

The Good Old Days!

by

Hazel Phillips Stimson

The Good Old Days (Annotated Edition)

Mother's works are very accurate and don't need correcting. There are various areas, however, where we have been able to expand on Mother's knowledge of her ancestors. We are now able to further trace the Phillips family. We have more information on the ancestry of Grandma (Mary Emma Cross) Stimson, Grandma (Almira Blanchard) Richardson, and Grandma (Nancy Chandler) Stimson. We also have other resources that serve to expand and sometimes illustrate Mother's work.

Throughout this edition of Mother's work, I have tried to maintain the flavor of Mother's writing. I have included all of her original pictures and drawings. If I have inserted another picture or drawing, it is for the purpose of further illustration and perhaps add a little color. Footnotes are at the end of the chapter.

Since Mother seldom used parentheses, I have used parentheses to make very short explanatory notes. For example, there are occasions where Mother refers to Grandpa or Grandma, particularly in More Good Old Days when we are introduced to a completely new set of Grandparents.

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Preface

Dear Readers:

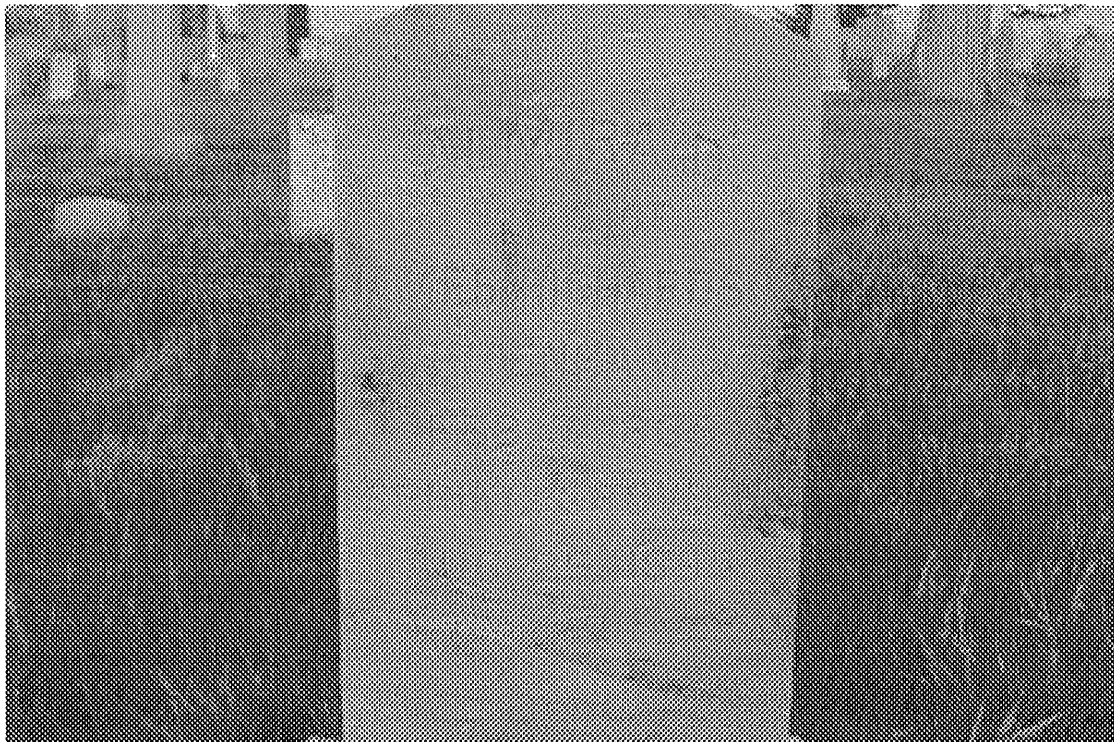
So many changes have taken place within my lifetime, it is hard to realize that they have occurred over such a short span of years. These reminiscences are written to recall the earlier days of my life and remind us to thank our ancestors for the care and settlement of this great state.

I was born December 14th, 1904 on the Creek Place to John Edward and Effie Todd Phillips. Grandfather (John Morris Phillips) and Grandmother (Eliza Bruce Phillips) were near by and on hand to help as needed. Grandfather (Salah Alanson Todd) and Grandmother (Mary Jane Richardson Todd) were far away in South Dakota, probably anxiously waiting to hear that all was well. Great-grandfather Richardson (James Richardson) and his wife¹ came to see their new Great-grandchild, coming several miles over snowy fields in a bobsled.

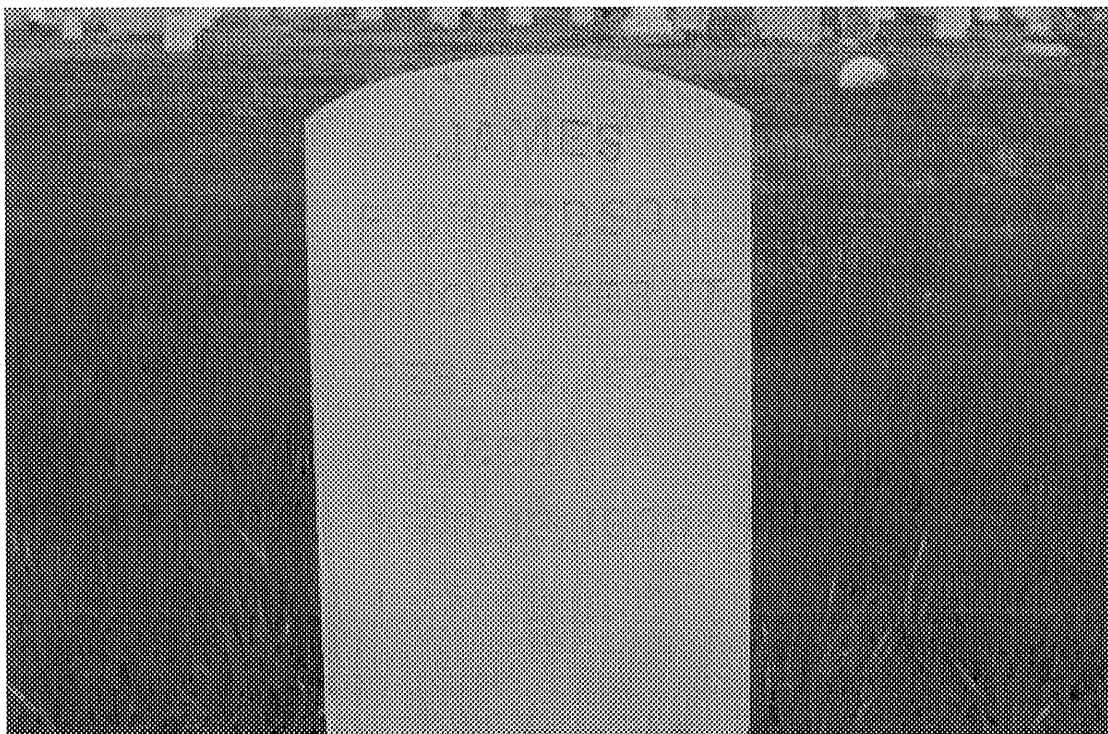
Mama's three brothers² and three sisters³ were still at home, going to school, helping, growing up: her youngest brother was only a year old.

Papa's sister Mary Celeste, married to Cyrus Gardner, with one daughter Fanny, two years old, lived on a farm several miles away. His youngest sister, Lydia was teaching school in western Iowa. His only brother⁴ had been killed in a haying accident years before.

Hazel Phillips Stimson



Located At Lower Spring Grove Cemetery, Linn County. Iowa



Located at Lower Spring Grove Cemetery, Linn County, Iowa

¹ James Richardson's was married to Almira Blanchard. Almira died on August 26, 1895, so when Mother related that Great-Grandfather Richardson came to visit with his "wife" she is mentioning a second wife who she doesn't mention by name. For years I have believed that James Richardson remarried a Mrs. Faye but recently on a visit to the Troy Mills cemetery, I stumbled on a name of Chester. "Aha," I said, "Mrs. Chester was the name." So now I am not sure about the second Mrs. Richardson .

²Homer, Nathan, and Orin

³ Lavica, Anna, and Florence

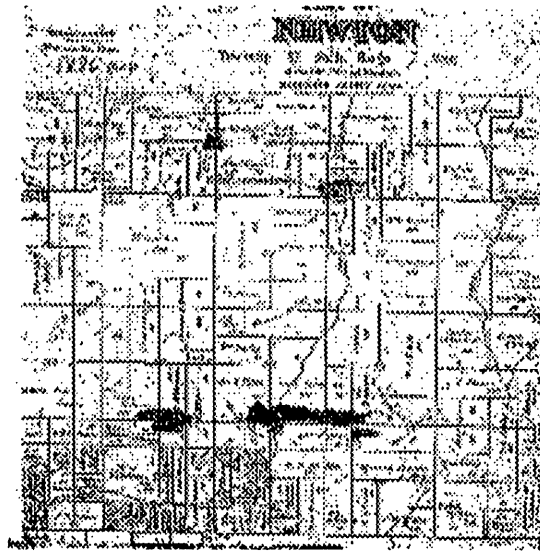
⁴ Andrew

The Creek Place

I call it the Creek Place to distinguish it from other farms on which we have lived. It is the original 120 acres, bought by my Great-grandfather, David Phillips and his wife Julie, (Faulkner) when they came to Iowa from Newark, New Jersey in 1955.

(Know all men by these presents That we John M. Phillips and Elizabeth Phillips of the City of Newark, county of Essex, and State of New Jersey in consideration of the sum of Eighteen Hundred Dollars in hand paid by David Phillips of Linn Co. State of Iowa do hereby sell and convey unto the said David Phillips the following described premises to wit The N (Fract $\frac{1}{2}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ & N $\frac{1}{2}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec 3 & the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 4, Township 86 N R7W of the 5th PM I we do hereby covenant with the said David Phillips that we are lawfully seized of said promises that they are free from encumbrance... Given and signed by us this 5th day of January AD, 1860)¹

They later purchased and moved onto 156 acres on the edge of the prairie.



After their deaths, the 156 acres passed to my Grandfather, John Morris Phillips and the Creek Place was owned by his sister Caroline. When Papa started farming for himself, he bought the (Creek) farm from his aunt (Caroline) and later brought his bride to the farm in January 1904.

Mama had been born in Delaware County, Iowa, but her father (Salah Todd) had moved his family to Canton, South Dakota in 1893, where he pioneered in a drier county. Mama returned to Iowa when she was twenty, to work for her aunt and uncle, the Orin Richardsons. Through them, she met Papa, whose parents lived only a mile west of them.

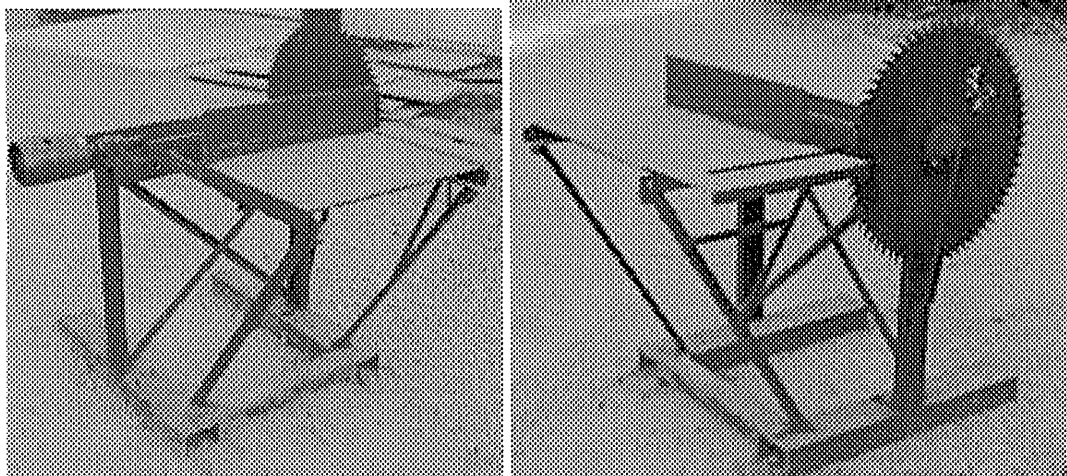
Papa escorted Mama to church one Sunday evening, the Spring Grove church, and as they returned home in the horse drawn sleigh, the horse turned the corner too short and upset them in a snow-filled ditch. They righted the sleigh and went on. As soon as the

uncle and aunt came home, they and all the children rushed upstairs to see if Mama or anyone was hurt. Of course the story of the upset was right there in the snow for all to see. Mama was very embarrassed.

They were married in the farm home near Canton. The honeymoon was the train ride home to Coggon. I don't know how many changes they had to make but I remember that later, when Mama went to Canton to visit at home, she had to change trains at Manchester, Waterloo, and again in northern Iowa, to the east-west railroad that served Canton.

The Creek Place was well wooded with only a few acres without any trees. David hired a neighbor to plow those few acres the first year, a spot where they wondered if the Indians had had a garden before them. This patch of wheat, corn, and garden was tended with a hoe. The farm lay fairly level with the exception of a portion of the hilly pasture along the creek and the big hill in front of the house. This hill was just right for sledding. By 1904, about half of the land had been cleared and was in crops.

Papa cleared another twenty acres after I was old enough to remember, and added it to his cultivated acres. This was long before the days of the tractor or bulldozer: he cleared it with his ax, crosscut saw and a team of horses. The saw logs were hauled to the mill, two or three logs to a load each time, then the cut lumber was hauled home. The loads of firewood were dragged or hauled into the house yard, there they were sawed into stove wood lengths with a buzz saw.



He couldn't afford much dynamite, besides dynamite doesn't really work very well with tree stumps, blowing out the dirt and leaving the stump and roots still in place. He farmed around those stumps for a few years. I helped him at corn planting for a few years, by throwing the planter wire over the next stump in the row before the wire became too tight and broke. Were they crooked rows? I don't know. The walking cultivator was very adaptable but likely the hoe was the only answer sometimes.

This added twenty acres of work ground was very valuable to him and to us. Each year, more stumps rotted and could be pulled out with the team and then burned.

Papa raised corn, oats, and hay with about the same acreage of the ground in each. He worked with a walking plow, walking cultivator, one-row, using two horses. He had a

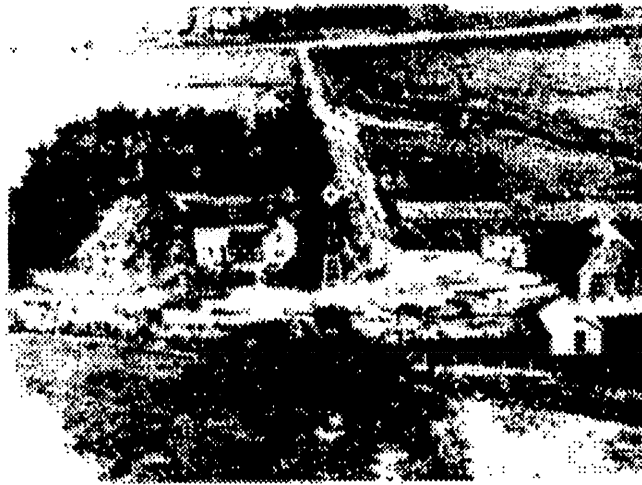
mowing machine, a harvester, a high wheel wagon, wagon box and rack. It was a red letter day, when he bought a sulky plow and used three horses. The sulky even had a seat for the driver.

Papa milked a few cows, kept a few brood sows, cut corn fodder for the cows and his young cattle, fed corn to his pigs, sold some corn, used the oats for the horse feed and fed the hay to both cattle and horses.

As we became old enough, each of us had to help with the chores. One fed the chickens, one threw a specified number of ears of corn to the shoats or fed the small calves. During the summer season, we brought up the cows from the timber pasture each evening. Two of the cows were belled so we had no trouble finding them. The paths were hot and sandy. To this day, I have a picture of summer as hot dry grass, a sandy cowpath, with scraggly dog fennel (mayweed), wilting in the heat. Nothing eats dog fennel. Then, when the sun had set and the air cooled, how pleasant it was to sit on the porch steps and watch the swooping swallows and listen to the whippoorwill call.

CRB:

THE CREEK PLACE



Note the cow path coming down the hill. Although this picture was taken in more recent years, the homestead looks much the same. The big cotton-woods are gone.

We were always hunting eggs. Some hens wander off, hide their nest in the oddest places, in the barn, hog house, under a burdock weed, a gooseberry bush, even in a crotch of a tree. If we heard a hen cackling off somewhere, we hunted her down and found her nest if we could. Sometimes, we found it too late and found only spoiled eggs and again, she managed sometimes to hatch out a nest full of chickens. These stray broods of chicks often did well but many times, they were too late in the season and the cold weather would get them.

All of us had to help in the garden, to plant in the springtime, which was fun. Later, we had to pick beans, peas, sweet corn, any vegetable which might be ready. Of course, sometimes, we got roped into weeding and hoeing, which wasn't fun. Every June, there was a large strawberry patch and a long row of red currants to pick. Mama would

mash the strawberries, a big pan of them, add sugar and a cup or two of cream and we feasted. She served the red currants in the same way. I don't think I would like the tart currants with cream now, they would likely set my teeth on edge.

We also had a huge blackberry patch but Mama picked them after Papa had cut a path through the brambles for her. I still like blackberries. After we moved from the Creek Place we had no more currants or blackberries. We had a few young apple trees but Grandpa (John Morris Phillips) had a large orchard so we always had bushels of apples, plums, and cherries.

Sometime, during the summer, I had to pick potato bugs off the potato vines. With a light sack, I gently knocked the beetles off, holding the pail to catch the bug or bugs as they fell off. When I had a large enough accumulation of bugs, we poured in kerosene to cover the bugs, which killed them. Each time I complained, Mama would tell me the story about Uncle Levi.

"Uncle Levi found an advertisement in a magazine, which extolled the virtues of a new device or invention, absolutely guaranteed to be fatal to all potato bugs or beetles. The cost of such a contrivance was just a dollar. So Uncle Levi sent in his dollar. When the package arrived, it was a small three-inch square block of wood and a small hammer. Cheer up! It could be worse."

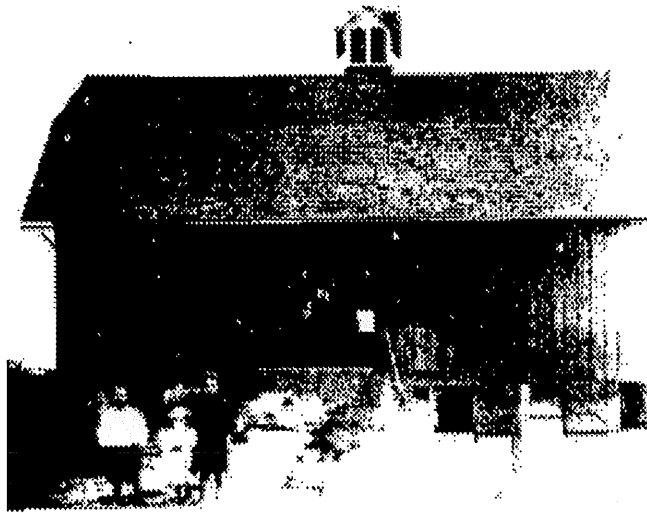
We still raise a few potatoes here, but I haven't seen a potato beetle in years. Now, however, we have a small aphid which will destroy and wither the vines in a few days or they cause a sort of blight. It is necessary to spray the vines every week or so.

Grandpa (John Morris Phillips) used a powder, called Paris Green³ to dust his vines, or he mixed arsenic of lead with flour and dusted with that, but nothing worked very well. Usually it would rain so soon after the application, it was useless. Our method worked as well as any other.

Although we had chores to do, we really had plenty of time to play. The big new barn was a favorite place with us. Papa had carefully planned his barn so that the horses, the milk cows, and the young cattle had their own area of the basement barn. A driveway led up to the hay mow and the overhead bins for corn and oats. There were the usual hay chutes, built so that the hay would drop in front of the mangers and there were chutes for the corn and oats to feed down as wanted. Eaves spouts, a tall ventilating cupola and lightning rods completed the roof. The barn was painted barn red.

I was severely frightened one day, when I and my smallest sister hid near the top of the twenty foot mow of hay in the barn loft. I felt us slipping down between the hay and the outside wall of the barn. I felt that it was a miracle that I was able to claw myself back onto solid hay again, dragging little sister with me. I don't really know how serious our plight might have been if I hadn't been successful. But I was scared that day and my little sister was too young to realize that anything was wrong. I never told anyone.

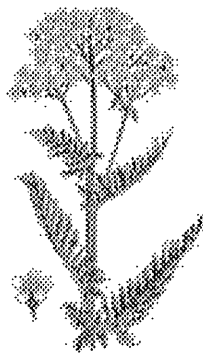
THE NEW BARN



Lightning did strike the rods one day and ran down the ground wires or cables to the ground. The only damage was a crack in the foundation stones. Thirty or forty pigs had been sleeping in the barn and after they were routed out by the noise, they never would return and sleep in the barn but slept outside in the strawy manure pile.

Many pigeons lived in the cupola and they also built their nests on the long ladders leading upward to the peak of the big hay doors. We climbed these ladders, when the mow was empty to look at the fat squabs in the nests. They were supposed to be good eating but we never had any. A workman did shoot a dozen or so one time and asked Mama to make pigeon pie. She did but I don't remember anything else about it.

We wondered and explored all over the 20 acres. We hunted wild flowers in the timber, finding bluebells, honeysuckle, crowsfeet, violets, Dutchman's breeches. Later there were daisies, cone flowers on the rocky hill, wild roses everywhere. Yarrow grew on the hillside, where we could enjoy the blossoms but they smelled terrible. One of the problems of sandy soil pastures, is that the cattle eat the grass and leave the yarrow



and dog fennel, which then take over. In season, we picked wild strawberries, wild black

raspberries, blackberries and gooseberries, which really thrived in our pasture.

One story about those gooseberries. One large clump of bushes grew in the side of the hill nearest two neighbors and two farm wives became accustomed to picking them as Mama had all she needed elsewhere. Each year, Papa heard angry bickering between these ladies about who was getting the lion's share of the berries. One year, after they had a particularly angry fight, Papa took his team and pulled out every bush so there were no more. Gooseberry bushes are a nuisance and a loss of pasture grass so he was glad to be rid of them. I never did hear what the neighbor ladies said.

Later, there were wild grapes, plums, choke cherries and elderberries. Mama made jelly all summer long.

We waded in the creek, not worrying about blood suckers or crawdaddies. This creek was fed by springs and never ran dry, although it was only a small stream with a sandy floor. After every rain, the deep holes shifted, moving from one back to the other side or to another spot farther down the channel. We named it "Phillips Creek," after the poem, "The Brook" by Tennyson⁴ and of course the Phillips family lived on its bank. Mama sometimes went with us and in later years, when they again lived on the Creek Place, she took her grand-children when they came to visit.

In winter, we used our sleds and rode down the hill just south of the house, over and over again. Papa made us two wooden sleds and then one Christmas, we received a larger boughten⁵ sled with metal runners, a wonderful gift. We had one pair of ice skates and we took turns as we tried to skate on the small pond. We never had much luck, usually there was too much snow. Sliding went better although it was hard on overshoes. We made a fox and goose ring after every snow fall and spent much time chasing each other on the snowy paths.

We never owned a bicycle or tricycle: there was no place to ride one but we never missed one. I used to envy the town children however, envied them their roller skates as we saw them skating around and around the block, but alas, we had no sidewalks. We did have a wish book, both Sears and Ward's catalogues. I remember longing for a Lionel train. I yearned over that train, but being a girl, I never had a chance, even if there had been money for such a fine toy.

Out in our young orchard, Papa had a lumber shed. Actually it was a roof over a pile of boards, freshly cut, carefully stacked to dry without warping. Here we played house, using the pile of lumber as a table and the setting of elaborate doll families. Dropped apples, the size of acorns and hickory nuts, joined together with twigs to form heads and bodies, made fine dolls.

We always had a swing. A small one, hung in an apple tree and a large one, which hung from a cross piece between two large cottonweed trees. It was made of hay rope, with a board seat, so notched that the seat would fall away if it should strike some careless or unlucky child. It was a delight to swing gently or vigorously in the deep shade. On a neighboring farm, they had a high swing, made of old log chains and a cast-off metal seat, off some discarded machinery. It was too dangerous for small children to use as someone could be killed or badly injured if he or she was struck by the flying seat.

Of course, we made mud pies. We had a sand pile behind the pump house where we made pies, built castles and dug ditches. The windmill over the pump house pumped the water if the wind was blowing hard enough. Several steps had been removed so it was

impossible for us to climb the mill. Later Papa replaced the mill with a new one with a sixty-foot tower and it was tall enough that it caught the wind most of the time.

Our best playhouse, however, was under the stately row of Norway Spruce windbreak, where the lower branches were over our heads. We partitioned off rooms, swept the pine needles into smooth carpets, which we decorated with leaves and flowers to resemble Axminster rugs.



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We strung wires, which were simple binder twine, saved from the oat shocks at threshing time. We used these for partitions and for telephone lines. Empty tin cans made excellent telephones.

The only doll I can remember had a black-haired china head. It was broken one day by one of my sisters and I was very angry. Mama bought another head and sewed it onto the body but I never did really like it because it had red hair. Not that I was against red hair as such but it seemed bizarre and strange after my black-haired beauty. I guess I must have been still angry with my sister. Either of the dolls would be a collector's item today, if they still existed. Few toys will survive six children and I don't think we were overly careful.

We had checkers, dominoes and such card games as Authors and Old Main. Regular playing cards were forbidden. I was enough older than my brothers and sisters that games were never very much fun. If I played to win, why of course, I did, and when I allowed them to win, it wasn't much fun either.

On a nice summer day, we might rest amidst the clover and watch the fleecy clouds overhead, naming them as we fancied. We ignored the ants and bees although the ant colonies were a marvel to watch. If we happened to receive a bee sting, we applied a coating of mud, even if we had to make mud with spit.

We braided long daisy chains. We also braided dandelion chains but watch out, these taste terrible and someone is sure to put his fingers in his mouth. Sheep sorrel⁷

was common and we liked the acrid taste of the little clover-line leaves. Many grass stems and leaves will split and by blowing on them just right, anyone can make a great variety of whistling noises. We tried them all. Do children today?

¹This is a deed from David Phillip's brother John M. Phillips, still living in Newark. Why it was delivered 5 years after David Phillips arrived in Iowa and the actual financial arrangements are unknown.

² The buzz saw during my time was powered by a tractor and belt. The platform rocked and allowed the operator to place large pieces on the platform and roll it forward through the saw.

³ Paris Green- an emerald green, poisonous, water insoluble powder produced from arsenic trioxide and copper acetate used chiefly as a pigment, insecticide and wood preservative.

⁴

The Brook, by Alfred Lloyd Tennyson

I come from haunts of coot and hern
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorpes, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Til last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery water break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

⁵ Boughten- Northern and North Midland U.S. non-standard. Store-bought.

⁶ Axminster Carpet- A machine made carpet having a cut pile and an intricate design of many colors-named after town in SW England where manufactured.

⁷ Sheep Sorrel- a slender weed, of the buckwheat family, found in poor, dry soils, having arrow-shaped leaves with an acid taste.

Early Farm Living

Of course, whenever our outside chores were finished, there was plenty to do in the house to help Mama. The water pail was always empty, the ashpans overflowing, the woodbox empty, each task just waiting for any footloose child. This was besides our regular chores of dishwashing, sweeping, hanging up clothes on the line or washing windows. Vegetables had to be carried from the garden or cellar, then peeled, sliced, or chopped. Often we watched over a small child or we rocked the baby. Although we helped with all these chores, I remember us as being haphazard and careless and not too willing.

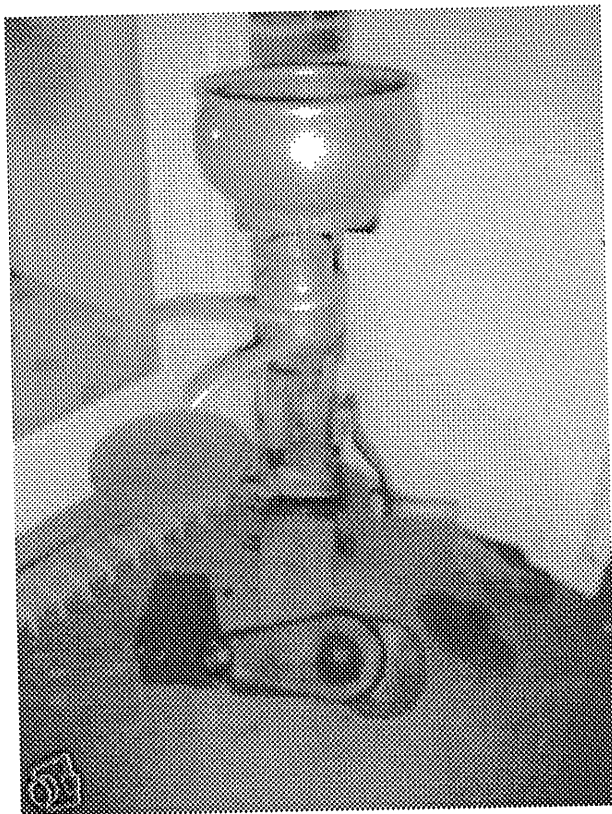
The kitchen was occupied by the wood and coal kitchen range: a cabinet for flour and supplies, with a pull-out work space: the sink or wash stand; and a kitchen work table. Always there were two chairs in the way, one near the range for the care of the baby and a second one near the outside door to use in putting on boots and overshoes. We always ate in the dining room or in the dining end of the big kitchen and dining chairs were kept pushed up to the table.

The kitchen work table was always piled high with dirty dishes, mixing bowls and cooking pans. Dishes were washed here, using a dishpan full of warm soapy water, the suds made from a bar of home-made soap or a bar of P and G soap. The dishes were then rinsed in another dishpan of hot water, then dried with a dish towel. We had a set routine, wash glasses first, then silverware because these touched your lips. Then came the least soiled dishes down to the dirtiest pans. The oatmeal pan was the worst and we could usually pit it so soak until the next dishwashing.

Each house we lived in had a large pantry, a room off the kitchen on the cooler side of the house, with a window kept upon for fresh air, except in very cold weather. Shelves filled one side wall and a table stood handy near the window. Here were kept the crocks of milk and cream, leftovers, and baked goods, to keep as cool as possible. In very hot weather, these items were sent to the cellar to keep cool. Milk kept sweet from morning milking until suppertime, and the even milking will still be sweet for breakfast. On extremely hot days, especially if a thunderstorm was brewing, the milk might sour. We never had an ice box.

One family, which I visited, used a well for cooling. The well hole was dug about three feet square and at least six feet deep, lined with boards and a cover fashioned. Food and milk products were lowered into the well with a rope and the cover replaced. It really did keep the produce cool and fresh.

At the Creek Place, the cream separator was kept in a small room off the kitchen. Papa ran the milk through a De Laval cream separator, sold the cream and fed the skim milk to the pigs. We children could catch skim milk off the spout and drink all we wanted. Mama made cottage cheese often from skim milk.



On Saturdays, Mama cleaned the house, ready for Sunday. We helped as we had to. We swept off porches, cleaned the wood box and refilled it, emptied ashes. Sometimes, one of us had to grind corn. First we shelled some nice clean ears, then ran the kernels through a small meal grinder. This small mill was mounted on a short plank and the entire outfit was set on the worktable. The mill was turned by a crank. This was usually by brother's job and although it was slow, it worked. The coarsely ground meal was used to make cornmeal mush or Johnnycake (corn Bread). In season, Mama made big batches of Johnnycake, soaked in in skim milk and fed it to the ducklings.

Each Saturday night, we bathed before the kitchen range in a round metal tub of galvanized steel, half filled

with warm water from the reservoir. Shades were pulled down although it was unlikely another person was within a half mile of us. Each bather bathed in the privacy of the warm room after Mama had helped the little ones. As each of us left, we would call to Mama, so she would know that the tub was ready for another customer. Mama would then add another kettle of hot water to the water in the tub, add more wood to the fire, if needed: make sure there was a clean towel and a clean nightgown on hand. We always had nice large warm nightgowns (home made) for sleeping, even Papa and the boys.

Our bedrooms were unheated and Mama insisted that we sleep with an open window. In winter, they were cold frigid rooms but we survived. Thrived, really! It was easier in winter to keep warm than it was to escape the heat in the summer time. Our beds were iron bedsteads with a plain mattress or a straw tick. Mama wouldn't have a wooden bed because bedbugs could hide in the crevices. We never did have an infestation but Mama was afraid of them. Many of the older homes were infested. We were often warned about trading caps or hats or clothing because we might bring home some dreaded head lice or bedbugs.

At this time bedbugs were still prevalent in older houses and rooming houses. There was no real defense against them except kerosene oil and lye water. Every spring and fall, our beds were taken apart and scrubbed thoroughly, all bedding washed and aired well outdoors. Straw ticks were emptied, the ticks washed and refilled. It is obvious why we never had bed bugs, the poor bugs never had a chance. They came in odd ways, however. I saw them, one time, a large mess of them, in some new lumber which had been delivered to the farm. One never knows where they could have come from. They sometimes infested chicken houses also. After D.D.T. there were no more bedbugs.

Mama had to patch, mend, and darn, but she always had a set of clean clothes ready for us each Sunday morning. I'll always appreciate the constant effort it must have been for her to prepare clean mended underwear, dresses, slips, overalls, a complete set for each of us down to our long black stockings. There were six of us children and Papa and Mama. I was the oldest.²

Other mornings, we donned the clothes we wore yesterday and we were ready for the day. These clothes lasted all week unless someone was especially careless or had an accident. Then, perhaps, a change was in order and someone had to wash out the garment or mend it as the case might be. Baby diapers, (white cotton flannel), unless soiled, were hung to dry and reused until they became too stained. Then they were washed in soapy water, boiled in the wash boiler and hung to dry in the sun.

We had everyday clothes and we had school clothes. We wore our newest school dress to church. We always had to change our clothes when we returned home from school or church and were supposed to hang our clothes up, ready to wear the next day. Woe to any forgetful child, who soiled or tore his school clothes by wearing them to chore. Everyday clothes were often old, faded, stained, too small or mended. It was a disgrace to wear patches to school. We went barefoot as long as we could, and each of us seldom had more than one pair of shoes to his name. When we fretted about the need of more and better clothes, Mama gave us little sympathy. She would tell us about her own school days when she had only one dress to wear everywhere and she thought that we should be satisfied. Mama's years in pioneer Dakota colored much of her thinking.

The next generation, (my own girls) had to have a different outfit to wear each day. They would hang the worn dress back in the closet to wear a few days later but the same dress twice in a row, horrors! What is the custom now? Always there are some girls who have more expensive clothes than the majority and the rest of the girls feel that they have to try to keep up with the affluent Jone's or perhaps the extravagant Jone's. Boys wore blue bib overalls and blue chambray³ shirts and it was difficult to compete in overalls.

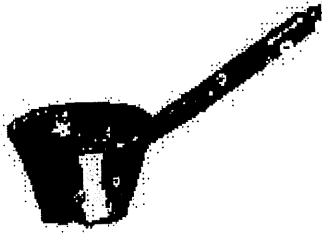
In between Saturdays, we washed our face and hands before meals and bedtime, in a metal wash basin at the kitchen sink or wash stand near the outside door. We used white Castile soap⁴ or Grandpa's tar soap. In summer, a small tub or pail was kept just outside or on the porch for washing feet. Warm water came from the reservoir via a big dipper, quart size, or from the teakettle. A large roller towel hung on the back of the door for the use of all. No wonder that Mama used to dream of a wash room, now called a mud room, for us to clean up in. Her kitchen must have been bedlam, just as she was trying to get a meal on the table.

Our drinking water was carried from the well in a pail., a twelve quart steel pail, all of us drinking from the same long handled dipper. Likewise, a metal cup or a dipper always hung on the pump, for the use of all. Water tasted best from an old rusty tin cup at the well, as any old timer can tell you.

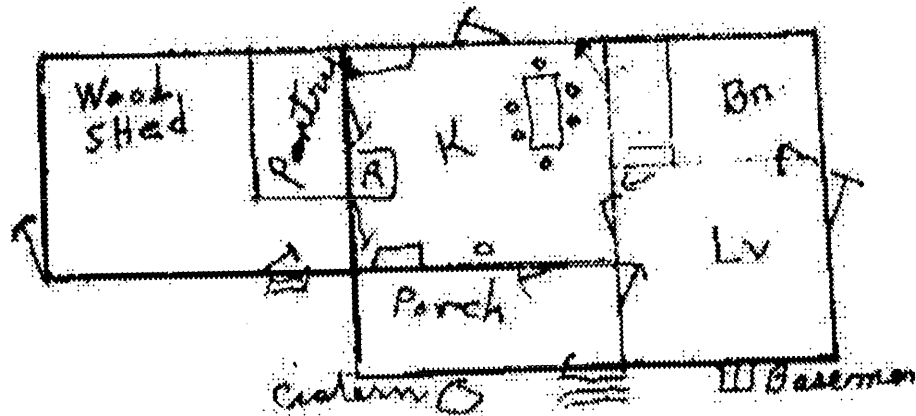
These old kitchens were half doors. In each house, we had an outside door on both the north and south walls., a door to the living room, to the pantry, to a bedroom and either an upstairs or cellar door, six doors in all. With the stove, cabinet, and work table occupying the wall space, the kitchen was crowded.

When Papa and Mama were married, Papa had just finished a new story and half

addition to the old kitchen and he had made many improvements to the kitchen. There was



a large living room with large windows, none of these little eight by ten panes, found in older houses. The two outside doors had fancy glass panes to let in plenty of light. There was a large bedroom downstairs and a stairway led to two rooms upstairs. Although the rooms were sloped and low, they were plastered and papered with pretty paper.



The kitchen was large enough with the added pantry and separator room and a large wood shed. He build new steps to the porch and screened the entire porch. It was very fine and they said that Mama kept it spotless with a nice carpet in the living room. Of course, by the time there were six of us, we had outgrown the house.

Most of our clothes were homemade, except for coats, underwear, stockings, and shoes, although some coars and underwear were made overs. Mama was an excellent seamstress. She made our sheets from unbleached muslin sheeting and sometimes from two widths of regular thirty-six inch muslin, if she found a bargain. Pillow cases were made likewise but often trimmed with fine embroidery or home crocheted lace. Flour sacks were bleached and hemmed for dish towels. She made our roller towels out of linen crash⁵ about thirty to thirty-six inches long, doubled. We had no purchased wash cloths but used worn out pieces of old underwear, towels, or blankets. I still think of a wash cloth as a wash rag.

In those days, children wore drawers, buttoned onto a garter waist or maybe I would call it a vest. I think even the boys were these until they were old enough to go to school at least. The drawers were made of white muslin or chambray and sometimes trimmed with lace and embroidery. The vest had button around the waist line and the drawers were buttoned to the vest. It must have been a chore to make because each drawer had six to eight buttonholes. The garters were long strips of elastic, with a rubber button on one end to fasten to the stocking and a safety pin at the top to fasten to the

waist. Some of these drawers were fancy. A neighbor's family had three little girls visiting them and their mother made them new underwear. They showed the boy cousins of the family their new finery and were soundly spanked for their brazenness. They were just barely of school age.

Later, the style became bloomers with elastic around the waist and just above the knee. They were much warmer. These were made of sateen⁶, which came in bright colors, blue, purple, green (no pastels then). Mama found that blue poplin⁷ was stronger and wore much better so ours were blue poplin for years.

Mama, although she was an excellent seamstress, could not get the special style and fashion of the day. She knew this and regretted that she could not get my dresses to hang properly. The following picture of my cousin Fanny shows the elaborate tucks and trimming on her dress. Mama said that after a day of playing with Fanny, I was so worn out. Looking at the picture critically, it looks to me that I must have worn her out. Note the hair and wrinkled dress. I have no idea under what circumstances the picture was taken. She was two years older than I. She moved with her parents to Nebraska where they took up a homestead. This was Papa's oldest sister and her husband Cyrus Gardner. Nebraska was not kind to them and after Mary died in her forties, Father Cyrus, Fanny and her brother William moved on to Oregon. We seldom saw any of them although Papa and

Uncle Cyrus wrote each other once twice a year, all their lives.

Mama was always glad when the styles became much simpler as they did. I can remember wrappers, and later Mother Hubbards. Our coats were cloth,

or



her

probably Melton⁸ often hand-me-downs; underwear were fleece-lined cotton. Mama once received a heavy new coat, after the death of a beloved sister⁹ and she wore it for years. It was a fine looking coat, a black plush seal skin, very attractive and becoming to

Mama, but she was often miserable cold under the rich looking plush. One of today's light weight inner lining would have made it a wonderfully warm coat.

Woolen sweaters were out of our price range. were not even stocked in our small local store. Plaid worsted and blue or brown serge was sold for winter dresses but most often our dresses were made from an outgrown dress of an aunt or older sister. For summer wear, dresses were made of gingham, calico, or prints. Some nice dresses were made of voile¹⁰ or flowered crepe. Boy's sunday school clothing was also often made from a larger uncle's or brother's pants.

Mama was always busy darning or patching stockings. With eight pair to keep going each week, it was challenge. Sometimes when she couldn't darn the hole

They



a

anymore and the patch had given out, she replaced the entire foot with a new foot. These were purchased for a few cents each. This wasn't bad, really, as we wore high buttoned

or laced shoes and so the stocking foot was not in sight. One of my sisters remembers of being very embarrassed over these feet because she had to wear them to a Sunday School party.

We gathered at the table for meals, all three meals a day except for the lunch we carried to school. Papa was very prompt even though he did not own a watch but told time by the sun. We ate at six in the morning, twelve o'clock noon, and at six o'clock supper time. Hours did not vary very much from day to day although in the winter time, breakfast might have been a little later. Since school started at nine, we had to be on our



way by eight o'clock. In summer, Papa milked before breakfast and after supper, but in winter, he might eat breakfast first and milk before supper. Milking was light in the winter time.

Mama always asked a simple blessing before meals, Papa never did orally but he expected Mama to do so and he strictly enforced the rule that we bow our heads and listen to Mama. Food was plain but well cooked and plentiful. Since we raised most of the food ourselves, it was always fresh and we ate well. Walking to and fro, the mile and a half, produced prodigious appetites. With eight at the table, vittles didn't always last for second helpings for everyone but if we were still hungry, we could always finish up on bread and milk.

Mama baked huge bakings of bread, twice a week and she added gems¹¹, biscuits, johnnycake, and pancakes to her menus. These gems were a source of irritation to me. This was one of the chores

assigned to one of my younger sisters. "Make the gems for supper." For some reason, the girls could not learn the recipe and each night, it would be the same. "What do I put in first?" "What do I put in next?" I wouldn't have had the patience but Mama would answer each time, "Put in a cup of milk." Childish voice, "What next?" "Beat up an egg and put it in next," on through the entire recipe. I don't know why the girls didn't learn it or get the cookbook out for themselves. Perhaps, they just wanted their mother's attention.

I broke a mixing bowl one time. I was asked to help with the stiff dough of a younger sister. I suppose I was trying to show off, anyway the bowl slipped and broke when it struck the floor. One of Mama's pet peeves was broken dishes and she was most vocal in her displeasure.

All of the girls had to help with the dishes except with the breakfast dishes. Mama would sew or mend all afternoon and we washed the dishes when we got home, not always willingly. Mama said afterwards, that, she had felt sorry for us when we came

home tired and bedraggled, but after a snack, we were tearing around like so many wild animals, so she put all that energy to work.



¹ Whole milk was poured into the top. When cranked vigorously, the cream came out of one spout and the skim milk came out the other spout.

² Hazel, Blanche, Edna, Nona, Paul, Donald

³ Chambray- a fine cloth of cotton, silk, or linen, commonly of plain weave with a colored warp and white weft.

⁴ White Castile Soap- Also called Castile Soap-a variety of mild soap, made from olive oil and sodium hydroxide. Also any hard soap made from fats and oils, often partly from olive oil.

⁵ Linen Crash- a plain-weave fabric of rough, irregular, or lumpy yarns, for toweling, dresses, etc. and/or painted or dyed coarse linen.

⁶ Sateen- a strong cotton fabric constructed in satin weave and having a lustrous face.

⁷ Poplin- a finely corded fabric cotton, silk, or wool, for dresses, draperies, etc.

⁸ Melton- a heavily fulled cloth, often of wool, tightly constructed and finished with a smooth face concealing the weave, used for overcoats, hunting jackets, etc.

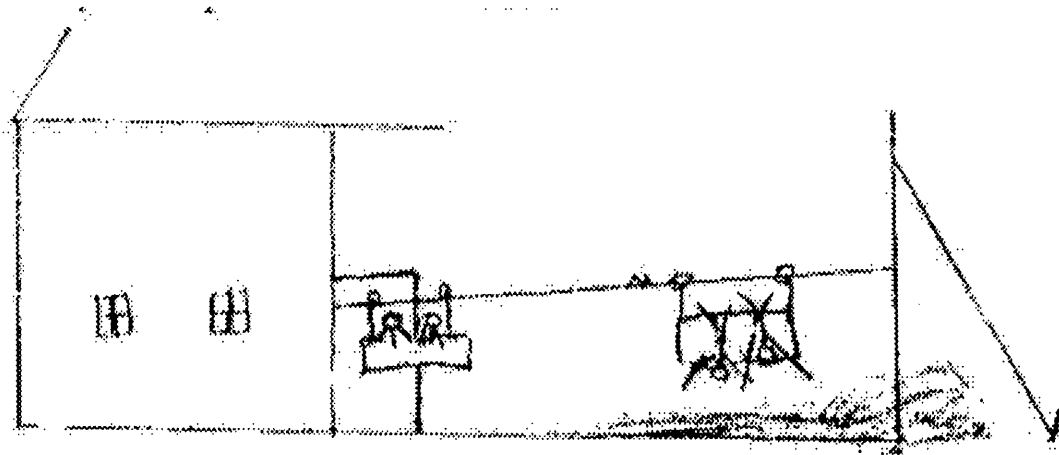
⁹

¹⁰ Voile- a lightweight, semi sheer fabric of wool, silk, rayon, or cotton constructed in plain weave.

¹¹ Gem- muffin

Kids Always Have Fun

Papa had installed a labor saving device in the new barn, a manure carrier. The carrier was shaped like a metal barrel, cut in half lengthwise. It hung on two strong metal bars, topped with two pulleys, which ran on a taut cable. It wound around in the barn so that it could be loaded from behind both the cows and the horses. The cable was fastened to the far end of the barn and extended out into the barn yard for thirty or forty feet and fastened to a strong pole, similar to a telephone pole, well anchored.



The carrier, itself, was held upright by a mechanism on each end of the barrel, which mechanism was tripped by a block near the pole, to upset the load. When Papa had loaded the carrier, using pitchfork and shovel, he pushed it to the outside door, gave it a healthy shove toward the pole, where it tripped and dumped the load. Gravity brought the empty carrier back to the barn for another use.

In summer, it was not in use, with all the stock on pasture, so we kids played on it. We rode it and dumped ourselves into the strawy pile near the pole. Neighbor boys and girls came to visit, just so they could play on our carrier.

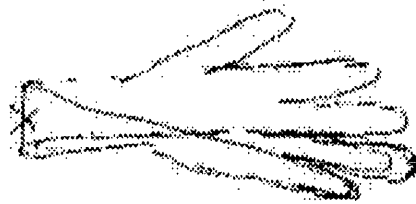
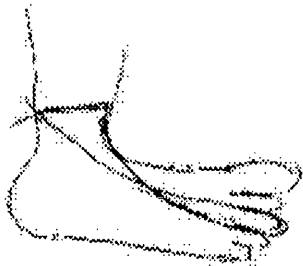
We always had balls to play with and we could always find a board for a bat. We lost balls then as now, so if our ball was lost or frayed, we made one. We rolled used binder twine into the proper size, then Mama would cover it with material from an old sock, sewing it firmly with big stitches. Presto, we had a new ball.

Because of the mixed ages and sizes, we played ante-over the henhouse or the wood shed, which had high pitched roofs. This was also popular at school where we played over the school house roof. We also played catch, work-up, and we set up bases and played our own rules. At the school in the village, we often had a nice game going although we had one spoiled bossy brat, who tried to run everything and everybody.

None of us ever received any severe injuries. I caught my finger in a wind slammed door and lost a fingernail. It was so numbed that it didn't really hurt but I cried with the shock and fear of losing the fingernail permanently. The doctor cut off the hanging nail and bandaged it up. It did grow out again as good as ever but it took a long,

long time.

Colds, sniffles were common as were nail punctures and small infections and rashes. Stubbed toes were always with us each summer. We had no prepared bandage or adhesive tape in those days, so Mama would put on some ointment, probably either Watkins or Raleigh's, then she would cover the injury with a clean strip of cloth, white cloth. She then made a stall¹ or cott of another piece of white cloth, shaped like a small sock, sized to the injured member, this pulled over the bandage on the finger or toe. Long strips of cloth were sewed to the stall and tied around the wrist or ankle to fasten the bandage securely. Worn out sheets and pillow cases were town into strips and saved for such emergencies.



One of Mama's cousins, Chalmer² visited us occasionally from a nearby small town. I don't know why he seemed to get into so much trouble; just because he was a boy, I guess. He walked out from town and one day, he balanced on a corner fence post to deliver an oration or something. The telephone rang and the neighbor lady warned Mama, "Keep the children in the house and watch out! There is a crazy man coming!" It was only Chalmer.

Mama dried sweet corn each summer, making a big project out of it. The corn was cut from the cob, then partially cooked, then spread out in thin layers in flat bread pans. These were covered with cheesecloth to protect the corn from the birds and flies. Then the pans of corn were set out in the sun to dry for several days. The corn had to be stirred and turned daily, brought in at night or if it rained, then put out in the sun again whenever the sun shone.

On one visit, Chalmer noticed the birds hovering over the corn so his method of helping, was to chase the birds away by throwing clods of dirt thus covering the corn with dust and dirt. Mama was very upset with him!

Chalmer kicked skunk, once. He ran a small trap line along the creek and when he found this animal in his trap, he kicked it. The skunk let ham have it! Papa buried his clothes and he slept in the barn than night. Poor Chalmer! As most boys do, he grew to manhood and he taught school in Lincoln, Nebraska for many years.

His father, Uncle Herbert was a rural mail carrier and he delivered the mail on our route. With horses and buggy, it took most of the day so he stopped at our place for lunch each day, while he rested and fed his team. He always brought the same lunch, shredded wheat biscuits. Tired of fighting the weather in Iowa, he moved his family to a fruit farm in Arkansas. The fruit farm was all right but he didn't like the weather any better. He said the winter winds felt colder than those in Iowa because of the dampness. He became a lay preacher and moved to Nebraska where he lived the rest of his life. I

seriously doubt that he liked the weather any better.

On our hill lived hundreds of ground squirrels. They were beautiful little creatures, sleek, striped brown, often standing on their haunches to peer around. We had open season on them every spring. We carried buckets of water and poured into their holes until the poor varmint couldn't breathe and he could come popping out. Armed with stout sticks, if we were alert enough, someone would kill the squirrel. Needless to say, sometimes we poured into the wrong hole or the squirrel had an escape hatch ready. At our country school, a nearby pasture had hundreds of these squirrels. We carried water from the creek and had varying degrees of success.

Our Mother Tabby cat would bring in a squirrel every day, thus proving her skill as a hunter and her devotion as a mother. We had many kittens but always at the barn. If one did happen to sneak into the house, he was thrown out at once. We always had a farm dog but he was never much of a pet.

These little squirrels (thirteen-lined ground squirrels) didn't seem to do much damage although I suppose they did damage the dry pasture in dry weather. Their big brothers, the pocket gophers were a pest and a nuisance. These animals were larger, have pockets in their cheeks like hamsters, and eat like pigs. A single gopher will throw up sand mounds over their tunnels, a mound about twelve inches across, and will go on to make a chain of mounds across a hay field, a meadow, or the garden. Actually, he is eating the seeds and insects and the dirt thrown out will be barren for some time. The gopher will then go on to build another series of mounds, leaving the first, a danger to horses, cattle and machinery. Many a horse has broken his or her leg in a gopher hole.

I read everything I found. We didn't have too many books at home but I remember we did have "Pilgrim's Progress", "Horrors of the San Francisco Earthquake", "Sinking of the Titanic", the "Yellow Peril", "The Story of Man" and the story of Ulysses Grant. Papa always subscribed to the Cedar Rapids Gazette, even when he was short of money. We had farm magazines, church and Sunday school papers. Then, there were so-called Dime novels but we were not allowed to get any. I read one, secretly, (where I got it, I have no idea) but I remember crying over the cruel step-mother, who wouldn't get up and get the little sick boy his umpteenth drink of water in the night. So he went out in the damp night air to get himself a drink, caught pneumonia and died. It was very sad. The author must have had a way with words because it seemed so real and it probably wasn't good for us to read. It was melodramatic indeed! Pretty tame when compared with what young teenagers read now.

Music was a large part of our recreation. Papa played the violin for his own amusement and when we lived on the Abbey Place³, he purchased a new piano and gave music lessons to his three oldest girls. We had to drive seven miles to take lessons from a Mrs. Carr in Center Point. I don't remember much about it but she would use her ruler across our fingers, if we didn't use the correct fingering. I learned to play well enough to entertain myself. I progressed to hymns and although I couldn't really play that well, I memorized "Falling Waters" and Repas Band March.

To our utmost pleasure to all of us, Papa purchased a new victrola with the proceeds of a wagon load of corn, during the one time in his life, when corn was selling for an adequate amount. It was a Pathe victrola with a diamond point needle, which never needed to be changed. Papa bought a good selection of records, semi-classical,

sentimental, comic and religious. We dusted to "Listen to the Mocking Bird," we danced to the two steps and fox trots, if Papa and Mama weren't watching. "It's not necessarily evil to dance but those who go to dances, swear and get into fights." Some of my favorite records were "Anvil Chorus", "The Whistler," and the "Jolly Coppersmith". We had some very good records of Hawaiian music and the one comic I can recall was "What killed the dog?"



Sundays, we went to church and Sunday school if the weather allowed. Papa would hitch the team to the surrey (no fringe on top) and we drove the five miles to the church in Troy Mills. There were leather like side curtains which could be used if the weather was bad. Usually they were left on in the wintertime. Mama always drove, leaving Papa to finish his chores and care for any unlucky sick child. Occasionally, Papa would take us in the car for a special service or entertainment.

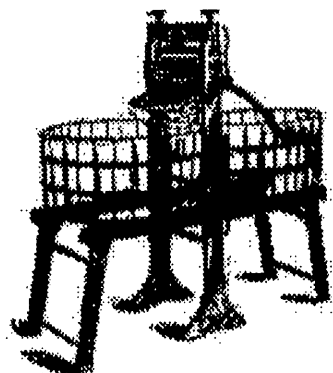


The old saying that, "You are never thirsty until the well runs dry" is very apt. How often the water pail was empty when I wanted a drink, I had to decide, if I wanted it bad enough to fetch a pail of water from the well. Likely, I would have to get it anyway as soon as Mama noticed the empty

pail. Water is always a problem to solve wherever you live. In cities, the average citizen only notices his water, when he receives his monthly bill or a leak develops someplace. Formerly, most farm wells were shallow wells but now most of them are drilled deep into bed rock, far below any surface contamination. With modern electricity and plumbing, the water pail is almost a thing of the past.

The well on the Creek Place was about thirty feet from the house but it was a steep, sandy path. Although Papa carried much of the water, it still took many trips to have enough for cooking, cleaning, dishwashing and so forth. A cistern right outside the porch provided soft water for clothes washing and for shampoos.

Mama always used a washing machine ever since I can remember. The engine sat on the cistern platform and the belt ran from the pulley to the pulley on the machine. Papa kept the belts tight, started the engine each time and kept everything running. They had enormous washings. Some of the clothes were put to soak in a wash tub of soapy water and she used the pounder on them before she put them in the washing machine. Either home-made lye soap or P and G bar soap was finely sliced into the wash boiler on the kitchen range. When the soap was dissolved and the water considered hot enough, it was carried by pail and poured into the machine. She had a two-tubbed stand with a hand wringer between the tubs.

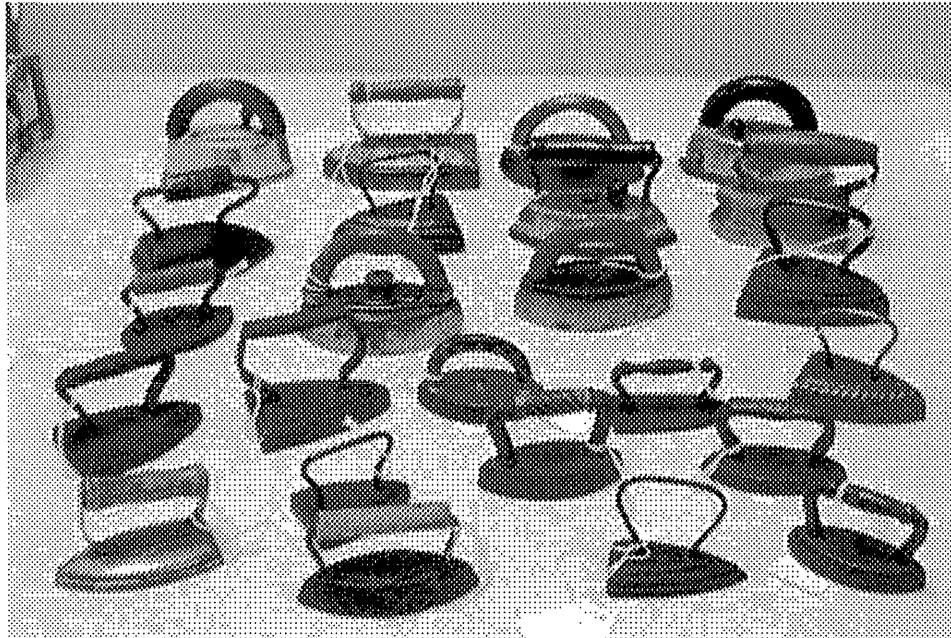


I recall that once when Mama was sick, Papa gathered up all the dirty clothes and took them to a wash woman in Troy Mills, who washed and ironed them for two dollars.

In cold weather, the clothes froze on the line like so many boards. Lighter articles would dry however, but Papa's

underwear might come in , frozen so stiff, she could hardly get it in the doorway. A small clothes line was always strung back of the range, for drying towels mostly. In very bad weather she set up a wooden folding clothes rack to dry some of the most needed articles.

Dry clothes when brought in were sprinkled and rolled tight and placed in a basket to be ironed in the morning, or at least the next day. The sadirons



were heated on the range; as one iron cooled, we replaced it and took another heated one, on and on. Three irons would usually keep one worker busy but sometimes four irons were needed to keep up the heat.

Papa broke his arm once. He was hauling tile in a three bed box on the wagon and the tile was level with the top of the box. He had thrown a horse blanket over the tile at the front end and was seated on this with his feet dangling, fairly comfortable. Along came one of those new-fangled automobiles and the frightened team shied into a shallow ditch. The first pull of the lines or reins caused Papa to slide down onto the double tree and one of the excited horses kicked him. It broke the bone in the upper arm close to the shoulder. Someone took him to the doctor and then brought him home. Someone else drove the team and wagon load of tile home. Someone else drove the team and wagon load of tile home. Papa paced the floor in pain for several days. Although he hired a man for five or six weeks, he was soon choring with one hand.

Mama braided our hair each day, parting it in the middle or on the side and ending with two braids down our backs. Hair washing was an ordeal. I don't remember what kind of shampoo we used but likely it was Raleighs or Watkins. After our hair was towel dried, we ran outside in warm weather. Mama then combed it and rebraided our pigtails. We felt like new women. But not too often in winter time.

Mama cut the boys hair and Papa's, using scissors and a pair of hand clippers.

Mama had a head of exceptionally heavy hair and when she combed it, she rolled it into a roll on top of her head or at the back. She always chose a sunny day to wash her



hair and she worked outside until her hair was dry. She was always busy. I can't remember that she ever played or loafed. After the last baby was born, she would lie down with him and take a nap each afternoon. I'm sure she needed it.

¹ Stall- a protective covering for a finger or toe, as various guards and sheaths or one finger of a glove

² Chalmer

³ The Abbey place was located between Troy Mills and Center Point, slightly closer to Center Point

Spring Fed Creek

I was born on the Creek Place farm in 1904, Linn County, Spring Grove township on the Buchanan county line. My two brothers and three sisters were also born here, although we did move around a bit. Papa and Mama always seemed mature and staid, but their early pictures show them young and good-looking. Mama had her dark hair combed into a pompadour and pinned into a roll on top of her head and Papa had well-combed black hair, showing no sign of his future baldness. I always called them Papa and Mama, although it became fashionable to say, Daddy, in later years but Papa did not like it, so he remained Papa all his days. He called his parents, Father and Mother, but Mama always referred to her parents, as Pa and Ma.

When David Phillips, with his wife Julia and son, John Morris and daughter Caroline came to Iowa in 1855, they bought 120 acres in Spring Grove township for \$4 an acre. It was rolling land, mostly timbered with beautiful trees of oak, hackberry, cherry, elm, and ash, with only a few acres of open areas of grassy plats. The farm was crossed by a small spring-fed stream which never ran dry.

They lived the first winter in a small log cabin built on high ground above the creek but the next year, they built a stone house, using limestone outcropping. David had some experience as a mason, so he and John Morris were better able to build from the stone, rather than a log cabin.¹ David's brother John, ran a foundry back in New Jersey so he built and sent to Iowa an iron stove, so David did not need to build a fireplace.² The stove was freighted to Marion and then brought up to the settlement at Troy Mills by another freighter.

Water was carried from the creek. Although the creek did not run dry, it must have been hard to get enough water, especially in the winter when the stream was frozen. I wonder if the dug well wasn't the order of the day as soon as possible.

John Morris, fourteen, and Caroline, eight, had both gone to school in Newark until they moved to the Midwest and here they studied at home, under their father's supervision. David also taught neighboring children several winters. On one of my frequent visits to my grandparents, I studied Grandpa's (John Morris & Eliza) arithmetic book and it was far more difficult than mine were. As I was at an age to enjoy learning about billions, trillions on up to zillions, I have remembered these from his book. I learned to add long columns of figures by tens and I still use this method today, even when I can use a computer. I trust the computer but not my accuracy with it.

However, grandpa's real education began here on the prairie, as he learned to hunt and fish for food, how to build buildings, how to sow and reap. He helped build the new stone house, to plow the tough native sod, to cut logs for the sawmill and for fuel. He helped with all the back-breaking work required to make a farm out of the virgin land. He was an avid student all his life, studying the world around him and perusing all the many books and magazines sent to him by relatives in New Jersey. In later years, he subscribed to many magazines and church papers. He was well informed in medicine, mathematics, botany, and he became an expert in horticulture.

In 1866 David bought and moved onto a 156 acres farm on the edge of the prairie,

father east but still on the Buchanan county line. David was also a surveyor and helped many of his neighbors find their correct boundary lines. He helped survey for the new cemetery for Troy Mills, and sadly, was one of the first to be buried in it. He died in 1868 at the age of 53 years and he had been in Iowa for thirteen years.³

Coffin receipt

This left John Morris as the sole support of his mother and sister. The above receipt shows the cost of the coffin and box in Quasqueton, paid in February, 1860. They were living on the Buchanan county farm and I will call it the Orchard Place (Savage farm) because grandpa (John Morris) developed a large orchard.

The country was filling up, schools opened so that there were singing schools, spelling bees, box socials, and school picnics. John Morris met Eliza Bruce at a singing school, south of Troy Mills.⁴ They were married January 22, 1872. All four lived together on the Orchard Place until Great-Grandmother Julia (Mrs. David) died in 1890⁵ and Caroline in 1913. Four children joined the family, Andrew David, John Edward, Mary Celeste, and Lydia Ann.

John Morris also taught his children at home. Although there was a school, two miles away, (Reilly School) there was no direct road or trail across the wet boggy fields and a large creek to cross. Papa (John Edward) and his brother Andy did attend the school one winter term. Great-grandfather Richardson lived in the same school district but they were on the schoolhouse side of the creek and only a half mile away.⁶

The winter when Papa was eighteen, he attended the seminary at Epworth, a special school, set up for the schooling of all ages, for anyone who hadn't had the opportunity of regular classroom work. He enjoyed himself immensely. He would tell us about the Literary Societies and his parts in readings and plays. That winter of school was most important and beneficial to him for he proved to himself that he had learned as much as many others, even if he hadn't gone to school but studied at home.

Andy was killed in a haying accident at seventeen. Mary married Cyrus Gardner and lived a few miles away.⁷ His younger sister Lydia attended the Epworth academy for an entire year to earn a teacher's certificate. All the girl students lived in a dormitory and one day, a girl found some dreaded head lice in her hair. All the girls then washed their hair in kerosene to destroy any lice or nits. Kerosene!

Mama finished the eighth grade in a country school in South Dakota. The school was filled with Olsen's, Swanson's, or Jorgeson's among others and she said they talked about the fact that they were Danes, or Swedes, or Norwegians. When Mama and her family asked at home, what are we?, the only answer they ever got was "You are all Americans." She said she never did know until she returned to her Uncles's⁸ that her ancestors had been English and had been in this country for 200 years.

Although Mama didn't have the interest in book learning the same as Papa did, she was very bright and knowledgeable. Her memory was fantastic as she could recall events, people, ages, who was who, until it made the rest of us look stupid in comparison. Her handwriting was poor and her mother's (Mary Jane Richardson Todd) almost illegible. In modern times, it would scarcely be noticed but in those days it was almost a status symbol to be able to write evenly with a flourishing signature.

We have no records concerning the formal education of our other great-grandparents, but according to letters and business papers, all of them had a reasonable education, writing in the stilted language of the day, and accompanied by many written embellishments. Deeds and leases were hand written and those who served as a Notary or Justice of Peace had to write out their records, petitions, deeds, leases, and decisions. Naturally, they also had to write out a copy. At this time, many could not read or write and signed with an X and someone else witnessed and also signed.

Tragedy strikes in every generation. Injuries, untimely deaths, birth defects are a part of our lives in every generation. John Morris and Eliza's oldest boy Andrew David was killed at age seventeen in a haying accident. Hay was stacked outdoors, using a tripod of long poles fastened together at the top with a large bolt. Then a pulley was wired to the bolt, then another pulley was fastened to the foot of the pole. A heavy hay rope was pulled through both pulleys with one end fastened to a harpoon fork and the other end to a single tree to which was hitched a single horse. When the fork was stuck in the hay on the hay wagon, someone started the horse and the fork full of hay was pulled to the top of the poles. The fork was tripped so that the hay fell onto the stack. Someone must level the hay and form the stack as each forkful was added.

On this day when the stack was high enough, Andrew was to oil the pulley at the top of the pole. He should have used a ladder, placing it on top of the stack to reach the top but instead it was fun to climb the rope to the peak and so he oiled the pulley. Finished with his chore, he jumped down upon the stack, but alas, the fork followed too swiftly and struck him in the back. He lived only a few minutes. Note a copy of the black-bordered letter, sent to relatives in the east. This was before telegraph and telephone came into frequent use and most messages were sent by post.

Very few families were lucky enough to raise all their children. Most had lost two or three infants, either at birth or under two years old. Poor sanitation and no refrigeration was hard on babies. Mama used to warn us about eating raw sweet corn, warning that we might get cholera morbus⁹ whatever that was. She probably was thinking of food poisoning from tainted food. Summer complaint was often fatal to small children. Except in summer gardening season, food was monotonous and not too suited to small children.

Diphtheria and small pox were deadly scourges, sometimes wiping out the entire family of children. Accidents with horses and cattle happened then as now we have car accidents. Doctor's were scarce and usually so far away, that most any accident could prove to be most serious. Neighbors helped each other as best they could, especially at the time of childbirth. A neighbor lady would hurry to act as midwife and care for the mother and child.

One malady seems to have disappeared, ague. It was quite prevalent and feared. Not usually fatal, the victim chilled and had recurring fever for weeks. The dictionary defines ague as a malarial fever. I wonder why it disappeared? Perhaps in draining the state, there are less mosquitoes or something. Some of the old-times blamed the ague on the rising mists from the bogs and sloughs.

Troy Hills Iowa

Aug 24th 1891

Dear uncle and aunt
it is with a very sad heart
I write this letter

Our eldest son David
was killed with a hayfork
about half past four o'clock P.m.
July 18th
he was 17 years old 15" of last year
we were stacking hay with
a

■ it went to harpoon for the day ■

¹ Iowa Pioneer David Phillips' father was Morris Phillips who is recorded as the owner and operator of Phillips Quarry in New Jersey. Also, in a letter apparently written to John Morris Phillips from his father David Phillips while on a trip back to New Jersey in 1867, "...in Fairmount Cemetery, and allowed no remuneration to plat holders but either sold the land or built themselves. I don't know which. Your uncle (John Morris Phillips, David's brother) had the remains of father and mother, and any others that could be gathered removed to his plot in Mount Pleasant Cemetery (In Newark ??) where there is a stone erected to the memory of "Morris Phillips and his wife, Naomi Peron."

² From old Essex county NJ history-"John M. Phillips was born in Newark, NJ, Nov, 1817, and is descended from Col. Phillips, an officer in the army of Oliver Cromwell, who, on the accession of Charles II, to the throne of England, in 1660, was obliged to fly to America with Goff, Whalley, and Dixwell, three of the regicide judges who assisted in having Charles I beheaded. He first settled in Killingsworth (now Clinton), Conn., and subsequently removed to New Jersey, where he purchased nine hundred acres of land near Caldwell, Essex Co. One of his grandson, David Phillips began his house-keeping, in a small one-story frame building that stood on the old Back Road to Belleville, now call Lincoln Avenue, and he purchased subsequently sixteen acres of land near his little house, for which his family received a deed from the proprietors of East Jersey in 1696. In this little house the father of John M. Phillips, the subject of this sketch, was born, and in it died. In it, too, Mr. John M. Phillips was born, and the little house still stands, a treasured heirloom, in the rear of the fine mansion which Mr. Phillips erected some years ago near to its original site. It may be mentioned as an interesting fact in this connection that Mr. Phillips' father was one of the proprietors of the quarries at Belleville, and that from these quarries he furnished the stone used in building Fort Lafayette, Castle William, the old St. John's Church and other buildings in New York, as well as the Mechanic's Bank and the old State House in the city of Albany."

This article, included in full in the appendix, goes on to relate Mr. Phillip's rise to ownership of "Hewes and Phillips" which became a very large operation during the Civil War, providing material used in the Union "Monitor", and refitting large quantities of firearms.

³ The family lore holds that Iowa Pioneer David Phillips left New Jersey when he lost a court case involving his father's estate. And in one letter back home written by David on his trip back home in 1867 he says, "...Your mother seems to enjoy herself but I cannot feel contented surrounded as I am with old objects and old reminiscences- I often wake at night and find myself cursing some of my old friends. If my mind don't get settled I shall be back very soon and leave your mother to finish her visit as leisure." and later in this letter "...Not that I am not treated well- but if you knew all I know and had suffered all I have suffered you might comprehend my feelings..." Pioneer David died in 1868, a year after this trip back to New Jersey.

⁴ There is no reason to think that this isn't true but I noticed in an old Coggon history, that the Coggon mill was built by William Bruce and the first customer was one John Morris Phillips who later married William Bruce's daughter Eliza Bruce.

⁵ Julia Faulker Phillips lived for 22 years after the death of Iowa Pioneer David Phillips, living with her son, John Morris Phillips, John's wife Eliza Bruce, sister Caroline Phillips, and children John Edward, Andrew David, Mary Celeste, and Lydia Ann.

⁶ Reilly School

⁷ The Gardner family has maintained contact over the years, particularly Dr. William Gardner, who has been back for visits to Grandma Effie and Mother Hazel.

⁸ The Orin Richardsons

⁹ Perhaps "Cholera infantum"- an often fatal form of gastroenteritis occurring in infants, not of the same cause as cholera but having somewhat similar characteristics.

Chapter 5

Going to School

On my first day of school, Papa took me in a lumber wagon and that afternoon, I ran off the way home, all mile and a half, ahead of a big thunderstorm. At least it seemed big to be, but I can't remember if it rained. School was easy for me but I was often bored stiff. Teacher would repeat the lesson over and over, lessons which I had learned before class time, as we were supposed to do. Once or twice wasn't bad but it was very trying when the teacher had explained that problem five or six times, then some inattentive pupil would raise his or her hand and ask, "What did you say, teacher?" In later years, I was shocked to find that those apparently stupid boys and girls could work rings around me.

Right at first, I walked alone but soon a neighbor girl joined me. She was enough older than I (a timid beginner) that I always did as she bid me do even if I knew I shouldn't. She often insisted that I stop and play with her after school, very much against my mother's rules. Mama even took a whip to my bare legs. The teacher finally came to my rescue and kept Gladys after school so that I could get home ahead of her tormenting. I never knew to whom I owed the thanks but some passing farmer had reported her behavior.¹

One night as we walked home, Gladys and I met her Aunt Myrtle, with her two babies, driving a horse on a top buggy. What happened wasn't mean but merely stupid as with the best of intentions, Gladys insisted that we hide in the brush at the side of the road because that horse was easily frightened. Of course, our crouching behind the brush really did frighten her and she shied and cramped the buggy until Aunt Myrtle had difficulty in controlling her. In the melee, in controlling the reins, with a baby on her lap and the year old on the seat beside her, the year old, Oma, fell out and the buggy wheel ran over her fat little wrist. By this time one of us had grabbed the baby and the other had hold of the horse's bridle to steady her. When everything had calmed down, noone was hurt and Aunt Myrtle drove on after lecturing us on hiding, "Don't ever do that again." Miraculously the arm wasn't injured. Apparently the soft sand of the road had cushioned the baby's arm from the wheel. We walked on much subdued. I knew better than to hide and shouldn't have listened to Gladys.

The road ran between shrub grown fence rows and it was easy walking down the sandy wheel tracks. When our school district consolidated, we had a new graded school with four teachers and four classrooms, primary through the eighth grade. Horse drawn school buses traveled over miserable roads to pick up the children. The bus was little more than a large wagon box on a high wheeled wagon, with a roof, windows on each side and hard benches on either side of the bus. In severely cold weather, our driver brought along a round kerosene heater, which sat in the middle of the aisle. It didn't help much and can you imagine the howls today about the danger of fire under similar circumstances?

Like many new concepts, the consolidation of five school districts was bitterly fought, resulting in the new district and the opposition each spending \$10,000 dollars in a court contest, a dismaying sum for our local farmers of that day. The leaders of the opposition were deeply disturbed. Their own schooling had been so meager, their cash

rewards from farming were so small, that they honestly feared higher taxes and the seemingly unnecessary outlay for a large brick building and for bus transportation. It took many years for the bitterness to fade away.²

About the next year, we moved to the Colyer Place³ where we attended a county school for part of two years. We moved back for part of another two years but in 1917, we moved onto the Abbey Place⁴ where I spent the rest of the years I was at home. Here we attended a country school and walked a mile and one-half again. I don't think that Papa considered it a problem for we always seemed to walk some distance to school. Our rural mail box was also near the school house so we had to walk down and get the mail on Saturdays and during vacations.

The road was not heavily traveled. It was level country with deep black soil so when it rained, there was mud and more mud. There were grassy shoulders all the way, even though the shoulders were some times higher than the road, it was not bad walking. In winter, sometimes, snow was everywhere.

In winter, we, my sisters and I, wore long black stockings, woolen dresses, knit underskirts, stocking caps or hoods, leggings in the snow and cloth-topped one buckle overshoes. The leggings were heavy black woven knit, knee length, buttoned the full length, with a strap under the foot to hold the legging over the shoe and under the overshoe. The long underwear was one piece and sometimes very patched. The boys wore the same kind of underwear, but since they wore shirts and overalls, the leggings were not necessary.

Snow soon filled our overshoes and sometimes our leggings, but I don't suppose it was necessary to walk through all the drifts. Our mittens were cotton mittens, pulled over knitted woolen if we had some. Otherwise, the cotton mittens were doubled. We never wore gloves. Mittens were warmer, were easier to mend and fingers need the comfort of each other in the cold.

We carried our lunches in one-half gallon syrup pails or we sometimes shared a gallon pail. Lunches were prepared by one of us each morning, sandwiches with meat, eggs, jelly, baked beans. In season, we had fruit, apples or grapes and often a cup of sauce or of pudding. Always there were cookies, cinnamon rolls or a piece of cake. Lunch pails were hard to come by. To this day, I regretfully throw away the fine coffee cans and plastic containers. How we would have loved to have them on our pantry shelves. I suppose there were lunch boxes to be purchased in those days but I can't recall anyone who had a boughten pail.

One year, when cold weather came, I had a nice new blue serge dress but alas, when Mama had to wash it, I found that I had to wear my last year's old red plaid, which was much too short and small. I hated to wear the dress so badly, that I decided that I would keep my coat on all day and not expose my old red dress. This seemed reasonable because one of my classmates was always wearing her coat in the school house because she was cold. Belatedly, I wonder if she had the same reason? Anyway, the teacher, (my only man teacher) asked if I was cold and he proceeded to build up the fire. I might have withstood the heat but I couldn't outlast his concern, so I had to remove the coat. Likely, he never noticed anything wrong with the dress but any woman teacher would have known what was worrying me. My problem was likely more fancied than real.

I never could get away with anything. If I told a little white lie or used some

fabrication, I was always exposed, so I found that it was best to face everything head on. That didn't make it any easier. They called me bashful but nowadays, I call it chicken. No one really looks at us anyway; each individual is too busy thinking about himself or herself.

Our library in the school house contained perhaps a hundred books, in addition to the encyclopedias and the unabridged dictionary. Most of these were old textbooks, history and geography. I read every one. After all we did need more books. I can't remember that anyone ever added a new book to the library. When my children attended a one-room school, the County Superintendent maintained a large library in his office and the teachers exchanged books every few weeks. The beautiful well-stocked libraries in our present schools, the public libraries in the cities, and even in small towns are visible signs of the great explosion of knowledge in the past few decades.

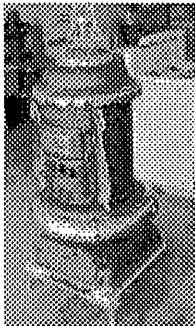
Our school house was much like most country schools in the Midwest, an oblong box of a building with or without an entry or cloakroom, painted white, with a flag pole on the front of the roof and the chimney on the rear peak. Inside, the lower half of the walls were covered with finish-lumber called wainscoting as was also the ceiling. The upper half of the walls were plastered and painted. The usual paint was a drab color so that the dirt didn't show. In later years, brighter and more cheerful colors were used to brighten the school rooms.

A black slate blackboard covered the front of the room behind the teacher's desk, to one side of the entrance door. Widows, three or four to a side were on the side walls with none on the front or back walls, so that no child or teacher would have to stare at a light window all day. Dark green shades could be pulled down on each window to shut out the glare when necessary.

Single desks were fastened down in rows, facing the teacher's desk, the smaller desks in front and graduating to the largest desks at the rear. A few schools had double desks so that two children shared a desk.

There was also a bench near the door, where we set our dinner pails for the day, with our coats hanging above and our overshoes underneath. The County Superintendent came to visit one day and he sat amidst the dinner pails while he was waiting for the teacher to finish the class. He looked so large and out of place, it is a wonder some of us didn't snicker out loud.

The heating stove, a coal burning Round Oak, stood in the center of the room with a coal scuttle, shovel and poker handy. There was a long black stove pipe extending from the top of the stove to the back of the room into the flue of the chimney. Wires from the ceiling helped support the long sections of pipe. It was the miserable job of the school director to clean out these pipes occasionally; soot collected badly in some types of weather.



There was always a stately picture of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, each draped with a small flag. Also there might be a series of pictures of the old family doctor sitting at the bedside of his young patient, or there was a picture of Washington Crossing the Delaware.

Fastened to the wall above the blackboard was a wooden box, which contained maps of the United States, of the continents and other countries of the world. Each of

these maps were stapled to a roller, similar to those used for window shades, so they could be rolled down for our lessons, then rolled up into the box, out of the way.

A stand held the water pail with its dipper, the washbasin and a soap dish. Two of the larger children were chosen by the teacher each day, to go for the water, carried from a neighboring farm, usually during the first recess. We had individual cups and towels, brought from home each Monday and carried home on Fridays. My drinking cup was a folding cup of aluminum, which telescoped into a small space, had a cover and was kept in my desk.

Outdoors at recess time or noon, we played ante-over, pump-pump-pull-away, hide and seek, fox and goose, all ages playing together. If it was too cold or stormy, we played indoors under the watchful eye of the teacher. She did play with us sometimes. Indoors, we played tic-tac-toe on the blackboard, spin the platter, (an old pie tin) pussy wants a corner, blind man's bluff, musical chairs or grandmother's fruit basket upset.

We had a special hour every Friday afternoon. We might spell down or cipher down. The teacher had to be on her toes to keep the competition fair between such mixed age children. Some Fridays, the teacher might read to us from her latest book, which she had brought from home. I remember one small victory; I spelled down the third and fourth grades, when I was in the second grade, spelling the words, chimney and ceiling correctly.

Each school had a spelling contest for pupils in the seventh and eighth grades, with the winners going on to the county and national contests. One year, Jay Cook and I were in the seventh grade in the graded school and we represented our school in the county contest. We managed to stay in the running while the two or three hundred pupils were lined up around the walls of the auditorium. When they marched the last twenty of us onto the stage, both of us missed words in the very next round. Stage fright or nervousness was likely the answer as both of us did know the correct spelling of the words.

Music in the schools was very difficult unless the teacher happened to be very musical and even then, she had no training in teaching music. We did learn some of the symbols, how to read staff and clefs and some songs, as America, Marching through Georgia, Home Sweet Home, and Polly-Wolly-Doodle. When the schools became equipped with record players, the music programs were expanded. All the schools in the county practiced from or with the same records so that at the county graduation exercises, all the pupils joined in the group singing. It was very impressive.

Each month, our teacher would skillfully draw or trace a large picture, with a monthly calendar under it, on one section of the blackboard, filling in the outline with colored chalk. This turkey, pilgrim, snow scene, Santa Claus, ship, flag or whatever the scene, was left for us to enjoy until it was replaced the next month. We had little art practice ourselves, unless you include penmanship, which we practiced diligently every day for a certain length of time. Some of the pages of ovals and capital letters by the better writers were a work of art.

Science as such was not taught but curious kids in the country learned much science from their own experiences. One teacher had us collect a sample of every plant we could find and we pressed them into a notebook to keep. We labeled each and added such facts as we found. Weather studies were a part of our geography lessons.

Slates and slate pencils were still in use when I started to school but they soon disappeared as paper became more plentiful; the main benefit was the elimination of noise. Our paper was of poor quality and we had to be careful in its use. It was unthinkable to use one side only; after all paper and pencils cost money and money was scarce. Oral recitations and lessons were heard in each class or the reading lesson was read out loud. Pen and ink were used only in penmanship classes after the fifth or sixth grades. All the desks were equipped with ink wells but most of us used the bottle of ink purchased from the drug store.

Each year at Thanksgiving time or Christmas time, school programs were exciting and lots of fun. Each and everyone of us had a recitation of his own, each sang in the group songs, and each had been assigned one or more parts in the dialogues. I believe this is one of the benefits of the one-room school which is overlooked. We had a feeling of belonging, a feeling of responsibility for we knew that we were needed.

Teacher drew each family into the act, to donate and sell candy, popcorn, cake or cookies, so that each family contributed to the success of the undertaking. The proceeds would go to purchase some needed item; as a new record player, a new flag, or a new fountain to replace the pail and dipper. One of our new purchases was a ten gallon crockery jar with a lid and a faucet to draw off the water and we could throw away the old dipper.

On some other occasions, instead of selling treats, the entire community enjoyed a box social. Each woman and each child, girl child that is, of school age, filled a box with lunch for two, fixing fancy sandwiches, pie, cake, fruit, or whatever as she might desire. Each owner competed with the others to make her box attractive, using colored paper, ribbons and bows. The owner's name was placed inside so the bidders did not know whose box he was bidding on. Amid a lot of good natured kidding, each box was auctioned off to the highest bidder. If a man wished to eat with his fiancé, he had to pay a higher price for the privilege. It was a neighborhood affair with perhaps some grandfather buying his neighbor's seven year old's box. Gallantly, the man sought out the owner of the box, two or three couples would pull their chairs or desks together to eat their lunches. Once my smallest sister was taking a box, and we were slightly worried about her reception because of her youth, but the teacher's father bought her box and he treated her so gallantly, she and we were very happy.

On the last day of school before the summer's vacation, we had a picnic and all our parents and relatives were invited. After a feast at noon, sports were the order of the day, races, high jumps, standing broad jumps, sack races, wheel barrow races, even a race between the grown men. Late in the afternoon, loaded with our books and final report cards, we went home with our families, tired, ready for the summer vacation.

¹ Teachers had discipline problems also. From the "The History of Troy Mills, Iowa" published in 2003, we read the following relating the problems of one teacher. "Everything went along smoothly the first week. The second week was in progress and now it was time for the pupils to test the new teacher. When the teacher went outside, he found himself locked out when he attempted to come back in. He tried the windows. They were all nailed shut and triumphant faces grinned inside the windows. Emotions began to boil. The teacher went to the woodshed and selected a big chunk of firewood. He also picked up a stick about three feet long. The lower section of the school door included two panels, just big enough for a man to slide through. The chunk of wood was thrown through one panel. Behind it came the teacher at the same time. Surprise! You could bet on it."

At another time a father, hearing that the teacher was having trouble controlling the children, decided to hide in the attic to see for himself. When he dangled his feet preparing to come down, "Kids ran screaming everywhere to get out of the buildings. One girl...climbed out a window and it came shut on her, pinning her to the sill. Another boy,...took off on his horse but neglected to untie it from the fence."

² Taxes were sure to cause dissent in the community. Again, from "The History of Troy Mills, Iowa" we read this, reproduced from the Dubuque Telegraph Herald on July 3, 1970, "The place to be on July 4, 1880 was in Troy Mills for the patriotic festivities. It seems however that the Buffalo Irish came down in full force to clean out Troy Mills people. The arrest of a local woman 'alcohol hinted' began a 400-person group participation riot. 'Stone and clubs were the chief weapons,' the Herald staunchly observed although someone shot the marshal's horse with a revolver. It seems the Buffalo Irish bore a grudge against Troy Mills for voting a railway tax on them. The physical dialogue that ensued, however, impaired 30 people and 3 or 4 are expected to die."

³ Location unknown

⁴ Approximately mid-way to Center Point

Chapter 6

Still I Go to School

As we walked to school, we hurried because we feared we might be late, oh, I mean tardy. Apparently I was the nervous, bossy one trying to hurry the others because some days, my oldest sister would rebel and walk all the slower, to my intense frustration. She doesn't remember this. Neighbor children walked part way home with us and we often quarreled, especially when the big boys teased my younger sister. I realize now, that those big boys were not very old or very big.

Our teachers were usually neighborhood girls with very little education and very little training. However, they were given information, forms, supplies, and instructions by the County Superintendent of Public Schools. Some of them became very good teachers. Later, all teachers were required to pass the State Teacher's Examination. At first, many girls had trouble passing these tests, especially those who attended Parochial High Schools, but eventually all the schools brought their curriculum requirements up to date, for the teacher's examinations were a fact of life for many years. Although the teacher was hired by the local school director or directors, the County Superintendent was their supervisor and provided help and supervision.

Some of our teachers were good capable teachers and some not so good, like teachers the world over. The only man teacher we ever had was John Henry, a lazy so and so, who napped on the recitation bench at the noon hour and at recess, thus allowing us longer play periods and shortened class time. Noon hour was often ninety minutes long. He couldn't work the arithmetic problems in the eight grade book or so he said, but I had no trouble with them. Of course, the answers were in the back of the book, so if I made a mistake, I could try again. Papa could help me if I needed him.

To graduate from the eighth grade, I had to take the tests in the Center Point High School building under the eyes of a strange teacher. The tests were then sent to the County Superintendent for correction and grading. I received a large diploma, about 18 by 24 inches, certifying that I had passed the curriculum of the state. Papa bought a large ornate frame and hung my certificate on the wall for all to see. I was embarrassed at the time, but in retrospect, I realize how pleased and proud he and Mama were of my good grades.

As I recall the early school years in comparison with later schools and times, the one-room school seems the most interesting and inviting. We did learn the basic skills, we had a sense of belonging, we assisted in the housekeeping chores and often helped the teacher with the younger children. We carried water from a neighboring farm, raised the flag each morning and took it down before leaving for home.

Papa was very determined that all his children go to high school. Because he hadn't gone to school very much, he intended that his children would. I don't remember if I wanted to go to high school or not but I knew I was going and that was it.

Many of the neighbor children did not go to high school for various reasons. Some did not like to read and had no further interest in further book learning. According to the legal code, each child must go to school until he was sixteen or had graduated from the eighth grade, but it was not strictly enforced. Boys, especially worked at home and

helped farm at an early age, although some of them attended during the winter months. My high school class had thirteen girls and four boys at graduation.¹

Irma, one of my school friends was forced to leave school in the seventh grade to help at home. She had seven younger brothers and the new baby turned out to be triplets. No wonder big sister had to stay home and help with the babies. Later Irma married a neighbor farm boy and her family took their place with the rest of the community. Our system of schools has been a most important asset to our national life but experience and common sense are still the most practical method of learning. Anyone who reads, who listens with an open mind, can discover something new every day and so educate himself.

John Henry did not teach another year as he was drafted into the army. Papa took us to Cedar Rapids to cheer and clap when he and his fellow draftees left for camp. The boys were already in uniform as I remember it but now, I can't see how this could be. The cheering crowd, the noisy band, the big locomotive with its whistle and its bell was exciting as we assured the boys that we were proud of them. John Henry was fortunate and returned to live out his natural life on the farm.

We had no close relative in World War I, as no one was of service age. My memories of the war are of childish things as the following, which we sang on the way to school as we pelted a fence post, named Kaiser Bill.

Kaiser Bill went up the hill
To take a peek at France,
Kaiser Bill went down the hill
With bullets in his pants.

All of us children were articulate supporters of the activities, amid all the talk of Germans, Huns as they were called and their treatment of the Belgian people and the Red Cross nurses. We listened to Papa and other older people as they discussed the news in newspapers and the latest rumors. At school, there was much talk about slackers and who was apt to get his house painted yellow. Several houses were splashed with yellow paint. Families of German nationality or those who disapproved of the war, (rumor said) received short shrift and were left strictly alone, a great injustice in most cases. Fortunately most of our neighbors were Bohemian or English background.

It was wheat that was in short supply and was rationed. We had to buy an equal amount of substitutes with each bag of flour. Some of the substitutes were equally good as cornmeal and oatmeal, but once we tried barley flour. Ugh! Papa was on the township committee to sell war bonds and he worked hard at it. Poor Papa! He had been bragging about how well Mama cooked with the substitutes, so guess what we had for dinner when Papa invited a fellow committee member to eat with us? Barley gems! Even we kids couldn't eat them and I assure you we would eat most everything in sight. To add to Papa's embarrassment, the committee member's wife was a famous Bohemian cook, especially noted for her fancy breads.

Many of the neighboring boys were in France and the community lived in fear and dread of the casualty lists of the dead and wounded. In a war with 320,720 casualties, 53,513 of them deaths, all communities lost a loved one, a friend or neighbor. Many of the maimed were injured with poison gas or mustard gas.² A severe outbreak of influenza

added to the country's woes. Altogether in camp and at home, the country lost 548,000 lives in the epidemic of 1918. Deaths throughout the world attributed to influenza are estimated to be 20,000,000 dead (according to the world almanac).³

Our school in Center Point was closed for three weeks in November due to the influenza and reopened the day of November 11, the day the armistice was signed. Our family was not sick at that time but we were laid low in January. Each of us was quite sick but no Pneumonia developed so we were lucky. All of us were in bed at the same time. Papa would get up and bring each of us some bread and milk. It tasted terrible. As each child recovered a little, he began caring for the sick ones. A neighbor did the chores. I think the doctor came out once. The doctors were a pretty worn out set of men.

It was very disillusioning to me to discover in later years that the Germans were just people also. Propaganda, our own included, needs to be taken with a grain of salt.

It was seven miles to our nearest high school, which was Center Point and the roads were terrible, deep in dust in summer, in snow in winter and in mud, mud, and more mud the rest of the year. I started out with one horse, Jim, on a top buggy but he had to work too hard and it took too long to haul the heavy buggy. Papa bought a sulky, a racing sulky; he lined the floor with tin to prevent the wind from coming up under me and I used the sulky most of the four years in high school. Jim was a scarecrow of a horse, gaunt and bony, definitely no race horse. He wasn't afraid of anything but sometimes he pretended, shied and pranced especially when the Rock Island freight train crossed our path. Just cussed orneriness was all!

About Jim, I remember when Papa bought him. He had heard that the new people near the school house had two colts to sell and he asked Mama to stop and inquire on her way home from Center Point. The mother and several children were standing in the yard as we drove in. Mama asked about the horses, getting only a blank stare. The lady turned and called "Joe, Joe". Joe came and somehow, Mama and Joe understood each other about the colts. Papa did buy them, named them Jim and Prince and we had them for many years. I don't know if the mother ever learned to speak English or not.

I knew Joe for many years and never could understand his broken English very well. In later years, one of his daughters, a tall stately blond lived in our neighborhood and no one would ever know that she did not speak English until she went to school. The great melting pot!

Three of Joe's brothers attended our school. How well they studied and learned, I don't remember but one day, they came to school smelling of skunk odor from their trapping. We simply put up with it, I don't remember any set-to about it.

Some days, the ride to high school was pure pleasure in open country in good weather, enjoying the farms and wild life along the way. Rabbits and ground squirrels were plentiful, as were quail and meadow larks. Other days, it rained or snowed or the wind chilled. I don't really remember many days when I actually drove through storms but the result of storms was always there, mud or snow.

Papa hitched Jim to the sulky each morning and I stabled him in a livery barn, about three blocks from the school house. Already, there was little need for these barns so the livery men had time to be helpful, so often they unhitched and cared for my horse and rehitched after school. For a fee, of course.

Driving to high school, limited my participation in extra curricular events, which

were few, when compared with modern schools. I hated so badly to miss any program, that Mama accompanied me one Friday night to attend a high school play. We left the team in the livery stable and went to the play which was being held in an old church building, unused because the congregation had split over the use of music in their worship services. A severe electrical storm came up that night with lightning, loud thunder and torrents of water. The church lights went off and we sat waiting out the storm in total darkness except for the brilliant lightning. After an hour, the lights went on again and the cast finished the play.

It was so dark that later, we could scarcely find our way back to the livery barn. There were no sidewalks and the street lights were few and far between and very dim. We stumbled into a water-filled ditch so we felt like drowned rats. Although the storm seemed over the men at the stable persuaded Mama to stay in town until morning light. One of the men vacated his room at the hotel so that we could have a place to sleep. We worried about Papa's worry, but the telephone was not working. Papa claimed that he knew we would stay in town, but I wonder. The next morning, before breakfast, we drove home through a world washed clean with rain, a bright and shining morning, but with a floor of mud. I hope I wasn't too hard on the folks before I decided it wasn't worth the effort very often. I was impatient at missing anything. Still am!

In my Junior and Senior years, I took part in both class plays, took an active part in the Y-Teen's programs, services and parties. I stayed in town on those nights with special friends, feeling welcome in their modest home, which was painfully neat, compared with the clutter of six kids at home. A tall girl friend and I dressed as George and Martha Washington for the Valentine Ball held in the school gymnasium. I wore Mama's wedding dress and Betty wore knee britches and a three cornered hat. We were good but we didn't win the prize.

I enjoyed the change of seasons. In the fall, large flocks of blackbirds descended on the cornfields and soared away at my approach. The flocks of wild ducks and geese warned of a weather change. One morning, I saw a prairie chicken booming, his throat swelling into large red sac at his neck. Other times it was wind blowing corn stalk leaves across the countryside.

On cold winter days, I wore Papa's fur coat, over my own coat and wrapped blankets around my feet, so I never really suffered from the cold. One winter day, I left the livery barn as usual, but Jim was in too much of a hurry and he tripped and fell. Ker-splat! I went right on over his head. I still can recall how long it seemed to take to slide down his flank, over his long neck until I stopped on the hard pavement. Thanks to the heavy garments, I was unhurt. Naturally, I looked to see who was watching, to find the stablemen running to pick up the pieces. They rehitched and I went on my way, very much embarrassed.

In the spring, the meadow-larks returned, turtle doves, and bob-o-links. There were still some wild crabapple blooming along the roads. Everything was green again. There were still many violets and buttercups in nearby fields.

One spring, Mama bought me a raincoat. I was thrilled, my first one, dark blue and large enough to cover my skirts. Sure enough, one day, it rained and you can imagine my disappointment when the coat leaked. I was miserably wet under the coat and to my chagrin, it faded onto my clothes. I was a mess! I had to borrow clothes from a friend to

wear that day. The ruined middy blouse was a white over blouse, jacket style with blue and pink trimming. I had coaxed and coaxed to be allowed to purchase this blouse but by the time I owned one, every other girl had a newer style to wear. So only Mama regretted the spoiled middy. I never again wore the coat and I never owned another raincoat until recent years when the bright all-leather coats tempted me.

In high school, I studied English, Literature, Geometry, Algebra, Latin, Economics, Physics, Modern History, Government, and Home Economics. It wasn't hard, only time consuming with the drive each day. Believe it or not, I received a grade of 100 per cent on my final physics test paper. Just think of all the new knowledge that would be included in such a test today. I graduated Valedictorian of the class of seventeen and received four years of tuition to a state school. Since I only attended college for one semester, supposedly the tuition is free for me to use. At least, they told me it would be. Probably, they didn't mean for 60 years.

At the University (Iowa), I tested out of beginning English and studied Advanced Composition, Chemistry, French, Speech and Physical Education. I worked for my room and board in a pastor's home⁴ and didn't have time to study or so I thought. Now, I suppose, I would admit that I just didn't know how to plan my time and that I wasn't motivated enough. I received C's at mid-term, very discouraging as I was used to A's, the pastor didn't need me anymore so that made a good excuse and I left school at the end of the semester.

Papa was disappointed but I had no ambition to teach and I already guessed that I would be marrying a farmer. The work seemed like a repetition of the high school work. I do regret that I didn't get more out of the speech class. I realize now that I was so busy trying to prove that I couldn't talk in front of a group of people, that I could and should have benefited more from the class than I did. A smart alecky young lady!

¹

² Later, Mother will introduce who we knew as Uncle Clarence (Clarence Popp) who suffered lung damage from Mustard gas during WWI.

³ Father Roy lost his brother Vernon in the influenza epidemic of 1917.

⁴ The pastor's name was

Is It a New World Now?

All of us note how the cities have mushroomed and spread all over the countryside. Although it is not so dramatic, the countryside has changed as much or more. My parents and I walked or rode along country roads, which were little more than paths. In spring, violets grew in great patches along the roadside and buttercups and cowslips (marsh marigolds) bloomed profusely in the nearby pastures. As it grew warmer, ink flowers and sweet Williams bloomed near the road and wild roses grew everywhere. Wild roses were a pest in the oat fields and in the hay. Nothing could eat the thorny plants and they were difficult to sort out, even by the cattle. Cattle didn't care how pretty the roses were! Wild crab apples and wild plums grew along most every road and draw and fence row, and shed a delightful fragrance as they blossomed each spring. The blossoms of wild grapes were especially pleasant.

In summer, the meadows were full of white daisies and brown-eyed Susans, while the sloughs were colorful with shooting stars, tiger lilies and Indian paint brushes. Later came sumac, bittersweet, golden rod and sunflowers, which grew along every road and fence row. We still see goldenrod and sunflowers every fall, especially in the farmer's fence lines but not along the roadsides.

Once, the roadsides were often mowed by neighboring farmers, the hay raked into cocks, then the hay was pitched onto the hay rack and hauled home to add to the stack by the barn. Some farmers mowed a grass line around their fields, mowing two swathes around each field and put up the hay. When company came on Sunday, they could drive clear around each field to view from the vantage point of the mowed swathe. It did keep the weeds down at the edge of the fields but it was an idea that didn't catch on. Papa and most of the neighbors mowed the roadside past their farm, once or twice a season. It was considered shiftless to allow the weeds to grow tall, besides the tall weeds caught the snow and held it on the road. After the county put in wider roads with a higher grade, it was almost impossible for the farmer to do much except mow one swathe at the edge of the road. The county then bought special mowing machines and hired men to work at this all summer and fall. They are gradually discontinuing this and I notice some weeds that are going to form some pretty deep snow banks this winter.

Both Grandpa (John Morris) and Papa told us about the passenger pigeons, such huge flocks, that they darkened the sun, and it took all day for the entire flock to pass.



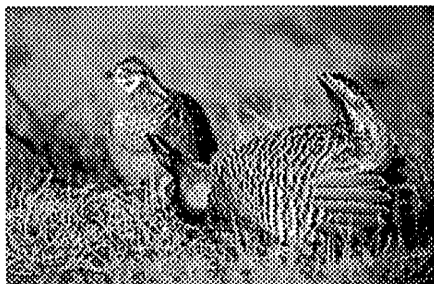
They had been hunted so avidly for their feathers, that they were already extinct before 1900.

We still see many birds although perhaps less of some kinds. The removal of habitat in road building and power farming is the most likely cause of less birds, if there are less. At least, here we don't see as many brown thrashers, blue birds and catbirds. We still have plenty of sparrows and starlings. With the loss of the big barns and

cupolas, we have less pigeons, but the meadow larks still sing in the meadows, turtle doves still coo in the thickets, mice still hang from a spiked weed where the shrike has hoarded a meal. King fishers still watch the creek and whip-poor-wills call lonesomely in the evenings. Blue birds may miss the hollow fence posts but wrens, swallows and hummingbirds return each year. Red-winged blackbirds nest in the wet roadside ditches and in the fall join the grackles and other blackbirds, ready for the flight to the sunny southland. Robins, our harbingers of spring, arrive just before the last snow storm of the year, usually looking very fat and saucy. We still see cowbirds and cuckoos even if it is harder to find shrubs to nest in. Bob-o-links still call and the horned lark goes, chink, chink, chink.

Killdeer used to nest by the hills of corn where the small horse drawn cultivator caused little trouble for the birds but now the modern power dragons roll the dirt around each hill with no escape for the hapless bird. Yet, each year, I see killdeer in our pasture and the birds flutter away, dragging a wing as usual. This summer, we visited our local cemetery and we saw a lovely killdeer reluctantly leave her nest near a tombstone and drag her wing away, trying to lead us astray. She must have had to do this often because she seemed to realize that we were not going to molest her nest but she was taking no chances.

Often pheasants nested in the meadow and the farmer carefully lifted his sickle bar and left her to hatch her eggs. But now the operator wouldn't even know there was any wildlife in the field. Still pheasants thrive and flocks are soon each year. It doesn't take them long to disappear at the first gunshot in the fall hunting season.



Prairie chickens were still heard of when I was a girl. Grandpa's (John Morris) farm was broken into small fields because unworkable sloughs separated the high ground. Back of his house, I could hear the chickens booming every morning, especially in the spring and early summer. The Abbey Place was right next to the last part of the Big Slough to be broken up. The county had run a drainage ditch through the center of this slough, which was ten or twelve miles

long and varying in width from rods (1) to two or three miles. A Mr. Pingle owned this last 320 acres next to us and he hired a tiling machine to put in drainage on the entire farm. Horses pulled the machine, using cables in some way and dragged the tile through the earth. Then the renter plowed the rough fields with a gang plow pulled by six horses. It was terrible work and he lost several horses in the process. He sowed the farm to flax that first year. We never heard chickens again after the ground was broken.

I don't know how well the flax yielded but the next year, it was sowed to oats and cut in the shock at the usual time, a bumper crop. However, we received one of these one in a hundred year rains and the entire crop was washed down the drainage ditch for miles. This is the reason, farmers are always pessimistic. Something always happens. Today, the farm is a high producing farm, stones all buried and likely an entire new set of tile.

We talk about flowers and birds but don't forget that the weeds were plentiful then as now. Careful farmers tended their fields and kept cockle burrs, morning glories, quack grass and dock under control. Others were not so careful. Threshing machines were

carefully cleaned after such a farm so they wouldn't carry seed to another farm. Any oat bundles with any amount of Canadian thistle was burned in the field. It was with dismay that they watch these seeds being scattered far and wide by the new combines. Herbicides have now controlled much of this. We still have plenty of weeds of all kinds.

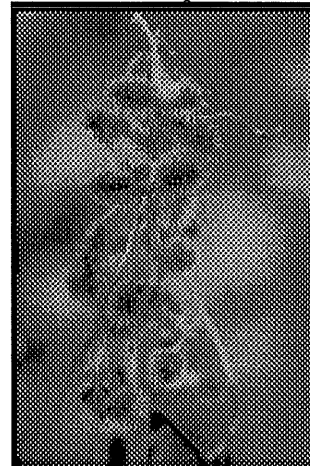
Mother Nature is our worst polluter. Note earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, storms, and wind, but she is marvelous in her power to heal. Nature is God in action. Let man, fire, or flood leave a raw strip of earth and immediately, weeds sprout and soon the scar is covered with tall weed, brush and or grass. Apparently, the seed lies fertile and unused until needed and then they grow and fulfill their mission.

Last year, during an unusual wet season, cattails were growing along our roadside where there had been no cattails in twenty years. And today, daisies, regular field daisies are blooming in our uncultivated garden, where no daisies have bloomed in those twenty years. Either the seed lay dormant in the soil or the wind carried the seed from far-off fields to grow in the untended soil of our garden.

Thistles have been persistent, both the bull thistles and the Canadian thistles.

Burdocks are still with us. We enjoyed the burdocks when we were kids. We picked the burrs or seeds while they were green and made baskets or most anything we could imagine. The prickly burrs would stick together to form the most exotic baskets, hats or pans, most anything. They were fun. Also, we enjoyed the milk weed pods with their soft white floss. We did not enjoy the many sand burs on the Creek Place.

Some weeds should be headed for extinction as they compete with food plants; cockle burrs for instance or Canadian thistles, are of no use to anyone. Stink weed (velvet weed) seed will lie in the dormant state in the soil for fifty years.



When the pioneers first came to Iowa, only the knolls were dry enough to work and between each knoll was a draw of slough, which filled with water after each rain and was slow to drain off. In the summer, when dry enough the native grasses in these draws were cut and put up for hay. In the wettest parts grew ripgut grass, sometimes as tall as a horse's back, a wide bladed grass with saw-toothed edges. Nothing would eat it and it was left in the field if it could be sorted out. Wild hay (native grass) made an excellent horse feed. Later, it was replaced by the better yielding timothy grass. Often both were baled with a stationary baler, hauled to a railroad town and shipped to Chicago, where there was always a demand for horse hay.

When the side-delivery rake and the hay loader come into common use, it was possible to make many more tons of hay. It was a common sight to see loads of loose hay moving from farm to farm or from farm field to house yard. Now we never see any loose hay, but sometimes, big truck loads of bales, moving to market. Market is usually a dairy farm or feedlot, sometimes many miles away.

Clover and alfalfa were gradually brought into the cropping rotation and soil built up until now, we grow three or four tons of hay (per acre) where only one grew before.

Everyone on the farm helped with haying. I drove the team of horses on the hay

wagon, straddling the swathes of hay, while Papa stacked the hay as it came from the loader. It was hot, dirty, sticky job for both of us. I followed the windrow until the end of the field, then turned to straddle the next row. As the load was built higher and higher, I must step up on the next forkful until I was perched on the very stop of the load. Papa would then take the reins and guide the team back to the barn. It was a pleasure to curl up on top of the load and relax, perched on top of the world.

Then one of us had to drive on the hayfork to pull the forkful into the barn. At first, Mama always did this, then we all took a turn. It wasn't a bad job except that when the man in the hay mow yelled, "Whoa," it was difficult to hear him and he or whoever was doing the mowing expected our instant response to "Whoa"....If we pulled the forkful past him or dropped it too soon, it caused much extra work to move it around with the pitchfork.

Later, I stuck the fork into the load. This varied as damp hay might go off with four or five forksful but if the hay was extra dry, it pulled apart and took many forksful to get it into the farm.

Hay was a fact of life for every farm in those days. Now many farms have no hay crop of any kind. And the hay that is baled are large bales, looking like huge loaves of bread or many small haystacks. The probably contain as much hay as many of the early stacks did contain.

I miss seeing little pigs running on grass with their mothers. Pigs are now raised in long flat buildings with ventilators and fans running most of the time. Chickens are also confined, 5,000 to 10,000 to a building. Formerly, we saw Rhode Island Red roosters



strutting around, or flocks of Buff Orpingtons, or Plymouth Rocks, or White Leghorns, or a mixture of all breeds scattered all about the farm. Now we seldom see even one chicken.

Mama and grandma (Eliza Bruce Phillips) had baby chicks roaming with the mother hen, which they fed and watered, but they were expected to forage for some of their living. Some few farms do raise chickens but most all of them are confined.

On the Creek Place, we had no fence around the house yard, only about the garden. The chickens scratched outside our door and small pigs rooted and rested in the shade of the trees. Only the city man had the time or could afford a nice lawn. Now all the chickens and pigs are confined and it is a rare thing to see a farm without a beautiful green

lawn and a power mower to keep it trim.

Our town (Independence) used to boast a kite-shaped race track, but now instead of horse racing, modified stock car racing is the vogue. Movie theaters barely keep running, even the big outdoor screens in the summer time. Television aerials blossom

from many houses. Radio towers are scattered all over the country, especially noticeable at night, when red blinking lights can be seen in all directions. I was thrilled when a radio station was built in our town; it seemed so unbelievable.

When we looked at the skies, we saw the sun, or moon or stars, falling stars, clouds in all forms, from the soft white clouds to the towering thunderheads, threatening of storms to come. Or saw the beautiful sunrises and sunsets. These are still with us but now we also see and hear airplanes and helicopters most any time of the day or night. Jet trails from planes cross and criss-cross the sky daily, often four or five are visible at any one time. Our town has build an airport for small planes and larger planes land at Cedar Rapids and Waterloo.

Towns are well lighted with good street lights and nearly every farm has one or two mercury lights which burn all night so that we do not even notice many stars anymore.

Many of the woodlots, laboriously set out and maintained have been bulldozed out and burned. The many rows of catalpa trees, set out to grow into fence posts are gone, and with the death of our elms, we are going back to the prairies in some areas. Other areas have more trees than ever, some set out and maintained as the pine groves, walnut farms and Christmas tree farms, but mostly by the scattering of tree seed along the fence rows and pastures.

Each fall, corn fodder shocks used to stand in orderly rows across many corn fields, but now they are a novelty. Where the corn was picked by hand, the remaining fodder stood all winter, catching snow and sheltering wild life; now the fodder lies shredded over the entire field until it is turned under by the plow, either in the fall or spring. Some are now planting right through the trash and learning a new way of farming.

Soybeans are now one of our main crops. Beans were not grown in Iowa until they were tried as a supplement to a poor hay crop. The green beans were cut, raked into cocks and left to dry, then put up for hay. These first trials of bean hay caused enough problems in drying and again in feeding, that bean hay did not become popular. It was so slow to cure and it contained the been seed, so it was too laxative to cattle. Next the beans were dried in the field, cut into shocks and threshed out with a threshing machine like navy beans, so a good market developed for the oil and bean meal. The acreage has grown until today, it takes millions of acres and hundreds of combines to harvest the crop.

Field tile and drainage ditches have eliminated most of the sloughs in this area, so that where the tall rip-gut grass grew, now corn and soybeans thrive, and where we waded to pick the cowslips and the buttercups, corn, soybeans and alfalfa grow rank. Grandpa's farm of small fields, divided by the sloughs, is now one big field and the small triangular shaped fields are part of the whole, close to a 150 acre field.

The first settlers on the prairie farms planted cottonwood trees and set out a windbreak to protect themselves from the cruel winter winds. Actually there are more trees in many part of Iowa today than there were when the Indians were here. Grandpa (John Morris) said, "There wasn't a tree between the hill just south of Troy Mills and the town of Center Point, fifteen to twenty miles of prairie away." Only wild grasses and rip-gut grass stretched across the level land. In some of our areas, trees grew along the ravines and streams but the trees got little start in the heavy sod. Lightning started fires swept over miles of dry prairie each summer, destroying the seedling trees which might have sprouted. After much of the land was plowed, the wind swept the tree seed across

the prairie and settled the seeds along the ravines, plowed ground and fence rows, where they flourished.

When Grandpa (John Morris) farmed the blacker sod of the Orchard Place, he had difficulty even moving his equipment onto some of the highest patches because of wet ground in between. He tiled one of these draws, using three inch cement tile. When we tiled the farm in later years, some of these tiles were dug up and they had been working still.

Every twenty years or so, the roads have been upgraded. When we were children, we walked up the road to Grandpa's, about a mile. We walked up a sandy hill, down the other slope, where sharp limestone rocks protruded into the wheel tracks; then the road went steeply to the wooden bridge over Phillip's Creek, up another steep rocky hill and along a sandy rocky road, where huge daisies (cone flowers) grew each summer. The rest of the mile was dusty or muddy, as the weather ordained, until we turned into their lane. Willow, brush and sumac grew on either side or both sides of the road. In summer, we could pause to rest in the shade, but in winter, the willows caught the snow so badly that even the horses had to be driven through the fields.

Now the hills are leveled and the road widened with smooth embankments on each side; a road wide enough for all cars and trucks. The wooden bridge has been replaced by a culvert, covered with such a deep fill that a traveler wouldn't even notice that the creek would "Go on forever". A rock quarry took out thousands of tons of ground limestone, leaving gaping holes as the quarry was abandoned. One deep hole filled with water, like a swimming pool, and weed and brush have covered most of the scars. The site of the old stone house has been completely obliterated.

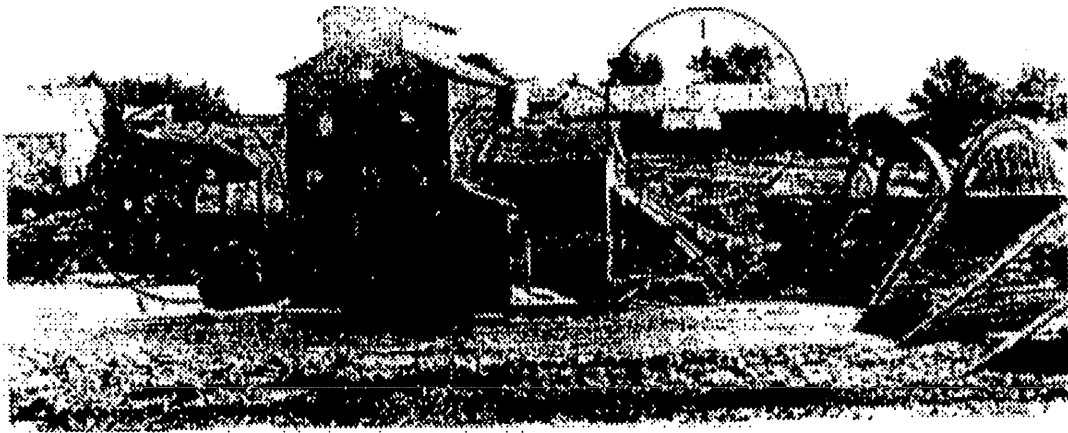
The Fleming homestead is gone and corn grows where their garden flourished; the old log house of Walton's is gone with only a more modern windmill over the well, left to mark a pioneer home. A new set of buildings have sprung up on the corner with barns, silos, all the needs of a prosperous farm. The boggy pasture by the side of the road, where the buttercups grew, is now a field of corn. The old grove of cottonwoods and fruit trees are gone with nothing left but one huge corn field.

Most farms show a similar change as new roads nibble at the farmyards and the farmer leveled his yard, fixed a lawn and improved his entire set-up. Most of the windmills have disappeared and many cement staved and glass lined silos stand in the farmyard. The thousands of rocks, stones and niggerheads¹ are gone, buried in the ground.

Electric and telephone poles run in every direction to every farm and the changes still go on, as the newest lines are being laid underground. One or two mercury lights on tall poles are part of almost every farm, lighting the yards and pens all night long. All kinds of traffic signs dot the country side and stop signs stand on almost every corner. Steel fence posts have replaced the wooden posts and the new corner posts are mostly old railroad ties or pent treated posts.

Grandpa (John Morris) used to cross the Wapsipinicon River at Troy Mills, at the rocky ford, just below the present bridge. A wooden span was built, later replaced with a steel bridge, something like a railroad bridge with plank flooring. Now, the present bridge is a modern cement bridge with I-beam construction. From the ford, the old road rose steeply to the town but now the bridge is high enough and the long fill

had changed the steep rise into town into a slight incline. This change is representative of the changes all over as the roads have been widened, culverts raised and widened, so the approaches have been higher and higher and so leveled the road. In the process and in search of fill dirt, many a small hill has disappeared.



(1) First Home (2) First Saw Mill
(3) Second Saw Mill (4) First Bridge

The first early farmhouses after the log cabins, were usually straight, two story houses with a gable roof and a one-story ell added on for the kitchen. Later, many two-story, large square houses were built, with wide porches and entrances. Today, most farm houses are new and built in ranch house style or an older house has been restored and modernized with a furnace, water system, a bathroom and a modern garage. Sometimes we forget how short a time ago, that all farm houses (and many others) didn't have electricity and everyone had a little house at the end of a path.

We still have weeds with us. Although we use herbicides to control weeds in the crop lands, fence rows run rank with horse weeds, berry bushes and sumac. Although we seldom see some species any more, in our timber pasture, most varieties still grow. Red and purple haws, hazel nuts, blackberries, black raspberries, wild strawberries, Solomon's seal, better sweet, wild grape wines, Virginia creeper. Many, many varieties, I do not know the names.

We comment on the changes but the basic things are the same. The sun still shines, the rain still falls and seasons follow seasons in swift succession. The good black dirt produces more every year. New varieties of grain, fruit and vegetables add more to our productivity each year.

Dew still sparkles on the grass each morning in the rising sunshine and illuminates the spider webs spun across the grass during a warm night. Sundogs still shine across the snow drifts in winter. We marvel at the complexities of nature's laws and nature's creatures.

Families grow up and another generation starts another family. Children grow up, become adults, have children, become grandparents, the cycle continues. God's laws control the world and his love will support us as we face whatever lies ahead.

¹ I left the term in. This was a very common term in my youth but has gone out of useage today.

Holidays

My earliest and happiest memories of holidays, are of Decoration Day, now called Memorial Day. After weeks of practice at school, all pupils, dressed in their summer finery, reported to the school house in the early morning of Decoration Day, May 30. The horse drawn school bus transported us and our teachers through the town, across the river bridge and along the country road to the cemetery, perhaps, a mile distance.

The grass was a bright spring green and flowers decorated every grave. The Stars and Stripes flew over every Veteran's grave and a larger flag graced the tomb of the unknown soldier, before which the morning program was performed. The honored minister prayed a long, long prayer, while we fidgeted, then it was time for our songs and recitations. We sang "America," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," "Marching Through Georgia" and "The Star Spangled Banner."

Many of our recitations were about the Blue and the Grey, lively sentimental poems of the Civil War and of Patriotism. It would be nice to resurrect some of them today. Uniformed men, veterans of the Civil War and the Spanish American War, would fire as many muskets as could be mustered in that particular year. Then sunburned and tired, we rode back to the school house. I'm sure that there must have been some rainy Decoration Days but I don't remember any.

Our town, Troy Mills, was famous for its' Decoration Day dinners. Every family for miles around donated some part of this sumptuous feast, furnishing chicken, potatoes, vegetables, salads, cabbage slaw, pickles, jellies, and a gorgeous variety of pies. A charge of one dollar was made for each dinner and all the money went to the cemetery Association for care of the cemetery. In my earlier years, the dinner was served in the large I.O.O.F hall, but after the new gymnasium was built, it was held in the schoolhouse gym. All women past the age of twelve, helped to serve and feed the throng. Such noise and bedlam! Some years, as many as a thousand meals were served. Today, it is still a large affair, but now it is served by the American Legion in the Legion Hall. It is a yearly gathering of old friends, neighbors and relatives to honor the dead and to renew acquaintance with the living friends.

After dinner, we gathered in one of the three churches to listen to a well known speaker on patriotism, politics or the affairs of the times. One year, the speaker was Guy Bromwell, the father of the present James Bromwell¹ in Cedar Rapids. The speeches, special music, and formal presentation of any one with a reputation, was followed by a ball game between teams of the neighboring towns. Gradually, over the years, the speakers have disappeared but the ball games and the dinners are still with us. The legion honor band plays and then they go home.

One years, unfortunately, Mama was struck by a batted foul ball right on the chin. I can still feel my dismay when I saw the ball strike her in the face and she wasn't even watching the game, merely visiting with some of the neighbor ladies. Luckily, no bones were broken and she suffered only a bad bruise. Some years, instead of attending the dinner, we delivered our share of the prepared food and then we picnicked along the river bank, although we children would have rather joined the noisy throng in the school house

As there were six of us, I suppose that money had something to do with the decision. One year, we were rather awed and disturbed, when on the verge of spreading our picnic on the cloth spread on the river bank, Papa and Mama invited comparative strangers to join us. Later, I came to understand the generous act to include this lonely couple in our meager picnic. As the years roll by, more and more of our loved one, friends, and acquaintances lie in scattered cemeteries in this section of the state.

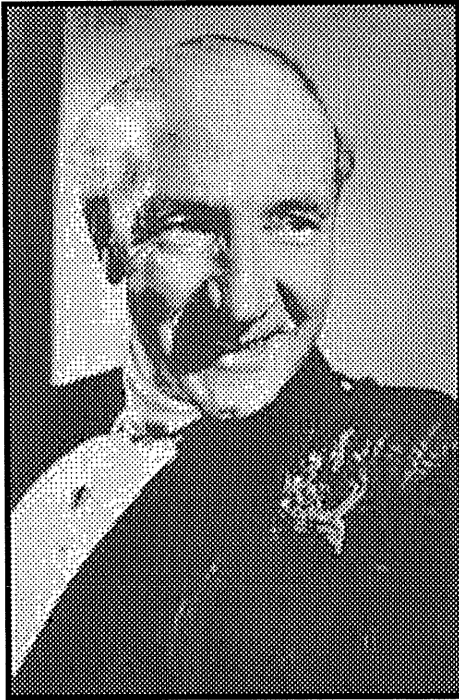
The Fourth of July was less formal, celebrated with carnivals, firecrackers and fireworks. Papa always bought firecrackers and small fireworks; he was a kid along with us. Some of ours were tiny, some were larger for the older children and some so large, that we must allow Papa to set them off. Our several neighboring towns took turns, celebrating the Fourth, whenever the city fathers decided that this was the year. These celebrations include a carnival, free circus attractions, a ball game and fireworks at night. We often attended, walking the streets and shyly greeting friends and chums. Do you believe it was Fun? Even when the streets were two blocks long in each direction? It was! Firecrackers were plentiful and you never knew when someone might start a cannonade with them or with torpedoes. Papa and Mama would not allow us to bring or use any firecrackers in town but other parents were not so strict. There was plenty to spend our money on, rides, drinks and ice cream. We were not encouraged to try the games of chance.

Neighbors took picnic dinners to these celebrations, vying with each other over the contents of their baskets. It was a feat and a feather in your hat if, from the garden, you had new potatoes, and green peas to accompany the fried chicken for the Fourth of July, all home raised, of course.

At home again, chores all done, we finished the firecrackers, trying to make the punk last as long as the crackers. When it was dark enough, we finished off with our sparklers, Roman candles, and some whirl-I-gigs, which Papa fastened to the well house wall. Some few years, we did go to an evening celebration, seeing the town's fireworks. Then we came home in the surrey, so very tired, and excited but happy.

Once each year, driving the team on a surrey, we followed the river road to attend the County Fair at Central City. In later years, we went by car. Dutifully, we looked at the exhibits, stock, garden produce, fancy work and all, but we went for the entertainment and the carnival. We never had much money so we had to plan carefully. Mama fixed a picnic dinner which we ate on the ground under some lovely old trees with friends and neighbors. One year, the gate prize was a ten minute ride in the airplane, a two seated bi-plane, which was stunting and performing at the fair. I yearned to win the ride as now my grandson yearns to win the new car offered as gate prize. Barnstorming with a plane was part of the entertainment for several years. One year, the plane provided extra entertainment by a crash landing in a nearby cornfield. The plane was wrecked but the pilot escaped injury.

Excellent entertainment was furnished at these fairs, circus acts, clowns, musical shows, variety shows, dramas, special performers, and horse racing every day. One year, Harry Lauder, the famous Scottish singer, was on the program and I enjoyed it very much. The only songs I recall were "There's a Wee, Wee, Lassie" and "The Dolly With a Hole In Her Stocking." I tried to whistle the last tune for months but I never could whistle well.



Valentine's Day was a bright spot in the winter months at our schools. Most of the pupils could not afford boughten valentines so we made them at home, using such materials as we could find, scraps of wall paper, saved bits of tinsel, and Mama could usually find us some colored tissue paper. We made paste from flour and water, which Mama would cook for us so it would turn out smoother. At school, Teacher helped us make a valentine for father and mother and she would furnish boughten paste in a jar, with a small paddle to spread it with. On the long awaited day, Teacher would brightly decorate a large box and we dropped our offerings into the slit on top. After a short party with games and fun, Teacher chose someone to pass out the exciting colorful valentines. Some of the more popular pupils received more than their share but I don't remember that anyone was ever left out. Probably the teacher saw to that. Then she would serve

small beautifully decorated cakes and candy to all.

Washington and Lincoln's birthdays were usually recognized with special songs, pictures and stories. No holiday recess or time off. Labor Day was also ignored in our community. Thanksgiving Day was always a vacation day, also the Friday following. If the corn was picked we drove with our offerings of roast chicken and pumpkin pies to Grandpa and Grandma's house (John Morris and Eliza) to share the day with them. If the corn was not yet in the bin, we picked corn with only a roast chicken meal to remind us of the day. Everyone tried mightily to get all the corn out before the Thanksgiving time; soon, it would be impossible to pick, and if we succeeded, it was a true Thanksgiving Day. Church services in honor of the day were either the Sunday before or the Sunday after.

Christmas was always the highlight of the year, toward which all the year was working, for children anyway. Our school and church always had special programs. Our simple school buildings and church buildings were not equipped with stage or platforms so curtains were made of family sheets and hung from wires strung across the front of the room to improvise a stage. I don't remember exchanging gifts with other pupils so maybe it wasn't the custom, but we did buy a gift for the teacher, and Sunday school teacher.

In the church, a large Christmas tree stood tall and beautifully decorated and twinkling with many lighted candles, giving off nearly as much light, as the kerosene lights in the chandeliers, in the poorly lighted church. Some children received a gift from under the tree but we never did. All our gifts arrived in our stocking on Christmas morning.

Although toys were few, compared with the present day super abundance, even then there were plenty of toys. Dolls, balls, tops, sleds, skates, and of course, articles of clothing, mittens, scarves, muffs, gloves, stockings, to name a few. One year, Mama asked me to lie down with my youngest sister until she fell asleep so Mama could finish her evening chores, ready to play Santa Claus. I could hear Papa play with the new toys,

heard him wind the top, play with the drum, bounce balls, while Mama filled the stocking with other goodies. One year, I received a Brownie Kodak and a new nightgown. Mama looked anxiously at me the next morning and years later, I realized how much they hoped that they had pleased me. I was really excited but I don't think I had a very good way of showing it. I never seemed to know how to express appreciation beyond the usual and casual thank you.

I well remember our first Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. I was a freshman in high school and school had been closed for three weeks because of the influenza epidemic. It was a Monday and I drove my horse and buggy into town, Center Point, to find wild excitement, bells ringing, whistles blowing, school kids snake dancing up and down the streets, while those with Model T Fords raced them up and down, screaming and yelling.

The president of the school board, also president of the bank, came out on the bank steps and harangued us about running around wild and ordered us back to school. Only a few went back. Those who could, piled into cars and drove off toward Cedar Rapids. I went to school, not really caring to go or worried about the president's threats but it was better than driving home so soon again. I didn't have the flu at that time, but waited until January to succumb. Armistice Day had faded in memories and now has become Veteran's Day, which is probably more representative of our feelings toward all veterans of all wars. Armistice Day, like labor day, was not fully observed except for those who worked for government or for labor unions. Schools and stores were open and they still are in many communities.

New Year's day was a time of good will and good times, with a family dinner, good food, more candy and popcorn. Like all winter times, the weather controlled what we did to celebrate. We never attended a watch night party; if any were available, they were too distant to keep the family up past midnight. Each of us wrote out our New Year's resolutions every year, promising such perfect behavior that of course, we never really tried to keep them. Perhaps our good intentions moved us toward better behavior.

One highlight of the year was the Sunday school picnic. Warm weather was here, the children's day program was over, grass had grown green, and we picnicked in Green's Grove with all the church, parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, everyone was invited. Can you imagine such food? After the long prayer, we walked around and around the long trestle table the men had erected. When we selected our food and filled our plates, we ate sitting on blankets in the shade or sun, depending on whether the sun was hot. After dinner, there were competitions for all. Races and more races, even a father's race. There were sack races, wheel barrow races, running jumps, three-legged races. It was fun.

Another unusual day which I greatly enjoyed was Flunk Day honored by my high school in Center Point. On a bright spring morning and warm enough, we would arrive at school to find the Flunk Day had been declared. We bought lunch materials, wieners, buns, rolls, cookies and marshmallows, pooling our resources. Then we hiked to a neighboring woods where it was pleasant to relax after the strain of school and winter. We did have one particular problem as a few of the boys had cars and they soon roared off to greener pastures. Not many of us could go as the cars were soon filled and our folks wouldn't have approved anyway. I went picnicking with a group of girls, wonderful girls, the elite of the school but they were old maids in spirit already. However, it is hard to be bored in the woodland in the spring and I recommend a Flunk Day, every year.

We think of Easter as a spring celebration but I can remember so many, many years that it wasn't really spring yet, that Easter to me is more of a celebration of the spirit. Between snow and ice and mud, Easter was a trial but we rejoiced in the coming rebirth of the countryside and celebrated the Risen Lord.

¹ US Representative James Bromwell, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Farming Then

A farm sale has been the most common method by which a farmer disposed of his equipment and livestock. The highest bid must be accepted and the article must be sold. The farmer might arrange for a neighbor or friend to bid in on some article for him but it would spoil the sale if it became known.

Usually a sale is called if or when a farmer is quitting farming or if he is moving too far to reasonably move his equipment and feed. Or if he wished to dispose of feed and livestock to raise money.

An auctioneer was engaged, sale bills were made out at the local print shop, advertising the stock, equipment, grain and whatever. These bills were scattered for all to see, in store windows, on corner telephone poles, printed in the local paper, anywhere to inform as many buyers as possible. The local bank furnished a clerk, for a fee, of course.

The machinery was lined up in orderly rows for convenience. The horses and cows were tied in their stalls. The calves, pigs and chickens were confined in pens, according to their size and age. All the small tools and junky items were collected and piled on a hayrack or two, where they were ready for the auctioneer. No matter how cold or stormy, unless the road was actually blocked, the sale went on.

When everyone came by foot, horseback or with team and wagon, the sale started at 10 to 10:30 o'clock in the morning and they finished in time for everyone to go home before dark. Often several men would come together in one wagon or sled. Whether they came to buy stock, equipment, feed or whether they just came for the free lunch and for sociability, it was always a time of bawdy good humor and friendly gossip, as they followed the auctioneer from article to article.

The small items on the hayracks were sold first, then the auctioneer moved on to machinery and small stock. Grain and hay were sold by the bushel or by the pound and must be weighed to find the final cost, usually at the nearest elevator scales. The horses were led out, one by one, and trotted around the ring of spectators as the bidding went on. Then the cows were also run into the ring of spectators, one by one; when sold, they were returned to their stanchions until the new owner could take them home.

At noon, the owner served sack lunches with hot coffee to everyone. The coffee was prepared on the kitchen range in a wash boiler, then poured into a ten gallon milk can, which had been scoured inside and out. It was then carried to a sheltered spot in the yard or shed. The auctioneer furnished the tin cups, one hundred or so, bringing them with him in a gunny sack (burlap bag). Each man picked up a cup, dipped into the can of coffee, and accepted a sack lunch as they were passed out. Mama and neighbor ladies had filled the sacks with baker's buns, with cheese and or bologna, and one or two doughnuts. Days ahead, the buns and doughnuts had been ordered from the local grocery, who, in turn, had ordered them from a bakery in Cedar Rapids. The bakery goods came from Cedar Rapids to the grocery in heavy wooden boxes, delivered by the railroad, on the morning of the specified day. One of the family or one of the neighbors would drive into town to pick up the order along with the necessary small paper sacks for the lunch.

In the meantime, Mama or the lady of the house, served dinner to the auctioneer,

the clerks, workers and friends in the house. Like in threshing time this was a feast for everyone. Girls were supposed to stay in the house and leave the sale to the men and boys. Sometimes, it was stormy or cold and the boys lost interest and came into the house. When they were forced to help herd or help move some of the stock, they bitterly wished they were back in the warm house.

The auctioneer could move around, wave his arms, stamp his feet to keep warm but the clerk had to stick to his clerking so the clerks were always bundled up in many layers of clothing. As each sheet of sales was filled, it was sent into the house to another clerk and the buyer settled for his purchase there. One auctioneer cried his sale in twenty below zero weather, wearing a cowboy hat and he froze his ears.

Later years, when cars became more generally used, sales were more often started at 12 o'clock and the sack lunches were a thing of the past. The family still fed the workers, but a group of church ladies often sold lunches to the men, selling main-rites, pie and coffee. Many an improvement at the churches was financed by these gallant ladies, who endured the drafty sheds and porches to serve their church. Now, there are men, who follow the sales, making it a business as they follow the sales with their traveling lunch wagon.

I used to enjoy the sight of stallions being led along the road, beautiful horses, Percheron, Belgian or Clydesdale. Use of horse power required constant replacements in each neighborhood, so two or three were usually available. When called, the horse tender,



usually a retired farmer, would drive his staid old horse on a single buggy (no top) leading the spirited stallion to the farm. Children were hurried into the house, to avoid frightening the horse as often he was very excitable and sometimes just plain mean, and to avoid exposing the children to the sex life of horses.

Papa kept two brood mares so there were young colts, yearlings, and two-year olds running in the pasture all summer. One of our brood mares worked regularly and her colt either

followed freely or the colt was haltered and tied to the mother's side. It was necessary to stop every so often to allow the colt to nurse. Two-year olds were broken to harness and to work in the springtime and by the time they were four or five years old, they were in their prime.

Papa loved his horses. Fanny was a gentle work horse, broken to drive single on the buggy, so Mama always drive her to shop or to Grandma's. She was gentle but she always tried to throw her tail over the reins, which made it much harder to guide and control her.

One year, Fanny and her daughter, Maggie had colts almost on the same day, but something happened to Maggie and Fanny nursed both colts. Papa named them Max and Rex. They grew to be a fine matched team, black percherons. Since Papa babied them,

trained to lead at an early age, broke them into harness and field work, he had a valuable team for several years. Sadly, I recall that years later, Max and Rex were killed by lightning as they stood on a knoll in the pasture one summer evening. I fear we were unable to express our sympathy adequately for his sorrow and his loss.

The art of butchering is almost lost to farmers, but it used to be a very important skill and butchering day was a special day for the entire family and often the neighbors. We never butchered a beef but always a nice fat hog. Water was heated in every conceivable container, from a large kettle over an open outdoor fire, to all possible containers on the kitchen range, including the wash boiler. A fifty gallon barrel, with one open end, was propped up against a table. After the hog was killed and bled, a block and tackle was used to help in handling the animal. The scalding water was carried to till the barrel half full, or as full as there was hot water. The hog was dipped in and out of the water, then dragged onto the table, where the man with heavy butcher knives scraped the hair and hide until the carcass was white and clean. If the animal was very large, it was turned and the other end dipped into the scalding water. After it was scraped clean, the carcass was pulled up and hung from a scaffold, usually the driveway of the corner crib. It was split down the center of the back with an ax and a saw, then the leaf lard and the innards were pulled down and out, leaving it clean and smooth on the inside also. The heart, liver and sometimes the brains were carefully saved and cleaned. We always had fresh liver for supper that night. The head was split and cleaned, cooked in the wash boiler and then Mama made head cheese from the meat.

After the meat was thoroughly cooled, overnight at least, it was brought into the house, where Mama could oversee the cuts as she wanted them. We never had pork chops as such, but stripped the loin from the backbone and from the ribs. The hams and shoulders and sidemeat were cut into two to four pound pieces and placed outside to freeze in a barrel or tub, for winter use. We rendered lard and made mince meat.

Some of the neighbors smoked their hams and bacon over a cob fire under a barrel but we put ours down in brine to keep for next summer, when it would be brought up and freshened. Some of our meat was fried down and packed in lard to keep till next summer. It was really very good that way. Sausage was fried and also packed in lard in jars.

The remains of the lard are called cracklings. We used some of these in making cornmeal mush to fry. Very good.

I watched Papa cut nearly ripe corn stalks with a corn knife, gathering enough stalks to make a nice shock about four feet across. He then tied them with twine, like a fat woman's belt. He used a rope with a ring on one end; he would throw the ring around the shock, slip the rope through the ring and draw the rope tight, making a good upstanding shock. Then the twine was passed around and the rope released to use on the next shock. If I was at home, I would sometimes have to carry water to him during the afternoon.

At that to time, every farmer cut some corn fodder. Straight rows of corn shocks marched across many fields ever fall. After the rest of the corn was picked, a neighbor, who owned a corn shredder pulled into the yard and the fodder was run through, removing the ears and grinding up the fodder rather coarsely. This coarse roughage was stored in the barn or in a stack, and fed to the stock through the winter. Some years, Papa husked the ears out by hand and fed the corn stalks as they were.

Corn picking was a busy time and all the family had to help. Our school had a two or three week vacation so the boys and girls could pick corn, or they could help their mother so she could pick. It was a mammoth job. Early in the morning, Papa fed the harnessed horses, finished his milking and his pig chores hurriedly, ate breakfast, hitched the team to the wagon and the pickers rattled off to the field about daybreak. When the box was full of corn, Papa shoveled the corn into the crib, while Mama and the girls prepared lunch. The second load came in about dark. Horses were watered, tied in the stalls in the barn, unharnessed, and fed. Chores were hurried again and Papa shoveled the load off after supper. It was a long day of hard work. If the baby was too small, someone had to stay in the house but small children rode along in the wagon or played about the field, and again rode when tired.

Papa used a three-bed wagon box with three or four boards high on one side, called bang boards. Corn was usually husked two rows at a time, throwing the husked ear against the bang board, where it fell back into the wagon. When two persons were picking, the best picker took the two near rows and the slower picker, a third row and had to take time to avoid hitting the first picker. A solid ear of corn can be a lethal weapon. Ears, which were overthrown were often lost, but sometimes the younger ones would notice and retrieve them.

We used husking pegs to help remove the husks. Papa was particular and did not want any husks left on. Some farmers picked out their seed corn while they were picking, selecting the nicest ears and saving them in a separate box attached to the wagon.

Papa had selected his seed early in the season before frost and it was stored in our upstairs room on a round frame, especially for that purpose. Each ear was spiked into place and stood around the frame, none touching each other. In the spring, he tested each ear by shelling three kernels from each ear and starting the seed in a so-called rag doll, to make sure every kernel would grow.

In Grandpa's day, he used no bang boards, so a picker picked a row on each side of the wagon, throwing directly into the box. This, of course, resulted in a down row of corn, so that a third picker had to husk out the down row each time across the field. One of our folklore stories concerns this. In his younger days, Grandpa boasted of his ability to pick the down row and keep up with the others. Tired of hearing his boasts, they picked away, leaving him far behind till he gave up and with a "Whoa, dammit, whoa" he stopped the team. It was necessary to keep muzzles on the horses.

Then, there were those who could pick a hundred bushels a day. Many yarns and stories have been spun around the competition of picking a hundred or more bushels of corn a day. Each had to pick three large wagon loads of corn a day to make a hundred bushels and it took good luck, good yielding corn, stamina and determination. Much depended on the amount of chores, on the yield of corn, on a good team and wagon and on a decent place to shovel off, and if the fields were not too distant from the crib. If the corn had to be shoveled over a ten or twelve foot partition, it took too much of your time and energy.

Many men picked all fall for different farmers, receiving from five to ten cents a bushel. If the weather was at all possible, picking went on because we knew it would get worse. It was a sign of shiftlessness, if you had any corn left in the field in the spring.

Farming has always been an exacting business as to time and weather. Men must

hurry to plant before it rains and before it is too late for a crop to mature before frost. Men must rush to cultivate before it rains, before the weeds get too big, before haying demands your time. Men must rush to harvest before it rains, before the straw lodges, before the frost kills the plants, before snow fills the fields. We were and always are at the mercy of the weather.

In their rush, men throw tools into a fence corner and the tools are lost till next year, log chains are plowed under in the furrow, gasoline cans and funnels are left beside the tractor and are crushed in the hurry. In a spotless yard, raked by mother and the children, someone used a rock to block a wheel as he fixed a wagon and left it there, of course. Father leaned a board against the rock as he drove away, brother added the spare parts of the wagon he was making, until the pile contained used motors, wagon gears, broken sieves from the fanning machine, bits of harness, odds and ends. Who did it? The mysterious They, of course.

A Red Letter Day

Threshing day was a red letter day in our summer. After the threshing crew had eaten their supper at one farm, they moved the machine to the next farm, arriving after dark. The huge steam engine came puff-puffing into our yard with wheels rumbling and sparks flying. They gave a long steam whistle, announcing their arrival at yet another farm. The engine was followed by the long threshing machine, and bringing up the rear



By the mid-1880s, many farmers used steam traction engines to power grain separators. Photo, ca. 1910.

was a faithful team on the water wagon, driven by the water boy even if the water boy was sixty years old. I hung on the gate, watching as the fire box clanged open, throwing a fiery orange glow into the shadows. The men looked huge and awesome as they banked the fire for the night in the bright glow of the fire. Then the door clanged shut again. The crew went home, leaving the monster machine in our barnyard.

In the morning, the engine crew gathered to stoke the fire in the steam engine and to jockey the threshing machine into position wherever Papa indicated he wanted his straw stack. The crew positioned the machine so that the morning breeze would blow the chaff away from the workers. The water boy filled his wagon from the nearest creek and filled the boiler of the engine. When the men were ready and the oats were deemed dry enough, the whistle was blown again to signify it was time to thresh.

Teams and hayracks soon arrived, hurrying to the field, where some pitched the bundles from each shock, onto a rack, while others shaped the load. The full load was brought into the farmyard and lined up beside the machine and the bundles laid on the moving carriage to be carried into the threshing compartment, in orderly fashion. Once in a while some smart aleck would throw too many sheaves at once and plug the machine. Much time could be wasted in this way.

In the meantime, the grain wagons came. The oats poured from a spout into the wagon and only needed to be leveled in the wagon, a three bed box. The load was then moved to the bin and shoveled off, usually two men taking turns at the shoveling.

Two or three men would be stacking the straw stack. This was the worst job of all, due to the chaff and dust as they laid out the stack and shaped it so that it would shed water and snow. The extra straw which accumulated around the stack made a wonderful place to play when everyone left. Papa forbid us on the stack as that had to be kept shaped, to shed rain.

In the meantime, Mama and several of the neighbor ladies were busy getting dinner. A big dinner was served to all, meat or chicken, potatoes, baked beans, gravy, corn, bread and butter, jelly, sauce (apple sauce at our house) cake or pie. Always pickles, beet and cucumber, and coffee.

I was born too soon because I had to be ladylike and could not ride the grain wagons as the boys were happily doing. I was allowed to take the younger children down

to see the machine but "Hurry back, it's time to peel potatoes for supper." The neighbor kids were there with their mothers so there was lots of work but it was exciting and fun also.

On the Abbey Place, Papa and fellow neighbors went together to form a threshing company and bought a steam engine and a threshing separator, water wagon and all. They hired one of their own to run the outfit. They were assured that the machine would be ready when the grain was ready, and you could depend on the machine to come when your turn came. Favoritism was a big problem when you relied on a privately owned machine. All the bills were paid at the end of the threshing season and it was one of the few successful adventures of the time. This machine was used until the combine put the threshing machine out of business.

Papa cut his oats with a McCormick reaper, with three horses pulling it. Oats



were then shocked in shocks of eight or so bundles and another one added on top for a cap. It was usually blisteringly hot during harvesting and threshing. We were kept busy carrying water to the field for Papa or for the threshing men.

A mini tornado went through our place and one of the trees fell on the harvester, crushing it.

Oddly, I can remember how it looked, and that wrens built a nest in the twine box each year. Papa then bought a new harvester, with a seven foot sickle and he used four horses. Mama drove on the harvester while Papa shocked. When we were old enough, all of us took our turn at shocking and carrying the drinking water. Harvesting was hard on horses because of the heat and you had to stop and rest them often. Shocking was often done in the evening after the sun went down, but the oats had to be cut when dry; as soon as the dew fell, they became too damp. Papa used to put big catalpa leaves inside his straw hat to protect his bald head from the hot sun. Water was carried in crockery jugs with a cork stopper although the cork sometimes became a broken corncob. The jug was buried in a shock to keep as cool as possible.

In the earlier years on the Creek Place, I remember helping Papa stack his oats. I couldn't have been much help but I thought I was helping. He would load a rack with bundles from the shocks in the field, haul them to a spot near the barn and build a stack, a conical stack with the heads into the center and the butts on the outside. The sheaves had to be thrown onto the stack, then arranged properly. This would go well until the stack was higher than the loaded wagon rack and I helped him. I have no idea if I was any help, real help I mean, but at least I was there. After the top bundles were arranged so as to shed water, the stack was allowed to set and go through a sweat as they called it. Later the threshing machine arrived and the bundles were thrown into the machine from the stack. It didn't take many men to thresh in this manner. Seems like there might have been 3 or 4 stacks of oats.

One of my pleasant memories concerned meals while Papa was gone threshing at the neighbors in their turn. Of course, he had a feed at the meals with the gang but Mama used the time for a mini vacation. Each day, she boiled a big kettle of fresh potatoes and another of sweet corn on the ear, with salt, butter and pepper, then we could take our plates and eat wherever we chose, outdoors, upstairs, anywhere. It was a kind of a

vacation. When Papa was home, we sat at the table and minded our manners as usual.

Once, when I was old enough, I helped a neighbor lady with the cooking and the dishes and I rode home with Papa on the high spring seat of the grain wagon. Huge black clouds rolled up in the west and over us. It was frightening, thrilling, beautiful. Did it rain? I don't remember, I do remember the awed, scared excitement as we watched the thunderheads roll higher and higher in the west and we could see and feel the wind stir up the dust devils around us.

In earlier days, caring for the chickens was a dirty, crummy job. I helped Mama with the chickens because I was interested, I like to think, but I'm not sure but perhaps it was to get out of dishwashing or housecleaning. Mama raised as many chickens as she could, trying to have fifty pullets to add to her flock of hens. In the spring, she set broody hens on fifteen eggs each in a string of brooding coops, fastened together on the ground and fenced into that the hens could not wander. When the chicks hatched, they were placed with a hen, fifteen chicks to each hen to a single coop. They were watered and fed and let out during the day to forage, but confined again at night. Some years we raised more than others, sometimes the hens were not very good mothers, varmints got some of them, or they were drowned.

Growing chickens, caught out in a rain will drown so we made a great effort, braving the wind and the rain to get them under cover. Many a half-drowned chicken has been revived on the over door or behind the kitchen range, even when they appeared lifeless when they were brought in. Some never did recover but lost their lives because they chose to huddle under a tree or the eaves of a building, instead of going inside of the coop or henhouse. Stupid chickens!

Before cold weather, the pullets were put into the henhouse. Hens had the run of the farm and we managed to sell a few eggs. The roosters were eaten when they were young as fried chicken and later they were roasted. We often had a big fat hen and noodles. We mourned if we happened to pick out a laying hen. Usually, we could tell.

Mama could cut off their heads at the chopping block with an ax, dip them in scalding hot water and then it was up to us to pick the feathers and pinfeathers from the chickens. Mama then dressed them and she was very skillful. Later, she taught us and we had to do our share of dressing the birds but she never did expect us to kill them.

One year, when the brooding coop was full, eight I think, it snowed and snowed till the coops were almost covered. By work we moved those broody hens, eggs, straw and all into the cellar. We saved some of the hatch but it wasn't worth it.

It was a continual battle with lice and mites. We dusted each hen with insecticide when we put her on the setting of eggs and again when we gave her chicks to hover. Broody hens were dusted as we put them in the special coop to break them of setting, if we didn't need any more broody hens. The hen house was sprayed occasionally for mites but I never could see that it did much good. I suppose it could have been worse if we hadn't.

One day, I dusted a group of hens with louse powder and afterward, I hung my dress on the clothesline as it smelled to high heaven of dip and dust. You can't imagine what happened? A calf ate it up! Several calves were running in the house yard and one of them ate the dress, leaving only a few shreds. No real loss but it was a long time before I heard the last of that! The individual coops for baby chicks were metal and so were easy

to keep clean.

Papa and Mama were industrious, planned ahead, and tried out new ideas. They were involved with church and school. They joined the new organization called the Farm Bureau. Mama attended the township meetings on homemaking and nutrition, which were planned by the county extension service.

Mama also attended a seminar in Cedar Rapids, a cooking school. I can't remember much about her going but she had a notebook full of recipes she had accumulated there.

One night of a Farm Bureau meeting at a farm two or three miles from us, we were too much for the poor old Overland. A young cousin was visiting us, so we all piled into the car to go that evening but we only got a mile or so and one of the car's springs broke. Papa and Mama returned home with the younger children and we older ones walked on down to the meeting, and although we did have offers of a ride for some of us, we also walked home. We didn't want to break down another car.

Each year, we helped plant potatoes. On an early spring day, we accompanied Papa to the field that he had selected for that year's potato crop. First, he plowed a straight furrow across one end of the patch, then we dropped the seed about twelve inches apart in the furrow. Papa then plowed another furrow, covering the first and the seed. We planted in every fourth furrow. Mama had prepared the seed which meant cutting up the potatoes so that each piece had two eyes. It took several bushels of potatoes, and we must have planted one-half acre.

When we finished, Papa leveled the patch with a harrow, working crosswise. The result was a fine soft soil, in which Papa urged us to practice both standing and running broad jumps. He was always encouraging these contests, especially running from the house to the barn and back. We learned that Mama could not run.

In the fall, Papa plowed the potatoes out and we picked them up, using fork, rake and hands. I don't know how many bushels but we usually had enough to last us till the next season and for seed. If for some reason, the crop was small, Papa bought potatoes in one-hundred pound bags.

Mama cooked a big kettle of potatoes every noon time and we had leftovers for supper, either fried or creamed. Some other families insisted on potatoes for breakfast also. Usually the potatoes were peeled before they were cooked but sometimes Mama cooked them in their jackets and we peeled the leftover potatoes to use for supper.

We had only work horses on our farm so I didn't learn to ride. Papa used to give a small child a ride, from his unhitching spot to the water tank, the child sitting astride a broad back but we were not allowed nor did we want to ride the work horses.

It sounds romantic as we recall riding behind a team through the countryside with it's green grass and bright flowers but it was also being exposed to the elements, heat, wind and cold. In good weather, especially in the spring, it could be delightful with the fresh greenery and the violets and ink flowers unfolded.

In winter the horses plugged along as the cold crept up under your collar, up your sleeves, up under the robe into your fingers and toes. When you arrived at your destination, the horse or horses must be tied in a sheltered place and blanketed. Or when you arrived home, the horse or horses must be unhitched, watered, (you likely had to break the ice in the tank) led to the barn, tied in their stall, unharnessed and rubbed down,

all done awkwardly with numbed fingers through heavy mittens.

In summer, heat, sweat, dust and flies were the big annoyance to both you and the horses. When the green-headed flies buzzed around, the horses would fight them, tossing their heads and biting at the offending flies. When the huge buffalo flies buzzed by, we had to tighten the reins to keep the team in control. Buffalo flies were not so common but the green heads and the common horse fly were always with us. The horses wore fly nets instead of blankets, in summer, to help protect them from the flies.

D.D.T. and modern fly sprays have done wonders for the fly population. Fly nets are not used on the teams working in the fields. It probably would take too many. However, in the field, there was usually a breeze to chase away a few of the flies. A horse can make his skin quiver at will, and thus also moved the netting to disturb any fly. They really helped. I sometimes wished I could twitch my skin and disturb the flies on me.

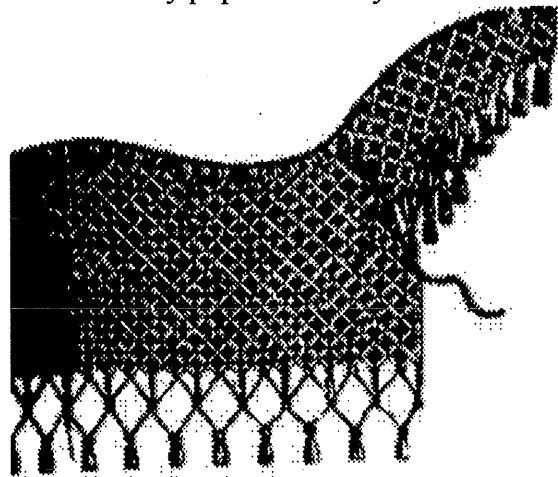
Every summer or fall, Papa had to work out his poll tax. It could be paid in cash, but most farmers took the option to work on a road near him. You paid with two days of your time or one day and your team. The township road boss set a time

and called a gang together and marked the places they would work. Usually Papa drove to the nearest gravel pit a mile or so away and hauled back gravel to spread on a nearby mudhole. A special box, used for road work, was set on Papa's high wheel wagon. It was constructed of planks, only ten or twelve inches high with loose planks for flooring. He and fellow poll taxers loaded the wagon with gravel, which they then drove to the spot designated, and the wagon was driven astraddle of the road mudhole, the planks were tipped and the gravel spilled only the road, a labor saving device. While the drivers went back for another load, the road boss and his helpers spread the gravel around as best they could with shovels.

At the foot of every rise, these hollows developed where water did not run off but had to dry up. They tried to build them up so the water could run off but as soon as it rained and muddy tracks became muddy ruts, water again was held in the low spots.

Sometimes they tried to fix a larger spot. A few furrows were plowed with a walking plow in the grassy filled ditch to loosen some soil. A team would be hitched to a road scraper or slip, which scooped up a full of dirt and pulled to the site. The farmer then upended the slip, depositing the dirt in the spot as designated by the supervisor. Then the dirt was leveled and covered with gravel if there was enough. It was hard work, but it was helping the mudholes near your own farm. Also there was a genial comradeship.

Women did not pay poll tax as they did not have the vote. I don't know what Papa would have paid in cash but later, in the twenties, it was two dollars.





Road Gang

Franklin Clifford Renfer was road boss this time. They had to work the road tax. Taken south of Lower Spring Cemetery on a hill as you came to a timber. The men were Henry Russell Taylor, Fred John Dudley, Franklin Clifford Renfer who is holding the lines, William H. Hagerman and Robert Edward Mote. Taken before 1915

This picture reproduced from "The History of Troy Mills, Iowa

Moving On

Farm leases ran from March 1 to March 1, so moving day was March 1 or as near as was practical. Sometimes, a family retired and moved to town so the chain of moving could be moved up a week or two but not usually. Some years, a snow storm struck around the last few days of February so as to make moving impossible. The leases gave only three days of grace so moving was accomplished as soon as possible.

Neighbors helped the family move, furnishing team, wagon, rack or whatever help was needed. Everyone had to plan ahead for the day. During the winter, much of the machinery, grain, fodder, and miscellaneous was moved to the new farm as the weather permitted. Extra dishes, pans, clothes, small items were packed in boxes ahead of time.

One year, we moved from the Creek Place to the Colyer Place, ten miles, then another year, we moved from the Colyer Place back to the Creek Place. Then in the spring of 1917, we moved to the Abbey place, eight mile move, where we lived the rest of the time I was home. I was twelve.

After all the weeks of planning and waiting, the day finally arrived. Early morning, the fires were allowed to go out so that the stoves would be loaded on the first wagon. The baby and small children were taken by someone, who had a car, to Grandpa's or Aunties's or a kind neighbor so they would be safe and warm during all the commotion.

Beds were taken down, bedding packed in boxes, furniture carried downstairs. A lunch was fixed for the dinner hour and perishable foods readied for the return of the car. Neighbors arrived with racks and wagon boxes and soon there was a train of wagons jolting down the road or slogging through the mud with stoves, beds, crates of chickens, pigs and calves and boxes and boxes of belongings.

On arrival at the new house, stoves were set up and fires started. Sometimes a trip to town was necessary to buy extra stove pipe or a different size because the old did not fit the new chimney hole. Everyone helped unload and carried in furniture, placing it wherever it seemed most logical. A few items were always missing for months. Mama made coffee and brought out her basket of sandwiches and cake.

A trusted neighbor, along with several half-grown boys had driven the cattle along the road and now they were stabled in the new barn. Most of the cows were dry and wouldn't freshen until April or May to take advantage of the pasture season. The pigs and chickens were penned or released in their new quarters.

On one of our moves, Mama's everyday dishes were packed in a galvanized wash tub with many dish towels around them. At the last moment, the tub was tied securely to the top of the wagon, on a set of bed springs to help absorb the jolting. Sad to say, they were not secure and fell off, breaking every dish. I don't know what Mama said, but remembering her phobia about broken dishes, doubtless Papa heard plenty.

Before dark, the neighbors would rattle toward home, leaving us alone in a strange new house. Beds were made up and some of the dishes and food unpacked. Someone brought the children and the baby. By now we were so tired, all we could do was drop into bed.

Although it sounds terrible to try and move like that now, at the time it was the

accepted custom and the day was filled with joshing, horse play, gossip and laughter. What we have to do, we do! We set the mood of the times, ourselves.

Always I had a new school and a new teacher to get acquainted with. It makes me tired to even think of moving now, but it did have its good points. We moved with great expectation, with the resolve to farm better, to keep house better, to clean away the junk left by the last tenant. I would get better grades, be less shy in school. We would plant a new strawberry bed and raise a wonderful garden. Some families were unwilling to make these efforts, knowing full well that they would soon be moving again. Many other families have enriched the country, leaving strawberry beds, rhubarb, asparagus, shrubs and flowers on every farm, they had lived on.

Papa had purchased the farm each time so we had an added incentive to improve it. On the Abbey Place we found a garden, long neglected and untended but someone had cared and loved it once. There were shrubs and flowers of all kinds. I really enjoyed finding all the different shrubs and perennials, all growing wild together. We had a grass yard for the first time and two lovely big catalpa trees to climb. They were messy because of the long beans so likely Mama didn't appreciate them except in blossoming time. Surely every one appreciates their beauty when they blossom. There were some crab apple trees and plum trees, especially some huge old crab apple trees. We didn't need to worry about fruit because Grandpa always had plenty for all.

The well was still about thirty feet from the house but it was level grassy ground and not sandy. A windmill pumped the water if there was enough wind. The Abbey Place had deep black soil, well tiled, good grain land. Papa had wanted to get away from the sand, timber and the creek. We loved the creek but to Papa, it was a job of rebuilding fences, every time it rained. We now had beautiful trees around the lots but no timber. The roads were not an improvement, instead of sand, we now had mud, mucky mud.

Instead of taking the horse drawn bus, we had to walk a mile and one half to the section school. Our mail box was also on the school house corner so one of us walked to get the mail each Saturday. The nearest neighbors had no children in school so we walked alone most of the way.

Although we still burned wood, we had a lower grade of wood, from a willow grown fence row and so forth. Papa and the neighbors exchanged in threshing oats, sawing wood, castrating pigs, calves, or colts and they exchanged hauling crops to market. We always had good neighbors. According to the old adage, when you move, you take your best neighbor with you. I think that this was true with my parents, if you were a good neighbor, others will respond in kind.

Dictionary defines neighbor, "a person who lives near another" or as an adjective "nearby or a close association." As a girl on the Creek place, I counted as neighbors, those within walking distance, only four or five families.

(At the creek place) We trudged up the sandy road to each other's homes, whenever our mothers allowed us to visit for an hour or an afternoon. I was very shy and I remember how I dreaded to turn the corner because then they could see me coming. Mama told me that the first time I went alone, I came back several times on one pretext or another. On the other hand, when one of us spotted neighboring walkers coming, we would sound the alarm, "Company's coming." We could quickly whisk our toys, papers, and trash out of sight and greet them with a fairly orderly house.

Actually, with the exception of Grandpa and Grandma, I seldom visited anyone but the nearest family, the McKee's. They had twelve children and they also lived on Phillips' Creek and we spent many happy hours in the water and on the sandbars with those of our own age. Some days they visited us and we played in the hay mow, climbed the long ladders in each end of the barn, to look at the fat squabs in the nests. And, of course, we played on the manure carrier, dumping each other into the strawy pile in the barnyard. The barn was a wonderful playground.

It was only a mile to grandpa's house and we walked there often. I stayed all night once in a while and stayed two or three weeks in the summer time.

On the Abbey place, the closest neighbors had children but they were younger so practically no one was around to climb into the hay mow and this barn had no manure carrier.

I think that the neighborhood ladies near the Abbey place were more congenial with Mama and she enjoyed their coming and going. There were three houses within a half mile of us, all close together and they walked back and forth to spend an afternoon. They helped each other during threshing and so forth.

From the Abbey place, it was seven miles to Grandpa's house, so then we went by team or car and I stayed often over the weekends because Grandma was getting feeble and needed someone with her. I don't know how much help I was but I liked staying with them. They were still living in the old house, built by pioneers after the log cabins. The house was set among tall old cottonwood trees and surrounded by gardens and orchards. A tall windbreak of cedars protected the house from the north winds so it was warm in winter and cool in summer. Grandpa recalled that the trees had been seemingly grown trees when he moved onto the farm in 1869. (The Old grove)

The house had been built over an old log barn, a story and one-half, the roof covered with milled shingles, now badly weathered (it didn't leak) and it was sided with narrow milled siding, unpainted also badly weathered. There was a large living room, a bedroom, and a long lean-to kitchen with eaves so low, that I could reach up and touch them with my fingertips. Two tiny bedrooms and one large storeroom had been fashioned in the loft. The windows were small, made with small panes, six to a sash. Steep narrow steps led to the upstairs.

Down steep narrow, broken down steps was the cellar under the living room. This was an important part of the house as here was kept all the produce of the gardens. Mama was so afraid some of us might fall down this cellarway, that Papa rebuilt it and made a good tight cover for the steps. He also made a patio, about ten or twelve feet square in front of the kitchen door. One of my mental pictures of Grandma is of her standing in front of the door welcoming us, with umpteen cats and kittens rubbing against her feet and skirts.

In this cellar were barrels of cider, turning into vinegar, and in season, barrels of apples, potatoes, turnips, carrots, squash, pumpkins and rows of crude shelves lined the walls to hold the assorted produce. Many fruit jar, empty and filled with plums, jams, preserves, jellies, tomatoes. Cold pack canning was far in the future. Fried down pork, lard and salt pork were stored here.

Convenient built-in cupboards were in the kitchen end of the lean-to. Some of these cupboards had never been painted and were worn smooth and bleached with many

washings. The kitchen cabinet was a work table with tip-out drawers for flour and sugar.

One unusual piece of equipment was a modern bread mixer, used to eliminate the hand stirring and mixing, leaving only the final flouring and shaping of the loaves by hand. It must have been successful as Grandma used it every week. A second piece was the large bread pan for setting the bread to rise. It was shaped like a dishpan but rounded on the bottom and it was set on a

two inch footing to raise the pan off the table and it had a domed lid, or cover. This pan, containing the bread was then set on the high reservoir of the range to keep warm while the bread was rising.

This room also served as a dining room, and work room with the dining table and chairs in the center, and the cream separator, wash stand and roller towel nearest the door. Outdoor coats were hung behind the door.

The floors in both rooms were wide, six inch lumber, slivering in many places. Grandpa scolded because they mopped the floor too often and that was what wore it out. He was partly right but we did have to clean it.

Like most grandparents, Grandma and Grandpa spoiled us. When we stayed overnight with them, we were allowed to use both butter and jelly on our bread (strictly forbidden at home) butter and syrup with pancakes, or karo and or molasses with our cottage cheese. Grandma made coffee for us, making it half milk and half coffee with plenty of sugar. Grandma made delicious cookies and we could eat between meals or before going to bed.

Their house was full of old copies of magazines like the Youth's Companion and the Chatterbox series. I read much of my time, Grandma must have gotten tired of her reading grandchild but she never said a word.

We washed the dishes together at the oilcloth covered table, where Grandma sat on a chair with a dishpan of soapy water on a chair in front of her. She washed the dishes and I dried them after she had put them in a pan of hot water on the table. She had running sores or ulcers on her shins and ankles, so she sat whenever she could. In later years, I have wondered if she might have had diabetes. The ulcers started after an injury in a runaway accident, years before, and if one ulcer healed, another ulcer broke out elsewhere. She was bedfast the last three or four years of her life and the ulcers did heal completely.

From the kitchen it was one step up into the living room, perhaps twenty feet square. In the center of the room stood the Round Oak heating stove standing on fancy, carved legs; its stove pipe went upwards through the ceiling register, a round grilled collar which fitted around the stove pipe, and allowed heat to rise to the room above. This was Aunt Caroline's room. I always slept in the little room next to her, the room which had been Papa's sisters when they were home. Papa and his brother had slept in the large room with the open stairway, now used as a store room.

When Grandpa was unable to manage the wood anymore, he turned to coal. He was always cold and sometimes he almost drove us out of the house with the heat. When he fixed the fire, he would forget that wood and coal acted differently; he would open the

side made a cover for his wagon and the buggy. There was even another lean-to on this lean-to for another chicken house.

Grandpa wasn't very careful about keeping the horse barn cleaned out; when the poor horses were almost standing on their heads Papa would bring his manure spreader and clean everything. I suppose that actually, Grandpa was unable to do the heavy lifting in his older years. He lived to be eighty-nine.

Horses took a lot of care unless they were not working, then they could be run on pasture or corn stalks. If working they had to be bedded, cleaned after, curried and brushed, led to water at the tank, harnessed (collar and hames) unharnessed, fed grain if they worked. Hay was fed in the manger, after it was carried from the stack. Hay knives were used to cut or slice across a stack. When that was used another slice was cut. Hay knives were sometimes



used in the mow when it wasn't possible to pull the mowed hay apart.



Grandpa's windmill, which pumped water into a wooden stock tank, was a creaky wooden giant, a many bladed wheel, supported on wooden poles and anchored at each corner by heavy wooden posts. One of my cousins said that when the mill ran all night it said, "Johnny get your gun, Johnny got your gun, Johnny get your gun." I

could never hear any sequence of words.

The water for the house was carried from this well. Aunt Caroline, while she was able, carried the water in five gallon cream coolers, one in each hand. She claimed "It was easier work if you were balanced." She and Grandma were like sisters and supported each other when Grandpa was difficult.

When Peddlers Were Welcome

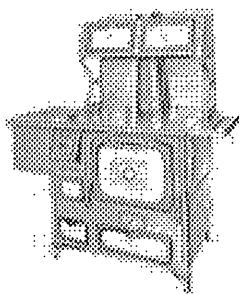
Grandma recalled to us the days when peddlers came calling with their pack of goods on their back. They were always a welcome break in the monotony of days as they opened their pack and showed their goods. One of these, very insistent, when they did not have any money to buy, kept repeating over and over, "I'll sell you cheep, I'll sell you cheep, I'll sell you cheep." He repeated this over and over until Aunt Caroline lost her patience and snapped, "No, you won't. I'm not for sale." He packed his bags and left in a huff.

Many of these early peddlers were immigrants from Syria, who had settled in Cedar Rapids. They traveled on foot and carried their pack until they could save enough money to buy a horse and buggy. Some of them went on to buy a store, first a small one, then a larger one, hard working men from the Old Country.

Many of these peddlers came to our house on the Abbey Place. He carried his pack, as large as a trunk, on the back of the buggy, tied on; he would carry this heavy pack into the center of the parlor floor and unfold it to display a storeroom of materials. It contained lengths of dress material, silks, satins, cottons, all imaginable variety of trimmings, threads, scissors, needles, thimbles, scarves, gloves, a marvel of packing. If Mama had any money, she would buy any needed articles from him.

Some of these peddlers stayed all night with us, if we happened to be the last place he stopped before dark. The horse was cared for and tied in a stall in our barn, the peddler ate supper with us and slept in one of our beds. The children would have to double up to make a bed available for the guest. The next morning after breakfast, he paid for his board and room by allowing Mama to pick and choose something from his pack. It was always interesting and exciting to have a guest for the night.

After supper one evening, one young man, (I don't remember what he was selling), lighted up an exceptionally long cigarette. Since Papa did not smoke, only an occasional cigar when in town, and Mama was violently opposed to smoking, I wasn't surprised when Papa quietly said, "We don't smoke in this house." The badly embarrassed young man dropped his cigarette in the fire.



The Wrought Iron Range Company of Kalamazoo, Michigan, kept many salesmen on the road in rural areas, selling Home Comfort Ranges. Each salesman drove a horse and buggy with a miniature range tied on the back. They were required to stop at every house and also to drive a horse and buggy after cars were in common use. Apparently, the company figured that the slower pace would keep them from skipping the lesser appearing houses. These ranges were sold on monthly credit terms, I think the only earlier credit allowed except the local stores or banks, at least the first time I ever heard of monthly payments.

The days of the so-called medicine peddlers are over but they were welcome callers many times. The Raleigh Company and the Watkins and the McNess Company sold medicines, cosmetics, health remedies, among other products through salesmen.

Some are still operating but we seldom see one now in the country. Nearly every farm family bought liniment, camphor ointment, disinfectant, cough syrup, and big jars of carbolic salve. The liniment and salve served many purposes from treating human cuts to their use on all kinds of livestock. It was especially used for saddle sores and collar burns on horses.

The salesman received his supplies by railroad, shipped to him by the parent company, to the salesman's nearest depot. Some owned their own team and rig but others hired a rig from the local livery stable to cover their assigned territory.

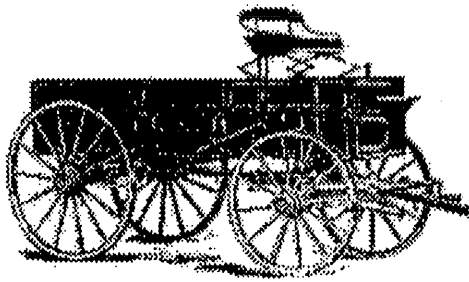
One salesman rented a team at a local barn and was furnished a team that did not pull well together. When he returned them to the stable, he complimented the owner of the team, saying, "That's a damn fine team. One horse tries to pull the entire load and the other horse is damn willing to let him."

Many of these salesmen enclosed their buggies or wagons, to display the products in an orderly manner and he covered his territory systematically, calling on each customer once in every six or eight weeks. Talcum powders, soaps, insecticides, spices, seasonings and flavorings. Pure vanilla extract was a specialty, which they all featured.

I doubt that Papa went to town oftener than once a week or two weeks. We took turns riding with him as soon as we were old enough. We usually had an argument as to whose turn it was, which Mama had to settle each time. Probably the only occasions when we doubted Mama's memory. We rode with Papa on the high spring seat of the wagon and we accompanied him everywhere, to the elevator, the blacksmith's shop, hardware store, grocery store or wherever. When he purchased his order of groceries and paid the month's bill, the grocer would put in a sack of candy for the children, usually hard sugar candies or peppermint sticks.

When we rode to town with Mama in the buggy, to buy shoes or clothing, she would make her purchases and then hurry home. But Papa would buy us an ice cream

cone and once I remember, he bought me and himself a strawberry sundae each. Has anyone told you that happiness is made of little things?



When I think about Grandpa and Grandma, I still visualize the old homestead, orchards and gardens. The east orchard was well kept with its rows and rows of apple and plum trees; deep grass

grew under the trees, which furnished feed for his calves. That made two gates to open each time we came and it annoyed Mama very much. The west orchard had run wild so it was a jungle of apple trees, plum trees, and nut and butternut trees, wild berries, gooseberries and currants and weeds. Grandpa had purchased surplus trees from the Experiment Station of the College at Ames, varieties which were being discontinued so many of them were unknown to anyone but Grandpa. Even if unnamed, they were productive and good eating.

I helped Grandma pick berries for dinner, big red and yellow raspberries and juicy blackberries. Once as we picked, Grandma was bitten by a spider and her wrist swelled and swelled.

Vegetables of all kinds were grown in the garden and Grandma and Aunt Caroline had special flower gardens, one on each side of the house.

In between the orchards were the buildings and the gardens, each garden fenced with high woven wire to keep out the chickens. On some days, I was sent to empty the dish water around the lovely clematis (purple) growing on the garden fence, where it bloomed profusely. I have never seen a nicer one even in the seed catalogues. During the late summer, the dooryard was a rainbow of color from the hundreds of blooming hollyhocks.

I learned to milk here. Everyone helped with the milking. Grandma and Aunt Caroline milked two or three cows apiece of the easy milking cows and Grandpa milked the hard milkers and the flighty one who always tried to kick and upset the milk pail. I milked with one hand into a short handled dipper, while I held the dipper with the other hand. At least I thought I was milking.

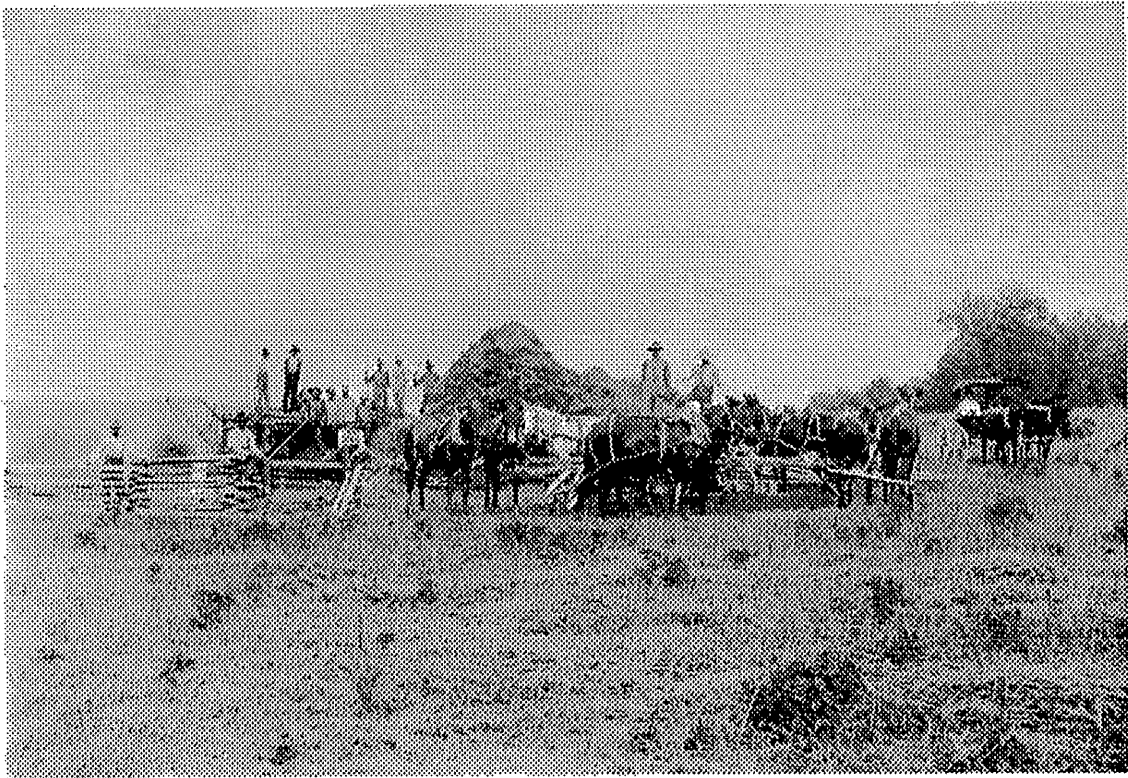
This cowbarn was comparatively new, Grandpa and Papa had erected it with proper gutters and feed alley. The hay was fed in the feed alley but fodder was fed in the yard.

There were no sheep since I can remember, but Grandma told about the sheep and they had a mean old ram. She and Aunt Caroline were afraid of him. One day as she crossed the barnyard, (she had looked and didn't see the ram) she had her apron full of eggs, she had rescued from a hidden nest. When, bam, the ram caught her from behind and she broke all the eggs, three dozen of them. Grandpa laughed and said, "He was not afraid, only you had to watch." One day the ram caught him from behind when he had a basket of corn on his shoulder. The ram was soon sold.

Grandpa sang as he worked in the garden and as he build the fire in the morning. I would lay in bed and listen to his songs. I wish I could remember some of them because he had many parodies. One was on the tune of "My Old Kentucky Home," something about the small rose to high from the still, "Rose so high that the angels had to sneeze."

He was a talker and sometimes bored us to death as he talked and talked and we wanted to leave. Not that he didn't know what he was talking about, because he did. He was well informed on many things from medicine to horticulture, to politics and government, but he often repeated himself. Grandma said, it was because his women never listened and so he must repeat himself. Maybe so, as he was surrounded by women all his life, mother (Julia), sister (Aunt Caroline), wife (Eliza) and two daughters (Lydia & Mary Celeste). Grandma (Eliza) had quit listening long ago. I remember impatiently waiting as he expounded with his foot on the buggy step so that we couldn't move without running over him.

Junk accumulated then as now. Under the huge catalpa tree was a rusting pile of old machinery, among which was a horse-powered threshing machine. Grandpa had purchased it and it had been wonderful to thresh out the oats and wheat instead of flailing it. Four horses were hitched to a pole and they were driven around and around to turn the threshing cylinder. It was a marvelous invention but soon someone came out with the steam-powered machine and the horse-powered machine was needed no more. This is the story of farm lives. No sooner than we invest in a new machine, but it was outmoded and another model is out before the first is even used.



Picture is of larger horse drawn thresher

We never see such complete gardens anymore outside of nurseries and they don't have vegetable gardens either or perhaps the big seed companies do. They had big juicy currants, white, pink, red: niagara grapes, pink grapes, concord grapes at the end of the garden; and rows of asparagus, pie plant, mint, rosemary and dill. It must have taken a lot of work. They had all kinds of flowers and strawberries and they carefully saved seed from all each fall. Grandma had a fine bed of pansies which I helped her cover one fall, ready before the winter. They were still blooming when we covered them. Aunt Caroline had a row of sweet peas along one side fence. We passed her flower garden each time we visited the "little house" and great groups of "Snow on the Mountain" bordered the path.

The last time I visited them, just before I married, I stayed three weeks. I pieced quilt tops as I sat and visited because Grandma was already confined to her wheel chair. We talked of many things, of styles and changes, of the early days when Indians came to call, trying to sell beadwork and moccasins. We talked of injuries and damages from runaway horses, of her brothers, who had moved on westward and she had never seen them again.¹ She offered gentle advice for my future plans and how she would have hooted at the modern talk of planned parenthood. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away."

When I see some woman in an extreme outlandish costume and make-up, I am a little girl again, I hide my laugh and giggle down inside as I think, "Jumping Jeshoshaphat, what would Grandma think of that?"

I think all children should have grandparents. They fill a need of unquestioned

love and acceptance. Grandparents sometimes balance the parents too strict discipline or too lenient discipline, but mostly, a grandparent accepts you and loves you for what you are and makes you feel worthwhile in your own right.

Mama's father and mother (Salah & Mary Jane Richardson Todd) lived in faraway South Dakota, where they were busily farming and raising the family, so that they had little impact on our young lives except for letters and for Mama's infrequent visits home. Grandma Todd wrote a card often and each Christmas, she sent a package, filled with simple gifts for each of us, perhaps a handkerchief, a scarf, or mittens. I didn't fully appreciate this until in later years; the loving thought that went into sending a gift to each child. I hope that Mama felt comforted by her love and concern. Even the postage was important in those penny-pinching times.

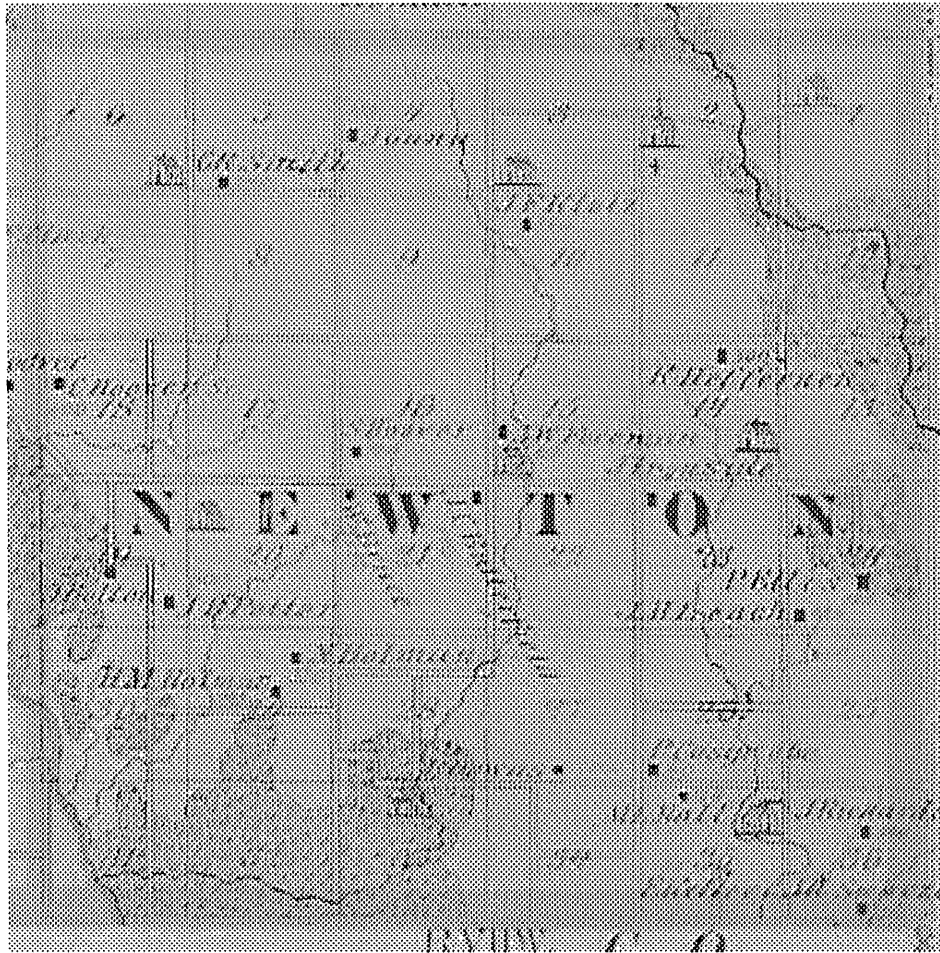
As we grew older, Grandma Todd pieced and quilted a quilt for each of us and sent them one by one. She did visit us once or maybe twice.

I can't brag that my forefather came over on the Mayflower but they were all early day settlers, the most recent having come in 1846. (William Bruce). All of them were either English or Scotch until the present generation has married into other nationalities. All of my great-grandfathers came to Iowa in the 1850's except on who came in 1868. One family came from Vermont, (Richardson), one from New Jersey, (Phillips) one almost directly from Scotland (Bruce), and the fourth from New York state (Todd). David Phillips, after a court wrangle over a division of his father's estate, (Morris Phillips) came to Iowa to start over again. William Bruce emigrated from Scotland to seek his fortune in a newer land. A. G. Todd sought a better future for his family of boys and joined a sister in Minnesota, finally settling in eastern Iowa. James Richardson came here as a young adventurer from Vermont, met his future bride here in Iowa (Almira Blanchard, also from Vermont) and they pioneered on good Iowa land.

The story of their lives is the story of the settling of Iowa. The Todd brothers helped build the railroad from Manchester to Cedar Rapids building the grade with team and scraper. William Bruce build the first Grist mill in Troy Mills and the one at Nugent's Grove, renamed Coggon.² James and Almira Richardson built a farm out of the prairie, helped build a community and church.

His father, Nathan³, ran a blacksmith shop to care for needs in the pioneer community. David Philips surveyed property lines, taught school in his home. All farmed and broke the sod and build homes and families.

In the early years, these men had to haul their wheat to Marion or Dubuque to have it ground into flour or grist. Bruce would haul a load to Dubuque to buy supplies and he would peddle these items all the way home. Once, he was gone three months; one child was born during an absence and another child died another time. The small settlement on the Wapsi helped each other. Grandma could remember that Indians came calling, trying to sell bead work and moccasins. Her mother (Julia) didn't have any money but she did trade food for beaded work. They were all frightened but the Indians never threatened them. Some of this bead work was keepsakes, kept in a large trunk, along with warm shawls, a fancy dress, a large picture album, with a music box in the cover. There were two headbands of colored beads and a beaded purse.



1856 vintage map shows the James and Almira Richardson home in Section 36, Newton Township, Buchanan County. The Reilly school also appears in section 35. The Orchard Place can just be made out up a lane in section 35 with what looks like the name of E Keller at that time.

Grandma told the story of the day when her father was building the mill at Troy Mills (Hoosier Mills). The men, who were hired on the construction site, hung their whiskey jug in the river to keep it cool. One day, Grandma and her brothers found it and filled with lessons on temperance, they emptied the jug and refilled it with green river scum. Grandma would always laugh and hold her hands over her ears saying, "You never have heard such language." I think the culprits were punished, but I don't think they were repentant.

Grandpa, John Morris, was fourteen when he came to Iowa and he was a pioneer in the best sense of the word. He kept the table supplied with meat, rabbit, prairie chicken and squirrel; also fish from the river. He trapped prairie chickens and shipped them back to his Uncle John in New Jersey where Uncle John tried to establish them on his farm land. His uncle ran a foundry and engine works in Newark and he and his family thought it was great fun to hunt in Iowa. Papa could remember when they came by railroad, big men, dressed in huge hunting coats, awing his nephews, at least.

David Phillips died in 1868, leaving John Morris as the sole support of his mother (Julia) and his sister Caroline. John Morris met Eliza Bruce at a singing school, south of

Troy Mills. They were married in 1972 and the four of them lived together for many years. It must have been real togetherness. Four children joined the family, Andrew, John Edward, my father, Mary Celeste and Lydia. At least they had baby sitters but no place to go.

Grandfather Bruce and grandmother Ellen, had moved often and finally settled on a farm, east of Hoover. He wanted to try his hand at pioneering in Nebraska but Ellen wouldn't hear of it so he gave that up. He died of a heart attack as they were preparing to visit their son in Nebraska.⁴ Grandma's brother Andrew moved on west and settled in California and her brother Will to Walla-Walla, Washington, and although they wrote occasionally, she never saw any of them again.

Contrary to popular belief, family ties are closer today than then, telephones are everywhere, mail is efficient and we can drive across the state in a day to visit at home. Or further if need be. Cameras and pictures help a great deal.

¹ Andrew Bruce died in Oregon.

Additional on Andrew Bruce from "The History of Troy Mills, Iowa," "John Henry Fairchild lost his young wife, Sarah Ann Fairchild and she is buried in Lower Spring grove Cemetery. John then married a widow named Mrs. Maria Bolton, mother of two little girls, and they moved to Riverton, Franklin County, Nebraska, and ran a machine shop in partnership with Andrew Bruce They had an improved waterpower on a small creek near town. While several were visiting in the shop on a Sunday afternoon, lighting struck the metal roof and killed Maria and their young son in the Summer of 1881 and they are buried in unmarked graves in Greenwood Cemetery in Riverton, Nebraska. John, broken hearted, sold his half of the business to Andrew Bruce and returned to Troy Mills and is buried in Lower Spring grove Cemetery with his wife and children.

William James Bruce died in Walla Walls, Washington

² From the early history of Coggon, Iowa, "...In 1858, it became the property of William Bruce, an emigrant from Scotland, who entered a half section of land. He immediately began erecting the first flour mill in this part of the country....They started grinding soon after the harvest of 1859, and John Morris Phillips brought the first wheat to be ground into flour...."

³ In the 1881 History of Buchanan County, Nathan Richardson is recorded as serving as Newton township member-elect to the Buchanan County Supervisors first meeting in January, 1861. Nathan Richardson died on August 18, 1861 and is buried in the Upper Spring Grove Cemetery. Buchanan County records indicates that his wife Jane Livingston Richardson is also buried at Upper Spring Grove but Mother Hazel always believed that Jane Livingston Richardson returned back East after the death of Nathan and there is no sign of her gravestone..

⁴ According to the "History of Troy Mills, Iowa" William Bruce sold his interest in the Hoosier Mills because of Asthma. From the Cedar Rapids Gazette, Dec. 2, 1890, "Wm. Bruce Sr. died at his home here on Thanksgiving morning. Death is believed to have resulted from an overdose of medicine taken to relieve asthma. Andrew Bruce arrived from Nebraska Sunday forenoon barely in time to attend his father's funeral."

Travel Ain't like It used to Be

Every town had one or more livery stables, who cared for the horses of travelers and nearly all homes in town also had a barn, to shelter the horse or horses and often a cow. To those, who loved the atmosphere of horses and barns, it was a great loss when they were needed no more. Some few barns still stand, now used for storage or a garage.

We learned to harness and unharness a single horse, how to put on the bridle and or halter as soon as we were old enough, which basically means, when we were big enough. I am sure I could still harness a team although I might not be able to lift the heavy harness, now. All of us learned to drive the single horse, Fanny, but driving a work team was more demanding. I did cultivate corn, drive on the hay wagon, drove three horses on the reaper and sulky plow but when we put four horses on the gang and so forth, Papa never would allow us to drive.

Papa bought his first car in 1916, a 1916 Model Overland touring car. Earlier, I



recall that Papa and I rode home from town in the buggy and our nearest neighbor Ide Carson rode in his buggy just ahead of us, and he and Papa visited back and forth. They agreed that the new-fangled automobiles were wonderful, but they were such a luxury, that neither man would think of owning one until all

Photo of 1915 Overland

his debts were paid. Ha! Both men owned and drove several cars and I doubt that either of them were ever free from past due bills and other obligations. Our economy would surely be different today, if they and others had followed their first judgment.

My youngest brother (Donald) was a baby that summer of 1916 and our little sister was two years old. She was afraid to ride in the car at first and we had to catch her to take her with us. The next spring, we moved to the Abbey Place, where we lived the rest of the time I was at home. I was twelve years old.

The Overland was packed full many times and we had many happy days as Papa took us traveling in the car. We went to the newly created State Parks, "The Devil's Backbone" and the "Wapsipinicon State Park" at Anamosa. The entrance to the Backbone Park (on the west) was terrible. At or near the present entrance you turned south and then went easterly down a long hill to the valley below. The road looked so steep and frightening, we wouldn't ride down, so Papa let us out and we walked down.

Of course, there were few paths and few bridges across the stream. It was a wonderful trip.

We visited the Amana colonies, the Indian settlement at Tama, Aunt Lydia in Waterloo. We attended many concerts in the parks in Cedar Rapids. We went to the circus and we attended a stage play, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in Green's Opera House in Cedar Rapids. It was great times for us children and I think that Papa and Mama enjoyed it also.

We would help Mama fix a picnic basket and we spent the day wherever we decided that particular day. Workdays were for work but after church and Sunday school and on holidays, we traveled around. How proudly, Papa rejoiced in the steady rumble of the powerful motor. He was proud of his Overland and so were his kids!

Of course, there were car troubles. It wasn't always clear sailing. The timing chain was always breaking. Naturally there were no well-stocked garages and Papa had to be his own mechanic. He learned by doing. Girls were not expected to know anything about engines or automobiles, but misery loves company and I learned much about the innards of the engine as Papa worked and swore over the timing chain, broken wiring or fouled spark plugs. Do it yourself was necessary to keep the car on the road.

Unscheduled stops at country school houses and at city parks, to take advantage of the toilet facilities, was one of the problems of traveling with a young family. Sometimes, we had to resort to cornfields.

The roads were dusty or muddy, poorly graded and many times the water ran down the roadway as the supposed ditches were higher than the road. There were no traffic signals, outside of a few in Cedar Rapids, so obviously there were no signs to give the right-of-way. The car on the right had the right-of-way, if anyone thought to ask. Lights on the early day cars were so poor that little driving was done at night.

Along with automobiles came a new type of salesman. They traveled the country, selling tires and oil, taking orders for special deals on oil, to be shipped in barrels by a certain date. Some of these were honest men, representing reliable companies, but many of these salesmen were fly-by-nights, who took their down payments and that was the last anyone saw of them. They were a nuisance, all of them. They parked in the farm yard and waited for the farmer to come in from the field or they walked out into the field, hindering as they talked and talked.

Early cars were experimental when compared with those of today's. Most of the early cars, used in our area, were touring cars with side curtains, like the buggies, with isinglass windows and buttons to fasten the curtain to the frame. Cold! I nearly froze my fingers once, while trying to button the front side curtain while the machine was in motion. We found out later, that it was eighteen degrees below zero.

If you had a flat tire (you usually did), you had to remove the tire from the wheel, after jacking up the wheel, then remove the tube, patch the tube, replace the tube in the tire and put the tire back on the wheel. Then with a tire pump, you pumped air into the tire, thirty eight pounds pressure. If you were lucky, this fixed it. You might instead, pinch the tube as you replaced it, so that you had to repeat the entire process.

To patch, we scraped the area around the puncture to roughen it, applied glue and the patch, which we had already cut to fit the puncture. Sometimes the tube would leak around the patch, sometimes another hole had been overlooked and you had to remove the

tire and start over again. If you were at home, you could check the patch by trying the tube in the stock tank but of course, if you were on the road, you had to rely on your eyesight. A hand pump, a jack, and a tire iron and tire wrench were standard equipment with all cars. All were easily misplaced, borrowed or stolen.

Gasoline stations sprang up on almost every four corners but as cars gained more speed and larger gas tanks, the small buildings were used for other purposes and larger stations were built in town. The process still goes on as the stations get larger and larger and more expert so that we need make only one stop for almost everything.

One event happened when I didn't go with them. Papa and Mama and two cousins went to the famous Cattle Congress at Waterloo, coming and going with no trouble at all, no tires to fix, no running out of gasoline or water and the lamps worked all the way home, all sixty miles. It was a remarkable feat which they talked about for weeks.

Papa took me with him to see the automobile show in the Coliseum in Cedar Rapids, one cold winter day. I don't remember anything about the cars, but part of the show was featuring new tires: tires, that would run for ten thousand miles! Now, why would I remember that? It must have been during the first winter while the car was new, because we stopped in Troy Mills on the way home for gasoline and for alcohol for the radiator. It was deadly cold in the car as I waited for the man to service the car. No heater on the Overland. I was happy to be going with Papa and I hope he enjoyed it enough to be worth all the trouble. Now, or cars are almost houses on wheels with many of the comforts of home.

We also attended a few movies, in the afternoon, I think. I remember seeing Douglas Fairbanks as he was racing from floor to floor, riding on a wide elevator belt, chasing and being chased by the bad man.

Later I saw several movies, starring such stars as Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy, Gloria Swanson, Mary Pickford, Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin to name a few I remember or heard of.

One of the first cartoons, that I can recall was very short and it went something like this:

Algy met a bear-picture of Algy and here comes a bear,

The bear was bulgy:-shows a fat, fat bear.

The bulge was Algy:-showed Algy's gun on the ground and the bear disappearing.

We didn't just jump from the horse and buggy to the car or to the truck. Wagons were common for many years or rather horse drawn wagons. All Papa's grain was hauled by wagon to the elevator in Center Point, seven miles.

On a severely cold day, just before New Years, Papa decided that he had better get a load of coal to add to the wood pile before the winter got any worse. We always had plenty of wood, which he had worked up and piled in the wood shed, wood grown locally on the farm, maple and willow, rather inferior fuels so he wanted some coal to supplement the wood during severe weather.

There were several inches of snow on the ground already. He hitched the team to the bob-sled, loaded the wagon box with ear corn to sell and exchange for the coal. Papa wore his fox fur coat and Mama tied his muffler around the outside of the collar to keep

the wind from blowing down his neck. His mittens were worn thin, but the two best pair were doubled together, "I'll be alright, I'll keep one hand under the robe," he assured us. It snowed off and on, lightly all day and the north wind blew the snow into drifts as we anxiously waited at home. He came long after dark and the memory will linger with me always.

Frost and snow covered his face, coat, collar and cap; frost and icicles hung from his nostrils, his whiskers, and his eyebrows. We helped him remove the fur coat and frozen garments and he paced the floor in misery of his half frozen hands and feet.

There was no one to put away the team so he trudged out in his chore clothes to care for them. He had to unhitch the horses from the sled, lead them to water, cut the ice in the stock tank, unharness the team, feed them oats in their feed boxes and fill the mangers with hay. It was welcome exercise for his chilled body.

When he returned to the warmth and security of the warm kitchen he had a late supper, likely hot soup and home-made bread and butter. Sometimes you couldn't cut wood fast enough to keep you and your home warm. Mama mended the mittens again, adding another lining of an old suit of underwear. Papa made light of the incident, treating it like it was all in a day's work but I think of it whenever someone talks about "The good old days."

One year, during corn picking, Papa lost his pocket knife, a very necessary item, used in many ways, to cut twine on corn shocks, fix harness, among other things. He searched and searched but had to buy another knife. The following winter, he hauled a wagon load of ear corn to the elevator, seven miles away, and he unloaded the corn in the elevator pit and received his money for the corn. Cobs were given away to anyone who wanted them, so needing some at home, he drove around to the cob spout and here came his knife amongst the cobs. The knife had been shoveled with the corn into the crib, then shoveled from the crib back into the wagon. It had been dumped with the corn into the elevator pit, it had gone through the corn sheller undamaged and come out the cob spout with the cobs, where papa was waiting. A real coincidence!



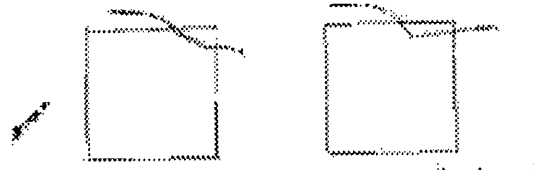
Papa usually raised mixed breed cattle, but one year he purchased eight purebred Red-Polled heifers and started a purebred herd of his own. They were a dual-purpose breed, reported to be good at the milk pail and for beef. They were not very successful, although this was a long time before cows were bred to produce such great quantity of milk as now. The herd was beautiful against the green pastures in the summer time. The only time Mama or any of the girls milked, was when Papa was late coming home from a day of threshing.

After Mr. Pingle tiled out the last of the farm next to us (The big slough), Papa altered a small stream which cut across a corner of the house forty. With a team and slip, he turned the water so that it had to follow the fence line and run into the road ditch as a right angle. Some of the tile emptied into this waterway. Now one would need to get permission before altering a stream, but this was harmless and made less waste land and did not harm anyone

else. It made one nice field instead of a field and a patch across the waterway. We continued to use the surrey to go to Sunday school and church for many years.

Papa would take us in the car once in a while or to a special program. One Sunday

night, we went together and we came upon another car stuck in a mudhole in our path, so we had to help these two boys through. Brother and I helped Papa as we pushed and we shoved them, clumping around in our good clothes until the car was free. The boys offered to help us through all right but Papa said, "Oh no. You boys go on, we don't have any trouble." But of course we were stuck, too. More pushing and shoving until we could go on our way. We were late to the program and even as a child, I was dismayed by our muddy appearance. Mama never commented, but I suppose it was easier to come in with some of us muddy, than to take six clamoring children home without the entertainment.



Cars did not run well in mud or in snow so the horses were used often. One of my vivid memories concerns riding home with Papa after dark, behind the team on the surrey. Even when it was dark, it isn't really pitch dark. The team clumped along through deep mud, the harness jingled, and the mud cascaded off the wheels with a soothing swish. Fireflies twinkled all around us, the bushes and the fence were only dark shapes beside us. Sometimes, we talked but sometimes we rode in quiet thought. There are no words to express the sound of horses hooves as they suck out of each step in the mud, gluummp, gluummp. We had been to Grandpa's.

Which reminds me of one of one of my own dismal, wretched disappointments on the night of my high school baccalaureate service in the Methodist church in Center Point. We didn't have caps and gowns then so I had made a black taffeta dress for the occasion. In the afternoon before the service, Papa took us to call on Grandpa's but when we came to go home, the car wouldn't start. Papa worked and worked but he never did get it started and the next morning, a neighbor took us home. I cried and cried that night. I don't think I cared about the clothes or the occasion so much as the fact, I was supposed to be there and I wasn't. It was one of those things! I expect the folks were as upset as I was, but they knew that crying would do no good. I never really forgave the neighbor because he just as well as taken us home the evening before. We could have found someone to take me on to Center Point.

Papa always subscribed to the Cedar Rapids Gazette, no matter how short of money he might be. In his spare time, he read the newspaper, farm magazines, the yearly world almanac and all of our school books. He taught himself to read French and at one time subscribed to a French newspaper. He was very disappointed when I didn't continue in French. He was working on reading Spanish, but when one of his grandsons showed an interest, Papa gave him all his Spanish books.

Papa was a gentleman of the old school, politely lifting his hat to the ladies, opening doors for them, carefully helping Mama with the heavy work like the water carrying. I never knew him to argue with anyone; instead he walked away from an angry disagreement and hid his anger except with the cattle. Mama was fiery and he often left the house to avoid an argument, thus angering her more than ever. I sympathized with her tears at such a time, but she couldn't help badgering him occasionally. Learning from

years of experience, I can see that both of them had their trials. Farming and raising six active youngsters on a financial shoe string was wearing and exasperating.

"Mr. Roosevelt has been shot," I heard Papa's excited voice as he told Mama the news he had heard in town. Theodore Roosevelt had been gravely wounded in an attempted assassination. Fortunately, Teddy recovered and continued to be Papa's hero for many years.

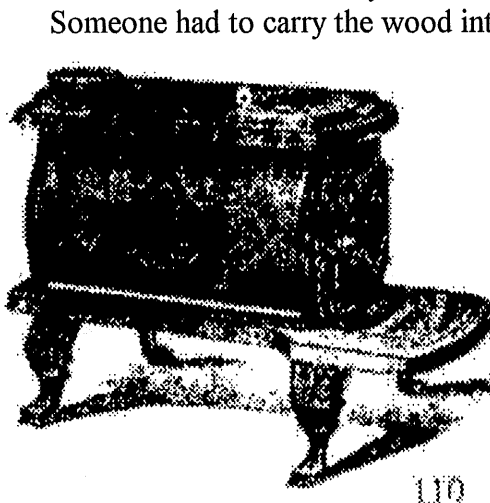
Papa often talked issues and politics and encouraged us to discuss ideas with him. He was a life long republican, deeply patriotic, glad to pay his taxes and work his poll tax. Mama was always too busy to get involved in these discussions. Yet I noted in her later years, she liked to listen to the political and farm discussions although she did not take part in them.

I Almost Forgot

When we recall that people, men, women and children, lived in log cabins with only a fireplace for heat, it is a wonder that they survived the cold winters with enough strength for another growing season. It is true that many cabins were well made and strong, but some were makeshift huts. Some did perish in accidental fires, from freezing, injuries and poor nutrition. The majority managed. There were many tales of heroism, of empty wood piles and absentee fathers, so that mother and children had to take refuge with the cows and horses to find enough warmth to survive.

Each generation thinks they have a corner on the terrible problems of the day as they struggle to survive and accomplish their goals. Then each new generation discovers a new set of problems to add to the usual ones. The explosion of knowledge makes this generation unique and they will be followed by future generations with still more knowledge and another set of seemingly unsolvable problems.

Wood stoves were a very good source of heat. True, they made lots of work for the provider and for the keeper of the fires. Papa cut the trees, sawed it into lengths with the help of neighbors with a buzz saw. Then he split it into proper sizes for the stoves and stored it in the wood house. Those with no wood shed, had to stack the wood outside, where it was often wet and snowy.



Someone had to carry the wood into the house, someone had to feed the fireboxes and keep the fire going, almost a steady job if the wood was a poor quality. Someone had to watch the drafts and dampers to control the fire, empty the ashes, sweep up the chips and dirt from each armful. The fire had to be banked at night or else someone had to get up in the night and replenish the fire. Small chips, slivers and cobs were used as kindling.

Burning coal had about the same problems but it did keep a much steadier fire. The direct heat from the stove was always pleasant although it might be cold

around the walls and outer edges. It was delightful to come in out of the cold and find warmth and comfort. This was one of Mama's pet peeves. Papa would come in from the cold outdoors and he would stoke up the fire, but by the time it was warm enough to suit him, he must leave for outdoors again, leaving Mama with a roaring fire and much more heat than she needed.

The children had to carry the wood and carry out the ashes. Everyone old enough, was responsible for seeing that fresh wood was added before the coals burned too low.

Our "little house" was built with about fifty feet of path, equipped with two large holes and a small one and the usual catalogue. In summer, we had to scrub out the house

on wash days but in winter, we were lucky if there was even a path. At night, we used chamber pots, which had to be emptied and cleaned each day. Except in severe weather, these were left outside to air during the day.

Lighted kerosene lamps and lanterns were always a hazard. With children around, they had to be watched in fear of someone upsetting a lamp or throwing something against it. Lanterns were safer but although they were completely enclosed, they seemed to smoke up much worse. It was an everyday chore to keep them filled, cleaned and trimmed, ready for another night.

We had a bracket lamp in the kitchen, fastened to the wall and set so that it could be turned toward either the stove or the table. Lamps had to be set so that no moisture would hit the chimney as they were very fragile.

One night, for some unexplained reason, the kerosene caught fire in the bowl of the table lamp. Papa happened to be right near and he grabbed the lamp, ran to the door and threw it as far as he could, where it burned itself out. They never could figure any reason why.



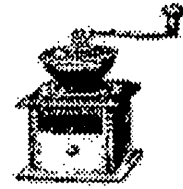
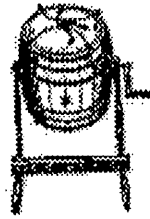
On the Abbey Place, the wash house was an added building, about six feet from the kitchen door. The washing machine was here, with the gasoline engine, which ran it, set outside with the belt going through the side wall. Papa kept it running. I don't think that Mama or any of us ever touched it except to shut it off when we were finished.

Water was carried from the cistern pump a few feet away. Each wash day, a boiler was filled with water from the cistern, and put to heat on the range. Bar soap, either homemade or P and G bar soap from the store, was shaved into the water. By the time the water was hot enough, the soap had dissolved. It was carried by the pails full to empty into the machine in the wash house. Winter must have been hard on washing although I can't remember what Mama did in severe weather. I do remember clothes soaking in a tub of water in the center of the kitchen, and one of us had to use the pounder on the clothes. Little brother got in bad once because he was careless or acting funny, and he splattered a lot of water all over the kitchen floor. Mama was as angry as I ever saw her.

Another chore, in the center of the kitchen was to churn the butter. We used a wooden barrel churn, holding four or five gallons. Mama would fill it about half full of cream and someone would be assigned to do the churning. Sometimes it didn't take long and again it seemed to take forever. Cream should be the proper temperature but we had no way of knowing or controlling the temperature. It was an easy job but boring.

Mama would draw off the buttermilk. We could drink all of it we like but it wasn't very popular. Mama liked it. The buttermilk was used in pancakes, biscuits and so on, but some of it was fed to the ducks and chickens. The butter was then worked, using a butter ladle, made for the purpose, working it over and over to remove the water, or whey. It was then salted lightly and set to keep on the pantry shelf or in the cellar. Some of the neighbor families sold their butter to the grocery store in town, using a pound mold with their own motif or signature. Mama never bothered and our cream was sold to the produce buyer in town. Mama often made cottage cheese (dutch) from soured skim milk.

Mama had a coffee mill but already the groceries owned a big coffee grinder, red, which ground the coffee bean as it was purchased.



We wore long black stockings over long underwear during the winter. I don't remember when the stockings changed color, but later we wore mercerized cotton in shades of brown and tan. They were held up with long garters although sometimes with round garters above or below the knee. This was hard on blood circulation. Silk stockings came out when I was in high school, about the time I graduated.

Silk stockings were about the last thing my practical Mama would have bought. I had made friends with the owners of our local dry good store in Center Point and she gave me two pair of silk hose for graduation. She knew what I needed. Bless her memory! She had a philosophy, which she often expounded. "It's a good thing we have so many different desires and do not think alike because, just think how it would be if we all thought alike. We would all want the same color dress, the same food to eat and everyone would want my man."

I had the usual childhood diseases from whooping cough to measles, although I don't remember much about them. Colds were common as well as something called LaGrippe, now we would say that everyone had the flu, Mama used to treat us with mentholatum, cough syrup and onion syrup. I've never heard of anyone else using onion syrup or if it was effective. She sliced several slices of fresh onion into a baking pan, covered it with sugar and baked it until it was a nice brown color and syrupy. I don't know about the medicinal qualities but I liked it.

For earache, she used skunk oil and warmed a bag of salt. Did salt hold heat longer or what? One of our neighbor friends, a boy of eleven or twelve years old, died of Pneumonia. They had no pictures of the boy so they asked me to take pictures of the boy in his coffin. They turned out really well and I hope they were a comfort to them. I have never liked or wanted picture taken in a coffin.

During the influenza epidemic, several died at the time or later as the aftermath of the flu. One classmate died of small pox and everyone had to be vaccinated that year. Small pox was not common, even then. Mama and her family had all had the small pox as children without any lasting ill effects.

Both Papa and Mama wore false teeth. Mama had pyorrhea of the gums so bad, that she had to have the teeth pulled. Although her new teeth were well enough fitted that she was she was comfortable with them, they were not build up to the shape of her face, so that she had a grim look which was not her true feelings. Dentists do a better job of suiting the shape to the face now.

Because Papa had not attended much school, he was very determined that his own children would finish high school at least. In a time of little money, in the aftermath of the first World War and the great depression which followed it, it was a great effort to feed and clothe six children and send them to school.

Think of the many times he harnessed and hitched a horse to a cart or buggy, one effort alone, for three girls to drive the seven miles to high school, ten years of it. Or the

many times, Mama remade a dress or wore the old one so that one of us could have the material for that new dress, we just had to have. Sometimes, it was the battle of the hems as Mama tried to keep our hem lines within reason during such changing styles.

I went on to the University for one semester in Liberal Arts. First sister (Edna) finished and she said, "I wanted to quit but they wouldn't let me." Second sister (Blanche) had a year in State Teacher's and taught one year before she married. Third sister (Nona) said, "I'm not going to drive seven miles to school for four years." so she found a place to stay in Center Point to work for her board while she went to school. She didn't finish her first year, to our disappointment.

My oldest brother (Paul), one of the blessed ones, did not develop mentally beyond the age of six or so (*). He could memorize, did well in spelling, and some other classes but he could not go beyond simple arithmetic. He could work with others but did not seem to develop a sense of judgment. Poor Brother, all his life he had to put up with someone trying to show him how to do better, always trying to make him act more normal instead of accepting him for his beauty and spirit, accepting him for what he was.

Although the stigma is lifting from such unfortunates, it is still a tragedy for the family. The father is appalled that his son is never going to be able to be on his own; sisters and brothers are embarrassed (other children can be cruel) and are often both supporting and belittling. The mother is stuck with it, a child in her house for her lifetime. Mama was still trying, until the day she died, to train her sixty year old son, in better habits, manners or something. Although I still say poor brother, I also have to say, poor mother, and the rest of the family.

My youngest brother (Donald) was able to walk some distance and meet the school bus route in the Troy Mills district and he graduated from high school (*). The school bus had been motorized, although the roads were not much better. All in all Papa and Mama did very well.

We had one of those freak late snow storms, April 16th, 1921, after an early spring. The oats were four or so inches high and the grass was green when we had about a twenty inch snow fall. It wasn't very cold so it didn't hurt either the grass or oats. Our farm yard was beautiful, where snow drifts lay side by side with green grass, and draped all the bushes.

One neighbor's farm house burned at this time, while the road was impassible. I ran down the road through twelve inches or so on the level. It was hard going. Naturally only a few of the nearest neighbors noticed the fire and came to help. It was too late and everything burned to the ground with the contents. No one was injured although the young man of the house tried to run to a neighbor's house to call for help, but he collapsed in the snow. Apparently he recovered alright.

We played a game called shinny, although I can't remember the rules of the game, but we batted empty tin cans into or onto the goal, while trying to send each other's can flying away from the goal. Thelma and Arthur, neighbors of Grandpa and Grandma, played with us at this game many times. Recently, I saw an article about games in Scotland called shinti. I wonder if our game of shinny came down to us from some Scottish ancestors?

Little Brother, age 4, April 16, 1921



The cistern pump and wash house.
Note neat patch and all buttons on.

Another fun thing that we did, fun for all of us, was rolling the hoop. A single lath was cut to about three feet long, as long as needed according to the height of the child. A cross piece of about five inches was nailed solidly to the lath. Using a small rim off a

wheel, a band off a keg, or any metal hoop from eight to fifteen inches across, was used. The trick was to start and keep the hoop rolling ahead of you. Many of us became experts at this. We also made stilts, not too tall, but enough.

