

I  
Mind  
the  
Time...

Recollections from  
1912 to 1933

by  
Vida M. Yoder

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## FOREWORD

In this world of change, as we go hurtling into the unknown future, most of us would like to have a grasp of where we have come from. When Mother's family, including Grandpa and Grandma McCulloh, left the plains and fields and farms of Illinois, they left behind a setting and a way of life that few, if any, of the family of my generation have ever experienced first hand. But the recollections and stories of life in Whiteside County, Illinois told at many family gatherings over the last fifty years have convinced many of us that we would have loved to live there with our family. Oh, to bring back those old times again!

Grandpa and Grandma have been gone for a long time—Grandpa died before I was born. And of Grandpa's 11 children who survived to adulthood, only four remain. Many of the stories we've heard, we'll hear no more. How we wish we'd tape recorded them or written them down before the details became vague and slipped from our memories.

But Mother is one of those who was there, and she has a wonderful gift for remembering events she experienced and stories she heard from life in Illinois. Over the years, when the family has gotten together, it seems someone has always wanted Mother to tell again one story or another that they had heard before. And oftentimes, that would lead Mother to tell another story or two that came to mind. Sometimes it would be suggested that Mother should write these stories down for the benefit of the family members that were interested in them. However, she never seemed to feel that these were serious requests. No doubt they were just flattery.

When I heard that my brother David had given Mother a bound, blank book, and had asked her to write in it those stories she remembered, and that she had written the book full, I was excited. When I read it, I was convinced that many family members would love to read it, and I asked Mother if I could type it and make it available to them. At first she didn't seem to think there would be any serious interest in this, but after consideration, she agreed that if she could do some further editing, the book could be reproduced for other family members. In the end, she added at least fifty percent more material to what she had written in the blank book.

Because of the intended audience, Mother identifies a number of people by their first name only. If some readers are not familiar with all of the family names, the following summary will help.



Grandpa William McCulloh was born in 1866. His first marriage produced one child, Archibald Scott, who survived to adulthood. Uncle Archie married Abigail Sider in 1916. They were the parents of *Leona* (chapter III). After the death of his first wife, Grandpa married Mariah Longanecker in 1894. This marriage produced 13 children, of whom 10 survived to adulthood. These were Anna—born in 1896 (she married Guy VanDyke in 1928; he is the *Guy* and *Uncle Guy* mentioned several times), Paul—born in 1898, Ezra—born in 1901, Cora—born in 1904, Esther—born in 1907, Charles—born in 1908, Lois—born in 1911, Vida—born in 1912, Ruth—born in 1917, and Eunice—born in 1920.

L. William Yoder  
December, 1994

## INTRODUCTION

The original book, "I Mind the Time . . .," was a gift from my son David. I accepted it, anticipating pleasant hours of reading. Then I was a bit surprised to see blank pages.

"Do you get the idea?" David asked. I hadn't. So he told me it was for me to write in those stories I remember. I finally filled the last page, and have now returned the book to him.

This collection contains most of the material from, and additions to, what was written in that book. Among the additions are a few stories I heard Grandpa and Grandma Longanecker tell. I do not pretend to remember them word for word as they told them sixty-five or seventy years ago, but the stories are theirs. Maybe you will not get goose pimples or heart throbs as I used to get when they told their stories, but I hope you can get a hint of how it was.

In case you are wondering, the title of the book came from Grandpa. Read on.

Ironing day had often been made pleasant because Grandpa and Grandma were sitting in the same room on their matching rockers. (Well, they didn't REALLY match; they could tell them apart by the grain of the wood in the arm rests. It was best if you didn't forget which was which when you moved them to sweep.)

They both loved to tell stories of the years gone by. Grandma usually began hers with, "Before (or after) I came to this Illinois" (she pronounced it, "Illinoiz"). Then came the story.

With Grandpa, you could SEE a story coming. His eyes would begin to twinkle, then a smile would begin to show around the edges of his white mustache and beard, there would be a chuckling sound, and then he would say, "I mind the time . . ." It was his way of saying, "I remember when . . ." That seemed to be exactly right for my book! Thank you, Grandpa!

Now, I mind the time . . .



## CHAPTER I

### THE LANE PLACE

My family was living on 'The Lane Place' when I arrived on the scene. It was in the woods, and I always supposed it was called 'The Lane Place' because a lane through the woods led to it. But I learned it was owned by a widow named Mrs. Lane.

I do not recall much that happened there (we moved away in the spring of 1916), but I do recall a few things. One of these is *The Rain Storm*, below. The other is *We Saw an Eagle!*, also below. Things that I remember being recalled by various people were *Archie Leaves for Grantham*, and *Paul had Typhoid Fever*. Many years later Uncle Guy told me of *Papa Becomes a Minister*. (I never thought to ask Papa.)

Guy first met the family before I was born. I remember his saying he picked Anna out when she was only fourteen—of course he had to wait a few years before he could tell her how he felt.

#### **Papa Announces a New Arrival**

I mentioned earlier that it was while the folks lived at the Lane Place that I joined the family. This story is how Papa chose to break the news to the neighbors.

It was Wednesday, November 27, 1912. The farmers in the area near West Clyde School in Whiteside County, Illinois, were gathering at the farm of one of the neighbors to shred corn (see under *Harvesting Corn*), which was cut and standing in shocks in the field. This was the last job for this year, and today should finish it. It was a good thing too, for the damp chill of the northwest wind seemed to portend the season's first real snowstorm.

Among those who came with team and hay-wagon was William McCulloh. Will, as he was called, was known as an outgoing, friendly man, who enjoyed a good joke as much as anybody. But this morning he seemed to be in a quiet, thoughtful mood.

One of the men inquired as to the cause of his state of mind, and he replied, "A little barefoot girl came to our house last night."

"A little barefoot girl in this weather?" By now all the men were listening. "Gypsies!" Some had been seen recently in the neighborhood. "I'll bet she ran away from them and saw your light," one said.

"Did she say what her name is?" someone asked.

"No, she can't talk," Will responded.

"A mute," someone decided. "The Gypsies dumped her when they found out she can't talk."

"How big is she?" another asked.

Will held his hands about 20 inches apart and said, "Oh, about this long, and weighs about 9 pounds!"

A roar went up. One man said, "But you said - - -".

Will interrupted. "All I said was 'A little barefoot girl came to our house last night'. Now, you never heard of a baby born with shoes on, did you?" (Groans all around.) They knew they had been taken, but it was a fair catch—they had swallowed the bait. The joke was on them, but it was all in good natured fun, among friends.

Then one asked, "Did you name her yet?"

"Yes; Vida Leona."

## **Harvesting Corn**

Whiteside County, Illinois, where I grew up, was right in the Corn Belt. Almost everybody had a big field or two of corn. In the hot humid days of mid-summer, you could smell corn, and Papa used to say you could hear it growing on a hot, sultry night. How you harvested your corn depended on the way you wanted to use it.

**Picking corn:** If you intended to store the corn in the ear, it was left to ripen on the stalk. Back then we picked the corn by hand right off the stalk in the field. You wanted to have the corn picked before snow came, so you got in the field as early in the morning as you could see to find the ears of corn, and stayed until it was too dark to find them, stopping only for food and an empty wagon. A really good man could pick a hundred or more bushels a day.

**Ensilage:** If you had cattle to feed, and you had a silo, you may want to make silage. For this, the corn is cut while it is still green. It is run through the silo filler machine, where it is chopped fine, then blown up into the silo through a big tube. Someone (or two) keeps it leveled and tramped down throughout the process. When the corn is in the silo, it goes through a fermentation process. It is now ensilage. The cows love it. It is a nice contrast to the ground feed and hay.

**Shredding:** When the corn is mature, but not altogether dry, it is cut and set in shocks to wait for the corn shredder. (This is the last of the big harvest jobs: haying, threshing, silo filling, and now corn shredding.) In shredding, the corn is passed lengthwise into the rollers of the machine. The ears are forced off and into a chute,

while the stalks undergo further tearing. This product, called corn fodder, is elevated into the mow, or piled in a convenient place. The animals seem to enjoy this—it is harvested while some of the corn sugar remains in the stalks. Besides, it's easier to eat than the thoroughly dried stalks still standing in the field that some animals have to eat.

Husking bees: This was before my time—I learned about it from Grandma and Grandpa. For this, the ripe corn was set in shocks until the night of the Bee. Then a lot of it was brought in and piled in the middle of the barnyard. In the evening the place would be lit with lanterns. The young folks would gather and make a party of husking the corn. One rule was: If a young man should find an ear of red corn, he could kiss any girl there that he wanted to kiss. (No wonder the pile of corn dwindled so fast!)

### **Archie Goes to Grantham—Early Spring of 1913**

Instead of leaving in time for the fall term, Archie stayed until after the baby Mama was expecting was born, and Mama was all right again. (Was he remembering what had happened to his own Mother? I wonder sometimes.) He went in time for the next term.

In those days the train stopped at Grantham, which was quite a convenience for the students who were coming to Messiah from a distance. Some years later, Abbie told us what happened when she first saw Archie. She was in her dorm room in Old Main, looking out the window. She saw someone coming up from the station carrying a suitcase, and said to her roommate, "Look at the bean-pole coming up the sidewalk," and as girls will do, they giggled about it.

Archie would then tell how he first saw Abbie. He had gone to the dining room for the first time with his roommate. Conspicuous in the crowd was a red-haired girl. He said to his roommate, "Now THERE IS a carrot top!"

Wouldn't you know it? The bean-pole fell in love with the carrot top and married her. They came to live not far from us—a mile or two—and I'd go home with them sometimes to stay a day or so.

Later, when they lived in Morrison and Archie worked away from home, he always kissed Abbie when he left for work and gave her a hug and a kiss when he came home. I decided that when I grew up and had a husband, that's the way he would do too. And do you know what? He did! Without my even asking him to!

## Paul Had Typhoid Fever

It was in the spring of 1914 that Paul became ill with the fever. I do not remember this, but it was often mentioned in the years that followed. He had to be quarantined with a nurse to care for him. I do not know how long the quarantine lasted, but while it was on, Paul was very, very ill—at times comatose with a temperature of 107°. The doctor (not our beloved Dr. Pettit—he had been called to serve his country somewhere as doctor-surgeon) told Papa and Mama that if Paul lives, he will never develop mentally beyond what he was then—a fifteen year old boy. I am so sorry the doctor said that, because they believed him, and treated Paul that way, and I know Paul suffered for it. Through the years, it seems, we were all programmed to accept that idea, too.

After the quarantine was ended, Paul was still very ill and weak. He had to stay in bed until his insides healed. He used to tell me how I, then about 1½ years old, would climb up on his bed and play there. He said I was his little 'Sunshine'. Long years later, when he and I were the oldest ones at home, I became his confidant. There were times when the tears came with the telling of some painful memory. I wished with all my heart that I could 'fix it' for him, but I didn't know what to do.

It was about 1950 when Paul came to live with us, and a year or so later, Mama came too. Leroy was the one who began to see things about Paul that had been overlooked.

"Vida," he said to me one day. "Paul has a good mind. I know that by the things he chooses to read, and talks to me about.." He began to encourage Paul to go ahead and do some things.

I admit I was a little (?) nervous when Paul got a learner's permit, and Leroy was teaching him to drive. This was hard on Mama. Paul hadn't even been allowed to drive the tractor before, and now this? But he passed his driver's test on his first try, and came home the pleased owner of a Pennsylvania driver's license! Next, he bought a good used car. Now, he could drive to work.

Within the next couple of years, he began to think maybe he could find a wife, and have a home of his own. This was really upsetting to Mama. Paul's wing feathers had grown out, and no one was clipping them. He was kind and patient with her, but he was on his way.\*

He found Grace Paulus, a widow six years younger than himself. Her husband had died around thirty years before. They had lost twin sons in infancy. Paul and Grace were married in 1962, after their nice little house in Wrightsville, Pa. was built. Before long they bought a NEW car. They had more than ten years together.

The last couple of weeks of Paul's illness—he had cancer—he was in bed, but he had hardly any pain. Grace said she could hardly take care of him, and was considering having him placed in a nursing home not far away. When Leroy and I visited him, he said he didn't want to go to a nursing home. I asked, "Would you come and let me take care of you if our doctor will accept you as a patient, and Grace doesn't object?" He said, "Yes, I'd do that." Our doctor, who was only two blocks away, agreed to care for him. Paul was to come the next weekend, but on a morning before he was to come, Grace went to his bedside to speak to him, and found him "mumbling something, but he doesn't seem to know I'm there." Grace's sister Mary went to see what was the matter. She bent over to listen, if by chance she could catch what he was saying. He was repeating the 23rd Psalm, and when he finished, he folded his hands on his chest, and quietly "went away" with the Good Shepherd.

On the day of Paul's funeral, I stood with Grace beside the casket. She said to me, "I never knew a man like Paul. He was so kind to me. There were so many things I wanted to say to him yet, now I'll not be able to." I took to heart what she said, to make sure that if I should be the one left behind, I could remember that I had not left unsaid those words of appreciation for the things that had made my Beloved so dear to me.

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\* If I sound a little hard on Mama, I saw that she was still treating Paul like a child. Example: Paul comes downstairs ready to go to work. Mama goes up to him and asks, "Paul, what underwear do you have on?" He says, "The blue striped ones." Mama: "Oh, you shouldn't wear those to work, you go put on those tan plaid ones I patched for you last week." Paul goes upstairs and changes! Mama is happy, and I do a slow burn. Later, when I have cooled off, I say to Mama, "Mama, Paul is fifty-five years old now, not five. He has a job and is buying his own clothes. He should be allowed to wear what he wants to wear." She still thought I should 'clip his wings,' not her 'apron strings'.

## **The Rain Storm**

This is probably the earliest incident I can recall. Once when I spoke of it, Mama said, "Oh, you were too little to remember that," so I told her the things I remembered:

It was night, I was sitting on Mama's lap in the front seat of the carriage. Ralph Vosses were in the back with Clarence, their baby. It was storming, the storm shields were in place, and Papa was having difficulty trying to keep track of where we were by watching through the window, about 2 inches by 6 inches in the front storm shield. He had to trust the horses to stay in the road. All one could hear was the wind and the rain



against the storm shields, the frequent crashing of thunder, and the squishing of the horses' feet in the mud. After a while there was a brilliant flash of lightning and a loud clap of thunder. Papa was watching out that little window, and said with relief in his voice, "Now, I know where we are—we're at Damhoff's corner". The tension left like air out of a punctured balloon. I remember nothing about the rest of the journey. I suppose I went to sleep and slept 'til morning.

After hearing that, Mama said that was the way it happened, but she didn't see how I could remember it because I wasn't yet two years old.

### **"We Saw an Eagle!"**

It was Lois's fifth summer, and my third. We liked to walk out to the mail box at the end of the lane and bring the mail. One day, flying just above the tops of the trees that bordered both sides of the lane was the biggest bird we had ever seen. It was ever so much bigger than the little sparrows, or even the robins we often saw, so we decided it was an eagle. We hurried home to tell of this awesome sight. They laughed at us! "Aw, that was just an old red-tailed hawk," they said. I still remember how humiliated I felt. I don't know if Lois remembers or not.

### **Papa Becomes a Minister**

I don't know why in the world I never thought to ask Papa about this. The thing just never came to my mind. Papa always was a minister. That was how I thought—until after he was gone. I didn't ask anyone else—until we were living at Hudson Street, and Uncle Guy used to come over just to talk. He loved to talk about 'the good old days', and Anna, he said, didn't want to hear any more about it—she had already heard it. I had too, but Guy needed to talk about it, and I really liked to hear his stories, even if I already knew them. He got such a kick out of the telling. If the visit was finished with a bowl of steaming hot salmon soup, he went home happy and contented.

One day it dawned on me that he knew my father before I was born, so maybe he knew how it came about that he was called to the Ministry. I asked him and he told me this story:

A Methodist minister was pastoring a small congregation which held services in the local schoolhouse. This was on The Bottoms (see chapter IV), and the school was named Independence School. Sometimes he would have to be away some place else. On times like this he asked the Brick Church congregation of Mennonites to send a minister to fill in for him. Papa's brother John was one of their ministers, and they usually sent him. One time when he was going to fill the preaching appointment, he

was asked to bring along a teacher for the adult Sunday School class. Uncle John asked Papa to do this, and he did.

Some weeks later the little congregation at Independence School learned that their pastor had accepted a call out West. They called Papa and asked him to come and preach for them until they could find a permanent pastor.

"Oh," Papa said, "You have the wrong McCulloh. It's my brother John who is the preacher."

"But aren't you the one who taught the Sunday School class that Sunday?"

"Yes, but I'm not a preacher."

"We don't care about your not being a preacher; what we want is someone who can teach us the Bible the way you taught the Sunday School lesson that Sunday." That Papa agreed to do—for a while. It meant a trip of close to 15 miles one way with horse and buggy, but he did it.

When he was ordained in 1915, it was by the Brethren in Christ bishop, because Papa was a member of that denomination, even though he had worshipped with the much closer Mennonite congregation.

### **Belle, Papa's Bay Mare**

She was a beautiful little bay mare. Papa drove her when he went to his meetings on Sunday. It wasn't practical to take the family along—he had to leave too early and get home too late.

In later years I came to understand that Papa knew his horses, and that he loved them. There was a special understanding between him and Belle. She knew the way home, and often, bone weary from a busy week, and this long day, he'd fasten the reins on the dashboard and settle back to relax—sometimes to sleep. Belle would stop when they got in the driveway of the granary where the buggy was kept. (Try to do that with a car!)

One chilly Sunday night it had begun to rain, so he buttoned on the storm shields, and they started home. Sleep overtook him, and he dozed off. When Belle stopped, he realized they were not in the granary—there must be something wrong. He lit the lantern and got out to check. Everything seemed all right, but when he got in the buggy and spoke to her to go—she whinnied. Now Papa got out again and checked her shoes—maybe one was loose, or a stone wedged in. But, no, nothing there. Then, what is it? Something worries her.

Just then he heard above the sound of the rain and the wind, another horse's whinny. Belle answered it. So that's where the trouble is. He took

the lantern, climbed over the fence, and went to look for the horse in trouble. He found it—tangled in a roll of barbed wire someone had carelessly left lay.

Papa freed the horse, and it whinnied again to Belle. She answered him, and when Papa got back to her, he told her she was a good little horse. Papa used to tell this for a horse story, but I think it says a lot about him, too.

### **Belle Knows What the Wig-Wag Signal Means**

Another time on the way home, she stopped and Papa woke up. They were a safe distance from the railroad tracks, and the wig-wag signal was swinging and sounding off. Papa saw that the train was far enough away that they could have crossed safely. But there might be a time in the future when it wouldn't be safe to cross. So he waited, and Belle proceeded when the signal stopped swinging.

### **Dick, Belle's Colt**

In her teen years, Belle had a colt—a pretty black fellow with a white star. We named him Dick. Charles used to lead him and Dan. (Dan was a sorrel colt from Maude, a mare Ralph Voss had given Mama one time. Mama had never accepted any payment for being with Alena when their babies were born, so Maude was a gift in appreciation for Mama. Dan was born at about the same time Dick was.) Dick was broad backed and of a stocky build, and Charles would lift Fido (see *Fido*, in chapter III) up on his back for the ride across the road to the pasture. Dick didn't seem to mind, and Fido loved it.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DIAMOND PLACE

In the early spring of 1916 we moved from the Lane Place to a farm about six or seven miles west of Morrison. It was on the east edge of The Bottoms, and was owned by a Dr. Diamond. Now we had only about a mile or so to the Independence School where Papa held services on Sundays, so we could all go to church together.

#### **Red Roses, Roy Spellman, and Purple Grapes**

There are only a few things I remember about the house. I especially remember the boys' bedroom. (Probably because of what happened there, which I will relate directly. It was a large room with big red roses on the wallpaper. The two iron beds the boys slept in were placed with the head ends along the west wall, with about three and a half feet between them.

This is what happened up there one day. Aunt Esther (Mama's younger sister) and Uncle Walter Spellman, with their two children Roy and Goldia, were visiting. We children were playing upstairs, and Roy got the idea that it would be fun to jump from one of the beds to the other. This was strictly forbidden, and we tried to persuade him to not do it. But he did it anyway. It went fine for several jumps, then he missed. Instead of landing in the middle of the other bed, he struck his head on the iron side rail, and cut a nasty gash on his forehead. It bled profusely—to the consternation of the rest of us kids.

Dr. Pettit came, stretched him out on the dining room table, gave him a few whiffs of chloroform, and stitched up the wound. It was quite an awesome happening, and quieted the rest of us down considerably.

The dining room had clusters of purple grapes on the wallpaper. And that's all I remember about the house.

The barn was built beside a big sand hill. On top of the hill was a road leading down to join the one passing our house. Part of the hill was like a steep bare cliff. We played there in the sand. Beside the barn, going up over the hill, a path led up to the road. This was a short cut to our neighbors, the Galushas. (Polish, I think.) They had a little boy about a year older than I, and one day I was up there with Papa. Mrs. Galusha was sick, expecting a baby. Mama had sent something up for her. I was playing outside with the boy, who was called Buster. I do not know what upset him, but he called me "an old kunk". I knew he meant "skunk" and was very insulted. I do not remember ever playing with him again, even though Mama took care of his baby sister for 16 weeks after she was born,

while his mother recovered from her illness. Mama was expecting Ruth at the time. How did she do it?

Across the road was a creek. Years later, on Monday morning, September 5, 1927, Papa would baptize Lois and me in that creek, but a lot of water would go under the bridge—literally and figuratively—before then.

### **First Love (or was it "Puppy Love"?)**

West of the house, a lane led back a quarter of a mile or so to a little house where lived a family by the name of Yeoman. They had one child, a little boy about my age, named Orville. He and I played house. I had a little cast iron cook stove that we played with. (He liked to 'cook' while I took care of 'the children'.) When they moved away I told him to take it along, because I wouldn't feel like playing with it any way, when he was gone.

But in time I recovered and fell in love again. I even thought of that stove now and then, but I don't remember ever feeling sorry I gave it to Orville.

### **Lesson in Obedience # 1**

It was while we lived there that I had my first demonstration of the fact that to disobey brought consequences peculiar to the situation.

Papa had gone up over the hill (a sand hill, remember) to fix fence. He told me not to come along. I wasn't happy about that. I was usually allowed to tag along when he worked around outdoors. By and by I thought maybe by now he misses me, and won't scold me for going up to find him. When I got up there, I found out that sand burrs grew there in great abundance. I sat down to pick them out of my bare feet and got sand burrs THERE, too. I put my hands down to help me get up and got sand burrs in them too. All I could do was set up a wail of despair. Papa came, picked off the offending burrs, then said, "Now, do you think you know why you should listen to Papa?" I thought I did.

He carried me down to the path where it was safe for bare feet.

### **Quarantined Again**

Another thing happened at this place that I have some memory of. We were quarantined again. For small pox this time. All of us except Papa were obliged to stay in. He could not come in. I don't know how or where he got his meals, but he did the chores as usual, all alone though. He'd bring milk and things to the porch, and then leave.

Some of us had mild cases, but Ezra was very sick. Mama used to tell us he had been so covered with the pox that you couldn't lay a pinhead between them. But one happy day the quarantine was lifted, and life got back to normal again.

### **Uncle Arch and His Unusual Animals**

His name was really Archibald Scott McCulloh, and he was the youngest of Papa's four brothers. In fact, he was the youngest of the family of eleven children. Uncle Arch and his wife, Emma, had four sons. I do not remember Aunt Emma. She died before I really got to know her. Uncle Arch remained a widower a long time. I was grown up when he married the second time, so I didn't get acquainted with Aunt Bessie.

Uncle Arch lived in the little 'town' of Unionville, just west of Morrison. Papa stopped to see him sometimes, and once in a while Uncle Arch would come to our place.

I remember once he came with his ferret. He warned us not to put our fingers through the wires of his cage. He might think we meant for him to eat one! I probably kept my hands behind my back after that.

Another time he showed us his guinea pigs. This time he warned us to NEVER pick one up by its tail—if you do, its eyes will fall out! I looked at him, shocked and bewildered at the poor thing's awful predicament. "Then daren't he even somersault? Or jump over something head first?" The poor creature must be terribly disadvantaged, to say the least.

Uncle Arch said it was just a joke—you couldn't pick a guinea pig up by the tail if you wanted to, because it doesn't have a tail! Ha Ha!!

I should have known there was a catch to it. But I didn't think Uncle Arch's joke was very funny that time.



## CHAPTER III

### THE OOSTENRYKE PLACE

Early in 1917 we moved to the Oostenryke Place, a dairy farm about a mile north and a quarter of a mile east of where we had been. On the corner where we turned east was Lincoln School. Next, going east, was the Oostentyke home. Beside it was the garden, and beyond that, the orchard. Next to the orchard was the house yard of the tenant house, with maybe a dozen large maple trees growing, and almost no grass. The house was comfortable, and as I remember it, pleasant to live in. There were two large barns—one for the dairy cows, the other for horses and calves and young stock. Sometimes we had to have some milking cows there, too.

There was a large corn crib with grain bins, a big hog house, chicken house, machine shed, and of course the little house at the end of a path with necessary facilities. It could accommodate three people at once if one was a small child. One end of the bench was low enough for a child's comfort, and the opening small enough for its safety.

#### **A Visit at the Fritzes**

We weren't living there very long until one morning I was bundled off to spend the day with Mrs. Fritz. What did she want with a girl around, I wondered? If she had liked girls, she'd have had some instead of all five boys. Well, I'll be sure to stay out of her way. I sat in a corner behind a big overstuffed chair in the living room. I was quite content there, and have no idea how long it was until Mrs. Fritz came and gave me a banana—a whole banana! Maybe Mrs. Fritz likes girls after all, and I came out of the corner. I wonder sometimes how the day went. Did she wish she had left me in the corner before the day was over?

#### **No Longer the 'Baby'**

I do not remember my feelings about the surprise awaiting when I was brought home that evening. I had been the 'baby' for four years. Maybe my thoughts were so dark that in time my better nature simply buried them. I had a baby sister.

I do remember one instance though, when Ruthie was about one year old. Her crib was in the dining room, for some reason—possibly to keep her off the cold floor. Papa was sitting at the end of the dining room table with his books. I was watching from what I was doing in the other side of the room.



Ruth was learning to walk, and, of course, trying to talk. And she was cute, too, and had very curly hair. She had pulled herself up, and had moved to the end of the crib. She cocked her head to one side and said, "Pa-pa." Her first word! Papa left his books, went over and picked her up, and took her back to his chair for a little while.

I do not remember feeling jealous—just a deep sense of sadness that I was now too big to sit on Papa's lap any more.

### **Helping Mama Bake Cookies**

Mama was baking cookies, and I was standing on a box beside her 'helping'. (I was probably four or five then). I don't think there was anything that stirred a loving feeling for Mama in me more than did the smell of cookies baking, or pop corn popping on a cold stormy afternoon when I couldn't play outside. I had my own little ball of dough to work with, and sometimes she'd let me press a raisin in the middle of the cookies she had ready for the oven.

On that day I loved her so much that I didn't ever want to be separated from her. I don't remember what all went through my mind 'til I hit upon an idea and made Mama this offer: "When I get big and you get little, I want you to be my little girl, and I will let you help me make cookies."

Mama said, "That's not the way it works".

Me: "It isn't?"

Mama: "No, grownups don't get little again."

Me, with concern: "Then where will my children come from?"

Mama: "You'll find out when the time comes".

That was not a satisfactory answer, but I had a feeling Mama didn't want to talk about it any more, so I didn't ask any more questions. But I didn't stop thinking about them.

### **Horse Tracks --- On Mashed Potatoes???**

When Ruth was big enough to sit up to the table in a high chair, I was moved to the end of the table beside Papa, and Ruth had my old place beside Mama.

I liked to sit next to Papa; he took extra time to fix things the way I liked them. For example: When we had mashed potatoes, a mound of them would be placed on my plate. Gravy poured on that would run right off, so I'd push my plate towards Papa's, and ask him to put horse tracks on it. He'd oblige by taking his knife and turning my mound into a

plateau. Next, he'd press the end of the knife blade around on it, making it look as though a very small horse had trotted around up there. Now when he poured the gravy over it, there were all those puddles of gravy. Mmm, mmm!

I'm not sure now whether the extra enjoyment I got really came from the bit of extra gravy, or whether it came from the love Papa put into doing this favor for me.

In later times I have noticed others making a sort of pit in the top of their mound of mashed potatoes—resembling somewhat the caldera of an extinct volcano—then fill that with gravy. I've done this too on occasion, but nothing has ever been quite so sublimely soul-satisfying as a plateau of mashed potatoes with little horse tracks full of Mama's good chicken gravy that Papa fixed for me.

### **Being with Papa and Learning to Milk**

Maybe I couldn't sit on Papa's lap anymore, but I could go with him when he came in from the hog house and said, "What do you think is out in the pig pen?"

I remember one morning he came in and said that. I wasn't dressed yet. So he wrapped a blanket around me and carried me out to see the dozen or so pink baby piggies having their first breakfast.

When it was time for Papa and the others to do the milking, I could go with him taking my tin cup along. He would fill it with nice warm milk right from the cow. I loved it. I also loved to watch him milk.

With all those cows, there was often a new calf in the barn. Of course, we had to go see it. Do you think all calves look alike? Not Holsteins. No two are ever alike, not even twins.

Before I was old enough to go to school, I learned to milk. I mentioned before how Papa would milk a cupful of milk for me. Well, this time he said I could milk Orpah and drink all the milk I got.

Orpah was a registered Holstein, now seventeen years old. She had been an exceptionally good cow, and produced a number of fine heifers. She was soon due to dry up, so she wasn't giving much milk now.

I sat down beside her and began to learn a thing or two. Milk doesn't come just because you have hold of the 'spigot'! I tried several things. Poor old Orpah was so patient. She had had a lot of different characters at her milk counter in her lifetime, and my fooling around didn't disturb her ruminant reverie. But, hey, wait a minute! I got some milk that time! How did I do that? Let me see now. Yea, that's it—you start squeezing at the top—then come on down. Sure! There it comes again. It's fun! I got

so I could get more milk than I wanted to drink, so I brought a Karo bucket and poured milk in that to be fed to the cats, the dog, the rabbits, the bantams, and whatever else came to drink.

The next step was to set a bucket under Orpah and learn to milk with two hands. It didn't occur to me what I was getting into—a cow to milk for real. Then two, and three, so that by the time I was nine I was milking four—morning and night. But I loved the cows, and I was part of the family. Milking was what we did.

In the winter it was quite comfortable in the barn, with all those big warm cows in there. But the walk from the barn back to the house on a cold winter night was another story. Even those times have some bright places in my memory. On a clear, moonless night the sky was so full of stars! (Here in Harrisburg, one sees so few.) I remember Papa showing me Orion and the Pleiades, reminding me that they were there thousands of years ago, already, when Job was out on the ash heap at night, and he saw them. Also, he pointed out the Big Dipper and the North Star.

### **Revival Meetings in the Burr Oak Grove**

I think it was probably my sixth summer—that is, I would be six in November—that a big tent was pitched in the burr oak grove across the road from Ralph Vosses, in Herb Frost's pasture. There were two evangelists, one rather quiet and gentle in his approach, and the other—what I remember about him is the way he 'got around' on the platform. (Uncle Guy called him the 'popcorn preacher'.) They had tents pitched under the maples in our house yard to live in. Two lady workers were in one of the tents and did the cooking for the team.

I remember one night at the big tent. The sermon was delivered, and now they were singing an invitation song. The choice that night was #55 in the old *Spiritual Hymns* book: *Let Jesus Come Into Your Heart*. I knew a person should let Jesus come into their heart. I had heard Papa say it in family devotions, and my Sunday School teacher had told us the same thing. The chorus of the song said, "Just now, throw open the door, Let Jesus come into your heart".

We were standing—I was sort of lost in the crowd of grownups all around, and I was wondering just how do you open the door? The only way I could think of was to open my mouth as wide as I could and let Jesus figure out how to get in. I don't suppose any person saw me standing there with my mouth wide open, but surely God saw it. I wonder what He thought.

## **Amos and Nellie Dick**

It was that same Summer (1918) that Amos and Nellie Dick visited Illinois for the last time before they sailed to India. Nellie was Abbie's sister. They had been brides in a double wedding ceremony on December 20, 1916, in Canada.

It was on a Sunday afternoon when Amos and Nellie went for a walk in the meadow with us girls. Across the creek was a catalpa grove. It was nice and shady there. While we were there they made Adam and Eve dresses for us, by pinning catalpa leaves together, using the stems for pins. We wore these back to the house to show them to whoever was there. They sailed for India the day dear Leona was born. They never got to see her in this world.

## **Blanche**

In 1919 or 1920 we had to have the cows tested for TB. I think there were eight or nine with positive reactions, and they had to be removed. Among them was a big, mostly black, cow, named inappropriately, Blanche. She was my favorite, and I pled with Papa to keep her and try to cure her. I had heard them say when we had Physiology lessons at school that lots of fresh air, sunshine, and protein helped people get well. Maybe it would work for cows, too. We could keep her in the corn crib—she'd get plenty of fresh air and sunshine there, and we could feed her eggs. They have lots of protein.

Papa said he didn't think she would like living alone in the corn crib, and he didn't think she would like eggs, much. Besides, the law says she must be removed from the place. He said he wasn't a bit happy to see her or any of the others go, but when things like this happen, we just have to be brave and take it. That little talk helped me.

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Several years later Papa had a bunch of heifers in a rented pasture a couple of miles away. When he'd go to check on them, they would come up to him expecting some special attention.

One morning after a severe thunderstorm he went to see how the heifers were. They had bunched under a tree for shelter, and eight of them were dead. Apparently they had been struck by lightning. That was a hard blow, and I didn't know any words to ease Papa's pain.

## **The Bush Girls**

I started school the fall before my seventh birthday in November. The other girl in my class was named Dorothy Bush. Her family lived in the

house on top of the sand hill, where the Galushas had lived. Dorothy had two sisters at home—Marjorie and Jeanette. In that winter another baby girl was born. She was named Rachel. The mother died not long after the baby was born. One of the mother's sisters took little three year old Jeanette. Who do you think had the other three? Mama, of course, and she was expecting Eunice in May.

The three older girls were placed in Mount Carmel home in a few weeks, but it was somewhat longer until they felt they could handle a baby.

### **Marjorie**

This was my first close encounter with death. Dorothy had been away from her mother going to school, but Marjorie was in a totally new world—a world full of strangers, with no daddy or mother.

I remember walking into the dining room one evening, and hearing muffled crying. Then I saw her huddled against the middle table leg crying for her mother. I stood there thinking there could be nothing worse than to lose your mother and father. And I never will forget her huddled there under the table, crying.

### **Rudolph: How He Got His Dimple**

Soon after school started, I had a crush on Rudolph, one of Mrs. Fritz's boys. He had four brothers, and no sisters, so maybe it was the novelty of having a pigtailed girl around that caused him to be nice to me. I really have only one clear memory of what happened between us, and that took place one day when we were eating our lunch on the steps of the schoolhouse.

He had a dimple in his left cheek that fascinated me. Maybe it was the first one I ever saw—I don't know that for sure. I asked him what makes his cheek go in like that when he smiles, and he spun this yarn for me:

"Long ago when I was young\*, an Indian took his bow and shot an arrow at me. It hit me right there." He poked his finger in his cheek.

I asked him if it had hurt terribly? He said "No, it didn't bleed or anything. It just left a dent that never quite went away." (My poor brave hero!) Before many more weeks Rudolph finished eighth grade, and that was the end of that.

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\* It couldn't have been THAT long ago. He was only thirteen or fourteen!

## Fido

It was in the late spring of 1919 that Grandpa and Grandma came one day with a box holding a little white and tan puppy. Before it was made known whom the puppy was for, one of my siblings said, "Don't give it to Vida—she'd have it dead in no time". I was wounded by that remark, yet at the same time, I felt I deserved it, because only a few months earlier I had set the stage for the tragic death of my very own puppy. Edgar Shearer had brought it for me—Edgar was a widower of maybe 35 years of age, who lived with his mother in Albany. About once a year he took a vacation from her and came to our place. There was always room for one more, and work to do. The puppy he gave me was a toy fox terrier, white and brown. I named him Spot. I loved him dearly, and he was with me everywhere I went.

One Sunday we went to Grandma's for dinner. I couldn't take Spot along, so I tied him in front of Prince in the barn. Prince was my favorite, and I imagined he and the puppy would be company for each other. I left the top half of the barn door open, since the weather was warm. The bottom half had a board nailed diagonally from the base to the top of the door. And I gave the puppy plenty of rope so he could play around in the feed-way. Thus, unwittingly, I had set the stage for the tragic death of the little dog. He used that diagonal board to scramble to the top of the door. You get the scene my brothers found when they came home early to start the chores. We came later in the carriage. By then my puppy had already been buried.

I still hurt, and this little puppy Grandpa and Grandma brought reminded me of him.

The puppy was given to Ruth, who was in her third year. As it turned out, she didn't like him. He pulled her socks, nipped her ankles, untied her shoestrings, and tugged at her dress until she said, "Get that thing away from me!" When he saw the empty space under the porch, he went there. He had had enough commotion for one day, and wanted his mother.

It was dinner time then so we all went in, but I was thinking of the puppy. We had sausage. I hated sausage. I knew better than to say anything, though. I had said one time what it looked like and almost got my mouth washed out with soap! I took a piece, but slipped most of it into my apron packet. I asked to please be excused as soon as I thought I could get away with it. I went to the end of the porch nearest the puppy and offered him a bit of sausage. By and by the smell got to him, I guess, and he came out and left me pick him up. I fed him the rest of my sausage, and by the time my brothers came out he was licking my fingers. They wondered if I was trying to take Ruthie's puppy away from her. I

said I was just caring for him until she got bigger. He was named Fido, and although he was supposed to be Ruth's dog, I knew he had given himself to me. Where I went, Fido went, too. He knew I loved him.

## **Leona**

On December 5, 1918, a daughter was born to Archie and Abbie. She was named Leona Marguerite. She was a dear little girl. When she was several months old, they moved to Ontario where Abbie's folks lived. Merlin was born there on September 17, 1920. Before he was a year old, they moved back to Illinois.

Leona was past two then, and talking everything. She was quite interested in the little house at the end of the path. She was particularly taken with the seat made to accommodate a small child.

Archie often had the privilege (?) of taking her there. If she heard a grownup use an expression that impressed her, she'd try to work it into the conversation somehow. This is what Archie reported one day when he took her out there and came back alone. She had said, "Now, Daddy, you go back in the house; then pretty soon you come out and say, 'Leona, are you done?' Then I'll say, 'No sir-eeeee!'"

Here is another one Archie told about Leona and the little house. It was a stormy day and Leona had to GO. If she just wanted to do #1 she could use a pottie, but if it was #2 it would be easiest to go out to the little house. So Archie said, "Leona, which do you have to do, #1 or #2?" Leona looked thoughtful, and after studying the question a bit she brightened and said, "I'm not going to do either one. This time I'm going to do-oo" (she was thinking again) "This time I'm going to do #7!" Archie took her to the little house.

Abbie was a skilled seamstress. She made 'coverings' like all B.I.C. women wore in those days. Leona wanted one, so Abbie made a covering just her size, and she liked to wear it. She also made for me the prettiest dress I remember ever having as a child.

In the winter, on November 13, 1921, Leona went to be with Jesus. She had diphtheria. Archie and Abbie were quarantined with her in the living room at our place. The rest of us were given toxin-antitoxin.

There could be no funeral. But the undertaker brought her body back in its little white casket and set it outside a window on the porch. Now it was my turn to cry. She looked so sweet. I loved her so. The night before she died Archie asked her if she wanted to get well and stay with Daddy and Mother, or did she want to go and be with Jesus. She said she wanted to go and be with Jesus.

I felt so sorry for Abbie, and I felt a special tenderness toward her for a long time after that. I felt sorry for Archie, too, but he had a little son, and the next June another son was born—named Kenneth Everett.

### **Paper Boats**

It was about this time that I learned to fold paper into boats and ducks. (I left the gliders to the boys.) The tinier I could fold them, the more pleased I was. Little things fascinated me.

The road past our place was plain dirt, and it was graded regularly, so that when it rained, it drained toward the little ditches made for that purpose on the sides of the road. The water could then drain into the creek. We would sometimes sail our paper boats in these drainage ditches, and run along beside them to watch them go. We could follow to the corner, then turn south a short distance to where the drainage water flowed into the creek that emerged from our meadow there. Then the little boats would disappear under the bridge and be gone out of sight. I used to wonder if any ever reached the Mississippi. I don't suppose they did, since we were about four or five miles from the river—as the crow flies.

### **Bear Soup**

No, we didn't use the bear to make it—we made the soup for the bears.

To make bear soup, you need a dirt road with lots of clay in the dirt. Next you need a good gentle rain, and after the road is really soaked, you need someone to drive by with a team of horses to make nice deep tracks in the mud.

When the tracks are full of water, you get out there and into a nice track with your bare feet., and start tramping around in a circle. You are making a soup bowl—the size of it depends upon the size of bear you are favoring. If it's a Papa bear you need a large bowl. If it's a Mama bear you need a middle sized bowl. If it's a bear cub you need a baby bear sized one.

When the bowl is ready, the next step is to fill it with soup. To make this you channel water from a nearby track into the bowl, and tramp it around, mixing it with soil, always keeping in mind that it must be just right or the bears won't eat it.

When you finally have the bowl full, and the soup is just the right consistency—smooth and velvety, like perfect gravy—you get out and leave it alone overnight. The next morning you go out to see if the bears



found the soup, and sure enough, it was gone! The bears had eaten it all up! (or something had happened to it).

### **Another Lesson in Obedience**

Around the same period, I did something that was strictly forbidden, but I was sure I would be very careful, and no one would know it. It happened like this.

We had a windmill to pump water for the livestock. First, the water flowed into a tank in the milk-house, then down an overflow pipe into pipes underground that went to big watering tanks near both barns. The milk-house was nice and cool on a hot summer day. Papa wasn't home, and no one else paid much attention, unless I hadn't done my chores.

I took my fleet of paper boats to the milk tank. The gentle flow of water made it extra interesting. If I hadn't been stuck on making teensie-weensie things I may have got by. But, alas! One of my tiny boats slipped over the edge of the overflow pipe and was gone! I quickly gathered up the rest of the 'fleet', and stood there watching for the dreaded signs of a clogged pipe. I didn't see any, but that didn't help me. As soon as Papa saw me he'd KNOW I did something wrong and ask me what was bothering me.

When I saw him coming I went to meet him, climbed up into the wagon beside him, and told him what I had done. We went to the milk-house and saw the water still flowing freely. I fully expected a spanking, but all he did was say, "Well now Vida, do you see why you should listen to Papa?" I was very sure I did.

As far as corporal punishment was concerned, I have no recollection of ever getting any from Papa. To see him looking at me with that "I expected better than that from you" look was more than enough for me. (I thought.) But when you want to do something very much, and you are sure it isn't a 'sin'—maybe you can rationalize your way into disobedience of your father—a sin!.

### **The Final Lesson in Obedience (I Think)**

I think it might have been the following May that the teacher was to take the school children May-flowering in the big woods beyond The Bottoms. A mile and a half one way. Papa said I shouldn't go—I was too small for such a long walk. But, oh, I did want so much to see where the wild flowers grew, and I went! We found violets—the biggest, bluest ones ever. There were Dutchman's breeches, wild columbine, wild geranium, spring beauties, trillium—to name some. But what fascinated me most was the Jack-in-the-pulpit. It was a lovely time—except for the guilt

gnawing away at me. On the way home the teacher took a short cut. By now I had a blister on my heel and was walking barefoot. The blister had broken open at the top. The short cut led through a cow yard, and I got my blister full of dirt. When I washed my feet the dirt didn't wash out. When we got home, Papa asked me why I had disobeyed him. I told him it was because I wanted to see where the wild flowers grow.

"You knew I'd have to punish you if you disobeyed me, didn't you?" His eyes were sad. I said, "Yes, Papa, I knew."

I do not remember what the punishment was—it wasn't very severe, I'm sure.

But punishment came anyway in a different way. A couple of weeks later my ankle was red and swollen a bit. But I didn't say anything to Mama. She didn't like us to fuss about every little thing that happened.

It was Papa who asked, "Vida, what's the matter with your foot? I see you favoring it when you walk."

"Oh, it hurts a little."

"Come here, let me have a look at that. Hmm, red, and swollen! We must show that to Dr. Pettit." So after supper we went to see him. The verdict? A tuberculin infection! I had my foot in a cast for the three months of Summer, and when school started in September, I still had it taped.

I think by that time I was thoroughly cured of disobedience to Papa.

The doctor was convinced I had picked up the bacillus in that cow yard. If I had peeled off the blister and cleaned it out thoroughly, I probably could have prevented the infection.

### **Lloyd—Another Love**

Rudolph, of the dimpled cheek, had graduated, and of course that took him out of school, and out of my life. But, on the farm just east of us was now living a family with twin boys, Lloyd and Lyle. They were in third grade. Lloyd was outgoing, but Lyle was timid. I never got very well acquainted with him. But Lloyd was different. He'd wait for me going home from school. He'd carry my book and dinner pail. As I told Abbie one time, "He is such a gentleman."

When the leaves were down from all those big maple trees in our yard, we (Lloyd and I, and Charles) made a leaf house. I don't remember how we did it, but we used stakes, old fencing, and lots of leaves. When we were done, we had a fairly warm den to play in. One thing he taught me was how to tell time—if I didn't know how to tell time, I wouldn't have his dinner ready when he came in from the field at noon. You

probably have guessed that we were talking about getting married. I remember telling him I wanted him to be baptized. He said he had already been baptized when he was a baby. I said that wasn't the way it ought to be—you had to be put under water three times. "Well, gee", he said, "A fellow could drown!"

I said, "Maybe he could, but I never heard of it, but one thing sure, if he did drown, he'd go straight to heaven." Well, he wanted to go to heaven, but he didn't want to drown to get there. I don't know how we resolved the issue.

It seems that by the time warm days were coming again, we had come to the conclusion that, yes, we would get married, so we were 'engaged'.

One day we got out of school early as the lower classes sometimes did, and Lloyd and I sat along the road to talk some more about the things we'd have to do before we could get married. I don't know how long we sat there after the older children went home, but it was long enough for Mama to be upset, and come down the road with a switch in her hand. Ah, me! What a way to end a beautiful romance!

### **The Visit to Grandma's**

Grandpa was going to Uncle Joe's in Sterling to assemble crates for shipping vegetables. Uncle Joe had a truck patch and a greenhouse. He grew lots of things.

They came to take me along to keep Grandma company, and to help her some while he was away. Grandpa and Grandma were already in the buggy, and I was just leaving the kitchen to join them, when Mama pulled me back in. She looked at me kind of funny and said in a low voice, with a warning sound to it, "Now don't you get into mischief!"

"No, I won't, Mama." I went off with a whole bundle of mixed feelings. Puzzled. What did she mean? Telling me not to get into mischief! To me, getting into mischief was pushing a chair up to the cupboard and helping myself to a few raisins, or maybe a lump of brown sugar. But, I wouldn't do that at Grandma's! What did Mama think I was, anyway? I was insulted, and hurt besides.

It wasn't much fun being alone with Grandma. It was rainy, and her 'roomatiz' was bothering her, so she spent a lot of time in bed. She'd get up to feed the chickens and milk the cow. Then, after she had fixed us supper, she'd go back to bed. One evening when she was starting supper, she told me to bring her the spider off the wall in the cellar way. I could see no spider. "It's a big black one!" she said. Her patience was running out.

Horrors!, I thought. What in the world does she plan to do with a big black spider? "I don't see one, Grandma." She came, took a big black frying pan off the wall, mumbling something about it being a pity I can't see what's right in front of me.

"Well, Grandma, Mama always calls a pan like that a frying pan."

"Well, now, you've learned something!" I got so homesick, I went out and stood by the gate, looking towards home, which was 15 or more miles away, and cried. I don't know if Grandma saw or not. But in a day or so two cousins came, a girl a few months younger than I, and a boy about a year older.

The girl slept in one room with me, the boy in the other, upstairs. Grandma slept in her room, downstairs. About daybreak the next morning, the boy came over to our room and crawled in bed with us. I thought nothing of it until they described to me a 'game' they played sometimes, and the boy wanted me to play it. Right then I KNEW! That's what Mama meant when she looked at me funny and said, "Now, don't you get into mischief."

I said, "I'm not going to play that game—you two can play it if you want to, but I'm going downstairs!"

I don't remember anything else about the visit at Grandma's house. I learned it was a lot more fun when Grandpa was there. Grandma was more cheerful then, and Grandpa never seemed to be tired of me, and he always was making something interesting.

In later years I came to understand Grandma better. She had raised eleven—no, one died in infancy—ten of her own, and now there were many grandchildren—more than 50 of them! She had had enough, already!

## **The Spelling Bee**

Now we must go back a few months. I just have to tell you about a big moment for me in the spring. During my second year of school, the teacher decided by some means or other that I was quite capable of doing 3rd grade work. So I got to be in the Spelling Bee. Two teams were lined up, one on either side of the room, and the teacher spoke a word to one team. If the #1 on that team didn't spell it correctly the word was passed to #1 on the other side. The #1 on the first side had to sit down. The next word was offered to #2 and so on. Whoever missed a word had to be seated. The chance to spell a word came around several times. Finally, there were only two still standing, a boy from the eighth grade on the one side and a girl from the third grade on the other.

The teacher offered the boy the word 'bow-wow'. He spelled, "b-o-w-w-o-w".

The teacher said, "Next".

The girl spelled, "b-o-w-hyphen-w-o-w".

"Correct," the teacher said. I had a mixed feeling about winning. The one who didn't spell 'bow-wow' to suit the teacher was our landlord's son. I never got a clue as to how my parents felt about it.

### **Catherine Anderson**

After school was out—possibly in June sometime—Catherine Anderson (from Clinton, Iowa) came again bringing her two children—Marvin, about four, and Opal, around three. She was also expecting, and would be there until sometime after her baby was born in September, after school started.

Just why she came I never knew for sure, but she was always welcome. She was not afraid of work, and did whatever there was to do, including helping with the milking. I was 8 years old then and caught on that the growing bulge in her body was a growing baby. But how in the world it was ever going to get out of there when the time came was a mystery to me. Once when Mother was butchering a chicken, it had a perfectly formed egg in it. That set my mind to working, and I asked her how babies get born. I knew how eggs were laid—I had seen it happen when I gathered the eggs sometimes. I guess the question came as too big a surprise to Mama. All she said was that I shouldn't ask so many questions. (I never, ever, asked her another one related to that subject.)

One afternoon in September I came home from school early. The doctor's car was parked in the driveway, and all the doors in the house were locked. Opal and Marvin were nowhere in sight. Neither were Ruth and Eunice. I sat on the big rope swing tied to a bough on the box elder tree by the gate, thinking.

(Sylvia Voss—who was a year younger than I—had discussed birth with me. She told me how babies are born—she had three younger brothers. I just couldn't believe that such a thing was possible, and decided that the doctor cut a hole in the belly to get it out.)

Before long I heard some terrifying sounds coming from Mama's bedroom. They got worse. I left the swing and hid in the woodshed. After what seemed like a long time to me, I heard a baby cry. Then in a little while I saw the doctor come out the back door to wash his hands. They were bloody! Now I knew, I thought, that Catherine had been cut open with a knife, and the baby pulled out! My blood almost curdled. I don't know how long I sat there. In about ten days Catherine was up and

around—her tummy flat, and her breasts full of milk. She seemed happy; I carried in my mind the haunting memory for several years until I learned the truth.

### **I Remember Mama**

This is one of my favorite stories from *I Remember Mama*, a collection of stories about Mama I wrote 10 or more years ago. It happened in about 1920. I had just come home from school, and after I changed my clothes I went to the kitchen for a slice of apple butter bread—we always had apple butter bread before we did our chores. On this particular evening Mama called me from the dining room where she was mending. She said I should get out of the kitchen and get to my chores. I was stunned! I went out to the granary to get chicken feed, and the seriousness of my plight overtook me there. I climbed up into the buggy to think about it. I concluded that I must be an orphan that the family had, for some reason, felt obliged to take in before I was old enough to remember about it, and now Mama is tired of me and she doesn't care if I do starve to death.

To be eight years old and suddenly lose your sense of identity is a traumatic thing, and I began to cry.

About that time someone entered the granary and called my name. It was Mama. She climbed up in the buggy and put her arms around me. She said she had been mistaken when she thought I had already been in the kitchen, and that after she had sent me out she learned it was Lois who had been there earlier. She said I should go back to the house with her. No, she didn't give me apple butter bread—she gave me a piece of raisin pie! I've never since doubted that I am a true flesh and blood daughter of William and Maria McCulloh. And if you ask me what I think LOVE tastes like, I'd say I think it tastes sort of like raisin pie!

### **The Fritz Family Moves Away**

I think it was in the winter of '20-'21 that the Fritz family moved to Oregon, Illinois. Oregon is a city just down the river south of Loudon Memorial Park—where that 48 foot high statue of Black Hawk stands, 300 feet above the Rock River, overlooking what was once his beloved homeland. Loudon was a governor of Illinois, and owner of a couple of dairy farms. It was to one of these farms that the Fritz family moved. With their boys—six now, they had lots of help of their own. Now they had George, William Jr., Harold, Rudolph, Edward, and Paul. Before they left, the neighbors gathered for a farewell party. The parents were in the living room and the kids were in the kitchen and dining room playing

games. The only game I remember was Post Office. WOW! What would Papa have said? Recently, I asked Charles if he remembered any games we played that night. He chuckled and said the only one he remembered was Post Office!

Several years later, Rudolph had left the farm. He was to be married soon. A tragic accident happened, and he was killed on his job. Some of us went to his funeral. His brother William walked with the girl Rudolph's had been planning to marry.

It was very sad. A couple of years later we learned that Willie (as we had called him) and the girl were married.

## **Grace and Roy**

Grace Miller was a girl in our community who had become a Christian, and a member of the Brethren in Christ Church. She became a Sunday School teacher, and taught the class I was in. One Christmas she gave us each a pretty little china cup. I still have mine.

The time came that she felt called to do mission work somewhere, and went to Messiah to prepare. There she threw herself into her work, and worked for her tuition and board, too. Someone wrote to Papa that she was working too hard—could he persuade her to let up a little? She responded to Papa by asking him to "Please don't scold me—I have this feeling that what I do for Jesus I must do quickly".

It was at Messiah that she met Roy Mann. He came along home with Ezra from Messiah in the spring of '21, his purpose being to visit Grace in her parents' home.

On January 1, 1922, they were married in a simple ceremony in Independence School House. Bishop Trump performed the ceremony. In August that year they went to Africa. On March 18, 1924, having just turned 24 on January 20, Grace died of malaria. She was also pregnant. Roy made her casket. He served alone for twelve years. Then he married Esther Thuma. God gave them a son and a daughter. Grace's death was the second very sad loss to me. I had looked up to Grace as what a girl should try to be.

## **An Unhappy Incident**

This is not a very pretty story, and I'm not proud of my part in it. But things weren't always the way we wish they had been.

Lois and I were less than two years apart, but for some reason, we didn't always get along so well, as I remember it. I guess I was something

of a loner, or maybe a dreamer is more like what I was. If I had a playmate who could pretend, we had nice times together.

I had a temper, too. I don't remember what she had done that day that made me so upset that we got into a fight. It would have been over as quickly as it started, but Anna happened to see us. She separated us and said we should kiss each other. Lois quickly kissed me somewhere—but, would I kiss her? Like fun I'd kiss her! She did me wrong and never even had to own up to it or apologize! Anna hadn't even asked what the quarrel was about.

Lois had been a 'good girl', so she was free to go, and if I wouldn't kiss her, I could go to bed until I was willing to obey.

Appealing to Mama didn't help a bit. She said, "If that's what Anna said, then you go to bed". That added to my fury. The thing boiled over and over in my mind. "Is there no justice in this house? How come Anna can boss us around like she does?"

This thing happened soon after noon. When it was supper time, Anna came and asked if I was ready to kiss Lois now. "NO!"

"Well, then, you can do without supper!"

When everyone was seated at the table, Papa noticed my empty chair. "Where's Vida?"

"She was sent to bed for being disobedient." (I suppose it was Anna who told him).

"Well, I better look into this." He came up to my room, and sat on the edge of my bed. "Now, Vida, I want to know what this is all about." He didn't look cross, just serious.

I told him what Lois did, and about the fight, and Anna saying we had to kiss each other. "Lois kissed me, but I wouldn't kiss her. Kisses are for when you love somebody. Lois didn't love me—she just did it so she could go free. If she loved me, she would have said she was sorry she did it. But she didn't even have to own up to it. A while ago Anna came up and asked if I was ready to kiss Lois now, and I said, 'No'. Then Anna said I couldn't have supper then, either. I don't hate Lois anymore, but I don't love her enough to kiss her, yet."

Then Papa said, "I see," and he thought a little bit, then he said, "You come now, and have your supper."

### **Eunice is Welcomed to Our Family**

It was May 15, 1920. I was in the field across the road where some of the boys and Edgar Shearer (who had brought me Spot) were working.

The doctor was at our place, and Mama wasn't feeling well. I worried some about her. Was she going to die like the Bush girls' mother did?



Finally, the doctor left, and bye and bye someone called me to come see the surprise. Surprise?? What kind of surprise?—that's what I wondered. Mr. Shearer lifted me over the fence, so I wouldn't have to go way over to the gate, and I went to the house. "It's in the bedroom." There was Aunt Belle, standing by the window. Mama was in bed—her face looked tired and drawn. I stood there a bit wondering what was wrong with her. Then she said I should go to the other side of the bed and see what was there. A baby! I do not remember my feelings about the baby that day—I was so troubled about what had happened to Mama to make her look so tired, and my fear that something awful would happen to her—then what would become of our family?

In a day or two, Mama was still in bed, but I was assured she wasn't sick—just resting, and she would be all right soon.

Eunice was as dear and sweet as any baby ever was, and we all loved her. She was Cora's special favorite, and when she learned to speak, she said she was "Dorda's dirl" (Cora's girl). Cora took a large part of her care on herself.

When Eunice was big enough to climb out of her crib, if the side was part of the way down, she would come to the top of the stairway and call "Dorda, 'm 'ere t' yer dirl." Cora would go and bring her downstairs.

On the fall day when Cora was to leave for Grantham, Eunice was having her afternoon nap when it was time to leave for the train. Mama said Cora bent over the crib and cried like a mother weeping over her baby's casket. Her heart was so wrapped around this baby sister she had so lovingly cared for. But Cora was a loving sister to the rest of us, too.

When I think of it, I feel blessed for having had the experience of living with, and loving four brothers and six sisters. Sometimes I think of John, James, and Rhoda, and yes, Archie's little sister and two brothers, too, who died in infancy, and wonder: do babies grow up in heaven? Or will they still be infants in that Glad Morning?

## **Isabel**

Isabel lived on the east edge of the Cattail Bottoms, about one half mile from Lincoln School. Having no brothers or sisters, she was accustomed to spending a lot of time with books, which made it seem as though she came from a different world than the rest of us did.

How it came about that she and I became good friends, I have forgotten. Probably it was because I admired her good diction, and her knowledge of subjects not taught in school. Besides, she was quite

attractive—always well groomed, her long red hair carefully brushed. The freckles on her face and arms matched her hair. She had blue eyes, and a ready smile for anyone who would accept it.

She was a year ahead of me, but we enjoyed the same books, and we listened while the seventh and eighth grade pupils read their lessons in reading class. We'd get our work done so we could listen while they read. Oh, how moved I was by Matthew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustom*. (I read it again recently, and it still makes me cry.) There was also *The King of the Golden River*, *The Great Stone Face*, *Evangeline*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, to name some I remember hearing, then reading later—more than once.

Sometimes when we were finished with our lessons, the teacher allowed us to sit together to read a library book—quietly, of course.

I missed Isabel after we moved away in early 1922, and there has never been anyone quite like her since. But I know this: Forever on the shelves of my memory I will find *Isabel of the Cattail Bottoms* along with *Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm*, *Girl of Limberlost*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and others who would seem to 'belong' in Anne Shirley's *Household of Joseph*.

### **Long Ago Summers**

All sorts of interesting things happened in the Summer. There were hens to set—eight or ten with chicken eggs and a couple with duck and goose eggs. There were still things to plant in the garden and flower beds, and spring cleaning to finish, as I will mention later.

The men were busy from early in the morning until after dark with farm work. Corn to finish planting, hay to make, wheat, oats, and maybe barley to harvest. These grains were cut and tied in bundles with a four horse team drawing the binder. Then the farmer and his family set these bundles together in shocks to wait until the man came with the big steam engine pulling the threshing machine. He'd toot his whistle to let us know he was coming. It was an awesome sight, I tell you!

Having the threshers was a big day. The neighbors helped each other with men, teams, and hay wagons. And the women helped each other, too. It was quite a job to cook for twelve or more hungry men, and take them coffee and cookies out in the field in mid-afternoon.

After the threshing was over, some nice day Mama would empty the straw ticks from our beds, wash them, and after they had blown dry in the sunshine, she filled them with fresh straw and sewed them shut again. Now they were ready to go back on the beds, and the beds 'made up.' There was no trouble getting the kids off to bed that night. We needed a chair to climb in. (Oh, the fun children miss these days!)

We went barefooted the whole Summer, except when we went to church or some other special place. There was a grassy meadow with a creek to play in. Sometimes I'd lie on my tummy on the bank of the creek and watch the water striders make lacy-looking shadows on the sandy bottom of the stream. Or I might find a field sparrow's nest on the ground, half hidden by a clump of weeds. Oh, I can think of lots of pleasant things city children miss!

We had our chores to do, of course, but we knew we were helping. That made it worth while.

Since we were always barefooted, we had to wash our feet every night before going to bed. I remember a few times when we added a little change to the nightly ritual by pretending we were having the foot washing part of communion service. We'd wash each other's feet, then kiss, just like the grownups did in church. These were solemn occasions. I remember them with a tender feeling.

## CHAPTER IV THE BOTTOMS

### **Moving to the Bottoms (Early Spring of 1922)**

I had heard about The Bottoms all my life. Now I was going to live there. It seemed like a strange place to me. Here was a place about a half mile wide, and it reached both north and south for as far as one could see, and beyond that, yet—a vast peat bed. On either side of it was regular Illinois soil. How did it happen?

One day Ed Randall stopped along the road to talk to Papa. Ed was an elderly bachelor who had lived on The Bottoms all his life. He drove a pretty little black and white pony hitched to a small cart. During the conversation he told Papa that he remembered hearing an old Indian tell that when he was a boy the Mississippi River flowed through here. Then the earth shook, and the river went over beyond the hills where it now flows.

Long years later, I read in an encyclopedia something that convinced me that the Indian story is true. The account told of what was said to be the strongest quake ever recorded on the North American continent. On December 16, 1811, and again on January 26 and February 7, 1812, these shocks occurred in the area of New Madrid in southeastern Missouri. Shock waves were felt 1100 miles away in Boston, and bells were made to ring in Washington, DC. There were numerous lighter quakes between and afterward. It was said the river flowed backwards for a time, and when all was finally quieted down, the topography of the landscape had been altered. Where the river had been here, all that was left was its desolate, watery bed. Water loving birds visited the place, bringing in their droppings the seeds of water loving plants, among them the cattail reed, with its velvety brown spikes of tightly packed flower heads. The abundance of these gave the place the name, 'The Cattail Bottoms'. Sometimes shortened to 'The Cattail', or 'The Bottoms'. In a century of growth, and breaking down and decay, as it comes with the seasons, the bed eventually filled with the 'compost'.

In the early quarter of this century, a drainage ditch was dredged down the middle of the length of it. Smaller ditches were dredged at right angles to it at intervals. This made a wonderful place to grow celery, onions, cabbage, potatoes—anything, almost. A few of the great blue herons remained, as did the bittern, and the red-winged blackbird. Frogs and turtles lived in the ditches, as did some other things I do not like to think about.

I didn't like to think of moving. I loved my teacher, Miss Vander-Schaff, and my classmates Beulah and Burdetta. Then there was Isabel. She was older, and in the grade ahead of me, but we were good friends. Also, there were Ceina and Edna Westerhoff, who had recently come from Holland with their mother and younger brother Teddy. They could not speak English, and when I had my lessons done, Miss Vander Schaff had me help them learn words.

These people—the girls were teenagers—came to America because their mother, who had been widowed, had accepted the proposal of marriage made to her by our neighbor, whose wife had died, leaving five small children. The oldest was perhaps, 8, and the youngest, a small baby. They had been acquainted before he came to America years before.

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The day we moved, Papa came for us after school and took us to our new home. I had made sure before I left for school that Fido was going along, and the cats. But it never occurred to me to mention my rag doll. Of course she would be along—she was family! But she was nowhere to be found. I finally was told she was just too disgusting looking to have around the house, so she was burned with the trash! Besides, I was too big to play with dolls anymore. Who was responsible for this atrocity, anyway? I knew better than to raise a fuss, because I was sure I knew who was responsible, and it wasn't Mama. But Mama would do nothing about it, if it was who I thought it was.

But I needed something to love—something to cuddle in my arms when I went to bed. So, when I shelled corn for the chickens, I picked out a nice ear and wrapped it in an old piece of blanket. Somebody found it and threw it out to the chickens. Next, I tried a piece of wood wrapped up. That got burned in the kitchen stove.

During the fall I turned eleven, Esther had been working in Morrison. At Christmas she gave me a gift. I was sure it was a new pair of shoes, but when I opened it, there was a beautiful doll, about eleven or twelve inches long. It had a bisque head, sleeping eyes, curly hair, and you could see her teeth—her lips were slightly parted. She was so beautiful, I decided to keep her in her box except when I wanted to see her, and play with her.

But, alas. One day I came home from school and found my doll with her head crushed. The younger girls had taken her out of the box to play with her, and left her lay on the steps. I never learned who stepped on her head and crushed it.

I never had another doll until I was fifteen, and bought a 'half doll' made especially to become part of a pin cushion. She will be sixty-five this winter (December, 1992), but she is still beautiful to me.

Our new school was the Independence School, where Papa had church and Sunday School. My first day of school on The Bottoms was different from what I was accustomed to. Miss O'Brien was the teacher, and she was extremely strict. If you so much as dropped your pencil your name went up on the blackboard and you lost part of your recess, or had to stay after school. The place was quiet, but it was a tense quiet. I didn't feel comfortable with her during the rest of the year, and was glad when I learned she wouldn't be back the next year.

### **Hans or Willie?**

My desk was at about the middle of the last row on the south side of the room. In the corner behind me was a shelf where the big dictionary was kept. If you needed to look up a word, you could go quietly and do it.

Ahead of me about three desks was 12 year old Hans Madsen's desk. He went back to use the dictionary, and when he passed me he tucked a note in the back of my dress. "Boys!" I thought to myself. "Some of them like to make a nuisance of themselves!" I didn't like the feel of paper against my skin, so I took it out. It was a folded piece of paper. Printed on it was, "PLEASE READ". Of course I read it. "Will you be my girl?" he wanted to know. I was flattered. There were seven other girls, all older than I, and he asked me! Hans was rather tall, blond and blue-eyed, but there was also Willie Connors with RED hair and blue eyes, sitting a few seats to my left. If I 'just happened' to look his direction, he'd smile and sometimes wink. So??

When Hans came back to his seat he looked at me, and raised his eyebrows inquiringly. I simply raised my eyebrows slightly, and shrugged my shoulders to say, I didn't know. It's a wonder Miss O'Brien didn't see us.

### **The House**

The house we moved into had only three bedrooms, a living room, and an eat-in kitchen. There was another house on the place with three rooms in it—a big kitchen, and two other rooms—each about 10' by 12'. A family of six was living in it. There was a third house, unoccupied, with five rooms. Papa repaired that house, and helped the family move from the three room house into this one. Then, the three room house was moved to our house and connected to it. The big room, about 20' by 20', became our eat-in kitchen, and our former kitchen, the dining room. This

room and the living room were used on Sunday evenings in winter for Bible Study. Several neighbors came in to join us.

The two rooms off the new kitchen were very useful, too—one became the boys' bedroom, the other a sort of utility room. There was a large pantry off the old kitchen, which now was the dining room. This made a satisfactory home.

## **The Barn**

The barn—there was only one here—was much smaller than the barn we had before. The horses and the cows were all stabled in it. We had maybe eight or ten cows and, of course, the father cow. (Nice girls don't say b-u-l-l right out loud—it isn't ladylike.) He didn't have a proper pen, so he was tied in a horse stall. When he was out he wore leather and iron blinders. With them on he could see sideways or down, but not straight ahead. His name was Iowana—'Ike' most of the time. He had been purchased from a farm in Iowa when he was a calf, and he had several other names to his pedigree, but I've forgotten what they were.

Our pasture was across the road. It was actually a grassy valley which followed a little brook back around the hills. There were little springs along the way, adding their clear, cold water to the little brook. I loved that pasture, and spent lots of time out there.

## **An Unnerving Encounter**

After the long, cold winter, there would come a day in the springtime when Papa would say, "Today we will let the cows out to pasture a little while". That would be the beginning of a new routine which would last into late fall.

It was often my job to go for the cows. I especially enjoyed it when the pasture had a stream, and it had a nice spring fed brook where we lived on The Bottoms. There were lots of trees in the pasture, too. I remember especially the hickory nut and black walnut trees where we gathered nuts in the fall. The ravines of the back pasture were grown over with blackberry and black raspberry bushes, where Mama and I picked buckets and buckets of berries in the summer.

I spent many hours in this pasture with Fido close by. I loved the solitude. Here I could think or dream, or even 'pretend things', and there was no one to tease me. I often went for the cows early just to have the time by the little brook, or on the hilltops.

As a rule, Papa didn't leave Iowana out in the pasture, but there was no yard where he could be to exercise, so here he was put out to pasture

with the cows. I was afraid of him. He was huge—almost as big as a buffalo, I thought. His head was almost as big as a bushel basket, set on a powerful neck and huge shoulders. His horns were as thick as a man's wrist at the base.

When I went for the cows, I always made sure I knew exactly where 'Ike' was, so I could keep a safe distance from him. (I didn't wear glasses in those days—no one knew how near-sighted I was.)

One evening I didn't go early, and the cows had already grouped, and were working their way homeward. I looked for Iowana among them—the big hulk with the blinders on, but I didn't see him. Was he back in some ravine dallying with one of the cows? I'd count the cows, then I'd know. I made my way among them, and suddenly I saw him—his huge face and those horns just a few feet in front of me! His blinders were gone!

My first impulse was to scream and run, but I knew better. I just walked as calmly as possibly to the edge of the group, and then I ran for the nearest fence, crawled under it, and went home.

One of the men went for the cows on horseback—with the bull-whip in his hand—just in case 'Ike got foxy', and brought the cows home and all in their place without incident.

Later they went out and found where Iowana had rid himself of the blinders by rubbing against a tree. The harness maker put new leather straps on it, and Iowana was allowed out to pasture again. I was especially careful to spot him before I got close to the herd again, you can be sure!

### **The Rawleigh Man**

Among those who came fairly regularly to our house was the Rawleigh man. The same one came from the time I was a small child until I was grown up. His name was William Reese. He sold spices, flavorings, and patent medicines—liniments, cough syrup, cold remedies, and things I have forgotten. Oh, yes—there were first aid remedies—salves, etc., too. He usually had supper and stayed overnight at our place when he was working in our neighborhood, as his home was too far away for him to go home every night.

### **Sammy Haddad**

Sammy Haddad was the most interesting peddler of those who came. He was a regular from my early years until I was about seventeen, at least.



He came from Syria—left his wife and two little sons there until he had established himself in business, and could afford to bring them over.

In the early years he walked his rounds, carrying a BIG pack on his back. That thing was a heavy leather case with a cover to fit down over it, accommodating a stacked up load, or one not so high. The thing unloaded would make a cube of at least twenty-four inches each way. It must have weighed more than a hundred pounds. It was packed with neatly folded dress lengths of fabric, besides table cloths, children's clothes, socks, shirts, aprons, men's handkerchiefs, and linen toweling. That is a partial list of the cloth goods. Then there were hooks and eyes, snaps, buttons (he called them 'butnez'), scissors, thread, and tape measures. Oh, it was quite a show for him to unpack his bundle. Sometimes Mama would see something she wanted, but often it was a more or less steady repetition of saying, "No, no, no, not today".

Sammy would say, "Don't say alla time 'no!' Say 'no' one time, then 'yes' one time".

He ate with us too, and slept there. Then he'd always give Mama something nice for the favor. (She never charged for the meal or the bed.)

After supper Sammy liked to play with us children. He'd sing us songs in his native tongue, and tell stories of his boyhood. A quote I once read about Grover Cleveland fits the man Samuel Haddad to a T: "He had a huge girth, shoulders like the Parthenon, a round compact head, and the slow movements of any large animal. He was not very tall, but he looked, somehow, like an enormous natural object—say, the Jungfrau or Cape Horn".

In about 1924 he began to make his rounds with a horse and carriage (which was much like the Amish use—the parents in the front, and an assortment of small replicas of the parents peering out of the opening at the back of it.) In that space Sammy carried his pack. My, what a relief!

Then in '28 or '29 he surprised us. One day (after we were living no longer on that big dairy farm, but on the Frank Broderick Place, close to Grandpa's Little Place—which was now Papa's) a shiny black panel truck drove down our lane and stopped near the front gate, and Sammy stepped out from the passenger's side. Then, from the driver's side emerged a strikingly handsome young man of perhaps eighteen. From the back of the truck another younger chap jumped down. He was perhaps fifteen. Sammy's family had come to be with him in America at long last!

His wife never rode along with him. She had a little shop at home where she sold laces, yarns, buttons, and other sewing supplies. The younger boy, Philip, stayed to help his mother after Sammy had 'showed

him around', but Camille, the older one, went with his daddy to drive for him.

One weekend they stayed overnight and went to church the next morning with us. Camille made quite a stir among the girls with his good looks and that black wavy hair. I sometimes wonder how things turned out for them. Sammy Haddad's 'home base' was Clinton, Iowa.

### **The Onion Patch**

Living on The Bottoms, we didn't have so many cows to milk, but we had another chore that took more time—a lot more—and that was weeding onions—a whole acre the first year, and by the third year it was three acres! The rows were about 15 inches apart and about 80 rods long. We wore overalls, straddled the rows on our knees, and proceeded to weed the length of the row. The C. B. & Q. Railroad tracks ran along the east edge of The Bottoms. When a train came—a big long freight train—we would stand up and wave our straw hats to the men in the engine. They would wave back to us. I hope it added as much spice to their lives as it did to ours!

Papa walked up and down between the rows with a wheel hoe first. It resembled a lawn mower, but it cut just a bit under the surface in the soft peat. Weeding wasn't hard work, but it was rather tiresome. The first time over the patch was the worst. The seedling onions were small, and the weeds sure grew fast. The second time over, there weren't so many weeds, and by the time we were over the patch the third time, the weeds had been headed off, and the plants were getting too big to straddle any more. To celebrate, Papa would take us on an outing, or a picnic someplace.

We didn't mind having this to do—all up and down The Bottoms other kids were doing the same or a similar thing. It just went along with living there.

### **Miss Gaffey**

When school started in September, I hurried to school to see what our new teacher was like. She was big and heavy set. That was OK. But the thing that troubled me was the feeling I got that she didn't like kids. Before long I began to think she didn't like teaching school, either. Maybe she wasn't happy because she wasn't married, and she didn't have a family??

She was very strict, too, but not the same way Miss O'Brien had been. Miss O'Brien just made you stay in at recess, but Miss Gaffey seemed to

like to humiliate you before the whole school if she got a chance. Like the time Willie Connors passed me a note, and she happened to see him do it.

"All right, Vida," she said, "You may come up front and read your note. I'm sure we'd all like to know what was so important that it couldn't wait until recess". I was stunned! The idea was preposterous, and I stayed in my seat.

"All right then, I'll read it for us," she said and her heels pounded on the wood floor as she came toward me. "She really would!" I thought, and quickly stuck it down my neck. She'd have to undress me to get it, and I didn't think she would do that. But she did get angry and pulled me out of my seat and marched me up to the front of the room, in the alcove where her desk was. She shoved me into a corner with my face to the wall and said I was to stay there the rest of the period.

When it was time to go home she handed me a sealed envelope to give to Papa. So, she wasn't satisfied yet. Now, I'd surely be whipped. We clearly understood that if we gave the teacher trouble, we'd have some ourselves when we got home. Papa had never whipped me before, but he would surely do so now.

I gave Papa the envelope. He read the teacher's note and learned that I had been disobedient, defiant, and disrespectful of authority, and deserved to be punished. "Well, well, Vida. We had better go to the bedroom where we can talk."

"Now, Vida", he said when we got there and closed the door, "I want you to tell me exactly what happened". So, I told him about the note, my refusal to read it, and the teacher's standing me in the corner.

"Why didn't you read the note?"

"It wasn't meant for everybody".

"Why didn't you give it to the teacher when she asked for it?"

"She would have read it, and made fun of it in front of everybody".

"Can you tell me what he wrote?"

I thought about it, and decided it could only make the whipping worse, but I said, "The note said, 'I love you.' Now, I couldn't read that in front of everybody, and I couldn't let her do it either!"

"No, of course you couldn't," he said after a little, then added, "and the teacher shouldn't have asked you to." He thought a little more, then said, "You may go now, and in the morning I'll go and have a talk with the teacher." I didn't get whipped after all!

The teacher moved Willie Connors over to the other side of the room, but that wasn't much of a hindrance to him.

## Papa Makes a Friend

On the farm just north of us, perhaps a quarter of a mile, lived an elderly couple. They had raised their own children, then in middle age a number of their grandchildren made their home with them. One had been with them from the time he was about a year and a half old, and was now the mainstay of the aged couple. Of the others—some married, others came and went as they pleased. Most of the time it was just the three: Grandpa, Grandma, and Guy (do you recognize the name?). Grandma was little and frail. Papa took pity on her, and even though she despised Papa, he did everything he could to make life easier for her. For a while he sent Lois to help her, then later he sent me to do it. We fed the chickens, hunted eggs, brought in wood and water, took out ashes and 'slopwater'. We filled lamp and lantern fonts with kerosene, washed lamp and lantern chimneys, dishes, and the 'less honorable' (but sometimes very welcome) vessels from under the beds. We also scrubbed the milk-house and the privy. Besides those things we helped Guy with the milking and washed the milk buckets afterwards. Of course, all those jobs weren't done every day.

After supper, I washed up the dishes, then was free to go home. Do you think it must have been a tough assignment? Not at all. Of her own free will she gave me a quarter a week!

As I said, she despised Papa. That was because Guy was converted through Papa's influence, and he no longer accepted invitations to sing popular songs at parties. His dream of making music a career simply melted away. Now, he wanted to sing for the glory of God. Poor Grandma's dreams of a famous Grandson faded, and it was Papa's fault. And she wouldn't be convinced otherwise.

One fall she was feeling stronger and decided to go out West to visit a son who lived out there, and it would take her away from "Old McC's (pronounced 'mucks') preachin". Alas, it didn't work that way. She wrote back that instead of getting away from it, "the coyotes hollerin' keeps remindin' her of it".

After they were home again, she would sometimes call Mama and ask her if it would be all right if she came up to visit a while. She did love Mama, in spite of her feeling about Papa. If Papa knew she wanted to come, he'd send us children down with the buggy—some pushing while others handled the thills\*. We'd pull up to the stoop\*\* in front of her house, then ease the buggy next to the porch when we got to our place. We'd take her home when she was ready to go. I think she had as much fun from those rides as we kids did.

In the summertime when we had our Sunday School picnic, Papa always saw to it that there was a rocking chair with a cushion on it for

Grandma. But still she hated him. One sad day dear gentle old Grandpa died. The family got together to make plans. Knowing her feelings about Papa, they gave her a list of ministers who would be available and asked her which one she wanted. "I don't want any of them," she said, firmly. "I want old McC."

From that time on she owned him as a good friend.

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\* thills: the shafts in the front of the buggy which the horse backs into, and is strapped to securely, to make the buggy move with the horse.

\*\* stoop: A stoop was a platform with a step leading to it. Many farmyards had these to make it easier for ladies to get into buggies or carriages.

### **The Lost Watch (One of Uncle Guy's Stories)**

*"Now Guyzie tell story", he'd say when he was a little boy and wanted to get his story told, too. Here are two I've heard him tell.*

The Burch men, Grandpa, a couple of his sons, and some of the older grandsons were working in the timber. They were cutting down some of the big old trees, then taking the logs down to the sawmill, and cutting up the smaller pieces for firewood.

Guy's mother, Etta, was home then, too. There were lots of extra chores to do when the men were working in the woods.

One evening a shadow clouded the faces of the men when they came home, and it was still there at the supper table. There the reason came out. One of the men had lost his watch somewhere up in the woods. It wasn't just his watch—it was THE WATCH inherited from his grandfather. It had a special meaning for everyone in the family, and now it was lost somewhere up in the woods. It probably would never be found in all of those leaves. It would snow any day now, too.

Next morning, it being Sunday, nobody was moving to go to the woods. Nobody, that is, but Etta. She came to the kitchen all bundled up, ready to go out. All she needed yet was her overshoes.

"Where are you going?" someone asked.

"Up to the woods to get the watch!" she answered.

"Are you crazy? You'll never find it in all those leaves."

"Tell me that when I get home," was Etta's answer.

She came back in an hour or so with the watch! "How in the world did you find it?" they all wanted to know.

"I dreamed where it was. You know that old hollow log that's been lying by the logging trail for years?"

"Yes, we know the place."

"Well, I dreamed it was right beside that log, partly hidden by leaves. I went to see, and there it was, just like in my dream!"

"I sat on that log when we ate our slice of bread and had our coffee in mid-afternoon, yesterday. It must have slipped out of my pocket," one of Guy's cousins said meekly. "After this, I'll be sure to have it on a chain or leather strap."

### **An Incident at School (Another of Guy's Stories)**

It was one of those warm days that come near the end of the school year, and the teacher had one of her arithmetic classes at the blackboard doing problems. This way she could see for sure how well each one understood what he or she was doing.

The windows were all open, and Guy's cousin, called by his initials, J. I., was close to one. When he heard a wagon going by on the road, he couldn't resist watching it.

The teacher spoke to him—it would be embarrassing to know the teacher had been watching him—then the teacher asked, "Who was it, J. I.? Tom, Dick, or Harry?"

J. I. wasn't embarrassed at all, and answered, "Taint neider one of them. It's my Uncle Arie (Ira)."

It must have been very funny, because it still made Uncle Guy laugh. And when he laughed it was catching—you found yourself laughing, too. I guess that's one of the reasons I liked to listen to him tell his stories—you were there, and it was sad, or funny, or whatever. And it was good for him to tell them. And good for us to listen.

### **A Step in the Right Direction**

I believe it was in the summer of 1923 that Rev. J. H. Byer from California held meetings in the school house. He was the same one who had been with another minister when the tent was pitched in the pasture across from Ralph Vosses. He was often in our home as he traveled across the country. His approach to preaching was gentle and warm, as I remember it.

One night the sermon had touched me, and when the opportunity was given, I walked forward and knelt at the altar. My big problem, it seemed to me, was my hot temper, and I wanted it under control.

I do not remember exactly all that happened there, but I do know that when I left I felt better. I went out on the school house porch—no one else was out there. I was alone with God and His wonderful sky full of stars.

Then someone came, slipped her arm around me, and drew me close to her and said softly to me, "Now you are my little sister." I didn't know then about 'warm fuzzies'\*<sup>1</sup>, but that certainly made me feel wonderful. The woman was Amy DeHaan, a half sister to Guy VanDyke. She had been my Sunday School teacher.

The last time Daddy and I were in Illinois, we learned that Amy had terminal cancer, and we went to see her. She made a comment about "she'd soon be gone, and just as soon forgotten."

"Oh, no," I said. "You will live in the memories of the people whose lives you touched." Then I recalled to her the night on the porch of the school house.

"Did I say that?" she asked.

"Yes, you said that. And I'm sure you said lots of things to others that will never be forgotten."

That, by the way, is not the only nice thing I remember about Amy DeHann.

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\* warm fuzzies: a sincere compliment, a word of encouragement, appreciation—or some other loving expression.

### **Miss Keegan, I Still Love You**

It was September, 1923 already, and time to go back to school. I did not look forward to school as I did back at Lincoln. Last year with Miss Gaffey had finished that, and although She wasn't coming back, this year we were to have her cousin! I approached the little white school house with a feeling of dread in the pit of my stomach. What would she be like? Would she even like kids?

I left my lunch bucket on the shelf in the girls' cloak room, and cautiously entered the school-room. No one was there besides the teacher sitting at her desk. She looked up, and the instant she saw me her face lit up with a smile and she reached her arm toward me.

Without hesitation, I went to her. I loved this woman! She was beautiful—her eyes dark blue, her hair curly and black. Her skin was flawless. But it was the way she looked when she smiled that made me love her. Even her eyes were smiling. Her arm encircled me and drew

me to her. She smelled nice—like an orchard in springtime. She asked what my name is, and didn't even say she never heard THAT name before.

She looked at the books I brought to make sure I had what I needed, then helped me find the right place to sit. I felt so comfortable with her—I just knew she liked kids.

In the spring of '25, we moved from the Bottoms. The day we had to leave Miss Keegan was a sad day for us. She asked us to remain after school was dismissed, then she came to us, held each of us close, and kissed us. She said she loved us and didn't like to see us go.

I've met many people in my time. I remember some one way—some another way, but when I remember Miss Keegan, something in me says, "Miss Keegan, I still love you!"

### **Leaving The Bottoms**

It certainly was not Papa's choice to leave; in fact it was a most bitter time for him. He was now fifty-eight, had put a lifetime of savings and a lot of hard work into this place, and now he was losing all of it. He depended on the crops for income to make payments on the mortgage, but two years in a row the old Mississippi tried to reclaim its bed, and just when it was about time to harvest the crops, the rain came, and came! And the water stayed and stayed. A couple of weeks after the flood, the water was still over the bridge which we used to get to the onion patch. Earlier, it had been hip deep there.

I remember early November of '24, the water was finally off—we thought. We went out to see if we could salvage some potatoes for our own use, at least. But as soon as a forkful of soil was lifted, the hole filled with water. If we fished around, we could find some potatoes, so we tried to get several bushels before the ground froze. We gathered some onions that we could find also. But all that work was in vain, too, because both the potatoes and the onions soon rotted.

It was a sad day for Papa when he had to go to the bank and tell Mr. Smith he has no choice but to give up. Then he told Mr. Smith, "Like Job, I came into the world naked, and I'll go out naked."

With tears in his eyes, Mr. Smith said, "Well, Will, there's one thing. You go out an honest man!"





## CHAPTER V

### THE BAKER PLACE: CLOVERDALE

Papa found a place to rent north of Morrison—not more than a couple of miles from the Brick Church. This was the area to which Great Grandpa Gsell brought his family. We would be going to West Clyde School. It was in this building that these early Mennonites held meetings, and it was in that building that Grandma Longanecker married Grandpa on December 17, 1870.

#### **A Year of Mixed Feelings and Emotions**

Living at Cloverdale, (as Charles named the place) was pleasant enough. In the lawn, several tall evergreens constantly whispered together, of what I could not quite tell.

The fly in the ointment for me was the teacher at school. She was highly esteemed as a teacher, we were assured before we moved, but I soon formed the opinion that she had no business teaching beginners. (Oh, Miss Keegan, how differently you would have handled the two frightened little boys!) A family moved into the community with three children: Annie—8, Henry—6, and Harry—7. Those little boys, for some reason, were scared to death of the teacher, so they watched her. This drove her crazy, and she'd yell at them to stop watching her and do their lessons. They couldn't stop, it seemed, and next thing the teacher would march to them and whack their little hands with a ruler. This made them even more afraid of her, and they still watched her. More whacked fingers! Poor Annie, their sister, would cry when she saw the teacher heading for her little brothers with a ruler in her hand. It used to fill me with such helpless fury! I felt like standing between her and those little boys, but I didn't dare to. My only outlet was a violent monologue on the way home from school. I was glad when I learned we were going to move again—early next spring.

#### **Growing Up**

This story is *Girl Talk*, so if you are male, or squeamish about some things, you may want to skip this story, because I am going to tell it like it was.

My first hint that I was growing toward young womanhood began when I was about eleven—the obvious things that anyone can see, and the things whispered about at school among the girls who were my age, such

as "do you have hair under your arms yet?" I never dreamed it would be some place else, too—that was a complete surprise.

One day in the late winter of '24-'25, Mama came to the privy while I was there. (We sometimes stayed longer than necessary, dreaming through the old Sears Roebuck, or Montgomery Ward catalogues, which came to an inglorious end there.) She may have chosen this place for what she had to say because it was one place where we had privacy; the place could accommodate only two at a time. She told me that before many more months, I would be getting 'the monthlies'.

"Monthlies?" I asked apprehensively. "Uh, what's that?" (What catastrophe is impending, anyway?)

She said I would "pass blood down there", and to keep it from getting on my clothes, I would have to wear a 'cloth'. I might have cramps, but lots of women do—it's just something we have to put up with, but while I'm having this I shouldn't eat pickles, or ice cream, and neither should I drink cold water. That was it. No explanation of what this was all about (maybe she didn't understand it fully herself), and no clear instructions on how to cope with this thing. Was it REALLY going to happen? Was it like catching measles or chicken pox—some got it and some didn't? I worried about it some, but hoped I'd be lucky and escape it somehow.

### **A Brief Encounter with Isabel**

Late in April, the eighth grade pupils in Whiteside County were required to go to the High School in Morrison (the county seat) to be given their final examinations under the County Superintendent of Schools. Those who passed were graduated in a ceremony at the Municipal Building. After the salutatorian and valedictorian gave their addresses and the Superintendent gave his, he passed out the diplomas.

To give the seventh graders the 'feel of the thing', so they would feel less strange when it was their turn, they were allowed to go along, but not to be graded. When I got there as a seventh grader, I met, first thing, my dear friend, Isabel, from Lincoln school. We stayed close together—she was the only one from that school, and felt nervous.

During intermission, Isabel—who was just across the aisle—whispered for me to follow close behind her, so I did, wondering what was going on with her, anyhow! When we got to the ladies' room, she asked me if she had any spot on the back of her dress. "No, there's nothing," I said.

"Oh, good," she responded, with a deep sigh. "My menses came, and I was so afraid it would be showing through". She thanked me, and went

into one of the stalls. Before long she came out, "Well, that's taken care of. What a relief!"

But, I had no idea what ailed Isabel. Did she have diarrhea? A kidney problem? Or could it be that thing Mama told me about?

### **The THING Has Happened**

One morning in June, I woke up with a terrible bellyache, and my back hurt, too???. Uh, oh! There it was. A spot on my nightie. The THING has happened! Now what will I do? I'll not tell Mama—she has enough already. I went to the rag bag, found something, wadded it up, and held it in place by not walking too fast, or running—if you get the picture! That night I discretely wrapped this in old newspaper and burned it in the cook stove, glad THAT was over, and went to bed.

I was very mistaken, as was well indicated by more spots on my nightie, and even on my sheet!! (I slept on a cot in the same room where Lois slept in a double bed.)

Lois evidently noticed my predicament, and took a homemade belt, pinned a cloth to it, and tossed it to me. I held the thing up—never saw or heard of anything like it before. "Good grief," I said. "What's this thing for?"

"It's for you to wear, Dummy," she said, and went on downstairs. I finally figured out what to do with it, wondering how much of my life I was going to have to be harnessed up like that, anyway!

### **B. B.**

I thought of this, which I'd like to add to show that I was—in spite of my partial ignorance—much better off than this girl, whose initials were B. B. She wasn't even twelve yet when they found her in the privy at school crying her eyes out, and she wouldn't tell any of the girls what was wrong. So they told the teacher. She went out and B. told her of her predicament.

Her mother had warned her (an only child) to stay away from boys or she'd get a baby, but Arthur, in the throes of puppy love, had surprised her by suddenly kissing her, and now she was getting a baby.

On further questioning the teacher learned that the girl had discovered blood and could think of no other reason for its being there. Dear Miss Keegan knew how to handle it, and also was prepared to help a girl in such an emergency. Before long B. was smiling again.

## **Trouble, Spelled with a Capital W**

When the Mount Carmel Orphanage began to be, Papa and Mama were among those who helped, in any way possible, to get it on its way. That was in 1900. In 1910 he was elected to the Board of Trustees, and served on that board for twenty-eight years—much of the time as president of that body.

This entailed considerable responsibility. One of these responsibilities had to do with legal matters. In the summer of '25 a matter came up which was taken to court. One of the boys was accused of molesting some of the older girls. The judge's sentence was a term in Reform School. Papa couldn't bear to see this 'boy' go there. The judge said he would release him in the custody of any responsible person who was willing to accept responsibility for him. Papa brought him along home. I do not know how he figured, but he seemed to feel that the guy would be on his honor, and glad not to be in Reform School, and would behave himself.

Papa told us girls that if we behaved like ladies, we would be treated like ladies. But he didn't know W.

The first time I have a clear memory of his propositioning me was that fall. I would be thirteen in November. He was somewhere around sixteen or seventeen.

I was alone in the barn to start the evening chores. I do not know where Lois was. Paul and Charles were picking corn, and Papa had gone to get a load of grain ground for cow feed. W. was assigned some chore—possibly to feed the pigs.

I was throwing down the hay to feed the cows after milking. W. came up and made an offer. I said "NO!" He grabbed me, and tried to throw me down on the hay, but I fought him, broke loose, and made a bee-line for the chute. I didn't waste time to climb down the ladder—I jumped down. I called up to W. that he could throw down the hay now! And if he didn't, and Papa asked why it wasn't down, I'd tell him. I should have told him anyway, but then I wondered, what would Papa think of me? Would he think I hadn't behaved like a lady?

More about this in the next chapter.

## **A Trip to the Hospital—a Tonsillectomy**

In the fall of '25 I was often sick with tonsillitis. My throat was sore, neck glands swollen, and I had a fever of 102° or more. There were also headaches and a general malaise. In about two weeks I'd seem to be over it, and was expected to do my chores as usual. But I felt very tired. Mama thought I was just lazy, and a good whipping would snap me out of

it. Well, I probably did try harder afterward, but that wasn't a cure. I'd soon be sick again with another sore throat and fever.

Just before Christmas Papa decided it was time to call Dr. Pettit. When he looked at my throat, he made an exclamatory remark and asked, "How - - - does this girl swallow? Her tonsils are like two big crab apples in there, and they are badly infected. They must come out".

So, during Christmas vacation, I had my tonsils out at the Sterling hospital. It did make a difference after a while.

### **The Doll Dress**

Ruth and Eunice each had a new doll. They were larger than any I ever had (except my rag doll). After the first excitement of having a new doll passed, the dolls were often abandoned some place. I'd take them to my room to 'take care of them for the girls until they want to play with them'. I was really playing 'Mother' myself.

Aunt Hattie, Papa's sister, brought a bundle of fabric scraps for quilt patches. I found two pieces I thought I could use. One was light yellow, the other, white. Mama said I could have them; they were a little light weight for quilt patches anyway.

I saw a little girl's dress in the Sears' catalog, and decided to try to copy it for Ruth's doll. (If only Mama would let me use her sewing machine!) I cut the cloth, fitted and basted it, fitted again, until I felt satisfied. Now it was ready for the final sewing. If only - - - ! What do you think? Mama decided to go along with Papa to town. She would be gone at least half of the day. I took the doll dress to the sewing machine. I had watched Mama so often, I was sure I could do it. (I learned it was something like learning to milk—it takes practice!) It's a good thing I tried with some scraps first, but before long I felt confident enough to sew the dress. When I was finished, I put the machine back like I found it—Mama would never know.

Next, I put snaps on the back to close the dress, then I embroidered little flowers in the band of white just above the hem, and another one just a little below the shoulder on the left side. Now it was ready to go on the doll and back to my room before Mama got home.

Sometime later (it must have been a blizzard that did it), the girls decided to play inside with their dolls. I was a little uneasy when Mama looked at Ruth's doll rather critically, then she asked Ruth, "Where did you get that doll dress?"

Ruthie responded, "Vida made it".

Mama picked it up and examined it. "But she couldn't have. This dress was sewn on a machine". She looked at me questioningly. (Now I'd be whipped again.)

"I did sew it on the machine, Mama.—the day you went to town".

"Who put the flowers on it?" she wanted to know.

"I did. Tena Huizenga showed me how, and gave me some thread".

I didn't know what to expect next, but Mama finally said, "Well, if you can sew like that, I guess you can use the machine".

Boy! Did I get myself into something: hemming flour sacks for dish towels, sewing quilt patches, and eventually making Mama's aprons, and my own dresses. But I loved to sew, and later enjoyed sewing for my family.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GOODENOUGH FARM MARCH 1, 1926

#### **A Bitter Pill to Swallow**

I had been looking forward to this move. Anything to get away from West Clyde School and Miss Platt. But, I would gladly have accepted Miss Platt, or even Miss Gaffey (of the Bottoms) if we didn't have to do this awful thing to Fido. We had to give him away because Mr. Goodenough had a Collie dog trained to work with the cows. Another dog around would be a distraction to him. By the time I knew of this it was already decided that Bert Mickel could have him. Bert was a middle aged bachelor who lived in a little house down the road from us. He liked Fido, but I didn't think Fido would like him—he smoked a pipe, and washed his socks in the dishpan of all things! But there was nothing I could do to change things. I made up my mind to hate that collie—I'd hate him with a purple passion! Nothing would change that!

The awful day came when we moved. Papa came for us at school. We rode on top of a load of things. I felt awful. When we arrived at the place, a big golden collie came to meet us. I climbed down, determined to ignore him. When I turned away from him I felt his paw against me. I turned and saw his questioning eyes, and something inside me gave way. I said, "Oh, Collie, it wasn't your fault. I'm not mad at you." And I hugged him.

But I did ache inside. There was nothing to ease that.

#### **Collie Accepts a New Family**

It didn't take long for Collie to become a good playmate for Ruth and Eunice. He'd join in their fun, but as soon as he got a signal that his services were needed with the cows, he'd be off, and he wouldn't be back until his chores were done.

He would watch for us to come home from school (from Prairie Center, at least a mile away). When he'd see us come over the last ridge, he'd run to meet us, his tail flying to express his joy at seeing us. He was a nice big doggie, and I came to love him, but he never made me forget Fido.

#### **A Room of My Own**

This house had nine bedrooms, so for the first time in my life I had a place where I could have some privacy. Someone had always managed to look over my shoulder to see what I was reading. Papa had some books



that looked awfully interesting. One of them was a big thick book with the title *Know Thyself*. I certainly had a right to know myself, hadn't I? I slipped it up to my room and read in it whenever I had a chance, and WOW! did I learn some things. One of them was that Sylvia Voss was right about how babies get born. But the big thing for me just then was the answer to what 'menses' are. Isabel didn't have diarrhea or a kidney problem, she had what Mama called 'the monthlies'—that vague something with its accompanying miseries. No, she was now a young woman capable of becoming a mother. Menses are a sign of a special endowment by our Creator. It means that the body had made preparations to receive and nourish a new life, and since none had come all had to be discarded, and all made ready again—just in case - - - .

Well, then that's the way it is with me, too, and I didn't even know it. I am thrilled with the thought, and now that I did know it I would guard it like the treasure it is so I can give it unsullied some day to my husband. He would be the father of my dream babies—all twelve of them. Who would he be? (Dear God, you choose him. Mark our paths so we will meet when the time is right, and help us to know we were meant for each other.)

### **More Trouble with W.**

This place had two large barns, the granary, a big orchard—all sorts of places to hide if one was inclined to do so. This guy was quick to realize this, and asked me to hide with him - - - , well, you know why. I said, "NO!"

"Why not? Nobody would know".

"I'd know".

"Are you scared you'd get a baby? I'd see that you don't".

"I sure don't want a baby. But that's not the point".

"Aren't you curious to know what it's like?"

"I have no intention of finding out until I'm married. I don't want to learn anything about it from anybody else".

"Well, I'm going to marry you some day, so - - -".

"If that ever happens - - then that will be soon enough".

But that didn't stop him. Time and time again he'd ask, just to be sure he knew the first minute if I changed my mind. I never did. Then he began to use force. Even though he was about four years older, and several inches taller than I, he never got to even 'first base'.

There were times I fought him off in the feed way of the calf pen. The calves—anywhere from one dozen to two dozen—were lined up in little stanchions and fed their share of the formula—a mixture of warm skim milk and calf meal.

The awful climax to these episodes is in the next story. It happened in August of '27.

### **The Sky Is Falling In**

Why do I tell it? - - - To let you know that life wasn't all Beautiful, and even Papa and I came to an awful crisis in our relationship as father and daughter. It was August. I would be fifteen in November.

Supper was uneventful. Afterward the men went out, and I began to clear the table and gather the dishes for washing. Papa came to the door and asked me to come to the woodshed. I didn't even wonder what he wanted—he had called, so I went.

When I got there I saw he had a rather mean looking whip in his right hand. That surprised me some, but it wasn't until the next moment when he took a firm hold of my left arm with his left hand that it dawned on me what he was about.

"Well," I said, pulling back a bit and facing him. "It looks like I'm to be whipped, but if I am I think I have a right to know why!"

"Vida, you know very well why."

"I do not."

"I saw you sneak out of the calf pen when I happened to go in this evening, and W. told me how you are always trying to 'get to him' when you are alone anywhere."

I was stunned, but I heard myself say in an astonished tone, "He told you that? And you believed him? You believed him without even giving me a chance to tell you if it was true or not?" (My Irish was up!) "Well, all right! Go ahead and whip me if you think you must, but I'm telling you this: If you do, I'm no longer your daughter, and I'll not stay here!"

Papa looked sick. "Vida, have I misjudged this whole thing?"

"You certainly have. I had no idea you came in the calf pen. I got out of there as I've had to do before. And now I'm going to tell you some more. He has asked me dozens of times to, well, you know what. But, I never have. But I have fought him off in other places besides the calf pen."

This hit Papa hard. He stood there looking so beat and sick. He asked, "Vida, can you ever forgive me?"

"Yes, Papa, I forgive you."

We both needed a good hug then—Papa to know that I did truly forgive him, and that I loved him dearly. I needed one to help me gather together the pieces of confidence I had thought Papa had in me, and to try to fit them back together. But hugs were not acceptable responses between members of opposite sexes in our family—you had to learn to KNOW. And sometimes that took a long time.

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Within two weeks or so, W. was sent to his sister in Kansas.

### **Grandpa and Grandma Longanecker Come to Live with Us**

When Grandpa and Grandma were in their late seventies, they sold the Little Place and moved to a small house close to Uncle Joe's in Sterling. Grandpa still helped Uncle Joe with certain jobs; now he didn't have to leave Grandma alone when he had to do outside chores.

Not many months later Grandma fell and suffered a broken hip. In those days a broken hip in an older person brought a feeling of foreboding as though one had already heard the first sound of the tolling of Poe's iron bell in a distant steeple. Grandpa's time was now taken with caring for Grandma. In time she was able to be in a wheel chair.

Soon after we had moved to the dairy farm in '26, Grandpa and Grandma came to live with us. We were happy to have them; Mama took good care of them both. Eventually Grandma was walking with a cane! What a model of fortitude she was to us kids, and Grandpa showed us that love and devotion can last even through sixty years.

*Against the storm  
Keep your head bowed.  
That's good sense.  
But keep your heart high.  
That's better still.*

*I ask you to remember that the longest storm the world has ever known  
—and the worst—  
came to an end one sunny morning."*

*(I don't know who wrote it.)*

## **A Firm Decision**

The summer of '27 was a difficult one for me, and I'm not thinking now of things I have already mentioned in this chapter. This trouble came from deep within myself. I felt homesick, but how could that be when I'm home? What is this yearning that makes me cry into my pillow at night?

When I heard plans being made for our little group to have a communion service at our house, and to invite the Franklin Corners congregation, I began to understand what my problem was: I didn't 'belong' with those who would be taking communion. I had given myself to God five years earlier, but I had never 'joined the church'. I knew Jesus wanted those who loved Him, and belonged to Him to "eat this bread and drink this cup" in remembrance of Him, and I wanted more than anything else to be with those who would do it.

The opportunity came for me to tell Papa my feelings, and he reminded me that the bishop required that only members be served. I told him I wanted to be a member, too.

Before long I learned that I was to have an interview with the Bishop and the deacons, and I was surprised and happy that Lois was joining with me. We were accepted into church, and had our first communion that evening. The next morning, Monday, September 5, 1927, a dozen or more met with us in the meadow below Ralph Vosses (not far from the Diamond Place) and Papa baptized us in the creek there. I think at least Cora and Esther were baptized there several years earlier, and I know several others were too.

It was an experience I'll never forget.

## **Papa Is THERE for Me**

On October 18, 1927, Papa and Dr. Pettit both had a birthday. Papa was 61; Dr. Pettit was 51. They celebrated together in the operating room.

I had been ill for three days with fever, abdominal pain, and nausea. Since there was no localized tenderness the doctor thought I had the 'summer flu'. But early Tuesday morning before anyone was stirring I woke with sharp pain in the lower right side of my tummy. As soon as Papa woke he came to see me. When he felt my brow, and I told him of the pain, he called Dr. Pettit. He came, and decided it was high time I got to the hospital. I got there shortly before noon, and by one o'clock I was on my way to surgery. I had a white cell count of 25,000, and a temperature of 104 degrees. Dr. Pettit looked so serious, and Papa did too, I felt very alone and afraid while I was on that cart, but when I got to the operating room, Papa was there with Dr. Pettit. He had on a cap,

gown, and mask like Dr. Pettit, so I knew he intended to stay with me. I can still remember how his eyes looked—so full of love and concern. I knew he'd be praying while Dr. Pettit did the surgery.

The appendix had ruptured, but my system had walled it off, so the horrible pus didn't spread. There were tubes to help it drain.

Dr. Pettit said he wants the best nurse available, around the clock, and he named Della Shiffer as his choice if she is available. They said she had just come off a case, and was due for a day or two off. But they asked her, and when she learned who it was she said she would come. She had a cot in my room, and was there three days and nights.

Miss Shiffer was Mamma's second cousin. Her father and Grandpa Longanecker were first cousins and life-long buddies.

### **Hard Times—Leaving the Dairy Farm**

In the early spring of '28 we were leaving the dairy farm. The owner wasn't 'making it' with the little ice cream parlor he had opened in Morrison, so it was decided that the son would move back on the farm.

Papa rented a farm north of Morrison owned by a man named Frank Broderick. It was close to the Little Place, which had belonged to Grandpa and Grandma Longanecker, but now Papa had bought it from them.

There was to be a cattle sale—some of Papa's cows and young stock, and some of Mr. Goodenough's. Papa and Mama, with Grandpa, Grandma, Ruth and Eunice, moved to the Broderick place with our cows, pigs, chickens, geese, and maybe cats, etc., while Paul, Charles, Lois, and I stayed to help get ready for the sale.

The Collie couldn't understand what was happening. When his work was done, he'd go out front to watch for the girls to come home. (I had finished eighth grade.)

I remember one night after I had gone upstairs to bed, I heard the old doggie crying. I went to the window; there he was—still sitting on the bank waiting for the girls. His nose pointed to the sky as he poured out his lamentation.

It made me feel sad. We would soon be leaving, and he'd miss us, and I knew I'd miss him, too. We'd have no dog at all now.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FRANK BRODERICK PLACE

After the sale, the rest of us moved with the last of our things to our new home. It was familiar country to us—this little community of White Pigeon. Just a few rods from the lane that led back to our house was the Little Place—so full of memories for all of us—where Grandpa and Grandma had lived. That is why I've included several of Grandma's and Grandpa's stories in this chapter.

#### **A Pleasant Place to Live**

The lane was perhaps a quarter of a mile long. To the left of it was a small patch of virgin timber. It crept up close to our barn and the cow yard behind it. The house was of the typical midwestern L-shape design, with a porch to the east, and one off the kitchen to the south.

This was a pleasant place to live. If I could go back to one of my Illinois homes, I think this one would be my choice. It had a nice big eat-in kitchen with a pantry across the whole west side of it. The dining room had two nice windows to the South, and two to the East. Mama soon had them filled with plants. She and Grandma both had 'green thumbs', something that seems to be lacking in my genes. This room was a perfect place for Grandpa's and Grandma's rockers—there in the southeast part of the room. It was out of the line of traffic, but close by whatever was going on. Their bedroom was off this room.

The dining room was an astonishing sight when we moved there. The boards of the wainscoting were painted alternately pea green and salmon pink! The panels of the door were painted one of those colors, and the rest of the door the other—but I forget which was which. It didn't take Mama long to change that. She painted it a soft dove gray (gray with a beige cast and a hint of pink to it). And the new wallpaper had soft blues and pinks in it. By the time she (and I) were done, we had painted or papered the five bedrooms upstairs and the kitchen, too.

The living room was large, maybe 18' by 20', and another bedroom was entered from there. Upstairs the hall was shaped like a right angle. On one part you came to two bedrooms. On the other there were three. None were really large, but they were all quite nice.

From where the house was situated you could look over the countryside and see the buildings of a number of farms. None were closer than a quarter of a mile; most were a mile or two away.

The boys said you could see the Mississippi from the top of the windmill. I tried it one beautiful clear day, but I didn't see much of anything! When I got up there and began to look around, I suddenly felt so lightheaded, I knew I had better shut my eyes and feel my way back to good old terra firma!

Mama planted lots of flowers here, and they always seemed to bloom in great beauty for her.

The pasture was a lovely place to take a walk. Follow the cow path down the hill to the creek; there the creek follows the curve in the valley. One place the water divides to pass a small island on which a good-sized tree was growing. This was my 'Isle of Dreams'. Farther on in a grassy meadow area there was one tree standing alone, straight and tall. It was a beautifully formed tree, and I admired it. But one day, after a severe thunderstorm, I discovered it split from the top to about twelve feet above the ground—the one side still standing tall, the other bent clear to the ground. I climbed up, beginning at the top on the ground, and found a nice place to sit and read up there—the stricken part a ladder and a seat, the other a back rest. I often came here on Sunday afternoons. Then when it was time, I'd take the cows home. Sometimes I'd go farther along the creek where ancient willows drowsed on the banks. But I never ventured up the hill where the woods seemed to spill over into the pasture. The woods was fenced, and seemed to be a place of mystery to me. It was an impenetrable jungle, you could never go in unless you were prepared to cut your way.

We knew there were wolves around—we heard them gathering for the hunt at times in the night. But we didn't see them in the daytime like we did on The Bottoms.

There were foxes though. One crossed our yard in broad daylight, and Fido took after it. But not much happened; Fido thought it was another dog, I guess.

The most evasive creature, which was either glimpsed momentarily, or had huge cat-like tracks attributed to it, was never actually identified, to my knowledge. Some said it was a cougar. Was it?? Did it live in the fastness\* of this undisturbed patch of timber??

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\* fastness: a secure fortified place—of safety

## **The Return of the Exile**

The call came in the early afternoon, and I answered the phone.

"Hello," a feminine voice responded, then asked, "Did your family live on the Baker place a couple of years ago?"

"We lived there a year," I answered, a bit puzzled.

"Did you have a little dog—mostly white with brown patches?" she asked.

"Yes, we did. But we gave him to Bert Mickels when we moved", I told her.

"Well, he wouldn't stay with Bert, and came back here. We like him, but we have a dog of our own, and don't want two, so if you would like to have him back, you may come and get him".

"Oh, yes, we do want him, and will come for him—today, if possible". I could hardly wait to get off the phone. I ran as fast as I could to find Papa out in the field. "Oh, may we please, Pretty Please! get Prince and go for Fido NOW?"

"If Lois goes with you, you may go", he said. I brought Prince along in, we hitched him to the buggy, and Lois and I were soon on our way.

The place was about six miles away, and when we got there the sisters, both maiden ladies, came out to us. One was tall and thin; the other rather short and a bit plump. Both were friendly and seemed ready to talk. I wanted to know where Fido was.

"Oh, we call him 'Carlo'. He is in the granary. Just go inside and call 'Carlo'. He'll let you know where he is."

Lois stayed with the ladies while I went for the little dog. Call him Carlo? Never! He'll know his name! I stepped inside the granary door. (How often I had gone there for chicken feed, or to play house in an empty bin.) I stood there, my heart pounding—this was the moment of truth. Would he REALLY remember?

"Fido", I said, just a bit above a whisper. My, Oh, my! What a commotion began suddenly in one of the bins! Yelping, crying, little yipping barks, jumping so his head showed above the top boards. "Oh, Fido, my dear, dear doggie, you do remember", I said as I gathered him in my arms. He covered my face with doggie kisses, and when we were outside and I left him down, he ran in wild joyous circles around me, 'til he saw Prince. He ran to Prince. The horse remembered the little dog and held his head down, allowing Fido to jump up to his face. Next, he saw Lois, and she also got a joyous greeting. Then he wanted in the buggy.

"Let's go HOME," he was saying, clearly. We put him in the buggy, then after thanking the ladies, we climbed in.

"Oh, my!" one of them said. "You must tie him or he'll jump out and come back."



"He never would," I thought, but we accepted the twine they brought, and left him tied while we drove out to the road. Then he sat on the seat between us. Now and then he'd kiss one, then the other, on the way home.

We got home just at the time the men were having their apple butter bread before beginning the evening chores. Fido was wild with joy. He'd jump up to each one—then lie panting a moment, then do the whole thing over again. There were ten of us at home then (including Grandma and Grandpa Longanecker). After this went on a while, I saw that the tears had come to Papa's eyes, and when he spoke he said, "I learned something today, and now I know that I will NEVER give another dog away!" Fido was home to stay!

### **How Billy Deter Figured It Out**

This happened in the year 1929. It deals with the BIG question, 'Where do babies come from?' Billy was (is) Grandma Longanecker's sister Barbara's great grandson. He was also Grandpa Longanecker's sister Fianna's great grandson. I guess Billy was (is) my double second cousin, once removed. I was doing the house work, and Billy's aunt, a nurse, was caring for the mother and baby.

The baby was a complete surprise to Billy. He was four years old, and had a sister and a two year old brother, Melvin, and now this! He looked at the baby, turned and walked about two steps, then turned and looked his mother straight in the eye. "There's something I want to know!" he said firmly, then added, "Where did this baby come from?"

His mother was not prepared for such a point blank question. She gathered her wits together as best she could, and said, "God sent him to be our new little baby."

Billy studied that a bit, then said thoughtfully, "So that's what that was!" "That's what what was, Billy?" his mom asked.

"Why, last night I couldn't go to sleep for a while, and I was just lying there looking at the sky, and all of a sudden there was this speck. It kept getting larger, and closer and closer, then it came down. I thought it landed here some place. And you know what? I'll bet it was that baby, and the doctor came along and picked it up and brought it in here. Are you sure you want it?"

I didn't stay to hear how she got herself out of that. This is the 'family tree':

Grandma Longanecker's sister:

Barbara Gsell  
married  
Henry Nice

Their son:

William Nice  
married  
Annie Hensler

Grandpa's sister:

Fianna Longanecker  
married  
Adam Steiner

Their daughter:

Elsie Steiner  
married  
Daniel Deter

William and Annie's daughter Violetta married Elsie and Daniel's son Daniel Jr.

Their children were: Savilla, Billy, Melvin, and now, Clayton

### **Grandma's Livewire Sammy is Lost**

*Since Grandma and Grandpa had lived nearby at The Little Place, this seems an appropriate place to relate two of Grandma's stories.*

How could he be lost so quickly? He was there with the other boys a short time ago, and now they can't find him. They hunted everywhere for him. Neighbors joined the search—through the corn field, the woods, the orchard. They even followed the stream through the meadow—but no Sammy.

The buildings had been searched. Grandma had the feeling he was in the barn, but the men had looked everywhere—even in the feedbox and in the mangers of the horse stalls. It had grown dark, and the men decided to go home and get some rest, and try again at first light of morning.

But how can a mother think of rest when she doesn't know where her baby is? She lit a lantern and started for the door. Men tried to restrain her, but Grandpa said, "Let her go; it's the only way she will believe he's not in the barn. Maybe she will try to rest then."

Grandma went into the barn. In the middle area of the barn, between the cow stalls on one side, and the horse stalls on the other, was a wide place. Here, at one end bagged grain had been laid several rows wide clear across the space. Other bags had been placed on top, until the last single row almost touched the underside of the mow above it.

Grandma looked at the pile of bags. My Sammy could have squeezed over the top of that, she decided. She climbed up, and pulled a bag loose and rolled it out of the way. Then she put her lantern over the top and held it so she could look down on the other side of this stack of bags. There on the floor was her baby! He was asleep, but his breath was coming in little sobs. He had recently been crying, but no one had heard him. But I am sure there was ONE who heard the little fellow, and

whispered a message to the heart of the mother, and even directed her search!

### **Grandma's Baby Rescued from the Cistern**

Grandma was getting ready for Wash Day. The fire was started under the big iron kettle where she heated the wash water. She used cistern water—soft rain water—which she drew up with a bucket, much like the woman Jesus met at Jacob's well drew water centuries ago.

Her four little boys —Jacob, 5½; Henry, 4; William, 3; and Samuel, 1½ —were on the other side of the house, far enough away from the cistern for safety while the lid was removed. That is, they were supposed to be, and they were to be sure to keep Sammy with them.

She pulled up a bucket of water, turned to pour it into the big kettle, then turned back to draw another, and there bobbing around in the cistern was her baby! She screamed for help. Grandpa and a neighbor were working together in a field about half a mile away, and they heard her. They quickly unhitched and rode for the house as fast as the horses could go. When they got there, Grandma, who was not a big woman, and was pregnant with Mama, was putting a ladder into the cistern (which it usually took two men to do).

When the men took over, Grandma fainted. Grandpa picked her up and took her to bed. The neighbor went down under the water, fished out the baby, brought him up, and went to work on him.

Grandma 'came around', but Grandpa made her stay in bed while he went out to see how things were at the cistern. The baby was awake now, but they continued working on him until they felt sure he was all right. Then they dried him off, put dry clothes on him, and took him to his mother. (At this point in the telling, Grandma's tears would come.) Her baby's hair was damp and curly, his cheeks rosy, and he reached his arms for his mother. She held him close, and thanked God that he had spared her baby's life.

### **The Little Lost Pup**

*"Oh, the saddest of sights  
In this world of sin  
Is a little lost pup  
With his tail tucked in.  
But the gladdest of sights  
In this world so fair,  
Is a little found pup  
With his tail in the air."  
Anon.*

Mama and I were in the kitchen when Papa came home that evening. As soon as Mama saw him she knew he'd been up to something.

"Well, now what?" she asked.

"Oh, not much—just this," he said, removing a little black, white, and brown pup from inside his jacket.

"Will McCulloh! Where did that come from?"

It was sitting along the road, and it looked like it wanted to come home with me."

"Oh, sure it did!" she said a bit tartly. "It likely belongs to someone living near there," she added.

"But, it was a lonely stretch of road. There was no farm anywhere near the place. It was cold, and going to be dark soon, and he looked so hungry."

"And, of course it's your responsibility!" Her irritation was showing.

"He needed somebody," Papa said simply. Mama gave in. This man would feed any hungry creature that came to him, so what could she do but fix the little dog some supper.

I wondered what Fido would think of him, but he seemed pleased with the little thing.

Papa tried to find his owner, but no one seemed to have any idea how he came to be along that road, unless someone deliberately dropped him off.

He was named Sport. He grew up fast, and soon he and Fido were hunting groundhogs together. They were responsible for the demise of thirty-nine of them in only one summer. He was well worth what he ate.

### **Prince's Predicament**

Mama and I were driving Prince to sewing circle at Franklin Corners. I loved this horse; he was a beautiful, dark, chestnut sorrel, and the very soul of gentleness. He and I were both born in 1912. I think there was something in the water or air that year—we were both often blamed for being slow pokes. But, now, back to the story. Our traveling was uneventful until we came to a big culvert. Just as prince was crossing it, the road simply collapsed under him—his belly on the culvert, his front feet on one side of it and his hind legs on the other. Mama began to cry. She was sure dear old Prince must have at least one broken leg. I jumped out and went to prince's head, and asked him if he was hurt. I felt sure that he was not seriously hurt, just surprised, and somewhat embarrassed.

I pulled the harness off him, and pulled the buggy around ahead of him. Then I said, "Now, Prince, do you think you can climb out?" And to our great relief, he made it! He turned and looked at where he had been as though he was trying to figure out what happened. We saw that all the soil had been flushed away from half the culvert, leaving only a thin crust above it. We hitched up again and went on to sewing circle, but went home by a different road.

A month later Mama and I were driving Prince to sewing circle again. We had been over that road several times since it was repaired, and weren't thinking about what had happened a month before. But Prince hadn't passed that way since then, and he remembered. When we got there he stopped and tested the ground by stomping with a forefoot. That sounded all right to him, so he did the same with the other foot. He tested the ground like that 'til he was sure we were passed that culvert. Horse sense? Mama and I thought he had a lot of it!

### **What Creature Makes That Sound?**

In the summer time when I went to the pasture on a Sunday afternoon to read, write, or just to be there, Fido and Sport would go along. They had become good buddies. If I sat beside the tree on the little island, they stretched out on the grass beside me. If I climbed to the 'chair' on the stricken tree, they stayed close by. Sometimes they would sniff around ground squirrel holes, or snoop in the underbrush not far away, but on this side of the fence that enclosed the woods. One day when both dogs were near the tree where I was, suddenly out of the thicket came a sound like I had never heard before, nor have I since.

Both dogs immediately went over to investigate. I have no way of knowing what they saw, but they both cringed and retreated. Fido took a shortcut home—up over the hill through the field on the run. Sport positioned himself between me and whatever was out there. He kept looking from me to it, and I saw he was trembling. "Well," I thought, "If Sport is afraid of whatever it is—I had better be too. I climbed down, and followed the fence about 20 rods to the corner. When I had disappeared around the corner, Sport left his post and took the same shortcut for home which Fido had taken. When I got there, they were both on the porch, still trembling. Could it be that it was a cougar? I suppose I'll never know.

I didn't go to that part of the pasture after that. Sometimes I'd sit on the trunk of a fallen willow near the stream, or step over onto the little island.

## **Grandpa Longanecker: Grandpa's Blood Runs Hot (but his heart is warm)**

*I am reminded, too, of Grandpa's stories, when I think of the Broderick Place and the nearby Little Place. Here are several he told.*

As far as I can remember, Grandpa had never told us what had so stirred his anger that he decided to leave home and join the Union Army. In her attempt to persuade him not to go, his mother reminded him that he was only sixteen. He said he'd tell them he is eighteen; others got away with it.

Early the next morning he came downstairs with a small bundle of clothes, went to the kitchen to kiss his mother good-bye, and started out. She went with him as far as the creek at the bottom of the hill. There on the bridge she held him close—would she ever see him again?—kissed him, and released him. She watched him disappear over the hill.

Grandpa wondered if she had got back to the house all right, so he slipped back up to see if the path to the house was empty. There sitting beside the bridge railing was his mother, crying into her apron. His heart melted. He went back to her, "Don't cry, Mother; I can't go. Please don't cry any more." They went back to the house together. (Grandpa's eyes would fill with tears when he told this story.)

(Grandpa was easy to hug, and was free with hugs and kisses. In his pocket he always had a little striped sack with either pink wintergreen, or white peppermint candy in it. He was generous with that, too.)

## **Grandpa Longanecker: The Ghost Confronted**

There had been a grizzly murder. The body was found beside a lonely road through the woods less than a mile from where Grandpa grew up in Ohio. The victim's identity was unknown, and it seemed the murderer wanted it to remain that way, for the body had been beheaded.

A year or so later the country was terrified to learn that the victim's ghost was returning on certain winter nights, when the moon was shining just right, looking for its head. It was said to favor the spot on the bank just off the road where its 'person' had been murdered.

People of good standing in the community declared they had seen it—a headless body, with its ghostly white neck turning this way and that, wanting its head back. It was a place to stay away from! Especially on clear moonlit nights.

However, Grandpa and his pal decided to have a look at it! They went several times and saw nothing unusual—the moon must not be

shining just right. Until one night when the moon was just about full—there it was! A dark form with that awful, ghostly neck turning this way and that.

Grandpa began to feel faint, and his mouth went dry. His pal felt sick in his stomach. But they dared to walk closer, and closer, until they were almost even with it. Suddenly they both know what it was: an owl sitting on a tree stump preening its feathers! They laughed at the farce the bird had unwittingly played on the whole neighborhood, and it flew away.

Then the young friends began to think more serious thoughts of how a false impression had spread into a rumor—and the effect had terrified a whole neighborhood. The moral: "Be careful of what you think you see. It may not be what it looks like to you."

### **Grandpa Longanecker: Iron Man Melted Down (with warm water)**

Grandpa was not a big man. In his prime he was probably 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighed about 150 pounds—just a nice size for my little Grandma.

Among the young men he knew back in Ohio was one big fellow who strutted around as though he was the Crown Prince—or Something! He was about 6 feet 2 inches and weighed over 200 pounds, and he was strong. He could pick up a chap like Grandpa and hold him over his head like some daddies hold their two year old sons in play. He had humiliated most of the guys one way or another. What was worse (for the fellows), most of the girls would almost go into a swoon if he so much as favored them with a smile. No question about it—he had to be brought down a notch some how. The fellows talked about it—without him, of course—and devised a plan to do it without hurting him. They would do it at their Halloween Party. The girls would be there, but would not participate in the actual stunt.

On Halloween, during the party, the witch invited them to come to "her" Room of Terror. "I'm not going", one said.

"Neither am I!" said another. No one would dare go until 'Big Shot' walked over. The witch blindfolded him. As soon as he was inside the door, he was picked up by several of the young men and strapped to a narrow table of some kind.

"Let's bleed him first," one said in an altered voice.

"OK. You get the basin to catch the blood—I have a knife in my pocket," another said in a high-pitched voice. "Ready?"

"Yes, go ahead, make the cut—but don't get an artery; we don't need that much blood." The one with the knife poked "Iron Man's" wrist—just

enough to make him feel a sharp pain, but not to pierce the skin. Immediately another began to dribble warm water over the wrist; it ran down and splashed into the tin basin.

"Looks like you may have a cut vein, the way its bleeding." Someone sounded worried.

"No, I don't think so. We've taken only about a pint so far—a big strong guy like this can easy lose a quart. How is he doing?"

"He's getting sort of green around the gills - - - . Hey, I think he's fainting!"

"Good night! I hadn't planned on that! Help me get him outside in the cool air."

He came around, with the girls all watching when he learned he hadn't even been scratched, and yet had passed out fearing he was bleeding to death! Did he come down a notch? Maybe two or three notches.

But the other fellows never even thought of playing that trick again. It was another lesson in the awesome power of suggestion.

### **Grandpa Longanecker: The Girl He Left Behind**

He never told us her name, that I remember. But when he spoke of her, I could tell that it stirred some kind of emotion deep inside him. Was it regret? Or pity? I could not quite tell.

He had only been to see her a couple of times. It seems she was the instigator of their association, and he had nothing else in particular to do, so, oh well, why not?

Then a man came into the community to get materials to take out to Illinois for people who had already moved out, and needed certain supplies for building projects. He told Grandpa there was plenty of work available for carpenters and cabinetmakers, and he could go out free for driving one of the teams. Besides, he said, there's a man out there with a pretty daughter just about your age—so how about it?

Grandpa decided to go, so the next time he went to see the girl he told her of his plans. She was brokenhearted. When he was ready to go home, and wouldn't be coming back, she cried. He hated to see her cry, but he had to leave.

Just then, out of the woods came the cry of a panther, and she renewed her plea for him not to go, but he went.



When the path entered the woods, he turned to wave to her, but she was crying and didn't look up. He felt sad to hurt her so, and turned toward home.

The moral here: If you know in your heart someone is not for you, don't play with their affections. It may mean more to them than you could guess. Hearts have been broken by such thoughtless behavior.

(I tried to remember that, Grandpa.)

### **Prince Proves Himself to be a PRINCE**

The Voss family was visiting. Little two year old Jeanette was out with the older children playing games. After some time someone came in and breathlessly announced that Jeanette was missing. They were playing hide and seek, and somehow she got away from them.

A woods was close by. Dark thoughts were pushing to be worried about. But the buildings would be searched first. Maybe she fell asleep somewhere.

"Here she is! Here she is!" The relieved call came from the horse stable. What was she doing there? She was under Prince's hind quarters, an arm around each of his hind legs, swinging a foot back and forth in the straw. Dear gentle Prince was indeed well named. I loved that horse!

If she had happened to go into the next stall where fiery little Jerry was, it would possibly have ended in a much different way. (Jerry was a small sorrel given to Papa in payment for a debt. Papa eventually got him 'gentled', and he made a nice teammate for his little sorrel mare, Peggy.)

### **Autumn of '28**

On September 2, Anna and Guy were finally married! Anna was 32; Guy was 39. They set up housekeeping where Guy had lived with his grandparents, who were both gone now.

Charles and Lois went to Pennsylvania to go to school, so Paul and I had the corn to pick. We finished our job by mid-November, then I was sent to help get Guy's corn in before winter set in. First thing in the morning I helped with the milking. After breakfast, I washed the milk buckets and did other chores Anna wanted me to do before going to the field.

My team was what was left in the barn by then—a big Belgian strawberry roan filly named Pussy, and a little black Morgan mare named Bonnie. She was twenty-two years old, and Pussy was four. The two were mismatched in size, shape, color, and age—everything except what really mattered. They seemed to like to work together. Bonnie, it seemed, had

long since learned to understand English as a second language, and she seemed to have a way of communicating it to Pussy.

### **A Birthday Celebration??**

On my sixteenth birthday I had been picking corn all day, and now the sun would soon be sinking behind the high timbered hills across the road. I was nearing the end of the corn rows when I noticed Dean Snyder walk past. His sagging shoulders, in fact his very walk, gave him a dejected look.

"Do you have trouble?" I called to him.

"Yes, my wagon is almost up to the hubs in a sinkhole. I've got to go for another team," Dean answered, obviously annoyed at the development.

"Why don't you use my team?"

"Those two!" He spat out the words in disgust.

"Well, it wouldn't hurt to try, and if it doesn't work, I'll pull out and you can ride in. Its a half mile. It will be dark anyway before you get back."

"Oh, all right, but I don't see what those two can do."

When Bonnie and Pussy were hitched in front of Dean's team, he grabbed his horses' reins, and yelled at them. The poor things began to plunge and back up, and plunge again, so nervous and worked up they were.

"Wait a minute, Dean," I said. "Your horses are all discouraged. Let me talk to my team first."

I explained to Bonnie and Pussy what we were going to do, then went to Dean's team—a pair of beautiful matched dapple grays. I talked softly to them, stroking their necks and patting them.

"What are their names?" I asked.

"Pete and Jack!" he said impatiently. I told them that Pussy and Bonnie were going to help them pull that wagon right out of that old sink hole.

Then I went to my team. "All right, now Bonnie, Pussy, push right into those collars," then went quickly to Jack, the lead horse, took a hold of his bridle, and said, "Come on Jack. Come on Pete. Pull!" And to Dean's amazement, they walked right out of that hole!

I finished picking the rows I was on, and by the time I got to the corn crib with my corn it was dark.

Later Guy told me Dean was telling it around that "that girl of Will McCulloh's sure knows how to handle horses."

Hadn't I been watching Papa with his horses for sixteen years? Anyway, it turned out to be a Birthday to remember after all.

### **The Richards' Family**

During the winter a new family moved to the farm across the field to the east of us. They had nine or ten children. The oldest, a son, was away from home. The next four were boys too, then came a couple of girls, and the little tots.

The older children began to go along to church with us. Then the oldest of the sons at home, Price, (his mother's maiden name) began to come over in the evenings "to see the minister," but it was plain enough that he also hoped to have a word or two with the minister's daughter. By summer he had bought an old Model T Ford.

Uncle Allan (Mama's brother) teased me. He said, "When a young man buys a coupe, it's because he wants to put a chicken in it".

The fact was, I was miffed at Price. He had sent me a note on Valentine's Day. Instead of finding some 'sweet nothing', I read:

*"Needles 'n' pins, Needles and pins,  
When a man marries, His trouble begins."*

Well! I know one girl who will never be the cause of his trouble beginning!

But I did realize that the business of choosing a mate was probably not too many years away. Out in the pasture, when I came to a certain place, I felt free to speak aloud to God—this is where He joined me in a special way in my walks, and I would tell Him my hopes and dreams. I would tell Him, too, of my fear of making a wrong choice. I asked Him again to choose the one who was right in His sight, and lead us together when it was time.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ZOOK FARM

#### **Our Last Home in Illinois**

This turned out to be our last home in Illinois. It was a good farm with gently rolling farm land and well kept buildings. I didn't like it as well as I did some other places we had lived, because the pasture had few shade trees, no stream, and there wasn't even a small patch of timber where one could find solitude.

The house wasn't as convenient as the one we left, either. Downstairs was a large eat-in kitchen, a large square living room, and two small rooms. One of these became Grandpa's and Grandma's bedroom, the other, Papa's study. Upstairs were five bedrooms and a storage room—here Papa tested his seed corn.

In the winter, the house was COLD. There were mornings when our bucket of drinking water was frozen over. The teakettle on the cook stove sometimes had ice in it. We didn't use the living room much in winter, and kept the shutters closed when the room wasn't being used. My room was on the northwest corner of the house, so I kept the north shutter closed, too, in winter.

The house faced west, and in the front lawn were several tall larch trees. I'd hear them at night, softly sighing in the gentle breeze, or wailing bitterly when the wind blew down from the north in icy gales. It made one pull the covers up close around the ears.

Before long I was too busy to spend much time strolling in meadows and woodlands—there were people who needed me. What time I had to be alone, I found that the whispering of the wind in the larches brought solace to my restless spirit. I came to see though, that it was not the larch trees, the woods, or the brook, it was HIM finding my heart open and hungry. It had been Him all along in His gentle way saying, "All you need is to 'Be still and know that I am God.' Psalms 46:10"

#### **1930. Times at Mount Carmel Home**

The cook had to have critical surgery—an eye removed! I was sent there to cook for thirty children, the aging matron, the school teacher—husband of the cook, and myself! The cooking alone wasn't so difficult, but I had to bake bread—three days a week—ten loaves each time. Besides countless pancakes, cookies, pies, cakes, and muffins.

One evening around 9:00 PM, I was sitting on the wood box waiting for the last loaves to come out of the oven. I began to hear sounds as

though someone was on the boys' stairway. I listened; was that a hand on the door knob? The door squeaked open, and there stood a boy of eleven—his face bore the signs of his suffering.

I slid over on the wood box; he understood the invitation and came to the bed beside me. I put my arm around him. "Are you hurting?" I asked.

He shook his head, "Yes." (There were six of these children—3 boys and 3 girls, he was the oldest. They had just come, having lost their mother.)

I held him close while the tears came. Then when he could talk he said, "I miss my mother."

"I'm sure you do. Would you like to tell me about her? What was she like?"

"She was a lot like you. You make me think of her. Her hair was the color of yours, she had eyes like yours - - -." The misery set in his features again. He sat there choking back the tears.

"Would it help to pretend I am your mother, and you could come here whenever you feel like you want to talk, or maybe just get a hug? It will be our secret."

He shook his head, "Yes, it would help." He smiled a teary eyed smile and went back to bed. This was the beginning.

### **Motherhood Rewarded**

Some months later, when the cook was back on the job—her eye healed and a prosthesis in place, I was working at several different places in succession while the mothers were waiting for, having, and recovering from the birth of their new babies. One day when I was home, Papa attended a board meeting at Mt. Carmel Home. When he returned, he handed me the pretty cover from a new tablet. "Vernon sent this for you. He said you would know why." Papa had a look which asked "What could possibly be between her and that boy?" I thanked him. Since then I've wished I had told him 'the secret'. I'm sure he would have loved it. I still have the picture in a scrap book.

### **Recognized in a Crowd**

Another time—years later—Leroy and I took our four oldest children to hear the Messiah College Male Chorus. The church was packed. After the service an usher came to me—one of the chorus men wanted to see me.

Who could he be? I didn't recognize anyone. We followed the usher to the smiling young Vernon. "I recognized you," he said, "And I couldn't leave without telling you, I remember." Now it was time for me to wipe some tears.

I wonder if he still remembers.

### **Emergency at the Andersons**

The call came on a May evening. "Could Vida come and help me? I've been spotting, and the doctor says I must spend most of my time in bed."

Catherine was eight months pregnant. She was like one of our family, and I loved her. Of course I'd go. It was about bed time when I got there—they lived in Clinton, Iowa—just across the Mississippi.

Next morning I prepared breakfast, got the children fed and Art off to work. He was a mechanic. About then Catherine said I should hurry the children off to school, then help her back to bed. With the children off, I turned to Catherine, and offered her an arm to help her get up. What I saw almost sent me into a panic. Spotting? The spot on her wrapper was as big as the seat of the chair she sat in. "I had better call the doctor, Catherine," I said as calmly as possible. "This isn't just spotting".

"It's all right—it will let up when I lie quiet." But it didn't. After a while she asked for the bed pan, and while I was placing it under her a huge clot of blood, like a half a pound of liver, passed from her, followed by a flow of blood. She still didn't think she needed a doctor. I took the pieces of blanket she had been using (this was no job for sanitary napkins), which I had washed out, and took them out to dry on the line.

Dear God! What should I do?

Just then the little Irish lady next door stepped out to shake out her little table cloth. I felt compelled to go to her, though I had never seen her before. "Mrs. Malone, Catherine is hemorrhaging and doesn't think she needs a doctor. May I use your phone to call one?"

"Oh, honey, don't you call a doctor. You could be held responsible to pay the bill. You call the Visiting Nurse Association and tell them. They will take it from there."

Almost before I got back home a nurse was there. She told it to Catherine 'like it was'. Then she called Art home, but before he got there a doctor had come and had already sent for an ambulance.

The doctor talked to Art. "Mr. Anderson, your wife is in extremely critical condition. She must be taken to the hospital NOW!. I only hope it isn't too late". What could Art do but give in?

On his way out the doctor said to me, "Young lady, if we can save this woman, it's because you had enough sense to recognize what was going on!"

They had to take the baby before the day was over. Nothing else would stop the flow. It was a case of *placenta previa*. I had read a little about such an occurrence in Papa's big book *Know Thyself*.

The baby was a darling little girl. She lived only a short time after the delivery. Catherine's heart stopped three times during the delivery, but they stopped working at getting the baby to get her heart pumping again.

The next morning the undertaker brought the baby to the house in a little white casket. She was wearing a little white dress and had a little pink rosebud in her tiny hand. I thought I'd never get done crying. It seemed so sad. The little baby had never been held in its mother's arms, and I had dark questions on my mind about how much its daddy cared.

With blood transfusions and good care Catherine was up and around before long. And in two weeks she went to church, and was soon able to take over at home.

### **A Shadow Finally Disappears**

It was June, 1930, Papa was going to Pennsylvania to General Conference, and Mama was going along to be with Anna for a couple of weeks. Wilbur was just a baby, and Mama hadn't seen him yet.

Since I helped with the milking, they had an elderly lady (whom I will call 'S'.) to come to prepare breakfast, and to just be there for the looks of things. (I was 17.)

We were now living on the Zook Farm—just a quarter of a mile north of Franklin Corners Church. Price Richards was hired out to work for the owner of the farm just north of us. There was a tenant house on that place, and the farmer told Price if he married 'that McCulloh girl' he could live in it rent free. Price was sure this was the Lord's doing, and I should cooperate. But I couldn't see it that way at all. I had never given him any reason to think I was interested in marrying him.

The folks left for Pennsylvania on a Sunday afternoon. That evening Price walked home from church with us (Paul, Ruth, Eunice, and me) and wanted to stay and talk to me a while. I told him I had baby chicks to tend to. There were maybe 8 or 10 hens, one to each of 8 or 10 little houses. I needed to make sure no hen had so many chicks that some would smother, while another hen had only a few. He said he'd wait. After I had changed clothes we went out to the chicken coops near the wood pile under a big old apple tree.

A big black cloud was floating overhead while in the east a full moon was rising. Suddenly, just as I finished the chickens, the cloud opened up all its little rain spouts and it began to pour. Price climbed to near the top of the wood pile, I stayed down near the bottom. The shower didn't last long, but we had begun to talk so we just stayed there where we were. All I recall of the conversation was his obvious concern for his mother—so many little ones and she wasn't strong enough to handle all the work. He said if he ever gets married he doesn't want more than two or possibly three children. (Another reason why he wouldn't do for me—he'd never be able to cope with my dozen.)

By and by the cloud passed on to the east, and there was the moon, almost straight south of us.

"Hey! You've got to go home. It's almost midnight," I told him. I had never been given a curfew, but 4:30 AM was time to get up!

I went into the house as quietly as possible (even though S. was hard of hearing) with my shoes off, and tiptoed toward the stairway. As I passed Papa's study, there was S. with a lighted match, checking the time. Three minutes to twelve. I undressed quickly, grabbed my nightie and jumped in bed, put on my nightie and laid my head on my pillow. Then I heard the clock in the study strike twelve! Whew, that was fast work!

Next morning when I came in from milking, S. was in the kitchen. She looked at me over the rim of glasses; her countenance was DARK! "What time of the morning did you come in?" she wanted to know.

"I was in bed before midnight", I told her airily.

"No, you weren't", she declared, looking as though she now expected the truth.

"If you are so sure I wasn't in bed by midnight, what time DID I come in?" I questioned.

"I don't know, but what were you DOING all that time?" Her disdainful look said she KNEW what we were doing—what else WAS there to do?

"You can believe what you please, but I did nothing to be ashamed of."

"Just you wait! Your father will hear of this! The first night they are away! Tut, tut, tut!"

She really would, I thought. I've got to get to Papa before she does. There's nothing else to say, she wouldn't believe me. The first week passed somehow, and it was Sunday afternoon. Who do you think drove in with the children and suitcases? Catherine Anderson! She didn't know Papa and Mama were gone, but I told her I was sure they'd say she was



welcome, just as I say it. S. packed up her things and went home. But she was still going to tell Papa of the wild night I'd had.

When Catherine learned that Mama had paint and paper for the kitchen, she suggested that she and I get busy and have it done when she gets home. Catherine, as I said in an earlier chapter, was not afraid of work, and knew how to go about it. I had helped Mama do quite a bit of papering and painting, so we did it. Mama was surprised, and I think happy, that it was done.

But the minute Papa came in I told him I had to talk to him. We went to his study, and I told him what happened, just as I told it here.

"But, Vida," he said, "I still don't see what the problem is."

"Well, S. thinks some things that simply are not true, and I wanted you to know the truth before she tells you what she thinks."

Papa was quiet for a moment. What is he thinking, I wondered. Does he really believe me? I was remembering another painful time a few years before. Then Papa said, "My dear girl, there is something I want you to know. I wouldn't believe anything bad about you unless you told me yourself that it is true."

What a lovely feeling. Papa trusts me! I really believe he does! It was the closest thing to a good hug I ever had from him. The shadow on my mind these many months has suddenly vanished. I felt good about my world again. Oh, Thank You, Papa. I love you!

### **What Happened to Price?**

In another year or two Price went to Boone, Iowa and attended Bible School. He became a minister, married, and had a pastorate in Nebraska or someplace. I never learned anything about his family, but I am glad things turned out like that for him.

### **Eliza and Mary**

In the late summer and early autumn of 1930—until corn picking time—I was in working in Morrison for two elderly sisters, both widows.

The older, Eliza, was in her eighties. She had a daughter named Cherry, who lived near Chicago.

The younger sister, Mary Carpenter, was in her seventies, and had no children. (She told me one time that her husband hadn't married her for 'a breeding convenience'. I never quite figured out what she meant to be saying.)

Eliza's mind played tricks on her. She seldom spoke, and seemed to be looking off into space somewhere. What was she thinking? Or was her mind a blank? But, every evening around four-thirty, she would go to the west window of the living room and watch toward the town area.

After a while Mary would get that exasperated, 'here we go again' look, and say, "Eliza, what are you looking for so long?"

Eliza would turn, her face marked with anxiety, and say, "Charlie's late tonight."

Mary, frustrated with the monotony of this ritual, says, (too sharply, I thought) "Oh, Eliza! Charlie's been dead for forty years!"

Eliza would look so stricken. "Charlie? - - Charlie's dead? - - Charlie's dead, then he won't be coming home tonight." She would go back to her chair. These were such poignant scenes. I know I will never forget them.

One day Mary was in a mood to talk, and she told me what had happened forty years ago.

Charlie loved horses, and had a few he kept as a hobby. One of these was a handsome stallion. One weekend he had taken the stallion to a horse show.

One morning while he was away, Eliza awoke suddenly from a horrible nightmare. In this 'dream', she saw her husband in a box stall grooming his horse, as he had done so many times before. Suddenly, the animal reared, pawing her husband with those powerful hoofs, knocking him down and trampling him.

Terrified and almost out of her mind with anxiety, Eliza waited. Later that morning she got a telegram stating that Charlie had been killed by his stallion. She never recovered from what the shock and horror of this terrible tragedy had done to her. Her Charlie had been so dear to her, and now he would never come home to her again.

### **Proverbs 22:1 Remembered**

While I worked in Morrison for Eliza and Mary, I decided to buy Papa and Mama something for Christmas—I may not have a chance to shop after I'm home picking corn. But what I wanted cost more than three weeks' wages, so I decided to withdraw what I still needed from my savings account at Smith Trust and Savings Bank. I had never been in the bank—Papa always deposited my money for me—but I had my passbook. What more did I need?

I walked into the bank and approached one of the windows. An elderly, distinguished looking gentleman, who I guessed was Mr. Smith

himself, stepped up to the window and asked if he could be of service to me.

"Yes", I said. "I'd like to draw some money from my savings account," and handed him my passbook.

He asked, "Do you have identification?"

"Identification? I'm - - - I'm just me," I answered.

Do you see anyone you know in here?" he asked.

I looked around. "No, but I know Miss Aherens who clerks in the grocery store next door."

"I'm sorry, but I can't give you money when I don't know who you are," and he closed the book and moved to hand it to me.

I wasn't going to leave with him thinking I just 'grew up like Topsy', so I looked him square in the eye and said—somewhat loftily - "I'm Will McCulloh's daughter!" and reached for my passbook.

"Will McCulloh's daughter?" he asked—obviously surprised.

"Yes, I am!"

"That's good enough for me," he said, taking my passbook back. "How much do you want?"

A father with a good name is quite an asset, I thought. I must be careful to never bring dishonor to it.

### **In Lovers' Lane**

While working for Eliza and Mary, my time off was Sunday afternoons. Papa usually came around 1:30, and took me back after church on Sunday evening.

It was quite a surprise to me one Sunday when I was watching for Papa, when Price drove up. He said Papa had given him permission. (Well! How about MY feelings?) But I wanted to get home, so I didn't make a fuss.

We hadn't gone very far before he invited me to move closer to him. I was not interested, so I stayed in my corner.

Before long I began to wonder if Price could REALLY be a Wolf. (I had heard Papa say that wolves sometimes appear like sheep, and this guy definitely had a sheepish grin.)

He wasn't taking me home. He was making turns unfamiliar to me, and instead of responding with explanations when I protested, he just grinned those sheepish grins.

When he turned into a lane leading to a wooded area, I began to plan my strategy should bad turn to worse. Before I was ready, he coasted off the road and stopped under a wide spreading tree.

"Dear me!" I said as calmly as possible. "What happened?" (I was pretending I thought we had car trouble.)

"Nothing," he said, turning toward me and placing his arm invitingly over the back of the seat.

Now my Irish was up! I looked at him squarely, and with my hand on the door handle, I demanded to know, "Then why did you stop here?"

If he felt awkward, it was only for a moment. Then, with a look of injured innocence, he said, "I just thought we could have a word of prayer."

"Well, that's a new one," I thought, but to him I asked, "Do you want to pray here or somewhere else?"

"Let's go over to that fallen tree in the woods." He knelt on one side of it, and I knelt a couple of feet away on the other side.

He prayed fervently, that "some how, in some way," God would bring our paths together.

Of course, I didn't dare to pray, "Oh, God, please don't," so I asked Him to help each of us to be willing to earnestly seek His will for our lives, and to be willing to accept it, even though it isn't what we think we want, because His way is better than ours.

When we got up, we went to the car, and went home without saying much of anything.

That was my one and only trip down Lovers' Lane

### **Misled by a Dream**

Did you ever turn off your alarm clock, then just lie there 'to wake up a little bit more' before you crawled out of your warm bed into a cold room? Did you then wake up a while later to the realization that you had fallen asleep again?

Then you know how awful I felt that morning when I woke up suddenly remembering Papa's call, and here I was LATE! It was practically a cardinal sin to oversleep and make it necessary for the others to pitch in to get your cows milked before the milk truck came to pick it up.

I dressed quickly and went downstairs. It puzzled me some that Papa wasn't in the kitchen getting the fire started in the cook stove, but that was not my problem. I had five cows to milk—fast!

On the way to the barn, I wondered why the barn was dark. The doors are all shut; it's winter, silly! But when I opened the door, it was dark in there, and the cows were all lying down. They are all done already, and will jump out of hiding any minute now! - - - But the cows are lying down. If they had been milked, they would be up, eating. What's wrong, anyway??

I went back to the house. It was still dark and cold in the kitchen. I struck a match, and held it up to the clock on the kitchen shelf. 3:15!?? How can that be? I checked with the clock in Papa's study. It wouldn't dare fib, not in there. It said 3:16. Well! What do you think of that? I must have dreamed that Papa had called. I went back to bed.

The next time I went downstairs, the odor of wood smoke leaked up the steps, and when I opened the door a current of warmth drifted past me. Papa was feeding the fire he had started. This is more like it! This is what I've been used to. Maybe I should get myself a clock and not trust my dreams any more.

## CHAPTER IX

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Selecting a Husband

This goes back to a summer afternoon in June, 1926. The Clarion (the yearbook of Messiah Bible College) had come, and two neighbor girls, Rozella and Kathryn Schroeder, Lois and I, were studying it much as we studied a Sears catalogue for merchandise. This time we were picking our choice for a husband from the photographs reproduced there. One girl picked Joe Stoner. I don't remember who the other two picked. I was strangely drawn to the picture of Leroy Yoder. There was something in the face that puzzled me—was that a hint of sadness in those dark eyes, and a bit of hurt on that sensitive mouth? I covered my feelings by saying my choice is Earl Miller! "He has a nice, intelligent face," I said. But I never forgot that other face.

His picture was in the Clarion Annual again in 1931. He had matured, and I liked what I saw.

In August that year, Paul and I visited Pennsylvania. He had never been there, and wanted to go. Papa said he'd let Paul go if I went with him.

The first Sunday Alene Van Dyke, Guy's cousin, who was visiting there too, walked with me to Sunday School. We were a bit late and sat in a seat at the back of the Chapel. I recognized the young man leading the singing. It was Leroy Yoder. They were singing the last part of the first stanza:

*"Let the water and the blood,  
From thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Save from wrath and make me pure."*

He knows what he's singing, and it's real to him, I thought. (What a fascinating face—very expressive.)

Alene poked me in the ribs with her elbow and whispered, "That's your man up there."

"Alene! Why do you say that?"

"I don't know. I just suddenly knew you two belonged together."

"Not a chance in the whole world," I thought.

In Sunday School, Asa Climenhaga, the teacher, was casting around in his mind for the words to an old adage in verse form. He said a bit of it, then, "Do you know how that goes, Leroy?"

He did. "Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a Destiny."

"Ah, yes, that's it!"

Later Brother Climenhaga was thinking of a Scripture with a certain thought. "Could you tell me what I am trying to remember, Leroy?" Leroy quoted the verse and the reference. Hmmm. He's smart, too!

I hadn't hoped to go to school, but the doors seemed to open for me, so I stayed in Pennsylvania. Paul went home with Samuel Keefer when he went out to marry Cora on September 1.

Leroy worked in Carlisle that year, but now and then he was at church with his parents, and my heart wouldn't behave. But I was determined to do nothing to attract his attention. If anything was to come of this, God would have to make it happen.

Sometimes, walking home from school in the starlight, I'd remember an incident that took place in the first week I was in Pennsylvania. Lois was to go to quartet practice over at Hill View. She asked me to walk along. When we got to Brechbills, she went in to let Helen and Ray know she had come. I waited on the sidewalk 'stargazing'. Leroy came along just then. He was the tenor of the quartet. We stood there talking, and pointing out different constellations we knew. Suddenly two meteors streaked side by side across the heavens. "Did you see that?" Leroy asked.

"Yes," I had seen it. In my fanciful way of thinking, a shooting star was a forget-me-not\* from my guardian angel. "What did she mean, sending two together like that?" Of course it was a foolish thought, so forget it! But I never could.

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\* From Longfellow's Evangeline: "*Silently one by one in the infinite meadows of Heaven, Blossomed the lovely stars—the Forget-me-nots of the angels.*"

### **The Summer of '32: My Secret Landmark**

When summer came again, I went to Philadelphia where I would work with a family in Germantown. The first couple of weeks were spent in their home on School House Lane.

While we were there I spent my free time at the B.I. C. Mission, as did several other girls. The Sisters at the Mission were afraid I'd get lost out there alone in the night. I might get off the bus at the wrong street and miss the street car going out Germantown Avenue.

How could I miss it when just a block before I was to get off, there was this building with the name LEROY in big red neon letters high

above it? (Never mind that the sign had ROOFING under that name.) It was my "guiding star."

Most of summer vacation was spent at the family's country home at Line Lexington. When they returned to the city, I went back to Van Dyke's at Grantham. They were going to make a quick trip to Illinois, and invited Charles and me to go along.

It was good to be back home in Illinois. I could see, though, that Grandma was not the same. She no longer left her bed. Will she be here when I come home next year?

### **The Summer of '32: Of Time and Change**

In the short time at home, I had what was to be my last time alone with Grandpa. We were on the front porch shaded by the tall larch trees. His eyes no longer twinkled, but had a sad, far away look in them. Even when he smiled, it seemed you could sense a melancholy heaviness within him. Did he realize that his Maria must soon be leaving? Or was he mourning for what had already gone from her?

My heart ached for both of them. They had been such a big part of my life, and now I knew if I went away I might never see them again.

I was on campus at Messiah again when Professor Brechbill came to me with the word. Cora had called him and asked him to tell me my Grandmother had died. It was November 20, 1932. She was 85 years old. She was buried in the cemetery at the Brick Church (northwest of Morrison, on the left hand side of Route 78 going north from Route 30).

After the funeral—a week or so—Grandpa asked Mama if she would feel bad if he went to Susie's for a while; he could hardly sleep in the bed he had shared with Grandma. (Susie was the older of Mama's two sisters.) He told how she would cuddle up to him and hold his beard. That's the way they went to sleep. Maybe a change of surroundings would help. So Grandpa went to Aunt Susie's for a while.

### **The Summer of '32: Farewell, Little Dog**

As soon as I saw Fido, I could see that it would not be long until he would be romping in the lush Elysian Fields reserved for good little doggies. An evening or two later, I was sitting on the edge of the back porch (about eight inches from the ground). Fido came to me, laid his head on my knees, and looked up at me. His eyes were so sad. I stroked him gently, and talked softly to him. He walked to the corner of the house, turned, and looked at me. Then he came back and laid his head on my knees again. He walked away again and came back. He walked away



again a third time, and came back. I petted him again, and talked to him. This time when he went to the corner of the house, he turned and looked at me, but then turned and wagged his tail slowly, lowered his head, and walked on.

I didn't realize this was 'Good-Bye'. Or was it an appeal for me to walk with him this one last time, until he passed through the gate to the 'field beyond'? I'll never know. But I do know there has never been another dog quite like him, and it hurts to think he may have been trying to tell me something, and I didn't understand what he wanted.

You were a great little pal, Fido, and I still love you.

### **Back at School in the Fall of '32**

The next school year, '32 to '33, Leroy was in college again. He was in one of the male quartets. I was in the Girls' Quartet. It just made me a lot busier. I was determined to keep a straight 'A' average, as I had managed to do the year before. At the same time, I was milking each night and morning for President Hess, besides doing their laundry, ironing, and weekly cleaning. There were also certain chores I did for Anna for my board—washing dishes, floors, baby-sitting. "Where did the time come for all this?" I wonder now.

On December 10, there was a strange set of circumstances: A wedding, a heavy snowstorm, a car accident which made it impossible for the best man to get to the wedding, Leroy substitutes for him at almost the last minute, and wonder of wonders, he falls in love with the groom's sister—Me! I wasn't even the bride's maid! He began walking home from school the long way around, which now had suddenly become the shortest way home!

On the evening of December 16, '32, the Choral Society sang at the Chapel of MBC. The program began with a candlelight service. The members of the group wore black gowns with white collars. We lined up in the corridor above the lobby, each holding a lighted candle. By sheer coincidence Leroy and I were side by side. I glanced up at him; those dark, eloquent eyes were saying things to me, and I KNEW. Leroy loves me. (Isn't that what his eyes were saying? Don't be a fool and take anything for granted. If he ever says it in plain English, then you can begin to believe it.)

### **I Move to Treona**

Guy and Anna moved back to Illinois. Guy's mother was very ill, and needed someone to care for her. They lived on the Little Place, which had belonged to Grandpa and Grandma Longanecker. At just the right time

Cora Sider asked me to come and help her—she was expecting, and needed help with the housework, and with the care of her two little boys, Harold and Neil.

Leroy was welcome to call on me there, especially welcomed by little Neil. He adored Leroy, and often asked me, "Is Woy tummin tonite?"

If I answered, "Yes," he'd jump around gleefully, "Woy's tummin, Woy's tummin!" When Leroy got there, Neil hugged him around the legs, and had to be picked up. "Woy read to me!" So he read.

At bath time, he'd push me aside, "Woy do it, Woy do it!" So Leroy bathed two little boys, and dressed them in their pajamas. Taking Leroy by the hand, he (Neil) led back to the living room. "Woy, sing to me!" So Leroy sang to the little lad until he fell asleep. Then he tucked him in bed.

"He'd make a nice daddy," I told myself.

### **Encouragement From The Climenhagas**

One day Anna Climenhaga caught up with me where I was walking. She slipped her arm around me and said, "Asa and I have been noticing you and Leroy together lately, and we are happy about it. Leroy is a fine young man, one of our favorite people. And we both like you, too. You two have a lot to give each other."

"Thank you, Mrs. Climenhaga. That was lovely."

### **Parting—Then What?**

The school year of '32 to '33 was coming to a close. Our Ladies' Quartet had travelled with President Hess on several weekends, giving programs in many churches in Pennsylvania—wherever we were invited.

The program I think I shall never forget was the one we gave in a chapel full of men at Rockview Penitentiary, where we saw several of the prisoners weep.

Another memorable occasion—for a different reason entirely—was the night the young men of the Glee Club and the girls they chose to be their guests, were served an elegant dinner by candlelight.

Commencement was on June 6th that year, and Leroy had the honor of delivering the valedictory address. Soon the time came for farewells. Some faces, we knew, we would never see again, and it brought a sense of sadness.

I had been asked to help at Mt. Carmel Home through the busy months of summer, so before long I was headed that way by bus. A few

weeks later Leroy would begin his long journey to Paddockwood, Saskatchewan, to begin the work the Mission Board had assigned to him. On his way west he would stop at our home in northwestern Illinois for a weekend.

What would separation do to us? Will we drift apart? Or will we come to a mutual assurance that God is leading us closer to each other?

Time will tell.

### **On the Threshold**

This is the last page of the book. I leaf back through it and remember many things not written here. On the last few pages I began to write of a whole new life opening up ahead of me.

Leroy had said it in eloquent English, and had asked THE QUESTION, too. How can I say anything but "Yes?" But I feel so scared—I never walked this way before. Is it really God's leading?

Dear Grandpa, many years have passed since I pondered that big question under the larch trees. Wonderful, fulfilling, happy years. And, yes, years of unspeakable sorrow. But still, I mind the time, Grandpa. I mind the time ...

*Vida*

## APPENDIX

### Ralph and Alena Voss

*(the couple on the back seat of the carriage during The Rain Storm)*

This is the story of Ralph and Alena (Lichtenberger) Voss, as she told it to me one spring when I helped her with her housecleaning. She was 'expecting', and it was hard for her to get up to the high places and down to the low places. I was, perhaps, 17 then.

*Vida*

\* \* \* \* \*

Alena Lichtenberger was born the daughter of a well-to-do merchant in Holland, and was reared to be accustomed to an easy life. Her parents dreamed of having her marry a young man of equal rank in society. But one day Alena met Ralph—the big, strong, handsome son of the blacksmith who so carefully fit the shoes for her riding horse. He fell in love with this lovely, little blond lady, and believed she felt the same way about him.

It took courage for him, the son of a blacksmith, to go to a merchant and ask permission to call on his daughter, but he did. The merchant gave him to understand clearly that the likes of him were unsuitable associates for his daughter, and he was forbidden to see her anywhere.

Alena heard this from the stairway, and was stunned and angry for the insulting remarks her father had made to this fine young man, whom she loved. His only flaw was that he was a man who worked for a living. She wrote to Ralph, saying she would meet him in the park—if he wanted to see her. He came, and they met there from time to time.

Since she wasn't downhearted, her father suspected something, and had her followed. She was meeting Ralph!

Her father wrote to Ralph, threatening to lock Alena in her room if he saw her again. Next they wrote letters, hiding them in a place they each knew. The father discovered this, and replaced Alena's letter with one of his own, telling Ralph he was going to send Alena away somewhere 'til she got over this foolishness—if he didn't stop writing.

Ralph realized he could never win the approval of this father, and he was causing Alena a lot of trouble. He wrote a letter to her saying that by the time she read it, he would be on his way to America. He said the only way he could stay away from her was to put an ocean between them. She

should forget him and be happy. As for himself, he knew he would always love her—the memories would always be in his heart.

Her father left her find this letter, and mistook the way she walked with her head held high and her jaw set, for anger with Ralph, and seemed to feel a smug satisfaction at having won. But this was not what was in Alena's mind at all—no man had ever loved her with the kindness and respect Ralph had shown her, and she was thinking things she dared to share with no one.

About a month later, she told her parents that she would like to visit her cousins in Amsterdam. This was a welcome sign to them—she is recovering already. Maybe she will meet a suitable man at one of the parties.

They did not know that Alena, who was of legal age, had checked out all her money, and had taken all her jewels from the vault. The clothes she packed were her most serviceable, practical ones, including only enough fancy things to avoid suspicion.

As soon as she reached Amsterdam, she purchased passage on the boat that would be leaving for New York in a few days.

Ralph did not have enough money to buy passage, so he worked in the shipyards to earn what he needed. Then he learned that a ship going to New York needed a deck hand. On inquiry, he learned that he could earn his way across. So he took the job.

Three days out on the Atlantic, Alena arose early one morning, and went out to walk on the deck. She went to the bow of the ship to watch the water divide as the ship headed steadily westward. She looked to find the horizon, so very far beyond the vastness of this ocean. One thought was always in her mind: 'How will I go about finding Ralph, where will I find him, and what will he say?' It wasn't hard to lose herself in the cherished memory of his presence. It wasn't hard to remember his voice speaking her name, "Alena, Alena." What's ailing me? She scolded herself. I must have been hallucinating. But there it is again, "Alena?"

She whirled around. There he stood. "Ralph? Ralph, oh, Ralph!"

"Alena!" They were in each others arms, and finally Ralph said, "Alena, what are you doing here?"

"I was coming to America to find you."

"Oh, Alena," he said, still incredulous. "But what of your parents?"

"I sent a letter to them telling them where I am going—they should know by now. I left, taking only what was mine to come to you—if you still want me?"

"If I still want you? Oh, Alena, you are everything that's precious and beautiful to me, and I want you with all there is of me! But, are you sure?"

"Yes, Ralph. I'm sure."

They were married on the Atlantic Ocean by the ship's Captain. When they landed in New York, they decided to go to northwestern Illinois where many others from their country had gone.

They found a place to live along The Bottoms. Papa befriended them, and they began to learn English and attend church in the schoolhouse where Papa preached. Mama became a second mother to Alena, and when their babies were born in the years that followed, it was Mama she wanted to be with her.

Alena wrote to her parents and sent pictures of the children, but all she heard of them was through relatives.

After many years had gone by she learned that her parents were ailing. Ralph told her to write to them and ask if she may come home for a visit, bringing two grandchildren. She got three words in reply: "You may come." So Ralph sent her home for a month, with two of the younger grandchildren. The painful breech was finally healed.

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