimpled, bisque face, shushed it!

But it wasn't one of us (or the doll) who caused Aunt Mina to have her one and only accident. According to our Uncle Guy, it was a foolishly brave toro. The bull jumped a fence and planted himself directly in the path of the oncoming Redbird. Aunt Mina hit him squarely in the rear end!

Uncle Guy said mildly, "Mina, you hit that bull."

From some accounts, my aunt used a word not ordinarily in her vocabulary. But she insisted she merely said, "That cow shouldn't have got in my way."

Whatever she said, she somehow managed to maintain her status as a lady by avoiding the use of the word "Bull."

Ladies simply did not use the word. Instead, they decorously called them "male cows," or in the case of swine, "Male hogs."

Since she had assumed the role of mother while still very young, Aunt Mina continued to think of my mother as the baby of the family. So I guess it was natural for her to feel she could remind Mom about any slips in housekeeping. But the one time I vividly recall wasn't Mom's fault. It was mine.

I was supposed to clean my room and do all the dusting, rug shaking, and dishwashing, with some help from my younger sister Marcella. But we sometimes let chores slip through the cracks–like the time we hid dirty pans in the oven after the big Thanksgiving dinner, or the many times we gave the furniture a hit or miss dusting.

So the stage was set for Aunt Mina to run her fingers over the top of our old organ and find dust! And Mom sent me for the Old English and the dust rag.

But if I'm beginning to paint a picture of my Aunt Mina as an unlikable eccentric, then I'm getting the picture lopsided. My aunt may have been too high-minded at times, and a bit eccentric, but she was far from unlikable. She had a dry sense of humor and a kind heart.

She was a wonderful seamstress and made clothes for her two daughters, and later on, a grandchild she raised. Plus, she sewed and gave things to the less fortunate, including my sister and me. I remember how I dreaded my eighth grade graduation because we couldn't afford to buy me a new dress. And then, two days before the event, I got a package in the mail from my Aunt Mina. In it was a handmade, hand-embroidered new white dress!

On another occasion we glimpsed that innate humor Aunt Mina so seldom showed. It was the day we all piled into an old car my seventeen-year-old brother Virg had bought for a few dollars, and we started out for Rushville. On the way, we had two stops–once to fill the radiator with water, and another to fix a flat tire. So we were late getting to Aunt Mina's

After we explained the delay, my aunt took a long, hard look at our less than luxurious vehicle, and then with a wry grin said, "Virgil, I think you did a very good job of driving. Couldn't have done better myself."

I loved to go to Aunt Mina's and to wander out into the big back yard where she and Uncle Guy raised flowers, fruits, and vegetables. How the two of them must have labored, dusting for bugs, cultivating, and weeding, to have such a beautiful garden. Aunt Mina cut many of her roses, peonies, mums, and other flowers and sent them to funerals and local churches. She took pleasure in giving away the bounty of their garden.

Uncle Guy died of a heart attack long before Aunt Mina was laid to rest. And after he died, she lived on alone in their neat, small bungalow.

After I was married and moved to a farm near Rushville, I used to meet her sometimes on the streets downtown, doing her shopping–a lonely figure, correctly dressed as ever in clothes that were rapidly going out of style. But she would never compromise on things that mattered most to her, like keeping herself neat and clean.

One day as I was waiting in the local variety store for a clerk to package my purchases, I glanced up and saw Aunt Mina through the window. As she opened the door, the clerk whispered, "That's Mrs. Grubb. She's a character."

I suppose to some folks who didn't really know her, Aunt Mina may have seemed to be just that. But I saw her differently. Squaring my shoulders, I said proudly, "That character happens to be my aunt."

She was nearing ninety when she became ill and muddled in her mind and was subsequently placed in a nursing home. Having cooked her own well-balanced meals all her life, you can imagine what she thought of the food served to her in the home. "It's nothing but slop. I won't eat that. Take it away!"

Believe me, the aides in the home had met their match.

She hadn't lost all the sharpness of her mind–not yet. Even when I went to see her and she first called me Evelyn (one of my cousins), she immediately corrected herself.

"Oh, what's the matter with me? Of course you're not Evelyn. You're Effie."

I smiled and squeezed her hand. I think it was about the next to the last time I saw her while she was still with us. However, I often think about her and her undaunted spirit, and I know I will never forget my Aunt Mina.

JOE AND HIS AMERICAN DREAM

Joseph B. Adams, Jr.

Somehow it seems a bit irreverent to call him by that shortened version of Joseph. Truthfully, it was most often "Pop"... or just "Pa." In retrospect, my feelings toward him were more along the lines of respect or admiration. No hero stuff. No saying "I love you" all the time. That was reserved for certain special occasions, like graduation, or anniversaries, or departure for long distances and extended periods.

Joe completed his apprenticeship as carriage-maker under my Uncle Julius in Budapest. He earned his journeyman's papers (called the "book") at the age of about eighteen, but found no work in his native Austria-Hungary, then an empire under the leadership of Franz Joseph. After a year or so, with a small loan from his grandmother, Joe bought a train ticket to Naples and passage on a steamer bound for America.

After his processing at Ellis Island, he proceeded by rail to Sharon, Pennsylvania. His only meal on the train was a pumpkin pie given to him by a Salvation Army "lassie." His sponsor promptly put Joe to work in a foundry where he pushed a truck laden with large castings. Citizenship then took about five years to earn, so Joe studied at night school to learn the English language along with Civics in order to pass the test.

Joe found out about openings at the large Pullman works in Chicago where his brother-in-law worked. He was hired on with a finishing crew that built the wooden interiors of railroad sleeping-cars. The "gangs" were really a team of about six men who contracted to complete each coach in a specified time. Joe was elected leader, or "straw-boss," to assign and work the various tasks.

When he learned about openings in the Yellow-Cab Company on the northwest part of Chicago, he applied for a job there. He was hired to work on the wood frames of the cabs. In those days the chassis was wood, so the vehicles were boxy-looking by today's standards. Then the Yellow-Cab Company was bought out by General Motors about 1926, so they moved Pa and his family of Mom and me to Pontiac, Michigan, where a new plant was built.

I remember spending my fifth birthday there, but soon after, we moved back to Chicago because Ma didn't like the hard water and apartment life. My folks had not sold the nice bungalow in Chicago, so we were glad to be back in the Windy City once again.

As Pa was a skilled craftsman, now a cabinetmaker, he was hired as pattern-shop foreman at Majestic Radio Manufacturing Company which took over the entire plant that was vacated by the former Yellow-Cab Company. Pa held that job from 1927 to about 1934 when the company went bankrupt, as did many other industrial businesses during those trying days of the Depression.

Joe was in his prime during those seven years, and was responsible for the radio cabinets from their conception by the engineers and draftsmen to the finished product. The pattern-shop produced the prototype models and also made the "jigs" for the various production machines. Radio manufacture was an assembly-line process from chassis to cabinet, and he answered

for the smooth operation of production machinery that formed the various parts of the wood cabinet.

The work-week then was five or six days with only a Sunday off. As I recall, that day was reserved for Joe's dinner at home and a "planning session" at the dining-room table for him and the different foremen in charge of each assembly process. Even the chief-draftsman was there as liaison between engineering and production. Mom would furnish a nice dinner, after which the table would be cleared and the men would get heads together for a sort of "think-tank" which involved previous production problems and also plans for the coming work-week. There was much discussion and conviviality on those Sunday afternoons.

After the plant closing, Pa still returned to clean things up in his beloved pattern-shop. Finally, he asked me to bring my coaster wagon, and we entered the main gate, together walking through the deserted factory to the area enclosed with chicken-wire. The workbenches were empty, and Pa's toolboxes were carefully placed in the middle of the pattern-shop. He loaded them onto my red "DeLuxe" coaster wagon and we left behind a tremendous facility that once produced thousands of radios with the well-known slogan of "Majestic Radio–Mighty Monarch of the Air." Its symbol was a world glove with an American eagle perched over it. Pa was the last production employee to leave the factory. The memory of that day still lies vivid in my mind. Joe went on to work out his remaining years at various other jobs in Chicago. He never was really out of work. He could do anything with wood, so was in demand at the factories.

After over fifty years of work at his trade, Pa somewhat reluctantly retired at the age of seventy. Fulfilling his lifetime of hard and productive work, he and Ma moved to California. There on the west-central coast, he rests alongside Ma. Just as thousands of other immigrants had before him, Joe realized his "American Dream." In the Hebrew, Joseph means "He Shall Add." Joe did.

THE WOMAN IN THE GILDED CAGE

Ruth Gash Taylor

"Tell us about Mrs. C.," I would beg Mother when it was story time at our house.

Possibly it was the mystery surrounding the wealthy recluse which fascinated me, but I never tired of hearing as much of the story as Mother knew.

Ellen C. lived south of Warsaw, Illinois, and she had no known relatives. She had been married, but her husband disappeared. Neighbors claimed Ellen chased him off with a butcher knife.

Certainly she regarded men with contempt and distrust. No male was ever admitted to her house.

The C. land was farmed on shares. At harvest time, the owner stood in one of the wagons to watch division of the grain in a day when women were neither seen nor heard. Once, when the tenant came to settle up with her, he essayed a pleasantry about the weather. "Just give me the money, mister!" was the brusque reply. "Never mind the nice day."

It was whispered that Ellen stored her dirty dishes in a barrel, and washed them only once a month. Mother did not believe this. She had been allowed in the house a couple of times as a child for cookies and milk. She had not been permitted to stray beyond the kitchen, but she said that room was spotlessly clean.

Ellen ventured away from home three days a year. My grandfather drove a team of horses to take her to Quincy one day and to Keokuk (Iowa) another time for shopping expeditions. She paid for all purchases with gold which she kept stored in her house.

She sat enthroned on a nail keg in the back of my grandfather's spring wagon for these journeys. She was a large woman, and her turn-of-the-century skirts billowed around her. She protected herself from the sun with a big black

umbrella.

Ellen spent one day a year visiting her friend, Elizabeth Tyree, who was my grandfather's Aunt Lib. She always took along several quarts of apple butter. Aunt Lib would then spend a day with Ellen, bringing some of her famous blackberry preserves.

Incidentally, Aunt Lib was the kind of housekeeper who probably waxed her window sills. It is unlikely she would have been friends with someone who stored dirty dishes in a barrel for a month.

The women lived only five or six miles apart, but they saw each other only those two days a year. Possibly months went by when Ellen did not see a human being. She discouraged visitors, and she had no telephone.

Mother taught country schools between her graduation from high school in 1912 and her marriage in 1918. Among the schools was Rocky Run in her home community.

She drove her horse and buggy past the C. place one October Sunday evening, en route to her boarding place, and she saw smoke lazily drifting from the chimney. Ellen C. died that night.

At first, it was believed the house caught fire, and Ellen was trapped within. However, when her body was found in the cellar with unburned cloth at the back of her neck, it indicated to the sheriff that she had been strangled, and her house was burned to conceal the crime.

It was known that Ellen never set foot outdoors after dark. Her house was a fortress with bars at the windows. It was theorized that she had forgotten, that once, to shut up her chickens and had gone out. Or, perhaps she heard a disturbance among the chickens, and went out to defend them against a possum or weasel. Upon her return to the house, she found the murderer waiting for her.

It was hard to find a suspect. While Ellen was eccentric, she had no known enemies. Some people believed her husband had returned for vengeance. Others blamed woodcutters who had camped in nearby timber and who might have heard stories of the C. gold.

Bloodhounds were brought in, and they did indeed give tongue as they panted toward the cold ashes of the woodcutters' fire. The men had moved on to other woods, and it took some time to locate them. No arrests were made. All the men could satisfactorily account for their whereabouts the night of the murder.

Officially, it was an unsolved murder.

Years later, after I was grown and away from home, Mother phoned one day in great excitement. "I know who murdered Ellen C.!" she declared.

She explained that a lifelong friend had visited her, and confided that her (the friend's) aunt, on her death bed, confessed she murdered Ellen C. The murderess told her horrified relatives how she waited until she saw lamplight in Ellen's windows. She described wrapping one arm with a piece of torn sheet, and splashing it with chicken blood. Then she went to the C. house and beat upon the back door to importune help. Ellen took her in.

The murderess found the gold. She waited a judicious interval before inventing an inheritance from a relative in the past. No one had ever suspected the woman.

Mother always spared a flower for Ellen's lonely grave on Memorial Day. My sister and I do the same, in Mother's memory.

OUR COURAGEOUS LADY

Betty L. Hardwick

I did not know Helen McClay and her husband A. L. in their time of power and abundance–the days when McClay was a powerful name. Newspapers boasted of the thousands of bushels of apples being shipped each year from the McClay orchard and proclaimed it as the largest individually owned orchard in the world. They talked of the extensive McClay farm lands and their fine produce, their fine honey production and sales, the important gatherings with VIPs in attendance, the McClay ball teams, and many other things linked to the McClay name.

Those were the days when the little towns of Hillview and Patterson grew and bloomed. The streets were filled with people having money in their pockets–money earned in McClay orchards and McClay fields. Those were the days also when businesses lined every downtown street in the towns, especially Hillview.

I first knew Helen McClay long after all of these were just memories and they had tasted deeply the bitter cup of bankruptcy through no real fault of their own.

A series of misfortunes dogged the progress of A. L. McClay and his helpmate Helen. A fire from a carelessly tossed match cost them forty acres of fine trees in 1924. Barely had the orchard begun to recover with new growth when gigantic floods struck the low lying Hillview area. It began in August, 1926, and the waters did not drain away until February, 1927. When it was over, the waters had stood upon the trees for one hundred days, and six hundred and forty acres of prime apple trees were damaged or dead: the entire harvest of those particular acres was lost as was the grain on the flooded farm land. The Depression arrived in 1929 with the orchards still reeling from the flood's massive blow. The McClay financial situation worsened. A. L. was forced to sell the beloved orchards to the Chicago Cold Storage Company. Along with this bitter disappointment was the loss of many acres of prime farm land in 1930. The formerly prosperous little Bank of Hillview closed its doors–the first bank in Greene County to go bankrupt. The people of the community, as well as the McClays, were stunned.

The McClays moved from the big house that had served as headquarters for the business to the small house where they'd started their married life and with determination started over.

A. L. worked as an employee in what had been his own orchards, managing the business. For about ten years or so, the orchards grew and prospered. Then disaster struck again in the form of a fire that wiped out the honey business. Gradually over the next years the orchards went into a decline. By 1949 the last of the McClay apple trees was uprooted. With the loss of its source of income, the towns' businesses and population began to move. How hard it must have been for Helen and A. L. to stand helplessly by and watch all of this.

Fate had still another blow in store for Helen. Her beloved husband suffered a series of strokes in the 1950s and died in 1957.

The countryside mourned with Helen and her children, now grown up. There were many who remembered the kindness, courtesy, and respect with which they had always been treated by the family, and there were those who remembered the help A. L. had given when they were in need.

Helen lived alone in their first home after A. L.'s death. She kept a few cows, feeding and caring for them herself. The farm land was rented out. Her children and grandchildren, always precious to her, were now even more so. If she ever felt disappointment or grief over any of them, it was all between her and the Lord.

She loved the community of Hillview and joined in all the local "doings." She kept many scrapbooks and photo albums filled with newspaper clippings and pictures of the town and its

activities. She was the community's unofficial historian. It was to her that all who needed to trace the past turned for information, and she was always willing and eager to show her records. She loved to tell of the days gone by, but took a lively interest in all that was going on about her, too.

Tragedy struck at her again when a grandson was killed in an auto accident and again when a daughter died. Helen's sorrow was deep but her faith in her God kept her going, and, as always, she was every inch a lady. Helen McClay's spirit was never broken, and she never gave up or became embittered.

The years sped by. Helen was past eighty years old. She was still active, caring for her cows, tending her big yard, keeping up with her church and community work, and driving herself wherever she went.

When her eyesight began to fail and her health to break, she reluctantly sold her cows and gave up driving her car. In time, she found it financially prudent to sell the farm, reserving the home for herself for her lifetime.

At the age of ninety, Helen McClay died–still interested in everything and interesting to talk to. Typical of her dislike of show, she had requested a simple graveside ceremony.

When fall walks through the hills, the spirit of what once was returns in the smell of ripe apples blowing on the wind and I remember once again the courageous lady, Helen McClay.

THE LITTLE DRUMMER MAN

Dorothy Boll Koelling

He was a wizened little man–old, perhaps, but no one really knew. His small eyes sparkled with friendliness. It seemed he always cherished a happy secret that he wouldn't reveal to anyone. His voice, when he spoke, was high pitched, as one would expect from his diminutive size. Neatness prevailed in his dress that distinguished him from the other peddlers who came to our house in those times. He was most meticulous, from the stiff derby he always wore and the celluloid collar with a narrow black tie to the worn but much polished shoes on his feet. His dark suit showed signs of many pressings and the cuffs of his coat were a bit frayed, but it proved that he was making a mighty effort to appear a successful businessman to his customers.

To us children, living in the rural area of Adams County near Quincy, Mr. Goodygood was a strange and fascinating person who broke our lonely routine with his regular visits. You ask about his name? To this day I don't know what his name really was. But that's how it sounded when folks addressed him, and I'm willing to accept it so.

Mr. Goodygood's name seemed to fit him as well as did his horse and rig. We always knew he was coming even before we could see his horse pull into our driveway near the kitchen door. His horse was a perfect complement to her master. She was slight but strong enough to pull the cart. She had rather sad eyes with drooping lids and was a most gentle creature wanting very much to please. When we came out, she would toss her head and the little bells on her harness behind her ears tinkled. She seemed to be very glad to see us, especially when we gave her a bit of sugar or a pat on her face.

After that greeting we would turn, eager to see Mr. Goodygood's wares. He was a drummer, as the traveling salesman was called in those days. His wagon was a black enclosed cart. Within, shelves lined the sides from front to back. Built-in drawers held small articles like buttons, thread, ribbons for the women of the house; nails, bolts, tools for the men. Larger articles such as clothes, blankets, and bolts of material for sewing were piled neatly on shelves. To look into the drummer's wagon was like looking into a wonderland. Such a variety of items, such lovely colors in the fabrics, such

excitement in trying to guess what the drawers and boxes contained. Sometimes he would bring his cases into the house so we could see the items more closely and even touch them. These were usually the newer articles. Naturally, his offerings were seasonal. In the spring, we bought garden seeds, or maybe some leather to mend a harness, or paint for the garden fence. In the fall, we chose warm socks and underwear, maybe some all-purpose linament that would serve as well for a sore throat as for a rash caused by poison ivy.

As he displayed his articles Mr. Goodygood was most polite, but not deferential. We recognized his pride both in himself and his occupation. No matter how busy Mama and Daddy were they always took time to look over Mr. Goodygood's items, and they would always buy something even in those Depression years because they knew that things weren't going well for the drummer either. His gratitude was evident by the shine in his eyes and his crooked smile.

The wagon itself was deteriorating as time passed. We could see patches of rust here and there painted over with a glossy black paint. One time we saw a new display case added to the equipment. Then, as time went on the wagon boasted a new wheel, the cost of which had surely been a major outlay from meager assets.

Occasionally Mr. Goodygood would come into the house to join us at the large kitchen table for a glass of milk with a slice of freshly baked bread spread with apple butter. Once, there was a severe thunderstorm when Mr. Goodygood was at our house, and we urged him to stay the night with us. He was very appreciative of this offer and he accepted. I think he feared more for his horse than for himself if he ventured on. I remember the next morning when he left, he gave us children each a long switch of black licorice, a treat for us.

Then Mr. Goodygood came no more. We realized an emptiness that was only partially filled by our memory of the little drummer man with his sad-eyed horse. His existence represented an era of the past. In looking back we came to realize that he had enriched our lives.

V Wild Things

WILD THINGS

Illinois is not a state that is known for its wild things and wild places. In the northeast corner it is a crowded metropolis fringed by spreading suburbs, and "downstate" (everywhere else but Chicago) it is a corn-and-soybean empire where everything is long-settled and agriculturally productive. The vast prairies that once characterized the Prairie State are gone, the forests are diminished, and the wild things are under siege–at least, in most areas.

It is now difficult to imagine what Illinois was like 150 years ago when it was still being settled. Fortunately, some vivid pioneer accounts survive. Perhaps the best is Eliza Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land* (1846), which is based on her experience in the Illinois River Valley during the 1830s. She describes the flowered prairies, the mysterious howl of wolves, and the limitless ducks and geese on the Illinois River. But her main focus is the coming of civilization to the wilderness, and she knew even then that settlement was changing the state forever: "Broad farms open as by magic on the blooming plain; stately houses take the place of the solitary cabin; and industry, that counts her gains, has stretched her transforming arm over all the fair land. The wild, the free, the mysterious, are fading . . . ."

In our own century, those who want to experience the wild things in Illinois have had to actively seek them. One of the most dedicated and perceptive seekers was a self-taught naturalist and writer from Springfield named Virginia S. Eifert. The best of her short pieces on the natural world are collected in *Essays on Nature* (1967), available at the Illinois State Museum. Another noted seeker of wild things was Leonard Dubkin, a Chicago resident, whose best book is *Enchanted Streets* (1947).

Like the writings of Eifert and Dubkin, the memoirs in this section of *Tales from Two Rivers V* reveal the importance to human life of experience with our natural environment. For example, Garnet Workman refers to the woodland on her farm as "the good provider," and indeed it was. The woods provided not only nuts, berries, squirrels, wildflowers, and wood itself, but also a harvest of experiences that became significant memories, as her account reveals.

In contrast, Glenn Lamb's "Encounters with Snakes" and Robert T. Burns's "More Than Two Scents Worth" remind us that some wild things have never been welcome neighbors to most people. Skunks have been killed for their pelts, but snakes have usually been killed for no particular reason–other than fear of having them around in those instances when they are believed to be poisonous. Public fascination with snakes reached a high point in Illinois during the later nineteenth century, when people sometimes competed to see who could kill the biggest snake and "snake stories" were fairly common in the newspapers. Perhaps when even snakes receive the kind of respect that all wild things deserve, we will have finally achieved a sense of ethical relationship to the living earth.

Several writers in this section reveal their uncommon sensitivity to particular wild things. For example, a childhood experience with foxes provided Marie Hawkinson with an intuitive sense of the instrinsic worth of those very common predators of the Illinois fields and woods. And James B. Jackson vividly recounts his experiences with bats. Without doubt, his life was enriched by contact with those widely misunderstood and largely unappreciated creatures of the night.

Even plants can provide memorable experiences. Lucille Ballinger's fine story of her quest for the red spirea bush reveals how clearly that episode impressed itself on her mind. And her closing note, on the destruction of the bush by subsequent residents of the farm, suggests the deep, unfortunate truth that plants and animals are all the more important to some of us because many others do not find any value in them.

Among these authors Dorris E. Wells is perhaps the most ardent amateur naturalist. She has spent a lifetime getting to know the wild things around her native Hamilton, located on the Mississippi River across from Keokuk, Iowa. Her memoir of Cedar Glen, which is now part of the Alice Kibbe Life Science Station owned by Western Illinois University, reminds us that wild places and wild things are indeed precious, and if future generations are to share these joys and have similar memories to keep, the natural world in Illinois must be our perennial concern.

John E. Hallwas

THE TIMBER BELT

Floy K. Chapman

In the early days of our state, the country was divided, roughly, into three natural areas–the great prairie land, the river bottoms, and a region between them covered with great hardwood forests. Because the good prairie land was taken first, and because little river towns grew up at the edge of the bottom area, wildlife fled to the timberlands as the white settlers arrived.

Not until Civil War days were the timber lands invaded by a group of Southern settlers. My grandparents were among those who settled in the Pleasant Dale neighborhood about seven miles west of White Hall. The first decade of my life was spent on one of the small farms that grew up on the edge of that great timber area.

Our house faced the prairie, but three patches of virgin timber were nearby. Great oaks, hickory, elm, and hard maple trees covered these areas. Wild grape vines as big as our legs climbed on some of the trees, and covered them with fruit in season. Paw paws, white dogwood, red bud, and various kinds of bushes grew under the trees and the ground was dark and damp.

We children never ventured into the timber alone because we were afraid of the noises that came from it at night and we heard many stories of the wildlife there. Sometimes we saw wild cats, raccoons, possums, skunks, foxes, a lynx, and many, many squirrels, rabbits, and groundhogs. In winter, the country folks hunted and trapped fur for cash.

Snakes of all kinds, harmless and poisonous, were a way of life, and every farm had guns over the door and a hoe near the back door for protection.

Bird song filled the air, and nests were always near at hand. Bluebirds, thrushes, larks, swallows, redbirds, hawks, crows, buzzards, and sparrows of many kinds were our acquaintances. We were not far from the Illinois River bottoms, and every year mighty flocks of wild ducks, geese, and migrating birds of every kind heralded the change of the seasons.

In season, and in their particular area, Dutchman's breeches; blue, yellow, and purple violets; red and yellow columbine; spring beauties; shooting stars; bluebells; Jack-in-the-pulpits; and the rare and beautiful yellow lady slippers were ours for the taking.

Wahoo bushes and bittersweet vines clambered over the rail fence back of the barn. Wild crabapples and plums covered the hillside, and patches of wild gooseberries, dewberries, and various sized blackberries dotted the hilly bluegrass pasture back of the barn.

In warm, summer evenings, my father and mother would sit on chairs in the yard and we children would lie on pallets on the ground while the house cooled off. We looked at the stars–thousands and thousands of them. Then, far away, we would hear "Whip-poor-Will! Whip-poor-Will!" from the west timber.

Then, from the north woodlot–"Who? Who? Whoo?" the hoot owl would reply.

We lay quietly listening, and soon the first notes of a mockingbird would come sweetly from a nearby oak. Then, the music became louder and sweeter. We went to sleep with his song filling the air with harmony.

It was over eighty years ago.

OUR WOODS–THE GOOD PROVIDER

Garnet Workman

Our centennial farm located in Pleasant Township, Fulton County, Illinois, is comprised of farm land and extensive pasture woodland. As I recall growing up on this farm, I realize that the wooded area was indeed a good provider of many things.

During the winter months, my father hunted and trapped animals for their pelts. When I was a small child, Dad promised to buy a new pair of shoes for me if he caught a fur-bearing animal in his traps. I was overjoyed when I saw him bringing home a skunk, and I jumped up and down, clapped my hands, and exclaimed to my mother, "Goody! Goody! Daddy caught a skunk! I'll get a new pair of shoes."

During February, the woods yielded sassafras roots from which my mother brewed delicious sassafras tea. She said it was good for the blood.

In late April and early May we went "mushrooming" for the delectable morel, or sponge, mushroom. Mother would fry these delicacies a crispy, golden brown, and I'm sure they rivalled the ambrosia of the mythological gods.

With the return of spring, the cattle were put out to pasture in the woods, where they grazed on the lush grass and drank from a branch or from Tater Creek. In later years, we had a pond and stocked it with fish.

The wildflowers from the woods provided many lovely arrangements for our home, and Mother transplanted bluebells along one side of our front lawn. Besides bluebells, we found Sweet Williams, Dutchmen's breeches, daisies, violets (our state flower), buttercups, trilliums, bloodroots, harebells, and deer's tongue or dogtooth violets.

In July, we picked wild blackberries from the woods. Mother made pies and cobblers from the luscious fresh berries. She also canned the berries and made blackberry jelly and jam. My sister and I sometimes sold a few gallons, and were very pleased with the small amount of money we earned.

In the hot summer months the woods provided an ideal place to wade in the refreshing streams. A deep hole in the branch also served as a bathtub for Dad when he returned from the fields after a long day.

My father enjoyed hunting and would bag squirrels for my mother, sister, and me, but he would not eat them. Mother would fry the young, tender squirrels, and, in my opinion, they were better than chicken. The older squirrels were stewed and served with a smooth, flavorful cream gravy.

The creek provided bullheads, sunfish, and an occasional turtle for many a tasty meal. Grandfather Vaughn fished in the creek during the spring of his eighty-sixth birthday.

In the fall, we gathered black walnuts, hickory nuts, and hazel nuts from the woods. Two methods of hulling the walnuts were used: one was to run the car tires back and forth over them and the other was to run them through the corn sheller. Picking out nut meats was an enjoyable project on a cold winter night. Hickory nut candy was one of my mother's special treats for Christmas.

Our woods also provided wood and coal for cooking and heating. A large woodpile was located west of the garage, and my sister and I would carry armloads of wood to the kitchen for Mother to use in her large old-fashioned range. We trained our dog Rover to carry one stick of wood in his mouth.

During the summer of 1934, Dad and one of my cousins dug coal and sold it to the Branson School in our neighborhood. With this money, we drove our Model-A Ford to Chicago and attended the World's Fair, known as the Century of Progress.

Before Christmas, Dad, my sister, and I would take our sled to the woods, where Dad would cut a small, well-shaped cedar for our Christmas tree and bring it home on the sled.

Besides providing all these material things, the woods was a wonderful place to meditate and feel close to God.

Grandfather Vaughn named one of the large hills Mt. Nebo. No doubt, when he bought this farm, he looked over his land from this high hill just as Moses viewed the Promised Land from Mt. Nebo.

Our woods provided many things which I remember with gratefulness and joy.

MORE THAN TWO SCENTS WORTH

Robert T. Burns

Many folks of the Illinois prairies have had disastrous run-ins with that beautiful black and often striped little wild animal known for his nauseating musk when he is aroused. Although he's really the farmers' friend because of his insatiable appetite for mice, he's quite unwelcome around homesteads. It's not only his smell that marks him for banishment; the skunk has always had an affinity for eggs and young chickens, which were staple commodities around farmsteads of the early 1900s.

My first memorable encounter with this little member of the weasel family, whose fur is often called "Alaska sable," took place on our farmstead one mile west of Greenview, Illinois, and about ten miles north of Lincoln's New Salem. That and two other adventures with skunks involved three domestic animals–a beautiful tan and white collie named Betty, a ponderous sorrel Belgian mare answering to Molly, and a half-wild little horse of mixed ancestry known as Cricket.

On a spring day a year prior to the American involvement in World War I, we had noticed the tell-tale aroma of skunk as we went about our morning chores. The cause of the stench was traced to the area under the corn crib. Knowing that a family of that tribe, or perhaps more than one family, could be a menace to the new chicken crop, and could almost certainly lead to human social ostracism, my father and two older brothers accepted the offer of our hired man to enlist the aid of his valiant little terrier, Spot. The young man, Earl Eldridge, a son of a prominent Greenview doctor and somewhat of a daredevil by nature, was later destined to become a pilot in the fledgling American air force in the impending war.

The little terrier went to work. Spot instinctively knew how to break the spines of the intruders, immediately killing them, then triumphantly depositing them at the feet of his young master. (My father, two brothers, and this six-year old kid maintained discreet shelters beyond the firing line.)

Another spectator was Betty, our young Collie, just emerging from the middle stages of puppyhood. After she had happily observed Spot's dexterity and success, she seemed to say, as she cocked her head from side to side, "I want into the action."

That turned out to be a rash and disastrous decision. Under the crib went Betty; out she dragged an adult skunk, dropped the animal to get a better hold, then mistakenly attacked her intended victim from the rear. Betty's adversary did what came naturally; the untutored pup received a full charge of the awful effluvia in the face and mouth.

Although I was six years old at the time, I shall never forget the extent of Betty's torment. She went into a frenzy laced with yelping, retching, eating dirt, and rolling over and over while trying to paw the pain of that fluid from her eyes.

Betty did recover from the venture, but she retreated that day to a shed where Dad ministered to her as best he could. The unfortunate pet was socially unwelcome for many days–something a naturally happy and gregarious puppy found hard to endure.

A second incident came some seven years later as I rode atop a gang plow towed by a four-horse team with Ol' Molly, a Belgian mare, walking to the right of her three companions. Usually such a gentle and cooperative horse is chosen for

Molly's position, to trudge along in the furrow while the others walked upon unturned soil to her left. It was a late spring day; successive rains had set back preparations for the new corn crop. The field was flat and fairly smooth; and the horses needed little driving: I was in a trance, dreaming about the sumptuous meal awaiting us at noon time.

It happened that "Uncle Doc" and Aunt Molly Hurst had returned to Greenview for a visit. Uncle Doc (S.T.) Hurst had been a doctor in the town for many years service after he had done a long stretch in the Civil War. Great-Aunt Molly and the doctor were impeccably moral; they had always denounced the silent movies of the early '20s and yet, they had retired to Hollywood, virtually living among the sinners of the screen. Uncle Doc was so straight-laced, though an accommodating doctor, that he demanded his Sunday School teachers meet with him in a weekly Saturday preparatory session before teaching their classes on the Sabbath. The Hursts were to be our dinner guests today.

As I savored the upcoming meal (I am never an unwilling feeder at the festive board), there were visions of salt tangy roast beef, brown gravy covering a mountain of mashed potatoes, capped with a mound of Jersey butter streaming down in little rivulets of goodness, country fried chicken, homemade ice cream, and much more.

As I recovered from the reverie, I noted the usual black and gleaming ripples of soil gliding over the double plow shares and mold boards. Then an alarming and unmistakable whiff of skunk jerked me into dismay. Walking down the furrow ahead of Molly was a mother skunk with her five little offspring, apparently about half grown.

I could have stopped the team and permitted the little family to retire unmolested. But Ol' Molly was trodding upon the furry creatures. One by one she purposely trod into extinction three of the critters, who before their demise, were unloosing a dreaded barrage of built-in ammunition. Why a naturally compassionate and gentle mare would choose to stir the animals into retaliation I shall never know. Incidentally, her hooves were no larger than those of a mastodon; neither were they much smaller.

Fear of the consequences overwhelmed me. Should I be caught in that stream of vile and malodorous musk, I would not be in any way welcome at the festive board–in fact not even in the house. Setting the plow deep to forestall a potential runaway, I high tailed it away from the gagging smellorama.

Miraculously, I remained free of the victims' assault, tripped the plow from the ground, and proceeded homeward for a joyous encounter with food and fellowship. But Ol' Molly stank to high heaven for weeks–even for months after a rain. We had heard that bathing a victim of skunk spray in tomato juice would assuage the situation. But bathing a 2,000-pound mare in such a concoction is a bit mind boggling.

Just two years later, in 1925, I saddled up the dappled gray little horse, Cricket, offspring of a half Indian-half Shetland pony and an Arabian sire. His mixed blood was too much for him; he was never gentle and was always planning some outrage against his masters. In late afternoon we headed for a "haunted house," which sat long abandoned in a neighbor's field where I had set a trap.

Before this trip, I had caught a pure black skunk on the old structure's grounds, but an unknown animal had attacked my quarry in the trap and had ripped its fur into strips, rendering worthless an otherwise valuable pelt.

Arrival on this trip revealed a trapped striped polecat outside the window of the old house. After tying Cricket to a sapling, I entered the abandoned home of yesteryear and climbed the rickety old stairs to give me a chance to dispatch the furry prey with my old single shot, 22 Stevens rifle. I leaned out the paneless window to get a clear shot without any retaliation from the skunk.

Early winter afternoon had almost turned to darkness,

particularly within the gloomy old structure. Then there came a squish, scraping sound behind me. Elevating my rifle and turning quickly to confront any intruder, ghostly or not, amid shivers of anticipation, I was soon relieved to find the eerie sound was old loose wall paper, well weighted with paste and old plaster, grating against a door.

But I still had not completed my mission. One shot dispatched the prey; then it was placed in a gunny sack and tied securely to the saddle of the violently objecting riding horse who was snorting, rolling his eyes, and sniffing the gamey odor of my catch.

Cricket had never before bucked; he'd been content to throw himself on his side or, for his idea of kicks, strike at mankind with his front feet. As I gripped the reins tightly and swung into the saddle, he tried a new trick for him; the frantic mount did a perfect upturn, causing me to land upon his neck, whereupon Cricket threw himself on his side. I managed to escape injury by landing away from his midriff.

After getting both myself and the little rascal quieted down, I again swung onto his back holding on to my rifle and the saddle for dear life. That evening, Cricket was a runaway, oblivious to either my commands or use or reins. We arrived home in record time; I never had a chance to insert my right foot into the stirrup.

That ended my days of trapping–a pursuit that I would today frown upon. Perhaps all my trials and tribulations on that brief December afternoon could be chalked up to poetic justice. Cruelty can often backfire upon the aggressor.

ENCOUNTERS WITH SNAKES

Glenna Lamb

In Green and Scott counties, where I grew up, the beautiful Illinois River bluffs stretch from Winchester to Hillview and beyond. At intervals, there are long lines of rock cliffs outlining the broad expanse of fertile river valley. The Frank Howard family farm was in the hills back of the cliffs in Greene County. It was all beautiful to me, even the small frame house that was our home. But there were dangers to be aware of.

There were rattlesnakes in the hills and bluffs. I have heard my parents tell about a time, shortly after they moved there, when my oldest brother, George, went to the door one morning to empty the dirt out of his shoes before putting them on. He dropped down on one knee, and was emptying the dirt, when he saw a small snake behind the door. It turned out to be a baby rattler.

When I was around seven, my brother Earl had an unusual snake experience. Dad was mowing hay. Earl was watching, and trying to catch baby rabbits as they ran from the mower. He had lain down to wait for Dad to make another round, the length of the field and back. He got interested in watching insects in the grass, and propped himself up on one elbow. This created a space between his upper body and the ground. Suddenly he became aware that a snake was crawling through that space. Earl had the calmness and self-discipline to lie perfectly still until the snake had emerged from the space beneath his body. Of course, the last part to emerge was a string of rattles. I'm not sure if Earl knew it was a rattlesnake before he saw the rattles or not. Neither did I know what happened next: whether the snake rattled and coiled to strike or not. Earl did manage to get Dad's attention, and Dad got there and killed the snake. Earl kept the rattles for a souvenir, and carried them in his pocket for quite a long while.

One summer evening our little dog, Trixie, bayed a

rattlesnake in the valley between our house and the cherry orchard. Trixie was barking furiously; the snake's rattles were singing. Dad said, "There is no mistaking the sound. It is a rattlesnake." It was after dark, and was a serious situation that must be dealt with. Dad considered it to be his responsibility. He loaded the shotgun and took a supply of shells with him. He could not see the snake in the dark, so he began shooting at the sound. He kept shooting into the weeds until the rattling stopped. He had no way of knowing if he had killed the snake, or just shot off its rattles, so he brought Trixie and got away from the spot as quickly as he could. When he went back the next morning, the snake was dead.

There were other kinds of snakes in the territory, some poisonous and some non-poisonous. Copperheads were another poisonous kind that were sometimes found in our community. I remember one summer when one was killed in a neighbor's field, about a half mile from our house. We felt concerned; where there was one, there might be others. There was one kind which my dad called a kissing viper, and another that he referred to as a spreadhead. They were both said to be poisonous. Rattlesnakes were the most prevalent, yet to my knowledge, the only ones I ever saw were the two that my dad killed.

Among the non-poisonous varieties, black snakes were probably the ones that I saw the most. There were also blue racers, bull snakes, and of course, garter snakes.

When I was twelve, we moved a short distance to the Jim Dillon farm in Scott County. It was a mile and a half southwest of Glasgow. The house was a half mile off the road, with a private road leading back to it. The fields were in the Little Sandy Creek valley, the pasture land in the hills that outlined it. It was a wonderful place for observing wildlife, snakes included.

One day Mother sent me to the barn to get a basket of cobs for burning in the cook stove. When I opened the door to the crib, there was a large black snake making himself quite at home. At that time, I did not know that snakes befriend the farmer by eating insects and rodents. I thought all snakes should be killed if they were encroaching on your territory. This one was in our crib, and I wasn't about to pick up cobs in the same room with him. So I went out to look for something to kill him with. I found a good sturdy club about four feet long. Just the thing, I decided. When I opened the crib door again, the snake was crawling through a rat hole, making his get-away. "Oh no," I thought, "I can't let this happen!" My next act was totally on impulse. About a third of the snake's body was already through the hole. I should have let him go. Instead, I grabbed him by the tail, yanked him back through the hole, and hit him on the head. I expected it to kill him, but it only made him angry. I had no idea he would fight so hard for his life, or that he would be so hard to kill. I would have liked to just drop the whole thing, but with him fighting so hard, I thought I had no choice but to finish the job. It was a hard battle, the snake raring up on it's tail and striking at me, and me hitting him with my club. I didn't get bitten, and I finally won the battle. At last the snake was dead. Suddenly a loud cheer went up from behind me. My brothers, Earl and Carl, and a friend, Wesley Erwin, had been watching. I hadn't known they were anywhere around. They thought I was a heroine. I didn't want to talk about it. I was tired, and glad it was over. I filled the basket with cobs and took them in to Mother.

One Sunday afternoon I had nothing to do, so I decided to go wading in the creek. I walked across the cornfield, left my shoes on the bank, and stepped into the water. I kept wading downstream until I was probably a mile from where I had started. It was in a particularly cool, woodsy place, and one side of the creek had a bank with weeds growing on it. I saw a snake lying still in the weeds. I picked up a pebble and tossed it at him. Instead of slithering away, as I had thought he would, he raised his head and hissed at me. I picked up another rock and threw it at him, thinking that would make him run, but he stood his

ground and hissed louder. I considered him to be my enemy, so I kept on tossing rocks at him, and he kept getting madder and madder. He spread his head, and kept hissing loudly, but he also began thrashing about, raring up on his tail and striking in my direction. The creek, about four feet wide at that point, was between him and me, but he was putting on such a frightening exhibition that I was very scared. I feared he might jump across the creek and attack me. I retreated upstream as fast as I could, and didn't stop until I was back at the place where I had left my shoes. In my mind, there was no doubt but that he was either a spreadhead or a hissing viper, and that I had been very close to being bitten. I'll never know what kind he really was, but I definitely know one thing: that was the last time I ever teased a snake.

Whenever anyone in the neighborhood killed a rattlesnake or a copperhead, the news spread fast, both as a warning and as good tidings. It refreshed people's awareness that dangerous snakes were around, and that to be bitten by one could be fatal. It was good news that one of our common enemies had been destroyed.

THE FOXES OF MY CHILDHOOD

Maxine Hawkinson

When I was a child, the youngest of eight, my two brothers found a dead mother fox and went to look for her babies. They found two crying baby red foxes in a cave nearby and brought them home to raise. Those young red foxes were the most beautiful creatures I've ever seen. They were so bright and graceful and new minted looking. I loved them from the first, though they were snarly and fierce, fighting each other over food.

At first, they were kept in a large chicken coop and as they grew were put in a chicken wire pen with a covered top. They were never "pets," always snarling and spitting. They would lacerate your hand if you offered food in it as we soon learned. They would never rub against you for affection as a dog or cat would.

As they grew older, they found many ways to escape, squeezing out between fence and top or digging out under the fence. They became expert at this, but they always came back.

As they stayed in the wild longer and longer, they only returned to raid the chicken house. After several such forays, our chicken flock decreased measurably, so my dad declared war on the invaders. They had to be destroyed!

I wept when I heard this and I think my brothers, Sam and Charlie, did, too, secretly. But the lovely red foxes were killed and their pelts were made into Daniel Boone caps with the tails, or "brushes" as fox tails are called, hanging down the back. I never saw my brothers wear the caps. I doubt they ever did.

Some years ago my husband and I were driving in the country and saw a red fox dead beside the road. I got out of the car and stood beside him and cried for him and for the little foxes of my childhood.

MY EXPERIENCES WITH BATS

James B. Jackson

Bats have always fascinated me. (If man were truly to fly, wouldn't he have to be built something like a bat?) I still love to see tiny brown bats at twilight feeding on flying insects while it is still almost daylight. They seem scarcely larger than the giant silk worm moths; in fact, they have no greater wing span

than some of the larger members of that equally interesting set of night flyers.

A very early encounter happened late one fall in the 1920s as I was prospecting for a new trap line along the Lamoine River just north of Macomb, Illinois. I came upon a huge white elm tree dead from one of our imported elm diseases. It was still encased in its bark which hung in a couple of great sheets ten or twelve feet long. I took hold of a sheet and found it quite loose except that it was firmly fastened at one edge. When I pulled it back slowly and gently I was amazed to see dozens of brown bats hanging to the old tree trunk, protected by the loose bark. The bats looked to be piled three or four deep, all clinging in a mass not unlike a swarm of giant bees. It was cold enough that they were starting their winter hibernation and my intrusion did not disturb them. I eased the bark back in place and on my next trip that way I brought a length of bailing wire to secure the bark enough to keep the winter wind from blowing it away. Throughout the fall and early winter, I checked it almost daily as I tended my traps and then it was forgotten until one warm May morning when I came that way in search of morel mushrooms and I checked it once again. This time I untied the wire and eased back the bark several inches. The bats were still there but no longer hibernating. They swarmed out en masse, sounding their high pitched sonar signals and flying away in all directions. I replaced the bark and the wire and sat down to watch and to rest. Within fifteen minutes the bats were coming back to reenter their violated sanctuary. I counted more than a hundred before the main body was home and only an occasional flittermouse came in. Then I resumed my quest for morels. The next time I walked that way, two years later, the bark was still in tact.

Once I came upon a well-hidden cave and returned later with a couple of good flashlights to explore it a bit. The passage way curved rather sharply some thirty yards from the entrance and no daylight penetrated beyond that point. Shortly beyond the curve the cave became two-level. A gradual slope, sort of a natural ramp, led off to the right and upward. Both branches had ten-foot ceilings and the floors were smooth. I went up the ramp and found myself in a large chamber much wider than the first part of the cave. There was a strong odor and the floor had a different feel, almost as if it were carpeted. When I turned my light on it, it was indeed carpeted–with bat dung several inches deep! I began to hear tiny rustling noises and when I put my light on the ceiling, it was covered with bats as far as I could see. As the light hit them, they began to drop off and fly about, clicking and squeaking and darting past within inches of my face. When I stood stock still and turned off the light, the activity seemed to intensify. Suddenly I felt a chill of uneasiness–fright–then sheer panic! I turned on both lights and RAN for the exit. The bats did not come beyond the ramp, but I ran until I rounded a curve and could see daylight at the mouth of the cave. I quickly recovered my composure and sat a long half-hour in the sunshine at the mouth of the cave. I felt much more at ease with the little copperhead snake who shared that sunny spot with me than I did with those hundreds of furry bats swooping about my head in the dark, dank recesses of the limestone cave.

FISH GRABBING

Robert L. Brownlee

Years ago a friend and I developed a technique for catching big fish without using hooks or lines: we grabbed them. The Edwards River was full of carp and catfish. It's a big stream that flows down to join the Mississippi near Seaton, Illinois. There the leather back carp that have just a few large scales grow to giant sizes, up to forty or fifty pounds. The

German carp are not much behind them. And huge catfish come upstream from the big river. They all lie in the holes between the riffles around the tree roots and drifts. In late summer the water is low and that's when my friend Carl and I went after them. We could keep the carp alive and get them to market where they brought a fair price.

To catch big carp, we wore a pair of bib overalls and waded right in the river. The water was four, sometimes five feet deep. One day in August we loaded the old pick-up truck with gunny sacks and rags to keep the fish wet and alive. We got as close as possible to the river and found a long strip of good water with some brush and logs in it and two or three drifts. We caught several carp in the shallow water just with our hands. They would weigh four or five pounds each. But when you try to pick up one that weighs twelve or fifteen pounds, its a different story. That's the reason for the bib overalls. When you find a big one, you stoop over until the bib is under the water. Then you guide the fish in next to your chest. If you work slow and easy, they never get scared and will slip right in where you want them. Now you have your fish in your bib. You tighten the suspenders, grab him by the tail and walk out of the crick. He'll flop and squirm but he can't get away. Well, we got six or seven old leather backs that weighed well over twelve pounds a piece and a lot of four or five pounders, plus several pretty fair catfish, mostly blue cats. We put them in the truck and covered them with wet sacks and rags before we went on to the next drift.

Then I felt around and found a big fish. When I ran my hand over it, I knew it was a cat because it had no scales. Up there we called that kind of catfish a "Hoosier." They are golden-brown in color and get to be huge fish. This one was lying on the bottom right beside a log. I hollered for Carl to get the clothes line rope we had in the truck and a stick or something so we could try to get a line through his gills. I stuck my head under water and tried to thread the rope through, but couldn't make it. The old fish was getting edgy and starting to wiggle a little so I let him alone awhile. Then we got a piece of wire and bent an eye at one end to take the clothesline. I got the wire through the gills and out of his mouth with no trouble. He wiggled some, but still didn't break loose from the bottom; just laid there like he was stuck down. I worked real slow and got the rope through his mouth. After we tied a good knot, Carl pulled and I pried with a board against the log. When he went, he went fast and furious.

Eventually Carl and I drug him out on the bank and, man, he was a big fish! We were so excited we were both shaking and had to sit down and rest before we loaded him in the truck. At Carl's house we put that fish on the scales and he weighed forty-two pounds. Biggest fish I had ever had anything to do with. We took a lot of pictures and then decided to eat him. When we cut off the head it weighed twelve pounds. Cleaning it was like butchering a pig. We cut steaks like pork chops, and they were wonderful eating. We kept a lot of it cool for another day, so the neighbors could enjoy it with us. When we sold the other fish, we felt we were well paid for half a day's work.

All of this happened more than seventy years ago. I have caught hundreds of fish since then, some larger than the "Hoosier," but I have never had another such thrill.

OUR QUEST FOR THE RED SPIREA

Lucille Ballinger

My brother, Stanley Klaus, and I, Lucille Klaus Ballinger, were fortunate to inherit the love of flowers, gardens, wildflowers, and anything pertaining to nature from our wonderful parents, Clara and Otto Klaus. During the depression days of the Twenties, we were so poor, but everyone else was, too. We made our own fun, and never had to hunt for means of

enjoyment, as something was always ready for us kids to do. We always helped in the garden, watered flowers, and helped put in bulbs, seeds, and plants. We loved it all.

A nearby neighbor who sensed our love for flowers and shrubs, told us of a certain place in the woods, about four miles from our home, that had been his former boyhood home, but was nothing now but a wooded area. He remarked there should be some flowering bushes remaining if the denseness of the timber had not taken over. Stanley decided it would be a good idea to go explore a bit. After some deliberation, parental permission was granted. We both were elated.

One hot, sunny May day, Stanley, ten, and I, age nine, started out with a spade and a gunny sack, on our trek down the railroad track nearby. We saw birds, animals, a snake, and many of nature's offerings, during our four-mile walk. The wildflowers were breathtaking and so thrilling. We loved every step we took. Finally we found the exact area, amid thorns, downed trees, and wilderness. We excitedly found the Red Spirea bush we had been told of, amid the great mass of earthy growth. It was in bloom and we thought it was beautiful.

Stanley started digging with the spade we had carried so far, taking turns with the awkward tool. It was a real job, but we knew we must keep on as we still had a long way to go. The bush, rather large, was all in bloom; digging it up was hard, but we finally got it out of the ground. We bumped off all the excess dirt from he roots to make it lighter to carry. Now we were on the way back to the railroad tracks, homeward bound.

As we were climbing the steep grade up to the tracks, Stanley spied some colorful wildflowers and he suggested we quickly pick some to take to our little ones at home. There was one drawback for me as we were going to have to cross the railroad tracks some twenty feet above the big creek below. Heights never did appeal to me and I quickly told him I could not do it. With much persuasion and the promise of his help, I gave in, as I often did.

He held my hand and we made it until we got halfway across and I became dizzy-headed, and could go no further. We had a real problem. Stanley decided I could crawl instead of walk, and he did tell me not to look down at the water below. I tried but that was the only thing to see. At times I felt as if I had to empty my entire stomach, as I was so upset and nauseated.

Finally, I had crawled the entire span, and I sat down while he slid down the side to get an armload of pretty wildflowers. All the time I waited, I was wondering how I would get back across the tracks. We finally crossed the trestle, he with the armload of pretty wildflowers, walking beside me as I crawled along the railroad ties. He kept reminding me not to look down. I did have to sit and rest several times, but finally got over it. I shall never forget the glorious feeling as I crossed the last railroad tie. I just thought he would never talk me into that again! He was a bit disappointed that I had not been able to pick my share of the lovely wildflowers. We picked up our spade and put the bush in the gunny sack and took off on our return trip. We got so tired, but had to trudge on as that sun in the west was going down fast. We took turns carrying the sack and the spade. Stanley's armload of wildflowers was getting more limp as we went each step. We could not imagine they could make such a change. About a mile and a half from home, we had to step off the tracks and let a long freight train go by, never thinking what we would have done had it come by an hour earlier.

We trudged on and on and finally got home. Our parents expressed their great concern for our tardiness, but we quickly related our exciting afternoon experiences. Mom gasped for her breath at my telling of the trestle crawl. She excitedly asked why we had gone so far, only for me to quickly inform her it was Stanley's idea to get the pretty wildflowers that by now were nothing but a drawn-up mess. We put them in water, only to be disappointed–there was no change. The folks asked what we would have done, had a train come along, but we had no answer.

Our flowers were a disaster, but we still had our healthy

looking bush. We put it in a tub of water, to be replanted the following day. Each spring after that our red spirea bush bloomed so beautifully and we were so very proud of it.

In time, our little rented farm was sold and we had to move. Months after the new owners had moved in, Stanley and I begged Dad to go ask if we might have a start of our bush. After much deliberation, he did go, only to be told that they had discarded all the bushes and shrubbery. We were so sad to hear the news. But sixty years later, I still love to go to my storehouse of memories and pull this particular one out.

CEDAR GLEN

Dorris E. Wells

Cedar Glen was a special joy of my teen years. How I first learned of that natural wild area of a small creek with limestone cliffs, native trees, and plants, is for the moment beyond my memory. I lived across the Mississippi River in Keokuk. Girl friends and I counted a hike to Cedar Glen to be a ten-mile round trip toward the G.A.A. (Girl's Athletic Association) award.

We walked the old Keokuk bridge, pausing to marvel at the geode and rock crystals displayed in a window of the old toll house on the side of the bridge. To me, the prize of the display was the golden-green "hairs" of millerite crystals growing from a dot in transparent calcite crystals and out into open space. This all was exposed in solid, hard, gray limestone from a nearby Illinois quarry.

After crossing the bridge into Illinois, we immediately followed the railroad track over a trestle and along the Warsaw, Illinois, tracks toward Cedar Glen. In this way we avoided the extra miles of the old dike road, the wooden Hamilton covered bridge, and the surrender of our 5¢ bridge receipt we had received at the Keokuk tollhouse. To my delight, the kindly tolltaker assured us that the 5¢ ticket was good as our toll for the return walk home.

Before my days of hikes to Cedar Glen, these railroad tracks had served also as a trolley-car line between Keokuk, Hamilton, and Warsaw. It also made a stop at Cedar Glen for picnicking parties. When the trolley ceased operation, the picnickers ceased, leaving but a shallow well pump and a simple shelter to remind us of old trolley days and picnic outings. The earlier vehicle road, serving farmers on that river bottom between Hamilton and Warsaw, had been mud or limestone. Crossing creeks such as Crystal Glen and Cedar Glen required fording the streams. The stream-sides, at times following high water, could be rather steep for autos of the '20s and '30s.

My love for Cedar Glen centered on the birds, trees, vines, brush, ferns, wildflowers, mosses, and fungi. As a teen-age school girl, I found challenge in trying to identify and study this nature, both at the Glen and along the railroad tracks. The geology of the area, the limestone cliffs, the fossils, and occasional geodes, also intrigued me.

At one place the stream made a sharp hair-pin turn to form a limestone wall some three-feet wide. We could walk the top of this wall and look directly down to the creek, some twenty feet below on each side of us. We speculated about the creek water boring a hole through that narrow wall to make a "natural bridge" in our lifetime. Another very high cliff, perhaps 100 feet, had through the years become an autographing space for the rock-clambering young men of this area. Names or initials were visible, printed with charcoal, sharp stone, or a soft chalky rock.

This Cedar Glen and other adjacent property was purchased by Dr. Alice Kibbe, and used by her in the biology classes she taught at Carthage, Illinois, some fifteen miles east. When Carthage College was moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin, Dr. Kibbe sought for some way that the Cedar Glen property could be kept natural. She eventually deeded it to Western Illinois

University. That property, with added State and Conservancy lands, is now maintained as the "Alice Kibbe Life Sciences Station."

I was heartbroken and irate when a "No Trespassing" sign first appeared at "my" access to Cedar Glen. Now I realize what a good deal that was. Now a Bald Eagle roosting area is protected through the winter months. Known as a conservation area, Cedar Glen is now much safer from vandals and careless hikers. Visitors are asked to register with the ranger, and to abide by certain rules.

Springtime favors the area with dutchman's britches, squirrel-corn, spring-beauties, varieties of violets, hare-bells, blue bells, wild pansies, and crimson-cup fungi. In early spring, certain hills are brittle with grey-green reindeer moss (lichen), or bright with vivid green moss. Creek water teems with frogs, tadpoles, and occasional minnows. Wild bees buzz in and out of their hollow tree hive.

My fondest memory–of the many of Cedar Glen–was the time that as a teenager I was approached by Dr. Clyde Ehinger, a noted bird and nature authority from Keokuk. He was at Cedar Glen with his boy's bird club; I was there with two or three girl friends. Dr. Ehinger seemed to know of, and trust me. He took me aside to show me a very rare "walking fern." He explained that the name was for the plant's ability to root a new plant where the long lance-shaped leaf rested a tip on moist fertile soil. Since the plant was rare in this area, he trusted me to keep it and the location a secret. I felt highly honored, and I told no one. But, alas it was so rare that it is now gone from Cedar Glen!

VI Farm Life Years Ago

FARM LIFE YEARS AGO

Before the technological revolution, America was primarily an agrarian society. Farming was the nation's primary business, and it emerged as a romantic movement that was a cornerstone in the building of our nation. It was an honorable life built on the love of the earth, the work ethic, a sense of serving others, self-reliance, and concern for the family unit. It both reflected and imbued an admirable consensus morality and a way of life that had broad appeal.

Writer Jessee Stuart had one of his protagonists indicate, "So many of the people who worked, farmed, thought, and believed in a way of 'livin are gone. . . . We'll go to new ground where we can raise what we eat and eat what we raise from the good earth. It'll give us strength. It always has."

This enormous strength and affection is reflected again and again in literature. The deep love for farming, in an almost mystical manner, represents ultimate commitment, dedication, and romantic reverie. In *Farm Boy*, a farmer submitted,

> I heard someone once say that Americans love the land like they love their own skin, and they love work in the same way. I think that's one of the things of being a farmer. Enjoy farming. You love the land–to plant things and to see them grow, and you enjoy the work that goes with it. That's farming. I think any farmer loves the land. I don't think you would ever make a good farmer unless you enjoyed doing it or working with it. I don't think I'd care to do anything else.

His wife added: "The land is like a child. Yes. And you grow with it. It's like a revolving thing. As a child you grow up with the land it takes care of you, and then one day you plant and it grows as a child does, and you take care of it."

Unfortunately, though, this enormous love affair with farming involves far fewer people each year. In 1820, over seventy percent of Americans were involved, in one way or another, with agriculture. In 1940, the percentage fell to under eighteen per cent, and in 1985 fewer than three percent earned their living in farming. Something of intrinsic value has been lost, and many consider the rediscovery crucial to the rebuilding of America. What happened on the farms in this nation in the era before the ending of World War II is worthy of consummate examination. At the very best, there may be important answers to America's most grave and pressing problems and a recasting of consensus values–what Myrdal identified as the secular hope of mankind. At the least, there is the explanation of a remarkable, romantic era in American history.

The memoirs included in this chapter brilliantly deal with farm life and allow the reader an inside look at a way of life that was very special. Overwhelmingly in the memoirs the major theme is love for family–the lovely and enduring importance of the family. At the same time, there is a comprehensive family-centered view of life in the rural areas.

Margaret DeDecker provides a compelling view of life on the farm, particularly of the difficulty of her Belgian ethnic family in the enterprise. Speaking of hardship, Margaret Reynolds shares an in-depth vignette of the farm privy and the anguish that she and her siblings suffered when a relative played the practical joke of feeding Ex-Lax to them claiming it was candy.

Technology, of course, profoundly changed farming. Ralph Eaton shared the poultry business in which his family was involved. Slow to accept change, his father eventually used the incubator—but the poultry business for small farmers was destroyed by the new ways. Mildred Seger, in a remarkable memoir about farm life, considers the difficulty her father suffered in adjusting to the new technology.

And the farmers had to overcome hardships. To earn

extra income, Florence Eckhardt's parents worked with her on making a strawberry patch a profitable endeavor. Helen Rilling affectionately tells how she loved the homemade toys that her father made for her because there was not cash to spend on such things. Evelyn Wittier charmingly shares her experiences in canning to stretch dollars–and can she did, one year canning 1,000 jars of food. Mary Conlan explains the extreme difficulty that the 1929 depression and bad weather had on her father's farming. A resourceful man, he began raising horses to succeed, and his daughter shares her love for both the horses and her father. Ivan Pratt explains the chicken stealing that farmers faced, and shares an incident of attempted thievery on the family farm.

Sending stock to market was an important, demanding, and sometimes troublesome task. Both Elizabeth Haines and Donald Norris explain the joys and trials of the endeavor.

A lovely portrait of farming emerges from the memoirs. To be sure, they speak of hardships, but they also show love. The writers demonstrate a profound joy in their rural heritage. And this speaks very loudly to a time when so many of the assets the writers extol are lost. Perhaps it is time, and well past, to look backward–even to the rural areas and to farming.

Alfred J. Lindsey

THE SILVER THREADS AMONG THE GOLD

Mary J. Conlan

I was born on a farm and my parents owned three farms, a grain elevator, and several businesses, but in 1929 during the stock market crash I saw them lose a lot. My father, who always seemed to have an inner strength, came back from adversity with the drive and ability to make money and provide for the family. He experienced failure and still managed to keep calm and active.

When the swirling, muddy waters of swollen Dry Run Creek surged over the cornland of Pleasant Valley Farm for the third consecutive year, my father vowed he would never plant another row of corn. With that in mind, he grimly set about scraping off the mud from his eighty acres of bottom land with but one determined goal in view.

When other more fortunate farmers who lived on top of the hill far from the threat of the mighty floods would offer him sympathy, he, very mysteriously, told them that he aimed to raise a crop that would bring good money every year, floods or not! You can imagine everyone's surprise when, out of all the wreckage of the damaging overflow waters, there finally emerged a beautiful half-mile race track with the corners graded to a fine degree for fast-traveling trotters and pacers-to-be.

What had started out as a hobby several years before with my father now turned out a full-fledged business: raising and training standardbred race horses.

My earliest recollections are of driving a fast hobbled pacer around that track in the early hours of the morning. What a thrill it is to drive an eager colt that is being taught to travel at a high speed! I had a very small part in the actual training of these fine race horses. The stable man, Earl Andrews, very generously allowed me to drive them on the exercise cart and assist in their grooming. I walked many around the cooling circle outside the stables as the hot, foam-covered horses relaxed and got back to normal after a heat.

Never will I forget the look of great pride on my father's face one hot June morning when Lady Jane Axworthy, tired and exhausted after a long anxious night in a noisy thunderstorm, presented a sturdy chestnut sorrel son to the Pleasant Valley Farm. This tiny foal, with his golden coat, white mane and tail, and four flashing white stockings, completely stole our hearts.

My father affectionately named him "Silver Threads among the Gold," and my mother rather tartly remarked that there would probably be many silver threads in her hair before the colt brought us any money. I wasn't interested in money, though. I only waited for the chance to slip out the kitchen door with a palm moistened with sugar, calling to Silver Threads to join me. It wasn't long before he would raise his head from the velvet carpet of grass where he was grazing with his ears tilting in my direction. I would call to him and, assured of a treat coming, he would produce his best colt nicker and race to meet me.

Silver did a lot of growing that summer, and we took his first photograph when he was five months old. He was a truly photogenic colt, looking very handsome from every angle. The most beautiful quality he possessed, though, was sweetness of disposition. I can't remember that he ever kicked out in defiance to an order. When training sessions ended and the halter was removed, he lovingly rubbed his head against my shoulder and almost demanded affection.

My job, when I came home from school, was to look after Silver Threads. This meant to water him, provide fresh straw for his stall, and watch him in the exercise lot so he kept out of trouble. In early April when I arrived at the stables one afternoon, I found Earl Andrews hitching Silver Threads to the driving sulky. When all was ready, I was astonished to hear my father call out to me to get ready to drive Silver Threads over to the track.

He said, "You halter-broke him: you know him and he

knows you. You should be the first to drive him in the harness."

I climbed aboard the sulky and spoke to Silver softly. Never seeming to mind the harness on him or the extra weight of the cart behind, Silver Threads slowly walked along the springy turf of the track. I urged him into a little pace that soon picked up momentum until we were traveling around that half-mile like veteran racers. My father declared he was a natural pacer and with the proper training and guidance would be a real two-minute race horse. He said that I was a good handler with excellent hands, and I knew that he meant it because he did not give praise idly. My father gave me a lot of self-confidence and self-esteem.

Although I knew we couldn't keep all the horses we raised, it was a surprise, and not a pleasant one, on my return from school in early May, to find a trailer truck standing in the loading arena. A shiver of apprehension crept over me and, approaching the big van with almost dread, I peered through the corral bars at the loading platform. There, standing with his ears pointed at me, was Silver Threads. Without asking, I knew he was on his way and would be going out of my life in a few seconds.

We raised and trained many horses during my growing up on the horse farm, and my father taught me how to treat and handle animals with care and love. He was firm but sincere in his desire to make them develop and be as great as they could be.

CANNING

Evelyn Witter

When Bill and Pop went to a farm sale late in the fall of the first year we were farming, I didn't know it but that was the day I was to begin home canning of foods in a big way.

They came home beaming. "Guess what we bought?" Bill asked.

"You'd never guess," Pop cut in.

"Well, what?" I asked, not guessing that their purchase was going to affect me so drastically.

"A half of a beef," they said almost simultaneously.

"Why we couldn't eat all that meat," I laughed with a nonchalance that clearly indicated my ignorance of what my part was to be.

"We will eat it over a period of a year," Bill was putting on his tactful tone of voice that rang a warning note in my ears.

"Sure," Pop said, "If you can it, it will keep indefinitely."

"Can a half of a beef?" I repeated unbelievingly. Looking at the two of them so proud of their ability to supply a good table at a minimum of cost and so confident in my ability to can the meat, I didn't have the heart to tell them what I thought. I was thinking it was a daring undertaking for one who had never canned anything at all and that it was a lot of money to spend when the beef might prove to be a total waste if it were not handled correctly. But they had such faith in my ability. They didn't even seem to entertain a shred of thought that maybe I couldn't do it.

So I decided to can a half of beef. It looked like a herd rather than a half when Pop and Bill carried it in and laid it on the kitchen table. It eclipsed the table, draped all around the sides. "Wow!" I managed to say out of the dryness of my throat.

I grabbed a wrap and got into the Chevy and into the Home Bureau Office before I had a chance to scare myself out of a job. Mrs. Wellman gave me a government bulletin on meat

canning and advised me to buy a pressure cooker since that was the only way the government recommended the canning of certain things, especially meat, and then she gave me another bulletin on pressure cookers.

It was good to have credit. I came home with the bulletins, pressure cooker, and some canning jars and lids.

I read and read. I read to digest. And as I read, I mused to myself, "Huh, if I'd studied as conscientiously as this in school maybe I'd have made an A in that course in Elizabethan Dramatists instead of a C."

But, of course, I hadn't had the impetus of impending disaster then, like the warning story Mrs. Wellman had told me about the pressure cooker. She had said, "There was a woman in the country who hadn't studied the directions for using a pressure cooker, and when she went to take her vegetables out she didn't let the pressure go down first. She unscrewed the lid right after the processing time, and the big volume of pressure that had accumulated in the cooker forced the lid off when the screws were loosened. The heavy lid hit her in the chin knocking out two teeth. The lid went to the ceiling and when it came down, it fell on her head. When her husband came in, he found her knocked out on the kitchen floor, and there was no way of knowing how long she had been there."

I read the directions to Bill when he came in, and he reread them aloud. Then we went to work. We cut up the meat in sizeable chunks, sterilized the jars, browned the meat in big pans, packed them with gravy into jars, and took turns most of the night watching that the pressure gauge stayed at fifteen pounds.

I continued alone for the next two days and had forty quarts of canned beef. I lined the jars up in the kitchen and enjoyed the display. That, I told myself, was a gratifying lineup if I ever saw one. We waited anxiously for weeks to see if there would be any sign of spoilage. But we had read well. The meat kept.

Realizing from the meat canning that anyone can can, if they have good directions and read carefully, the garden vegetables didn't frighten me a bit. Another government bulletin from the Home Bureau Office and a practical demonstration which the state put on in this vicinity gave me added confidence.

The spinach was the oddest vegetable I had to work with. Jim brought in several bushels of it and I thought I'd have a lot, so I washed up two dozen jars, but after I wilted the stuff according to the directions, it turned out that all that spinach made only eight pints.

Mom told me that I had better learn to make preserves because men loved them so. She came out one day and gave me the lowdown on her delicious tomato preserves. She showed me how she scalded them and then removed the seeds. How she cooked them down and then added cup for cup of sugar and let them simmer slowly until they were thick and yummy. She figured that we'd need a jar a day, so that meant three hundred sixty-five jars plus a couple of dozen or more for extra men and company. Four hundred jars of jellies and jams were stored away that year and for every year after that until wartime sugar shortages made it impossible.

The tomato preserves have always been tops. Well, tomatoes are a wonderful fruit. Besides being so rich in Vitamin C, their various uses make an interesting table the year around. I've canned lots of them.

One day the third year we were on the farm, the men brought in four more bushels of garden tomatoes just as I sealed the lid on the hundred and tenth quart!

"We'll be glad to have them next winter," Bill apologized, "if you can stand any more canning."

"Everything will be put up," I reassured him as he left me to "do something" with them all. Privately, I was beginning to wonder if I would ever see the end of them.

Juice was what I wanted this time, but how to get it? Would it be best to push them–four bushels through a

colander—or to put them in a flour sack and wring the juice out by hand? Just thinking about that much work made me weary.

"Now if my hands were a couple of rollers," I daydreamed, "I could just roll them over the sack of tomatoes and extract the juice in one easy operation."

Rollers? Why . . . the very rollers I needed were on the washing machine.

But before I grew too enthusiastic over my idea, I wanted to make sure that using the wringer for making tomato juice would not injure it in any way. First, I called my hardware dealer and asked his advice. He assured me that using the wringer in this way could not damage it if I did not force it. He also told me that he had hand wringers that would serve if I were still dubious about using my electric one.

This assurance was all I needed to start my big scale canning. I carefully scoured the wash machine, wringer, tubs, and boiler. I washed and scalded the fruit jars and turned them upside down. Next, I gave the tomatoes a cold water bath in the laundry tubs. The tomatoes were cut into small pieces, after all the blemishes had been removed. Into the wash boiler they went, where they cooked until they swam in their own juice—yes, all four bushels.

The wash machine had been made ready by a hard scrubbing, by removing the agitator, and by fitting a flour sack into the machine. (The sack was held open by fastening its outer edges to the machine with clothespins.) Then, I transferred the cooked tomatoes from the boiler into the sack, tied it with a heavy cord, placed one corner in the loosened wringer, and presto . . . the sack started through the wringer, and the tomato juice poured freely into the wash machine!

I opened the spigot, caught the juice in the wash boiler, filled my sterilized jars (adding one teaspoon salt per quart), ran the jars through the pressure cooker at ten pounds pressure for five minutes, and in what seemed no time at all had fifty quarts of high quality tomato juice all ready to store away!

When two more bushels of tomatoes came into the kitchen the next day, and Bill said with another apologetic smile, "This garden is a lot of work for you," I said, "Oh, bring in all you can. I'll just take the tomatoes through the wringer."

I believe I've canned everything that was cannable. And everything has come to good stead. One year when we had threshers, my versatility in canning saved the day.

My mother was helping me, and we divided the job as we had learned was the systematic way to do. Mother had charge of the meat and desserts. It was roast beef again that year and I bought the usual twenty pounds. For roasting convenience, the butcher had cut it into two ten-pound roasts. When the first roast had been consumed by the men, I dashed into the kitchen with the empty platter.

"More meat!" I ordered.

"More meat?" Mother repeated looking into the empty roaster. "Why, that's all there is."

"Can't be," I dithered and looked into the ice box. Sure enough there was the second roast. Mother hadn't even seen it and if she had, she would not have thought of roasting that one too, having the Chicago viewpoint on eating which I had long since put into the discard.

The situation was not lost. I had canned chicken. The fall before, wholesale poultry prices had been so low that Bill and I had figured that we could eat chicken more reasonably than we could hamburger at the prevailing prices, so we had canned the surplus poultry according to directions.

So the crisis of the threshers' dinner was averted. I went down to the cellar, took two quarts of chicken off the neatly lined shelves, reheated it, and before the men had time to notice the lack of the main course too much there was a platter of golden brown chicken all tender and hot, ready for their consumption.

"Boy, this is some swell meal," one thresher remarked. "Roast beef and chicken!"

I smiled sweetly at the compliment and secretly vowed

that I would always have some canned meat or poultry on hand to meet culinary emergencies that seem always to be arising on the farm.

The year before the baby was born, Bill and I counted nine hundred ninety-five jars of canned food that we had stored in the cellar that summer. I hurried to can five more jars of apple butter so that forever after I could brag honestly, "One year I canned one thousand jars of food!"

During World War II, rationing was no problem except that many city friends knew of our inexhaustible cellar and in blue-and-red point desperation forced themselves to drop out about mealtime. When it seemed that we were having more and more extras to feed, I kept track of the company and the extra meals we served. It amounted to four hundred and ten extra meals a year. So we needed an inexhaustible cellar!

TOYS MADE THE KID

Helen E. Rilling

Kids, when they can, live in a world of play, and that means a world of toys. A long time ago there were few toys to play with. Most families could not afford to buy playthings. There were tricycles, bicycles, sleds, and fancy dolls for those who could afford them. But the lucky kids were the ones who invented, built, and enjoyed toys of their own making. Our family fit into that group. Blessed with a set of inventive parents, we made, made do, and enjoyed the happiest of childhoods.

In the winters we played on the warm floor back of the heating stove. We surveyed our world of make believe while we ate bowls of snow ice cream. We were farm people from eastern Morgan County, and animals were a big part of our lives. We carefully preserved the cardboard backs from our Red Indian writing tablets. Father was great at cutting out most any animal. We bent their legs each way to make them stand up. Each of us had a farm complete with horses, cows, pigs, sheep, and chickens. For wagons we used match boxes. There were big and little boxes that served our purpose very well. On the slick linoleum floor we didn't need wheels as they slid along hitched to our horses with a bit of twine formed into a set of harness.

We enjoyed the snows of winter with our old homemade, wooden-runner sled father made out of scraps of lumber. It couldn't be steered but a pile up at the bottom of the hill was the fun part of sledding. Mostly we pilfered father's shiny grain scoops from bins and corn cribs. These made wonderful toboggans.

On one wall was a piece of black oilcloth. It was our blackboard. We all learned to draw on it and worked arithmetic problems there, playing school by the hour on bad-weather days. We thought it was a game, but mother was clever and we learned spelling, reading, and art under her watchful eyes.

We would beg mother to save her wooden spools. We used a long and short piece of matchstick. By putting a rubber band through the spool and turning the long matchstick until it was twisted tight we had a self-propelled toy and enjoyed exciting races across the room.

Our father was very good at carving toys from a piece of wood. He'd sit by the stove and carve out the neatest guns. He liked to carve horses, too. In the summer he carved whistles out of willow stems. We had tree creeks, so there were plenty of willows to choose from. We'd toot the whistles for days and each child's had a different tone. When the weather warmed up, father helped us make kites. We'd gather around the big dining table. Father would bring in a large wooden shingle. He'd carefully slit it into narrow strips and fasten them together into a frame. We'd get impatient sometimes waiting for the homemade flour paste that glued the paper to the frame to dry. Rags

were tied in strips for tail. We always begged mother for bright rags for those tails. We'd hunt up the ball of twine and head for the pasture. Against the blue skies, our homemade kites were beautiful to our eyes.

There was one cutting job that all of us took part in. We would fold newspapers many times and then cut out dolls, leaving them attached at the hands. These strings of dolls were hung all across the rooms. Some were very fancy with curls in their hair and shoes on their feet. We especially liked to have a pretty piece of colored paper to make a string of dolls out of, but mostly we had to be happy with newspaper dolls.

When the spring rains came and the creeks ran full, we made water wheels; a frame was made out of old lumber and fastened to the creek bank by driving sticks deep into the sod. The wheels were put on a shaft and carefully fastened to the side so the water just hit the ends of the blades. They turned and turned as the water rushed along until it quit raining and the creek went down. If we didn't take our wheels up each time, the horses and cows would break them to pieces when they crossed the creeks.

We girls had a little black iron cookstove we pretended to cook on. For our pans and dishes we used the round metal lids that came from cocoa and spice cans. A long time ago there was a candy that came in little fluted pans and had a tiny spoon with it. We saved all these for doll dishes. Our dolls were cupies made of celluloid. They could be won at fairs and carnivals or purchased at a 5 & 10¢ store for 10¢ or 25¢, depending on whether they had molded or real hair. They were about five inches tall and only the arms moved. The elastic that held the arms to the body soon gave out and we had mostly armless dolls.

Another game we girls enjoyed was to cut the green moss that grew on the north side of our big maple trees into shapes of furniture. Then we furnished our houses between the big roots of the trees. We made tables, chairs, beds, stoves, davenports, and cupboards out of the moss. If it was kept moist the houses lasted for days.

If we needed a jump rope, we just mosied down to the shop that was in the end of an old railroad car and cut a piece of haymow rope. We used this rope for lariats when we played rodeo. We had a beautiful white shetland pony named Dixie. There were other horses we could ride if we wanted to put on a rodeo or just race along our dusty lane. Another game was to nail spools to the many sheds about the yard and string binder twine between them like a pulley. It took some skill to keep the spools turning as we raced between them, giving a sharp pull as we raced on by.

Father was the greatest stilt maker of all time. At least we thought so. He used long two by fours and cut them in lengths to fit each child. He nailed a short piece on for a step about halfway up. Then he nailed on a piece of old harness leather. Tugs made the best holders to keep our feet on the steps. We walked about the yard high in the air. It took lots of practice to learn how to mount the stilts without falling over. We had many bruises before mastering those stilts.

There was a junk pile in one of the washed out ditches in the pasture. Junk from Alexander was hauled out there and used to stop erosion. We found many broken toys and wheels that served quite well in making our own homemade versions. One was a car complete with a buzzing motor. We'd find a wheel and put it on a stick. Then we pounded the stick into the ground and found an old box or bucket to sit on. For the motor we'd catch bumble bees in a jar. There we'd sit twisting the wheel as we rode along. Every once in awhile we would kick the jar to make the bees buzz. We also found old hubs from wagon wheels. Using a lathe, we nailed a cross piece at the bottom. A curled stave from a keg worked very well. We used this to roll the hoop along, guiding it into circles and over bumps. We could roll it along our lane a mile or more without it falling over.

But, the most fascinating game for us was our corn-cob horses. We made them by cutting off the small end for horses

and the big end for mules. We wove intricate harness from bindertwine for the harness. Holding the teams of two or four horses in front of us we drove them to dozens of imaginary places. We cut the cobs in other ways to make cows, sheep, and hogs. A whole play farm could be built around a few pretty corn cobs. At corn shelling season we searched other farms for additions to our stables. We had such fun naming all the horses.

When I visit the area east of Alexander where I grew up, I can still hear the laughter of happy children floating across the fields and timbers. We left our mark on the prairie and it left us with precious memories of a wonderful childhood living on the farm.

A STRAWBERRY PATCH

Florence Ehrhardt

My parents raised seven children on a forty-acre Adams County farm, twenty acres of which were planted with fruit trees. Apples, peaches, and pears were their main crop and were ready for market in late summer and autumn. To provide income for the family earlier in the year, my folks planted earlier-maturing crops such as cabbage, pickles, potatoes, and strawberries. Strawberries seemed to be the most successful of these early-maturing crops.

I know that my parents needed the income from these extra crops, but they also had a fetish about keeping the kids busy. An awful lot of work goes into raising strawberries. The plants are planted in the spring and are taken care of for a whole year before a crop is produced. They must be carefully tended to keep the weeds out of the patch without disturbing the young plants on the end of the runners from the parent plant. My parents depended on child labor for this work. Their pet saying was that kids didn't need to stoop as far as a grownup does to reach the ground to pull those weeds.

In autumn, the whole patch was covered with a thick layer of carefully spread straw. When the next spring came, and those beautiful berries were getting ripe, we forgot all about the work of the previous summer. We needed to get up very early in the morning to get started with the berry picking. Later in the day the sun was too hot. Pickers are near the ground with the heat reflecting from the straw. No breeze was felt there. Suntan was not in fashion then. We all wore straw hats, long sleeve shirts, and long pants.

We had lots of fun in the berry patch. The young folks from the whole neighborhood came to help. The wages for picking berries were from 1/2¢ a quart to 2¢ a quart depending on picking conditions. Early in the season, when ripe berries were scattered, and late in the season when berries were smaller, the price for picking was the best.

Each picker was saving his money to buy something special. My neighbor girl saved money to get her first permanent wave. It cost her three dollars, and it took most of the picking season to earn that much money. One of my brothers spent more time complaining about other people's work than trying to improve his own. Whenever he saw someone do something that he could run to Pop and tattle about, he lost no time in doing just that. Strawberry patches do not come equipped with Scotties Potties, so a nearby ditch was used to meet our needs. One day this brother came back from the ditch with a shiny dime. It didn't take long for the pickers to make up a jingle about that.

Snitch, snitch,
Fell in a ditch,
Found a dime,
And thought he was rich.

About nine o'clock each morning, Pop took the first picked berries to the stores in Quincy. About eleven o'clock, he went with a second load. I can remember times when he would

have to bring some berries back home. He couldn't sell them at any price. On those days, we children needed to get busy to help can those berries. Believe me, I was glad when Pop came home with an empty truck. However, on a snowy winter day, I was equally glad when we could have some canned strawberries with bread or pancakes. Strawberry preserves were usually made from the smaller, end-of-the-season berries, and kept for special occasions.

Almost everyday, for over two weeks, we had fresh strawberry homemade-biscuit-dough shortcake. Mother baked a large biscuit in an oversize pie dish. While it was still hot, she sliced it crosswise and poured sweetened dark red mashed strawberries on the bottom portion. Carefully turning over the top part to make a second layer, she added more strawberries. She then cut it in pie-shaped portions. I remember my brothers turning the dish around four or five times looking for the biggest piece, while all the rest of us waited impatiently. No one worried about calories. How times have changed!

TECHNOLOGY COMES TO THE FARM

Mildred M. Seger

In the late 1930s our rural society was poised on the brink of an ocean of change. The dawn of the age of technology was approaching, but there were yet only a few rays of the coming morning of progress.

Those rays, in our home, were our radio with its cumbersome batteries, and the telephone with the line wire attached to the large oblong box with its two round bells gleaming like big eyes from its dark, long face. I always fancied the long projecting mouthpiece was the nose, the shelf below, its mouth, and the receiver hanging beside it, a single arm. The crank on the other side didn't count. Why those ugly old wall telephones have become valuable antiques, which some people use to decorate their homes, is more than I can understand.

My father was farming in much the same fashion that his ancestors had done for hundreds of years. He was delighted with the "Johnson place," as he had four level fields of good black soil. There he could practice the method of crop rotation. One field was sowed in clover and timothy seed for pasture and hay. This was the field that was being restored to fertility by rest from growing corn. In the spring he would load up manure from the barn into the manure spreader. This was a wagon-like vehicle which had a pronged, rotary attachment at the back which threw out the manure as the wagon was pulled by the horses across the field. I'm not just sure of the mechanics of the implement, but it must have had a conveyor belt and received its power from the wheels of the moving vehicle.

One field was sowed in oats. This one always had timothy and clover growing in it after the oats harvest, too. I'm not sure, but I think my father had disked last year's clover and timothy field and sowed the oats there in the spring. As soon as the oats were threshed in summer, the field became a pasture for the stock. The other two fields were planted for the money crop, corn. This was the "gold" that had lured my father and Uncle Lawrence to the fertile plains of Illinois prairie from their home in the tree-covered hills of southern Indiana. The red clay soil there only grew "nubbins."

Daddy was strong and proud of his muscles. He got up early before dawn in the corn-shucking season and fed and watered the livestock by lantern light. Meanwhile, mother cooked a bountiful breakfast of oatmeal, salt pork, gravy and biscuits. Sometimes we fried potatoes left over from those she had boiled the day before with the "jackets" on. She fried eggs and made coffee, and there was always apple, plum, wild grape, or strawberry jelly, or maybe apple butter as well as the butter we had churned from the milk our cows produced.

Just as the dawn was breaking, Daddy would arrive at the cornfield with his cap lapels pulled down over his ears, his denim jacket buttoned over his overalls and flannel shirt to guard against the morning chill. Later, the cap lapels would be reversed and the jacket abandoned as physical exertion and the day's temperature increased. His hands were encased in a new pair of canvas gloves, as he wore out a pair each day. (It's no wonder some glove factories began to shut down after technology arrived in the cornbelt.) Also, strapped on his hand was a sharp curved tool, a hook, or peg, for freeing the ears from the cornstalk and stripping the husks from the ear.

The wagon had a bump board attached to one side. This kept the corn from going over the wagon bed instead of into it. When my father twisted the ripe, golden ears from the stalks and with his hook stripped off the husks, he tossed the prize into the waiting receptacle without turning to look. The steady old farm team would move up the corn row at his signal as he progressed up and down the field. I wish I could remember how many bushels he shucked each day, but I never really listened then or appreciated the enormous task as he related his day's progress to my mother.

Some farmers were beginning to subscribe to the new technology. Grandpa Agan and his sons proudly showed off their new red Farmall tractor to us one spring. The sound of roaring tractor engines sputtering to life in the early spring mornings was beginning to be heard more frequently in our farming community. But my father was very conservative, and he wasn't sure it was right to leave the old ways. He was also fearful of contracting a large debt, so he farmed with his horses longer than most of our relatives and neighbors.

However, in the early 1940s he yielded and bought an orange, steel-wheeled Allis Chalmers tractor. The age of technology had come to the Davis farm!

THE PRIVY AND THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Margaret Kelley Reynolds

"Privy" comes from the word "private," and our privy was anything but private. For my sister it was a handy place to take refuge when there were dishes to be done. It was also a handy place to hide when playing games. It was often occupied by a stray cat or dog, maybe a snake now and then, or a sparrow building a nest under the eaves. A few times we had a skunk as a very unwelcome visitor.

Our privy was situated in the shade of a gnarled, old, mulberry tree, which was always filled with birds dropping mulberries and bird doo all over the place. A trip to the privy in the summertime in bare feet, even over a well-beaten path, was sometimes a hazardous journey. In the wintertime, it was even worse. We slipped and slid on the path, and sometimes had to shovel our way through the snow. I do believe that I've never known anything else as cold as the wind whistling up through that two-holer privy seat. It was a miracle we didn't freeze our bottoms.

Our privy was a tall, four-foot-square building with a swinging door that fastened with an old leather strap and a nail. Above the door was a crescent-shaped moon design, and perched on top was a bird house. Inside the door was a bench-like seat, with two sawed out, rough edged, round holes. Hanging over a binder twine string on one side was an old *Sears Roebuck Catalogue*. On the other side in one corner was a broom, used to sweep out leaves, bird droppings, and dirt. In the other corner was a small, bent coal shovel set in an old, rusty tin bucket filled with white lime. When all necessary chores had been completed, it was a GOOD IDEA to throw in a shovel of lime. This was supposed to keep down the odor. In the summertime, the privy was surrounded on three sides by hollyhocks which came up voluntarily every year and were beautiful when in bloom. The unpainted, dilapidated building didn't look too bad in the

summer. It was a shady place to sit. But in the wintertime the flowers were gone, and the leaves had fallen from the mulberry tree and in their place was snow, ice, and icicles hanging from the roof.

I shall never forget one summer when our uncle came to visit us. He was a bachelor and was making the Army a career. When he was on furlough, he always spent several days at our house. We were glad to see him because he usually brought us something tasty to eat.

It was a hot summer day in July when our uncle came, and, as usual, he brought something–candy this time. We had it eaten long before dinner time, but we were, as usual, hungry again at meal time. We always had something special for dinner when company came. After dinner, we were all trying to get out of doing dishes. It was my sister's turn to wash while we dried, but she always managed to run for the privy when dishwashing time came. There she'd stay until the dishes were done.

Well, it was the same old story! About halfway through the dishes she complained of a stomachache. We didn't believe her, but when she took off in a dead run for the privy, we could see she had a problem. A few minutes later, another member of the family ran for the privy, and, when my sister wouldn't open the door, he ran for the corn crib. About that time, I had a stomach cramp, my sister wouldn't open the privy door, so I jerked it open. Ordinarily, we'd never go to the privy with anyone, but those were unusual circumstances. One thing I especially remember about the next hour or so was that the path to the privy and those two holes on the privy seat were the busiest places you could ever imagine. There were kids waiting in line to occupy the rough, round holes. When we all felt better and the old *Sears Roebuck Catalogue* was about depleted, we went back to the house. Our uncle was laughing so hard he could hardly stand up. He told our mother that in the box of chocolate candy he had put quite a few pieces of EX-LAX! He wanted to see what it would do to us. Well! He saw all right! Our mother was horrified, but she tried to explain to us by saying, "He wouldn't have done it if he hadn't had a 'little nip' before he came." We didn't find out for several years what a "little nip" was.

I must say that in my later years, I never had to worry about eating too much chocolate candy. And Ex-Lax–never! This all took place in the Mississippi River bottoms where I was born and raised on a farm over sixty years ago; it was near New Canton, Illinois, in Pike County. After I was married, I thought I was living in the lap of luxury when we had an indoor bathroom with a tub and a stool, and I never once missed trodding the beaten path to the privy. The privy served its purpose in my life and was an essential part of living then, but to go back to the "Good Old Days"–NEVER!

BELGIAN FARM LIFE IN ILLINOIS

Margaret M. DeDecker

From the lowlands near Watervliet, Belgium, and the watery provinces of Holland came the Flemish and the Dutch burgers to settle on the prairies of Illinois near Geneseo and Atkinson in Henry County. They created a community within the melting pot of other Europeans. Most of them came with farming and related skills and so were soon working for established farmers. With the conservatism of their native countries, many were in time able to save money to own their own farms.

I was witness to this moderate life style. I remember my Dad and brother wearing bib overalls with patches, and their darned rockford socks were almost total darning on heels and toes. My dresses as a little girl were made of cotton print on the old treadle sewing machine. Bloomers and slips were made from cotton flour sacks. Our other underwear was ordered from

the *Sears Roebuck Catalog*, as was our one good outfit for going to church.

Going to mass on Sunday was the normal thing, as most of the people came from Roman Catholic families. The priest was the advisor in all things as he was the only one with an education. My family joined our friends in learning the English language when the children went to school. Even though they were born here, some of them spoke no English until they went to school. This was true in my family. My brother, older than I, went to school first and then taught me to write my name. When I started school, I had to learn to print my name, but at least I could speak English.

Our medical care was usually taken care of at home. I remember cuts and wounds were miraculously healed with Rawleigh's Salve and bound up with soft strips of torn old linens. One time I stepped on a garden rake that had been left out in the yard. Being a puncture wound, it became infected and I was chugged off to town in the old Model T to see Dr. Spencer. My Dad was so proud of me because I didn't cry when the doctor had to lance the wound. My mother became the midwife among the Belgian families and delivered many of their babies. She also helped the doctor during the flu epidemic of the early 1900s. He teasingly told her she was too mean to get it, and she didn't

Wonderful Belgian cooking kept everybody strong and healthy. The soups cooked with vegetables from the garden were filled with vitamins. I remember the huge round loaves of home baked bread as well as cakes and pies. Fresh milk from the cows was a special treat. Many times I helped turn the barrel churn to make butter and then buttermilk.

Gardens were usually the pride of the women. Seeds were saved from the year before to plant peas, corn, and pumpkins. Potatoes were a favorite crop. And there always were flowers around the vegetable gardens.

The men had their games of rolle bolle on Sunday afternoons. You could hear a "hotfer domma" and everyone knew that the player had missed the stake with the bolle by a mile. The women played cards, usually bien, a game brought over from the old country. The kids played baseball or went to swim in the canal. In the winter there were house parties, and there usually was an accordion player for those who wanted to dance a polka or a mazurka.

These people had many ethnic beliefs, such as, a kid was always to be right-handed. If he were going to be left-handed, the left hand was tied up. It seems there was a flaw in the intelligence if you let the child be left-handed. Another belief or myth that I personally experienced occured during the process of making fourteen-day pickles. I was told by my mother that I had to slice pickles in half in a thirty-gallon crock because "Gramma came to visit." It was believed that if she had touched the cucumbers when she had her period they would spoil.

I remember the wall phone was the party line. Each member had a signal. Our signal was two longs and a short ring. To get central to call elsewhere, you had to crank the handle on the side until the operator answered. Then everybody shouted to hear each other.

The Belgians and the Hollanders helped each other, but, of course, at times such as hay making and threshing they worked with neighbors of other ethnic backgrounds. I'm sure they learned much from each other.

REAPING THE HARVEST

Eleanor Green

It was a beautiful morning in mid July, 1931, on our farm home near Media, Illinois, in Henderson County. The sun was coming up, the birds were singing, and my dad (Roy Rankin) was coming up the board sidewalk carrying a bucket of warm

foamy milk. The cats were at his heels, knowing he would stop and fill their pan.

Mother was in the kitchen preparing a breakfast of potatoes, sausage, eggs, coffee, and a large kettle of oatmeal. She also had three pies baking in the oven for dinner.

Dad had been working in the oat field for three days. He cut the oats about four inches above the ground with a binder. This implement was drawn by a team of horses. There was a long sickle across it for cutting the oats off. A canvas draper on rollers carried the oats up into the binder, and they were tied in bundles with binder twine which was on a spindle. After the bundles were tied, they dropped to the ground. Now it was time for the whole family to help. We went to the field and stood the bundles upright, using approximately twelve bundles to make a shock. Then we took two or three and laid them across the top of the shock to keep water out in case of rain. When we were finished, we had rows of shocks down the field, ready for the racks to pick up on threshing day.

Jake Livermore and his son, Ivan, of Raritan, Illinois, owned the steam engine and separator. They went from farm to farm threshing the oats at harvest time. The big day was here! Jake and Ivan were pulling in the gate with the threshing machine. Dad went out to meet them and showed them where to spot the machine. He wanted it near the gate, so they could easily get loads of straw in the winter for bedding the livestock in the barns.

The neighbors with racks, wagons, forks, and scoops, were beginning to arrive. Some were four miles from home. The sun had burned the dew off and it was time to start. Each rack had two men to pitch the bundles onto the rack, and the driver spread them evenly from front to back and side to side as high as they dared go and not tip their load over. He then drove to the separator which was powered by the steam engine, where large, wide belts turned the wheels. The bundles were pitched into a conveyor, and the oats came out a spout into a wagon on the opposite side. The straw blew out onto the ground and, when deep enough, my dad and Lloyd Rankin started shaping it into a kidney shaped stack. The chaff fell to the ground beneath the separator.

As one rack emptied, another was ready to pull in and unload. When a wagon was full of oats, another was pulled under the spout, and the full load was pulled by a team of horses to the barn. There, two men scooped the oats into the oats bin through a small door on the side of the barn.

A lot of hard work was being done, and it was getting hot and sultry, so perspiration was flowing freely. My job was "water boy." I hitched our pony to the pony cart and filled gallon jugs (which had been made at the Monmouth pottery) with cold well water and headed for the field. I went from rack to rack to the men at the threshing machine, giving them a drink. They all drank from the same jug, tipping it up and drinking. By the time I had made the rounds it was time to refill and go again.

At last, dinner time came. The steam engine shut down, while the teams were driven in under shade trees, watered, and left to rest while the crew went to the house to eat. Under the big elm tree in our yard mother had placed four washpans, bars of soap, and combs, and had hung a mirror and towels on nails in the tree. A big tub of water was setting in the sun where it had warmed for them to wash with. The men took off their straw hats and dropped on the lawn to rest and visit while waiting their turn to wash up for dinner.

Mother and my sisters had been working all morning preparing dinner. They were cooking on the hot cookstove because there was no electricity. All we had was an icebox, which was rather small, so a box tied on rope was lowered into the well with food in it to keep it cool. We also went to Media to the ice house and got one hundred pounds of ice, placed it in a tub, and covered it with carpets (rag rugs) to keep it from melting. A big chunk was chopped off and placed in a five-gallon stone jar which held our iced tea. Mother had a huge beef roast,

mashed potatoes, gravy, lima beans, spaghetti and cheese, radishes, onions, pickles, cabbage slaw, homemade bread and butter, three kinds of pie, iced tea, and coffee.

The men sat down at the table which was stretched across the dining room. They ate heartily, laughing and joking. When they were finished, they got up and thanked my mother for the good dinner, and went back under the shade tree for a few minutes to rest. Then they grabbed their hats and headed for the field.

Now it was my turn to eat. My mother, my sisters, and I sat down and ate our dinner. When we were finished, we started clearing off the table, piling up stacks of dirty dishes and pans. We had no running water, and no water heater, so the water was heated on top of the cookstove. Having no double sink, people washed and rinsed dishes in big dish pans. I knew what was best for me, and took out of the house to avoid helping with those dishes.

The steam engine was fired up, and the racks were back in the field. The afternoon task was underway. About 5:00 p.m. as each rack came in and unloaded, they unhitched their team, watered them, and led them into stalls in our barn where they would stay for the night to be ready for another day of work tomorrow. I had put straw in the stalls for bedding, filled the mangers with clover hay, and put corn covered with oats in the feed boxes.

The neighbors went to their homes to finish up the day by doing their chores and getting ready to come back to finish our oats the next day. Dad fed the hogs, milked the cows, and went to the house to eat supper. After supper, we lit the Aladdin lamp, and listened to the battery-run radio. Dad read the *Galesburg Register Mail* and the *Chicago Drovers' Journal*. We had to read to find out the news; we hadn't heard of television.

After the horses were checked and the chickens shut up, we went to bed. It must have only been 8:30 or 9:00 p.m., yet it seemed like only a short time when the roosters started crowing and I heard Dad going out the door to do the morning chores. Another day was underway.

We finished threshing about 3:00 p.m. on the second day. The steam engine and separator pulled out and went to the next neighbors to set up. The crew would all be there tomorrow.

I know it was hard work, but I believe the people all looked forward to working together, exchanging labor for labor, visiting and caring for one another, and probably most of all–sharing.

I often think today as I drive in the country and see farm homes far apart, and large machinery operated by one man, what these folks are missing–those things which I hold so dear as memories of the past.

HOG HAULING

Elizabeth Harris

The rattling, bumping sound of wagon wheels on hard frozen ruts of the country road jars me wide awake. I throw aside the woolen blankets and rise up from my soft feather bed. The room is black; the air is frosty; my nose feels cold.

I hear sounds of activity downstairs; Mama and Papa are up. The fires are started, radiating cozy warmth from the kitchen range and the wood-burning heating stove. Outdoors, the wagon noises increase as neighbors approach from all directions to convene in our barn lot.

Then I remember. This is hog hauling day!

Playful white piglets, born last spring, had frolicked in the meadows in the summer. Maturing, they grew fat on corn during the fall and early winter. They are now hogs, ready to be sold. The brood sows will be retained in the sheds, and, as the seasons pass, the yearly cycle of the hog farmer will be repeated.

In 1908, among the farmers in lower Rock Island County, Illinois, this hauling of the hogs is a community effort–one phase in the prevailing habit of exchanging work with close neighbors for the group-oriented tasks of haying, sawing wood, butchering, corn shelling, and castrating the pigs.

The closest railroad terminal for shipping livestock is in the little town of Joy, Illinois, in Mercer County, fifteen or twenty miles south of our farm (which is located south of Illinois City, in Buffalo Prairie Township).

By telephone, Papa has talked to a Mr. Shingledecker, an agent in Joy, and has arranged to have our hogs delivered at the railroad yards by 11 a.m. on this frigid February morning. There they will be loaded on the cars and shipped to the Chicago Stockyards, and from thence to various slaughterhouses and packing plants throughout the Midwest.

The fact that these activities are necessary to the livelihood of our family is not even thought of by me, Sissy, seven years old, or by my six-year-old sister and bedfellow, Irene. Our older brothers work with Papa outdoors; our older sisters help Mama in the kitchen. We, too, have daily chores, but in such events as hog-hauling we are mere spectators.

Irene and I leap from our bed in the darkness, shivering with excitement and cold. We pull off our flannel nightgowns and blindly don our outer clothing, laid out the night before. With long black stockings and high button shoes in our hands, we feel our way through the dark hallway to the stairway and descend to light and warmth below. We plop down on the warm floor behind the heating stove and painstakingly try to pull our long stockings neatly over the legs of our ankle-length long underwear. I reach for the button-hook on the window sill to speed up fastening my shoes, remembering to put it back where it belongs for the next user.

Papa has eaten his breakfast, and with his kerosene lantern has gone to the hog lot, followed by "Old Max," our faithful reddish-brown shepherd dog.

We are too engrossed in what is going on outside to think of eating the bowls of warm oatmeal that Mama has prepared. Faces pressed against the windowpane, we see shadowy figures in the dim lantern-light, moving about the crated wagons backed up to the chute that leads from hog lot to wagon bed. We hear the muffled shouts of the men; the barking of the dog; the protesting squeals of the pigs as they are prodded up the chute.

Light streaks of early dawn are showing in the eastern sky by the time the six or seven wagons are loaded, lined up, and ready to start. Papa hurries to the house to don his heavy horsehide coat before climbing to the seat on the rack above the wagon bed.

The other drivers are similarly dressed–some wear sheepskin-lined coats and all have the ear-lugs of their heavy caps pulled down and fastened under their chins. As we watch the caravan move down the driveway toward the road, the figures huddled on the wagon seats remind us of huge bears, driving away with our pigs.

Well-shod and sure-footed, the horses pick their way over the sharp, icy clods of the rutted dirt road. The thermometer outside out kitchen window hovers near zero. Papa has told us that sometimes the men walk beside the wagons part of the way, flailing their arms and hugging themselves in order to keep warm.

Starting out before 7:00 a.m., they will reach the railroad yard at Joy before the appointed hour of 11. After unloading the hogs, my father and his neighbors will perhaps have their noon meal together in the village cafe and spend a sociable hour at the local pool hall before starting back in time to arrive home for late-afternoon chores.

If times are hard and farm life is primitive in 1908, we children are not aware of it. We feel safe and secure in the love and care of our family. We have friends and neighbors who share the burdens of work when help is needed. We have warm clothing and plenty of good food. Radio and television are

unheard of; electric lights are found only in cities. Our news comes by way of letters, telephone, telegraph, newspapers, and monthly magazines.

Occasionally, in good weather, an automobile is seen on the country roads. We cannot even foresee that within three years our papa will purchase our own auto–a forerunner of miraculous changes yet to come–and that someday in the future, huge automotive trucks will move our livestock to market in one easy load.

RAISING CHICKENS ON THE FARM

Ralph Eaton

The era that I want to write about on the subject of raising chickens is the first half of the twentieth century–from 1900 to 1950. That period brought about many, many changes throughout America, and those changes touched the lives of everyone, whether they lived in cities, towns, or on the farms.

It probably seems unbelievable to modern day readers who did not live during that period, but early in the twentieth century there were more people living on farms throughout the country than there were in the cities and towns. Most rural people were busily engaged in producing their own shelter, food, and clothing. If they were fortunate, they might manage to produce a little extra of something, which they could take to town to sell.

When a farmer's children grew up, married, and started farming on their own, it was customary for the parents to help the new couple get "started." Perhaps one or two horses could be made available, one milk cow, and one hen and a "setting" of eggs.

My parents married in 1912 and settled in their farm home southeast of Augusta, Illinois. As was customary, my mother's parents provided a hen and a "setting" of eggs. The hen was expected literally to sit on all the eggs that her body would cover, which ranged between fifteen and twenty. Of course, this is the way that our wild birds still propogate today. The hen was usually happy to oblige because of her "mother instinct," so in three weeks the eggs turned into a flock of fluffy baby chicks. During those three weeks, the hen had left her nest only to drink and to eat a few bites of food. She carefully rolled each egg over with her beak twice each day in order to assure uniform temperature to them. Once the chicks were hatched, the mother hen led them from the nest and they were taught to forage for food. Each evening, she returned them to the nest and sat on them to keep them warm and safe.

They grew rapidly, and in about four or five weeks they became capable of taking care of themselves. Approximately half of the brood would be little male "cockerels," and the other half would develop into little "pullet" hens. At about five or six weeks, the little cockerels would begin to provide the farm family with "chicken dinners," which were a delicious treat eagerly anticipated by the family. One or two cockerels would be allowed to grow to adulthood, as would all of the pullets, to expand the flock. The cockerels were necessary to fertilize the eggs, to make them hatchable. In this manner, a young married couple could expand their chicken flock so that, in three or four years, they could have as large a flock as they could manage. This depended, of course, on the available housing space, available feed, and available time. To care for a large flock was a lot of work. Also, one had to be on constant guard against predators. Foxes, skunks, weasels, possums, and coons would all kill chickens whenever they got an opportunity. A large dog was about the best preventative of this, as well as having a varmint proof chicken house to lock them up in at night. As automobiles increased, they also killed their share of chickens, for if the chickens were near the road when a car came by, the

chicken would almost invariably dart in front of the car. But, as a flock increased in size, it provided a source of income, since eggs, as well as the young chickens, could be sold in town.

But technology began to change this system about the time of World War I. An apparatus known as an "incubator" was invented. This took the place of the "setting hens" and would allow the hens to continue to lay eggs for those three weeks required for the hatching processes. Depending upon the size of the incubator, it would replace several setting hens at a time. Also, the chicks all hatched simultaneously and were thus more uniform in size. A couple days after they hatched, they would be placed in a "brooder house" where they would be housed, fed, and watered until they were grown. Of course, the mother instinct still prevailed in the laying hens, so they would occasionally try to sit on one or two eggs, in spite of the fact that her other eggs had been "stolen" from her. So, whenever this happened, the hen would have to be "jailed" (confined to a coop of some kind) for a couple of days. This usually made her give up the idea, and she would return to productive egg laying once again.

My folks got their first incubator perhaps before I was born. One of my earliest memories was that incubator every spring in our kitchen, yielding a bunch of fuzzy little chicks. We could peek through the window of the front door of the incubator and watch for the "pip" on the egg about a day before it hatched. Then, we could watch for them to crack the shell and squirm their way out. That incubator would hold 200 eggs, and it was mother's responsibility. She was the "chicken manager" at our house, while Dad was responsible for all the other livestock. That was a very common arrangement among farm families during those times. This incubator was covered with tin, was approximately thirty inches square, and twelve to fourteen inches deep with four legs which made it about table height. It burned coal oil (kerosene) to maintain the even heat needed for three weeks to replace the body heat normally provided by the sitting hen. A thermometer was kept inside the incubator and had to be watched vigilantly to keep the temperature constant at all times or a poor "hatch" would result. Also, the eggs had to be turned twice each day as the mother hen had done. The eggs rested on two trays in the incubator, and the trays were slid out one at a time while the eggs were turned by hand. Even with all this good care, a seventy-five to eighty percent hatch was considered pretty good–but a poorer percentage than most setting hens would provide.

As technology evolved, incubators were improved. My folks bought their second incubator on March 19, 1927. It was ordered through Sears Roebuck & Company, but was called an Ideal, manufactured by J. W. Miller Company, Rockford, Illinois. It cost them a total of $19.56. It was of wood construction and was rated for 300 eggs, but mother usually didn't put over 250 eggs in it at a time. This incubator had a thermostat to maintain an even temperature. It still burned coal oil, but heated water which circulated in pipes inside the incubator. It burned approximately eleven gallons of coal oil in three weeks and coal oil cost approximately 12¢ per gallon. I still have the incubator and am currently restoring it to present to the Schuyler County Jail Museum at Rushville, Illinois.

By the second World War, technology was changing the pattern once more. Larger, commercial hatcheries developed in farm towns. These could operate more efficiently. Mother began selling hatching eggs to the commercial hatchery in Augusta and buying back what chicks she wanted that were hatched from her own eggs. This ended the use of home incubators.

After World War II, specialization began in both the broiler and egg businesses, making it increasingly difficult for farm flocks to show a profit. So, one by one, farmers ceased their chicken operations. By 1950, less than half of the farm operations had chickens, whereas probably ninety percent had flocks just twenty years earlier. By 1960, farm flocks were practically

nonexistent. My mother was one exception, although she did change from Plymouth Rocks to Leghorns for they were slightly better egg producers. She enjoyed her chickens so much that she kept a few as late as 1982, when she was 97 years of age.

Chickens did provide many farmers with some very badly needed dollars during the Depression years. My father milked cows (by hand) and sold cream. Money from cream and eggs saw our family through those difficult years. My mother kept our farm records and I have those books from 1924 through 1964. She faithfully recorded the number of eggs collected daily during those forty years. She also recorded the eggs sold and the prices received for each sale. They were a very important item for farm folks during that era.

SAVING THE CHICKENS

Ivan E. Prall

By the summer of 1932 the Depression had deepened to the extent that many people, especially in the cities, were going hungry. On the farm there was no money to pay bills, but if a farmer raised chickens, there were eggs to eat and occasionally a chicken or hog for meat. The result of this situation was that desperate city people started "visiting" the rural population in the wee small hours of the night and would carry off chickens or small live stock.

Since the average farmer of that time had no telephone or electricity, he could not summon help or turn on a yard light. The first line of defense was usually a good watch dog and a shotgun. A second defense line sought by many was the guinea. This peculiar looking fowl was raised along with the chickens. A guinea would feed with the chickens during the day, but at night would fly into the tree limbs above the farm yard to roost. At the slightest unusual nocturnal activity below, it would immediately start up a loud chant of "poderack! poderack!" until their sleep was no longer being disturbed.

The farm magazine *Prairie Farmer*, under their Protective Union Organization, established a third line of defense. For a negligible fee they supplied you with a small can of indelible ink that looked like black axle grease, a wicked looking tool to use with this, and signs to post along the road front indicating that your chickens were marked. A purchasing farmer was assigned a registration number. The numerals of this number were outlined with needles on the tool. Marking the chicken was a two person job. First, the chickens had to be corralled and brought forth one by one. My job was to hold the fowl on its back on the bottom of an overturned wooden box. One wing was spread out exposing the tin web with a little cover inside the bottom of the wing. Here my father, after pressing sharp pins of the metal stamper into the indelible ink paste, forced it down on the wing web, and the chicken was branded with our family registration number.

The theory here was that a chicken thief peddling his ill-gotten fowls to a dealer would be exposed and caught when the dealer checked under the chicken's wing for a branded number. Personally, due to our proximity to Chicago and other large cities, I doubt if many chicken buyers checked beneath the wings of profered fowls.

As summer passed in the farm community where we lived, north of Sycamore, our neighbors all around lost chickens. Lottie Larson, a widow, lost eight–all that she had. Certainly this left her desperate. The Nelsons lost two hundred, Andersons one hundred and forty, and so on.

What had preserved us so far was that our farm sat back at the end of a long lane, while the neighbors all were situated immediately beside the gravel road.

Our fenced chicken yard with roosting houses was located just beyond our brief lawn in line with the upstairs

bedroom window. A few yards beyond the chicken yard ran a cow lane fenced with barb wire. This lane led the cows from the meadow to the barn. The grazing meadow lay between the house and the road.

After our neighbors' losses, we began to feel secure because of our distance from the road. Then one night we were awakened around 1:00 a.m. by the "poderacking" of our guineas and muffled squeaks of chickens. My father stumbled out of the bedroom to grope his way in the dark downstairs and get his shotgun. My mother, realizing the time required for this and the darkness of the night presenting poor targets, rushed to the screened window overlooking the chicken yard and emitted the loudest, shrillest "Get out of there!" that I had ever heard. At least it was the loudest noise I was ever to hear from my mother. There followed a twanging noise from below, somewhat like the plucking of a banjo string, then silence except the "poderacking!" of the guineas and fussing of the disturbed chickens.

My father with his shotgun prowled in the dark but could find no one. Morning light disclosed the source of the twanging noise. The thief, or thieves, making their abrupt departure upon my mother's scream, had run into the barb wire fence along the cow lane. Pieces of burlap bags and chicken feathers surrounded the spot, and blood was on the fence. A rough count indicated we might have lost four to eight chickens.

We were not bothered again during our years on the farm, but my mother injured her throat that night with her mighty yell and for several weeks could only whisper.

SHIPPING DAY AT NORRIS FARM

Donald R. Norris

At the turn of the century all my father's fat cattle were shipped by rail to the Union Livestock Yards in Chicago. As a youngster, I found accompanying them to market was an experience to be remembered.

My father most often chose a Monday as market day for his cattle. Selecting the steers was the first step. Swinging open the feed lot gate about two in the afternoon on Sunday, I remember the steers hesitated before venturing outside the lot. Apparently fearful of leaving their familiar surroundings, they sniffed the ground beyond the gateway. After the leaders had made the plunge, those following came with a rush, jumping in surprise at their unexpected opportunity for freedom.

Several neighbors joined us, everyone on horseback, in preparation for the two-mile drive to the railroad loading pens in LaMoille. My father trusted me to take the lead to hold the pace to a walk.

The fat cattle ran too hard; they were exhausted and lost weight. One or two riders would take positions on each side of the herd to keep a nervous steer from leaving the roadway. On his favorite bay mare, my father brought up the rear, enjoying his view of the broad backs of his fattened charges.

If all went well, we would have our steers at the village limits of LaMoille in about an hour. Halfway there, we crossed Pike Creek. Spanning the creek was a bridge supported by its iron framework, and it had a floor of planks. When the steers in the lead approached the edge of the bridge, they came to an abrupt halt, refusing to put a foot on the plank floor. I rode my pony across, hoping some steers would follow. They didn't. The men shouted and cracked their whips. The steers pushed forward, forcing the leaders to follow me. Once started, the herd charged across. I remember how the bridge shook and the frightened steers crowded against each other from fear of falling

off the shaking structure.

Invariably, our troubles started at LaMoille, Illinois. Village dogs barking to protect their domain from this sudden new challenge would panic some of our herd, sending steers in several directions across lawns and backyard gardens. Often as not, a surprised and angry housewife, anxious to be rid of the intruders, would suddenly appear waving her apron with both hands, hoping to chase away our confused and frightened animals. I remember steers plunging through a grape arbor and trampling gardens that brought threats of a lawsuit. It was always a feeling of great relief to me when we could close the gate behind our charges at the railroad loading pens.

Often our steers would be loaded, the wide rolling stock car doors slammed shut, just as the "way freight" came puffing into LaMoille from the west on a branch line of the Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad. Coming from Denrock, near the Mississippi River some seventy-five miles west of LaMoille, it was serving as a "work train" hauling loaded cars to the main line of the "Q." After it screeched to a stop, the brakeman would disengage the engine. By stepping on the "cow catcher" up front, he could ride on the engine to the spur track to couple on our cars. With bumps and lurches they would be moved to join the line of cars awaiting them. The brakeman would then give the engineer the sign to start the train. With the "bill of lading" from our station agent identifying our cars by number, and letters on their exterior sides and a head count of our animals, my father and I would hurry to board the caboose at the rear of the long train.

Upon arriving at CB&Q's main line at Mendota and after an hour of switching cars that only a railroad brakeman could justify, our train continued toward Chicago, jerking along, stopping to add cars of stock at loading points en route. Owners often accompanied their shipments. A shipper was allowed a free ride in the caboose with a free pass to return on a passenger train.

At each stop, the door of the caboose would be opened and slammed shut many times. The talking and shouting made any sleep impossible. In winter I remember that the blasts of cold air chilled everyone except those close to the potbellied stove. After what seemed endless hours of travel, starting, stopping, and waiting in the darkness, our train of cars jerked to a halt at a long row of unloading docks within the Chicago Yards. Each car of stock would be unloaded and the animals secured in one of the maze of pens under roof near the docks. From there they would be driven to the sale pens before market time.

From the caboose at the rear of the train to the train depot itself was a long walk in the early morning darkness, as we stumbled over rails and dodged switch engines, hissing steam, their bells clanging. Arriving at the depot, I remember a hearty breakfast of pancakes and syrup, eggs and sausage. The market wouldn't open until 8 a.m. and no sales were allowed before that hour. In the meantime, there was much for a farm boy to see.

Unbelievably, the Stock Yards area encompassed a square mile, six hundred and forty acres of livestock pens, alleyways, scale houses, packing plants and factories, all related in some way to the sale and slaughter of livestock and the preparation of those products. With many railroad lines entering and leaving the city of Chicago bringing cattle, hogs, sheep, and lambs to market, Chicago became known in particular as the "hog-killing capitol of the world." Efficiency was such that packers boasted of using "everything but the squeal."

The sale of our stock was handled by an established firm of livestock salesmen on a commission basis. A sale was made directly between our commission agent and the packer or order buyer, man to man, eyeball to eyeball–a contest of wits and personalities. Often there was haggling over a quarter cent per pound of the live weight of the shipment. A dull market took longer, each side vying for the price advantage. My father's loyalty was such that in his lifetime he consigned all his cattle

and hogs to the Bowles Livestock Commission Company and he encouraged others to do so too. He considered Bowles the best salesman at the Chicago Yards.

In a complex as large as the Chicago Yards, most cattle buyers and many salesmen rode horseback to get about the area and to sort off animals from large shipments. Commission firms were not allowed to buy meals or lunches or cut rates to gain customers. Recognized firms were bonded for the security of their clients. A shipper received his commission firm's check for his stock minus the commission earned and the cost of the hay or grain fed to his animals.

An additional interest at the yards for a youngster was a trip through a meat packing plant. The two plants I recall were Swift and Armour. Visitors were directed to an overhead walkway. A sign said, "Those unable to endure the sight of blood take detour." I remember I didn't. Beef animals were stunned before having their throats cut. Hogs and sheep didn't receive that mercy. The animals were swung off the floor, heads down, onto a rail, their blood gushing against the rubber aprons of those doing the killing. With a steer's hide removed, the carcass was split down the backbone and reduced to quarters. Once started, the disecting never stopped–eventually to bite size pieces in some instances. Men of every ethnic group stood side by side with razor sharp knives and cleavers to reduce carcasses, still warm, to manageable portions for human consumption. The sight and smell of blood, the odor of steam from cooking vats, and the hum of machinery mixed with men's voices created an atmosphere I had never before experienced. Refrigeration and packaging occupied the attention of both men and women in another area of the plant. At the end of our tour a pretty lady with a smile offered various bite size product samples, labeled for distribution. She invited us to return.

By now it was 4:00 p.m. I joined my father to catch a Halsted street car for the ride toward the Union Passenger Depot to board the CB&Q to Mendota. From there we would take the evening train west to Denrock through LaMoille.

It had been a long day. As I settled back in my green plush seat in our passenger car, I was content to be leaving the city with its crowds and noise. As our train moved into the country, the open fields were serene and peaceful. My day in the city had given me much to think about. I shuddered at the thought of being a packing plant employee. One thing I was sure of: I wanted to be a farmer and a livestock man.

VII My First Job

MY FIRST JOB

The Puritan work ethic, which is a cornerstone for America and its noble dream, is one of the primary reasons for the nation's character and preeminence. This ethic is, of course, a societal necessity in all civilized social orders. The lack of it is a grave sign of crisis. And those who study human behavior report that there is the need for work satisfaction, the pleasure of a job well done. The Jewish faith, Christianity, and other faiths speak firmly of the necessity for honorable work.

This important concept, however, has for some time been the target of criticism. During the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States, the work ethic was attacked by many as being an outdated and corrupt tool of the elite to maintain its own wealth. Instead, many of the youth subscribed to the pleasure principle, the child of affluence and humanistic philosophy as well as psychology. Others turned inward, focusing on a frantic search for their identities, the massaging of their egos. Indeed, many college and university professors accepted and taught one or both of these beliefs. Still others, politically opposed to capitalism, perceived that they could attack an important prop of the American republic by endeavoring to undermine the work ethic.

In those days, jobs were plentiful, dollars easy to come by. The youth could afford to look inward, to contemplate their navels, to consider work as a minor goal. But Japan and Germany knew better. They planned and built, the ethic of work central to both their thinking and procedure. Of all the grave errors of the '60s and '70s, none was more serious than the erosion of the work ethic in America.

All that comes from economic recession or depression is not to be deplored. With bad times, with economic dysfunction, comes the work ethic, the understanding of the crucial nature of tenacious endeavor, the necessity for it, and the satisfaction of a job well done. This is no little development, and it is positive. The memoirs in this chapter demonstrate the validity of these claims. In this discussion of first jobs, the ideal of the work ethic is considered in depth, and there is very great wisdom offered.

Many of the memoirs explain the sense of accomplishment and pride involved in their first jobs. Hazel Fink speaks of the pride she gained through nursing and of the profound sense of achievement she realized through the endeavor. Virginia Schneider shares the difficulty of getting a job in the days of the Great Depression and the joy and sense of accomplishment when a full-time position was achieved.

James B. Jackson learned the value of work in his first job of building hard roads. He learned that he was the equal of the men with whom he worked, and experienced peace and inner joy. Perhaps the most important lesson was that he must finish his education to get a better job.

Lydia Jo Boston shares the back breaking fruit-picking work of her first job. Though more than demanding, the job taught her much, not the least of which was "the responsibility of finishing a job in spite of any discomfort I might feel." She also speaks of "a sense of pride and satisfaction in working."

Elma Strunk's first job was teaching. Her ambition was fueled by a desire to succeed and a need to eat. In spite of poor working conditions, poor pay, and manifold hardships she achieved the "burning desire to be the very best teacher I could be."

Self-respect is another attribute mentioned by the writers. In 1917 Mary Stormer's grandfather, with whom she lived, told her it was time to accomplish odd jobs around the house–for which she was to be paid a penny. She felt well about herself for meeting her grandfather's wishes. It also taught her the value of money and how to manage it.

Work also prepares one to succeed in life. Many of the writers made this point. Anna Becchelli, having arrived in America just ten days before her first job, spoke no English, a

fact making her first job as a waitress stressful. Still, it helped prepare her for success in her new home. Phyllis Fenton appreciated the fact that her job as a waitress prepared her to succeed later and to enjoy the success. Ivan Prall recalls with pride and satisfaction the job that helped him feel a sense of success.

Work, though not always pleasant at the time, had a positive effect on the lives of these writers. The toil they exhibited in their lives was part and parcel of a mind set, an ethic, an attitude, an action that distinguished them and that, multiplied by an ethos shared by countless Americans, helped build a very great nation.

Alfred J. Lindsey

UNDER A NURSE'S CAP

Hazel Denum Frank

While visiting with friends recently, I began reminiscing about my days in Nurses Training, starting in 1927. Everyone in the group seemed especially interested in my description of the uniform we wore as student nurses, but one young woman's reaction was, "How gross!" This puzzled me because that uniform set those of us who wore it apart from all others. It was never seen on the street, only in the hospital or in the nurses' home. All others were dressed in the traditional white starched attire, but the student nurses' uniforms were ours alone.

After paying the $75 registration fee at the Hospital School of Nursing, we were issued our uniforms: a dress of blue and white striped chambray with elbow-length sleeves and a modest neckline. It featured a detachable, stiffly starched white collar and cuffs. The front of the dress was held closed with removable shank buttons, and the full, gathered skirt was below calf-length and had a set-in belt. There was also a white apron gathered to a waistband, and this apron overlapped in back and completely covered the skirt. Black laced oxfords and black hose completed the uniform. It's interesting to note that the housemother adjusted the length of the skirts so no matter how short or tall the person, each skirt was exactly the same distance from the floor. This is how we dressed for the first four months, which was a probationary period.

Our training began with us working on the floor at the hospital's 7 to 7 day shift, with two hours off, four on Sunday. It was here that we learned about cleanliness, obedience, promptness, and seniority. There was not only seniority in the three class levels, but seniority within each class itself. This even extended to the dining room where each class had its own table, with the senior of the class seated at the head. Around that table, her classmates were seated clockwise, according to seniority. Our place at the table was marked by a napkin ring which we each furnished. My sister Roberta and I went to the jewelry store and bought silver napkin rings. Too late we discovered that any kind of ring was acceptable, even an old bracelet!

We also attended classes in practical nursing, nursing procedures, and ethics, as taught by the Supervisor of Nurses. We soon learned promptness at class was a *must* whether it was scheduled while we were on duty or on our short time off. One of our first accomplishments was carrying the big trays on our hand at shoulder level without spilling. We learned to respect all student nurses, our seniors and supervisors, and *especially* doctors. We always stood in the presence of nurses as well as doctors. A doctor never went into a patient's room without a nurse accompanying him, opening the door for him, and then always walking at least one step behind him. During this probationary period, we learned to manage our time, always finish the assigned work, study and keep our grades up, and keep our rooms satisfactorily neat. Our day ended with "Lights Out" at the 9:45 curfew.

At the end of the probationary period, if we had adjusted to routine, had satisfactory grades, and showed promise of becoming a good nurse, we were promoted to freshmen. Many dropped out at this time. Those of us remaining were issued white, stiffly-starched bibs. The bib was to be tucked into our apron, the wide straps crossed in the back, and then buttoned to the apron band. More importantly, we were also issued a CAP! Each school had its own style of cap; therefore, there were several different caps worn by the supervisors. Some were quite ornate. Our camps were flat when they came from the laundry. We then turned back a "cuff," brought the corners to the center-back, and secured them with the usual shank buttons. They were worn on the back of the head, secured in front with a white-headed pin, and at the sides with bobby pins, preferably white. We first feared they would fall off, but soon became quite secure with them. The rule was never be seen in uniform without your

cap! In fact, the cap was so much a part of the nurse, it was often the last item of the uniform to be removed. I recall the first day I went into the nurses' home I saw a senior nurse at the telephone. She had very little on, but her cap was in place! I soon learned that was not uncommon.

During our freshman and junior (2nd) year, the uniform remained the same. It was always worn while on duty, unless during special training such as surgery, laboratory, or diet kitchen. In these situations, plain white "scrub robes" were worn. The cap was worn except during surgery when special caps were donned to cover the hair. As soon as possible, however, the nurses' cap was back on our heads because it was a source of great pride to us. At this time, since all the care of the patients was done by students, we received a monthly allowance. During the freshman year, it was $8 per month; increasing to $9 during the junior year. We were supervised by an R.N. on each floor and department during days and by one supervisor at night.

When we entered our third year and became seniors, we received a black velvet ribbon to be worn as a band on our cap. With this came more responsibility, along with an allowance of $10 per month. Among our studies were classes in anatomy, material medica, chemistry, nursing history, obstetrics, and others taught by the doctors. Dietetics was taught by the dietician, and we also learned about serving special diets, which was a very important part of the training.

At the end of three years working in all areas of the hospital, and having satisfactorily met the grade requirements, we were ready for graduation. For this occasion, we received our regular white, long-sleeved starched uniforms, still secured with the white shank buttons, plus white shoes and hose, and a cap. Graduation did not mean we were full-fledged nurses, however. We put back on our striped uniforms and finished our required number of days, according to the sick days we had to make up. I finished on August 21, 1930, at 1:00 p.m. and had free time from then until State Board Exams. The testing lasted three days; then it was back home to Stronghurst to wait for the report. Then, and only then, could I call myself an R.N. and begin to practice my profession and start earning money.

It was three years of hard work and new experiences, but it was worth every bit of it to have the privilege of wearing that uniform, and especially the cap. It bothers me a great deal that today's nurses seem to have lost some respect for the uniform and cap. The have learned so much more than we did, have skills that weren't even thought of at our time of training, and are good nurses. Yet I wish they could recapture the respect we had for the nurse's uniform and the cap, in particular. The cap wasn't just something to wear. It was a part of the nurse. And it represented the opportunity for young women to fulfill their dreams for a life of respect and service.

I LOOK FOR THAT FIRST JOB

Virginia Schneider

Trying to find that first steady job during the Great Depression of the 1930s was like finding a needle in a haystack! Although I could type and take short-hand, I joined everyone else in willingness to settle for any kind of paying job. Very few of us were concerned about vacations, fringe benefits, or coffee breaks.

When Goldblatt Brothers were opening a new department store in a southeast Chicago neighborhood, I decided to apply for work there, with my fingers crossed. However, I had to take a long ride on a lumbering, noisy street-car with screeching wheels to their employment office, which was located in what was then the Stockyards area around 47th and Halsted.

The day was hot, muggy, and very uncomfortable. What made it even more uncomfortable was this sickening odor wafting from the slaughterhouses in the stockyards through the open streetcar windows. At that time, Chicago had the largest livestock market in the world and was considered the greatest meat packing city.

What with the butterflies that I felt in my stomach because of anxiety about getting hired and having a tendency to become nauseated whenever I rode a streetcar, this offensive smell made me feel even more queasy. It was a good thing that I had a brown bag with me for it certainly came in handy.

It took great determination to keep going and not turn back. I wondered how the residents in that area were able to tolerate this overpowering stench in the summertime when windows had to be open since air-conditioning was not available at that time. Carl Sandburg once said that Chicago was the "hog butcher of the world." Without a doubt, it smelled like it in that part of town!

When I finally made it to the Goldblatt's Employment Office, the line of us unemployed was so long, I never thought I'd get interviewed before dark. Yet, I was fortunate to be one of the few selected to work in their millinery section on opening day only. We sold loads of ladies' hats for $1.00, and we were kept very busy. During this rush, one of the girls gave a customer the wrong change from a ten-dollar bill. She was fired immediately.

Later, while hopefully waiting for Goldblatt's to call me after that single work-day, a friend and I decided to try our luck in downtown Chicago. My friend told me that they needed chorus girls at the Minsky's Rialto Theatre on State Street. While I was anxious to get work, I wasn't too eager to apply there, for I didn't think I'd feel comfortable wearing those skimpy costumes. Of course, this was before the bikini was accepted as standard beach and backyard garb.

Was I relieved when we were told that the manager was out to lunch! Besides, we were told that they already had all the chorus girls they needed. Today, I wonder what would my thirteen grandchildren think of their grandma as a chorus girl?

Since it was close to Christmas, we decided to walk over to the Mandel Brothers Department Store on State and Madison streets, the busiest corner in the world at that time. On the way over, a very strong wind made it difficult to keep our skirts where they belonged while hanging onto our hats at the same time. No ladies wore slacks then and one simply did not go downtown without a hat and white gloves.

While my friend Rose and I struggled against the wind to look respectable, the men enjoyed our predicament! Rosie told me something I never knew. I always thought Chicago was called the Windy City because of this strong wind. "Not so," she informed me. "Along about 1890, Chicagoans were bragging so much about their city that a New York newspaper editor nicknamed it "windy city."

At Mandel Brothers, the personnel manager looked so stern, I was afraid to apply for this job. Rose, who was bolder than I, encouraged me.

"Oh c'mon, I'll go first and you'll see how easy it is."

He asked her if she had any experience, and even though she told him she had, she wasn't hired. That almost made me want to get out of this long line of prospective employees. Too, I worried whether I should tell him that I was experienced since I only worked that one day as a sales girl at Goldblatt's

With a good deal of trepidation and a little push from Rosie, I looked him in the eye and said, "Yes sir, I've had experience." He seemed to be able to look through me and know that I wasn't too sure of myself. However, he informed me curtly, "I'll give you this opportunity. See what you can do with it." I couldn't believe that I was hearing right! Yet, I got to work on the main floor during the Christmas rush selling beautifully initialed men's handkerchiefs for only a dollar a box! It was also a good spot to be working for it was near the entrance and

attracted many shoppers. Among them was the actor who played "De Lawd" in *Green Pastures*, a play written by Marc Connelly.

I felt sorry for Rosie who practically had to push me into applying for this job, yet she was turned down. After Christmas, however, all of us extras got the pink slip. I wondered if I would ever land a steady job–yet, I could at least now be able to say I was experienced without flinching.

Another Christmas rolled around before I was able to get work again. I applied at the Wieboldt's Department Store on 63rd Street, near Halsted Street, a very busy shopping area. On the 63rd Street streetcar, I met my former shorthand and typing teacher, who was disappointed that I hadn't found use for these skills.

At Wieboldt's I was hired. No, I wasn't hired as a sales-clerk this time. Because I was *then* a petite young lady, I was asked to hand each child a present as he/she came to visit Santa. I dressed in a fairy costume and wore a tinsel trimmed dress, a shiny tiara in my hair, and pretty white slippers.

A *Chicago Herald-Examiner* newspaper reporter came and took a picture of me handing a little girl a present while Santa smiled on. This picture appeared in this now-extinct newspaper.

After Christmas, I had to start looking for a job again! The Wieboldt personnel manager assured me, however, that if anything turned up, he would call me.

In the meantime, a brother-in-law, who managed a cigar store next to the Loyala Law School in downtown Chicago, called me and said that his assistant had the flu. He asked if I could help out.

I agreed somewhat reluctantly since I wasn't too greatly experienced using a cash register. I did make some mistakes. However, the fellows from the law school and telephone company nearby told me about it in a nice way and for that I was grateful. At Mandel Brothers, I didn't get to use a cash register. We wrote up the sale and enclosed it along with the money in a metal tube that was attached to a wire pulley and conveyed to a cashier.

Again, all too soon, this job also came to an end, for Ed's assistant recuperated and returned in no time. No one lingered at home with an illness for fear of being replaced.

Next, I tried baby-sitting, except that in those days you didn't just sit. You were also expected to help with housework and do dishes besides caring for a child. I was paid a grand total of six dollars a week plus carfare. I had to work from 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. with Thursday afternoons off. I also stayed overnight on Wednesdays and Saturdays so that my employer and her husband could go out on the town while I stayed with their young son.

You'd think I won a million dollars in the lottery! I was that elated when I came home from my baby-sitting job one day! My mom told me that Wieboldt's called and wanted me to come and work in their men's department as a regular on week-ends from Thursday through Saturday.

I sold what seemed like a thousand neckties that first day. They cost 29¢ a tie and went like hot cakes. Men wore ties more often in the 1930s than they do today. A tie would look weird with a running suit.

Eventually, I got to work steady from Monday to Saturday, and how I rejoiced to be able to count a regular weekly paycheck. Even though, according to today's standards, it wasn't very much, that $14 a week looked good to me. After I got my first paycheck, I picked up a porterhouse steak at 29¢ a lb. to celebrate my good fortune!

If I sold a typewriter, I got a commission plus a day off. This job was certainly a lot better than my baby-sitting job at $6 per week. It was also nice to get a discount when purchasing items in the store. In fact, I still use the bedroom set I bought there in 1936. Furniture was made to last in those days!

From all those attempts at finding my first steady job

during the Great Depression, when I finally did get that permanent job, I gave it my all because I was so pleased to get it. Also, I benefitted from that variety of part-time jobs because all those experiences have provided me with "grist for the mill" in my efforts as a free-lance writer.

And, oh yes, Mrs. Olson, wherever you are . . . I do get to use my typing skills–shorthand, too–to good advantage after all!

THE HARD ROAD GANG

James B. Jackson

School closed in May, 1926, and I graduated from the little two-year high school in Tennessee, Illinois. For the first time I faced a summer with nothing to keep me at home. I was big and strong and had just turned eighteen. I needed money for school in the fall and I wanted to break away and be a man on my own. Len Small was Governor and he was trying to pull Illinois out of the mud by building "Hard Roads," as we called them, in contrast to "Dirt Roads." Dad was working on a State Highway construction crew in Calhoun County, and he said he could get me on too for the summer. It was too good to turn down.

Plans were made so that I would arrive in Hardin on a Saturday and be ready for work on Monday morning. I packed my clothes: three pairs of bib overalls, three or four pairs of rockford sox, a few chambray shirts, a pair of work shoes, my straight edge razor, my toothbrush, and a Brownie camera. I'm sure I had a hat of some sort and a bag or box to carry it all in. I wore the one suit I owned and the shirt, tie, and shoes that went with it. I had my pocket knife, a few hundred dollars, and a one way ticket to Elsbury, Missouri.

I caught the 2:00 p.m. Burlington passenger train on Friday and felt like a man of the world, a man with a mission. I knew all the towns between Macomb and Quincy and I kept a look out for familiar landmarks. As the train passed a couple of hundred yards from our house, I could see Mother and the girls waving me goodbye. At Quincy we crossed the Mississippi into Missouri, and I was in foreign territory, a stranger in a strange land. In less than an hour, we were in Elsbury, Missouri. I checked in at the one and only hotel, my first experience of the kind, and it must have been obvious to the kindly old desk clerk. I ate supper in the dining room.

Early next morning, Saturday, I caught the Star Route mail carrier for the last leg of my journey. It cost me 50¢ to ride the twenty miles to Hardin, Illinois. That included my baggage! We crossed the Mississippi River on a cable ferry and drove up to the orchard country and on down to Hardin, county seat of Calhoun County. Such a tiny town!

I asked at the post office for directions and thus started a brand new life for me. I met Dad at the rooming house, and we had a good visit. Room, board, and washing was $3.50 a week.

We were finished with breakfast and waiting for the truck to leave at 6:30 Monday morning. Our lunches were packed, big, hearty sandwiches, and a dessert (usually pie). The men had coffee, which I didn't drink at that time in my life. Until I had a paycheck and bought a dinner bucket, I carried my food in a paper bag. There was a water barrel on the job. The water was cooled by wet sacks that were wrapped around it as it sat in the shade. Ice water was supposed to be bad for hot, sweaty men to drink. Maybe it was; I'll never know!

I went to work as assistant form setter. The head form setter, Roy, explaining how to read the surveyor's stakes, handed me a pick, a shovel, and a sixteen-pound sledge hammer. The forms were made of heavy sheet steel, ten feet long and nine inches high. They were flat on the bottom and slanted

at the back. There was a hole at each end and one in the middle through which a steel stake was driven to keep it in place. Each form fitted into the one behind it. Since the big concrete mixer rolled along the forms, they had to be set firmly. They were left in place until the mix set.

Each morning we pulled the forms off the previous day's work and dragged them by hand to the next area. In itself, this was a hard, mean job. To make it worse, the old forms were half full of concrete, and most of them weighed a hundred pounds or more. We would set forty or fifty pairs of forms a day. I worked without gloves and by the end of the summer had thick calluses.

Roy set his form first and then I would measure across to my form. I think it was sixteen feet. The form had to be exactly parallel to Roy's and on the same level which I got from the grade stakes. Most of the time it was just a matter of moving some dirt or adding some. In some places, the grading crew had not cut deep enough when they hit solid rock. This meant I had to use a sledge hammer and a pick to remove an inch or two of hard limestone. The outcrop might be forty or fifty feet long. On more than one occasion I raised the grade stake a bit–an inch or so. Of course, this made a slight hump, a permanent hump. Forty years later as I drove along the same road, I could see and feel them. For some reason, I never felt a single twinge of guilt!

All of our materials came up from St. Louis by barges pushed by the old side wheeler, the *Golden Eagle*. Sand, gravel, and cement in cloth sacks were unloaded on the riverbank some fifty yards off the roadway. Sand and gravel were shoveled by hand into a long-legged hopper, and the correct number of bags of cement was poured in on top, again by hand. The cement men greased their faces in the morning, and by night they had at least an eighth-inch of cement plastered tightly all over. (I wonder now how much they sucked into their lungs.) The hopper held one truck load. The trucks were T-Model Fords with gear shifts added. They had no cab, just a box for a seat. The driver knelt on the box and drove wide open in reverse as much as five miles to the mixer which was mounted on the steel forms and which rolled slowly forward as the "slab" was poured. When two drivers met where Roy and I were working, we gave them plenty of room as they had only a foot of clearance on any side. But I never saw a collision.

We worked ten to twelve hours a day unless it rained. We drew no pay for off time and we were not paid portal-to-portal, just for time on the job. A couple of times we ran out of materials and had to wait until the *Golden Eagle* arrived with a fresh supply. The first time we lost half a week's pay. Then one morning just at dawn we heard that deep throated whistle we'd all been waiting for: "Steam boat a comin'." The whole town was happy. Every man in the gang was up and ready to go with a full lunch bucket when the trucks came at 6:30. Dad and I worked near enough together that we could eat lunch together. We'd find a shady spot and sprawl on the ground and talk and rest. One day the little red ants found our buckets in the tree where we had hung them. I was all for throwing everything away but Dad said: "Just knock off what you can and eat the rest. They won't hurt you, and they have a nice sour taste." He was right on both counts.

Sundays and days off I went walking up on the high land above the bluff and looked at the rows and rows of well-pruned apple trees. Or I'd sit on the old barge and fish for gar. Once in a while I'd go to a ten cent movie, mostly westerns. There was a nice girl who worked in her father's drug store where I bought film, toothpaste, and candy bars. I asked her once to go to a movie with me. She said she'd love to, but her parents would not let her go out with any of the "hard road gang." They didn't know it but she would have been in less danger with me than with a local swain parked in an apple orchard. All I had in mind was seeing a movie, eating an ice cream cone, and walking her home. I learned quickly what it feels like to be an outsider, distrusted and socially unacceptable, and it hurt.

But I learned a great many other things, too. I could hold

my own with any man on the crew. I was as strong and as tough as any of them. I learned the true value of solitude and the peace and inner joy it brought after a week of hard work never out of sight of other men. By mid-August, when it was time to catch the Star Route carrier back to Elsbury, there was no doubt in my mind that for me construction work would never be any more than a means to an end. And the first end in mind was to finish high school and college. Eight years and many construction jobs later, I received my first degree from Western Illinois State Teachers College. But I shall always believe that my real education began with the "Hard Road Gang."

LEARNING TO WORK IN NAUVOO: A FRUITFUL EXPERIENCE

Lydia Jo Boston

Nauvoo was a community of fruit growers. Many with a small acreage had strawberry and raspberry patches; vineyards were a common part of the landscape. There were apple and pear orchards; peach, cherry, plum, and apricot trees provided fruit for family use with the surplus finding a ready market. You could usually find a job picking fruit if you really wanted to.

I was introduced to the backbreaking job of picking those luscious, red strawberries when my mother took me with her to Aunt Mayme and Uncle Charlie's large patch. Customarily a child was assigned to pick with an adult until they learned how to search out the berries, picking all the ripe ones, not leaving any on the vines to spoil. When my younger sister and brother came along to pick, they, of course, picked with mother, but I got to pick with my cousin, Margaret!

Each picker was given a tray containing four quart berry boxes; trays with six boxes were for speedy adult pickers. The full boxes were taken to the strawberry shed where the overripe and too green berries were sorted out by Grandma Huntley and Aunt Mayme. Depending on the wage for that particular year, you were paid either five or six cents for the four quarts. We carried small bags with a drawstring to hold the precious coins we earned. Sometimes we used a large safety pin to secure the bag and its treasure inside a pocket. We kids thought it a good day if we made 50¢! Adults made more!

Though we liked to earn money, we kids soon became tired; as the day wore on and the sun became hotter, we grew slower at our task. As we dawdled, we daydreamed of better times when we would no longer have to pick berries–maybe we'd be rich and spend our time ordering things we wanted from the current wishbook! Margaret and I used to dream that someday wealth could be ours if we could just devise a method for raising strawberries that would make them easier to pick. It was beyond our understanding why strawberries couldn't be grown in wooden boxes standing on legs, so we could stand up to pick and thus be relieved of backs that ached from several hours of stooping. Our fantasy for a future without backaches or sore knees included some arrangement that would allow us to ride between the rows and just lean over to pick. Unfortunately our dreams remained just dreams and strawberry picking still requires strong backs.

Raspberries were usually picked in pint boxes. No matter how hot the day, you usually wore long sleeves to protect yourself from the thorny bushes. Some pickers would protect their hands by taking an old pair of dress gloves and cutting off the ends of the fingers, thus providing some measure of protection for their hands while allowing the fingers to work freely.

One of our neighbors was among the first in the community to grow boysenberries. The berries were large and the boxes filled quickly, but the bushes were very thorny. The pickers were given a stick about twelve to fifteen inches long

with a nail protruding about an inch or two from the end which allowed a picker to lift the thorny branches for easier picking.

Grape cutting required a good knife to cut the bunches of grapes from the vine. Grape baskets sat on waist high stands to be filled and we tried to make the tops of the baskets even and neat.

Even though it was discouraged, we girls sometimes wrote our names and addresses in the bottom of the grape baskets hoping to get ourselves a pen pal from up north where the grapes were shipped. We not only put in ours, but were known at times to include our friends and just for fun our mothers! We were somewhat concerned though that the state fruit inspector might find our names and our frivolity would be an embarrassment to Uncle Clarence, who was President and Manager of the Fruit Growers and Shippers Union!

My mother once got a letter from some farmer's wife in the Red River Valley. Interestingly, her husband's name was Russell, as was my father's. They also had three children in the family as we did; they, too, had a Russell Jr. My cousin, Margaret, received a letter from a Norwegian farmer in North Dakota who had bought a basket of Nauvoo grapes. They corresponded and some years later they were married.

The sun would be hanging low in the west and we could hear the six o'clock bells from the Convent as we walked home from Aunt Ruth and Uncle Clarence's vineyard. The tempting aroma of potatoes frying seemed to greet us from every house we passed on our way home tired and hungry after our day's work.

There were some who raised tomatoes for the canning factory in Lomax, so there was another summer job between berry picking and grape harvest. My sister Lois became aware of discrimination at an early age when she discovered she was picking more tomatoes for 15¢ an hour than one of the boys for 20¢ an hour. Her employer explained that men and boys always earn more than girls! The incident was no barrier for cupid; they married while still in their teens!

A merchant from Ft. Madison opened a dime store in Nauvoo. Two of my girlfriends decided they would apply for a job there. I wasn't particularly interested in a clerking job in a store; however, I allowed them to persuade me to accompany them. When we arrived there, they both suddenly had an attack of shyness and urged me to tell the owner why they had come. I finally summoned up enough courage to approach him and asked for jobs for my friends.

"I only need one more clerk," he said," and you can have the job if you want it."

"Oh, but it's these girls that want the job," I protested.

"But you asked and they didn't, so if you want the job, it is yours."

From then on I got up earlier on Saturday mornings to walk the mile out to Grandma Ruff's to help her with the weekly cleaning and be back in time for my one o'clock job at the dime store.

I really didn't mind the clerking job once I got used to it. One day an elderly lady asked for the "elastics." I guided her to the sewing notions to show her the elastic we had.

"No! that is not what I want. I want the elastics you wear over your shoes to keep them from getting wet!"

I decided she must mean what we called rubbers or overshoes, so I sent her on to another store.

It was on my eighteenth birthday that I got the phone call offering me my first REAL job! A five-days-a-week job for 35¢ an hour! I didn't have transportation, but some generous folk allowed me to be a part of their car pool so I was able to get to Fort Madison, Iowa, for my job at the Sheaffer Pen Company.

As the nation's factories geared up for the war effort, there were transfers to different departments; working schedules changed with overtime and longer hours so at times finding a ride to and from work became a problem. There was no bus service, but morning and evening the mail was picked up at a Ft. Madison depot, and as long as there was room the carrier would

take passengers. I recall one time when I rode "the mail" home. There were eight of us in the car with one passenger holding a decorated cake for delivery in Nauvoo. The bags of mail that wouldn't fit in the car trunk were deposited all round us until there was hardly breathing room!

My fiancé, Raymond, was discharged from the Navy in May of 1946 and we were married in June. I continued to work until we moved to a farm in the Colusa area in 1947.

Looking back, I view those hot summer days in the berry patches as a fruitful experience! There I learned the responsibility of finishing a job in spite of any discomfort I might feel. The earnings, meager by today's standards, nevertheless bought needed clothes and helped pay my way to church camp ever summer. The fruit growers around town gave many a young person a summer job and were instrumental in instilling in them a sense of pride and satisfaction in working. They performed a needed service for the fruit grower and learned some important lessons about life and what it means to work. From this early experience young people learned how to relate to an employer–something they can use all their working lives.

MY FIRST PENNY

Mary C. Stormer

"A penny saved is a penny earned." I'm sure everyone has heard this phrase. I want to tell about the "first penny" that I ever earned.

This was a long time ago. I was four years old and had gone to live with my grandparents who lived on a farm west of the town of Eureka, Illinois, in Woodford County, the home of Eureka College, President Ronald Reagan's alma mater.

The year was 1917. One day my grandfather mentioned the fact that I should be doing odd jobs to earn a little money. I agreed. The first job was to clean Grandpa's spitoon which was a small round blue granite pan, filled with clean wood ashes. The ashes came from the wood burning stove out in the old summer kitchen. The ashes were also used to "scour" the tin, black-handled knives and forks–another job for me.

I received one penny a week in payment for my services. I will never forget my great joy the day Grandpa gave me my first earned penny. I saved my first penny which was a shiny new one with the year 1917 date. I still have this penny in my collection, labeled "the first penny that I earned."

Throughout the years, I managed to earn quite a few pennies by doing errands for the nearby neighbors. I stored my pennies in a large white milkglass jar which I kept in Grandma's wardrobe on the top shelf. When I had 100 pennies saved up, Grandpa gave me a crisp $1 bill which he called a "green back." Oh! I thought, how wonderful to be able to save and have "green backs."

Grandpa always enjoyed telling me how he had earned his "first penny." He would carry water to the thirsty hay makers in the field during the boiling hot July days. The water had to be pumped by hand from a deep well on the farm. Gallon jugs were filled with clean, sparkling clear, refreshingly thirst-quenching water.

The coin that Grandpa showed me was (Oh, yes, he had saved that penny) larger than the usual penny. It was copper and bore the date 1850. Grandpa was six years old at that time. He was born October 7, 1844, in a log house on the farm two miles west of Metamora, Illinois. I have this penny in my collection as it is a pleasant memory. Grandpa gave it to me shortly before he passed away on February 18, 1932.

Throughout the years, my daughter enjoyed hearing about the "penny story." So, we decided that she could earn a penny a week by doing little errands about the home. She still has the first penny she earned when she was four years old in

1940. She stored this penny in a little white bag which hung on a nail in back of the old dresser in the upstairs bedroom. It is still hanging there in the same place.

Then, let history repeat itself. My granddaughter, Julie, also has the first penny that she earned by doing chores for her parents. That coin is in her glass piggy bank.

In today's world, a penny doesn't mean anything to a child. What can they buy with a penny? Not much. It takes several pennies to pay the sales tax on all purchases. I saw a lady break a $5 bill in order to have change (extra pennies needed) to pay the sales tax.

Living in today's uncertain times, I really do appreciate having learned from a very early age the value of money and working in order to earn that penny. It is a valuable source to know where money comes from. I've learned to manage money and that saving it is made possible by careful spending. Managing money well requires effort. The rewards, however, are great. It will accumulate, eliminate financial worries, and strengthen the sense of self-respect that accompanies financial independence. All this in turn will strengthen character and improve one's personality.

It was great living in the days when life was quiet and simple, where we counted our "blessings and our pennies." I shall forever cherish the memories of this shared childhood joy.

MY FIRST DOLLAR

Ivan E. Prall

My first dollar did not end up hanging on the wall under framed glass like so many first earned dollars. The reason was simple. It was Depression time and that dollar had a thousand dreams waiting its arrival. Also, the Depression explains why there hadn't been a first dime or nickel or even a penny. There just hadn't been any previous income.

Of course, I was only ten, so it was excusable not to have piled up much income by then, and my folks had no money to give me for odd chores or allowance. In fact, in those days you were expected to do the chores, and I'm not sure the word "allowance" was in the vocabulary.

We lived on a small farm in the center of a Swedish community about five miles from the nearest town. The Swedish farmers around us were all elderly, having come to this country in the late 1800s. I was the only child my age for some distance around and each day I faced a trudge of a mile plus to a little red brick school house on the highway.

Some pigs, eggs, and cream were our sources of income, together with the sale of an occasional calf. Farming was done with horses.

When school let out in June, I faced a rather dull and lonely summer of hoeing thistles, cutting wood, milking cows, etc. The chief monotony reliever was threshing time. A steam engine pulling the threshing machine would huff its way from farm to farm, and all the neighbors would arrive with their teams and hayracks to haul in the bundles. The neighbors' wives arrived to help put on a meal that stayed in your memory to the following year.

Now to my first earned income. One of our neighbors was an elderly Swedish bachelor whose farm buildings were situated at a bend in the nearby Kishwaukee River. In fact, Combs Mill, which served most of our county, had stood at that location for most of the 1800s. Now, he, whose real name was Carl Olson, was known far and wide as "Cully pa dammit." That is as near as I can come to the Swedish pronunciation, which translated to "Cully by the dam site."

Most of Carl's acreage lay beyond the river which in summer ran very shallow. A gravel road allowed him to move his farm machinery back and forth from the buildings to the

fields, and his livestock grazed beyond the river.

Occasionally a recalcitrant bovine was tardy in coming home for milking. So, in order to meet such urgencies, Carl had installed a catwalk of planks across the river. Old ten gallon milk cans filled with rocks rested upright on the river bottom, and 2" x 16' planks ran between them and were fastened to them with wire.

However, when the snow melt of spring brought the river over his catwalk, a second route, a last resort, existed. Stretched between trees on opposite banks were a series of cables. Suspended from these was the seat of an old spring wagon. Positioning himself in this, he would pull himself across the raging torrent and drive his reluctant cows into the flood, forcing them home for milking.

Since the thresher crews hauling bundles from the field could not be expected to dismount their wagons and open and close gates, fording the river, Carl approached my father and asked if he could hire me for one dollar to watch the gates and keep the cows from straying across the river and ultimately out on the road. This seemed something within the capabilities of a ten-year-old farm boy, and hence my first dollar was earned.

The crowning reward came, however, with the noonday meal. Since Carl had no wife to prepare meals, he fed the crew at a restaurant in town. My father, who was one of the bundle haulers, myself, and the other threshers piled into cars and drove five miles to town for the noonday meal. It was my first restaurant meal, and the last for some years.

I shall never forget the hours spent on that first job. Also, I shall always remember with satisfaction and pride of my entry into the world of work.

MY FIRST JOB IN AMERICA

Anna Becchelli

My first job lasted two weeks. The year was 1927 and I was eighteen years old. I had just arrived in America ten days earlier. I couldn't speak or understand English yet. I had never worked in a restaurant, but when a friend told my brother about a job for me with an Italian restaurant I was willing to try it. I got the job and was paid $12 a week and I thought it was a lot of money. I had never seen that much money at one time in Italy. My job in the restaurant was to clear tables when people finished eating, clean counters and tables, and dry dishes. Sometimes people would ask me for a glass of water. At first I couldn't understand what they said, but I soon caught on to that phrase.

I remember a couple of funny things that happened to me while I worked those two weeks. I didn't think they were so funny then, but now I laugh when I remember.

One day while I was cleaning some plates and glasses off from a table where a couple was sitting, all dressed up, I spilled some liquid down the silk stockinged legs of the lady. I was so mortified that I tried to tell them that if she would just take her stockings off I would wash them clean in the kitchen. Of course, they just looked at me. They couldn't understand a word I was saying, since I was speaking Italian. Somehow I managed to understand that they were telling me back, to forget about what happened.

The second incident was really comic. In those days streetcars took you around the city in St. Louis, Missouri. I had to ride the streetcar six blocks to get to the restaurant. One morning my father came part way with me as he was going uptown for some business. When he got off the streetcar before my stop, he said, "I will pay for you now, so you won't have to pay when it's time for your stop." I said to my dad, "OK." Well, when it came time for my stop I got up and went to the door and the

conductor didn't open the door. I stood there and he said something to me. I couldn't understand him and he said something again. Now I figured out that he was telling me to pay before he could let me off, so I said, "Papa pay." I didn't know any more English. The conductor got angry and said some more. My face turned beet red because passengers were behind me waiting to get off and the rest of the people in the streetcar started laughing. Then the conductor started to shout. I knew he was cussing although I couldn't understand the words, but I wasn't about to pay again since I knew my dad had paid for me already, so with a beet red face I kept repeating, "Papa pay, Papa pay." Then he had to let me off because he was holding up the rest of the passengers. When I got home from work I was furious at my dad for putting me through that experience and told him, "THANK YOU, DAD, for putting me through that embarrassment, and don't you ever do that to me again!!"

Once a week at the restaurant they sold spaghetti to construction workers who came into the kitchen through the back door. For 25¢ the workers bought a big cardboard bucket full of good spaghetti. The cook would ask me each day what I wanted to eat for lunch. I couldn't understand what he was saying in English so everything he said to me I would answer, "Ok." He would say, "Stew?" I would answer, "Ok." "Roast?" he would ask. "Ok," I would answer. Then he would give me a sample of everything he cooked up that day. Everything he made was good. Once in a while he got drunk and didn't show up for the evening and the owner would panic, but he always had already made the evening meals, and the owner just had to heat them up.

This first job was not easy for a new American lass, but it was a good experience, preparing me to succeed in the new land of promise.

WORKING AS A WAITRESS

Phyllis T. Fenton

In the summer of 1935, I got my first job. Since I could type, my father urged that I get office experience, perhaps in a typing pool, but no one, not even the family friend who ran a small office, would take a chance on a high school girl in times of economic depression.

I pursued other leads through the *Tribune* want ads and answered one for "Waitress Wanted." After an interview with the personnel manager of the DeMets restaurant chain, whose headquarters were on Madison Street just west of the Chicago Loop, I was given a one day training session, then assigned to the tea room in the Board of Trade. Located one floor below street level, the tea room served lunch to the secretaries and office workers in the massive building at 141 West Jackson Boulevard, the same building which today, as then, throws its long shadow down LaSalle Street.

The job covered the noon shift–four hours a day for five days. My pay was $4.50 a week. When I complained about this skimpy pay, my father said that on his first job in 1905 he earned but four dollars a week for a ten-hour day. I was moving on up!

Wages were paid Friday afternoon by cash, in a small brown envelope, and 25¢ were deducted for starching the white apron and collar. The black uniform, bought at time of employment, cost $1 and was laundered at home. Waitresses then, as now, were expected to plump out their base pay with tips, but tea room patrons in 1935 seldom tipped, and if they did it was a generous nickel or dime. They, too, were working girls.

The tea room was large and squarish, its decor soft blue and gray. Along three walls were "deuces" or two-seater booths each lit with a lamp. Arranged over the floor were tables-for-four. Scattered throughout were the bus stands for napkins, silverware and water pitchers.

Daily routines began with inspection, that we were neat and clean and all hair wisps tucked under the net required by state law. Then we set up doilies and silverware at our stations and stood sentry, tray under the arm, until one of the two middle-aged hostesses in black dress and white lace collar escorted a customer to a table and laid down a menu, an act which ended the veneer of tea room gentility. From then on, under the buzz of patron conversation, the pace quickened for the waitress.

First, she filled the water glass; then she took the order. Most customers ordered from the menu daily specials ranging from the spaghetti or meat loaf at 35¢, upward to the 55¢ lamb chops. Each special included a hard crust roll, butter, dessert, and drink. The maverick customer who ordered á la carte, however, challenged the greenhorn waitress to learn quickly that a club sandwich had three layers of bread and á la carte pies were cut larger than those on the special. A gracious spirit characterized most patrons; a few were picky, rude and squeezed out every inch of service. Indeed, the tenderfoot waitress had to balance people as well as trays.

Trays were filled in a clattering kitchen by the waitress. From a long counter, she picked up the salads and sandwiches for the daily specials which were being made by women and girls on the other side of the counter. From large metal vats, other kitchen workers ladled up the special DeMets spaghetti and sauce. At the entrance to the dining room, a cashier rang up the bill and checked each tray for extras such as rolls, butter, and lemon wedges. This kitchen administration was under the scanning eye of the head chef, a stocky, gruff man named Tony.

After the customers were gone, tables cleared and washed, and salt and pepper shakers filled, we ate a free lunch at the back tables near the kitchen, usually the 35¢ special. A surplus of lamb chops, however, would be distributed by the chef, Tony.

Between Jackson Boulevard and my home at 66th Street, it was a half hour ride on the Clark-Wentworth streetcar, for which 14¢ a day was budgeted, leaving me $3.55 for worldly pleasure. Sometimes I stayed downtown with friends for a soda and a cup of tea at Walgreen's where a fortune teller read the leaves, or I'd splurge 35¢ on a first-run movie with vaudeville at the Chicago Theater. Other days I might meet a girlfriend in Field's third floor waiting room and browse through the store.

Occasionally, before work, I watched the action of the Board of Trade from the visitor's gallery. Here, the traders shouted their buy and sell orders from the wheat and corn pits.

Four years later, after two years of college, I got a job on LaSalle Street near the Board of Trade in the offices of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Company. There I earned $65 a month, and instead of riding the street car I took the speedier but more expensive Rock Island suburban. In this job, hat and gloves, not hair nets, were mandatory.

A few times I spent lunch hour in the blue and gray tea room where a gray haired lady in black dress and white lace collar escorted me to a wall table lit by a lamp, then handed me a menu. When a breathless child waitress whipped out a pencil, I ordered the 35¢ spaghetti special, and when I left, now that I was a LaSalle Street office worker, I slid my nickel gratuity under the tea cup.

TEACHING AT ROUND PRAIRIE SCHOOL

Elma Strunk

Whoever said going out on your own for your first job was easy never experienced that formidable task in the mid-Twenties, when times were hard and jobs scarce, especially if that job was teaching a rural school in the far corner of Jersey County, a long way from home and on dirt roads–almost impassible in

winter.

Anyway, about sixty years ago I was faced with the need to make my own way doing something besides housekeeping if I wanted to succeed in life, and also if I wanted to eat.

I had always wanted to teach school. I had a wonderful high school English teacher who inspired and encouraged me. She helped me to know how to write applications and how to go about applying in person. This, of course, stood me in good stead when applying for the "job" in the rural school of Jersey County. For a very timid person from the country, this was very hard.

However, I got names of schools from the county superintendent of schools that would need teachers the next season. In order to teach, I needed a Teacher's Certificate. I needed to take an examination to get one. I took the examination without any "qualms" of passing. After all, I had gone to a country school for eight years, and was a high school graduate. Was I ever surprised when I got my grades: I had failed. The county superintendent issued me an Emergency Certificate good for one year so I could keep my job.

I was fortunate to have already been hired at a school, Round Prairie, in the very southern part of the county. I guess because of the good heart of one of the directors who was Dad's cousin, I got a salary of $60 per month for seven months.

I had to board in the district. I was able to find a place about a mile from the school at $3 per week from Sunday evening until Friday morning. Here again this was a relative, Mom's second or third cousin. They were an elderly couple. There was no indoor plumbing. I wasn't too used to that anyway. There was no heat in my room upstairs. She had cleaned the former storage room so I could stay there. It got cold up there in the winter! The water would freeze in the washbowl so baths were a minimum and when it got too cold, Aunt Ella fixed me a place in the kitchen pantry where I could wash my face and hands and dress behind the big heating stove in the living room if I got up and at it while Uncle John was doing his milking. You can be sure I got there on time.

I would dress, eat breakfast, and be on my way to school by shortly after seven. I needed to be at school by 8:00 a.m. and school started at 9:00 a.m. Kids began to arrive anytime after 8:30 a.m. I walked in rain, shine, snow, or whatever. There were no snow days.

When I got to school, I had to carry in whatever, and go inspect the outdoor toilets, as you never knew what might happen to them the night before. They had to be cleaned before the children arrived. In the fall and winter you had to build fires because they seldom held overnight.

My schoolhouse was like others in rural areas. It was a one-room building, set out in the country. There were no close neighbors. It had a very high ceiling, about twelve to fourteen feet high. I'm sure they knew nothing about insulation in those days. There were three tall windows on each side, two in the back, and a door in the front. Fire exits didn't exist in those days. There were wood floors that were not well finished. Blackboards were all around the room except a place in the back which had pegs for children to hang their coats and shelves for the lunch buckets. Some of the blackboards in the front were slate, but toward the rear of the room they were boards painted black. The walls and ceiling were painted an ugly grey and really needed another coat. It wasn't the most cheerful setting. The room was sparsely furnished: a big monstrous furnace, a teacher's desk and chair, a bench for the water bucket, a recitation bench in the front of the room, and a big old baby grand piano that wouldn't play. There were also the traditional row of seats all fastened to the floor and graduated in size from those for eighth graders to those for beginners. That recitation bench was not fastened to the floor and was supposed to sit right in front of the teacher's desk, where each class came to recite.

My first day I arrived early as I hadn't seen the inside of the building. I had no key, as there wasn't one. You didn't "lock up." It was scary. The directors or someone had cleaned and

prepared for opening day. The children came early to see the new teacher and also to try to get the seat they wanted, especially the back ones. When they all arrived, there were twenty-one of them, all sizes from first grade through eighth grade and from age five to an eighth grader fifteen years old. The fifteen-year-old was a very large boy who came to school when Dad didn't need him to work at home. He was trying to get through eighth grade. Some of them talked to me, but most of them just looked and whispered. I was embarrassed and scared, but at 9:00 I rang the bell, a little old hand bell that had belonged to someone's grandmother. Everyone took a seat, and my job began. We tried to sing an opening song (I couldn't carry a tune). One of the younger boys knew "everything," so he led us. Our flag was a sorry specimen, but we said the Pledge of Allegiance. Our day was spent in getting our names, ages, and grades straightened out and doing assignments for the next day.

I found some of the children didn't have school books and no money to buy them. Each pupil was supposed to supply his own books in those days. They all tried to get secondhand books. I found there was a family of five who needed many things, so when I went home the county superintendent helped me get some books. I also found this family had their lunch all in one bucket and not very much at that, but they shared willingly and were always happy.

Recess and noontime were spent in playing games I'd never heard of and was expected to play with them. The biggest problem at recess was it was supposed to be "go to the toilet time," and most of them would forget until the bell rang, or a couple of older ones would stay so long the little ones didn't get to go. On the first day, and sometimes in the first week, you had little ones who wet themselves and there was no way to take care of them except to love them.

At 4:00 p.m. I told them all good-bye, drew a sigh of relief, shed a few (quite a lot in my case) tears, swept the floor, dusted, straightened everything for the next day, gathered an armload of homework, and started the long walk back to Aunt Ella's, thinking I had surely chosen the wrong job. As time went on I got settled and loved it for the fifteen years I was there.

Getting to the job from home was something else. The folks would see that I got to the bus in Jerseyville (about fifteen miles away). I would ride the bus to East Newborn, just a place with a country store and four or five houses. I would get off at the store. It was closed on Sunday evening. I would walk the four miles to Aunt Ella's right past the schoolhouse. It was usually dark, especially in the winter, by the time I got to her house. I was tired and sometimes wet and muddy or snow covered. It was a hard and lonely trip, but I had a job. Worrying about my trips in the winter, Mom insisted she buy me long underwear and extra heavy sox and gloves. I had vowed when I quit wearing long underwear after eighth grade graduation that I would never wear such underclothes again, but I did and was glad. Four miles is a long walk in the cold. I didn't have warm clothes as I had spent my high school years in Jerseyville where it was warm. I was to get to Aunt Essie's, who lived at McClusky on the way and stayed all night there. They met me at the bus, kept me Saturday night, and put me back on the bus to get to East Newborn. Of course, the bus was late because of the snow. I didn't get to the store until almost dark. Mrs. Tompkins was waiting for me and wanted me to stay all night with them, but I knew I had to get to Aunt Ella's as she would worry about me. There was no snow plow, so I walked the wagon tracks, and sometimes there weren't any so I just made my own path. I got to Aunt Ella's about 9:00 p.m. and it was dark. I was so cold. I had to carry my suitcase all that way besides some homework I had taken home. Aunt Ella was waiting for me with hot food and lots of hot chocolate. She was so good to me. Often times in the winter I only went as far as Aunt Essie's for the weekend.

About a month before school was out, Uncle John

became very ill, and I had to change boarding places. The new place was closer to school. The lady was so nice to me. She did my laundry so I wouldn't have to take it home. She helped me prepare extra food for the school picnic held at the school the day school was out.

I think school went along very well. Anyway this is a story not about the school but my first job, the working conditions, the pay, the hardships, the perseverance it took, and the valuable experiences I had. When I finished the year, I had a paycheck of $60 left for me to live on through the next several months and a burning desire to be the very best teacher I could. I went to school and taught young people for many years.

VIII The One-Room School

THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

Just a few remain. Most of them have been revised by time and change, but on occasion one may observe rural one-room schools. Sometimes they are miniature ghost houses in ruin. Like ancient untended barns, they sag mournfully amid the overgrown grass, weeds, and thickets. Now and again, an ancient foundation, the remnant of an old schoolhouse, is to be found. But there are also remodeled and venerable old one-room schools that have become homes. Perhaps a room has been added; however, they are unmistakenly the old schools reborn. How very fitting this is. Once again, they ring with laughter, excitement, squeals of joy, tears, and hope. For yet another time, the happiness, dreams, plans, and the superb consensus value system that both built and accompanied the world's greatest people and nation are at home in the little schoolhouses. Hope glimmers.

It is true, of course, that all movements are not better than those they displaced. It is likewise correct that sometimes looking back is wisdom; the contemporaneous can be much worse than what transpired years earlier. So it may be in regard to schooling. Indeed, the outmoded, ancient, one- room schools speak with a profound and remarkable voice. They were very, very special.

They speak of local people, rather than the federal government, controlling the schools; and families were responsible in caring for their own. There was the consensus, high-level value system that Myrdal referred to as the hope of mankind. The religion of Jesus Christ was taught everywhere in the schools. Discipline and hard work were cardinal purposes of the enterprise. Students were made to feel well about themselves when they performed admirably and badly when they behaved badly. They were taught the value of hard work and respect for their parents and elders. Moreover, there was no more important objective than building moral people who were successfully acculturated and socialized to succeed in the majority culture. Of such goals and objectives, a great people was built, and an exalted nation resulted.

But the schools were also a model of pedagogical excellence and experimentation. So many curricular developments central to the curricula of the rural school have been rediscovered in the current era–and are viewed by many as revolutionary. Most of these remarkable new breakthroughs, though, are as old as the one-room rural schools.

The Massachusetts Law of 1642 resulted in universal and compulsory schooling for American youth. Then the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 mandated that in the Northwestern Territory one square-mile section from each township of thirty-six square miles be used for township schools. This, of course, was the beginning of the one-room school. Thus, the community–in this case the township–controlled schooling for its youth, and the superb sense (and truth) of community consensus provided an effective model for the acculturation and socialization of the students.

It was these most excellent rural schools of which the essayists wrote. Indeed, the selections provide a compelling and effective glimpse backward in time. The doors of the schools are opened again, and the reader may judge the quite remarkable nature of elementary schooling in the one-room schools.

Some of the memoirs share unforgettable experiences. Eva Hapner records her very great joy and excitement attendant to a Christmas celebration and explains her love for a very special teacher. Marie Freesmeyer shares the terror accompanying a tornado. Focusing on the practical of the program, Virginia Rhodes explains her admiration for a practicing school bank.

Explaining the laws and logistics affecting the schools, Fern Hancock describes the varied community uses of the school building, and explains school procedure.

She is also joined by Louise Van Etten in analyzing the

life of a teacher. Louise graphically explains the trials and perils she faced as a neophyte instructor. Mary DeWitt adds to the portrait of the life of a new teacher.

Katherine Cravens reveals the logistics of the school room and the makeup of the curricula. Expanding this information, Ida Simmons, Helen Harless, Blondelle Lashbrook, and Anna Rittenhouse reveal information about the curriculum and the nature of the schooling.

From the other side of the desk, Robert Tefertillar expounds on the trials and tribulations of being a student.

Emerging from these essays is a comprehensive view of the schooling of another age. It is a charming portrait that so well demonstrates that something very special occurred in the fabled one-room schools that represented a fine and proud era, the best of which remains as a model for better schooling in the present era.

Alfred J. Lindsey

CHRISTMAS AT THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

Eva Hapner

Waking up, I rubbed my yet sleepy eyes, pulled the yarn-knotted, black and red block comforter over my head, and nestled back into the warm inviting arms of the feather bed. I could hear my mother bustling around in the kitchen, shaking the grates of the old cook stove, rekindling the few remaining coals with corn cobs. An aroma, a mixture of brewing coffee and bacon sizzling in the cast iron skillet, wafted through my door and gave me that wonderful feeling of security that all was well.

There was something exciting about this morning, a feeling I couldn't explain. Why was it different from all the other three hundred and sixty four days of the year? Sleep had erased it from my memory, but suddenly it came back to me in a new surge of joy. Today was the Christmas program at the little country school I attended.

With happiness in my heart, I skipped to the window, pressing my nose against the frost laden pane, leaving an imprint of my nose and mouth on the window.

I gazed on a world suddenly turned into a fairyland. Several inches of snow had fallen during the night, making the barnyard an unfamiliar magical kingdom. The old rusty pump had been adorned with a coat of ermine and the fence posts stood like a group of ghosts who had suddenly decided to take a walk on the dazzling carpet of diamonds.

I grabbed my clothes and made a dash for the old warm morning heater. Its rosey belly greeted me and cast out a warm glow across the hand-woven rug.

The silence of the morning was broken by the sound of sleigh bells jingling in the distance. Pulling up in front of our house was our neighbor's bobsled drawn by two beautiful and spirited dapple gray mares, respondent in red and green harness in observance of the festive season.

At the helm of the sled was our neighbor, who with his little round belly and red stocking cap reminded me of jolly St. Nick himself. Smoke curled from his corn cob pipe, circled over his head, and cut a path through the frosty air. Mr. Vancil gave the signal and my three brothers and I climbed over the bed of the shiny red sled. He tapped the horses and away we flew over the shimmering snow. The two-and-one-half mile ride to the school seemed all too short as we nibbled on homemade molasses cookies and sang "Jingle Bells."

Entering the school, we were greeted by Miss Alice, who had a smile for each of us. She was our angel in disguise. Words cannot describe the beauty of that little school room. Paper chains crisscrossed diagonally across the room. In the corner stood the proud little pine tree. It was decorated with popcorn and cranberry strands. No electric light illuminated it, but each little candle winked and blinked its sparkling light. The scent of the pine boughs permeated the air.

Hanging on the tree was a bright red ball, and reaching out her arms to some lucky little girl was a beautiful doll my mother had dressed for that special one whose name my brother had drawn.

The day went by quickly. After a short program, gifts were exchanged, teacher passed out treats, and we were on our way home because already dusk had begun to appear.

A ONE-ROOM SCHOOL IN MACOUPIN COUNTY

Katherine Nola Thornton Cravens

There was a shortage of teachers during the years of World War II. The condition was created by the drafting of men for the military service and the need for women to fill essential positions. By 1943, a high school diploma and the desire to teach were all the qualifications needed to instruct in the

elementary grades. Each of us who chose to teach was provided with a War of Emergency Certificate. Ordinarily, a teaching certificate required two years of college.

To teach school, especially in a little country school, had been my deep ambition since the years I attended Miles Station school, District #172, near Brighton, Illinois. However, in 1943, I had a good job with Owens-Illinois Glass Company in Alton. The shortage of gasoline discouraged traveling, and shift work allowed little time to investigate the teaching positions available. As a result, I worked in Alton for another year.

In 1944, at the age of twenty-one, I applied for a teaching position through the office of Mr. I. K. Jurgensmeyer, County Superintendent of Schools in Macoupin County. From his office, I received a list of schools needing teachers for the coming term. About half way down the list was Ness, District #161, a little school located two miles east of Bunker Hill, Illinois. I knew I had to teach at Ness School! The reason was personal and entirely without logic. I was influenced by my attraction for a Naval petty officer having the same name.

I applied for the position at Ness School one evening in July. So desperate was the need, I was hired on the spot. I gave the exterior of the building a quick appraisal that evening. As there was no electricity, I did not enter the dark interior. I returned to Alton to work for the remainder of the summer.

I saw the class room of Ness School for the first time on the fifth day of September. I arrived early so I could get organized before the students arrived.

The first week of school, which was only four days in length because of the Labor Day holiday, seemed to last forever. I not only felt out of my element, I was doubtful of my ability. By Friday, I wasn't at all certain I wanted to return for another week.

I suspected I was being too lenient with the children who didn't seem to notice I was a novice. I had to become familiar with a large quantity of books, workbooks, and records. My carefully prepared daily schedule had been difficult to follow. Apparently, I had not allowed myself time to get adjusted as my assignment seemed more difficult than I had anticipated.

At the end of the second week, however, I was feeling totally confident. From that day forward, I knew I was in control of my position. I was becoming completely absorbed in every aspect of my work. The children treated me with respect, and I was accepted by the friendly community.

Driving along the country roads near Bunker Hill in the fall was absolute pleasure. The summerlike days of autumn, with their blazing colors, balmy breezes, wild flowers growing in profusion along the roadside, and the buzzing of insects, gave me the pleasant awareness I had experienced as a child. The delightful sound of ringing school bells reverbeating across fields and woodland was as delightful as I had remembered.

A one-room school was a school where all eight grades were taught in one room. The classroom had the usual two cloakrooms, one for the boys and one for the girls. It had the standard entrance hall, a library, and a kitchenette. There was the usual coal room and another addition used for storage and kindling (material, such as dry wood, used for starting the fire in the furnace).

The average monthly attendance in District #161 was twelve children. Several students moved away and others moved into the district during the school term. There were no sixth or eighth grade students at Ness School during the 1944-45 school year. A system had been devised to incorporate many classes allowing more time for discussion. This plan united the fifth grade with the sixth grade, and the seventh grade with the eighth grade, in all classes with the exception of grammar and arithmetic.

School children in the Midwest had a special war project in the fall of 1944. On their field trips, they gathered the milkweed pods which grew in abundance along the fence rows and country lanes. The silk from these pods was used in the

making of parachutes for the armed forces. All pods collected were taken to the fall teacher's meeting in Carlinville and given to the official in charge of the operation.

This was a fun project for the students as they not only collected milkweed pods, but also persimmons, nuts, colorful leaves, flowers, grasshoppers, and all the things that interest normal, inquisitive children.

Regretfully, the milkweed pod project in Macoupin County met with a disaster. The pods were not stored in a well-ventilated place where they could dry sufficiently. As a result, hundreds of pounds of raw silk were ruined. Because the person in charge of the project had a German name, the children were convinced the project had been sabotaged.

The teacher of a country school not only taught lessons, she was a janitor, a mother to the younger children, and a mediator in all things. She made decisions on the playground, settled personal differences peacefully, and determined the extent of minor illnesses. She cleaned wounds, applied Mercurochrome, and pressed on bandaids. She spent her lunch hours listening to youthful conversations which covered a multitude of subjects. She pumped water from the well and, like the students, she used the outdoor toilet.

Maintaining the furnace took extra effort, and occasionally it interfered with classroom routine. One of the older boys helped me with the janitorial duties during the severe weather, for which I paid him five dollars a month.

From my home in Gillespie, I drove to and from Bunker Hill until the winter snows started. Then I roomed in the little town until spring. Besides inclement weather, I had difficulty making my gasoline ration coupons go far enough.

In our study of history, we often discussed current events. My seventh grade students, ranging in age from twelve to fourteen, displayed interest and expressed intelligent ideas on world affairs. One of the subjects of discussion was the Rhineland battle which was in progress that winter. The class stated their personal views as there were few available facts. Military secrets kept civilian knowledge at a minimum. Grade school children spent little time listening to radio broadcasts and very little time at reading the newspaper. Considering all things, the boys and girls were equally knowledgeable and imaginative. However, the boys' ideas were endowed with more gory detail than those of the girls.

By late February, I was regretting the decision I had made to take a lonely teaching post for which I had given up many things: my friends, adult companionship, and more than half my wages. After a short trip to Texas, though, and the arrival of bright spring weather and outdoor activities, my spirit was restored.

On the last Friday in April, the children and I went to a nearby wooded area for a picnic. We deposited our food in a safe place, and put our bottles of soda pop in the cold water of the stream to cool. Then the children took me to a place where pansies grew. Thinking the children had confused pansies with violets, I was surprised to see an uncultivated hillside covered with giant purple pansies. I was thrilled.

Upon returning to our picnic site, we ate roasted wieners, toasted marshmallows, and drank our cold pop before returning to the school building to say our last goodbyes.

The school year ended on an upward note. I had completed all the work I had planned to accomplish during the school year, and the board of directors had asked me to return for the fall term. I had grown attached to the children and was reluctant to leave, but I declined the offer.

I had given up my $50 a week job at the Glass Company to begin a teaching career for $115 per month. I have not regretted my choice. Time spent at the Glass Company was only incidental. Teaching a country school fulfilled a dream. It was an adventure with a lasting advantage. In addition to gaining a valuable experience, I was living future memories.

CERES SCHOOL: MEMORIES OF A RURAL CLASSROOM

Ida Harper Simmons

The road sign with one word, *Ceres,* might easily be overlooked by the average traveler on Route 67. But for me, the crossroads formed by the highway and a country road located a mile south of the Morgan-Green County line mark the beginning point to wherever the intervening years have taken me. In my mind's eye, I see the remodeled building on the east side of the highway as the country school which my sister and I attended in the Twenties. The high concrete steps leading to the west door of the neatly painted school house were our entrance to the world beyond our farm home.

In the main room beyond the cloak room, rows of desks ranged from those for older students on the south to the little ones on the north. The teacher's desk was placed precisely front center. To its left was a slippery recitation bench. The blackboard across the east wall had pulldown maps above it. My sister says her sense of direction was marked for life because the left and right of the maps were oriented north and south, not east and west.

My education began at an early age because I constantly begged to go with my older sister to visit school. I soon had the primer memorized, and my parents succumbed to my pleas to start school just four months after my fifth birthday. I wonder if our teachers realized how easily they provided for individual differences. By listening to other classes recite, each of us could be learning something at all times.

Our first day of school found us wearing new gingham dresses. We were armed with wooden pencil boxes with sliding covers and a new writing tablet. Sometimes these had a pretty picture on the cover, but more often they were "Big Chief" tablets with an Indian in full head dress on the front. My sister kept hers looking neat, but mine usually had its cover torn. Erasers, crayons, and a ruler completed our supplies. All textbooks were furnished by the district.

Pictures of poets hung on the painted classroom walls, with the New England poets grouped in a single frame. We probably learned more literature in our eight years at Ceres School than today's high school students. Poems were memorized, and I can still recall portions or sometimes all of my favorites, including "The Swing," "The Village Blacksmith," "The Highwayman," "Snowbound," "Evangeline," and "The Courtship of Miles Standish." I also recall reciting Henry VanDyke's "America for Me" at a school program.

We had a library, too. This played an important part in our education because there were no public libraries near us. New books were exciting and I can still visualize Dr. Doolittle's cover and the delightful drawing. It was years later when I learned that "Canary Islands" was pronounced the same as the bird. I had silently read it as "Can'ery Islands!" This was true of many words. As a college freshman, my English professor was perplexed over the disparity between my speaking vocabulary and my considerably larger written one.

We also learned to spell by using word lists and by the motivation of spelling bees and other incentives. We received a spelling certificate for one hundred perfect lessons. When we had collected five certificates, we were awarded a perfect spelling pin ornamented by the initials PS.

Penmanship was taught, but not the ornate script of preceding generations. We performed the oval and push-pull exercises, dipping our metal-tipped pens into the lidded inkwells located in the upper corner of our desks. The ink had a peculiar odor, and it was sometimes frozen on winter mornings.

Arithmetic does not hold an important place in my memory, probably because it was difficult for me. My sister Della recalls the two hundred thought problems in the eighth grade text which included the practical aspects of computing the number of bushels in a corn crib, the amount of shingles for

a roof, or the quantity of paint or wall paper for a given area. Students were required to work these problems independently and check their accuracy by referring to the answers printed in the back of the book. Della became so proficient in these problems that neighboring farmers asked her to figure the amount of grain in their bins and cribs.

We learned geography from large brown texts. Colored maps and black and white illustrations did little to help me comprehend the world beyond our immediate experience. History was also a part of the curricula. I remember studying physiology, and in the upper grades we had a health book which we studied. Grammar was a separate subject.

Orthography was taught to seventh and eighth graders. I regret that this subject has become obsolete because it consisted of the study of the history and derivation of words. Many students found it extremely interesting, a fact that should dispel the misconception that rural schools taught only by rote learning. Years later, Della and I used our old orthography texts to teach our own students.

Final examinations were the climax of elementary education. My sister took them at the end of both seventh and eighth grades, but the requirement changed. I took them only in the eighth grade. Students from each township in Green County went to a central location to write the exams. Our teachers did little to prepare us for the ordeal and did not go with us to take them. Della took finals in May, two months after the close of the seven-month school term. During those months she spent a great deal of time sitting at the top of the stairs memorizing facts and gazing out the window wishing she could be outdoors. No doubt, our mother coached her because our parents took a great interest in our education.

My memory of the final examination is on a lighter note. My sister had already faced the unknown, and I, having shared her experience, was less fearful. I recall my father taking me to Athensville on examination day. To keep my mind off the impending trial, he told me that we were going through Yellowstone Park and the jersey cows on the hillside were actually yellow stones. We received impressive eighth grade diplomas after passing our finals.

Our teachers all left some impressions, but it is impossible clearly to picture them. Miss James, who taught at Ceres for several years, had auburn hair and wore horn-rimmed glasses. She often came home with us and stayed overnight. This was a great treat and my parents were generous in their hospitality.

Della had a male teacher when she was in first grade. Since she was the only child who walked west from school, he would often walk part way with her or carry her on his shoulders. He was our distant cousin and probably felt a responsibility for her safety. Many years later, we read his obituary in the newspaper, and calculated that he was eighteen years old when he taught at Ceres.

Mr. Frazier was my sixth and seventh grade teacher. His sister was my best friend, and his two little brothers were also his pupils. He was always kind, and his special treat for us was divinity fudge made by his mother.

One teacher, a young woman, was evidently unsatisfactory. I recall the school directors, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Marsh, and my father, having some kind of conference with her. My eighth grade teacher was a very young woman. She endeared herself by telling me that my new pink checked dress made me look pretty. This was a great compliment because I perceived myself as an ugly duckling.

We gained a different kind of knowledge as we played games at recess or sat together eating the lunches that we brought in tin buckets. Recess was a time for establishing lifelong friendships, an important aspect for Della and me because our farm was too isolated for nearby playmates.

There were also happy times at school when our families gathered for programs and basket dinners. Here we had the

opportunity to recite poems or participate in plays.

Ceres School students were usually happy and well-behaved. We learned to make the most of things, just as our parents coped with the uncertainties of bountiful harvests or crop failures.

A school picture taken in 1924 reminds me that the paths from Ceres have led in diverse directions. Of the twenty-seven students pictured, five have earned college degrees and entered the teaching profession. Three others became ministers, and two are minister's wives. Some are farmers still living in the Ceres school district. Three died young, and one lost his life in World War II. Some are unaccounted for, but to my knowledge none took the road to crime or prison.

The years at Ceres School have not only left me a legacy of pleasant memories, but also a wealth of experiences which have enriched both my professional and personal life.

THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

Robert L. Tefertillar

The one-room schoolhouse of a half century ago was bitterly cold in winter, stifling hot in late spring, and recalls pleasurable and painful memories.

The absolute authority over this approximate 30 x 40 foot domain was the teacher. My schoolmaster was always a male being hired for brawn as well as brain . . . for practical reasons.

He was a janitor, principal, custodian, coach, and disciplinarian—a prime example of a "big frog in a little puddle." He taught Readin', 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic to the tune of a hickory stick, *literally*! If students flunked a grade, they took it over until they finally made it, or got big enough to lick the teacher.

Some brawny sixteen and seventeen-year-old farm boys were kept in the same grade a couple of years before being promoted. This is no reflection on their intelligence. In the Depression years, farm youngsters missed many weeks of school, especially during spring planting and fall harvest. Money was hard to come by, and the value of education was considered important but not as vital as eating. School was, of necessity, secondary.

Many a strapping eighth grade lad graduated via his final victorious confrontation with Mr. Cooper—in the sporting arena, the alley behind the coal shed.

The schoolmaster's rule extended from the school house, over the playground, to the willows by the creek. On the far side of the creek, we could thumb our noses at the academician with exuberant impunity. We did so on the last day of school before summer vacation.

It was traditional to cross the creek and scream at the teacher, "School's out, school's out, teacher let the monkeys out." We also added insult to injury by calling him a monkey-faced baboon of a bully.

We never worried about his remembrance of the incident. At the time, it seemed that summer vacation would last forever, and fall seemed light years in the future. Naturally, revenge burned in his disciplinarian heart all summer, and he was waiting in the autumn with a new, and even bigger, hickory stick. This was expected and faced with the stoicism of condemned prisoners without chance of parole for the next nine months.

The playground boasted a broken teeter-totter, two unsafe swings, a makeshift ball diamond, a bedraggled, netless basketball hoop on the coal shed, and a small mound to play king-of-the-hill. We were spared adult spectators and supervision of our pick-up baseball, football, and basketball games. We played for fun without parent pressure.

Marbles, mumbley-peg, kick-the-can, hop-scotch, jacks,

baseball, and pum-pum-pull-away were popular recess activities. Snotty, sophisticated seventh and eighth graders sometimes sneaked behind the coal shed to pay that stupid "post office" kissing game. I thought that was stupid until about the seventh grade when I became an enthusiastic player.

Located on the fringe of the playground were the outhouses and the coal shed. The boys' outhouse had a paint-peeling, white, high board fence which enclosed a long, narrow, wooden trough to be used (but rarely was) as a urinal. The bathroom facilities for the girls were even more spartan, having no fence. Its only ornamentation was the familiar quarter moon carved above the door. The only other building on the grounds was the coal shed.

The traditional signal to be excused from the school room to answer a "call of nature" was raising your hand. The length of time you expected to be gone and the urgency of the jaunt was designated by holding up one or two fingers. A two fingered signal would usually get you out of the classroom for as long as ten minutes. Naturally kids took advantage of this method to escape. This was especially prevalent in the fall or spring. During bad winter weather, the outhouse trips decreased by fifty percent.

Holding up four fingers indicated you wished to visit the library located in the back of the room. The library consisted of one ancient, glass-fronted book case. With the exception of a few fiction books by Burroughs, Twain, London, Grey, and Harte, the most exciting reading were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

The schoolhouse, in addition to the American flag, had a picture of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln staring down at the pupils. Most kids liked Abe, but George looked a little too stern for their taste.

While writing on the blackboard with his back turned to the class, the teacher was invariably struck by a well-aimed spitball.

Mr. Cooper had a wonderful retaliatory weapon to counter these sneak attacks. He would spin around, grab an eraser, and let fly in the general direction he thought the spitball originated. If his missile struck an innocent victim, that was okay because he figured (quite correctly) the kid he hit was just getting what he deserved from an overlooked past prank. The erasers seldom hit anyone as we became expert at "dodging and ducking."

In those days you *never* told parents you were punished at school for very good reasons. Parents always took the teacher's side. In fact, if you got a paddling at school and your folks found out about it you got another one, much harder with a razor strap, at home.

It seems miraculous that students could concentrate on their books. All classes were held in one room. It was the recitation room, lecture room, theatre, and study hall. The grade that was due to recite came to the desks in front of the room and loudly read their assignments. The rest of the scholars were supposed to be deaf to this distraction.

The confiscated and illegal items Mr. Cooper pillaged from us were kept in the deep, locked drawers of his desk. There were dandy sling shots, knives, rubber guns, whistles, tops, baseball cards, pulp magazines, big and little books, comic books, and marbles. The academician had a Quaker Oat box full of beautiful cat's eyes, crystals, steelies, pee-wees and agates that he had taken from us when he caught us playing marbles for "keeps."

A student picked his or her desk at the beginning of the school year. This was a first-come, first-served basis. It was always a most difficult decision as whether to take one near the windows for the comfort of a breeze on a hot day or choose one close to the coal stove in the middle of the room to fight off the frigid drafts in winter.

If the word picture painted of the one-room schoolhouse seems grim, that is not the case. The pleasurable memories far surpass the unpleasant ones.

We boys were straw-hatted, overall clad, plaid shirted, pubescent Vikings who left sacked and ravaged theatres behind on Saturday afternoons, raided the old general store, and divided our spoils behind the school coal shed. On Halloween we soaped windows, "chatted" porches, and turned over outhouses, often with angry, screaming victims still inside. We could all throw a knife, toss a lasso, climb a tree, swim, fish, hunt, and run like the wind. We made our toys from inner tubes, tin cans, discarded rubber tires, and assorted junk.

The girls were smudged-faced tomboys who could hold their own in any pick-up football or basketball game. They climbed trees and scuffled with the best of the guys and were just kind of considered one of the gang until they reached the seventh grade. Then they magically changed into dainty ladies who played that "stupid" post office game behind the coal shed.

We all had our very own private fishing, swimming hole, and ice skating rink on the same small creek.

Some hurts seemed tragic and terrible. At twelve, and now being one of those snotty, sophisticated eighth graders, I caught my best girlfriend (unfaithful Treva) kissing my best friend (that creep Charlie) right on the lips behind the school yard coal shed. The heartbreak lasted for the eternity of a week.

The educational facilities, equipment, and qualified instructors are far better now than then. The application and accessibility of electronic display typewriters, calculators, computers, and TV have made students more aware and sophisticated at twelve than we were at twenty.

The old Montgomery-Ward Hawthorne bike has been replaced (by teenagers), like old "Dobbin," with a horse of another color, be it called Mustang or Bronco.

The radio serials and Saturday matinee westerns have given over to the sophisticated entertainment of video games and VCRs.

The outdoor playground, as we knew it, is as outdated as the outhouse and kerosene lamps. Nowadays kids play on modern well-lit playing fields and gyms. Supervised, organized, well-equipped, coached, and uniformed teams are now the rule rather than the exception even for tiny tot little leaguers.

Albeit every once in a while it does this antiquarian's heart good to see youngsters forsake the "fast lane" of organized school play and activity and return to plodding down the one lane road of yesteryear. I see it in a game of pick-up ball in a vacant lot, a chalk-marked hop-scotched game on the sidewalk, little girls skipping rope and playing jacks, a kid reading a book instead of watching TV . . . and I tip my hat to 'em.

AS I REMEMBER IT

Blondelle Lashbrook

I was delighted to learn in the Fall of '27 that after making three attempts at passing the teacher exams, I had succeeded. I left word at the county office that if a vacancy occurred I would like to fill it. Shortly after Christmas, I received a call from the office informing me that there was need of a teacher in a rural school just outside of Knoxville, a short distance from where I lived. I was on my way at last to my first teaching job. How happy that made me feel!

The teacher had failed to leave any message or to return after the Christmas vacation. I was able to board with the clerk's family in a very pleasant home. He had two children in the school, a boy and a girl. The school was within walking distance.

For one who had never been inside a rural school, I was in for many surprises and inconveniences. There were no desk copies of any of the books the children used, no library books, maps, no playground equipment, and little lighting on dark

days–so lacking! And then I had to be my own janitor, too! Thank goodness, I didn't have to hunt up firewood to start the fires as I did in one school. There were cobs. But I was teaching and I loved that!

Then came the first of March and moving time on the farm. My family was moving onto a farm four miles away. What was I to do? No one would board me. I could stay at the schoolhouse. Imagine a nineteen-year-old young woman doing that! There just was no choice but to board with my original family in their new home. They were kind enough to provide me with a work horse–a kind and gentle big animal that I did learn to ride. My biggest difficulty was mounting and getting off the animal.

One afternoon in going home from school, it rained, sleeted, and snowed before I got back to my boarding place. The elements were turned loose that afternoon.

Because there was poor lighting at this school, the children pulled their desks to the windows on dark days for light and huddled together close to the stove when the room was cold on Monday morning. Floors were very cold.

I swept the floor each night and kept it clean with a sweeping compound. And water was drawn and brought in for daily use from an outside well. All students drank from a common bucket and used a common dipper.

There was no playground equipment, but the children did have a ball and bat to play with and many common games were played. Baseball was enjoyed at the recess time and noon hour.

One morning, I was utterly surprised to find a dead mouse in my desk drawer. It really startled me. I was glad it was dead. My fifth grade boy who liked to call me by my first name confessed he was the guilty one. Now, many years later, I saw his name in the paper. It called to mind the incident of so many years ago. His young son was receiving a Boy Scout Award. I thought it would have been fun to look him up and ask him if he remembered that time he had played the "dead mouse" prank on me.

About the time school was out in the spring of the year, the sky became overcast and the snow began to fall fast, the wind blowing so hard that to have ridden my old work horse to my boarding place four miles distant was out of the question. One of the families that had several children in the school invited me to stay overnight with them. That proved to be a very interesting experience to say the least. To see such a big family gathered about a supper table and so congenial was thrilling. I felt drawn into that family circle too–such a warm friendly feeling. I forgot about the elements raging outside. That night we all slept in one big room under the eaves. By morning the wind had died down. School resumed as usual and everything was back to normal.

My first teaching job paid only $60 a month, but what fun I had earning it!

FALL FLORA AND "FUN"A

Elizajane Bate Suttles

I must have been in the third grade in our one-room school. I didn't have this teacher when I was in the first grade, and I don't remember too much happening in the second grade, but the THIRD GRADE! My brother started to school that September and all at once I was "big" sister. I had always been large for my age and tried to show everybody I was just as tough and daring as any *boy* in my class. Of all my fond memories, the nature hikes are foremost.

We took one of these hikes in the spring, just when the violets and spring beauties were a solid carpet on the hillside and the boys could whittle "whistles" out of the soft willows by

the creek. We made a second trip in the fall when we gathered buckeyes, red and yellow sumac branches, and bittersweet vines.

We had a "giant" oak tree growing out by the water-pump, where we girls played "house" in the shade under its branches and half-sheltered among the exposed roots. We used acorn tops for dishes and "pretend" tea-cakes, till the boys got tired of their game and came thundering across our "make-believe" table, crushing acorns, and spinning everything in all directions.

Our school was on top of a long, steep hill with a creek and a bridge at the bottom. It was perfect for sledding on snow, but on this special fall day we all grabbed our paper lunch sacks and started down the hill, leaving all our cares behind. We walked on the left side of the road to meet cars (we hardly ever saw any) and chattered excitedly. We started about 11:30 a.m. Some of the bigger boys ran ahead and stood on the bridge, throwing rocks into the creek, causing big ripples on the water till the rest of us got there.

Just before we got to the bridge, we could either go to the left and follow the creek to the willows and wildflowers, our favorite hike in the spring, or we could climb the big wooden gate and take off to the right where the buckeyes were found. That is the way we went on this day. We also followed the creek, but the trees were so thick and the hill so high, the ground was always "damp and marshy," even when we hadn't had any rain. There were also "wash-aways," cutting into the path and you had to jump over them. Unfortunately I came down a little early in one of the crevices, spattering mud and water all over one stocking and shoe. We all hurried along–only too happy to come out the other side, into the warm mid-day sunshine. The field was so beautiful. The green grass was kept short by grazing livestock and here and there golden rod was blooming. Finding some large rocks, we immediately took possession of them and ate our dinner. There were cows off in the distance and they looked over at all of us. Deciding we were not in any danger, they went on eating and so did we.

Finishing our lunch, we walked on across the pasture. To the east, a group of CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) boys were building the farmer a pond. We all waved and shouted, but we kept on walking. Finally, we came to the chestnut grove. It was fenced and set-aside by the farmer as a wild-life sanctuary. He had graciously given our teacher permission for us to gather buckeyes to decorate the school for fall. We all took out our paper lunch sacks and collected as many buckeyes as our sacks would hold. Some of the nuts were still in the shell so we shelled them. The nuts came out a light-blond color but when exposed to the air, they started to dry and turn dark. Some of the larger boys got out their pocket knives and cut long vines of bittersweet berries. They also climbed along the bank "shelf" and cut red, yellow, and green sumac branches. As I stood and watched, I decided right there that I wanted a pocket knife for Christmas. After all, I couldn't let the boys get ahead of me.

It was much slower and harder to talk and carry our "treasures" back to school. In fact, climbing the fence with barbed-wire strung along the top was almost impossible for us girls with our cotton ribbed hose and full-skirted dresses, but we made it without too many tears and snags.

Once we got back to school, we laid out the buckeyes to dry on the floor in the basement. Later, the boys hammered a nail hole through each buckeye and we girls strung heavy twine through the holes and hung them "looped" at the tall windows above the blackboards, where they still hung when I graduated five years later. We hung the bittersweet wherever we needed color, especially over the frame of the blackboards. The heat from the room made the berries "pop" open. Some of the boys brought back walking-sticks and branches, and the teacher showed them how to cut them into lengths and make "twig" baskets and flower holders. Some of the mothers sent flower cuttings of "Wandering Jew," a vine with beautiful leaves that,

when exposed to the sun, turned a brilliant red. Soon we had "Wandering Jew" rooting in the glass jars of water and growing in our "twig" vases everywhere, along with the sumac bouquets and buckeye strings, and I thought we had the "prettiest" school room in all the world.

A DAY TO REMEMBER

Marie Freesmeyer

The morning of April 19, 1927, donned sunny and warm. As I walked the distance from my boarding house to the one-room school at Gilead, Illinois, where I was teaching, I anticipated a delightful spring day. Little did I dream of what the day actually held in store for the community and for me.

Nine o'clock came all too soon for both teacher and pupils. By recess time, clouds had begun to gather, causing the children to become apprehensive about the ball game they were planning for the noon intermission.

After recess, everyone worked on arithmetic assignments until it became so dark that they could no longer continue. I tried to keep their minds off the approaching storm by telling them a story. One curious little first-grader insisted that he must leave the room. Afterward, I realized the danger of allowing him to go by himself. When he opened the door to return, the strong, west wind caught the door and slammed them both back against the side of the building. If I had looked to the northeast, when I stepped out to rescue him, I would have been more frightened than the children. If we had had windows on the west side of our building, we probably would have been under our desks.

When the wind abated, it began to hail and continued all during the time we were eating our lunch. When it finally stopped, the children ran out on the playground, but, instead of playing ball, they spent the rest of the intermission scooping up handfuls of hailstones. The tall grass, the road, and all the paths were completely covered by a thick layer of hail, making an unusual sight.

We had just begun our afternoon session with singing, when one of the school directors stepped in the door. He informed us that a cyclone (the common term for tornado at that time) had swept across the county at the noon hour. He told us that it had done a lot of damage just a little way north, especially in Kintown Hollow. He assured the children that none of their homes had been in its path, for he could see the terror in their faces. Then he told them to take their belongings and go with their teacher to see and learn what a destructive thing a cyclone could be. They were dismissed for the day since they would probably meet their parents somewhere.

The students and I had gone less than a mile up the bluff road when we began to observe the terrible disaster of the storm. As we approached the two-story Dixon home, we could see that the south side was completely gone. The wind had sliced that house vertically, leaving the north part intact. The contents of the remaining portion were plainly visible, even the dining table where they had been eating their noon meal when they heard the ominous noise which sent them scurrying to their cyclone cellar. The hillside across the road was strewn with various types of debris: boards, tin roofing, pieces of cloth, and tree branches. Most of this litter had blown from areas across the river.

A path of complete obliteration extended through the wooded area on both sides of the hill. It looked as if someone had cleared a road through the timber. Many other trees were damaged and limbs were scattered far and wide.

When we reached the site of the first homes in Kintown Hollow, there were many curious spectators everywhere. Nothing remained of the smaller home on the north side of the road

except the floor which was still intact on its foundation. Small portions of it were scattered as far as we could see, but most of the frame structure had blown completely away. From some of the spectators we learned that its owner, Mr. Wilkinson, had been killed, and three other occupants had been seriously injured. These three, along with others in a state of shock, were now being cared for at Mr. Watson's home across the road.

Although the Watson home had been spared, it had been badly damaged and his barn was lying flat on the ground. It looked as if a giant foot had smashed it with all its contents, including his son's car.

Soon, all my students had located their parents among those who had congregated there to observe the catastrophe and to lend any assistance they could. Most people had obligations at home and could not stay to help. Since I was free of my responsibilities, I entered the Watson home and asked if I could be of any assistance.

The sight and sounds that I encountered are indelibly etched in my memory. People were lying on improvised beds, several badly injured with less than adequate emergency treatment. There was a mixture of moaning and groaning, and several more in a complete state of shock, not knowing what to do.

My first question, directed at a man who was standing helplessly by, was, "Has the doctor been summoned?" There was only one doctor for the entire county, but he resided in Hardin, which was only a few miles away. I was quite perplexed that he wasn't there.

"Dr. Piesker is detained by those who were injured when the cyclone hit the Al Bracksieck home on the Ridge and several more in Poorfarm Hollow," the gentleman informed me. It was then that I realized that this terrible storm had cut a swath across the entire county, taking its toll along the way.

My offer was readily accepted here in this improvised hospital, when I asked if I might assist in some way. I was told by Mrs. Watson, who was by now quite recovered from her terrible shock and was beginning to get organized, that I might go upstairs and see what condition the rooms were in.

There I found glass and water all over the floor and even on the beds. The dormer windows had been shattered; rain and hail had blown in. With some help from others, these rooms were cleaned of the debris and the beds made ready for occupancy. But much remained to be done: a meal to be prepared for countless numbers; lamps to be made ready; and most of all, the needs of several patients to be met.

The overworked doctor arrived late afternoon. Immediately, he began administering to the needs of the several patients, and kept two or three of us busy as his assistants. Mrs. Wilkinson had a badly lacerated scalp, which, she said, was caused by a flying, sharp object hitting her while she was still wrapped around a tree where the wind had blown her. This wound required many sutures. This tedious task had to be performed there on a table by the light of a kerosene lamp. The burly county sheriff, Asa Foiles, was pressured into the chore of holding the lamp high so as to direct the light exactly right for the doctor to perform the operation. To do this, he had to keep his eyes steadily on the gruesome wound. I happened to be near when he turned and asked for someone to take his place as he was getting sick. I took the lamp and held it until the doctor finished. It was not a desirable task.

This was, indeed, a long and eventful day. It is one that I shall always remember, and I shall continue to be very thankful that my little school at Gilead was not in the path of that terrible tornado of 1927.

THOSE FOLKS AT JOHN DEAN SCHOOL

Helen C. Harless

A few months ago, I proceeded to show my four-year-old grandson some of the places in Canton that were special to me. Our first stop was the former location of the John Dean School. Much to my dismay, it had been torn down and replaced with a playground. I have been gone from Canton forty-five years, but I return each June for a family reunion. How terribly disappointed I was that the school was gone. I had wanted to show my grandson the school and explain to him how special it had been to me.

As the old saying goes, "You can take the girl from the town, but you can't take away her memories." Of course, this is a paraphrase on "You can take the girl off the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the girl." I was a farm girl. I lived on Route Nine about three miles west of Canton. When it came time for me to go to school, Mom and Dad took me to the John Dean School every day. Of course, school busses were unheard of then.

I looked forward to going to school because of Mrs. Thixtun, my first grade teacher, and Mr. Cook, the custodian. Mrs. Thixtun was a plump, happy person who made me want to learn–a great motivator, we would say today.

Her room was on the south side of the school on the first floor. On the east end of the room was the little semicircle of red wooden chairs where we went to recite. Here, also, hung from easels, were the phonics and reading charts. Just west of the chairs were little desks arranged in rows. They were fastened to the floor and were adjustable. At the beginning of the year, Mr. Cook came to the room and "fitted" the desk to us. He would raise or lower the seat so that we could sit comfortably with our feet flat on the floor. Mrs. Thixtun's desk sat at the front of the room and the old pump organ was nearby. Our cloak room was on the north side of the classroom. The students kept caps, coats, mittens, boots, and scarves on hooks in this cloakroom. I can never remember anyone losing anything. How did we ever survive without lockers?

Our class was divided into the Bluebirds, the Red Birds, and the Blackbirds. The Bluebirds were the top students and the Blackbirds were the slow students. Naturally, the Red Birds fell in between. I was lucky to be a Bluebird until one day I did not measure up in reading class. I was demoted to the Red Bird group. I was humiliated, crushed, and worried about how I was going to tell my parents I had "slipped" academically. The truth is, I did not tell them. I "dug in" and worked hard and in a few days redeemed my status as a Bluebird and Mom and Dad never knew.

Mrs. Thixtun worked hard to make her students well-rounded. Music was a part of our program every day. She had a beautiful soprano voice and was generous with her musical talent. Our only accompaniment was the pump organ. For some reason, Mrs. Thixtun never sat down to play the organ. I suppose it was because she could not see us if she sat down or we her, so she would stand up, play the organ, and pump with her right foot as we sang along with her.

She also included art and drama in our curriculum. I well remember one art project we did. String hammocks were made of pastel-colored string. These hammocks were about six by eleven inches and were woven on small looms. After we tied off and secured each end in a gold metal circlet, Mrs. Thixtun hung them end to end around the windows of the room on a wire. These were on display so our parents could see them at the next PTA meeting.

As a part of our drama, I can recall being cast as Martha Washington with a beautiful full-skirted long dress and a white wig. Another time I was one of twelve clowns. Our performances were put on for PTA audiences or became special programs open to the community.

Holidays were always observed regularly in Mrs.

Thixtun's room. A few days before Valentine's Day, Mrs. Thixtun placed a beautifully decorated box on a stool just inside the door of our room. We brought our valentines and deposited them in the box, and then on Valentine's Day we had our party and opened our Valentines. Among my first grade friends was Robert Possum, a cute, chubby, blonde boy. About two weeks before Valentine's Day, Robert brought a big heart shaped box of candy, whispered something to Mrs. Thixtun, and she put the box of candy in the bottom drawer of her desk. Every girl in the room knew that Valentine was for her, but come the day, I was the lucky one.

The PTA played an important part in the life of our school. Meetings were usually held once a month on Friday afternoon. The teachers set up folding chairs around the perimeter of the room, and the parents would listen to us recite, or we would put on the program. The business meeting followed.

I distinctly remember one issue that my mother took before the PTA. There were not hot lunches provided. The town students went home for lunch, as did the teachers. The country students carried sack lunches. During the cold or rainy months, the only place we were allowed to eat was in the basement in the toilet room. Only a partial partition divided our lunch room and the toilets. Believe me, this was not a pleasant surrounding for a lunch room. Finally, my mother took the issue to the PTA and was told that the reason for making us eat in the toilet room was that the teachers did not like the smell of oranges and the crumbs of food in their classrooms. Mother stood her ground and finally won. We were allowed to eat in the hall between the first and second grade rooms. We had to stand up to eat at a big table, but even that was a big plus to the toilet room. On nice, warm days, we sat on a bench on the playground and ate picnic style.

Eleanor Coleman sat in the seat just ahead of me, and periodically– often, that is–she had a severe nose-bleed. We would be working in our seats, and all of a sudden Eleanor, having a nosebleed, would lean out over the side as a pool of blood accumulated on the floor. Mrs. Thixtun, who was always understanding, took time to stuff cotton in Eleanor's nose, clean up the blood, and assure everyone that all was well.

Mrs. Thixtun not only taught us our academics well, she also gave us culture, showed compassion and patience, yes, and even taught us how to be compassionate and patient. I loved her very much.

And then there was Mr. Cook, our custodian, who was a very dear person, too. He seemed to like me and helped me in many ways. He was always at school over the noon hour, so he and I really became pals. If he had chores to do over the noon hour, I would tag along and "help" him, but usually we just had good things to talk about. Each spring, and this meant all five springs I was in school, Mr. Cook made me a kite. The size of the kite was determined by how tall I was. As I grew, so did my kites. When he got my kite built, we would test it out together on the playground over the noon hour. Our kites were a harbinger of spring for the neighborhood around John Dean School.

One morning, Mr. Cook was sitting on the iron railing that bordered the sidewalk that led to the school. I always stopped to chat with him before I went in. This particular morning, Mr. Cook asked me, "Did you ever eat groundhog?" Naturally, all I could think of was a wild little woodchuck. So my answer to Mr. Cook was, "No, of course not." He looked me straight in the eye and asked, "Haven't you ever eaten sausage? That's ground hog." All the kids around thought this was a neat joke, and we all had a good laugh. What a fun way to start a school day. This was typical of Mr. Cook who was always full of fun.

Mom and Dad never forgot either Mrs. Thixtun or Mr. Cook come butchering day. I always took them a nice big package of fresh sausage, which they always appreciated.

Although the John Dean School is no more, my little grandson enjoyed my shared stories centered around beautiful memories of this school and those two most unforgettable people–Mrs. Thixtun and Mr. Cook.

FROM MY TEACHER'S PLANNING SCHEDULE, 1929-1930

Anna Rittenhouse

Upon graduation from high school in 1928 I borrowed $100 to attend Southern Illinois Normal University for one year. Food was carried from home and I did my own cooking in the rooming house where I stayed. How proud I was in the Spring of 1929 to receive a certificate giving me permission to teach!

My first teaching position, Bower School in Kinkaid Township, Jackson County, paid $85 per month for an eight-month term. To receive my paycheck each month, I was to fill out the attendance record sheet and take it to the clerk's home a mile from school on a dirt road. Then I walked another mile to the place I stayed, paying $20 monthly for room and board.

Before the first day of school, two of the three directors visited to make sure it was clean and in perfect order. School opened at 9:00 a.m. on September 2, 1929, with an attendance of thirteen more or less interested students ranging from grades one through eight. Textbooks and lessons were assigned and a few general instructions given.

On the second day, the schedule was posted where all could see. All reading and penmanship came before recess. Classes varied in time from five minutes for reading to fifteen minutes for penmanship, yet every child learned to read and write. From recess until noon arithmetic and spelling was taught, varying in time from five to ten minutes. One hour was taken at noon for a cold lunch brought from home and outdoor exercises and play. At 1:00 p.m. school began with language and physiology classes varying from five to fifteen minutes. At 2:30 p.m. we had another fifteen minute recess, after which geography and history classes were held. Our timekeeper was a seven day wind-up clock on the wall for all to see. School dismissed at 4:00 p.m.

On the third day of school, two students were given permission to walk to the clerk's home to get the victrola, basketball, and curtains. The big curtains were hung at the front of the schoolroom to make a "stage" from which a program would be given at the box supper. The date for this important social event and fundraiser was selected carefully. It had to be held before bad weather set in and on a night not taken by schools nearby. Practice for the program began in September; proceeds were used to buy balls, bats, indoor games, etc., as needed. Visitors were welcome to drop in anytime and were especially enjoyed at intermission in play.

The first fire was made in the big heating stove on September 19, adding to the responsibilities of the teacher who was also the janitor who tended the fire and kept floors clean.

During the year, neatness awards were given weekly. Students were divided into two teams, Lions and Tigers; department prizes were given. Language work was graded by points: one off for each misspelled word, incorrect punctuation mark, and inappropriate use of grammar; two off for each incorrect capital letter; five off for each mistake in paragraph structure; and ten off if work wasn't neat. All grades were recorded numerically. What a task it was to add all numbers with no calculator or adding machine! On September 30, exams were held and grade cards given out a day or two later.

A race started for the tooth-brushing contest, students being divided into two teams, Blue Birds and Red Birds. The big tooth-brushing party was October 31. At this time there were

more new rules: Stay in one minute for each time pupil leaves room; failure to make 100 in Spelling requires staying after school until missed words are learned; the signal of one finger meant asking to be excused, and two fingers indicated anything important other than solving problems.

Plans for nature study for grades seven and eight were recorded, including the study of birds, weeds, how wheat becomes bread, etc. Required book reports given were written and included (1) author and name of book; (2) part of story liked best and why; (3) name of principal character liked best and why; and (4) did you like this story and why.

Book salesmen visited country schools during school hours. Since our school had no encyclopedias, I bought a set, paying $10 monthly. On October 8, County Superintendent "Pop" Etherton and a photographer visited our school and took our picture. How thrilled we were! For October, the average daily attendance was 98.4% Grade cards were handed out November 4, following the regular monthly exams.

A Thanksgiving program was given November 22, which included readings, tableaux, and songs. Games were played. On November 30, the temperature dropped to zero; on December 2, several inches of snow fell. On December 3, exams were held and grade cards given out several days later.

On December 19, only six students were present, and lessons were all finished before noon. The Christmas Program was given on December 23, with ten visitors present. Santa also appeared and gave bags of candy, oranges, and nuts, which I purchased, to the children. The only Christmas vacation was December 25. All pupils were back in school the next day with a perfect attendance record. Exams were held December 31, with grade cards out soon after.

On January 10, ice was a half inch thick everywhere; three weeks later we had our third snowfall. Exams were held January 29, and the next day one girl troublemaker became sixteen and dropped out of school. On February 27 exams were held, with grade cards soon following. March 31 was another exam day. May 1, 1930, was the school year's end.

My first year at teaching was very special to me. Indeed, I found so much pleasure and satisfaction that I remained in one-room schools until consolidation finally closed them.

PERILS OF A COUNTRY SCHOOL TEACHER

Louise Barclay Van Etten

A B. Ed. degree was bestowed upon me by Western Illinois State Teachers' College in June, 1935, and my first job as teacher of the little country school of Oak Grove began that fall.

I was employed at the munificent salary of $50 a month, and since I wished to commute from my home in Macomb rather than obtain room and board in the neighborhood, it necessitated buying a secondhand "Chevy." It had been owned by a local auctioneer who had driven it hard and unhampered for 60,000 country miles, leaving it weary and stubborn. I had nine nice kids, and since I was extremely athletic, they loved the extra-curricular sessions in the school yard. We even had a few lessons outside on especially nice days. Other than that, the fall was relatively uneventful.

That was fall, but in November winter appeared. Almost immediately came cold, snow, and icy roads, and I was rudely introduced to putting on snow chains and listening to their clickety-clanking. Arising from bed in the dark left something to be desired. Then the trouble began. Across the road in front of the streaming headlights was the continual and ominous sweep of drifting snow. One below-zero morning I arrived at the crossroads to find the east two-mile trek drifted shut, so I parked the car in the barn lot of the farmer who lived at the

intersection and took off on shanks ponies. I didn't realize it then, but this was to be the pattern for the rest of the winter.

When I got to the school, the fire had gone out in the big, old stove, which was my job to stoke. I hurriedly started one with cobs and kindling, and it was just beginning to throw off a little warmth when one of the directors arrived on horseback. Joe Lynn, a former Sunday school mate of mine at Camp Creek Church, informed me that there would be no school due to the bad weather but that I could ride behind him as far as his corner, which was one mile west and so half way to my car.

I banked the fire, locked up, and then got on the horse behind Mr. Lynn. Off we galloped–into the frigid wind of twenty some below. After a half a mile without breathing, I told Joe I couldn't stand the ride, so I slipped off the horse and waved goodbye. Standing in the middle of the road, I discovered, was no more condusive to breathing than horseback had been. The gale and below-zero temperature were freezing the air in my lungs, and snatching the breath right out of me. My lifetime passed in front of me.

Not being ready to die and remembering my three-year-old little girl at home, I made a supreme effort and got turned around with the wind at my back. The Wes Hayden family lived a quarter of a mile west of the school, so, saying a little prayer, I started plowing through the heaped snow drifts toward their house. I have no idea how long it took, but when I reached the front porch, I collapsed, fell down, and hit the front door. Mr. Hayden heard the noise and, began opening the door. Finding me half frozen, he took me inside and got me into warm blankets and gave me some hot soup.

The day was spent listening to the radio reports of the weather across the country and watching the wind carve snow sculptures outside the windows. By late afternoon, the wind had died down and the sun had come out. Mr. Hayden loaned me a horse to ride across to the highway. It was unbelievably beautiful with sparks flying off every snow drift and all the trees swathed in ghostly garments. I left the horse in the farmer's barn, but when I tried to start the car it didn't even growl.

The road north to Macomb hadn't been cleared so I called a garage in Industry, which was south, and a truck came and towed me in to the shop. I had friends with whom I spent the night, in return for which I threw a few scoops of coal on the fire from time to time.

During the night we heard the fire siren and the next morning learned that Ricey Walker, who lived across the road from the school, had an over-heated furnace, and his house had burned to the ground. The little Industry fire truck had valiantly bucked snow drifts for the two miles from the highway east to the fire, but the wind had risen to gale velocity again, thirty-five below zero–it was hopeless. The Walker family spent the remaining night with neighbors, but I'm sure no one was able to sleep after such an experience.

After a night in the warm garage, my grateful car started right off, and since the roads had been cleared I didn't waste any time making my getaway.

The extreme cold and snow continued, and we were out of school for a week. The following Monday was crisp and clear and seemed to have moderated, so I drove to school, whistling a tune and glorying in the sparkling diamond day. Ernest Moon lived just south of the one mile corner, and I stopped in to inquire the temperature and couldn't believe my ears when he said twenty below zero. When I arrived at school my nose was frozen!

The weather didn't improve much all winter, and all the snow that fell stayed until one sunny day about February 20 the temperature suddenly soared to seventy degrees and all the snow melted in one day. I realized what that was going to do to the streams, and, as there was a small creek to cross west of the school, I dismissed school an hour early and hastily left.

When I got to the bridge, water was running over it, and I knew it was then or never. I started across, and killed my

engine about midway. In those days the car starter was on the floor, and, stamping on it with a heavy foot, I pulled the car on across and was on my way, thanking God for my resourcefulness and my jalopy for its cooperation. I later learned that about two hours after I had crossed, a family's vehicle was swept off into the swollen stream. Fortunately, they managed to get out, frightened but safe.

Thus ended winter, and an early spring helped us to forget the bad weather. There were woods back of the school and spring flowers beckoned, so the children and I spent many noon hours exploring.

Then came the big fun day–the last day of school. Everyone brought special dishes, and we had a lovely picnic lunch outside. The mothers were guests. I brought my little girl as well as a special friend. We played games, did many fun things, and laughed a lot. I hope those "children," now grandparents, remember that day with fond memories.

EXPERIENCES OF A RURAL TEACHER

Mary K. DeWitt

At the beginning of the Thirties, my family had barely, but painfully, survived the Depression of 1929 and 1930. I had completed a year of elementary training at Western Illinois Teachers College and was in dire need of a teaching position. At that time, a teacher's limited certificate could be completed with just one year of college training and by successfully passing a written test at the superintendent's office.

With many misgivings, I attempted to locate a teaching position, only to learn that there was only one school available–in the northeast part of Schuyler County–and the only way to reach it was either by walking, by horseback, or by driving on a very bad dirt road for a much longer distance. Nonetheless, I decided to take the position.

I had to drive my car the first seven miles out of Rushville to a farm home where a very kind gentleman, Mr. Asa Bartless, rented a gentle white mare for me to ride the rest of the way–a distance of about one mile through some beautiful woods–also I crossed a stream.

The new job was quite a challenge. I was young and had learned that I was a descendant of the explorer and famous historical pathfinder, Daniel Boone. As I rode on my horse, I imagined I was on the Wilderness Road in Kentucky and watched for the many things which nature had to offer. Especially were the spring and winter beautiful times. Also, the trip gave me time to be alone and to plan my lessons for the next day.

There were many very difficult times, also. Two snowstorms that winter gave me a hard time. During one of the storms, I was returning home in the evening and the snow was so deep in the road that my horse could go no farther. My feet were even touching the drifts while in the saddle stirrups. The horse stopped! I rolled off before she began plunging in the snow. Thankfully, a neighbor who saw me came to my rescue.

During another snowstorm, I had tried to go without any chains on my car. But I got stuck on a hill before I got to the place where my horse was kept. I finally succeeded in putting on the chains and continued on to school. My students were waiting for me to let them in out of the weather. That was one of the reasons I always felt it necessary to be at the schoolhouse on time.

Still later in the spring, my horse Goldie refused to go on the riding path, stopping very quickly and snorting in terror. I finally spotted a large black snake crawling ahead across the path. When it disappeared, she calmed, and we continued on our way.

The only outside activity we could have at school was a meeting of the mothers during the daytime, honoring them especially for Mothers Day. Our Christmas was a very simple

observance when we exchanged gifts and enjoyed the beautiful Christmas tree which we had obtained from the woods nearby. We had no electricity, so everything was very common and had to be held during the daylight time. We had very good attendance during the year. There was a very close relationship among the five families represented, and we all learned to be very concerned about each family.

In the spring when Mr. Bartlett needed his mare for field work, I used a little Western riding mare Dolly which my uncle from Kansas had shipped to Illinois for pasture. As she was used to the cowboys and could do tricks, I enjoyed her little antics and finished my year in Western style. She entertained my students with her little tricks and became a spoiled pet to them all.

It took lots of faith, courage, determination, and many frustrations to complete my year's teaching. But I often remembered my ancestor's hardships, too, and it helped my year to pass very quickly and pleasantly. If there had been accidents or sicknesses in such a very remote place, it would have been a disaster. As it happened, though, we were very fortunate and these were some of my favorite experiences in preparing for a long career of teaching, which finally ended after thirty-eight years.

THE OLD ONE-ROOM COUNTRY SCHOOL

Fern Moate Hancock

Still sits the school house by the road,
A ragged beggar, sunning,
Its door's worn sill betraying
The feet which, creeping came to school,
Went storming out for playing.

The Ordinance of 1787 had, as one of its most important provisions, one that stated, "Education shall be forever encouraged" in the states that would be formed from the "Northwest Territory."

One of the methods used to implement this provision was to establish schools at regular intervals that could be reached by walking. Consequently, as the land was surveyed and parallels and meridians were mapped, parcels of land could be described. Our township was twenty-six degrees north and three degrees east of the Third Principal Meridan. As roads were constructed, a grid, like a waffle iron, emerged. Little wooden one-room schools were built two miles from each other north and south and east and west. No child was ever more than two miles from a school. Standards for teaching were very low. People with only an eighth grade education might be hired. But in my time, I took an examination for a second grade certificate after graduating from high school. I was eighteen years old.

Until I entered my first rural school, my knowledge of a rural school was slight. Schools often served as churches. So the first time I was in a rural school was to attend the confirmation of the daughter of one of my father's patients. Other times were the school picnics on the first day of school, possibly the Saturday following for I would have been in school otherwise. The term for a country school was eight months. Our school was in a small town, but it was at the intersection where a country school should have been, so we had pupils from the farms, with their rosy cheeks and chapped hands, in our classes. Some had walked the railroad tracks to school. At this same time, a teacher who taught two miles east of Gridley walked the track to her school. Prairie Valley was its name. Our term was nine months long. When my father taught, school was discontinued at corn husking or corn planting times so the children could help.

I passed the examination, had six weeks of summer school, and was qualified to teach. The subjects I studied were

Country School Teaching and Primary Methods. I passed Professor Cavin's (he wrote an orthography text) spelling test.

I had applied for a position at Maple Grove, northeast of Carlock. I was granted an interview with the three members of the school board. A $90 salary per month to conduct an eight-month term was agreed upon. We shook hands on the agreement. I was asked to attend church at least two Sundays each month, to which I readily agreed. (My son-in-law, who is a professor at Western Illinois University with a doctorate, always says when I tell that, "Your civil rights were infringed.") I didn't feel that way then, and I don't now. I felt the board was interested in a good Christian example for its children.

I secured a room with a family–this included the room, board (food), and laundry.

Then I entered my first rural school. A porch preceded an anteroom where coats and over shoes could be left. Shelves for the lunch pails were also there. My school had a basement, a coal and cob bin, and a furnace. In winter, I built up the fire and banked it at night.

There were two doors in this hall by which to enter the school room. Long windows were on either side of the room. A slightly raised platform in the front of the room held the teacher's desk and chair, and book shelves for textbooks and such library books as we had. Encyclopedias and a big dictionary completed the equipment. On the wall behind the desk was the blackboard. A metal cupboard filled one corner and held consumable supplies, theme paper, manila paper, colored paper for art work, chalk, scissors, and erasers.

There was no water on our grounds so one of the student chores was to go across a meadow and up a slight rise to a farmer's well. In my mind's eye, I can see those little legs scampering up that hill. A common dipper served us very well, although collapsible metal cups were coming into use. On the wall opposite the teacher's desk was a two burner kerosene stove which I found was to be used for a hot lunch program in winter. We also had a piano and an assortment of song books. A picture of George Washington was prominently displayed and an American flag.

I assembled the textbooks I would use for the ensuing year, prepared a schedule of classes, and, in fear and trembling, awaited the first day of school. Mothers, possibly some fathers, too, had given the school a good cleaning. I had a bouquet of goldenrods on the desk.

We were quite modern then and taught alternate grades–one year 1 - 3 - 5 - 7, the next year 2 - 4 - 6 - 8. But it was not a perfect arrangement by any means, for if you had a person just starting school, how could you possibly put him in the second grade?

We began the day by saying the Pledge of Allegiance first and had ten minutes of singing. I chose the songs the first day. Later, we had little committees put the numbers on the board.

The first day I had to have each child write his name, age, parents' names, his grade, etc., to enter in my register. They had chosen their seats, and this first day I saw no reason to change them. So we got organized and went through the schedule so lessons could be assigned. Time sped past and here was recess.

A school bell brought them back, and school continued until noon. We enjoyed our lunch together outdoors. Then we played a game of baseball. I was umpire, but I didn't stand behind the catcher. I stood next to the pitcher because I felt it was safer.

After the noon break, when drinks had been taken and hot faces and dirty hands washed, I had decided to read fifteen minutes for rest and relaxation; I read on through the day. We had an afternoon recess and after a while school was out. I had made up my mind always to say goodnight to each one and good morning, too.

One of the customs of those days was to have the teacher home to stay all night. So I walked home with the children, had

a delicious supper, was treated royally, slept in the "spare" bedroom, and had a hearty breakfast. The mother packed my lunch pail, and the children and I walked back to school. I made some lasting friendships through that by-gone custom.

The school term went swiftly. We chose monitors for the following week to do various duties, such as choose the daily songs, keep the black boards erased, be the water carrier, etc. On Friday afternoons, in the winter, the last item was to choose the menu for the next week's hot lunch. Imagine me, who had only helped cook for four, deciding how much milk, cocoa, and sugar to use for hot cocoa or for the creamed dried beef they liked or how much hot rice and sugar, cinnamon, and milk should be used. Various families would offer to bring these foods. After recess, imagine me teaching a class with my book in one hand and stirring the rice with another. Sometimes each pupil brought a jar of vegetable soup or chili which would be stirred together in a big kettle, then rationed out at noon. We sat at our seats to eat, told riddles, had Morris sing for us, or, if time permitted, played an indoor game. The children took their bowls or cups home to wash, but we had chosen a dishwashing monitor so everybody had his her turn at washing the pots and pans. Water had been put on to heat before we ate.

The last day of the school program was the picnic. The children came in the morning and played ball, ran races, and played other games. The parents came at noon with well-filled baskets. After the visiting, while the women packed food and dirty dishes away, the older men played ball against the younger ones.

About two o'clock they gathered in a circle and our little program began. One of my little girls had come up to me and said her father had some things he wanted to say. At the proper time, he rose with a paper in his hands and started to read a poem about school days. Pretty soon I pricked up my ears. I realized his poem was about our little Maple Grove School. Then came the last lines which recalled my wading through a stream in September.

It closed with this couplet:

"If the directors were kind
They'd buy a boat
For their teacher, Miss Fern Moate."

The pupils and their parents were hilarious. I don't know to this day how I felt. I do know this: I had made the grade. I was one of them. They were pleased with me.

I can't praise the one-room rural school too highly. The children learned, often from one another's recitations. We had no problems with drugs, cigarettes, or "dirty" books. The years I taught in the one-room school were some of the most rewarding of my thirty-four years of teaching.

IX
Letters of Long Ago

LETTERS OF LONG AGO

Those involved in the areas of history, literature, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy affirm the significance of letters. Indeed, they are crucial to a culture and a society. Unfortunately, the telephone, the rapid pace of life today, the time-consuming glitter of the mass media–particularly television–and the myriad of spectator events that capture the minds of so many have conspired to relegate letter writing to a minor position in our society. And this is a shame.

Edna St. Vincent Millay told her generation to "search the fading letters, finding steadfast in the broken binding all that once was I."

And it was Goethe who insisted, "We lay aside letters never to read them again, and at last we destroy them . . . and so disappears the most beautiful, the most immediate breath of life, irrecoverably for ourselves and others."

The marvelous memoirs included in this chapter lend authenticity to the poetic claims. The charm, information, knowledge, love, and sweet morality are really quite special and demonstrate aptly the enormous worth and relevance of letter writing.

Important, enlightening historic information is offered in three of the memoirs. Jean Lynn's moving selection tells of her great aunt's 1865 letter in which she graphically describes her experience in seeing the train bringing the slain President Abraham Lincoln's body from Washington, DC to Springfield, and she speaks in defense of General Sherman. Esmarelda Thompson, speaking about the Civil War, includes a letter from her Uncle John. Another of America's important historic periods is featured in Owen Hannant's letter written by his great grandfather who was a part of the Gold Rush of 1849. The abject difficulty attendant to the trek and the hopes, dreams, and disappointments of the gold seekers are explicated.

Stella Hutchins includes a letter in which she speaks of love for mother and father and of her desire to teach school. Even more interesting is the step-by-step process of making maple syrup, a project initiated to secure monies to finance schooling. Helen Keithly's 1908 letter to her grandmother focuses on a child's adoration for the woman and on the lass's view of life and school over eighty years ago. In an 1839 letter from David Prince to his sister, submitted by Helen Shelton, the writer lectures his sister about her tastes and demeanor. Though there was affection in the communication, it aptly displays the elitism of university education in the era—if, indeed, young Mr. Prince, not a humble man, reflects his schooling.

The other memoirs speak, in one way or another, about love. Signa Lorimer includes a splendid letter to her granddaughter filled with deep affection and wonderful advice. Louise Efnor shares a touching letter concerning a young husband's loving Christian view of the untimely death of his wife and of his deep affection for his children. Love letters were included in the memoirs of Max Rowe, discussing communications received by his mother, and Katherine Cravens submits an affectionate letter received from a serviceman during World War II.

It was Donald Mitchell who asserted, "Blessed be letters–they are our monitors, they are our comforters, and they are our heart-talkers."

If the memoirs in this chapter are an indication of the accuracy of his statement, he is most surely correct. From a bygone time, these letters instruct, charm, and please.

Alfred J. Lindsey

ABE LINCOLN'S BODY COMES HOME

Jean Geddes Lynn

Laura Geddes, my great aunt, was born March 23, 1844, near Fountain Green, Illinois–the daughter of Colonel Thomas and Susan Rebecca Geddes, early settlers in Hancock County. She married George Brandon, raised a family, and lived most of her life in the Fountain Green area. Laura was a student at Illinois State Normal University at the time she wrote this letter describing the passage of Lincoln's funeral train through Normal on its way to Springfield. The letter was addressed to her mother (my great grandmother). Thanks to the foresight of my father, Allen Geddes, the letter was saved. Our family is happy to be able to share this treasure with others who may be interested.

My dear Mother,

I wrote to Julia the latter part of last week and I thought I would answer yours during this week, but I have had so much writing "to Mr. Edwards" (as the girls call the essays on Theory and Art of Teaching) to do lately, I put if off.

This has been a week long to be remembered at Normal. On Wednesday morning the funeral train bearing the remains of our lamented President passed through our little village on the way to its final resting place. The station house was draped in mourning and there were several appropriate mottoes. They raised an arch over the track. It was all wreathed with cedar and white plumb blossoms and across it was the motto "Go to thy rest." The lady students got up a wreath of the most beautiful flowers I ever saw to be placed on the coffin. On a card was written "Here is a man whose like we shall never see again" on one side; on the other "We bring flowers because we loved him, Normal Students." This card was fastened on with the richest bow of white ribbon and crape. Wednesday morning the teachers had engaged several boys to go round with a bell to wake the students at three o'clock. They took a vote the night before to see how many could get up without having to be called and as there were only three or four, they said we must not set up all night for fear of sleeping too late in the morning and they would see we were wakened in time.

The train was to come at four and by that time all Normal and the neighborhood round were there waiting. It was nearly five when the Engine came; it is always ten minutes ahead. It had a life size picture of the President in front and was draped in mourning. Then the train soon hove in sight. It stopped at where the roads cross and the wreath was put on. It passed the station very slowly but did not stop. There was eight or ten cars all covered with black and white, little flags on each car with black and white streamers, a large picture of the President on the engine in front like the first engine. The car the coffin was on was almost black and covered with black and white. Mr. Edwards said it was built in Virginia and presented to the President only a few days before he died for to come to the fair in Chicago in. It was all iron. There was soldiers standing guard at each car door both before and behind. The front cars was filled with distinguished men, not a woman on the train. His son did not pass till evening. The head of each man was uncovered till the last car passed under the arch. All stood silently watching till the cars wound slowly round the hill out of sight. "Go to thy rest."

Mother, have you read Henry Ward Beecher's funeral sermon on the death of the President. It is splendid, all of it, but the last part is in the most beautiful language I ever read. I would copy the last few sentences here by Libbie has lent the paper and I do not remember the connection. Libbie's brother Will keeps us provided with all the reading matter we have time to do justice, *The New York Herald, Dailies, Harper's Weekly, Atlantic Monthly,* and *Our Young Folks.*

I hear a great many rumors calculated to tarnish the fame of one of our best Generals. I do not believe a word of it.

I often wish I could get the *Chicago Journal* and see what it says of General Sherman. I have not received a letter from either Rob or Cy this week. I can hardly wait till I get Cy's letter, he is going to send his photo. Kate and I were going up yesterday to get ours. It rained all forenoon and we did not have time in the afternoon. I am afraid you will get out of patience reading my excuses, so I am not going to say "photo" again till I send it.

O! Mother I have read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* since I wrote you last. I liked it so much. If I had read it before the war broke out I don't know but I might have turned out like John Brown.

I have been up to S. School and Church. The minister gave us a red hot abolition sermon. Just gave the greatest cursing I ever heard to old Bucky, the rebellion, and sympathizers. I would like to hear Mr. Walker preach again. We have a minister here every day and some of them are rather right. Love to all. I hope you will write soon.

L. A. Geddes

A LEGACY FROM UNCLE JOHN

Esmarelda T. Thomson

My first exposure to American history outside my mother's family group was with a fourth grade class in a Galesburg elementary school. Our pretty young teacher asked us if we knew anything about the Civil War. I felt proud to put up my hand, and when Miss McCabe gave me the nod, I reported, "My grandfather was in this war." The teacher asked, "Which side was he on?" And I replied, "My mother's side." And so a family joke was born and I later discovered my father's family supplied me with two great-grandfathers who served in the same conflict.

My Uncle John gave me the key to his personal desk one afternoon as we visited together. The year was 1943. I felt a sense of urgency in his words when he asked me "to look after it." I agreed and we spoke of other things. Three evenings later, he died in his chair with his books near at hand and his glasses in place. It was a bleak and sad time but perhaps a fitting way to leave for this man who had filled his mind with a world of books and family devotion. I kept the key and "looked after" the desk during the unsettled years of World War II. I felt the solemnity of my uncle's request but never more deeply as when a packet from the desk was opened several years later to reveal a very special letter, written by my "mother's side" grandfather, John H. Hunter, 1st Lt., 31st Regiment, Illinois Vol. Infantry. World War II was over by this date and my husband, our little Tom, and I were settling into our first post-war home. Thoughts of my uncle and his long protection of this letter, together with his tremendous admiration and respect for his Civil War father, flooded my mind. I became the protector of a legacy from my Uncle John. The letter has been displayed at several historical celebrations. On my sister's sixty-fifth birthday, I had it copied for her. Together, we placed a copy of it in our brother's seventieth Birthday Celebration Book. With this memoir, I give parts of it to my readers and believe my uncle would be glad. Surely my Civil War grandfather would want to add the truth of his writing to some historical record!

The yellowed pages are fragile as I look at them now, but the black ink holds strong even though the old letter is 124 years old. The writing style is Spencerian with decorative, right slanted, rounded letters; it must have been made with a broad nibbled pen and good, black ink. Flourishes are in continuous evidence, particularly in the crossing of t's and in the beautiful signature. I can only marvel at the pages and the conditions under which the letter was penned–perhaps in daylight or in a lantern lit tent? My grandfather was an adjutant and assisted with orders and records.

The letter is dated January 16, 1865, with the location

of Poctaligo, South Carolina. On a current atlas map it is southwest of Charleston close to a river. It is important to remember that the fall of Atlanta opened the way for "Sherman's March to the Sea," which my grandfather had experienced with the Union army according to his writing.

He addressed the letter to "Mess. Mershon, Dilworth and Co." with the simple salutation of "Gents." These men were business associates of my grandfather in Vermont, Illinois, where he lived before going to war as a substitute for Lemuel Lindsay of Ipava. Let us give attention to some of his words: "On the evening of the 13th we broke camp near Beaufort and took the road for Charlestown. On the next morning, we crossed the Poctaligo River and began to find plenty of the Johney's in front of us, our regiment was in front of the entire army. The 31st went ahead to feel of them. . . . By two o'clock in the afternoon, we had them on the skedadle. (I say we, well, I was not in the mix for the day before we left Beaufort, the regiment received via New York one hundred and ten drafted men and substitutes and the Colonel placed them under the command and supervision of the undersigned.) Of course, I regretted very much that I could have no part in the glory of making the chivalry take the double quick. . . . Early yesterday morning *we* came in and took possession (I say we now for Hunter and his brave hundred and ten came in with their regiment with a loss of only two men, and they came in this morning safe, they had been looking after chickens, honey, etc.) of Pocotaligo Station. It is not much of a town, only a station on the Charlestown and Savanah R.R. . . . From the looks of the camps and camp grounds around here, there must have been a big lot of Johnies here. The 17th A.C. is here now, the 15th will be soon and the 14th will come up from Savanah and then the *Grand Armee* will move on and take the last ditch. Please examine a map and you can tell better where we are than I can, for I have no map. I wish you would tell H.S. Thomas that I would feel much obliged if he would send me one of those maps that he has in the Post Office."

Some of the words used in this letter intrigue me and make me wish I could have known my grandfather, who died when my mother was a child of nine. I like his word "skedadle" and think of it as a mild term for a retreating army! He makes reference to "The Rebs" in the early part of the letter but most often speaks of the "Johneys." The reader might like to know that John H. Hunter was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, a border state. His father came from Richmond, Virginia, and immigrated to Illinois, a free state, when my grandfather was about ten years old. His mother was Lucinda Nash from Tennessee.

When I read his wish for a map and the message for his Postmaster to send one, I marvel at his ability to sort out the location of his regiment's encampment and the lucid picture he creates as to the gathering of the Union forces for the push on "to take the last ditch" at Charleston, spelled "Charlestown" in the letter.

In the closing page of the writing, Grandfather requested his friends to show the letter to his family and "tell them that I stood the late fight first rate." He also wrote, "Provisions are again short but hope to have plenty soon. . . . Several large plantations inside our pickett lines. They were all cleaned out yesterday besides some others that were outside the pickett lines. Today, there are orders against letting any of the boys outside the lines and so they will be safe until we move or the lines are moved farther out." In this portion of the letter, we are brought into the warfare of Sherman's "March to the Sea," which included an army traveling light and "living on the country," according to Stephen B. Oates in *Portrait of America*. Foraging was a reality and I ponder over the terrors of it.

He also urged his friends to write to him with the sentence, "What in the world is the reason you do not write to me. Calladay gets letters but there is none for me." Word from home is strength for the soldier and he made the universal plea, "write to me."

The letter holds two postscripts, one concerning the weather which says, "The weather is pleasant during the day but quite cool at night. We hope to take Charlestown by February 1st and then, think we will come home. Get ready for us for, if alive, we are sure to come." This last statement holds such poignancy; it clutches my heart. The penmanship is smaller and with no flourishes. However, the final sentence brings some relief with a humorous comment on Jefferson Davis. It reads, "Notice what this paper, the *Charlestown Mercury*, says of Jeff Davis. They do say that although a very devout man that he uses a great many whiskey stews."

The first "P.S." said, "I understand that William Mellor got home. I am glad to hear it. I took New Year's dinner with his regiment in Savannah. Give him my best wishes." This identifies his presence in the Savannah campaign where Union communications were opened up by sea. Sherman wintered for a month there before making the drive northward through the Carolinas to which the main quotes of this letter refer.

This is a letter with glimpses of a Union infantryman in the Civil War. He began as Sergeant Hunter and gained a field promotion to First Lieutenant within his first eight months of duty. With his officer rank he served another year. His Civil War sword stood by the mantle in the parlor of the Hunter home in Table Grove in company with the more ornate one of his Knights Templars of the Masonic Lodge. These items made life more enjoyable as I was growing up in my Grandmother's home. Each was a point of reference with my dead Grandfather. Grandmother always called him "Papa." Uncle John called him "Pa."

How my uncle gained this letter I can only conjecture. Perhaps the friends from Vermont saved it for my Grandfather's return, or, as I believe, sent it to my uncle after his father's death in 1907. The letter was treasured by my Uncle John, a self-read student of history. His signature was similar to his father's, though without the bold flourishes. The generational stream holds me in awe; and I feel blessed by family and country.

LETTER OF A FORTY-NINER

Owen Hannant

This letter was written by my great grandfather, James M. Daigh, upon arriving in California after making the long overland trip from the States in the gold rush of 1849. Born in Virginia in 1800, he moved to Illinois while a young man. Caught up in the gold fever, he made the trip when he was forty-nine years old. He panned for a time, hauled supplies to the miners for a while, and then set up a store where he did quite well for a few years until he was murdered in 1855. He is buried at Shasta City.

Dear Friend Whitaker,

We arrived at the first gold diggings today. As you know I took the river boat "Connecticut" from Naples to St. Louis. Next day at St. Louis I boarded the "Embassy" for St. Joseph. Our first death occurred on this boat. A young man named Thomas Washington died of cholera on April 12th. His comrades buried him on top of a high bluff about five miles below Jefferson City. This death cast a solemn gloom over every man on board and bibles blossomed out in great profusion. But as no new cases developed the men soon returned to their gambling, fighting, and drinking.

Our teams arrived at St. Joseph and we began our overland trek. The trip proved hard and tiresome. Many died along the way. At times the road seemed endless. It seems that Providence has, on these vast plains, provided the Indian with a retreat where he may remain, unmolested, for many years to come.

Sometimes there were as many as 300 wagons in sight at one time. The teams ahead often ate the grass down so close that there was little left for those that followed. I have seen hundreds of oxen dead along the trail. The superiority of the older animals was fairly tested and proven. Most of the animals that died were young. While crossing the desert several of our

young animals failed so as to be of little service, one died. We had to leave one wagon here before coming to the Humboldt or Marts River and Carson River about 200 miles from the nearest gold diggings. Many of the emigrants are disheartened and many are sick.

While I did not expect as much as perhaps some others but I did expect to make from three to ten thousand dollars. I expect it yet, Friend Whitaker. I never could believe I was doomed to kneel down to the wealth or dictation of any man. I am fully convinced of that yet. If I keep my health I will soon make a handsome sum of money. I always detested the idea of making money by low, pitiful, sneaking advantages. I still detest it but all I can make by honest labor I will make and I believe I am now where a steady lick will win. Therefore my motto is "Death or Victory." If the latter be my fortune I expect to return to Pike County where I shall spend the balance of my days in peace and quietness with my family and friends which seems to be the most desirable thing to me in this world. If the former then my bones and flesh will mingle with the dust of California.

We have all been sick more or less. James and Arthur Chenoweth were sick when I left them but both were considered on the mend. William Chenoweth died July 26th and was buried 30 miles this side of Fort Hall. Roland Griswold died August 18 and was buried on Carson River about 200 miles from the Gold mines. John Aiken died September 8 at three o'clock about 10 miles from our camp and forty miles from this city. Old David Porter died on the route somewhere on the Platte is all that have died from Pike. I know that all of the Chambersburg boys are well.

I wish you to furnish my family and don't let them suffer till I can make a remittance which will not be long. I will write soon again. Write me as soon as you get this and direct it to Sacremento City, California.

Yours Truly–James Daigh

A LETTER ON MAKING MAPLE SYRUP

Stella Howard Hutchings

This is a letter I sent to my sister concerning the making of maple syrup.

Dear Sister Gladys,

Thank you for getting me an invitation to visit with you in the Stickleman home there in Blue Mound, as you work for your room and board while getting your last year of high school.

Luckily for us, you are in Macon, and adjoining Christian County. A job teaching a country school in either county will be fine. Are you keeping your ears open for schools where a change of teachers is likely?

I don't regret that I resigned my school and came home for this past winter, but now that Mother is so much better, I'm eager to get back to teaching, and preferably near Blue Mound.

I have some good news. As I wrote a month ago, my bank account is depleted. I've worried about money for my train fare, and the cost of getting around to apply for a teaching job. I needed to earn some money before going to seek a position–but how?

I remembered that when we were small children and lived in the wooded part of the Jim Lovelace farm half-way between Patterson and Glasgow, Dad tapped some maple trees and made syrup. That memory is dim but a few years later a neighbor, Fairy Martin, and her friend had a "sugar camp" near our house. They worked there every day and made syrup and candy. We don't live there now, but there are maple trees growing on Dad's place here on the line between Scott and Greene counties.

Then I remembered that Dad used to tell us about how he had helped his grandfather Wells make maple syrup.

When I told about my plan, Dad said he remembered how it was done, but it involved too much work and he didn't

have time to help me. I couldn't forget the idea. After more talking, Dad called it "pestering," he agreed to tell me how to go about it.

First, I should make spiles to fit into holes drilled in the tree trunk. Sumac saplings were good for these. Many were growing along the road. In one afternoon I had a pile of Sumac sticks about one foot long. The diameter was about 1 1/2 inches. I sawed halfway through each stick about three inches from one end. With a pocket knife I whittled away the bark from the short end. It wasn't difficult to pry off the top part of the long end.

The next step was to burn away the soft pith that was in the center. I did that at the house with a tool made by forcing a corn cob on the end of a steel rod with a very small diameter. You remember the heating stove in our living room has a big door with a little iron platform out in front. With the iron poker I raked a heap of live coals near the door, then opened the door a crack and rushed the rod into the coals. It was soon red-hot. So was my hand, even though I had on a double glove. It was easy to push that hot tool through the pith. While the tool was heating again, I scraped out the pith and there was a little trough.

Dad said the spiles were alright, and he offered to haul the big iron kettle down to the maple grove. We loaded everything into the wagon. We took an axe, spade, shovel, the brace and bit, all the gallon buckets, and crocks that Mother could spare, and my spiles. Mother gave me some strips of old sheets to wrap around the round end of the spiles to fit them tightly into the tree.

Dad dug a pit which he called a furnace. On either side of it he set a heavy post with a vee shaped top. The big kettle was swung on a pole over the pit. The ends of the pole rested firmly in the vee notches. At the back of the kettle was a long length of stove pipe which was wired securely.

From the branch we carried flat rocks and banked them against the furnace and up around the kettle. Dad had done all the hard work. I couldn't have done it alone.

"Now," Dad said, "I'll tap one tree. This is a big tree and I'll drill two holes. Smaller trees will only need one."

I watched as Dad fitted the inch bit into the brace and soon had a hole about two inches deep. When he pulled out the bit and scraped out the wet shavings sap ran out and down the tree trunk. I wrapped a strip of white cloth around the bare wood end of a spile and handed it to Dad. Gently he tapped it into the hole. You should have seen how the sap raced down the little trough into the bucket I placed under the end of it.

"The camp's set up in the maple grove. The place is full of dead trees and fallen limbs for fuel, and you're on your own," Dad said as we started home.

I worked all the next day tapping trees. I even tapped one from which no sap came. I couldn't think why. I looked more closely at the bark and the tree's shape. It wasn't a maple. If only I could have closed up that hole! Of course, our brothers, Buell and Earl, saw it and reported it at home. I tried to save face by saying, "The way to find out if hickory trees ran as much sap as maples was to tap one."

In two more days Mother's pans, buckets, and jars were all catching dripping sap. I was on the go from early morning till dark carrying sap from trees to kettle and poking tree limbs or logs that I could drag into that furnace. Then I could hardly drag myself to the house. A few times Dad volunteered to go after supper and keep the fire going for awhile. If Buell and Earl went too, I always found a big pile of wood beside the kettle when morning came. It had become a family project.

Dad had said between forty to fifty gallons of sap must be evaporated to make one gallon of syrup. I kept a rough count of the sap I had poured into the kettle. As it became thicker and darker, I had to reduce the fire or it would burn on the sides of the kettle. When the kettle was more than half empty, I went to the house for Mother's advice. She said to draw the fire from under the kettle. Then when it had cooled enough, dip it into the

big milk bucket and pour fresh sap into the empty kettle. Then she'd help me carry it to the house to finish on the cook stove.

What a relief it was to get the bucket of sticky stuff safely into the kitchen!

Mother told me how to cleanse the syrup. We dipped it into our dishpan on the kitchen stove. As it heated we spread a clean white cloth in the colander and set it over a big canning kettle.

Mother beat nearly a dozen eggs, then stirred them into the boiling syrup. What an unappetizing mess it was! Like dirty scrambled eggs. We dipped this mess into the colander. The syrup dripped through into the kettle. The dirty eggs stayed in the colander. When we lifted it off, the kettle was half full of clear golden syrup.

Mother said she'd seal up the syrup while I returned to empty the sap buckets and start the fire under the kettle for another batch.

We had maple syrup on pancakes for supper. Dad said, "You've worked hard for days and we've eaten it all for one meal. Was it worth it?"

"But no," I told him, "we have seven pints sealed up." Dad couldn't believe it.

"On Saturday I'll take it to Roodhouse and sell it for you," he said.

When Dad came home from Roodhouse and handed me $28 I could hardly believe my eyes. "I could have sold that much more," he said.

I'll let you know definitely when I'll arrive in Blue Mound. I'll travel from Drake by the C and A railroad, then by interurban to Decatur, and by Wabash train to Blue Mound. I'll stay a week. Hopefully we'll both be sure of jobs by then and can make our plans to go to Normal for a term of summer school.

Love, Stella

P.S. Did you and the Stickelmans enjoy the maple candy we sent? Mother says if you dissolve two or three squares of it in a pan of sugar syrup it will taste like the syrup we're eating.

DEAR GRANDMOTHER

Hazel Keithley

This is a letter that I wrote to my grandmother many years ago. It brings back memories of my activities as a girl.

Dear Grandmother,

Hi, how are you doing. I'm doing fine. School is going fine. I wanted to tell you that I have learned to read and write, so I wanted to write you a letter.

I go to Sunnyside School in Hire township. We walk one mile to school, after we eat our good breakfast Mama fixes for us.

There are twenty-five other kids in our school. My teacher, Miss Blanche Hardy, has her hands full; she teaches eight grades in one room. My teacher rides a horse to school everyday. The boys in school take care of her horse during the day.

Miss Hardy teaches us history, geography, math, spelling, physiology, reading, and writing. One thing very important that she teaches us is about manners. We sit in double seats and are taught not to push and shove. I like my seatmate. Her name is Helen Simpson. Sometimes I tease her and she teases me back.

Cliff Zimmerman always keeps the coal and water buckets filled for the teacher.

Miss Hardy always rings a brass bell every time we have to be seated. Grandma, I was real good today and yesterday, so

Miss Hardy let me ring the brass bell.

Oh, Grandmother, I wish you could be here next Friday. We are going to have a potluck dinner. Our parents get to come, and the pupils will present a program. We are going to sing. Leslie Kreps and Helen Simpson are in a play. The rest of us are going to speak a piece, and mine will be "Old Iron Side."

Papa played the violin last night. We got to have popcorn, and we played checkers, dominoes, and flinch. Mama sewed a dress for me. It's gray flannel with a red velvet blouse. I hope I get to wear it to school.

Papa is very busy taking care of our cows. We now have six new calves, a lot more work for Papa. He gets a lot of milk from our cows. Mama uses the cream to make butter and the milk to make cottage cheese. I think we have the best buttermilk around. The butter Mama makes is sure good on our popcorn and our bread that I eat when I get home from school.

Mama is planning on raising 150 baby chicks again this year, if all goes well. Sometimes Mama lets me carry the feed and water buckets. Everyday I get to go and help gather the eggs. Mama tells me I have to be very careful gathering the eggs, so I don't crack them.

Grandma, you know Mama, she does everything very nice and teaches all of us to do the very best we can do.

Remember our dog, Frisky? Well, he died. Papa got us a new dog, and we named him Rex. Rex is six months old, and he is black with white spots on his face. Mama doesn't care for Rex because he drags everything up to the back door. I'm sure Enid and I will have fun playing with Rex. Papa always wants a dog around the farm.

Maybe Mama and I can come and see you this summer. I sure would like to see you.

Love, Your granddaughter,
Hazel

A LETTER TO A SISTER

Helen Shepherd Shelton

The following is the copy of an old letter I treasure. It is written by a brother to one of his sisters, dated from Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 23, 1839. The sister, Mary, became my great-grandmother, and she evidently loved to read, as I do. Perhaps she was slightly miffed by her older brother's patronizing, lecture-type letter. It reads,

Dear Sister,

After so long procrastinating, I have at length come to the point in earnest of writing a few lines to you. When I received yours, I little supposed it would be so long before I answered it, but procrastination you know, is my *besetting sin* and it is only from the influence of that vile inclination to put off without any good reason for it, that you have been thus long deprived of an answer to your kind epistle–.

As usual my health is good, and hope yours is so, too–Am spending my time pretty much as when you heard from me last. You seem to be afraid I shall become so absorbed in my studies as to forget to think of home and those who are dear to me there. But you need have no fears on that account. There is no doubt but that my mind will dwell sufficiently on the scene of Payson and those it contains and especially those who reside in the white home west of the village. (This home is still standing–a beautiful residence). You seem to think I must study a great deal but you are probably mistaken for it is not much easier for me to study now than it used to be. I attempt something in the way of study, it is true, but it does not amount to much.

You are greatly in love with the "Lady of the Manor" it seems–have never read it but for some it is a pretty good sort of a novel well calculated to afford amusement–but not quite so profitable as some reading which would add to your store of useful knowledge. Fictitious reading affords great pleasure

during the perusal, but less probably on after reflections. Such reading as is calculated to add to the stock of substantial and useful knowledge affords less pleasure at the time of reading for to understand it and treasure it up in the memory required. *Work*, and *hard work too*, and that you are aware, is not very pleasant. But the pleasure is to come afterwards when we compare and reflect upon the knowledge we have acquired. Fictitious reading then affords enjoyment for the time–but that which is of a more substantial character affords us the means of enjoyment afterwards and an enjoyment which will increase the more we indulge in it–and it not only affords us the means of enjoyment to ourselves, but the means of being useful to others and thus contributing to their happiness also. Fictitious reading is an intellectual luxury which it may not be best to abstain from entirely, still, if carried to excess it cannot fail to be vitiating in its influence on the mind, unfitting it for the stern realities of life and for more useful reading–and indeed, when I think of the comparative value of fictitious and sound reading, I am disposed to give the former but a very small place in my estimation. But we are governed by our appetites and passions perhaps quite as much as our reason and for that reason principally I read novels sometimes myself but not very often, though. There are some fictitious writings which would not probably injure any person, but they are exceptions to the general rule and we should be very cautious in our selection. We may conclude, then, that solid reading which will afford us knowledge is of inestimable importance–that the reading of well selected fiction is in itself a rather innocent amusement and much better than not to read at all–but that reading of every novel which may fall in one's way is better than not to read anything, I very much doubt.

Am glad to hear that something is doing towards building a meeting house for one is certainly very much needed. The little schoolhouse I think must be full to overflowing, especially as the population of the *Great City*—Payson) has increased some within the last few months. The weather for sometime past has been so warm that we have scarcely needed a fire, and it has not only been warm but the sun has beneficently contributed his vivifying rays to enlighten and beautify all nature. Our weather for the last weeks would do very well for the month of April [Here a small piece of the letter was stuck to the wax which sealed it, but was stuck to fold, and I was able to gently remove it to fill in the above "last weeks," and in the next line, "April"], but it has now commenced to rain and I fear it will not be so pleasant very soon again.

Lectures close this week and I have no very strong wish to remain here many weeks longer. I can give you no promise when I shall show my face. That will depend very much upon circumstances so you need not set any time when you may look for me.

Excuse the carelessness of this but accept much love from your affectionate Brother

Mary A. Prince David Prince, Jr.

And on the back of the very fragile, yellowed handwritten folded letter is this P.S. "Give my respects to all my friends, the names are too numerous to mention. Sophia's (another sister) kind letter was received day before yesterday and shall be answered very soon. The $5.00 enclosed was very acceptable. Do answer this immediately and tell me all the news.

D. Prince

A LETTER TO JULIE

Signa Lorimer

This letter to Julie, my granddaughter, is part of a series of letters that I began writing to her on her first birthday. At the time this letter was written Julie lived in LaGrange, Illinois. Julie is now 28 years old and lives with her husband in Rochester, Minnesota. On January 18, 1989, they became the happy parents of a baby boy, Eric.

This letter I am enclosing was written to Julie when she was nine years of age.

Dear Julie:

Today is your ninth birthday. A little girl once said to me on her ninth birthday, "This is my best birthday. Do you know why?" I really didn't. "I'll tell you why," she confided. "When you're ten you are old, and when you're eight you are young. But nine is in between."

You may wonder who gave me this bit of insight. Can you guess? It was your mother when she was nine years old. Now you are nine. Dear Julie, I hope you will always remember this special year. The babyhood years are over. You are at the noontide of childhood. Every day is a fresh adventure. The future is mysteriously far off. One day at a time to be enjoyed and savored. Happy birthday, Julie, with nine times my heart!

You are still young enough to enjoy a story. This story is about a tiny stone that I found one day on the beach. You know how much fun it is to look for pretty stones that have been washed up by the tide? One day I was looking for agates. Do you know what agates are? Perhaps Craig has some marbles made of agates. When they are polished they are very beautiful. Sometimes you have to look for a long time until you can find one. After a long fruitless search I was about ready to give up looking when suddenly my eyes happened upon a shiny green stone. It was small. But there was no doubt in my mind. My long search was rewarded. I had found what I was looking for. A smooth, translucent stone. The color of turquoise. I held it towards the light. A perfect gem. I felt its smoothness against the palm of my hand. Every bit of roughness had been churned away by the constant grinding of the waves. I was happy.

With my treasure clutched in my hand I headed for the agate store near the beach. In the window were many varieties of agates, polished and for sale. My stone was not for sale. It was my own and I would always treasure it. I had looked a long time for it. And now it was mine.

Carefully placing my stone on the counter I eagerly questioned the clerk, "How much is it worth?" Not that I intended to sell it. But I needed someone to appreciate my find. Someone to tell me, "You've got a real stone there, little girl. A real pretty stone."

The clerk gave my stone a swift and practiced look. Then he laughed. "Just a piece of glass," he said. "A chip broken off a fisherman's float. Not worth a thing."

I was stunned. And suddenly ashamed. Stumbling out of the store I threw the stone into my pocket. Then I flung it away. Just a piece of green glass!

That evening I sat beside the lake watching the white foam churning against the boulders. The waves crashed against the rocks, but a few yards from the wild foam were gouged out rocks into which the turbulent waters had been splashed. In these recesses were quiet, still pools of water. Looking into these tranquil waters I was reminded of my green stone. I remembered that it too had been lovely and smooth just as these quiet waters were. Then it was that I felt a real sadness. How I wished that I had saved that stone. It had been beautiful to me when I believed it was an agate. Nothing had really changed except the label. I had learned too late that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." I had held beauty in my hand and had thrown it away.

Why am I telling you about a little piece of green glass

that I found one day on the beach? So that as you grow older you won't be misled by labels. So that when you find beauty you will hang on to it. There is much about us that is sordid and ugly. There is much that is wonderful too. You are the judge of what is important and grand in your own life. No one can take that judgment away from you unless you deliberately or carelessly throw it away. When you are tempted to substitute another person's valuations for your own, perhaps you will remember the story about my stone and how I once held beauty in my hand and let it go.

Remember when you and I saw "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" and how we laughed when Charlie Brown put a paper sack over his head when he saw the beautiful little red headed girl? I think we all have a little of the Charlie Brown complex in us. We are too shy or too embarrassed or too unsure of ourselves to grasp an opportunity when it comes. On the other hand we wouldn't want to be like Lucy who knows all the answers! Still we need the courage to stay by our convictions and our sense of values regardless of what others may say or think. It's easy to be wishy-washy. It's easy to go along with the crowd. It's hard to stay by your own values when others are trying to pull you their way. It's hard to choose the beautiful when the shoddy seems more attractive.

I know that you like to get away by yourself occasionally to work on projects that you have set up for yourself to do. Some might call this solitude. Or better yet, creative solitude. Whatever the label, hang on to these creative moments. The loss of quiet in your life would be a great tragedy. Sometimes we need time to do nothing at all. And at other times we need to be quiet so that we can listen to God. A Russian novelist named Dostoevski once said, "The one essential condition of human existence is that man should be able to bow down before sometime infinitely great." You see reverence is a precious thing. Our universe is so ordered that if we are blind to its real values and to the deep traditions of our culture we harm ourselves as well as others. God does not die if we deny Him, but something in ourselves dies when we no longer listen to His voice.

Would you like to hear what happened one day when you were a very little girl just three years old? Something beautiful happened to me and this time I held onto it. One morning you and I were sitting by ourselves at the kitchen table ready to eat our breakfast. You told me that you had learned to say grace. So we folded our hands while you solemnly prayed, "Come, Lord Jesus, be thou our Guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed." Scarcely had you ended your prayer when with shining eyes you hastened to explain to me, "Mommie says when I say grace the Lord Jesus comes and sits right here beside me." "He's right here," you added happily, placing your hand on the bench between us.

Suddenly there came over me the consciousness of something great and real. Something I had lost and rediscovered. I had known the wonder of the Presence in my mind. But now in a flood of awareness I felt the wonder in my heart. You gave me that day a fresh outlook, a new understanding. Only the childlike can walk with the Eternal. That day I held beauty in my hand.

Dear Julie, here is my birthday wish as you enter the mystical, magical land of nine, going on ten. I hope you will hang on tightly to the convictions you now possess, the values that have no price tags. I hope you will appreciate what is true and lovely regardless of the labels of others. These values are yours and no one can take them away from you so long as you hold onto them and never let them go. I know this is true. For I once held a beautiful stone in my hand.

Love, Grandmother

A LETTER EDGED IN BLACK

Louise E. Efnor

Grandma's "keepsake" box held a great fascination for me as a child. Her son had hewn the box out of native walnut lumber and attached a heavy metal clasp to it so Grandma could lock her treasures away from such an eager little curiosity-seeker–me! As a child I would wait patiently (sometimes not so patiently, fidgeting first on one foot and then the other) for Grandma to unlock her precious box and sort through her "treasures," hoping there would be a story forthtelling.

Time has taken its toll; the years have sped by and Grandma has long since entered her home in glory. But even today her "keepsake" box of treasures holds the same fascination as of yesteryear.

Way in the bottom of the box are some very old coins, among them some Indianhead pennies, a buffalo nickel or two, a victory dime, and some Canadian coins, too. Here's Grandma's pension certificate from the government, and some old deeds to property sold long ago and forgotten.

One of my favorites from the box is a letter edged in black! The envelope and notepaper have a black border around them and were sent to relatives and dear friends living at a distance to tell of a death in the family. This one is addressed to my Grandma, Cynthia Green, Blandinsville, Illinois, and is from her nephew James Mackey in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Dear Aunt,

I come to you this morning in the sweet hour of prayer in the deepest sorrow and gloom that has past over myself in a good many years. Dear Aunt, pray with me while I take you to the bedside of my dying little angel wife and mother. Dear Aunt, the sweet little doll past away from this world of toil and trouble, pain and sorrow, to that happy home so bright and fair, where sunshine shall ever be, where no darkness nor gloom ever come, where all immortals sleep in peace, on last Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the Mount Carmel Hospital in Pittsburg, Kansas, July 5.

Dear Aunt, my dear wife and mother went from this world of sorrow to that sweet land of flowers and met her Savior with right hand of fellowship. But the brokenhearted husband and father was left behind with two children which are more than sweet life to me. They are my guide, my comfort, and my pleasure in this hour of sad bereavement. But, my dear Aunt, we certainly shall meet on that happy shore where parting words shall be no more. Dear Aunt, bow your feeble head in prayer when you read this letter and pray for me and my little boys. May God help you is my prayer. My little ones are Eugene, 2 1/2 years, and Laury Larime, 19 months—they are so sweet. They are all I have to live for now and so much pleasure to me, and Vernie loved them so well.

Hoping all are well. Trusting I may hear from you soon, I remain your loving nephew and children,

James W. Mackey

Did you note the love and compassion in the letter as James addresses his "Dear Aunt" and he mentions his angel wife and his two little boys? Certainly, close family ties must have existed in this generation and I wonder if they are so today. This letter leaves me wondering what happened to James and his two little boys–Did he remarry and did the boys grow to manhood? I heard nothing of this family as a child; perhaps I shall have to travel to Forth Smith, Arkansas now in these golden years of mine and search out these cousins mentioned in "A Letter Edged in Black."

ROMANTIC LETTERS

Max L. Rowe

Nellie C. Moyes was born in 1889 in Pontoosuc, Hancock County, Illinois. In those days of dirt roads and horse-and-buggy and steamboat travel on the Mississippi River from Pontoosuc, Nellie, until she reached her "twenties," never got farther from home than Burlington, Iowa–fifteen miles upriver–and Fort Madison, Iowa–five miles downriver. This was true, in spite of the fact that the main line of the Santa Fe Railroad between Chicago and Kansas City stopped some trains in Pontoosuc.

By the time Nellie enrolled in Elliott's Business College, Burlington, Iowa, in 1908, she was an attractive nineteen-year-old with beautiful blonde hair, to whom a number of young men from Pontoosuc and nearby Dallas City "paid court."

By 1909 her "steady" was a handsome young man from Dallas City, Leaf Knight. In the fall of 1909, Leaf enrolled in Medical School in Chicago, and their romance continued by correspondence. I have the letters and cards that Leaf wrote to Nell from Chicago, including a letter in which he sends her a diamond engagement ring and later letters from both Leaf and a young man, Guy Rowe, who came to Dallas City from Oskaloosa, Iowa, via Gem City Business College, Quincy, Illinois in 1912 to become Assistant Cashier of Farmer's State Bank of Dallas City.

Leaf wrote to Nell from Chicago on June 12, 1910.

Dear Nell,

Gee, but I wish you were here. I have two tickets to "My Cinderella Girl" at the Whitney for tonight and I suppose I'll have to go alone. There are two girls rooming next to us and I may ask one of them to go, although they are not my style. I have to have somebody. I don't know whether she will go, but I think she will as she is only a young girl–about sixteen.

They are a silly pair–the kind that wear big hats, high-heeled shoes and paint a little. You know the brand. I've got to have somebody.

Why can't you come up here and get a position as soon as you get out of school? There are hundreds of them and a girl that attends to business, as I know you would, could certainly make good.

When I got in the other night the train that brought me back from you was about three hours late so I went right to bed, but I was not destined to stay there long. Horrors, the bed was full of bed bugs–I had not slept in that bed before. When I turned on the light I saw the bed was literally alive with them. I slept on the couch the remainder of the night!

The next day I raised the roof with the landlady. She did something to get rid of them by that evening.

Well, I'll cut this short as I don't expect bed bug stories are very interesting to a college girl. Write soon.

Leaf

Leaf wrote Nell again two weeks later, on June 23, 1910.

Dear Nell,

I thought I'd be able to go down home for a few days this week, but my exams are lasting longer than expected. I study most of the time in the day and go out someplace every evening. I have gone to all of Chicago's parks and a good many shows.

As soon as my last exam is finished, I'm coming right down to see you. It makes no difference whether you're in Burlington or Pontoosuc. What will I do if you decide to take that job in Denver?

Looks as if you could come up and pay me a visit sometime this summer. Don't you know someone up here you could visit? If not, fake an acquaintance with someone up here, and I'll see that you have good care while here.

Leaf

His next correspondence to Nell is dated June 16, 1911.

Dear Nell,

Nell, here is that long promised diamond. I'm ashamed for having you waiting so long. It was the most promising looking stone for the money so I bought it. Write and tell me as soon as you get this whether it is all right or not and if you should return it at once so that I can have it changed. Hoping to hear from you that it is all right and that you are well again and gaining in flesh and strength. I remain

Yours lovingly, Leaf

P.S. I would give a good deal to put this on your finger, but I am afraid I won't get to see you very soon though I would like to better than anything I know of.

The letters from Leaf all carried 2¢ postage and the postcard 1¢. As I recall those were the postal rates into the 1930s. As I noted earlier, Guy Rowe arrived in Dallas City in 1912 and soon became part of the young single group which included Nell. They were drawn together while Leaf continued his medical studies in Chicago, seldom getting back to the Dallas City area. In December, 1912, Nell gave Guy some handkerchiefs on which she had beautifully sewn his initials as a Christmas present and for his January 2 birthday. This was his thank you note:

Dear Nelle,

I confess I couldn't wait so I opened the package at noon today.

Nelle, they are fine and the initial is so nicely done. I like the colored letter too, for I never saw any but white, and this lends individuality. I shall only use them on very special occasions. I appreciate them the more because *you* made them. Please accept my sincere thanks.

Wish we could dance tonight, don't you? Wishing you a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Fondly, Guy

As time went on the close relationship of Nelle and Guy escalated, and her relationship with Leaf deteriorated to the point that the engagement was broken. She liked Guy's warmth and zest for life. Guy was thoughtful and kind to Nelle, and never a day went by without his genuinely praising her for some facet of her personality or for something she had done or cooked for him.

By the spring and summer of 1916, Nelle and Guy were deeply in love, and he would often send a note to her, quoting poetry. Here are two examples:

Nelle, John Keats had you in mind when he wrote

> A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
> It's loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness.

Love, Guy

My friend Lord Byron and I were talking about you and got so inspired that we wrote

> She walks in beauty, like the night
> Of cloudless climbs and starry skies;
> And all that's best of dark and bright
> Meet in her aspect and her eyes
> Thus mellow'd to that tender light
> Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

I LOVE YOU
Guy

Nelle and Guy were married in October, 1916. In August, 1921, their first child was born–ME. In May, 1924, my brother Edward was born. Nelle and Guy stayed in love through good times and bad, until he died in 1963. Her death followed in 1967.

A WORLD WAR II LOVE LETTER

Katherine Nola Thornton Cravens

The years of World War II may have produced more love letters than any other era in the history of the world. The war and its effects reached to the far corners of the earth. Fighting men, married and single, were sometimes gone for years without a leave of absence. Letters written and received helped to relieve the pressure of the seriousness of their position.

The soldier sometimes poured out his feelings with words he may never have written under ordinary circumstances. The love for a girl back home often gave a man the incentive he needed to carry on in the face of great adversity. A sweetheart represented the possibility of marriage, children, and the continuity of his life.

On March 25, 1945, I met Private Joe Seresin in Temple, Texas. Joe, a young man from New York, was taking his basic training at Camp Hood, near Killeen, Texas.

Over a period of fourteen months, Private First Class, Joseph Seresin wrote me at least one-hundred love letters, all classics. I, like many young girls of the time, received love letters from several service men during the war years. And many service men were the recipient of love letters from more than one girl.

I remember Joe as a great guy. I often wonder if he ever thinks of me. I hope he, like myself, has had a happy life.

Following is one of Joe's letters to me.

Dearest Darling Kay,

I love you. I've finally finished the house I was building for the lieutenant and it is by far the best house around here and possibly on the island, or at least I like to think it is, for I've not seen anything to equal it, in all the time I've been here. The lieutenant likes it very much. For this past week, he couldn't stay away and could hardly wait for me to finish. I had to smile at him at times. Anything I wanted, I just had to say the word and off he went to get it. The past two days he's even been working himself on the painting. He worked pretty late last night to paint the ceiling white. He had a large florescent light in the room that gives off a brilliant white light. The interior is all plywood in ceiling, walls, and floor and the closet is too. To finish the plywood, we used a blow torch to burn the wood and bring out the pretty grain in the wood, then we varnished it. The result was very pretty. We even had two Jap PWs painting. I finished the shower in stainless steel. It'd be a lovely little house–even in the States. I figure it'd cost $2,000 to build the same house in Gillespie. For its size it compares in beauty with the homes I used to build. The house has a large closet and I built five shelves, twelve inches wide and equally spaced from floor to ceiling. That's one thing a house really needs is plenty of closet space. I even made built-in bookcases for the lieutenant. What my next job is I don't know but there's plenty of work.

Outside there is a full moon and it's clear and bright. It reflects its silver rays off the swift moving cumulus clouds. The stars are like pin-point diamonds in a blue sky. The night is cool and refreshing. We have no signs of autumn as there are in Gillespie. Everything is green and luxuriant in growth. Possibly the only sign of the lateness of the year is the shortness of the day–it's getting dark around 6:00 p.m. But tonight is lovely and would be fine, to have someone to love. I'd love to be with you, in your car, parked in a quiet and pretty spot–the lake

would be fine with the Autumn moon reflecting a silver stream across the lake, to bring out the glow of love in your eyes and the softness of your lips. We would act with our feelings–thinking perhaps–or loving each other, with the radio in a sentimental mood. Time seems negligible in moments like this–for our wildly beating hearts would never let us sleep until our love had been given and returned, for love is the essence that would bring a wonderful sleep. I'd love to have you cuddle up in my arms and go to sleep, while I smoothed your hair or felt for the beat of your heart. I'd hold you to me tenderly and think of how fortunate we were to have found our loved one and to be able to love so deeply and pleasantly. Until later, Darling, I give you my love and would that I could hold you in my arms tonight.

Your one and only–Joe Seresin

X The Unforgettable Past

THE UNFORGETTABLE PAST

Memory is not as simple as it seems. It is not merely a recorder of experience, like a filing cabinet, into which everything goes that is part of someone's past. It is a subtle process of interpretation. It keeps only what is important to the present-day self.

Failures, frustrations, and anxieties may be horribly oppressive when they occur, but usually they are not of lasting importance to us. We can't build a satisfying self-image on them, so most of them fade from our retrospective view.

Positive matters, like stable relationships, new experiences, personal achievements, and meaningful work are handled much differently. They are slowly edited into brief symbolic expressions of our self-worth, our uniqueness. And they remain with us. They become part of the foundation of our security and our confidence.

Milton A. Powell's "He Started Me Fishing" is a good example. He tells of an old fisherman who took an interest in him, encouraged him to pursue commercial fishing, and then, faced with death, pointed his life toward preaching. That episode may not have been important at the time, but after years had passed, and Powell had finally become a preacher, it emerged as a key aspect of his sense of identity. That memory is full of meaning for him.

Marie Freesmeyer's "Here Comes the Showboat" is based on an experience that was obviously remembered because it was an exciting adventure, a first-time encounter with the magic world of theater on a riverboat. But the careful reader will also note that it was part of the author's sense of growing up. As she says, "I was fourteen, old enough to be allowed to go to such a questionable place as a showboat." The experience was meaningful because it symbolized her passage into another level of maturity.

Robert L. Brownlee's harrowing experiences taking heavy steam engines across Warren County bridges were also not just exciting. They were personally meaningful. They testified to his ability to keep a cool head in dangerous circumstances, even as a youngster. No wonder he remembered those episodes.

Experiences that are stressful but come out well in the long run are apparently very apt to become preserved in memory. "Fleeing Beardstown without Brakes" by Helen Shepherd Shelton is a good example. Another one is Margaret Kelley Reynolds' "Hot Lunch at Brewster School: The Old Hen." The children may not have had chicken and noodles that day, but the young cook finally conquered the old hen–and in the process, created a memory that was shared by everyone at school.

As her vivid memoir so clearly demonstrates, when we remember, our feelings are resurrected too. We relive what we have lived before, and we derive meaning from that preserved experience. Our recollections may seem like the discarded remnants of a shattered globe, a heap of fragments; but they are really condensations of our emotional lives–symbolic episodes that tell us who we are.

As columnist George F. Will said several years ago, "Our continuity is more in our memories than in our physiologies. Without memory we could not have a self in any season. The more memories you have, the more 'you' you have."

Memory is, then a kind of compensation for growing older. It is an expansion of the self. And the act of remembering not only preserves us, for a time, but provides continuity with our past–our earlier selves. Ultimately, memory interprets us to ourselves. So, the memoirs in this miscellaneous section of *Tales from Two Rivers V*, like those throughout the book, are not just things preserved, they are selves more deeply understood. And if we read them carefully, we can not only learn what happened, but what those experiences mean to the people who cherish them.

John E. Hallwas

HE STARTED ME FISHING

Milton A. Powell

In the spring of 1928 Jurd Flemming began to teach me how to fish in the Illinois River near Browning, in southeast Schuyler County, Illinois. Sixty years later I'm still fishing.

My family had moved from the Center Ridge area in the northwest part of the county two months earlier. I met Mr. Flemming the first Sunday we attended the Browning Methodist Church. He was not the kind of man I expected when I learned he was a commercial fisherman. I had always heard that men who worked on the river were rough men, lazy, and prone to vulgarity. Mr. Flemming was the opposite. He was one of the hardest working men I ever met. Not only was he a commercial fisherman, he was president of the local bank. As Jesus said of Nathaniel, it could be said of Mr. Flemming, "There is a man in whom is no guile." He was a Christian not only in name, but also in deed.

He was close to seventy years old; I was fifteen. He took an interest in me, as he had in many other boys. I had been to the grocery store for my mother and was headed to the post office to pick up the mail when I met Mr. Flemming on the street. He said, "Milton, come on down to the shop with me. I've got a couple of things I want to show you."

When I got there he showed me fishing nets that had been tied but not tared. They were about ten-foot long net sacks, three feet in diameter, supported by steel hoops. Funnel shaped net inserts with progressively smaller holes trapped the fish in the end of the net. He also pointed out baskets made of red elm slats. He said, "We bait these baskets with cheese and tie them to trees or stakes set in the river. We catch some nice catfish with them."

He showed me a new boat ready to paint. "The steel-covered runners on the bottom help guide the boat in the water and also enable it to be used on ice. We use the oars when the boat is in the water and the poles with hooks on the ice." The next January I found how well the boat worked on the ice when two brothers took me for a ride. It felt like we were going fifty or sixty miles an hour, but it was probably only thirty miles an hour. Mr. Flemming had taught them.

As I left, Mr. Fleming said, "If you'd be interested in learning more, come back tomorrow morning." I thought, "I'd like to be a fisherman." But that was impossible. My family didn't have the money it would take to buy a boat, nets, baskets, and other needed equipment. My only hope would have been to find a job working for another fisherman.

I got to his shop the next morning about 10:00. He had already been to the river, raised his nets, and sold the fish at Vern Bryant's Fish Market, which weekly shipped three railroad cars filled with fish packed in ice to Chicago, New York, and other distant cities.

My first lesson was how to carve a shuttle needle from "privy brush" which grew in swampy areas of the river bottoms. It was used to knit the nets. He showed me how to make a gauge block to size the loops in the net. That was quite a bit for the first day.

The next day, he started me on fish baskets. Red elm slats were soaked in water for several days in a horse tank. On the day we made baskets, we heated the water for an hour to let the slats get hot. This made them pliable enough to bend around an iron pipe about twelve inches in diameter. We nailed the ends of the slats together. Slats tapered to thin fingers formed funnel shaped entrances for fish, but prevented their escape.

As we worked together, he told me how he had set up other young men in the fishing business. He taught them to build all the equipment needed and fished with them for the first season. It was truly on-the-job training. He shared proceeds from the sale of fish with the young man on a fifty-fifty basis. At the end of the first year, the young man could buy the

equipment for one-half the cost of the materials. And Mr. Fleming personally financed that.

I was going to be a fisherman! I was going to have my own business! And I was only fifteen years old.

In the middle of the third week when I went to the shop, he wasn't there. His wife said he was in bed sick. A few days later he sent for me. He said, "I won't be able to teach you any longer. The doctor said I have only a few days to live." My sorrow at hearing this news and my disappointment about not being able to learn to have my own fishing business almost caused me not to hear the rest of what he said. "God has led me to believe that He has a higher calling for you. God wants you to be a preacher."

That set me to thinking that perhaps God was calling me to be a preacher. However, I didn't fully accept the call until twenty-one years later. I've been preaching almost forty years now and have been pastoring my present church, New Hope Baptist Church, southwest of Waverly, Illinois, for eighteen years. In the long run, I did become a fisherman–a fisher of men.

WHEN SHERIFF COOK CONFRONTED AL CAPONE

LaVern E. Cook

B. E. "Pop" Cook was the former Chief of Police of Canton, Illinois, 1934-1942. He never bragged about the old days, although he well could have. Sheriff Cook worked hard, week nights and weekends too, to keep a "clean" county. He was not afraid to go after a man who had a gun and was drunk or desperate, even though his own life would be at risk if the desperado began shooting.

B. E. Cook was a big, broadfaced man with a hefty handshake. He had flint blue eyes which he could fix in a steely stare that was most effective in dealing with youthful offenders. Several times when he picked up teenagers for mischievous or malicious misdeeds, he would take them in and have the deputy watch them in a small room while just outside the open door he loudly discussed putting the boys in the "back cell, the one with the stinking, stopped up toilet that was crawling with big, black waterbugs." That is when the clerk would wink back and say in false horror, "You can't put those poor boys back there with those big, old rats! Why they chewed the toes off that murderer last week!"

No way would Pop put boys in any cell. Usually by the time their parents arrived, the youths were shaking in their shoes. After a stern lecture by the sheriff about not ever wanting to pick them up again, they were released to angry fathers who were ready to take off their belts and head for the woodshed.

Many young men were stopped short of worse crimes by Sheriff Cook and his own kind of psychology. Today he would probably be sued by some disgruntled parents for upsetting their kid, but Cook's way kept paperwork to a minimum and prevented petty crimes from clogging the court system.

Sometimes, B. E. knew enough about what was going on in his county not to get involved, like the time a country preacher called and was all upset because someone had thrown a live skunk in the midst of an evening prayer meeting, causing a big stink. Rather than going after the offender, B. E. quietly suggested that the preacher no longer "counsel" other men's wives alone after choir practice.

Not much got by B. E. When he heard that Al Capone was motor boating down the Illinois River to Havana to set up a gangster-controlled gambling and prostitution operation in an old mansion, B. E. went to help the Mason County Sheriff round up some of his heaviest, tallest deputies and armed each with a sawed-off shotgun. He kept in touch with other police and was always glad to help them.

A sliver of a moon gave little light as B. E. waited in the dark for the motorboat to dock. Finally, it came in, and black-shirted, mean-looking men helped Capone up onto the planking as the wake washed in and rocked the floating dock. Then one of Capone's men shined a flashlight on B. E.'s grim face and his huge form.

B. E. boldly stepped forward, grabbed the gangster's right hand in a powerful, hard handshake, and then told Capone he was welcome to put ashore for food, drink, or fuel, but if he had any other business in mind, he'd just have to change his plans.

"Well, what if I stay anyway!" Capone challenged Cook.

In a deep, low voice akin to a growl, B. E. said "Boys," whereupon the heavily armed deputies stepped out from the shadows with their weapons pointed right at Al Capone. The gangster merely nodded, stepped back down into the boat with his thugs, and returned to Chicago.

It took awhile for one deputy to let go of his shotgun. When B. E. asked him what was wrong, the man stuttered, "There was another man on that boat and he had a tommy gun aimed right at us." "Yeah," replied B. E. "I saw him but he didn't use it, did he."

After B. E. Cook retired from public service, he bought the Churchill Hotel on South Main Street. Later, in the 1950s, Pop and I operated the Pfisters, a lunch counter/pool hall/candy and cigar store on the northwest side of Canton's Square. He died in 1967.

Pop was not perfect by any means. He had a difficult time providing for his family during the Depression years, and like any man, he had his share of faults and weaknesses. But he was a fine, courageous lawman who is well remembered in Fulton County.

HERE COMES THE SHOWBOAT

Marie Freesmeyer

My brother and I were busily hoeing sweetcorn in the truckpatch when we heard the familiar sound. Although our farm lay a couple miles from the Mississippi River, the showboat's calliope could clearly be heard. When we heard the first note, we immediately stopped our toil. One or probably both of us exclaimed, "Here comes the showboat!"

It wasn't a surprise as we had seen the advance posters in town telling of the future arrival of *The Cotton Blossom Showboat* on this date. In fact, we had already asked our parents' permission to go. I had never been allowed to accompany my brothers when they had patronized these "palaces of worldly pleasure," as my parents called all showboats. By consistent coaxing, I had secured their reluctant consent to accompany my younger brother this time. (My older brothers already had dates and were looking forward to an evening of genuine pleasure.)

One condition of their consent was that I practice my piano lessons and do all my chores without being told. Needless to say, I had been a paragon of endeavor all week and needed no reminding about any of those arduous chores which came with regularity.

"Do you think we can get there in time to see them play the calliope?" I asked. "That depends on how contrary the cows are tonight," my brother replied. "You know how they are when we are in a hurry to go some place–farther away and more stubborn than usual," he added.

We hoed vigorously for a time in order to get the job done. Really, it was futile for us to hurry as there would always be another job waiting to be done. Hoeing was to be preferred over many other tasks as it left our mind free to dream of the sinful pleasures we anticipated.

Supper was difficult to swallow. The excitement took my

appetite for the usual hearty meal spread on our long, oil-cloth-covered dining table. It was often told us that if we couldn't eat we must be too sick to go any place. So I managed to eat, though I had to force each bite down with a drink of milk.

As soon as supper was finished to the point where I might be excused, I hurried out to shut up the chicken coops–my last chore. Then I could get ready. "Sho-o, you old biddy! Get your chicks inside or I'll leave the door open and let the varmints get them." Of course, there would be one old hen that wanted to do a little more scratching before retiring within the dark coop. Usually I would go much later to prop the board across the door of each chicken coop; but this night was different and I hoped they would cooperate. With a little more persuasion the last family was safe inside and I was free to get on with more important matters.

My hair was the next big problem. I was fourteen, old enough to be allowed to go to such a questionable place as a showboat, so surely I should put my hair up in some sophisticated way. My cousin and I had experimented with different hairdos in front of the mirror. Now I must definitely put it up in some sort of bun. My long tresses were quite difficult to manage with inexperienced hands and my arms damp with perspiration. Choosing a dress was simple since there were such a few from which to make my selection. All finished, I surveyed my girlish figure in the mirror and decided it would do quite well for my evening out.

My next problem was my brother. He never hurried. This evening he seemed to be unusually slow getting ready. I knew, however, that once we got on the way he would make up for lost time.

He did! We fairly flew! That Ford touring car was hard on my hairdo and I wished that I had found a few more hairpins. But the wind was cooling on my hot face, so I didn't complain. Besides I was anxious to get there.

When we crossed the big iron bridge at the edge of Hamburg, we could see that many cars and carriages had already arrived. He found a parking place some distance away and we walked sedately up the street to join the crowd awaiting the captain's signal to come aboard. The very sight of this majestic boat sent a thrill over me. Soon the calliope began playing and we edged down on the wharf where we had a good view of the musician. He was sitting at this large keyboard on the top deck where he could view the crowd below and they could watch him. He was, indeed, a spectacular sight with his black half-sleeves, bow tie, and derby hat. It was a thrill to watch him manipulate the keyboard which sent the loud music from the steam pipes. It seemed to rock the ground where we stood.

Then it happened! The captain unsnapped the heavy silk cord allowing the eager crowd to proceed up the gangplank. We hurried to get into the line headed for the ticket window. I thought the line moved much too slowly, but we finally reached the auditorium. Now, I would probably consider it quite small and gaudy; but then, it was the grandest place that I had ever seen. I gazed in awe at all the elegant draperies and majestic lighting. With all its finery, it was the ideal setting for the elaborately costumed characters who were to entertain us.

The rows of plush seats and the box seats on each side were soon filled with an exuberant crowd. However, once the curtains parted and the lights dimmed, a hush of anticipation fell over the entire auditorium.

During the evening we were entertained with a three-act melodrama with several vaudeville numbers between each act. The play kept us in suspense from the beginning to the very end. There was considerable excitement trying to catch the villain. Part of the vaudeville consisted of jokes about well-known local people, most of whom were occupying the box seats in plain view. This created a lot of laughter for the audience but some embarrassment for the individuals named. Time passed all too quickly. The lights came on and it was time to leave this magical world.

Many times after this eventful evening, I heard the calliope of both the *Cotton Blossom* and the *Goldenrod* showboats, but never with quite the same thrill. But it always elicited the same response, "Here comes the showboat!" My brothers and I always stood transfixed until the sound of the last note was carried away on the breeze.

FLEEING BEARDSTOWN WITHOUT BRAKES

Helen Shepherd Shelton

One of the first stories my husband told me on an early visit to Beardstown was of the great flood of that small city in 1927. He pointed out many still visible water lines on utility poles, homes, and other buildings, describing how the flooding river had covered acres of farmland and city streets. The water at that time was of such depth that barges, driven by paddlewheels, and flat boats owned by river-loving citizens, carried cargo and people over the inundated city streets. With the exception of childhood years spent in the small town of Hull, Illinois, only a few miles from the great Mississippi, I had always lived in high areas, unconcerned by any river overflowing its banks. Even in Hull, although there were times when a levee might break, or develop a softness, the town had never been the victim of a deluge from the muddy Mississippi River. Now, we were married, the year was 1943, and we were living in Beardstown with our two small babies, Carole and David, Jr. And the Illinois River was rising steadily.

The river stage on May 13, 1943, was given at eighteen feet, and it was projected to reach twenty-six feet by May 19. Men were volunteering for sandbagging and watch duty on the sea wall, which had been constructed in the late 1930s in a man-made effort to control the unpredictable Illinois River. On May 20, the stage was noted at 26.5 feet. Tension was rising, with the swirling river water. Excitement and dread filled the town, and people began moving furniture and belongings to second-story levels, if their homes had them. In single story homes, blocks were placed under appliances and furniture in an attempt to protect them should the water invade the homes. Filling stations were attempting to depreciate their gasoline supplies by giving gasoline away. Grocery stores were busy with families stocking supplies of food for the flood that was sure to come.

All over the state–even the nation–Beardstown was in the public eye. The new Governor, Dwight Green, was keeping open communication with the distressed town, and five hundred Negro troops from Camp Ellis at Lewistown were sent to help the city fight the battle. On May 22, following orders from the Governor, Mayor Fred I. Cline, speaking for the city council, issued an emergency proclamation about the imminent peril of a flood. An evacuation order from the Governor ordered all women, children, and infirm persons (elderly) to leave the city. The river on that morning at 7:00 a.m. had touched 28.6 feet.

Forty-two hundred people were evacuated from Beardstown, leaving only men and troops to guard the city against possible looting and the sandbagged seawall. By Monday, May 24, at 2:00 p.m., the angry river had reached 29.45 feet. Still, the seawall with several feet of sandbags atop it, held back the turbulent force pounding relentlessly against it.

With the Governor's order to evacuate on the 22nd of May, Dave and I packed our little '31 Plymouth coupe with baby needs, and clothing for me, because Dave was returning to Beardstown to help in the fight against the river. We crammed the potty-chair behind my head on the ledge of the seat, and set out for Pittsfield, my hometown. Others went to Chandlerville, Virginia, Jacksonville, Springfield–wherever they had relatives or friends who opened their homes to them. The brakes

were non-existent on the Plymouth. We hadn't had it very long, and Dave had been planning to work on it, but hadn't got to that job as yet. We had paid $25 for the little car–an unbelievable price in today's used car market. Perhaps for $30 we could have gotten brakes, too.

There was no way we could go through Bluffs or Meredosia because much of the land in those low-lying towns was water covered. The only way we could leave Beardstown on our journey to Pittsfield was through Virginia, and then go on to Jacksonville. By driving slowly and carefully, we were able to reach Jacksonville uneventfully. Approaching a railroad crossing, my attention was turned to the two little ones (Carole was fourteen months old, and little David was six weeks old). Suddenly I felt the car jerked to the right, and the wheels bumped fiercely over the ties. At the same moment, a fast moving freight train went by—and I realized that we were traveling down the side of the tracks, along with the freight train, two wheels on the ties, and two on the roadbed. And I knew, with a sickening feeling in my stomach, that we had come so close to being killed by that freight train in a few seconds' time. My head had been aching from the potty chair, loose from its moorings, hitting me with a steady tattoo. That pain was minor and forgotten when I discovered in the worst way that other bodily functions can happen, too, when a person receives a tremendous, traumatic encounter.

The rest of the trip to Pittsfield should have been uneventful–with the condition our nerves and other things were in, but there were even more harrowing experiences in store for us before we reached Pittsfield. We knew we would have to cross the swollen river at Florence, and that was another dreaded encounter coming up. On the road between Jacksonville and Florence, sections of the highway (Route 36) were out, and barricades had been placed across the gaping holes where concrete was missing. When we came to those places, and there was no approaching traffic, we were able to swing over into the other lane and pass safely. Nothing to that. But when there *was* oncoming traffic at the same rate of speed, another barricade was barring our way, and our courage wavered considerably. If we could have just stopped and waited, all would have been well. And sometimes we were able to, but remember, that $25 Plymouth was minus brakes, and Dave did the only thing he could think of in those instances. He drove around the barricades, up the embankments, tilting sometimes at a frightening 45 degree angle, or more. The flood had driven us out of our home, and was even now threatening inside the car. I held the babies and prayed for all I was worth.

I can't remember Dave saying a word all the way home–especially when we were dodging the freight train and slipping around the barricades. Sometimes words aren't necessary. The Pittsfield city limit sign never looked so good as it did that day.

Soon we were driving into the backyard at home, and Mother came running from the house, waving her arms in gladness to see us safe–and nearly dry. Her smile turned to perplexion when Dave leaned out of the car window and yelled, "Get out of the way, Mom! Get out of the way!" And by the grace of the Almighty, and a very tired Plymouth, we finally rolled to a quiet stop–a few feet from Mother and home.

Dave worked on the brakes the next day, and he returned to Beardstown to share in the watching and waiting. The slow fall of the river began on the 26th day of May, and it was believed the crisis was over. The Governor was to order the re-entry by the evacuated citizens to the town and their homes. On May 28, with the still-lowering river stage, Governor Green issued a proclamation praising the high courage and grim determination shown by the Beardstown people in protecting and saving their city. If the sea wall had not been built, a twenty-six foot water stage would have put the city neck-deep in flood water. Governor Green issued the return home notice on June 3, and by 6:00 a.m. June 4, four hundred cars were in line to wait for the firing of the gun at 9:00 a.m. to re-admit the

homesteaders. Although the transportation was different from the land-grabbing stampedes of early settlers, there was the same element of gladness and eagerness to return to their homes after twelve days in exile.

THE RUSHVILLE TORNADO

William P. Bartlow

March 30th, 1938, was a fateful date for Rushville and Schuyler County. Spring was early that year with warm summer-like temperatures all through March. Fruit trees were blooming and spring flowers that normally did not bloom until late April were in full color. As a senior in Rushville High School, the whirl of school life and graduation in May tended to be the focal point of all my energies. Looking back, it was a time of carefree living with no major problems except those revolving around school. Life was more leisurely in those days, or so it seemed, but maybe that was because I was a teenager. I was living at home with my parents, along with my brother Ted, my sister Nancy, and my maternal grandfather, C. W. Eifert. Our home on South Liberty Street was a conventional bungalow of wooden construction with a full basement.

March 30th dawned warm and hazy with summertime temperatures. The sky had a peculiar haze that day and the atmosphere was laden with high humidity and a warm sun trying to cut through the haze and moisture. That noon, going home for lunch, I shed my winter clothes and donned summer clothes that were more comfortable to wear the afternoon session of school. As the afternoon wore on, the skies became more heavily laden and storm clouds began to gather in the western sky. Lightning zigzagged across the heavens, with great claps of thunder sounding as though the heavens were at war firing heavy artillery. Outside, the winds were calm with only the crashing of thunder bolts to break the ominous silence. Classes were held as usual with no one paying too much attention to the gathering storm clouds on the horizon. Weather forecasters giving storm warnings were not likely today, for while we had radio, it was only AM frequency, and the lightning made so much static you couldn't hear anything. Hence, there were no warnings of the impending storm. As the clouds became heavier and the skies darkened, all the lights in the classrooms and corridors were turned on.

During the last class hour of the day, I was in the 600-seat auditorium with its large plate glass windows facing west. Margie Dean (later to be my wife) was standing with me in front of those windows watching the storm gather momentum. At 3:40 p.m. we observed a large green boiling cloud come raging out of the southwest charging toward us like a fast express freight train. With it came a roaring wind and rain carrying sticks, boards, and trash, which plummeted against the big glass windows. It beat so hard against those windows that we stepped back away, fearful they would break. At that moment, the electricity went off, leaving the building in darkness. We knew it was a bad storm, but in those days during a thunder-storm we often experienced power interruptions so an electrical failure did not excite anyone. Although several people later reported seeing tornado clouds, as we watched the impending storm we saw no funnel clouds.

Within five minutes, school was dismissed and we all proceeded to the east door where small groups of students gathered to discuss the storm. Reports were getting bigger as someone would arrive telling of damage about town. Someone reported the cornice on the Rushville State Bank had blown off. Another reported the old three-story wooden broom factory building on South Congress had blown over and was lying in the middle of Congress Street. By then the storm had passed and the skies were beginning to clear. I started to walk home when

Carter Stephens stopped to tell me that our house had been blown away but no one was injured. It was too incredible to believe!

Someone offered to drive me home, which I gratefully accepted. As we started down South Liberty we could see the street was blocked with downed trees and power lines from Madison Street on south. I jumped from the car and ran as fast as I could go toward home. The 200 block on both sides of South Liberty between Madison and Clinton was hard hit. Houses with roofs blown off. One large two-story brick house had every window blown out, with the window curtains sticking straight out like arms. Massive big trees were blown over blocking the streets, and piles of debris were everywhere. Beginning at the intersection of Clinton and Liberty and going down to Logan Street there was less damage. But starting south from Logan Street there was heavy damage. The first house north of ours belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Eales, and although it was standing, the roof was gone as were all the windows, and the house had been shifted on its foundation.

As I ran toward our house, I could see ahead that it was totally demolished. My mother later related what had happened. My sister Nancy, two years old, had been laid down in a back bedroom for her afternoon nap. The thunder and lightning became so vivid and loud that she became frightened so Mother picked her up and carried her into the adjoining bathroom. My grandfather was in the front part of the house. As the storm intensified, my mother became concerned and carried Nancy into an adjoining front bedroom. At that instant, a blast of wind broke a large window in the adjoining dining room and Mother, aware of things blowing about the room, started to lay Nancy down and go see what she could do, but that was the last she remembered. The next thing she knew she was lying in the only grassy spot around with Nancy still in her arms and it was raining heavily. She pulled a mattress nearby over them and waited.

In the meantime, my grandfather had been watching the storm and later said that it came in three blasts. The first broke the windows, the second took off the roof, and with the third, the house just flew apart, all within a matter of seconds. He was thrown against a large upright piano and suffered a broken thumb but otherwise was uninjured, as were Mother and Nancy, although Mother had been hit a hard blow on her right eye.

Most of the furnishings in our house were lost. There were a few items that made it through the tornado, including the clock that sat in the dining room and a few pieces of Mother's Haviland China, but most things were smashed. The clothes I had taken off at noon were never found.

Many other homes were severely damaged. Also, immediately to the east and south of our house about one hundred yards was the Bartlow Packing Plant, which suffered major damage. Two 75-foot steel smoke stacks were lifted from their base on the tops of two high pressure steam boilers and set down in front of the fire doors, but they still remained erect with guy wires intact. The meat coolers were unscathed, and with the exception of no electricity, there were no problems in that area, but some masonry walls in several of the rooms in the rear had collapsed and there was heavy damage to the livestock barns and pens.

Within a few hours, the power company crews had electricity restored to most of the city with the exception of the storm damaged areas. By the next day power was restored to the packing plant, and arrangements were being made to re-erect the smoke stacks. By the following Monday, business was carried on as usual.

More than half a century has passed since that fateful day with no recurrence of such a fierce storm in Rushville, but those who were around to experience those days will recall the help of neighbors and friends during the reconstruction that followed. Despite the savage wind, Rushville became a bigger and better community.

STEAM ENGINES AND BRIDGES

Robert L. Brownlee

"Never cross a bridge before you come to it" is good advice, but even better is "Don't try to cross every bridge you come to." I speak from experience. There is a cold tingle of raw fear that runs up my spine when I remember some of the close calls I've had moving big steam engines across old bridges in Warren County, Illinois, in the early 1900s.

It was not uncommon for a steam engine to break through a bridge, but it was uncommon for the engineer to be a lad of twelve or fifteen years. That was when I started handling steam engines for my older brothers, who had all kinds of heavy machinery. They'd get a job set up and then I'd run the engine. All I had to do was watch the gauges and keep up a head of steam. As I got older, I did more and more until I became a fair mechanic. We had to move from place to place as we thrashed, and that meant crossing all sorts of bridges on the back country roads.

One day my brother and I were moving a big Gar-Scott engine to a sawmill site. He was steering and I was at the throttle. We were crossing Henderson Crick on a long bridge with steel girders and somehow he got off course just enough that the drive wheels were straddling one stringer. We were both sitting on the tool boxes, one on either side, when there was a loud crash and we stopped dead still. The rear of the engine fell a couple of feet and came to rest on the steel girder. The drivers were chewing away at the planks but couldn't move ahead. When the engine dropped, it threw us both off and, luckily, out of danger. We were shook up and scared but unhurt. I jumped up and shut off the power. Then we sat down and tried to figure out what to do to get us back on our way. We had a long, heavy steel bar that we laid in front of the drivers. Then we put planks lengthwise across the bridge as we should have done in the first place. When I put just a touch of power to the wheels they caught the pry bar and climbed right up on top of the new planking and away we went. By that time we had quit shaking and we got a couple of men to help us fix the bridge floor. We got the rig to the sawmill before dark and I wondered how we could have been lucky enough to get out of that deal so easily.

The year I was fifteen I ran that same big engine on a thrashing run for fourteen days. I got $5.00 per day and that money had to last me until corn shucking time in the fall. So I was glad when my cousin, Elsy Kuncaid, came by with an offer. He wanted me and my brother Roy to thrash this big run, but Roy was too busy to do it. Elsy and Roy had made a deal: so much a bushel–me to run the engine, Elsy to run the separator, and get a man to haul water and coal. This was on Thursday and we wanted to start on Monday. It takes a good while to cover fifteen miles with a steam engine. I asked Elsy if there were any cricks to cross and he said, "Yeah, and one of 'em is pretty good sized." We decided we'd better take a look at it. It was about twenty-four feet long and not in very good shape. "That's a darned weak bridge," I said. "I'm not sure I want to try crossing it." "Well, there's another one about five miles on down the road." It looked fine. It was only twenty-four feet long and had steel beams that rested on concrete abutments, so that was the one we picked.

Friday morning we started out pulling a separator and a water tank. When we got to the bridge, I asked Elsy if he wanted to ride or to wade across. He decided to ride so we sat on the tool boxes, one on either side of the platform. Everything seemed all right as we pulled on. There were some rough planks for the front wheels to go over and the engine had to work harder to push across. Almost at once, the drivers began to spin and that piled loose planks up behind them until they jammed. Then when the drivers did take hold, they pushed the whole bridge ahead just far enough that the end slid off the abutment and fell down on the crick bank. The tool boxes we were sitting on folded up against the engine. It threw me clean across the

creek and I landed on the shore. Elsy flew over the railing and landed in three or four feet of water. And there sat the engine with the drivers grinding away and still pushing at the bridge.

It all happened so quick we didn't know what had hit us. And there we sat, half dazed, not knowing what might happen next. I could see that the end of the bridge was down on the creek bank just in front of the abutment and the front end was hiked up but still on the bridge floor. I jumped in the water and waded across and shut off the power. Elsy climbed out and we looked it over and found that the stringers had never been attached to the concrete abutments so when the pressure was put on, the whole structure slid forward a couple of feet and down she went.

Now we were in a hell of a fix; but by piling some old planks in front of the drivers and running the engine real slow, we got it raised up enough that the engine climbed up the approach to the bridge and I took her on across. It was a tricky stunt, but it worked. Some of the local farmers helped repair the bridge. In an hour or two we were on our way again and, By George, Monday morning we were thrashing.

The last time I had trouble on a bridge I was bringing an engine up to Dad's place from Old Man Winbiggers so we could finish thrashing. It was an old twenty-five-horse double Gar-Scott and it weighed over twenty tons. There were two bridges to cross. I made the first one without any trouble. The second one was on the Henderson Creek and was about seventy feet long. It was all steel and looked o.k. I was maybe thirty feet out when she began to sway sidewise, sort of slow and deadly. It was eerie; scared the Hell out of me. It shuddered to a stop and swung back. I thought, "What'll I do? Jump thirty feet into the creek or ride her out?" Pretty soon it swung back to the other side and stopped. I stopped. The old bridge was shaking and quivering worse than I was. I found that the tie rods along the sides that stabilize the bridge were loose, one more so than the other. When the bridge swung one way the rod on the opposite side would tighten up and pull the whole thing back in that direction. Each time the vibration got stronger. I knew it could finally collapse the bridge. Now I was really scared. The bridge might go at any minute, or so I thought. Both of us quit shaking a little bit and I got back on and drove very slow and steady all the way over. You can be sure I didn't take the rig back to Winbigger!

I must have been close to twenty at the time, so this was no small boy's fright. I didn't panic or "freeze to the throttle." My mind was perfectly clear all the time. That was the most frightening experience of my life and I've been in some mighty tight spots.

HOT LUNCH AT BREWSTER SCHOOL: THE OLD HEN

Margaret Kelley Reynolds

It was the fall of 1938. I was a W.P.A. Worker (Works Progress Administration) and was assigned to cook at a hot lunch program at a school that was then known as Brewster School. There were fifteen pupils and the teacher to cook for. The school was about two miles from my home in a small town and I walked both ways, unless I was fortunate enough to catch a ride. The teacher at this school was one I had gone to in the seventh grade, so it wasn't as difficult as it might have been, although she told me I was on my own as far as planning the cooking–SHE hated to cook. With a noon meal sufficient to feed sixteen people, I was always grateful for donations–or nearly always!

The kitchen was set up in one end of a long hall, and was known as the clothes hall because the pupils used the other end for their jackets, coats, galoshes, etc. I'm sure the smell of

cooking must have clung to all of their clothes. The kitchen consisted of a three-burner pressure gas stove with an oven, a cupboard, and a table with a water-bucket and dipper. The water was carried by bucket from a pump outside and was generally carried by volunteer pupils. I had a lot of volunteers the first week I was there. They were the most helpful and thirsty bunch of kids I'd ever seen. They were allowed to get a drink whenever they felt thirsty and they felt thirsty a lot that first week. That old granite dipper clanged and banged as it hit the sides of the old galvanized water bucket. Our menu consisted of meat if possible, chicken or beans, fruit and milk, and either cupcakes or bran muffins. The pupils were allowed to make suggestions for the meal, and I must admit it was interesting to find out that you could cook a ground-hog! I didn't! The kids were very good about trying to bring something from home and it was up to me to figure out how to use it, hide it, or bury it–as I did a skinned and pretty rank coon carcass.

One day a nine-year-old boy, who was an only child from a well-to-do family, offered to bring an old hen to cook so that we could have chicken and noodles the next day. He loved noodles. In fact, he loved to eat and ate anything and everything that was left each day. Sometimes I used to think he would eat anything that didn't eat him first. Both the teacher and I were surprised when he offered to bring a chicken because, after sending a note home with him for seven weeks, we'd sort of given up. But we told him to bring the chicken, and after lunch that day, the teacher gave him permission to watch me make the noodles to be ready for the next day's lunch. The next day the teacher met me at the door-stoop of the school house and said, "We've got a problem." When I looked at the dirty old gunny sack tied with a binder twine string, lying on the ground and giving a squaking sound every time one of the kids punched the sack with a stick, I *knew* I was in trouble. We had a live hen!

I had never killed a chicken. My husband had always killed them by cutting their heads off with a hatchet. We didn't have a hatchet. The teacher was no help; she'd never even dressed a chicken. She just rang the bell for school to take up and told me I was on my own. You might say, she chickened out! It took quite awhile to carry enough water to fill a five gallon lard can to heat to scald the old hen and get her ready to pick. But first, I had to kill her. I'd seen my mother grab a chicken by the neck and wring around and around until the head popped off. It looked easy when she did it. I was sure I could do that. Well, I grabbed that old hen by the neck and started swinging around, and around, and around, but that old hen's neck just got longer and longer, and her head never did pop off. About the time I was ready to give up, school recess started. I then had an audience of fifteen jumping, screaming kids all yelling advice. "Pull harder!" "Yank it!" "Get a knife!" Finally, one boy said, "My mother always steps on their head and pulls it off." By that time my nerves were so shot, I would have tried anything. So, with my audience yelling encouragement, I stepped on the head of that poor old hen, shut my eyes, and pulled. The head flew off and blood flew all over me and some of the kids. I know that tough old hen flopped around for at least ten minutes. To this day, I get sick just thinking about it, and I haven't killed a chicken since.

It was too late for our chicken and noodles that day, so the teacher asked the kids to volunteer to help make potato soup for lunch. They all volunteered, but she would only let five help me. We really would have had better soup if we had used the peelings, because out of a bushel of potatoes, we had very few left. There was more on the peeling than in the pot. But, the kids were real proud of the soup they helped make and as they always said, "Just think, if we hadn't got that old hen, we never would have had so much fun." The kids that were at school that day are now grandparents, but they still talk about the day I battled the old hen, and they had to make potato soup for lunch.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION IN MORGAN COUNTY

Mary I. Brown

Rural electrification is accepted by those fifty years old and under as a taken-for-granted fact of life. Those of us who remember what life was like before its time give it a higher rating. Sixty or seventy years ago, the only outdoor light was daylight. The kerosene lantern, after darkness fell, lighted our way sufficiently if it became necessary to leave our homes.

Few rural homes had their own set-up to power "electric" lights. The prevailing method used was kerosene lights in my growing-up years. That did not change for many years after my marriage. My husband remembers when (as a child) he visited his grandmother, who lived in the nearby village of Manchester, before electricity came. At nightfall the village watchman came and manually lighted the street lamp at the end of the board-walk.

The person who devised the kerosene lamp was no dummy. No doubt it was someone weary of candles. It took ingenuity to perceive something that would light up a room from a woven cotton wick suspended in kerosene. The glove enclosing it was of no less importance. The lantern for night-time outdoor emergencies was built on the same principle.

Lamps were continuously improved. I remember our great "Rayo" lamp given us by a relative. It had a gleaming metal base with a milk-glass shade which sat on a tripod over the burner assembly and chimney. We were able to read at night by it. The children were able to do their homework from school. Care of the lamp was tedious. Daily the kerosene had to be replenished and the globe washed and polished for best results. Turning the wick too high caused smoking and smudging of the chimney.

We lived in the southwestern part of Morgan County. One day two gentlemen came to our door asking us to put our names on a list of petitioners to get electricity along our road. I believe one man's name was Rawlins. I do not recall the other name. We signed that petition and later became charter members of Illinois Rural Electric, our cooperative. That was in mid-1930. Money was at a premium most everywhere, especially in rural areas. Those forward-looking men, however, spent their time and energies to work for a dream. I well remember how big the $68 bill for wiring our five-room house looked at that time.

My husband was told he could get work when actual construction began. He applied and was assigned to the hole-digging crew. No, they did not dig them with a tractor and auger. They used good old elbow grease, a long-handled shovel, and a crumber. They were two very unique hand-operated tools. The shovel was broad and necessarily long-handled. It was fashioned somewhat in the manner of a spade being shaped "dished out" and of metal which kept a sharp edge. My husband said this made digging the six-feet-deep holes (seven feet for a yard light) easier than it sounds. The other tool was to "crumb" the loose dirt from the hole. It had a very long handle with a rounded devise to do the "crumbling." The two tools were heavy and difficult to carry the long distance between the holes. Sometimes the foreman would assist the men in going from the hole just dug to the next one by picking them up in a pick-up truck and transporting man and tools. There was no required number of holes, but digging six in an eight-hour day was considered a good average. The pay was four dollars per day.

My husband dug his first REA hole on highway 67 at the top of "Big Sandy" hill. To this day when we drive along there we are very apt to comment sometime concerning it. It is always remembered with a sense of pride.

The poles were strung by a follow-up crew. The trucks that hauled the poles on trailers and the wench that maneuvered them into place were smaller than ones I see now. Somehow they accomplished the same end. In places where road banks were narrow, poles were put up on an acquired field

right-of-way.

The day seemed a long time coming. Eventually, the wire crew came and strung the wire. The electricians followed up. The year was 1937 when our lines were completed and energized. That was a memorable event. At supper when we turned the light on over the table, there was a deafening silence. It was broken by my husband saying, "Well, I feel like I'm up on a stage somewhere."

In this year, 1988, as I look out my west window at nightfall and see the lights dotting the countryside, I think about how much "warmth" electricity has given us.

MOUTH-WATERING HOMEMADE BREADS

Helen E. Rilling

It has been three-quarters of a century since I ate those mouth-watering hot breads mother used to made. The smell of fresh-baked bread still brings back memories of those lofty brown rolls peeping over the sides of a three-inch black baking pan and crowding for space with the other twenty or thirty rolls.

We lived on a livestock and grain farm in eastern Morgan County near the town of Alexander. Several hired hands lived as part of the family most of the year. Along with our family of six, we filled a big table in the dining room. Three meals a day the year around consumed a lot of food which included lots of hot breads beside the huge loaves of "light" bread mother baked twice a week.

Among the hot or quick breads that we liked best were pancakes, cornbread, hoecakes, and light as a cloud biscuits. Mother's pancakes were prepared in a gallon crock. She'd break a half-dozen eggs into the crock and beat with her hand-held beater until light and fluffy. Into this she sifted flour, salt, baking powder, and a spoon or two of sugar. Melted butter was added with milk until the batter was just right for pouring. Mother seldom measured ingredients but just seemed to know a pinch or handful of something was all that was needed to bring a recipe to perfection. Three or four frying pans would be heating on top of the Home Comfort range with the hot lard beginning to spit. Mother's pancakes were plate size. She'd flip them over when the tops were full of bubbles. Heated plates waited in the warming oven, and as she worked the piles of pancakes grew high. When the men arrived from chores and milking, mother took the plates, hot pancakes, a pitcher of maple syrup, sorghum molasses, and a bowl of freshly churned butter to the table. Mugs of steaming coffee were poured. There would be little conversation at times like this around the breakfast table. Sometimes there was a surplus of batter. Since nothing was ever wasted in those days, mother would add a bit more sugar, flavoring, and flour and bake a nice light egg cake for our school lunches.

Biscuits were the usual fare for breakfast on a farm. Mother used a large wooden bowl half-full of flour to mix them in. She'd add baking powder and salt. Pure white lard would be mixed in, then milk poured into the bowl and mixed until the mixture could be turned out onto the bread board and kneaded a time or two. Rolled out about one and a half inches thick and cut with a sharp round cutter, they were transferred to a well greased pan and flipped over once so the melted fat glistened on the tops. Popped into a hot oven–one that mother checked the heat by sticking her hand into the oven for a second–they rose to a height of two and one-half inches and turned a golden brown. Sometimes if mother was in a hurry, she flattened the dough right in the baking pan and crisscrossed it with a sharp knife. We kids loved these diamond-shaped biscuits. Plates of mother's biscuits piled eight to ten inches high would disappear in minutes.

Once in awhile when the men had been busy harvesting

crops or the weather was bad and the roads were deep in mud, no one went to town for supplies. Then mother had to make soda biscuits. We didn't like them very much and would beg Father to make the trip to Kaiser's General Store in Alexander that very day.

Cornbread was usually served at the noon meal. It was delicious with wild greens in the spring or green beans when gardens were producing. Cornbread was a must when dried beans and a piece of cured ham were cooked together. Mother's southern cornbread was deep and rich, and delicious with fresh butter and sorghum molasses swirled until it looked like marble. The big pans of cornbread were cut into three-inch squares and the tops and bottoms were crusty brown. There was a delightful smell all through the house when cornbread was baking.

Mother raised turkeys. When she had small poults to feed, she'd bake large pans of cornbread with the egg shells crushed right into the batter. She added bits of meat or cracklins if they were available. We'd snitch pieces of the cornbread to eat while it was cooling. The shells were no problem for us; we just spit them out and enjoyed the stolen treat.

Hoecakes were the speciality of our father. He'd make them for supper when mother was ill. He stirred one cup cornmeal into one and one-half cups boiling water to which a teaspoon each of salt and sugar had been added. Into the spitting hot frying pans he poured circles about four inches in diameter and quickly flipped them over to brown both sides to a crusty and lacy perfection. Sometimes he flipped them high in the air to make us laugh and often they missed the pan when they came down. There was a terrible smell from the burning batter. We always loved hoecake suppers. It was a warm and loving time filled with much laughter in the golden yellow light from old fashioned kerosene wall lamps in the cozy kitchen.

Mother baked the best rolls and loaves of bread that I have ever tasted. She would use several barrels of flour in a year. Father brought it home in a box wagon and stored it in a large wooden box in the hall at the top of the stairs.

Mother was very careful to have clean utensils for her breadmaking. Her breadboard was scrubbed until it was almost white. She boiled potatoes the night before bread-baking day. No salt was ever added to those potatoes as they cooked, and we were warned to never touch the potato water she saved to use in her bread starter she set the night before with cakes of dry yeast and some flour.

Mother was fortunate to have a large bread mixer. It was aluminum and had a mixing hook that worked down the dough after it had raised the first time. This saved mother all the hard work of hand-kneading the dough. The dough was formed into three or four loaves to each large pan. These pans were set in a warm place until the dough was double in size. Mother baked three or four large pans twice weekly. The loaves were turned out onto racks and the tops were buttered until shiny and the rich butter trickled down between the loaves and rolls.

The loaves of bread were cooled and stored in stone jars covered with a clean dish towel and a tight wooden lid. If the bread became dry before the next baking day, mother sliced the bread, sprinkled it with water, and heated it in a hot oven. Leftover bread was used in a pudding rich with eggs, raisins, and flavored with cinnamon or nutmeg. This was served with thick cream and was a popular dessert when I was a child.

For threshing-day dinners and big family gatherings, store-bought bread was brought home from town. We loved those soft thin slices. But it was sort of tasteless after mother's hot brown rolls and crusty loaves. We gladly returned to our little world of delicious home-made breads hot from the Home Comfort and spread with dandelion-yellow butter, honey, apple butter, and other good things.

LOST TRAIL BARBAREE

Ruby H. Bridgman

During the 1930s Roodhouse, Illinois, at one time a flourishing railroad town with three large hotels, was struggling to maintain its equilibrium as its past grandeur was slowly fading. Many people saw their once flourishing finances also diminishing. But this didn't seem to be much of a problem to a group of young energetic "kids," full of fun and enthusiasm because they were busy enjoying special activities of the town. One of these activities was a lively game called "Lost Trail Barbaree."

"Lost Trail Barbaree" was a group game. A large troop of kids would gather under a big light at the town square and divide into two groups. The first group ran off to get a "head start," and the second group was supposed to follow and "track them down." But the way in which we played the game, the second group would usually run in an opposite direction. Each and every one of us whenever he felt the urge would yell, "Looooooooost Traaaaaail Barrrrbareeee!" We all felt the urge quite frequently, and it was a great, glorious cry! It fulfilled a primeval need to be glad to be alive and to feel free! I think the Good Lord looked down and smiled, "turned up" the light of the moon, and added a little more silver shine to the earth as we ran whooping all over town.

In about an hour, we would meet back at the square, divide into other groups, and go howling once more into the night. At the end of the evening, we would gather once more at the square, thoroughly refreshed after all the running and "hollering," bid each other good-night, and troop happily home.

Even now, when the moon is full and there is a silver shine over all the land, I yearn to burst forth from my home in Jacksonville and go racing down the street crying, "Looooooooost Traaaaaail Barrrrbareeee!" Since there are three other former Roodhousians on my street, I know their ears would twitch and out of their doors they would come.

MY QUEST TO KNOW ABOUT MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS

Marjorie J. Scaife

"Where did Elizabeth Anderson and Willis Fulp come from?"

The answer to this seemingly simple question about my great-grandparents presented no problem to me–a budding genealogist. All I had to do, I thought, was ask my mother. How naive I was. So began a chase that lasted eight years and unearthed more than I was looking for.

During that search I learned much about how my ancestors lived. I also learned how they moved around and made it very difficult for descendants to find them. Despite the lack of cars, good roads, and airplanes, they seemed to jump from state to state like fleas. But a most important side benefit of all this was getting acquainted with my mother in a different way.

When I asked my mother for any family records, she gave me the marriage record of her own mother, Lydia Fulp, who was the daughter of Elizabeth Anderson Fulp. This valuable document stated that Elizabeth's husband, Willis, was born in North Carolina. In North Carolina's 1850 census, I found Willis and his parents while he was still in school. That was the last I could find about Willis Fulp for several years. So I switched to researching Lydia.

As to Lydia, in this marriage record I found that she was born in Clay County, Illinois. While I never found a certificate of her birth, the 1860 Illinois Census turned up Willis Fulp and Elizabeth Anderson in Clay County with a daughter, Lydia. So much for Lydia until later.

When I complained to my mother that I couldn't find anymore records for the Willis Fulps, she casually said, "Why don't you look under Armstrong?"

"Armstrong?" I was puzzled.

"Well, Elizabeth did remarry after Willis died."

"Why didn't you tell me she remarried?"

"You didn't ask," was my mother's answer.

At this point I began to study my mother more closely and pay more attention to her answers, to listen with "the third ear." I was beginning to suspect that she didn't volunteer to tell everything she knew.

Since I wasn't getting anywhere with the beginning of the mystery, I decided to try to find the end. I could never find any official record of the death of Willis Fulp. The 1917 death certificate of Elizabeth Armstrong was found in Morgan County, but there was not one word that would help find her family. There was the death record but no gravestone. I turned again to my mother.

"You said Elizabeth lived with your family for years–made hot biscuits for breakfast everyday. If she lived there so long," I asked, "didn't she ever visit other relatives? Where did they live?"

"Of course she visited her relatives. She packed her trunk, got on the train, and went to Indiana for weeks at a time," she said.

"Where did she go in Indiana?" I asked.

"I don't know. She came from a very large family and she visited from one house to another."

Do you know how many railroad lines there were in Indiana after the Civil War?

By that time I had learned a little more about searching, so I started, county by county, along the major railroads that went into Central Illinois. And one day, in a letter about some other records to a county nowhere near a railroad, on a whim I added a P.S.: "Do you have a marriage record of Willis Fulp?"

I will never forget the day I got the answer to my letter. It was on a single sheet of paper. I was almost too discouraged to look at it. But with that single sheet of paper, I had found the long lost marriage record in Madison County, Indiana. And that wonderful clerk had pencilled on it the name and address of a local researcher. This researcher turned up Elizabeth's large family (parents, five brothers, and five sisters), naming all the members and giving their story back to North Carolina. The ultimate reward was that a record was found of the purchase of land in Clay County, Illinois, by Willis and Elizabeth Fulp. At last I was getting somewhere. So back to my mother.

"If they owned land in Illinois, why did Elizabeth live with your family so many years?" I asked. "I realize that her daughter, Lydia, was ill for a long time and needed help (Mother would not say tuberculosis), but didn't Elizabeth's husband object to this long stay?"

Imagine my shock at the age of fifty to learn for the first time that, after Elizabeth married Armstrong, they had a violent argument over the farm she had inherited from Willis. Armstrong wanted to sell and she didn't. So, he shot her.

Fortunately, Elizabeth was hit only in the shoulder and she recovered. So, in 1883, she went to live with her daughter, Lydia. Divorce was unacceptable and Elizabeth and Armstrong lived separately for thirty-four years until her death in 1917. He was still living then.

Realizing that I would get no more information from Mother, I wrote for the court records of the case. Sure enough, "He did pick up a revolver and with malicious intent to murder did shoot her." Off to the penitentiary for Armstrong.

Since Elizabeth remarried in 1875, this put Willis's death between 1860 and 1874. Efforts now turned to finding that farm in Clay County.

Finally getting disgusted with my moaning and groaning about my problem, Mother said, "I'll make a suggestion. If you'll drive me down to Clay County I'll write all my cousins and suggest a reunion of those of us that used to have such fun at week-long houseparties in the early 1900s. Maybe some of them will know something."

I'd heard about these cousins all my life, so I agreed. I also knew that my mother dearly loved to go in the car for

several days and stay in nice motels. The reunion was planned and finally held in 1973 near Clay County.

Those elderly cousins had a wonderful time. I was allowed to drive the car for them, to cook, and do dishes. And listen. At last one cousin told me she knew a court clerk who might be able to translate the Indiana land description. We started out with vague directions that would "put you in the general area–and there's an old man out there who might help you."

Some miles out in the country we found the old man. What good luck! He turned out to be a genealogical researcher. He recognized the property and offered to go with us to find it. Sort of incidentally along the way, he suggested we stop at a little roadside cemetery. We found only a few graves in about an acre and a half of land. But–more luck–among them were the graves of Willis Fulp and two of his daughters!

Old stones had been turned over and were covered with dirt, but they gave names, birth, and death dates. We cleaned the stones and leaned them against the fence and took pictures for a permanent record. And there at last I learned the date of Willis Fulp's death. I had found the end I'd been looking for. There was no death record, but there was a gravestone.

Worth more than the facts unearthed, though, were the real benefits of this search–finding how interesting my ancestors were. And I learned that visiting with older people and letting them talk casually would tell me more than I ever learned by direct questioning. My mother really didn't give me a lot of facts, but she did give me many valuable clues.

Genealogically, the Fulp line turned out to be my entry to membership in the DAR. And one of the important proofs accepted in my DAR application was the picture of Willis Fulp's gravestone.

MY THOUGHTS ON MEMORIAL DAY

Phyllis Wells Pincombe

It's Memorial Day, and here I am at the cemetery. It seems funny not having Mom here. Well, in a way she is here. Mom died last fall.

As far back as I can remember, Mom and I have always decorated the family graves on Memorial Day. Six generations of our family lie buried here, in this quiet little cemetery outside of a quiet little town, Ridott, Illinois.

I once said I could remember going to my great-grandfather's funeral because I could remember the flag on the casket, but Mom said, "That was your other great-grandpa. He was a Civil War veteran, but he isn't buried here." She was right, too, because the headstone here says that Benjamin Boyer died in 1906, and that was eleven years before I was born.

Let's see now. The pink geranium goes on Grandma's grave. Mom always bought a pink geranium for Grandma's grave. Come to think of it, I wonder why she always called it "Grandma's grave." Grandpa is right there beside her. "William and Dena Boyer," the gravestone says. Perhaps Grandma loved pink geraniums.

Now I must go down to the other end of the cemetery to my parents' lot. My father, Harry Wells, died of a heart attack at the age of forty-four. Somehow I always felt that it was really the Depression that killed him. He was the sort of person who loved to give gifts and pick up tabs, and when his business caved in, he just sort of caved in with it.

My mother, Susan Boyer Wells, was a widow for forty-three years. She always said that there just wasn't anyone quite like my father. She never considered remarrying.

This stone says "Baby." Actually there are two babies on our lot. The first, Baby Jack, is the brother I never knew. He died two years before I was born. I used to wonder why my mother made such a fuss over a nine-month old baby. He had

not been old enough to talk or exchange ideas. Mom and I went to the cemetery every year and always visited Baby Jack's grave, but I couldn't understand what he meant to her.

The other baby is my tiny granddaughter, Richelle Rosetta. She had black curly hair and a husky looking little body, but looks were deceiving. In her third day, for no apparent reason, she suddenly stopped breathing and died. Now, like Mom, I understand.

My daughter was unable to attend her baby's funeral as she herself was in the hospital for breathing difficulties. When I reported the funeral proceedings to her, her only words were, "Mama, I never even got to hold her."

Two days later the doctor told her that she only had a short time to live. The cancer that had attacked her arm a year and a half before had broken out again in her liver. She lived just four more weeks. Now she's here.

Altogether six generations of my family lie here in the Ridott Cemetery. Most of them live in my memory. One day I shall join them, but then, who will remember?

MY VISIT TO FORD'S THEATRE

William E. Thomson

Many years ago as a very young boy I attended the dedication of "The Lincoln Memorial" in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois, with my family and grandfather. Sitting next to him as I usually was, I remember him telling me that some months before an attempt had been made to steal the body of Lincoln. And later, when the casket was moved from the hillside crypt to the permanent interment in the base of the monument, the casket had been opened to make sure the body was still there. He mentioned, too, that a man he knew from Galesburg had viewed the body, and that after all these years there was only a little spot of mold on the collar of his suit–otherwise the body itself was perfectly preserved.

The dedication ceremonies, with the somber addresses made that day by Governor Emerson and the President of the United States, Herbert Hoover, and others, reflecting the past and eulogizing this great man, made an impression on me that I wouldn't soon forget. It was about this time that I became intrigued not so much with the many aspects leading to the assassination, but the place where it happened.

It was several years later, after a successful run on Broadway in the hit comedy, "Janie," that I was in Washington for the first time appearing in the touring company. It was through stage hands, I recall, that I learned Ford's Theatre still existed in its original state: It was the place of the assassination, and for all these years it had been closed to the public.

After participating in an early morning radio talk show, I hailed a cab and set out on what turned out be quite an adventure. After depositing me at the curb across the street from Ford's Theatre, I remember watching the cab as it rounded a corner and disappeared from sight. It was then that I noticed how quiet it was in this what seemed a very remote part of town. I realized at this early hour the town hadn't really come alive yet. It wouldn't have surprised me at all if a horse and buggy had galloped down that deserted street. At about that moment, I caught out of the corner of my eye what appeared to be movement of some kind behind the soiled glass of the double doors at the entrance of the theatre. This is impossible, I thought–what's going on over there–I must be seeing things. There it was again–as though a shadow passed over the door pane. After a minute or two I finally crossed the street and, with my kerchief, wiped some of the grime from one of the panes of glass in the door in order to look inside. As I did so, peering at me from the inside was the face of a white-haired old man about to open the door. Laughingly, he said, "No, I'm not a ghost." He

said he had been watching me for some time and wondered what I was doing in this part of town at this early hour. I explained to him who I was, what I was doing in the city, and being a "farm boy" from Illinois, it seemed only natural that I should be interested in "Lincoln History." It was then that he mellowed, saying he too had been a farm boy from around the Kewanee area, and he had for many years been overseer of Ford's Theatre. I remember him saying that he hadn't been at the theatre for some time and that it was pure happenstance that he was there at all, especially at this time in the morning. He went on to say, "On the second thought, guess I must have come down just to let you in." He added that I was free to look around. Which I did.

This was an opportunity of a lifetime. To step back in time some seventy-five years to a place undisturbed only by time. A chance to see it just as Lincoln might have seen it. To stand there before the stage as Lincoln must have done upon entering the theatre, greeting friends and dignitaries before the performance. To retrace his steps as he retired to the President's Box. It was the intimacy of this small theatre that impressed me, and how in this environment a tragedy such as this could ever have happened, puzzled me. Of course, this is a mystery that to this day isn't fully understood.

Moving over to the stair-well leading to the President's Box, I could see that the door at the top was slightly ajar, thus giving me light to see the stairs. Brushing away the cobwebs, I climbed to the top. In the semi-darkness, not knowing what to expect, an eerie feeling came over me as I pushed open the door and stepped inside. To my amazement, the setting was pretty much as I expected. The rocking chair where the president sat when assassinated–still there, its back to the door. A straight chair off to the side. As I stood there collecting my thoughts, I found it not at all difficult in this doom and gloom atmosphere to envision the incredible senseless act that took place here in the confines of this small place. With a little stretch of one's imagination, one could almost hear the shot that killed the President and smell the stench of gun powder as Booth set about to play his final roll as he leaped out of the shadows past the President slumped in his chair–brushing aside the hysterical Mrs. Lincoln as he vaulted over the box rail–catching a spur in the flag–thus throwing himself off balance and breaking his leg as he hit the stage floor below.

As I was about to leave the theatre, the overseer called to me from inside the ticket office, saying he had something to show me before I left. Standing in the doorway, I could see that he had removed a small box from the safe located in the corner of this small room. Lifting the lid, he folded back a piece of cloth, soiled with age. As he did so, he handed the box to me. Taking the box and looking inside I could see it contained two articles. One was a small Daringer-type pistol, but it was the other piece that caught my attention. A sliver of bone. As I turned the piece over, withered skin and a few strands of dark hair were clearly visible. As I recall, it seemed that I was immediately aware of what it was. For just an instant there it seemed I could see the whole man. "The rail splitter," "The circuit rider," "The President," "Four score and seven years ago"–all flashed through my mind. I was speechless and probably visibly shaken. During this time, I could faintly hear–very distantly–the old man rambling on: "Yes, it's the weapon that killed the President and probably the most untalked about fragment of American history in existence. A piece of bone from Lincoln's skull was left behind–later found beside the rocking chair where he sat when shot. You'll be able to tell your grandkids you've held a piece of Lincoln in your hand. Nobody will believe you, but it'll be true. Still, to this day, most people who know about it won't accept the fact that it exists. Won't admit what's in that box. Don't want to know. I keep it hidden. No denying it–it's all right there in the box. A lot of history. What's the matter boy–you all right? Maybe a little fresh air would do you good."

List of Authors

LIST OF AUTHORS

Tales from Two Rivers V is comprised of manuscripts selected from *Tales from Two Rivers* writing contests VIII, IX, and X. The following is a listing of all authors who submitted stories to these writing contests. Their manuscripts are part of the *Tales from Two Rivers* collection at the Western Illinois University Library.

Adams
Bloom, Kathryn
Dodson, Madge Bates
Ehrhardt, Florence
Greenleaf, Violet
Jones, Jr., John A.
Klarner, Elizabeth
Oitker, Lillian
Reinebach, Ruth
Reynolds, Margaret Kelley
Ruddell, Sara J.
Seger, Mildred M.
Shelton, Helen Shepherd
Stowell, Arthur Francis
Turner, Helen
Waite, Truman

Brown
Miller, Wilma
Roe, Nellie

Bureau
Bennett, Jane
Norris, Donald
Philpott, Glenn

Calhoun
Carpenter, George W.
Navarre, Olive

Cass
Bley, Arline
Kirchner, Janette
Leverton, Beulah
Smith, Helen Sherrill
Smith, Thelma

Christian
Becchelli, Anna
Trapp, Alice

Clinton
Goodwin, Catherine

Cook
Harper, Milton
Rockett, Ferna

Dekalb
Prall, Ivan E.

Edgar
Strow, Rosemary

Effingham
Shadwell, Nelle E.

Fayette
Hinshaw, Virgil

Fulton
Beaird, F. D.
Bowman, Mabel
Cattron, Augusta Kuehn
Cook, LaVern E.
Efnor, Louise E.
Freeman, Donald
Hansberger, L. E.
Helle, Joseph A.
Henry, Vera
Hickerson, Margaret
Lafferty, Mahala
Livers, Hazel
Myers, Helen
Reihm, Joan
Thomson, Esmarelda T.
Thomson, William E.
Workman, Garnet
Yurkovich, Eleaner

Greene
Chapman, Floy K.
Chapman, Mrs. Floy
Hardwick, Betty L.
Kassing, Shirley A.
Stout, Viola

Hancock
Boston, Lydia Jo
Braun, Florence
Deener, Ellen
Emery, Mattie
Grigsby, C. O.
Howard, Dorothy M.
Junk, Lucille
McClintock, Elden L.
McCutchan, Ruth
Muschalek, Sister Clare
Schafer, Grace B.
Smith, Lois H.
Tinch, Irene B.
Wait, Myron
Wells, Dorris E.
Whitehead, Imogene

Henderson
Brown, Dorothy L.
Dixon, Willis
Gibb, Irene
Kane, Mrs. John
Milligan, Louise Gibb
Perry, Faye

Henry
DeDecker, Margaret M.
Hapner, Eve Hodgson
Magerkirth, Charlotte E.
Nash, Marilyn Hade
Nelson, Helen Olson
Rasmussen, Marvis
Richards, Sr., Robert C.

Jackson
Kupel, Claudia W.

Jersey
Bohannon, Audrey
Chappell, Lorraine
Cravens, Katherine Nola Thornton
Fester, Maurita
Freesmeyer, Marie
Strunk, Elma
Van Meter, Dorothy

Kendall
Ketcham, Charlene

Knox
Beaty, Eileen Cadwalader
Callopy, Mary Moore
Hawkinson, Maxine
Mangieri, Joe
Nash, Glenrose
Owrey, Delores
Simms, Louise Parker
Stuckey, Katherine

Lake
Mogg, Ruth Drummond

Lasalle
Burns, Robert Taylor
Thompson, Marguerite

Lee
Peterson, Lillian
Weitzel, Wilbert

Linn
Taylor, Ruth Gash

Logan
Poppleton, Roy

Macoupin
Ballinger, Lucille

Madison
Koelling, Dorothy Boll

Maricopa
Brasel, Kenneth R.

Marion
Currie, F. Mary

Marshall
Bussell, Eleanor H.
Kuhn, Grayce

Mason
Powers, Hollis Sheldon
Sauer, Twyla
Walker, Lucille J.

Massac
Green, Beulah

McDonough
Applegate, Francis
Bricker, Harriet
Campbell, Effie L.
Cheek, Doris

Combites, Lillian Nelson
Cordell, Harriet Wetzel
Dark, Nina Sullivan
Foster, Pearl Jackson
Graham, Burdette
Graham, Martha K.
Green, Eleanor
Halliburton, Basil
Harper, Veta M.
Keithley, Alvin L.
Keithley, Hazel
Keithley, Teckla
Krauser, Alice
Little, Robert
Meriwether, Fern
Morley, Juanita
Rogers, Ruth
Stevens, Mary Cecile
Walraven, Ruby
Welch, Marie
Willey, Esther
Wilson, Pearl

McLean
Baltz, Wilson M.
Hancock, Fern Moate
Miller, Ailene
Miller, Leo
Paddock, Joseph
Scaife, Marjorie J.

Mercer
Brown, Dorothy G.
Kiddoo, Elizabeth
Speer, Veta Bloomer

Monroe
Hartman, Al
Hartman, Emil
Spytek, Sue

Morgan
Bridgman, Ruby H.
Brown, Mary I.
Fenton, Phyllis T.
Fitch, Grace
Powell, Milton A.
Sievers, Mrs. Glenn
Simmons, Ida Harper
Suttles, Elizajane Bates

Moultrie
Kirkwood, Bill

Muscatine
Brei, Irene
Harris, Elizabeth

Nolan
Hedgcock, Everett

Ogle
Van Briesen, Armour F.

Peoria
Adams, Joseph B. Jr.
Athen, Joan F.
Burroughs, Chuck
Childers, Guillard O.
Conlan, Mary J.
Herron, Carmen Razo
Kohrs, Walter E.
Lamb, Glenna
Lynn, Jean Geddes
Norton, Mildred
Placher, Louise
Pope, June
Russell, B. M.
Sperling, Edwardine

Piatt
Walker, Mrs. Guyneth

Pike
Brim, Genevieve Dorsey
Chandler, Etta
Cockrum, Margaret L.
Dunmire, Joy
Hannant, Owen
Henson, Helen
Swartz, Merl

Pope
Watson, Eva Baker

Randolph
Rittenhouse, Anna

Rock Island
Barber, Betty
Chatterton, June Speer
Chatterton, Keith
Chilberg, Doris L.
Fetes, Genevieve
Findlay, Junetta

Huber, Jean Courtney
Johnson, Lina Fink
Jordan, Robert D.
Lashbrook, Mrs. Blondelle
Nash, Dorris Taylor
Nesseler, Bernard
Pearson, Ruth E.
Pierce, Anne C.
Rowe, Eleanor R.
Sabath, Rose Fox
Seward, Sidney Jeanne
Singleton, John
Vennet, Irene Vander
Witter, Evelyn

Sangamon
Busch, Ora
Cawley, Opal Cora
Hammond, Jo
Hart, George S.
Kish, Ruby Davenport
Kotner, Vivian Barton
Mathis, Irma
Oblinger, Josephine K.
Rilling, Helen E.
Rowe, Max L.
Schneider, Virginia
Stanfield, Wilmogene
Taylor, Gloria L.
Tefertillar, Robert L.
Thom, Richard
Welhelm, Telma
Workman, Vivian

Schuyler
Baker, Larry
Bartlow, William P.
DeWitt, Mary K.
Peters, Iva
Prather, Virginia
Terry, Lillian
Turner, Nell Dace

Scott
Duncan, Mrs. Orin
Hutchings, Stella Howard
Vortman, Nina Krusa

St. Clair
Greco, Eileen
Hall, Clarence G.
Heller, Dorothy A.
Miller, Lillian D.
Niemann, Vera
Rhodes, Virginia Roy
Schmidt, Elsa E.
Welch, Grace R.

Shelby
Harless, Helen C.
Knecht, Beulah

Tazewell
Eaton, Ralph
Huebach, Mary Rogers
Marek, Eulalia
Smith, Laston
Stormer, Mary C.
Valentine, Lucius

Warren
Bertelsen, Mary
Breeding, Grace Runkel
Costello, Carmen
Fitch, Mary
Frank, Hazel Denum
Hill, Marguerite C.
Inman, Lyman
Miller, Anna
White, Mrs. Omega

Whiteside
Florence, Jennie
Harris, Clarice Stafford

Williamson
Ashley-Runkle, Audrey

Winnebago
Lorimer, Signa
Pincombe, Phyllis Wells

Out of State
Brownlee, Robert L. (Florida)
Colegrove, L. L. (California)
Danielson, Ernest (Iowa)
Heino, Doris (Wyoming)
Jackson, James B. (Florida)
Selters, Beula M. (Texas)
Van Etten, Louise Barclay (Ohio)

"The Roaring Twenties for me was a great time. There were new freedoms, great music, exciting dances, and happy times with friends. I still enjoy the music and dancing. Everyone was optimistic about the future. We thought our country was the greatest and was going on to bigger and better things. The stockmarket crash of 1929 put an end to those dreams for some time. The Roaring Twenties were over."

My Recollection of the Roaring Twenties
Madge Bates Dodson

"Caught up in the gold fever, he made the trip when he was forty-nine years old. He panned gold for a time, hauled supplies to the miners for a while, and then set up a store where he did quite well for a few years until he was murdered in 1855."

Letter of a Forty-Niner
Owen Hannant

"This has been a week long to be remembered at Normal. On Wednesday morning the funeral train bearing the remains of our lamented President passed through our little village on the way to its final resting place. The station house was draped in mourning and there were several appropriate mottoes. They raised an arch over the track. It was all wreathed with cedar and white plumb blossoms and across it was the motto 'Go to thy rest.'"

Abe Lincoln's Body Comes Home
Jean Geddes Lynn

"I had applied for a position at Maple Grove, northeast of Carlock. I was granted an interview with the three members of the school board. A ninety dollar salary per month to conduct an eight-month term was agreed upon. We shook hands on the agreement. I was asked to attend church at least two Sundays each month, to which I readily agreed."

The Old One-Room Country School
Fern Moate Hancock

"There was an announcing blare of trumpets, and the celebrated band marched onto the stage and took their places in fine military order. In navy blue dress uniforms, their band instruments shining, they were a sight to behold. Then up the steps to the platform came the world-famous bandmaster, the March King. The cheers were deafening."

The March King Comes to Monmouth
Martha K. Graham

"A sliver of a moon gave little light as B. E. waited in the dark for the motorboat to dock. Finally, it came in and black-shirted, mean-looking men helped Capone up onto the planking as the wave washed in and rocked the floating dock. Then one of Capone's men shined a flashlight on B. E.'s grim face and his huge form."

When Sheriff Cook Confronted Al Capone
LaVern E. Cook

"More than half a century has passed since that fateful day with no recurrence of such a fierce storm in Rushville, but those who were around to experience those days will recall the help of neighbors and friends during the reconstruction that followed. Despite the savage wind, Rushville became a bigger and better community."

The Rushville Tornado
William P. Bartlow

"Moving over to the stair-well leading to the President's Box, I could see that the door at the top was slightly ajar, thus giving me light to see the stairs. Brushing away the cobwebs, I climbed to the top. In the semi-darkness, not knowing what to expect, an eerie feeling came over me as I pushed open the door and stepped inside. To my amazement, the setting was pretty much as I expected. The rocking chair where the president sat when assassinated–still there, its back to the door."

My Visit to Ford's Theatre
William E. Thomson