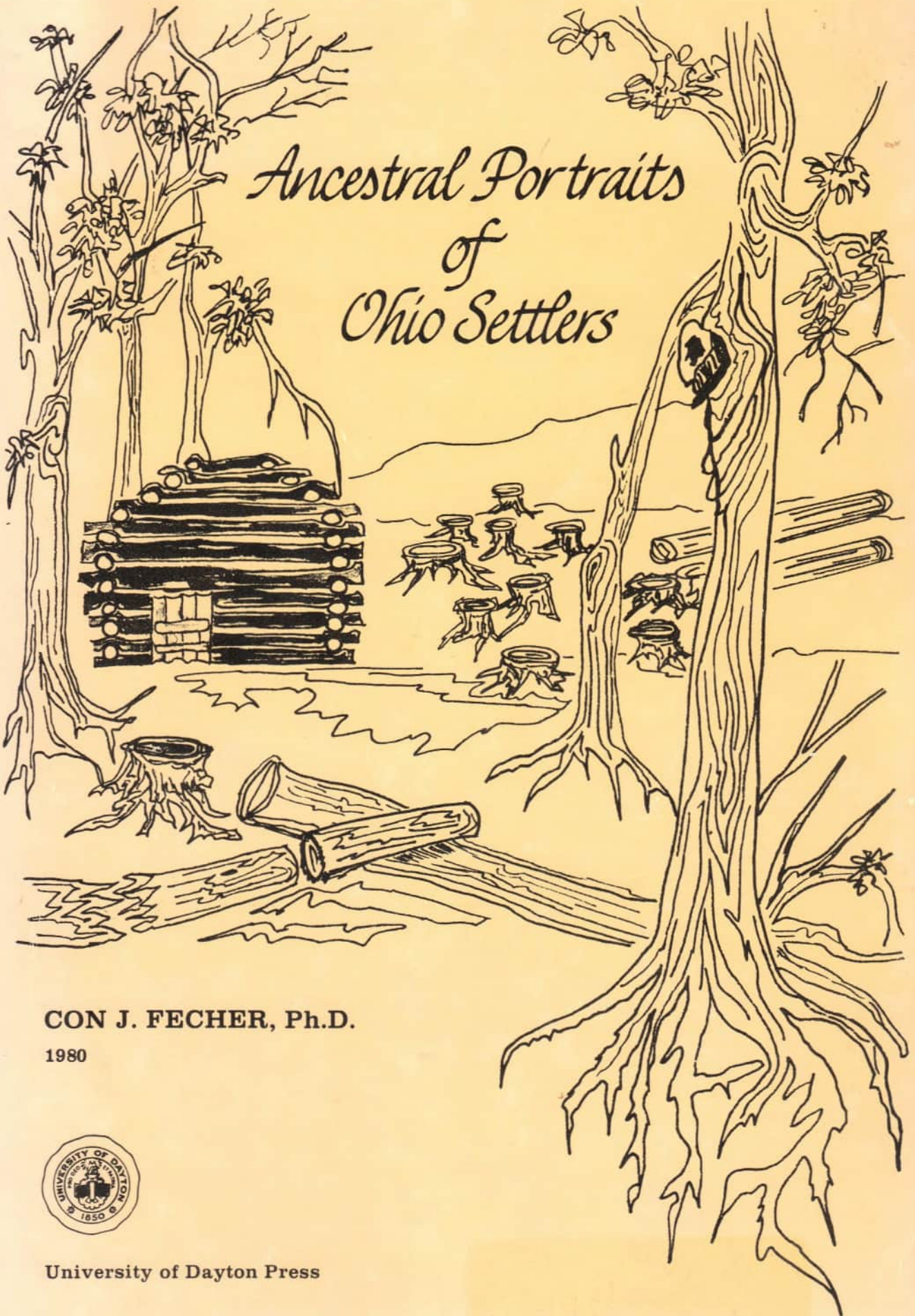


*Ancestral Portraits
of
Ohio Settlers*



CON J. FECHER, Ph.D.

1980



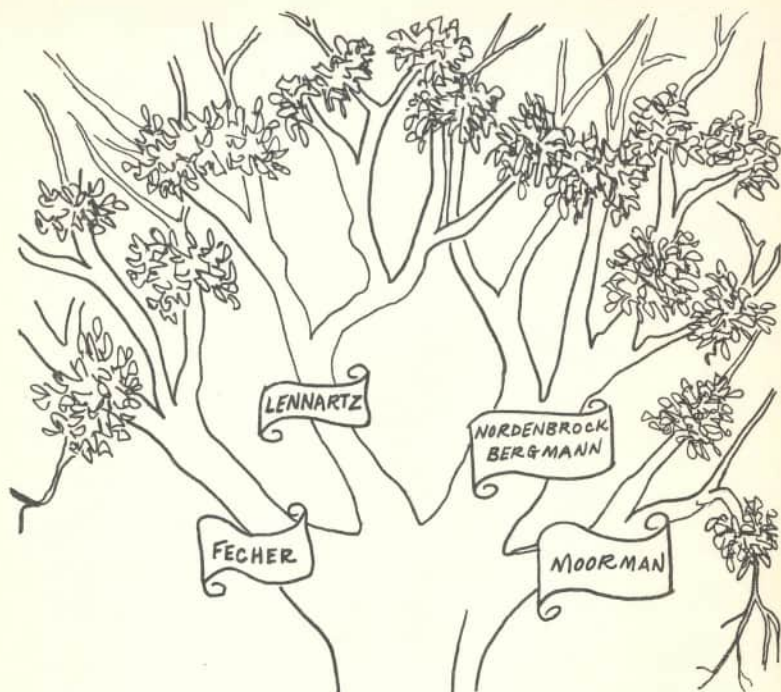
University of Dayton Press

The stage setting of this gentle yet moving biographical sketch is the 20-mile square area of West-Central Ohio. The three counties, Mercer, Auglaize, and Darke, have many distinctive scenes not found elsewhere. Scores of beautiful, Gothic churches with lofty spires dot the countryside. Dozens of religious convents and countless log mission churches erected from 1850 to 1875 by German and French European settlers, religiously supported by priests and nuns of the Society of the Precious Blood were the percusor of this unusual environment. Despite the unmeasurable, large, more complex economic change of life-style throughout America the traditional religious practices and the desire to live close to nature had been/is the oasis of 2nd, 3rd, and current 4th generation.

An abbreviated map of this region gives the reader a grasp of the geography of communities, homes, roads, Indian trails and sites of exceptional happenings.

The volume of 325 pages presents a complete story of one and one-half centuries. It deals with involved interrelationships among principal characters of each family whose stock of unique strains appear and reappear in on-going generations. Eventually, the novel recalls the growth and experiences of the childhood and teenage periods of two young people in the 20th Century who were influenced by the forces of family traditions and heritage.

Alfida E. Willke



THE ANCESTRAL TREE
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

LEAVES LIMBS and TRUNK

Con J. Fecher, Ph.D.

Frontispiece by Therese Zink

D E D I C A T I O N

To My Children
in
Memory Of Their Mother

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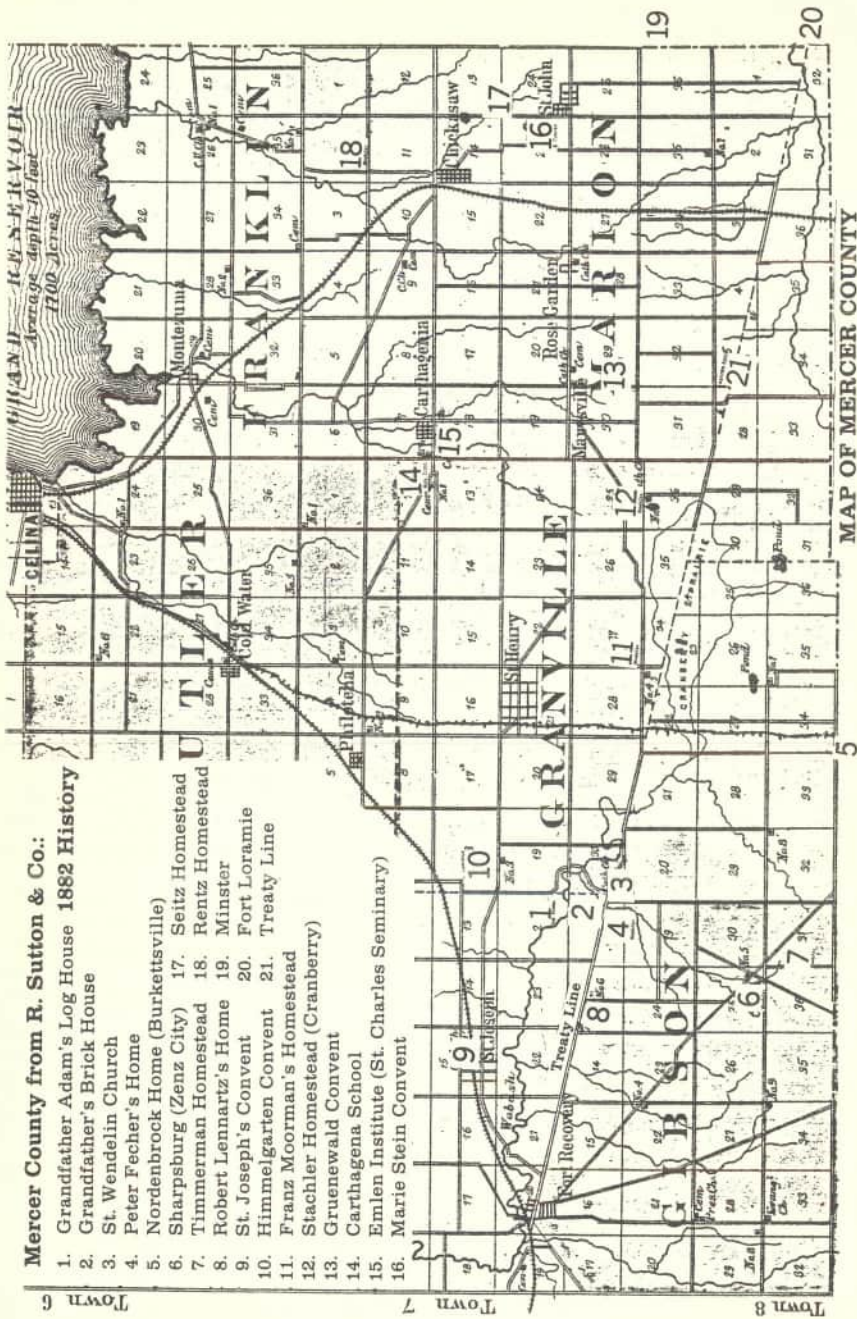


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The Family Tree: Con J. and Marie
(Nordenbrock) Fecher Family

PREFACE

Ancestral Portraits, a detailed history of West-Central Ohio, counties of Mercer, Auglaize, and Darke, came into focus after a thorough research had been made of the accomplishment of today's descendants of the ancestral families that migrated there in 1800.

We find hundreds of young men and women of the old German stock having college degrees, filling important positions in education, medicine, nurses in hospitals, industry, and salesmanship in all parts of our country.

We cannot disregard the spiritual atmosphere in this religious oasis that had been initiated and is still nurtured by the priests and sisters of the Society of the Precious Blood. They have left their stamp upon both, young and old. Progressively, this particular flavor has been inherited by all 20th Century descendants, irrespective of their present location or profession.

Leaves, limbs and trunk, underpinned by ancestral roots, portray this sequence; the trunk represents the ancestors born after 1800 to near the end of the Century, the limbs, the generations born about the turn of the Century, and the leaves refer to the young men and women born the past 40 to 50 years. These represent all young members who are equally supported by the ancestral roots.

It was the latter group who encouraged me to edit a second edition of the genealogical sketch, *Ancestral Portraits*, of 1978. Simultaneously, they said, it would encourage their children to learn the experience of changeness in customs, culture, philosophy, and religious nuances of the ancestors of the 19th Century world.

It is my wish to encourage contemporary young men and women, descendants of the one hundred or more 19th Century settlers, described in this book, to expand this collection of Catholic local history.

Ancestral Portraits is an accurate and excellent Source Book to all interested in the early history of West-Central Ohio for further research. Permission, therefore, is granted to all to use any genealogical data.

Looking at the historical development of Catholicism in Mercer County from your ancestral origin will be a great delight for on-going generations.

In no way should one discount the qualities of these progenitors. Now, 150 years later, it is imperative to review their accomplishments, and esteem the inheritance they passed on. What they sowed in hardship and toil, the descendants, now, are reaping in untold benefits.

Indeed, I shall write sensitively about their characteristics and attributes. I shall attempt to make this story come alive without sacrificing historical authenticity.

Due to a lack of information, and available time and space, the biographical sketch will concentrate on the happy and sad events related to the four ancestral families, the two principal characters, and the children referred to in the prologue.

The story of leaves, limbs, and trunk of the ancestral families was merely a thought of the writer fifty years ago. However, it was the culmination of an idea of his wife, the mother of his children, that gave meaning to it many years later. It was she who chose a particular drawer, a permanent file, for all personal diaries, scrap-books, photographs, mementoes, letters, news items, and family achievements. We realized in time the meaning of the varied personalities of ancestral families and friends who touched our lives. Their accounts, pictures, keepsakes and death cards found a resting place in the same location.

All articles and pictures had been assembled, chronologically, in a family book, a volume 24 x 24 x 3 in dimensions. Indeed, one, too voluminous to transfer from hand-to-hand. However, this became a valuable source of unremembered experiences, activities, and memorabilia.

The writing of this biographical sketch materialized after the family moved from the city to a 100 acre farm, ten miles from Dayton, in 1940. Our mutual object was to have our children experience the meaning of rolling fields of yellowing wheat, and tasseled corn, bending to the rising sun and each fading in the breeze at dusk. We earnestly desired that the love for work and its dignity, encouraged by us, would support a want for land, shaping their world, rooted in American soil. This would provide a unique testament to a way of life that has all but disappeared.

Moreover, it is fitting that the tradition and heritage of the four ancestral groups should not be lost to succeeding generations after they had learned about the members and their milieu as related on these pages.

It was a European trip in 1954 that directed our attention to a much needed knowledge of the European background of these four families, thus providing clues to the identity of each family as a unit and of the individuals who made it up.

These exploring trips were repeated more than a half-dozen times in the next ten years. The final one in 1962. Each provided more and more of the character strains of family stock. Fortunately, the early lives of these families had been concentrated in middle Europe, lived, and migrated to the New World in a space of approximately a decade.

When we come to the end of this biographical sketch will the stories of our ancestors end? Indeed, will they ever end. It is my sincere desire that they will never end but be told and retold for many generations by the members, somehow, somewhere, wherever they may be.

INTRODUCTION

A life story is not a biography nor an autobiography of any one particular person or persons. But, in a modified sense it might qualify as either or both. Each can produce portraits of the personalities of members of an ancestry as seen in the living thoughts, words and deeds, both materially and spiritually, that influenced the oncoming generations. It is a study of character, an analysis of distinguished qualities either good or bad. It describes how persons acted under certain conditions, thus illuminating the times in which they lived.

The writing of a biography is always ticklish work and particularly when it is illustrating heredity from four ancestral families. In other words, the life of the principal living characters are written before they were born. My purpose was to collect all available and searchable details as someone going into a forest, chooses a huge tree and collects leaves, limbs, and roots of it as they had been influenced by environment.

The view in interpreting these ancestral stories and events could be fraught with beneficial or deceptive observations. Not being a philosopher or a humorist, I have attempted to be cautious in depicting the qualities of individuals, and how these differentiated from those of others who had lived under similar situations and environment.

To preserve qualities and accomplishments we are accustomed to think of enduring monuments, fashioned from hard materials. In this story there was unearthed a mine of source material in the form of letters, writings, news items, and family documents that had been partly assembled and available in almost all instances. Conversations with my grandparents, my parents, many living experiences in my youth with ancestral relatives, and accounts given by my wife's parents and her 100-year old grandmother, provided a memory of recollections which became a good sorting house as time passed to separate the wheat from the chaff. The stored grain I jotted down on these pages while the chaff disappeared with the breeze of time.

As an avid student of history I was able to correlate events with significant and contemporary persons of certain ancestors. Facts of the memorabilia are supported with picturesque historical exhibitions of personalities who had been a part of the respective ancestral families. These were grounded by exhaustive research with an energetic desire for personal and historical truth.

The thought of searching the history of these families was because their past history was searchable, but not necessarily that any one of them was great, for who can define

historic greatness? The history of all families are, more or less, equally ancient but in regard to greatness, interpretations of the historical impact may change from one generation to another.

Family history is history dramatized. One could say that an obscure individual life if truthfully written could surpass any romance. I dare say with great humbleness that the activities throughout our lives were truly romantic, daring, at times displaying leadership and a high degree of perseverance. In examining, investigating, and appraising the accomplishments of a few ancestors who depicted the above characteristics, I am stalemated on the horns of a dilemma; was it inheritance or was it observed examples? Without trying to answer the query, I shall speculate that both: inheritance and many imitative examples of equal or of greater weight, definitely impressed and inspired the oncoming families of the 20th Century.

I shall give in advance my readers the opportunity of gazing into the looking-glass as Alice In Wonderland did, thereby focusing their attention on the most noticeable and admirable features ascribed to these ancestral progenitors. They had a desire to improve their lives and the lives of the on-going generations thereby ameliorating hardships, acquiring freedom, and personal liberty, irrespective of laborious efforts involved.

In writing this biographical sketch, covering over 100 years, I have attempted to recount the joys, sorrows, and achievements of certain personalities. I have examined, analyzed, and interpreted the forces of certain family traditions and heritage which created a unique strain that reoccurred and endured from one generation to another. Conceding the fact that these characteristics might have been pressured by conditions, foreign to me in this last half of the 20th Century, I have with reflective judgment endeavored to portray and create true personal qualities of each. Not as stilted pen-point imaginaries but based on their personalities and happenings as described by my parents and twice-told stories related by elderly relatives.

Much of the knowledge, occupation, religion, and events of the German and French settlements in the twenty-mile square area of Mercer, Auglaize, and Darke counties has been gleaned from early histories of this territory. This information has been augmented by the history of the priests and sisters of the Society of the Precious Blood who established their province in this area in 1843. News items in the Diocesan Cincinnati Telegraph, current at the time, provided a knowledge of the unique faith of these people in the late 19th and 20th Centuries.

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PROLOGUE

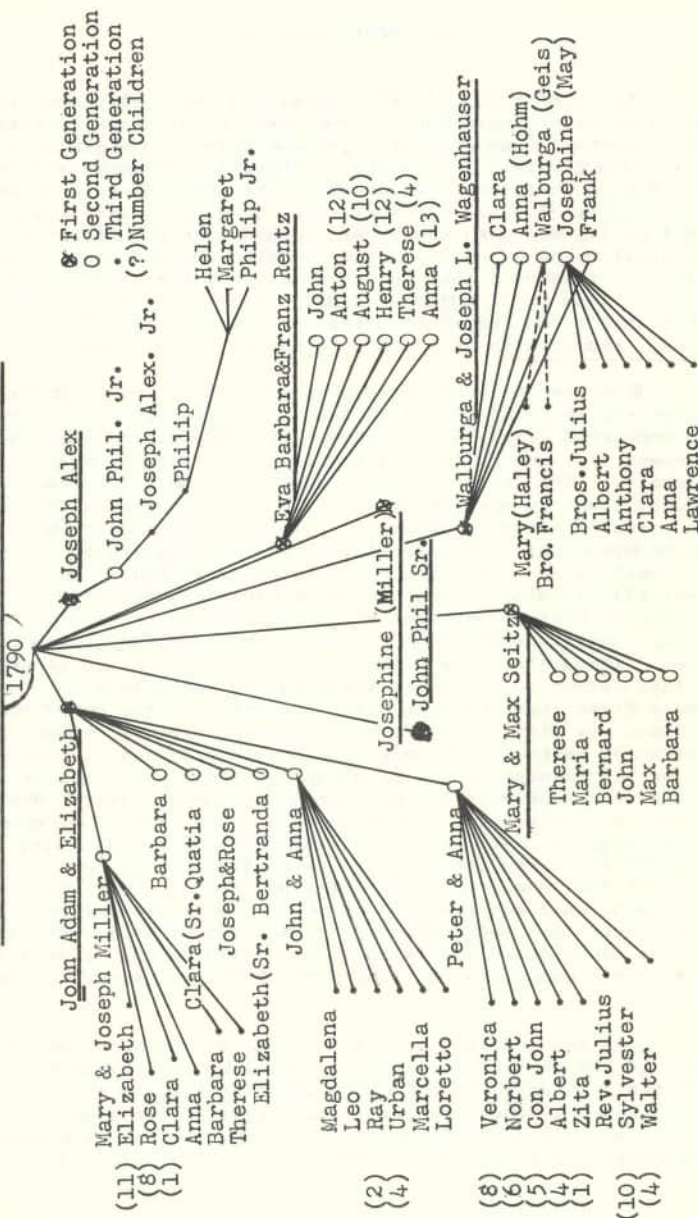
In June 1924, the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., granted a competitive four-year Fellowship to a young man, married and the father of two children. Being a married student he occasioned the University to initiate a precedent in granting the award to a married recipient, though contrary to the rule at the time.

After two summers and three scholastic years of educational attainments at the University, he and his wife were awarded, simultaneously, the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy and the degree of Bachelor of Music, respectively, in June 1927. Dignity was added to this auspicious occasion by the presence of their immediate families, members of the University Faculty, hundreds of dignitaries, and 350 candidates for degrees. One could acclaim that this event had great personal interest and intrinsic significance for the family of Constantine and Marie (Nordenbrock) Fecher, the two principal characters, and their two children, Mark and Mary Margaret.

At the appointed time the Captain of the commencement exercises announced the names of these two candidates to present themselves for their respective degrees. Whereupon the Most Reverend Michael J. Curley, Chancellor of the University, questioned their three major professors: Rev. Dr. Peter Guillard, Rev. Dr. William Kerby, and Dr. Frank O'Hara, as to the excellence of the academic work completed by the candidates. With the approval of these professors the Archbishop conferred the degrees and addressing the assembly he said: "We are, simultaneously, conferring degrees to two students, husband and wife, for the first time in the history of the University." The academic hoods were then placed upon their shoulders and the scrolls presented. The Archbishop continued: "These two can, with rightful pride, point to the completion of a vast labor of academic attainments under pressured conditions and situations."

This accomplishment was a remarkable example of a young man and young woman who had been limited in educational facilities in their younger years, and now had reached their desired goals; the recipients of the highest academic degrees of that day.

JACOB ABRAHAM ADAM & MARIA FECHER FAMILY



CHAPTER I

THE FECHER ANCESTRY

The culmination of this educational accomplishment in 1927 had taken place approximately 100 years after Jacob Abraham and Maria (Fecher) Adam, my great grandparents, had migrated from Croatia and Slovinia to Austria, to Bavaria (Germany) and later into Alsace Lorraine after crossing the Rhine River. It was in the vicinity of Karlsruhe where they boarded a small Rhine River craft on its way down the river, loaded with few migrants and the usual cargo of goods. After passing the old feudal University of Strassbourg they landed at a point near Neuenkirche, a small village on an adjacent canal. In it centered around a small chapel the Shrine of Notre Dame, were a few unpainted houses, ringed with high board fences of rough lumber.

These two migrants were born in late 1700 when Middle Europe was in great political and social disturbance. Napoleon had conquered nearly all of Europe by 1810, wiping away the old European map, and ruling all acquired territory by his chosen delegates. The Industrial Revolution in Middle 1700 had been brought about by new inventions, and steam-powered machinery that created a consciousness of position, and dignity among the new Middle-Class. Principally, it was the leaders of the professional groups that brought disturbance in Middle Europe, eventually leading to the French Revolution about 1800. According to history Napoleon at the end of the revolution had gained complete control of France and had annexed Alsace Lorraine. Immediately, he created a state of order and security in this German territory by lowering the heavy taxes of the Middle-Class that had been paid, formerly, to the Dukes and Bishops. By dividing the nobility-owned territory among the peasantry, harmony and peace to a degree had been restored. For better transportation of goods new roads and a system of canals connected with the navigable Rhine were built. However, giving the peasantry a few acres each and to skilled workmen of higher wages and reduced taxes, did not satisfy all. The strained relations continued to exist with former dukes and lords of the conquered territories of Europe. They, with their loyal adherents and combined armies, were successful in recovering their lost possessions from Napoleon in 1815. His disastrous campaign in Russia in 1814 and his defeat at Waterloo crushed his ambitions, destroyed his army and placed him in exile.

Upon the completion of the second treaty of Vienna Alsace remained French territory but all other boundaries in Europe were again changed which brought about political, social, economic, and religious changes in the lives of the people. Under this treaty all the German states were brought under a German Confederacy while the territories of lower Austria and the

Balkans were left under independent Bohemian Dukes as had existed before the revolution. The Church continued to suffer much under these petty rulers for the Hierarchy was, more or less, the handmaid and correlatives of the state. The dukes appointed and paid the salaries of the bishops of their choice, duties of whom were to teach people obedience to these princes, with no choice of freedom of action or enjoyment. The ruling class had determined to hold to the old order of the past with continued restriction, interfering with the Church by controlling the education of the clergy and that of the children.

Many landless peasantry, farmers of a few hectares, independent tradesmen and professional men became dissatisfied with these arduous restraints and migrated to upper Austria and into the newly formed German Confederacy of Bavaria, Baden, and Prussia. Alsace had a heavy German Catholic population along the Rhine which encouraged many migrants to cross over after entering Bavaria.

With such adverse conditions in the Balkans, families able to obtain a few gold sovereigns from clothing and hidden nooks, loaded their few household belongings on two-wheel carts and trundled off to the North and West. For Jacob Abraham and Maria, the only daughter of a middle-class family by name of Fecher, (pronounced F-a-ch-er in the German language), less effort was required than for others to leave the homeland. The Fecher ancestry had been fan makers in the 18th Century but the Napoleonic unrest had disrupted all trade in the Balkans and lower Austria, forcing this small handicraft shop to close.

According to the history of the fan-making industry the use of fans had become fashionable among the ladies of the Court before the 16th Century and had been gradually introduced among the middle-class. In the 17th and 18th Centuries the use of fans had spread all over Europe, Spain to France, and to lower and eastern Europe. Indeed, by the early part of the 18th Century it was evident that the use of fans was general among men and women of the middle-class. The handicrafting of the folding fan had become very sophisticated in this century since the fan was made up of a dozen or more blades of wood, ivory, or mother-of-pearl, an inch apart, and attached to a half-circle of silk, lace, woven material or paper. The chosen material was richly decorated with picturesque events, art objects, or other characteristics with gold, silver, or other colored paints. The fan when opened to a half-circle depicted its beauty and characters it represented. When folded it made a neat slender object, one inch wide and ten to twelve inches in length. The cost of fans in the 18th Century varied from a few pounds to fifty or more, depending upon the material and amount of handicraft involved.

Jacob was not a landowner or a peasant but a traveling tradesman moving his small stock of backpack goods; shawls, fans, perfumes, dress materials, and various household items - from village to village for weeks on end, scarcely seeing his Maria more than a few times a month. The girlhood of Maria must have been pleasantly tinted with a slight touch of aristocracy which was reflected later in the rearing of her family.

She must have been a lady of enduring gentleness and bravery, never complaining of Jacob's absence or his dealings. It was Jacob, who after a long journey in upper Austria upon encountering more difficulties in trade and travel, broached the subject of migrating. "Maria" he said: "Let us leave and travel North and West to Bavaria where my trade might be better. Both of us can speak and write the German language and also recognize various dialects." Together they planned the next journey to the North, she to accompany and help him with his trade. They bade her parents and relatives goodbye, and with a scanty store of personal possessions and his usual stock of goods they started for points unknown. Little were they aware of the fact that they were beginning the life story of ancestral history of more than 150 years.

In traveling about Belgrade Jugoslavia and in Hungary, I learned that the family name of Fecher is still in existence but written now as Faher. The two combination letters, "ch," was not needed in the many dialects that existed in the lower Balkans. In time the "c" had been dropped, retaining the "h" while in Austria, and in Germany the family name remained Fecher or Fächer, meaning fan.

After a week of travel by a simple mode of transportation and the hawking of his wares the two came to the city of Gratz, Austria. Another week or more by way of the Salzbad River they entered Salzburg. Coming nearer and nearer to Bavaris it was but a few more weeks they found good trade in and about Munich where they remained for many months.

On March 30, 1823, there came a great event in the lives of Jacob and Maria; a son was born in the area of Baden-Baden, Landgericht (country court) of Mildenburg, Kingdom of Bavaria. This was their first child and was given the name of John. Realizing that a family name should be permanently established for the son and for future children born to them, here was an opportunity to designate either the family name Adam, the father's, or Fecher, the mother's. Usage of the mother's family name had been in vogue among the nobility and occasionally by the middle-class in Middle Europe. It was Maria who made the suggestion to use Fecher as the surname by saying, "Let us name him John Adam Fecher and have all future children so named." Jacob agreed and the son was baptized as John Adam Fecher according to the baptismal records, thereby retaining the two names John Adam, as his two Christian names. No court action and no formality was needed.

Jacob and Maria had made a respectable choice of surname, thereby creating a desirable family atmosphere and environment that came in good stead in all their future business adventures and social dealings. The family name was known by all as Fecher in the Munich area and John Adam as the son of Jacob and Maria Fecher,

Jacob continued with his chosen trade in the Duchy of Baden, a small province between Bavaria on the East and the Rhine River on the West, the province of which was ruled by the King of Bavaria, King Ludwig I. Jacob called on merchants in

villages and in cities of Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and in cities as far north as Heidelberg. By changing his method of trades (no more backpacking), dealing directly with well established merchants in population areas, the new marketing methods caused him to improve his stock of goods that were now in demand by these merchants. In addition to a lively business of household necessities there were demands for luxurious articles of pewter, silver, porcelain, and semi-precious stones of agate. For centuries the deposit of agate had been known and marked about Idar-Oberstein, a half-days journey from Heidelberg. The trade in semi-precious stones had been created by local skilled craftsmen in the 18th and 19th Centuries, reaching a peak trade after 1800. It was not by chance that these stones found their way into hands of tradesmen, but the up-coming middle-class created a demand for them.

In spite of improved trade and the greater demand for certain articles, improved means of travel, and increased clientele, there were problems to be solved by Jacob and Maria. The establishment of the German Confederation of the political states of Bavaria, Baden, and Prussia, had not solved the existing political, economic, and religious difficulties within their borders. Little could be accomplished by the rulers of the three provinces without the consent of all three. The growing middle-class of professional men, merchants, and tradesmen were demanding less taxation while members of the guilds and factory workers needed higher wages. The greater increase in population and the migration of peasants to the cities for employment brought increased problems of housing, water supply, health and drainage. These difficulties had been partly solved in France and Alsace by Napoleon after 1800, but with his defeat at Waterloo, the French Monarchy had been reinstated under Louis XVIII who was merely a ruling figurehead. The common people now were represented by the one House of Legislature which guaranteed more rights, greater enjoyment, freedom, and less taxes for them.

The unsettled conditions in the German territory had affected Jacob and Maria, thus encouraging them to search for a more stable pattern of home life. Having had traveling experiences from the homeland and Maria, with an education of more than that of the average middle-class society, they were spurred to cross the Rhine and enter Alsace. Jacob had been advised to cross over by a number of his clients while traveling through Baden. They said, "Go over the Rhine into Alsace where you will find many shrines and churches, acquire a few hectares, live in a nearby village and carry on your usual trade."

It is to be remembered that Napoleon had annexed Alsace to France before 1800 and divided land-holdings among the peasants, thereby depriving Bishops and Dukes of their territories. The Protestant Revolution had little or no influence in Alsace for Shrines, familiar signs of intense Catholicity, dotted the land along the Rhine. One traveling in the area around Strassburg, will find active shrines in the villages of Marienheim, Rosheim, St. Odile, Benfelt, and Darnbach. Large churches are visible in nearby villages of Mutternholtz, Hilsenheim, and Witternheim. About fifty miles south of Strassburg is the

town of Selestat which had housed the castle and former home of a duke, but now accomodates the provincial government center of administration which collects taxes from the surrounding area.

It was in the village of Neuenkirche, known as the Shrine of Notre Dame, fifteen miles from Selestat and two miles from Witternheim, that Jacob and Maria decided to establish a permanent home. A few months before 1825 a second child, a daughter was born and baptized, Josephine Maria Fecher. Over a period of the next ten years five more children came into the family: Mary in 1829, Joseph Alexander in 1830, Eva Barbara in 1831, John Phillip in 1833 and Walburga in 1835.

Viewing perspectively the next 20 years many changes with respect to social, educational and language innovations had affected this family. Though not seriously and not suddenly, the parents realized that the constant influence of French environment (their ethnic background being German) could create certain disadvantages for the growing family. The children had attended school in the larger village of Witternheim taught by German sisters but later replaced by French teachers. The German bishops and priests, providing religious services at the shrines and churches, were gradually replaced by the French hierarchy. It is remarkable that with all the influence of the French, John Adam, brothers and sisters were able to and continued to write and speak the German language correctly and fluently. The reproduced copy of John Adam's diary of 1860 is an example of his German script, style and knowledge of the language.

I, in my youth, had many visits after 1900 with grandfather and his sisters, and their growing families, was astonished at their skillful usage of the German language. My grandparents and his sisters would converse in the German language only and had difficulty in speaking English. In reality, the only means of communication between these ancestral families was by conversation and letters in German. From the energetic display of family unity and conduct of this ancestral family, one must infer that the parents, Jacob and Maria, or at least she, had had a desirable social association in her girlhood, and had been educated beyond the mark provided by the common school of the middle-class in her native land of Croatia.

In a few years John Adam grew to be an active, useful, and self-reliant young man, carrying many responsibilities and helping the mother with the growing family. Jacob, the father, continued his activity as a successful tradesman, and in time purchased a few hectares in the area and a house in the village of Neuenkirche. John Adam loved to work, and displayed a life long interest in cultivating and harvesting the few hectares of grain, located a half-mile from the village. Other families of the village, perhaps a dozen, owned some cultivated land nearby, a house and garden plot, a cow, a few pigs and chickens, thus providing their daily essentials. An established procedure at that time and still in existence, is the cooperative efforts of the neighbors in the cradling, binding, and shocking of the ripened sheaves of wheat and barley. John Adam was able to cut a swath with the cradle-scythe as bold as anyone while his two

sisters knew the exact kind and amount of straw to bind the loose cut grain into sheaves. Of course, the sisters followed well behind him, out of harm of the swinging scythe. They, stooping and with their breasts and arms, would catch the swath of grain where he had cast it. Now tucking the straw tightly together with a wisp of rye straw, the binding rye-straw rope was brought around and twisted as a knee pressure was applied; and lo, a goodly, tightly bound sheaf was ready to set up in a shock.

It was the brother who teased his sisters at times, saying, "Some day we will go to America where good land is plentiful and grow many acres of wheat which can be cut with a contraption, called a mowing machine. You will never be able to keep pace with me in tying the cut grain." John Adam had heard about the McCormick reaper with the revolving paddle-wheel which forced the standing straw into a moving sickle. History recounts that hundreds of acres of wheat, barley, and rye were being cut by this reaper in Pennsylvania and Virginia by 1845.

A few years later the dream of John Adam materialized for the family migrated to America, but the use of the non-mechanical, man-powered cradle scythe continued many years for him, as many acres of the wild forest land had to be tamed for cultivation in Ohio.

By coincidence many drawing forces were pulling Europeans to the shores of the New World. Due to persistent rumors of greater opportunities in land ownership, riches, and freedom of action in America, migration increased a hundredfold in the 19th Century. One cannot exclude the political, and social unrest in Europe and the desire of religious freedom, both Catholics and Reformers, as important motives for this huge migration.

It was in the year 1839 that Father Francis de Sales Brunner established a branch of missionaries, (The Society of the Precious Blood), in Loewenberg, Switzerland, with a few priests and lay brothers who had been sheltered in the old castle belonging to his mother, Anna Marie Brunner. She had formed a nucleus of women religious who kept Eucharistic vigilance, day and night, in the chapel. This group, in reality, was the origin of the Congregation of the Precious Blood Sisters. Naturally, Father Brunner, her son, was the spiritual leader and at her death in 1836, she appointed Sister Clara Meisen Superior, approved earlier by Father Brunner. The Bishop of Strassburg noted the neglect of certain shrines in Alsace due to the absence of German speaking priests, invited Father Brunner to send a few of his members to care for the Shrine of St. Odile in 1841. By 1843 reformers had gained control of certain cantons and compelled the Society to leave Switzerland. Father Brunner, realizing the great need for more of his German speaking missionaries in the villages along the Rhine, petitioned the Bishop to establish a new home for the Society at the Shrine, Shrine of Drei Aehren, Alsace, a few miles from Selestat. This Shrine, too, had been neglected, though, much more was desired by this small band of priests, it was a home. By their efforts the buildings were restored to livable quarters and the

location became an ideal one, at least temporarily, for the Precious Blood missionaries who provided the religious services and mission exercises for the neglected German Catholics in a wide area around Selestat. Two sisters administered to the temporal needs of the few priests. In the interim Father Brunner had been in correspondence with Bishop Purcell in Cincinnati for he contemplated a more permanent home in the New World for the development and expansion of his society of missionaries. Eventually, it was his ambition to have sisters aid the priests in this religious work. His contact with the Bishop of Cincinnati had been meager but fruitful. Though Bishop Purcell had little knowledge of the potentials of this little group of missionaries, he did invite Father Brunner to send a few German priests to meet the needs of the German Catholic immigrants in his diocese. Within a year there was an urgent appeal by the bishop for more priests to administer to the many German settlers in the Northwest-Central part of Ohio.

With such encouraging news Father Brunner with seven priests and seven lay brothers, (priestly candidates), started for the New World in October 1843, and landed at the Port of New Orleans. Proceeding by boat up the Mississippi, they arrived in Cincinnati on the last day of the year and were greeted by the Bishop who lodged them and supplied much information and advice concerning conditions of the Church in the Northern area. He suggested they occupy the old Redemptorists Mission of St. Alphonse, (now abandoned), but near a village, the present town of Norwalk. This early mission place adjacent to a settlement would be a more desirable place to build a permanent home.

Going up the Ohio River on January 2nd, they passed small flourishing towns of Portsmouth, Steubenville, and embarked at Wellsville. Their trek westward through heavy forests was made by large farm wagons over nearly impassable roads toward Canton and arrived in the small village of Massillon on January 12th. Another week brought them to St. Alphonse. The first two weeks were devoted to the surroundings in creating a bit of comfort, since there were no furnishings, but the young candidates, having skills in woodworking, with an abundance of hard woods, fashioned within a week rough but sturdy chairs, tables, and bedsteads. Father Brunner with his assistant began to organize the territory for mission work. In July of 1844, the sisters from Switzerland arrived after a long trek and were housed in a log house that had been abandoned a few years earlier.

Covering the area to the West, two of the mission priests were informed of two old mission settlements at Tiffin and Thompson, about 20 miles West of St. Alphonse. It appeared a priest had been assigned by the Bishop to cover this area some years earlier who had also visited missions of other German Catholic centers about the sparsely area in Auglaize, Shelby and Mercer Counties. No permanent priest had been assigned to conduct religious services except at Minster, on the canal. According to diocesan records a log church had been built in 1834 with a Father Bartels, now, as permanent pastor administering to over 400 families, aggregating 2000 adults, including

children who were taught in the village school.

Due to the scarcity of priests and the failing health of Father Bartels, Father Brunner was advised by Bishop Purcell to consider establishing a permanent place for the Congregation of priests and sisters of the Precious Blood in this concentrated area of German Catholic settlers. This was accomplished a few years after Father Navarron who had religious services for the French settlers at Versailles, insistently requested for German priests to come into the area North and West of Minster.

With the many details confronting Father Brunner in administering the affairs of a religious congregation, he, after the death of his mother had delegated all financial responsibilities to the Mother Superior of Sisters who was to provide the temporal needs of both, priests and sisters. It is to be noted that for many years finances were in the hands of the Mother Superior, who, with the advice of Father Brunner and succeeding provincials, directed, supervised, and controlled all expenditures relative to the needs of the combined society of priests and sisters in America. With the cooperation of the two, Mother Superior and Father Brunner, a major program of expansion in the building of convents, a dozen or more, throughout Mercer County came into being from 1850 to 1860.

It had been the desire of Father Brunner as well as his mother to carry on the mission work through the establishment of homes (missions), which would provide livable quarters for priests and sisters in centers where immigrants had settled. Today, formerly mission centers, parishes from two to five miles apart, with beautiful churches and high bell towers can be viewed in all directions in this county.

Groups of sisters were constantly migrating to America to assist the priests and by 1845, upon the sale of Mother Brunner's Castle, all had been housed in the New World. Ten or more sisters under a Minor Superior were assigned to each convent to care for the chapel, outbuildings, land, and the schooling of children and to provide the temporal needs of two or more priests assigned to the mission area who lived in a small log house in the vicinity of the chapel.

However, with the rapid population growth of both, priests and sisters, financial conflicts arose which encouraged both to form independent organizations of self-government. Through the combined efforts of Mother Kunigunda, her assistant and Mother Ludovica and Father Henry Drees, Provincial of the Fathers, a separation, both in government and in property had been accomplished in September 1889.

At this time it is necessary to direct our attention to the huge wave of immigrants, both, French and German who came to American in the middle of the 19th Century. An early history, news items in the Cincinnati Telegraph provided much information on German and French families from Alsace who migrated to Darke County (Versailles area), as early as 1833 by names of Bernard, Grilliot, Marchal and others. They were fortunate to have their own French priest, Father Navarron

appointed by Bishop Purcell to provide religious services in the three French villages of Frenchtown, Versailles and Ft. Loramie (a mixed French and German settlement). The parish of St. Michael at Ft. Loramie, founded in 1838, was administered by Father William Bigota after 1874. Communicating with 2nd, and 3rd generations he wrote a detailed history of the settling and development of this community.

However, the greatest concentration of immigrants materialized in Mercer and Auglaize counties after 1850, which in turn demanded more and more mission centers and personnel in providing religious services to the settlers and the education of their children. Father Brunner and influential sisters made enumerable journeys to Germany and nearby provinces, encouraging young men and women to enter the community as potential candidates, financing all expenses. A prime example of Old World recruitment was in 1847, when its membership was expanded by 40 young women and 8 young men as a group, financed by the Society to consider a religious career. This is not to say that the sons and daughters of the settlers had not swelled its ranks substantially. In my research study of the history of the origin, growth, and dedication of religious communities, it was found that the early migrant families with large families had a great interest in the welfare and development of the Society by providing material aid and encouraged their children to this life of dedication. The roster of membership of both communities presents persons with familiar names of original settlers. These of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd generations were and are now leaders in the two congregations.

Throughout the years from 1843 to 1850, Father Brunner was in constant touch with his four members who had remained at the old home in Drei Aehren, Alsace. These four continued to hold religious services and missions in the German villages. With little speculation one can arrive at the conclusion that the family of Jacob Abraham had learned of and had visited the Precious Blood priests at the Shrine. Without doubt, John Adam and his sisters attended the missions in and about Selestat and learned much about the New World and the German and French settlements in Mercer and Darke Counties. The genuineness of this assertion is well established in the memoirs of Father Brunner, housed at St. Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio. Here we find many letters from him to his members in Alsace and they in turn informed him of the many families who were migrating to Mercer County. We quote from one, "Dear Father Brunner, Many of our young people, yes, whole families of young men and women, are leaving without parents, for your country, who need your direction and help, all are good practicing Catholics." The opening line of a long letter of Father Brunner to his comrades was, "There are great opportunities here for our Society and for all Catholics who wish to come to America for there is much available land and very cheap. A settler can easily purchase enough acreage to maintain two cows or more and a horse or two for cultivation. Anyone can travel from Havre, Bremen, or Amsterdam on a freighter for \$20 by providing his own food on the boat."

Many Europeans in Alsace, Bavaria, and Prussia scraped

together their meager resources, traveled by freighter to America in the last half of the 19th Century and were prepared to live in the hold of the ship with little food. This was indeed trying for them for their beds were narrow bunks, sometimes two and three tiers high, one above the other, and attached to the inner wall of the boat, while wooden benches provided seats, attached on the outer wall. Dreams of better living in the New World gave them courage to go on.

Migrants, in learning from letters and campaign propaganda about the riches in America, were subject to other means of information that were available in the form of travel books, and articles in newspapers in Rhineland and Bavaria. People were beseeched by European agents in the homeland to take advantage of land offices in New York and Baltimore who would provide aid in acquiring new homes. For over a half-century these land offices had been established, inducing and advising immigrants to settle in Ohio when landing, where they could buy farm land of huge forests at \$1.00 per acre or purchase a small house in villages along the canal for less than \$100. Generally, a settler would buy or make a down payment with a land office affiliated with one in Cincinnati that would provide ownership papers to the family upon arrival. These early land purchases made in New York or Baltimore opened up ways of speculation, and created sharpers who filched the unaware, occasionally.

News of migrant families going to America were continuously coming to the attention of the Fecher family. This created a constant piece of conversation in late 1847 and winter and spring of 1848, which ultimately materialized in their going to the New World.

John Adam, Josephine, and Mary over 20 years of age, Eva Barbara 17, and Joseph Alex 18, were mature persons and had the ability to earn a living anywhere and under all situations. The exact motivation for departure and the consent of the parents is clouded by incomplete facts, but there should be no doubting of the fact that the courage, resourcefulness and ages of the mature children, eventually, gained the consent of the parents before the end of spring. There were, however, many debatable questions and contingencies to be considered and to be met. Should the entire family migrate? If the children only, who should remain with the parents who were now of middle age with less ambition and strength to continue as in the past? It was first suggested that the young son, John Phillip, 15 years of age, and the daughter, Walburga, remain with the parents. In the end it was decided that John should have the same opportunity as the others, for he and his older brother, Joseph, were intimate pals and could be of assistance to each other in the New World. With this momentous decision made, the parents with Walburga resolved to leave the home and small farm at Neuenkirche and return to Munich.

In March the two properties, including household articles, were sold to neighbors and personal effects, clothing, and keepsakes were their only valuables upon leave-taking. The family was in a position now to carry out the venture since the

Ich Joseph Adam Fecher bin geboren am
 16ten März 1823 in Neuenkirchen Landgericht
 Wildenberg Königreich Bayern Kreisfluß.
 Am 12ten April 1848 reiste ich von Hause ab
 nach Amerika und am 28ten Mai kam ich in
 New York an. Dann machte ich die
 Reise weiter bis nach Lebanon Co.
 Penn. Da blieb ich zwei Jahre, dann
 machte ich mich auf und kam nach Ohio
 dem guten County Mercer. Am 6ten Juni
 1854 vermählte ich mich mit Elizabeth
 Stadler und diese ist geboren am 30
 März 1809. Sie machten ihre Heimath
 zu Wendelin, Recovery Tp. Mercer Co.,
 Ohio. Der liebe Gott hat ihre Arbeit
 reichlich gelehret und ihnen eine Fam-
 lie von 6 Knaben und 5 Mädchen be-
 schert. Vier Kinder sind ihm bereits in
 der Ewigkeit vorangegangen.

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Page from Grandfather's Diary

young people were to go to America and the parents and Walburga to Munich. Munich in the meantime had increased in population, finance and trade, industry and transportation which elevated it to one of the important cities in Middle-Europe.

It was the first day of April 1848, that the family took leave on a small river craft up the Rhine River. The parents and Walburga disembarked near Karlsruhe and began tracing the steps taken 25 years earlier. With a final farewell to the children, never to see them again, they went ashore while the group of young people remained on the boat to Amsterdam. Due to the limited amount of money (gold), for this venture of parents and children, John Adam insisted that the parents keep the major portion of it and the children take a sufficient amount for passage, food, and lodging in Amsterdam and in New York. The parents, with mixed emotions of sadness, joy and hope, gave each of the children \$10 in gold. It was suggested that it be divided among three, concealed in their clothing for safe-keeping until they reached New York.

Now, at last, was the beginning of the fulfillment of their American dream. According to the meager diary of John Adam, it stated that they embarked at Amsterdam on April 12th, and arrived in New York harbor on May 28th, 1848 experiencing no striking difficulties on the voyage. They did not contract for land in Ohio upon landing, perhaps due to the scarcity of money, but journeyed by a slow train (the newly constructed Baltimore and Ohio Railroad), to Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. The group of six, applying themselves diligently to available farm work in the area near Harrisburg, found it possible to move on to Baltimore in two years.

They found little difficulty in crossing the Appalachian Mountains over the B. & O. Railroad to their desired destination, (Cincinnati, Ohio), arriving there in April 1850. The ambition of the group was to reach Mercer County, the area described in Father Brunner's letters, and to purchase farm land for their future home and security.

However, this was not the ambition of Joseph Alex, now 20 years old, and his brother John, 17. The country was not for them and they remained in Baltimore, where they found employment with the City Passenger Green Line cars of which were drawn by horses from street to street, a likely job for Joseph who became a driver of the horses for more than thirty years, and became the occupation of his son upon his retirement. Since no communication or contact by the members of the family had been maintained with the two brothers, Phillip Fecher, great grandson of Joseph, living in the Baltimore area initiated an inquiry of the Fecher Ancestry in Ohio upon reading a published article in the Catholic Family Digest, written by Julie Marie Fecher, my daughter, in 1949.

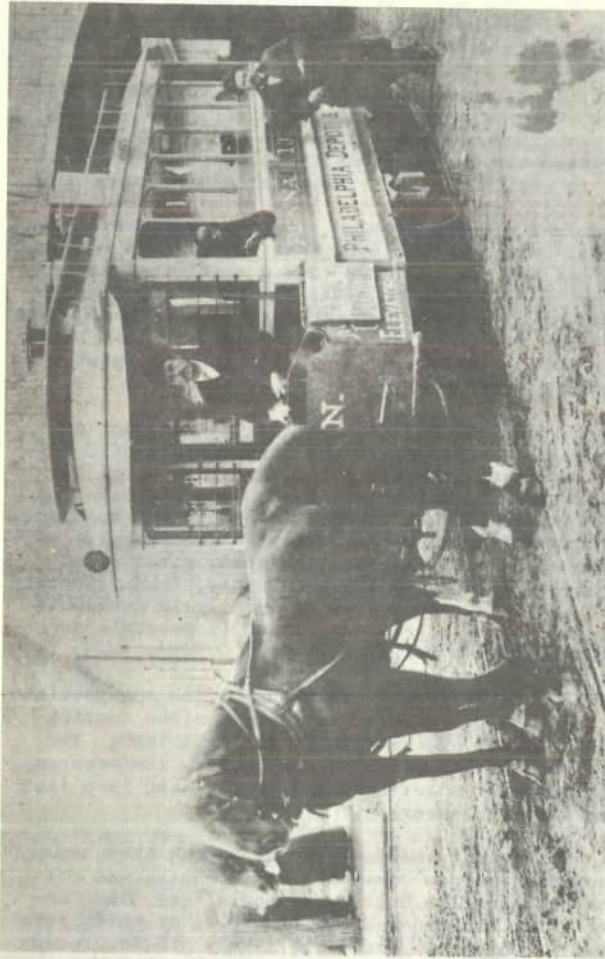
THE NEW HOME

Upon arriving in Cincinnati, John Adam eagerly inquired about a Land Office that could give him information on land in



Mr. Fecher

My father, John Phillip Fecher, drove one of those old cars for many years. That's my father in the picture above, which was taken about 1884.



A horse car driven by John Phillip Fecher leaving the barn of Boy His and Toone streets in Canton, about 1884. In the article below Mr. Fecher's son recalls that period in Baltimore transportation.

I Remember . . .

The Horse Car Era in Baltimore

northern Ohio. He was informed that large tracts of land had been granted to soldiers and their heirs in payment of military services while other tracts had been sold to land contractors early in 1800. If he wished to buy land in Mercer County it could be obtained from private owners only in the area. Land-owners, mainly politicians and friends of influence, had purchased vast stretches of forest land from the Land Office in Cincinnati, fifty or more years earlier, and in the meantime, sold smaller tracts to settlers, known as Yankees, from Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia who were eager to explore new frontiers beyond the mountains.

Original Land Grant in Ohio

James Madison, President of the United States of America.
To All To Whom These Presents Shall Come Greeting,
Know Ye, That "John Doe" having deposited in the Treasury a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Cincinnati, whereby it appears that full payment has been made for Section, Township, Range of the land lying between the Old Indian Boundary Line and Lake Erie of the Virginia Reservation, sold under the direction of the Register of the Land Office at Cincinnati by virtue of the right of preemption granted by law to certain persons who have contracted with John Doe or his associates, THERE IF GRANTED, by the United States, in pursuance of the Act of Congress in that case provided, unto the said (name of Purchaser)., Section of land above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said section of land with all appurtenances, unto the said Purchaser, his heirs and assigns forever.
SEAL In TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have caused these letters
OF to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General
OHIO Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my Hand at the City of Washington, the 20th day of July in the Year of Our Lord, 1812, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the 34th.

BY THE PRESIDENT: James Madison
(signed)

Edward Tiffin, Conscript of General Land Office
(signed)

After learning about the possibilities of purchasing land in Mercer County, John Adam inquired with respect to the whereabouts of and method of travel to the county seat of Celina. In reading his diary in the original script we find these words, "My greatest desire was to come to good old Mercer County." The area around Celina, the county seat, was accessible by a canal boat up the Ohio Lake Erie Canal. This waterway had been built from Cincinnati to Lake Erie in 1841, with Minster as a canal port, 20 miles East of Celina. The canal had been the only means of transportation into northern Ohio except by horseback through dense forests or by canoe up the Great Miami River to Dayton only. It connected Cincinnati with small towns and villages of Germantown, Middletown, Dayton, Piqua,

Ft. Loramie, (old Indian village and later a U.S. Fort), Minster, New Bremen, Defiance and on to Toledo. This one and only important means of transportation and communication allowed travel as well as the shipment of grain, wool, meat, and simple farm tools, animals, etc., from the farms to the country towns and villages along the route.

Adam and his sisters took passage on a flat-boat to northern Ohio by way of the Ohio Erie Canal one early April morning. The horse-drawn flat-boat glided smoothly away, loaded with pleasure-seekers, tradesmen, merchants from the upper lake area, produce buyers and a few immigrants. After passing through the small villages of Hamilton and Middletown the first day, it arrived in Dayton, a small city of about 15,000 on the second. In the last hour of semi-darkness, the emerging night life along the canal had its enchantment. Cool breezes swept over the boat but subsided as the boat entered the deep forest covering each bank. As the stars came out, myriads of fireflies on either side imitated their sparkle. The boat carried a brilliant lantern in the bow which dispersed a circle of yellow light on the watery track ahead.

In Dayton much cargo was unloaded and loaded to and from water-level warehouses, located between Second and Fifth streets on both banks of the canal. Many tradesmen and drummers in the evening and early morning hours before departure called on local customers who were available for trade. Small hotels; the Beckle, Phillips and rooming houses provided night lodging for many passengers, while Adam and his sisters with a few other passengers, who were compelled to practice frugality, remained on the boat for the night. The next morning the boat proceeded slowly North, occasionally, elevated to higher land by 20 or more locks. It was apparent to Adam that this area was excellent farm land, now covered with heavy forest and extended along both sides of the lily-infested canal. Here and there, a clearing for an isolated village, a farm, or just a house. Eventually, it passed through the village of Piqua (an Indian village), and the French settlement of Fort Loramie. By early evening the prosperous village of Minster, the destination of the four, came into view. The day's experience of Adam, seeing the vastness and riches of nature, aroused in him a consciousness of this country's wealth as well as his new relation to it. This emotion became progressively intense, completely overwhelming him as he approached the little village.

For them, establishing a prosperous farm homestead in the virgin forest of Mercer County, perhaps a day's journey from this busy little canal port, developed into more than a vision. Thus ended the long journey and mental anguish on reaching this goal while prayer and hope supported them, always confident that Providence would direct them properly.

Minster and its twin village of New Bremen, two miles to the North, had also been settled by Germans. The pioneers of New Bremen of staunch Lutheran stock had migrated from Northern Germany, while those of Minster were from middle and lower Germany where the religion remained Catholic. In spite of the two denominational religious differences, social and trade

relations of these two settlements had been most amiable and have continued so throughout the years.

Exceptional hard woods of ash, hickory, and oak in this area fostered domestic manufacturing of stirrups, barrel staves, wheels and wooden handles in both villages in the 19th Century. With the introduction of sheep in western Ohio, New Bremen became an important center in the processing of wool from the raw state to the spinning and manufacturing of cloth and blankets. This industry continued far into the 20th Century and eventually expanded to St. Marys. Many of the present generation have had the privilege of sleeping under the well-known St. Mary's blankets. Incidentally, every bed in our farm home has a woolen-bat coverlet while all the floors are covered with woolen rug-carpets, products of processed fleece from our own sheep and loomed at New Bremen in 1940.

Minster appeared to be a great trade center in the processing of farm products of meat and grain. Old prints, pencil sketches, and paintings of this era depict grain elevators, meat and hide processing plants. Centered near the landing wharf on both sides of the canal were shops of wagonmakers, blacksmiths and other handicrafts, catering to the settlers, thus providing articles necessary for simple colonial living. Transportation in and about these canal Villages was by cart, high-wheel farm wagons, or on horseback.

The next morning, approaching the wharf, John Adam noted that a few farmers of the surrounding and partly cleared bush country were urging their sturdy teams of farm horses to move a little faster with the high-wheeled, narrow-gauged wagons toward the grain elevator. Adjacent to and combined with it was a water-driven powered flour mill which could be seen above the treetops. Both were located on the bank of the canal. He, ambling, toward them and shading his eyes from the morning sun, stared in open-mouth disbelief at the frantic activity around and about this central point of trade. It is to be remembered that all business with the surrounding country was focused in buildings and shops about the canal dock. Grizzled bearded farmers in coarse homespun woolens were unloading loosely-woven grain sacks of wheat and rye at the elevator and mill. Others were rolling miniature barrels of molasses and honey and large hogs-heads of salt pork onto the wharf. He became aware of shipments of small live pigs, calves, and chickens in weather beaten crates to go to dealers in towns and villages up and down the canal. Within an hour droves of cattle and hogs, from the surrounding country, herded by a number of men, boys, and dogs were corralled into a fence enclosure adjacent to the slaughterhouse. These animals had been purchased in the area by a cattle and hog buyer earlier in the week and by cooperative efforts of sellers and the buyer the animals were moved as a unit to the stockyard for slaughter. The open, wooded, and unfenced country must have created many problems for those participating in this roundup. Within a day or two the processed products of these animals with other farm products would find their way by canal boat to the markets of the growing towns along the waterway.

Occasionally, a couple, man and wife, would pass by in a dog-cart or buckboard, carting boxes of drawn and dressed carcasses of pork, lamb, or chickens. They were eager to barter with a local merchant for staples, boots, or shoes. Perhaps, more frugal than others, this couple anticipated an additional monetary return of profit due to the extra effort expended.

At the landing, not one but two canal boats were waiting to be loaded. Sacks of newly ground flour, dressed hams, sides of beef, and a variety of wooden fork, hoe, and plow handles were moved into the hold of the boat. Adam visualized the great moment of good living for farmers had arrived in this part of Ohio and hopeful, he anticipated to share in its bounty.

It was on this very morning when Adam was imagining and dreaming of a better life that he met and learned to know a young man, Maxmillian Seitz, standing near the mill. Max was a very approachable young man of 23 years, living with his parents and family near Maria Stein, six miles west of Minster. His parents with other German families had migrated from Germany 10 years before into this dense forest. Max could well remember constructing a log house and a three-sided shed for a few animals in the midst of a small cleared, stump-infested plot of ground.

At this point in time it might be well to review current ideas of early colonial living which had been based on historical colonial sites in the East. Immediately one would be appraised of the fact that the lives of these early settlers was very different and filled with many hardships. What the average reader had seen was merely the cream of colonial life, depicting folks of wealth with starched linen and tricornered hats, chippendale furniture, four-poster beds, quill pens, etc. Our forefathers, the early settlers, which included Max, Adam, and neighbors were trying to wrest a living from the land with crude, back-breaking agricultural methods and tools, relying heavily on wild foods for their tables. In spite of the rich black soil, without crop fertilization and rotation, and peppered with stumps it was a Herculean effort to provide sufficient essentials in the first years of frontier life. Most ground-breaking was done by clumsy, wooden, iron-tipped plows pulled by horses, and the farmer by bending over a hoe and rake from sun-up to sun-down prepared an inadequate seedbed which was sown with hand-cast seed of wheat, rye, or barley a few weeks later. What were the results at the end of the season? Grain, lacking in amount and quality, would be harvested, cut by hand with a sickle or scythe and threshed with flails on a cloth or wooden floor.

In spite of these many hardships, Max's family had overcome some of these difficulties for within a period of ten years they had cleared plots for fruit trees and vegetables, and some tillable acreage for wheat, barley, and rye. The family had domesticated wild bees, purchased a plough, a high-wheel farm wagon, two horses, some cattle and a flock of sheep and chickens.

Max came to Minster for the grinding of grain into flour, and while waiting his turn on this early morning he spied this

young man of similar age who appeared to be a stranger in the village. With the usual home-spun brand of fraternization and a reflective smile he brought into play a conversation that might be of interest to this new acquaintance: "I am Max, living with my parents and family on some cleared land, West, about halfway to Celina." Adam upon hearing the name Celina, the county seat of Land Records, was aroused with curiosity and interest, for here he thought is someone who can help us. Max, with more time to pass, and Adam, greatly concerned about land and wanting to learn more of other German settlers, began a lively conversation. Max related the experiences of the Seitz family of the past ten years as well as the abundance of land available at less than \$10 per acre. He did not neglect to tell him how the building of the canal had improved their everyday routine of making a comfortable living. He said it had opened a brisk exchange of trade between the pioneers and the families of the villages and towns along the canal. Adam told of his experiences in Alsace and their recent journey to the New World. He said, "My one ambition is to have a few acres in Mercer County for we had been informed by German priests in Alsace that their Society had established a new home in this territory." "My three sisters," he continued, "came with me and are now visiting the church." The conversation continued on many topics related to the life in the wilderness, thus creating a friendly, sociable, and congenial relationship.

Adam desired to have Max meet his sisters, for additional conversations would give them the opportunity of gaining more information about this vast forest country and at the same time find a way to Celina. Fortunately, he spied his sisters coming from the church, which was located a short distance beyond the mill, and calling and waving to them he and Max met them midway. After a very simple and informal greeting, Max said, "Your brother told me about your parents in Europe and how all of you wish to find a home among German Catholic families. My home is about half-way to Celina." Stopping, with a bit of embarrassment he continued: "My father and mother would be delighted to have the four of you stay at our home for a day or two, and in the meantime your brother and I could learn of land for sale from neighbors, priests and sisters who live nearby. We could make a trip to Celina to the Recorder's Office in a day or two." The sisters appeared puzzled at first, but after hearing Adam's version of how their dreams might come true, they agreed to pass the evening at Max's home.

Now with the full consent of the sisters, Adam and Max piled and tied their belongings onto the rough wagon bed while all found slightly better than uncomfortable seats on the sacks of milled grain. They slowly proceeded through the dense forest of stumps and bogs, gazing intently at the path of thin, tired, wagon-wheel ruts that scarred deeply in the black muck. After an hour of a jolting wagon ride, passing a few clearings, harboring simple log houses and animal shelters of families by name of Miller, Mescher, Bruegmann, and others, they came to the open clearing of the Seitz's home. Max's parents, two brothers and three sisters were excited to have German speaking visitors from their homeland.

The one and one-half story log house with an overhanging porch at the one entrance, a berry vine covering its sides, shaded with large over-hanging trees, a garden plot to the left with a few stumps, created a background of this comfortable home. It was truly a landmark in this sparsely settled area. Off to the right, less than 100 steps was the stable and corral, while in the deep beyond, the partly cleared acreage showed that some impression had been made upon this wild land. In reality, this occasion was the greatest and most welcome sight for the four since leaving their home many weeks ago.

The entire family reflected the personality of Max. The father, very friendly, was full of life with a twinkle in his eye. The mother, small, wrinkled with snow-white hair and dancing blue eyes, had a soft and quiet facial expression. Adam and his sisters felt completely at ease. They truly liked people of this attitude who showed a friendliness in all their dealings. After a very unabashed, simple meeting with most welcome gestures by the family to share their hospitality, all entered this humble home which reflected the cleanliness and tidiness of nature itself.

The centered door brought them to the lower floor which provided a cheerful combination of both living and dining room. The walls of logs, naturally in earth-color of brown, mirrored the natural of walnut. A huge stone fireplace dominated the left wall, and adjacent to it in the far corner was a rough hewn table. At the right wall appeared the attic-ascending ladder. Between the two was a deep homemade slat lounge, resting on its four short legs, nearly hidden by the skin of a black bear. The ladderback split hickory rocker to the left of the fireplace provided a warm cozy respite for the mother. Not to forget, however, that a number of awkward, ill-proportioned split-bottom chairs and three-legged stools completed the simple furnishings. The whole thing was done in early clutter but very homey and comfortable. It reminded one of an in-door outdoor effect. The walls were lined with skins of fox, mink, and muskrat, while the rough board floor was amply covered with coarse furs of marmot, skins of deer, and one of bear.

A note of greater affection developed in time by all, including Max's younger brothers and sisters who initially appeared shy and ill at ease. The younger children, open-mouthed and round-eyed, were awed to an unusual quiet as they listened to the sailing experiences of the visitors. Really, all busied themselves with more than idle talk by relating their activities, thereby learning more of each others' lives that afternoon and evening.

The short afternoon was spent about the house, sheds, and nearby garden and orchard. The evening meal of home grown vegetables, cured ham, johnny-cake with honey, and canned blackberries, was the first wholesome meal for the four visitors for many months and naturally was the subject of many thankful expressions. Before the father and mother had completed the family's experience of frontier life, yes, one might say that within a twinkle of an eye, the shadows had deepened into twilight and the sun had hidden itself back of tall trees. The

hush of light had descended from the clear sky. All about them the dark line of the forest rose against an orange-covered sky. The first faint gleam of a few stars broke out in the darkening heaven in the depth of which the brightest stars began to appear as points of silvery darts, and twinkling diamonds. The air had the balm of early summer and the ground was dry and warm.

That evening the father continued to relate the problems of the early settlers in that part of Ohio. Since there were no waterways or navigable rivers, settlers had difficulty in making a living because of the lack of transportation. The cost of transporting farm products overland as well as buying the simple farm tools absorbed all the profits in buying and selling.

"It had been different the past few years," he said. "Wheat which had been selling for 20¢ a bushel was now over \$1.00. Salt pork at \$1.24 a barrel a few years ago is now selling from \$7 to \$8 in Dayton and Cincinnati. With the increase in value for food products and other essentials for people in villages and towns, and the need for farm tools and country staples, many allied businesses mushroomed along the Miami-Erie canal. This new waterway had connected Central Ohio with Lake Erie and Cincinnati, and initiated an era of growth and prosperity, thus better living for all who were near the canal and those within a radius of 20 miles." Simultaneously, more canal systems, more extensive in character had been and were being built in all parts of New York State, connecting Buffalo with Albany which increased Lake Erie traffic and brought prosperity to Western Ohio. Products of the farm were finding their way not only into Cleveland, Buffalo, and eastern cities of Albany and New York, but were being shipped into the trading centers of Europe.

After the father told about the great future in store for these new friends, Max related what he had heard of the hardships in the building of the canal. He was aware that his schooling had been limited to a few months in the winter, but that he would always remember what his teacher had related about the advantage of the canal, who said, "The building of the canal will be remembered as one of the great moments in Ohio history." He continued the canal story far into the evening. Occasionally, the father or mother would add their versions as related by the settlers.

It appears that the first spadeful of earth was dug about 1830 at Middletown, the midpoint between Cincinnati and Dayton. The digging was to proceed toward both ends at the same time. It was some years later after the stretch of ditch was completed and in use that the canal was continued north to New Bremen in 1838, and on to Lake Erie by 1845. The work of digging the canal was a gigantic and back-breaking task for men and beasts, (there was no heavy construction machinery). All the work had to be done by men working with long-handled shovels, and horses and mules who pulled the loose dirt with large wooden scoops, called slipscrapers. The diggers were mostly farmers who lived along the proposed canal route and

German and Irish young men who had immigrated to Ohio upon hearing of the need for workers on the canal. The canal usually followed a ditch, swamp, or low-lying area, the dampness from which caused many men to become ill with fever and cholera in summer. The men worked in teams of 20 or 30 and with the aid of scoops would continue to dig until a solid bottom of earth would be reached. All loose dirt, mud, and frozen ground would be piled on either side of the canal to form its banks. Diverting the water in the spring and summer, and the moving of the frozen ground in the winter, slowed the building of the canal to many years. The canal channel was usually four feet deep, about 40 feet wide at the top to 25 or more feet at the bottom. On the side of the canal, a 10 foot wide bank served as a "Towpath," for the mules or horses that pulled the boat up and down the waterway. Real problems confronted the construction of the canal over hills and valleys where locks had to be constructed to raise or lower the water level in the canal. A lock is usually 90 feet long and at least 15 feet deep according to the height of the hill to be crossed. At each end of a lock is a wooden gate to be closed or opened to fill or empty the lock. "Don't they have difficulty in keeping sufficient water to do this in a dry summer when water is scarce?" chimed in one of the sisters. The father then told about the large swamp east of Celina which had been dammed and the smaller one not far from Minster, thereby creating large storage lakes to feed water into the canal when needed. The one at Celina had been a huge swamp of large trees, covering over 10,000 acres, ten miles long and five miles wide, extending from Celina to the banks of the canal at St. Mary's. The large trees had been used to build the banks and dams surrounding the swamp to contain the water during the rainy season.

The father whose knowledge of money was more extensive, continued with information on the financing and building of the canal. The going-wage of a man for a full day's work on the canal was 30¢ per day with lodging and meals. Many settlers, who wished to remain and establish homes in the area, were more interested in acquiring farm land and agreed to take farm acreage for their work. In examining the ethnic origin of many families in Mercer and Darke Counties one finds farms of French and Irish owners, interspersed with those of the Germans. Settlers came by the thousands into the adjacent area of the canal, settling in the villages of Troy, Piqua, Middletown, and at the same time increasing the population of Dayton and Cincinnati. All areas experienced great growth in population and wealth, including a greater demand for the forest covered farm land. Land values went from a dollar an acre to \$10 for miles, East and West of the canal. Homes and business sites in the villages and towns were in great demand. These glowing accounts, describing the past and the possibilities of the future, created dreams of prosperous homesteads in the minds of John Adam and his sisters. The dreams actually materialized far beyond their expectations. Max exclaimed excitedly, "We will travel over the built-up tree and dirt road on the south side of the Celina Reservoir on our journey to Celina."

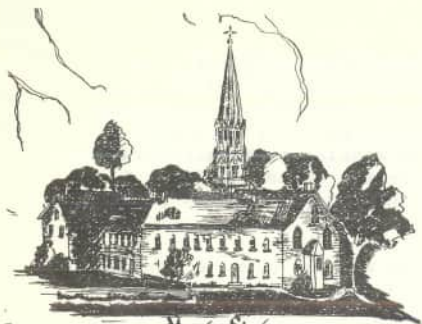
The mother much interested in religious facilities expressed her ideas of Catholicity in the territory by saying,

"The religious activities of the Precious Blood priests and sisters in Mercer County today, as well as in the future, is very hopeful. It is true that there had been little religious activity before 1835 in an about Minster and only once per month services were held in a home in Minster by Father Hortzman who came down from a German settlement around Tiffin. A log church had been erected in 1834 and had a permanent pastor after 1835."

It can be said this part of Ohio was not open to European immigrants before 1800. Those who had come earlier into western Ohio were protestant settlers from the eastern colonies of Virginia and Pennsylvania, who were continuously pushing into the frontier land of Kentucky, Tennessee and lower Ohio. Because of the conflict with the Miami and Delaware Indians, whose territory had been encroached, the United States Government built a number of forts in mid and late 1700 in western Ohio: Fort Loramie, Fort Recovery and Fort Defiance to the North and Fort Greenville to the South. In 1795, Mad Anthony Wayne was delegated to take command and control the Ohio country. This he accomplished by defeating the warriors in the area of the Wabash River near Fort Recovery. He forced the Chiefs to sign the Treaty of Greenville, establishing the southern boundary line, known as the Indian Boundary Line. This line extended from Fort Recovery East, passing the home of my birthplace, and on to Fort Loramie. A rough but open forest military road was constructed by the government from one fort to the other which later opened up the western area with the canal port of Minster for trade. Although the power of the Indian warriors had been severely crippled in 1795, it was not until after a series of treaties, the last in 1818, that this part of Ohio was safe for settlement.

Max, knowing the religious development the past few years from information he had received from priests and the Mother Superior at Maria-Stein, assisted his mother by saying, "Due to increased protection against the Indians and the available employment in building the canal a number of French families in 1835 had settled about three miles west of Fort Loramie, the present villages of Russia and Versailles in Darke County. The spiritual needs of these French immigrants were administered under Bishop Purcell." I described this settlement earlier and that Father Navarron had come to America about 1837 and gave generously of his time and effort not only to the French families but also journeyed periodically north to the German settlers until the arrival of the Precious Blood priests. As has been stated the early history of Fort Loramie settlement is extensively treated in a book The Annals of St. Michael's Parish, published in German in 1907 by Rev. William V. Bigot. Father Bigot had been pastor of the parish shortly after the third quarter of 1800. He was able to gain much knowledge of the pioneer years of Ft. Loramie from the second and third generations of the original immigrants.

Max being a young man of marriageable age also had dreams of a homestead and family in this bush country and wished to make another point by saying, "We, the young people of today should find no difficulty in settling on land within 10 to 20



María Stein
Mary Help of Christians
1846



Gruenenwald
Mary, Mother of God
1850



Minster
Chapel of the Visitation
1852



Himmelgarten
Mary, Mother of Mercy
1852



An 1846 drawing of the Emlen Institute

miles, have religious services at least every other Sunday and have our children educated by the sisters at their convents." Leaving the group temporarily, he rummaged about and unearthed a piece of wrapping paper and with a whittled half-length pencil began to sketch a crude map of the wilderness within the 20 mile area as he remembered it.

To provide a simple picture of the present and future possibilities of Catholicity he drew a box-like image of the chapel, sisters' convent, school, and orphanage. The mother interjected here by saying, "The summer of 1848 and 1849 was one of untold hardships for the settlers in western Ohio. Many households in the surrounding country disappeared from the ravages of cholera. Minster appeared to have carried the brunt of the scourge. Nearly three hundred victims had been numbered and in some instances entire families had been exterminated. Many homeless children in this village, as well as those of a dozen other German settlements, found not only succor but had reinstatement of family life under the motherly care of the good sisters."

Tracing a sketchy wilderness, linear route to the West, and indicating his home by a dot, he continued for 15 miles West, to the second sister's convent, housing about a dozen sisters, and a log chapel, known as St. Joseph's Center. The sisters had purchased this plot of 100 acres, adjacent to the Wabash River, and recently constructed a school and a house for two priests who held religious services, periodically, for the scattered families in a five mile area. Many German Catholic families had settled near St. Joseph's, it being near the old fort of Ft. Recovery. Retracing his line of direction he located the third newly constructed unit, a sisters' convent with a chapel and adjacent home for a priest or two. This had been named Greenwood, (Gruenewald) because of the beautiful green environment. The near-by Maria Stein convent was a well established religious center of substantial brick buildings, and was not only the Motherhouse of the sisters but also the Seminary for the training of priests.

Mary, sister of Adam, also of marriageable age and perhaps interested in the future of a potential family, studying the face of Max, exclaimed, "But will there be sufficient priests to provide religious services for the many families isolated and scattered over these many miles?" Max was quick to respond, "Just last year three young men, mature German students, Homburger, Kunkler and Schweitzer, were ordained here at Maria Stein by Bishop Purcell, and within a year or two Peter Wilhelm and Willibald Willi will be ordained."

It appeared that the Seitz family knew much about the organization of the sisters and the duties and functions of the priests; the sisters provided the religious and secular education of the children, while the priests who had had European training were to instruct and prepare young priestly candidates, and brothers for ordination. In addition to the religious duties at the convent centers, the priests were to provide religious services, once each month, to the many outlying settlements in the area. The sisters, nearly 200 strong, and

apportioned to the various convents, were directed by a leader who in turn was subject to the Mother Superior at the Mother House. Sisters, other than teachers, caring for the chores on the farm, found their tasks very tedious, hard put, and long suffering. Their work included the care of the live stock, storing hay and grain for feed in the winter, harvesting produce, vegetables and other essential foods for the refectory, and provide laundry services for all.

Brothers, seminaries and priests performed religious services at Maria Stein and nearby small settlements. Clothing, religious articles, and travel were provided by the sisters who in reality controlled the purse strings and the assets of the two societies. The two groups of religious were well organized, very religious, and based on the old monastic rules of monasteries in Europe. The sisters introduced a perpetual vigilance, day and night, before the Blessed Sacrament. This religious spiritual practice has continued now for more than 100 years and is a conscientious exercise of the Order.

Since the Seitz home was a short distance from the center, Max had been of much assistance to the sisters in aiding them in their farm work, thereby creating a very friendly atmosphere with the Superior. She informed him of land dealings occasionally and that she and Father Brunner intended to purchase a 550 acre farm from a Mr. Himmelgarn, located about halfway between the little mission center of St. Henry and the center of St. Joseph. As usual, she intimated to him that a school and convent, housing at least 50 sisters, would be under construction within a year if purchased.

The Mother Superior, appointed by Mother Brunner and her son to finance the Society, was a rugged individual, experiencing many hardships in the old world. She, aiding Mother Brunner in the financing of the household at the old castle and the encounters with the Swiss Government, helped her in meeting the problems in the wilderness. It is hardly a great surprise that she as a horse-woman in her youth, now, traveling from convent to convent, speaking with the old and new settlers, would find her activities less than a hardship. She gave considerable attention to the recently registered Catholic German families who were purchasing large tracts of 80 or more acres in the wild country of Mercer and Auglaize counties.

It should be noted that priests at Maria Stein were conducting religious services, monthly, in the small settlements of St. Rose, Cassella, and St. Henry, but with the influx of Catholic families West, North, and South of St. Henry, Father Brunner and the Mother Superior, saw the need for another convent center, school, and perhaps a seminary in the area of the proposed new purchase.

Acres of rolling, heavy wooded land were being purchased from \$5 to \$20 per acre from the frontiersmen of Pennsylvania, Virginia and Kentucky by Catholic German immigrants. The old pioneer settlers came here after the Indian treaty, clearing a small space only and constructing hardly a livable log hut. It is not surprising to find these adventurous men with a few gold

dollars to move on and explore new frontiers farther west. The great forests of oak, walnut, buckeye, sycamore, hickory, butternut and many other trees spread from western Pennsylvania through Ohio to Indiana and Illinois. It was claimed that a squirrel could travel from the Appalachian Mountains to Illinois without leaving the tree tops.

Hundreds of European immigrants in the latter half of the 19th Century purchased this frontier land from these hardy pioneers, cut the forest, burned them, and used what timber was necessary to build their log homes and sheds. If the land was wet they drained, ditched and diked. If the land was strewn with boulders, the farmer and his family, in time, gathered the stones from the fields on "stone boats," dragged them to a fence row thus marking off his fields. These stone-fence ruins record the endless toil of these immigrants. Droughts, hurricanes, floods, early and late frosts, dust storms, plagues of crickets, grasshoppers, and locusts, low prices, small grain returns, and Indian conflicts sometimes checked but never stopped the western movement into Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois country.

Max continued to relate his conversation with the Mother Superior since it was only recently that Father Brunner had met Mr. Himmelgarn at his homestead and of the potential sale. To encourage a sale, Father Brunner had informed Mr. Himmelgarn, if purchased, he would name it 'Himmelgarten Convent,' for he was pleased with the location of the many cleared acres, garden, orchard and the two log cabins. Subsequently, he invited the Mother Superior to visit the area.

It appears that she had no difficulty on her recent journey to St. Josephs Center in locating the farm and meeting Mr. Himmelgarn. He told her of his past years, had found contentment in the solitude of nature but disliked to be hemmed-in by more neighbors. In fact, he thought his house was haunted, and, now that he was beyond the prime of life, he intimated that if deeded to the Society it would be more of a gift than a purchase.

Mr. Himmelgarn had known Mr. Egar, a neighbor, half a mile South in the bush and owner of 40 acres on the bank of the Wabash River. In past conversation with Mr. Egar he learned that he had been a bricklayer in his youth in Connecticut, knew the process of burning clay into hard bricks, and related the fact that the consistency of the clay at the River would be excellent material for the construction of brick buildings. The Mother Superior said that she was delighted in hearing this from Mr. Himmelgarn for she and Father Brunner could now anticipate in building a substantial brick convent in the future, when purchased. Mr. Himmelgarn had also suggested to the sister that this partly cleared 40 acres of Mr. Egar would be a suitable homestead for an immigrant family since he had lost his wife recently and would be willing to sell it. It can be said that Max retold this conversation of his, with much emphasis and at the same time suggested that they visit the farm of Mr. Egar.

For the family and visitors time stood still and the once large log in the fireplace was a bed of glowing red coals, fast whitening. Max found two huge knots of oak and upon heaving them into the large stone open hearth for an all night's comfort, said to his father, "Would it be well for John Adam and me to investigate this acreage of Mr. Egar?" "Yes," replied the father. "Do so before going to Celina." It was agreed the two young men would start for this place in the morning since its location was most desirable, being adjacent and near the new convent if the 550 acre farm be purchased by the priests and sisters.

The moment approached to find lodging for the additional four. In spite of the crowded and limited available floor space, all found a way of sharing a place for the night. Fortunately, the visitors had not discarded essential bed coverings of simple woolen blankets and coverlets, thus providing both, mattresses and coverings for some on the first floor to be shared with others on the attic floor above. The mother, moving about, mindful of the comfort of all, went to bed on the lounge near midnight. Rolling herself in temporary bed clothes she went to sleep just as the last bit of candle flickered blue, deep in its brass socket, sending up a fast-fading wisp of smoke.

The possibility of remaining with the family for a few days was highly encouraging to the four since the three girls could visit the nearby Maria Stein Convent while Max and Adam would be on their journey in the morning.

The next morning the sun broke the horizon with an ocean of red, predicting a possible rainy day. However, within an hour the low-lying fog disappeared and the west wind blew the rain clouds to the East. Max said that they could expect days like this at this time of the year. The family agreed that the young men should be on their way after a breakfast of corn-cakes, honey, and cured ham.

The sun was now in full view, spreading its warmth and creating a pungent odor, characteristic of decadent wood. Leaving the home and passing the convent buildings, they traveled South over a rough forest road, but well rutted, toward St. John, a quarter-mile away. Turning West they continued on a similar grass-covered rough trail which led them to St. Rose, two miles to the right. In the stretch of the first mile, deep in the forest, though rods from each other, homesteads to Drees, Göttemoller, Lang, and Lochtefeld had been pointed out to Adam. In a neat but small clearing was the village, consisting of a few log houses, surrounding a log church with a slender walnut steeple. In another two miles, passing homesteads of Harting, Stelzer and Wirtz, they entered an unplanned clearing of an acre or more which consisted, in addition to a small log church, clusters of log houses, a blacksmith and wagon-maker's shop, and a small grocery. It had been named 'Cassella,' from the German Cappella. (The German scrip of the letter 'p' was written similarly to the letter 's'.)

Approximately one-half mile South of this small settlement

was the Convent of 'Gruenewald', so named by Father Brunner in memory of a pilgrimage shrine in Alsace. It was built of red brick in a dense, green forest, truly describing the name it was given. Construction of the buildings had not been completed but after 1851, it housed three priests and many sisters who recently came to America after abandoning the Loewenberg Castle in Switzerland.

After passing beyond these places they started in a westerly direction, over a sort of zig-zag, unbroken trail, a hide-and-seek, stop-and-go affair, completely overgrown with weed trees. Obstructing their path were old dead tree trunks and stumps. Due to the non-use of this one-time footpath to St. Henry they encountered difficult travel in keeping on the trail but with Max's frontier experiences they came to the village of St. Henry within an hour. The old military road (Indian Boundary Line), had been carrying limited transportation of farm produce and animals from the Western area to the canal port of Minster.

St. Henry had been laid out in lots in 1837, by Romer Brothers, Beckman and Bruns. The Romer Brothers had established a log trading post about 1838, carting merchandise and dry groceries from Cincinnati to this area and bartered for furs and farm produce among the settlers. Transportation before the completion of the Erie Canal had been by horse and wagon. The Romer Clan owned many acres of uncleared, heavy forest land in all directions about the village of St. Henry. Bruns had built the second cabin in the village, acquired many acres of forestland and also had a thriving business as a blacksmith and wagon maker. Henry Beckman, in addition to owning land, operated a store of groceries, books, notions, medicine, and had an agency for sewing machines. Two small log stores, owned by Miller and Bany provided additional marketing and bartering services for the settlers.

The mission had been established by the Precious Blood Society which was visited once a month by a priest from the Gruenewald Convent after 1851, with periodic religious services in the log church.

In the half-hour of gossip with the settlers, Max and Adam learned of the location of the homesteads of another Romer family and Borgerding homestead to the South and were informed that a couple by the name of Franz Moorman came to the area recently by way of the canal from Cincinnati and had purchased acreage near the two families.

Adam and Max now headed West on a more worn, two-wheeled wagon trail. As they passed the log house and shed of Staughler, Max turned to Adam and said, "We are on our way to the center of St. Joseph and in another two miles we should pass the homestead of Mr. Himmelgarn." After jogging down this stump-free, narrow-gauge road for some time they spied the two log houses, garden, orchard and cultivated land that the Mother Superior referred to as the future home of the Himmelgarten Convent.

Adjacent to the log houses of Mr. Himmelgarn a questionable

path to the South toward the river came into view. It appeared to be an obsolete and unbroken foot and horse trail. It must have been an old Indian path many moons ago that led to the Indian Boundary Line a mile beyond. A rough military road cut through the forest by soldiers before 1800 indicated the Line and also provided a marching route for the soldiers going from Fort Recovery to Fort Loramie.

Max and Adam seeing this path, veered to the left and followed it, now nearly hidden with vines and small brush. They zig-zagged right and left, dodging the uncut trees. The trail directed them through patches of may-apples, making a solid carpet in the woods. Nearby were densely populated thorned blackberry shrubs that were shooting up white blossoms and pale green berries. The bright sun-streaked foliage of oak and beach overhead colored the carpet with a blanket of variegated greens. Both men became conscious of the nearness of Mr. Egar's farm. Simultaneously, a second observation to the right outlined a tree-cleared patch and log house off in the deep forest of tall walnuts and oaks, hardly a quarter of a mile from the riverbank. Continuing their journey to the river a treeless hillock of gently sloping sides on the riverbank came into view on their right. On it were a half-dozen grave markers, indicating it to be a pioneer graveyard, the resting place of the deceased members of an earlier pioneer family.

A much deserved rest at midday for both riders and horses gave them the opportunity of examining the gravestones. One heaped-up site, grassless, covered with leaves of the forest had a yellow blooming rose stock at its head. Gazing about they had no difficulty in noting a well-beaten path toward Mr. Egar's homestead which they followed. Each rider on foot, guiding his horse down the path of overhanging foliage, appeared anxious to locate the home of Mr. Egar which consisted of a log house and a nearby shed.

Walking laboriously down this mysterious, brush-lined trail they came to the homestead within a few minutes, located on a stump-cleared acre, enclosed and completely surrounded by a fence of split saplings. Following a path that encircled the cleared and fenced-in yard, they found a diminutive one-and-one-half story log house. Its distinctive rustic appearance of grey-weathered, hand-hewn, adzed logs, chinked with dark black clay, was enhanced by many large trees surrounding it. From a huge stone chimney at one end curled a faint gray of fragrant wood smoke, while a raised porch at the entrance of the one centered door boasted a few, small, split-bottom chairs, set at random. On the left of the clearing adjoining an animal enclosure, stood a three-sided log shed for animals. As they approached, now late in the morning, they spied an elderly man, (barefoot), wearing a homespun, roughly textured blouse with an open neck and rolled-up sleeves. His thinning hair, shaggy beard, half-closed eyes and leathery deeply etched face, reminded one that nature had taken its toll of hacking-down brush and weed trees, not to forget the endless grubbing of roots in cultivating a few acres for wheat, rye, oats and hay. These menial tasks, briefly, summed-up the cause of physical characteristics of many frontiersmen.

Mr. Owen Egar, an original settler from Connecticut, came by way of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky into the valley of the Wabash about 1820. Years of the flooded waters of the Wabash, covering hundreds of acres, left their mark of huge forests of oak, beech, walnut, and elm upon this valley.

Upon their approach Max and Adam, were surprised to note the calmness of his manner in bidding them welcome. To him they were friends, sharing the difficulties which he had recently experienced. Not surprisingly he with a thick guttural voice said, "It is kind of you to visit me now that my wife is no longer with me. I buried her in the new grave on the hill." Max in a note of sympathy said, "Yes, we saw the new grave and wish to express our condolence." He continued, "A Catholic sister, who may purchase the farm of Mr. Himmelnarn informed us that you were interested in going back to Connecticut." Gazing intently into space, Mr. Egar mused, "I have loved this country and working with nature, but, now being alone and 60 years old, I should go East and live with my son. Yes, I am interested in selling my half-cleared farm, my animals and farm tools."

After scanning the acreage of cleared level land and the thick untouched forest of 20 acres, terminating at the bank of the Wabash, Max and Adam returned to the house within an hour. Passing the shed and corral they noted that he owned two horses, a few cattle, a half-dozen sheep, and some chickens and pigs. The view to the left of the log house pictured a matured orchard of apple and peach trees already in bloom with a few random colonies of bees underneath. The garden, adjacent to the house on the right, newly spaded for spring planting, completed the setting of a desirable vine-covered log structure. Entering through the centered heavy door-jamb they came into the lower floor and noted the stone fireplace and limited household appurtenances. The only interior light in the cabin, summer and winter, came through a window on the right and the open door. Angling into the room they brushed their heads against herbs and onions, hanging from the low log beams. The rough furnishings consisted of a plain wood table with a hinged bench of rough-sawn oak, worn in places to a dark black and hacked with a knife and hobnailed boots. A couple of stools, wooden basket, oaken water bucket, and cooking utensils concluded the few essentials. The ladder-like narrow stairway led to the middle of the raftered attic above which was divided into two rooms. The one, the sleeping room, contained a low wooden bed roped with unmeasured, bulging, huge knots along each supporting beam, and a split bottom chair nearby. A few rounded pegs, protruding from the chinked log wall, provided studs for quickly cast-off clothing. The second room was a catch-all and grain-storage one, thus protecting the precious seed and food from destroying rodents.

Max and Adam, twisting their bulky frames and with backward steps, descended the narrow, rough, unpatted stair-treads to the lower floor.

The entrance door and one only, was protected by a straw-covered pole-extension porch, thereby providing a pleasant spot for an afternoon of well-deserved repose, as well as an exterior

covering against rain and snow. The three, sitting on the edge of the slightly elevated porch, legs dangling with an occasional swinging motion, and conveniently sheltered from the blazing sun, enjoyed a pleasant hour in relating their personal experiences.

Unquestionably, Adam was eager to learn of the pioneer experiences of Mr. Egar in his early years of travel from the East, all translated into German by Max. It appeared the pioneers after coming into Kentucky followed the old trail of Daniel Boone to Cincinnati, which at that time was a town of 25,000 or more. The well-informed Land Office in Cincinnati had dealt in the selling of large tracts of land of indefinite boundaries, guaranteed by writs and signed by President Madison. The northern Ohio territory which included Celina, came under the area that lies between the Indian Boundary Line and Lake Erie. Speculative land agents were instrumental in selling small and large acreage to early eastern settlers in Mercer and near-by counties. Fortunately, Mr. Egar had been able to purchase his small acreage of 40 acres from an owner of a section of land lying on the north side of the Wabash. He said he had purchased the horses from Indians and had no difficulty in obtaining seeds, potatoes and corn for planting from friendly Indians who had been allowed to continue squatting on unsettled or unoccupied wilderness. With the aid of some Indians he was able to build a crude shelter for protection and lived through the first year from garden produce and meat of wild game that roamed all about.

Mr. Egar was well acquainted with the military road on the Indian boundary Line as well as the meaning of it before 1800. He said that in spite of the extension of the boundary further to the North, limiting the territory of the Indians, friendly relations between them and the settlers existed and many of them continued to live in the area. The old military road was a half-mile South of the Wabash River and passable for wagons except in the early spring when water would cover a bog area of cranberries about six miles East. A better established corduroy road of saplings had been built by the government which continued toward Minster and Ft. Loramie. The improvement of the road allowed him and other settlers, at certain periods of the year, to purchase live animals and to barter with other pioneers and businesses near the canal area. Max, having lived in the semi-cleared frontier the past ten years realized these conveniences and how certain improvements had bettered the lives of the immigrants in the western part of Ohio.

Mr. Egar, after hearing the experiences of Adam in Alsace, his journey from Europe and his interest in acquiring land for a permanent home, became very enthusiastic in contracting a land deal with him. Upon further inquiry the visitors learned that Mr. Egar would consider \$20 per acre for this partly cleared farm, including the house and shed. Max after a quiet German conversation with Adam said to Mr. Egar, "What a homey place you have made here in the bush, Adam, my friend, says that he and his three sisters could be happy here thereby

fulfilling their dreams, and would continue to improve what you have begun." Adam interrupted Max by saying, "But, we need animals and farm tools and we are not able financially to purchase the land and other farm necessities at that price." Mr. Egar, recognizing the thoughts of Adam, giving a quick sidelong glance at both said, "To return to Connecticut I need the money and should have full payment since I have no relatives here. Perhaps your family, Max, could help them."

In the discussion that followed between Adam and Max it was decided that the problem of purchasing the land could be solved since Adam and his sisters had slightly more than the purchase price. Max with hesitation said, "Mr. Ega, I believe my father and mother will help with tools and animals or provide the money to purchase yours."

Mr. Egar was well aware of the fact that this was a rare opportunity of disposing all of his belongings, and after thoughtful deliberation, decided that \$100 would be a fair price for his other possessions if Adam would buy the 40 acres at \$20 per acre. With scarcely any more talk and dickering on the price of animals and tools, it was decided that the three would meet at Celina on the morrow at noon to complete the deed for the purchase of land. Max, being more at home with and knowing the ways of settlers, ended the conversation by saying, "We will see you in Celina tomorrow and give you the money for the farm. Tonight we will give the family the details of the day and have my father and mother decide about the animals."

Once they were on the homeward journey they urged the horses to a trot in order to reach the homestead early in the evening. Needless to say they were saddle-sore and hungry upon arrival, but very excited to relate the conversation of the day.

During the evening meal, the members of each family acquired a deeper respect for each other, thus developing a mutual interest in the welfare of all. The father, learning more about the financial ability of the four, proposed a solution. He said, "Suppose Adam and Max, jointly, buy the land, each have a half interest with the right of Adam to purchase the other half (at the same price per acre), when financially able, and buy the animals and tools as stated by Mr. Egar and own them outright." This was a very satisfactory arrangement, thus providing extra money for the four to begin the new home. The Seitz family had no difficulty in financing Max's interest in the land.

The following morning, a beautiful summer day in July 1850, the two traveled north on a passable road which fronted the Shrine and the old homestead, directing them toward a former Indian village of Chickasaw. Going for a short distance, they turned left and then right which brought them to a rough cut trail of deep, rutted tracks into the deep forest which in fact was an almost impenetrable wilderness. In a half hour they approached the old village of Chickasaw, now, no longer of Indian wigwams, but laid out in square lots. There were a few log huts interspersed among Indian wigwams. As they passed

these Indian tents, Indian women, tall, with sharp bronze features and dark eyes, looking pretty in their brightly striped blankets, stepped out, seeking the cause of barking dogs.

A few German farmers had homesteads surrounded by very heavy forest in the four directions of this village. To the East, South and West were the families of Kreusch, Kaiser and Greesup while the family of Rentz had located about a mile North.

Leaving this settlement they traveled for hours without much change in the type of road or the wilderness. In cutting this trail westward toward Celina the early settlers had been obliged to chop undergrowth and fell trees to move horses and wagons and slipscrappers for the construction of the reservoir. Deer in herds of fifty or more, unafraid of man, could be seen in those days. Max and Adam after passing homesteads of Schwieterman and Klosterman, approached the village of Montezuma, similar in size to Chickasaw. It contained the homes of a few migrant families by the name of Long, Burge and others from Kentucky, Southern Ohio and Virginia who had plotted this small former Indian settlement in 1835. A Mr. Winter settled here in 1836 and built a large two-story log house, a kind of overnight refuge for lodging and drink. It had been said that it was a favorite stopping place for a number of prominent Indian Chiefs who had been well known in Ohio history: Armstrong, Johnnycake and Oldhouse. Mr. Winter's daughter, Mary, had no fear of Indians, was familiar with the Indian dialect and spoke it more readily than her mother tongue.

Leaving this village they continued to skirt the south and west bank of the Celina reservoir. For an hour they toiled along a two-mile stretch, going from low to higher areas where the road bordered a number of small, cleared patch-fields containing a log house with a lean-to poleshed open to the southside. The lean-to was the stable for animals that were sheltered by a pole-covered floor above, heaped high with feed for the winter. This kind of construction, house with lean-to shed was doing a double duty by providing food and shelter for the animals and additional protection and warmth for the family in the winter. Just a few yards to the right was a narrow strip of cultivated land with markings of yellow stubbles where wheat had grown. To the left of the house were grooves of upturned dark soil, interlaced with small stumps which indicated the area of vegetables for the family. German Catholic families of Wirtz and Billerman, had migrated here earlier. In spite of many difficulties of bogs and puddles of water these German settlers found high spots of dry level land for their homes. Each family living a goodly distance from the other, were keen to meet Adam, one from the old country. The grizzly-haired, sunburnt faces of the men reflected good manners, a good nature and an agreeable disposition for work and ready to meet the challenges of frontier life.

Staggering and lurching, the horses eventually brought the riders to the higher road on the west side of the water. The view from the man-built bank road was treeless with a vast expansion of water of nearly inundated tree stumps on the right

while on the left there was a gradual descending slope from the corduroyed roadbed to a fading dark jungle of trees beyond. Traveling here was more desirable on this slightly improved hard roadway allowing Max and Adam to quicken their horses to a trot, arriving in Celina about noon.

For Adam, visiting a county courthouse in the new world, was a new experience. Celina had been founded in 1834 by a Mr. Riley from the East who named it after a town in New York State, Salina. In 1850 Celina contained 150 lots: half of which were occupied by homes; a half-dozen log stores; a hotel, Ellis House; a newspaper office, Western Standard; a physician Dr. Hayes; a small sawmill owned by Mr. Riley; a brickyard managed by two negroes, and a jail and courthouse.

The old log courthouse, 20 x 24, of 1835 had been replaced by a larger one of frame in 1849. While the outside structure and first and second floors were complete, workmen were still finishing the four rooms in the basement. The building was simple in structure but contained offices for the necessary administration of a county: a room for the treasurer and the recorder; office of the judge and the court; office of the sheriff which entered into the jail, and offices on the second floor for minor officials.

The land deal with Mr. Egar was drafted in the office of the attorney, Mr. LeBlond, and after the payment of \$800 in gold to Mr. Egar by Max and Adam jointly, the transaction was completed and each now had a half-interest in the 40 acres. Mr. Egar and Adam agreed on the purchase price of \$100 for the other possessions.

The recording of the sale in the Book of Records of land deals and the payment of property tax were experiences that remained stamped in the mind of Adam. It can be said that he had many similar land transactions and other financial deals in the next fifty years.

As might be expected, Mr. Egar was eager to have John Adam and his sisters take possession of his property immediately. The next day with the help of Max the four moved their personal belongings and household and kitchen accessories loaned by Mrs. Seitz to their first log house in America. It was Max who assisted them in every instance to make them comfortable in the new surroundings. Within a few days Max made it possible for Mr. Egar to travel to Minster and embark on a canal boat to Lake Erie. Crossing the lake to Buffalo and on a New York Canal to Albany, he eventually reached his destination in Connecticut.

It comes as no surprise that Max was more than a visitor the first summer. Simultaneously, he provided them with much needed advice in solving some of the problems of frontier life, and it appeared that he paid more than ample and fair attention to Adam's sister, Mary, who in no way discouraged his courtship courtesy.

Midsummer had arrived and some of the growing season for

vegetables had been spent. Fortunately, the garden spot, though still aggravated by short, tough sucker-sprouts and tree roots, provided food for the first year. The plot of rich, black dirt with ample rain and sunshine produced an abundance of green beans, lettuce, beets, carrots and potatoes for them. The heads of cabbage and other slow growing vegetables had been provided by the Seitz family and other neighbors. All settlers, having similar experiences and common problems in providing food in the first years, were eager to assist and contribute essentials. Adam, with the assistance of Max planted corn, pumpkins and sugarcane in the first week of July which matured sufficiently in the unusual warm, sunny days of September and in the delayed frost weeks of October. That summer the two constructed a root cellar which abutted the outside wall of the log house at the rear. Its construction was a heaped-up mound of earth and straw, cone-shaped, to a height of seven feet at the peak. Externally, it appeared to be a roofed dugout with slanting straw-covered sides that ended at the front in a neat framework entrance, which was protected by an iron-clamped heavy wooden door of three inch saplings. The interior of it had sufficient floor space for the storage of garden produce and at the top were overhanging poles for cured meats in the winter.

The Seitz family was the leader in providing additional food stuffs, household items, and in organizing social gatherings to make the first winter a comfortable one for them. Social life on the frontier is something to be desired which was supplied principally in the fall and winter months by themselves, German people had considered social gatherings of singing and dancing as part of a village community life, and these settlers and their teenagers were determined to carry on the European tradition and culture in America. In the years before and after 1850 the farm home in the bush country of Mercer County was almost a self-contained unit, fostering and contributing to the social and religious life of the community.

Adam and his sisters for the first year consumed very little beyond what had been produced in the garden and on the cultivated acres. The living therefore was similar to the living in the old world with the exception of much wild life, roaming about the forest of wild turkeys, game birds, rabbits, and an occasional deer that supplied the meat. Wheat, rye, and barley seeds were cast broadside in the spring and cradled in the fall, a method of harvesting which allowed less than an acre to be cut in a day.

Shovels, hoes, sickles, a mattock, scythe, and a wooden hay rake were the essential cultivation tools. Fortunately, many settlers were able to supplement these simple tools with a horse-drawn, wooden, iron-tipped plow, and a log drag. The livestock, few in number, purchased within the year, ranged freely in the bush, unhindered, but occasionally they would find a breakthrough to the growing crops. Hogs, the usual culprits, were tough critters for they were wild, half the size of today's breeds, longer in legs and snout, and narrow in the spine, thus called 'razor-backs'. Even though being a nuisance, and roaming in swarms like rodents, they were an important

source of meat. Within the year a confined razorback, fattened on nuts and corn, was butchered for the following winter by Adam. A few sheep were sheared the next spring and provided raw wool for winter processing. The process of washing, carding, and spinning was carried on in the home by the sisters with the assistance of Max who had the knowhow and in addition supplied the spinning wheel and the loom. In retrospect, the first few winters in the new home were contented ones in spite of some unforeseen hardships and low temperatures.

In the second month of the next winter twilight fell early over the frozen uncultivated plots on many February days, causing dozens of crows wings flapping low, and heading straight toward sheltered southern exposures for warmth after having had their fill of corn. An occasional solitary caw was the sound of one that flew from one fence rail to another, indifferent to the cold. Periodically, a flutter of larks would issue forth from bushes of May ground-apples that covered the nearby forest with a pale yellow carpet. On many days sunset radiance streaked across the open land, nowhere a yellow sunbeam glittered on an object, and a solitude of clouds stretched around the earth, thus bringing on darkness before its time.

It was the last day of February when sleet; nature's way of revealing a threatening storm, had alerted man and beast of foreboding and distress. Rain had been falling steadily, each drop freezing where it fell, adding ice on ice. Sheltered tree limbs and ice-freighted berry bushes hung as low as the window sill. Through the chinks of the log shed, rain penetrated to the stalls of horses and cattle and animals, backs were flacked with snow and ice specks, but were melted by body heat, causing dewdrops to hang from their hides of newly covered hair. But before the two-day storm had abated, nature had enwrapped the earth, beautiful yet terrible, for it had turned all into a glasshouse. Fixed in a brittle mass the violent wind, bending, swaying and breaking the boughs, created booming noises in the woods, far and wide, throughout the night. The next morning showed the destruction of many trees everywhere.

It goes without saying that for Mary, sister of Adam, and Max, this was an important period of their young lives. Both had the opportunity of studying the personal characteristics of each. Max was truly in love with one that radiated humility, modesty, self-assurance, and reserve other than coyness. Mary gained a knowledge of Max's character and capabilities in the home and on the farm. His ten years of frontier life shaped a companionable, affectionate and sympathetic personality with an abundance of practical knowledge, skill, and intelligence for frontier living.

It comes as no surprise that the Seitz Family encouraged neighbors and friends to invite the four to a butchering or corn-husking party, simultaneously allowing the sisters to learn the art of quilting and knitting. Not unusual, after one of these affairs all would enjoy a late evening supper of fresh pork, canned farm produce, cider, and even ice cream if ice could be had from a nearby pond or creek. A square dance, called a "hoe-down" would be announced thereafter by a 'caller'

while the necessary music would be furnished by three or more members who were able to play a fiddle, strum a guitar, and pick a manolin.

Max, on every occasion at a 'bee party or sing-fest' would be ill at ease if Mary was not present. He, instinctively, would speak of her qualities and her abilities with all his friends, boys and girls. At every chance meeting and at every party he was open and above board in his conduct toward Mary for she was his favorite. There is not much more to add to this story other than young and old, and Mary herself, could detect that she had a lover. Outwardly, there was no alteration in the routine of Mary's life with the exception that her actions had a spring and a vigor in and about the house and garden.

The excitement in late winter for the two families may be easily guessed because of the many duties that were required by Max at his home with an occasional day or two with Adam. He took the lead in preparing simple furniture during the winter months for the new home of his bride-to-be, Mary. This consisted of two bunk beds; a simple X-legged walnut table and a few split-hickory chairs, caned with white oak splits; and reinforced with deer thongs. It was such goings-on that caused rumors of a wedding the coming Summer and Fall among friends of Mary and Max.

Where would they live and would he build a new log house? Gossip and hearsay simmered to hard facts in the early spring for Max had purchased some heavy virgin timberland to the North and West from his home on the trail to Chickasaw.

It had been over fifty years that the Chickasaw Indians as a tribe, had moved from their village. A number of German immigrants had purchased and settled on these happy hunting grounds of the Indians, though not surprisingly a number of Indian families adopted the settlers' simple pioneer living and remained in the area. Young men intermarried with Indians and with blacks in the Carthagena area, which created a mutual relationship between different ethnic groups, that I recognized as a boy at the turn of the century.

Max's plot of ground had been a part of a section of land purchased by a German immigrant from a land agent. This in reality, was not more than a mile from the homestead of his parents.

The fact, that this land of virgin forest had natural resources for building a log house of clay, stone, and trees, Max was prepared to start the venture immediately. He had acquired the skills of using the broad axe, the foot adze, and the use of a chalk-line in squaring logs. After the spring planting he and his father with a few friends, Indians, and German youths began to clear the area for his cabin. A man on each end of the cross-cut saw could fall the largest tree in an hour but there was still much chipping and chopping before a log would be ready for squaring and matching. It was Max and his father who decided on the type and size of the cabin, which

when completed would be square in shape with a center door in the front wall, two windows, a stone fireplace, and an attic of a half-story. This was the going pattern among settlers for it was easy to construct on a stone foundation, and very practical for frontier living. The larger logs forming the foundation and lower section of the building were, more or less, in rolling distance. These large logs were adzed on one or two sides according to their particular needs. The smaller logs for the upper structure; saplings for the floor and rafters were cut from the roadway that provided an entrance to the new homestead. The past experience of building and assisting the neighbors in the ten years saved Max and his father many hours in this construction since there was a know-how needed with respect to the size, shape, and kind of every log for its proper use. The matching of logs was a continuous process of notching and reshaping at the corners of the structure for perfect fit and beauty. These were important marks of stability, permanency, and protection. All of this knowledge had been used in good stead in elevating the smaller logs to the higher framework of the attic or loft. Neither could they disregard the proper notching and laying of the halved-poles of six-inch saplings for the lower and upper floors, nor the kind, size and shaping of the smaller logs for the horizontal plate that carried the rafters. The logs, used for the wall in the loft, were bark-peeled only while those in the lower story were hewn on the inside which would be planed smoothly, rubbed, and polished to a mellow, ruddy brown, walnut glow.

The building of the fireplace and chimney was not an easy task because of the lack of flat creek rocks and field stones in the area. No matter how difficult it was in its construction, the trick, of course, was to make a fireplace draw properly, and smoothly in all kinds of weather.

There were shingles of one and one-half length of random widths, as well as hand-hewn boards for windows and door frame to be fashioned. The three-inch, rough-hewn door was pegged and mounted on a frame with wrought-iron hinges made by a local blacksmith. The one and only door for entrance and exit would be locked by a stout bar on the inside to which was attached a thong, known as the "latchstring". This passed through a hole in the door to the outside for any friend to enter conveniently. The old saying, "The latchstring is always out for you," is familiar to all generations. At night the string would be pulled in for safety.

The summer months had passed far too quickly for Max and Mary, and there was still much work to be completed on the outside in chinking with waxy clay, rocks, and small wood knots to be wedged between the logs. Near the end of September the roof had been laid and a skeleton porch attached to protect the front door. Max and Mary had the month of October to tidy-up the interior, arrange the necessary items for cooking and dining as well as the orderly distribution of chairs and bunk beds. "How fortunate we are that we have much wood to burn in our new fireplace for warmth," were the words of Max upon entering the house on cool days to begin the pleasurable tasks of the day. Both were eager to make this new home very

convenient and comfortable since their future would consist of simple living, thus they intended to obtain happiness from a life-style which had been their's in the past. Mary, in the final arrangement, placed a blooming red geranium in the window, though slightly hidden by the coarse-knit draw-curtain, it added color to the walnut-brown surroundings.

It was late when Max and Mary finished these final touches. Nightfall was approaching rapidly with low hanging clouds in the West, and the sun had gone down with dark curtains, closing heavily over it. Before starting for his home the clouds had parted in the East and the moon had arisen amid white fleeces floating about, casting a pale yellow upon the Fall's last vestige. As a final leave-taking that evening before the wedding day, Mary declared, "I must pinch myself to make certain that I am not dreaming, or something."

They had announced the marriage to be the first of November and had hoped and prayed for an exceptionally bright fall day, but to their dismay the early morning had predicted a dark and chilly one. The sun appeared through a hazy sky at 8:00 and presently resigned itself to staying hid all day. The simple marriage ceremony was in the nearby church at 9:00, after which the two families returned to the Seitz home for the day's celebration.

Within a few hours the afternoon increased with rain and cold, approaching the drizzle and chill of an early November day. A few minutes later the autumn storm showed touches of severity and indicated the nearness of winter. On the storm-faced tree-trunks and in the narrow deep-cut ruts of the road there appeared little white patches and drifts of snow. By mid-afternoon the surroundings had been enveloped with a dark, black, and snowy wet blanket.

The father and a brother had made an early trip to the new home in the afternoon which was now gradually fading into evening. Max and Mary hearing about the coziness and warmth of the new home with many embraces and tears, truthfully they were tears of joy, they made their leave-taking before dark. Mary, meditating for a moment said, "Now for our new home with you Max." He, helping her with her knee-high rubbers, combination hood and coat, and heavy woolen shawl, took her up in his strong arms and carried her over the threshold to the porch step below.

Nearby, tied to one of the poles of the overhanging porch, was old dobbin hitched to the two-wheel trap. "This old rattle-trap is the best I have but it is safe, and the ride will be more comfortable than on horseback," exclaimed Max, breathlessly. After placing her on the seat with an additional lap-robe for warmth they were off.

Turning and inching nearer to her, Max spying flecks of snowflakes, scarcely more than glittering crystals, dancing merrily about her head and playing antics on her black coat, encouraged him to say, "You are truly my winter fairy."

It was but a short jaunt to the main road, the only one leading North and West toward the Celina reservoir. Within a half-mile they veered North to the old Indian village of Chickasaw. This was a less traveled trail through overhanging oaks and walnuts but slightly cleared of roots and stumps. Max's brother on horseback directed the way through the fast fading twilight into darkness. A half-mile of travel brought them to the entrance of the half-acre of cleared land, the focal point of their new home. In spite of the dreary day, the roaring wind, and the shrinking afternoon, the log cabin almost hidden by a background of tall trees, afforded them a rare object of beauty and satisfaction.

Max repeated his door-step performance over his new threshold, and placed his bride near the glowing fire of blazing, crackling oak-knots that had been laid by the departing father. The room of dusty brown presented a most welcome and comfortable scene to the couple as they watched the sparkling and wreathing tongues of flame proceed up the wide-mouth chimney. The brother without much ado, returned home in the two-



Family of Adam Fecher, 1872

wheel cart with the tag-along saddle horse.

This was the beginning of the termination of a beautiful and harmonious family life of four who had emigrated from Europe a few years earlier, and within a period of four years had married and established homes in Mercer County.

If one were slightly acquainted with the sociability of the German people one could predict that the wedding of Mary and Max would not be overlooked by the young people. In those years a surprise get-to-gether at the new home, known as "Bellowing" the newly married couple, was the accustomed practice and one which continued far into the first years of the 20th Century.

The boys and girls, from far and wide, without invitation would assemble nearby, but not overlook the need of cow bells, sleigh bells, tin pans, and other loud noise makers. At a given signal all swooped upon the home of the lucky culprits with deafening noises of singing, whooping, shouting, and bell ringing. Unquestionably, this din brought this young couple to the door and with a feigning look of surprise they exclaimed excitedly, "We didn't know you were coming, but come in and we can have a 'hoe-down,' but we have little food." Whereupon the crowd shouted, "We have doughnuts and cider, let's push the chairs to the wall, and dust the floor with a bit of cornmeal." A bellowing party started with a square dance, some party games, and eats which ended about midnight.

The fiddler, the most striking of the musical group was a tall powerful fellow with a black, shaggy head and stubby beard, protruding out of a red flannel shirt. He was seated on a three-legged stool, precariously perched upon Max's half finished table that evidently felt the recurring pulse of the measured beat. His high boots on his crossed legs swayed above the heads of the dancers while his own head was not far from the braided red peppers and onions that Mary had hung there a few days earlier. With eyes half closed and cheeks arched and bowed on the violin, he would demonstrate great versatility with uppercuts and downward strokes with the fiddle bow. He had had no acquaintance with musical notes but had acquired his artistic skill from a long line of German fiddlers. At this time he was a veritable stamping machine with a fiddle attachment, sometimes devoting the strength of both feet for greater notability.

Other "get-to-gether" affairs: Christmas, New Years, quilting and husking bees, candy-pulling, or what-nots would be planned for other occasions by the boys and girls as a group. They would provide the necessary entertainment of music, the food, and drinks, many times ending far into the morning but always innocent entertainment. In the late 19th and the first decades of the 20th Century, the second and third generation replaced the 'hoe-down' with the waltz, one-step, two-step, and some 'twists'; With the growing population, improved roads, more convenient transportation by automobile, and the construction of large grain barns, these affairs were no longer held in

the home but in the barn with an ample amount of parafin applied to the rough barn floor or to a newly constructed dance platform.

The early settlers sought and found compensation for their loneliness and hardships of their lives by co-operation and helping each other at these 'bees.' These meetings for both, young and old, were weekly during the winter while those held in the summer and fall were combined with some co-operative project: barn-raising, butchering, husking and thrashing. Work and play were well integrated which developed a consciousness of purpose, thrift, and cooperation that impressed the younger generation of the customs, activities, and the beauty of the German culture. The members of this ethnic group: grandparents, parents, and newly arrived young men and women noted similar characteristics of initiative, leadership, and the spirit to conquer, irrespective of age. Having had a background relatively linked with the shadows of these attributes and culture, I stressed the importance of this inheritance to our children. The virtues and weaknesses of one's forefathers smack of the environment of their motherland which is uniquely and excessively true of the characteristics of the German people.

Religious gatherings in this 20-mile square area were as prevalent as those for entertainment. The pilgrimages, (Waldfahrt) holy days, festivals, Eucharistic gatherings, annual parish festivals, and church dedications, for the 75 year period 1850-1925, were amply documented in the Cincinnati Telegraph, the diocesan newspaper. We must be mindful, however, that much credit for the religious fervor displayed in Mercer, Auglaize, and adjacent counties had been due to the sacrifices and spiritual efforts of the religious men and women of the Society of the Precious Blood. The seed of all this spiritual growth began in the period of 10 years - 1845 to 1856, when the priests and nuns in the area had established a complex of six convents and had obtained ownership of over 1000 acres with a membership of 180: 11 priests, 120 sisters, 50 seminarians - including lay brothers. The priests provided religious services, periodically, to 14 mission parishes while the sisters, in addition to the duties of the farms and convents, supplied teachers for the school. A particular stamp of religious flavor had been inherited by members of on-going generations, the leaves of the ancestral tree, irrespective of their location or profession that is strikingly visible.



Adam and Elizabeth, 1900

Understanding the environment of a common language, German customs, and deeply religious spirit, John Adam and his sisters adjusted without much difficulty and to the diverse problems of frontier life and the disposition of their neighbors. They were regarded highly by the young men and women for their utter simplicity and unmistakable frankness and many wondered at their ability to speak and write German so fluently.

It will not be surprising to the reader that Adam's sister, Josephine, was married the following summer to a member of the Miller family. Barbara, the youngest of the three, met a young man of her own age, Franz Rents, at the bellowing party of Mary's and was married in 1855. He, with his parents, had settled on uncleared land a mile North of the old Indian village of Chickasaw about the same year the Seitz family had migrated to the New World and to Mercer County.

We find Adam now alone in the old Egar home. He was one not conforming to a type, but was absolutely independent in his thinking and doing, always taking advantage of every opportunity in creating equity capital by raising animals and clearing the land to increase tillable acreage. It was in the fall of 1852 that he was fattening a few head of cattle and pigs on his forty in addition to the raising of wheat, corn, and hay. Pigs and cattle, running wild, whose only obstacle was the Wabash River, thrived and fattened rapidly on the abundance of beechnuts and corn. According to his diary he had driven a few head of cattle and a dozen fat porkers to Minster by way of the old military road by 1854 which resulted in exchanging animals for American gold dollars for the first time.

It should be of interest to note that Adam on one of these trips, came in contact with the family of Peter and Catherine Stächler, both born about 1800 in Europe who had migrated to England in 1849, and within a year to America, where they established a wilderness home a few rods beyond the cranberry bog, North of the military road. The family worshiped at the mission church of St. Henry, and occasionally at the Gruenewald Convent which at the time housed many sisters and three priests.

Turn the thin neat sheets of this book, settle yourself comfortably, and picture yourself in an ancestry of one and one-half centuries gone-by, enjoying fully the human interest stories related by my grandfather, Adam, and grandmother, Elizabeth.

It was in 1850, as related by Grandmother, Elizabeth Stachler, that she with her parents and other members, Henry, August, John, Frank, and Peter, etc. established the home near the bog. Bears, wolves, and wild hogs, formerly abounding this area, were no longer there while the nearest neighbor was Mr. Beckman, who had moved to St. Henry a few years later. As years passed the settlement East of the bog became a village and today is known as Cranberry Prairie. On one occasion of his trip to the canal port of Minster he learned the acquaintance, courted Elizabeth and they were married in the chapel by Father

Joseph Butz who was the senior member at the Convent. Father Butz was a true and trusted associate of Father Brunner and provided spiritual guidance to the members of the Precious Blood Society.

No history had been recorded by Adam in regard to the work involved or of the hardships endured in these early years. No doubt, the tasks were similar to those common to all pioneers who were aiming to tame the wilderness. Elizabeth was eager to relate how energetically they worked, taking advantage of all available and usable resources to bring the forty into early tillable land. Trees had to be cut and removed while the larger logs were rolled into heaps and burned. The smaller ones utilized for constructing additional animal shelters, fence posts, and rails which in time were substituted by split-rails. Grandfather Adam with his two horses and a homemade slip-boat (mudboat), carted many six and eight inch logs to a crude saw mill, with a vertical up-and-down cross cut saw, powered by water, (the circular rotating saw was still an idea) that converted them into random widths of coarse-grained boards.

Adjacent to this mill was also a water-driven corn crusher for milling corn and wheat located on the Wabash River, South of St. Joseph's Convent, which became a mutual center of information on new settlers, local happenings, and much gossip.

For cooking and warmth there was no scarcity of wood for the fireplace, while the rich, warm, glow from it with the help of a tallow-lamp, proved sufficient light on the winter nights. With a slight wink of the eye, Grandmother would say, "In the spring and summer we went to bed at dusk and arose at dawn." The food consisted of wild game, supplemented with beef and pork in the winter, while chickens and eggs had been available for them already in their first year of married life. She said that his animals, having had proper shelter and food in the winter were considered "tops" by neighbors and buyers at the canal. Vegetables from the garden, cornmeal cakes and bread with honey, fruit from the orchard and wild berries picked on the slopes and ravines near the river, provided provisions for the table. With an occasional chuckle she would say, "But this was not all milk and honey." Coffee was dried roasted barley, brewed in a mixture of water and sorghum, which was very palatable to me as a boy of ten.

I knew her well and of her experiences, she having lived to age 96, nearly three decades in the 20th Century, spoke often of the absence of electricity and gasoline since the only power on this little farm, other than human, came on four legs; the two horses, Bob and Jerry. Journeying from place to place was either by foot or with a horse, saddle or cart for roads other than those to trade centers, were few in number and nearly impassable as such. Many were merely cleared, zig-zag paths through the forest made earlier by Indians who no longer menaced the settlers while those that remained were very friendly and helpful.

The territory adjacent to the Wabash extended along the

river from their forty acres East to the bog of cranberries (the source of the Wabash River). This area in the spring and early summer was filled with stagnant pools of water, a likely breeding place for millions of disease-spreading mosquitoes, and known as the Black Swamp. Typhoid and other fevers were not unknown to the family of Adam, for these dreaded diseases were the causes of death of four young members of the family in the early years. Most of the illnesses consisting of various chronic disorders of adults, even as late as the end of the 19th Century, had been attributed to bad drinking water. Another contributing factor causing sickness of typhoid, smallpox, and cholera appearing often in the form of recurring fevers and chills, called the common ague or mere cold fever, originated by contact with the germ-infected soil. Many times respiratory ailments similar to tuberculosis afflicted the families, thus affording a very short life for these members. The nuns and a few priests in the established communities were not exempted from these unhealthy surroundings.

The Himmelnarn farm of 520 acres had been under consideration for purchase by the Society already in the summer of 1850, purchased in 1851, but its occupancy did not materialize until April of 1852. A small log chapel had been annexed to the two badly weathered log houses, but with less than livable quarters a dozen sisters attempted to live there, at times begging for food for an existence from my grandparents and other neighbors. Unfortunately, in March 1854, the chapel and the two log huts were completely destroyed by a wind-swept, raging fire, causing the sisters to be housed at other convents for six weeks. With the aid of benefactors in Cincinnati, restoration of the site began immediately but only temporary houses of logs and clapboards were provided to shelter them temporarily. A new kind of brick convent had been considered by Father Brunner and the Sister Superior since they were planning for a complex convent and seminary, patterned on the monastery type in Europe.

Simultaneously, with the construction of temporary quarters a portion of the elongated two-story brick building was also erected and within two to three months the sisters were in a position to occupy it while the temporary huts were converted to various utility buildings.

The next year the convent building for sisters and a chapel had been completed in full and with additional financial aid, the Society constructed a permanent brick building for a priests' seminary, functioning as such in 1860.

At the extreme East end, which completed the unit, was the chapel with the usual brick spire. The priests' quarters, separate and distinct from the convent, had been erected within walking distance of the chapel.

Priests, religious brothers and families of nearby settlers could enter the chapel from the front while the sisters were confined, strictly, to their quarters and could enter from the north side only.

Adjacent to the convent building was the garden and yard, enclosed with a high board fence. It included the small out-buildings for baking, laundry, and garden tools, and the kitchen which concealed all movements of the sisters from persons about the grounds.

The oratory of the sisters was completely separated from the main chapel by a grilled partition and situated at the side of the main altar and communion could be received by them through a sliding window which would be opened for the occasion. Food for all persons at the convent was provided by the sisters while the portions for the priests and brothers were handed to one of their members through a slot opening in the kitchen. By and large, this opening was the entrance and exit of all messages and articles exchanged by priests and sisters, except those of the Mother Superior and the Superior Priest.

This farm of more than 500 acres required the help of many sisters to provide for the care of its occupants. It housed more than 30 sisters and from three to eight priests and brothers at times, three of which traveled to the out-mission places of St. Joseph, St. Wendelin, St. Henry and other centers in the area. My father, born in 1868, remembers well, as a boy and young man, the tough, arduous and burdensome farm work performed by the sisters to make the land tillable and productive. Two of the sisters furnished the schooling and taught the three R's in a 20 x 40 room in the convent building, which could be entered by a side door on the south. This room was the school for the children for approximately 15 years until a frame school-house was erected across the road from the convent.

My father attended this school, located approximately one-half mile as the crow flies, from his home. It was he who related his jaunts through the forest of deep winter snows with half-frozen hands and feet but in the spring and fall he found the trips more pleasant since he anticipated finding a prison bird in one of his bird snares or a rabbit in a trap. The convent was the center of education and also the place of worship, of all religious life for the family of Adam and Elizabeth for nearly 30 years.

Their first born, daughter Mary, was born in September 1855, and baptized at the Himmelgarten chapel by Father Homburger, the senior priest who became the superior of the small seminary later in 1857.

Grandmother Elizabeth was small in stature of less than five feet, dark brown eyes, small regular features, and an oval face surrounded by coal black hair drawn tightly about it and over the ears to a small knot at the nape. In spite of her stature she was physically strong, confident, self-possessed, displayed unflinching steadfastness with an ambition and determined character and slanting to restlessness of spirit. Carrying a child the first year did not deter her from helping grandfather in doing the chores about the animal and farm sheds while the garden was mainly her duty of which she spoke in glowing terms of grown vegetables and preserved fruits for the

winter. It is understandable that with the care of Mary she had no opportunity to visit her parents the first summer and winter. Eight months after Mary's birth, she with the child in one arm and a gallon of honey in the other, walked the distance of six miles through forest and unbroken trail to the home of her parents who welcomed their firstborn grandchild with great joy and enthusiasm and displaying much love and pride. Henry, grandmothers favorite brother, was more solicitous in catering to Mary, hereby cementing more than a brother-sister relationship with Mary. After a three-day visit, she and Henry returned to her home in a two-wheel trap since they wished to explore the surrounding acreage about the Wabash which belonged to a Mr. Romer and was for sale. Both hoped to have the opportunity of living near each other at some future date since Adam had purchased the other half-interest in the forty acres from Max in 1855.

April, May, and the following summer months were the busy months of the year. Adam was happy to have the help of his brother-in-law for a few days. In clearing new ground for cultivation, many tough young saplings could be removed with ease with a log chain, two men and two horses.

At the end of the first day, about dusk, a young buck had been observed at the edge of the clearing by Adam who with the shotgun crept through the underbrush in the rear of the stables. Suddenly a shotgun blast sliced the air with sizzling hisses that exploded the fading dusk. A loud shout from Adam, "Look, I got him. We'll have young deer for the summer." But his shout of smugness turned to disappointment for the darkness swallowed-up the retreating deer into the deeper brush. The possibility of tracking the buck which appeared to be disabled, would be impossible and had to be postponed to the next morning. Adam and Henry rose before daylight and advanced noiselessly to the spot of the disappearing deer. Hardly had they entered the brush when the gray mist of the dawn revealed the disabled yearling buck a hundred yards ahead in a deep clump. Not wishing to disturb the deer he whispered to Henry, "You remain here and I shall creep to an open space for a shot." He approached the hideout and with one shot—a shot not akin to the thrill a hunter knows at the moment when the game has equal livable chances — he relieved the buck from its misery.

Within an hour the deer was skinned, dressed and the carcass ready for hanging. It was placed in the ground cellar at the rear of the house. After a number of days for curing, the shoulders and hams would be salt-cured and other short meats cooked and canned. In spite of the surprising and exciting morning, no time had been lost in doing a strenuous day's work on the farm.

Walking near the Wabash on their way home from the far corner of the fortys, Henry, shading his eyes from the low-hanging sun said, "I would like to jaunt through that thicket on the other side for" He was interrupted by Adam, "Yes, tomorrow we will explore the eighty acres on this side and that on the other which belongs to Mr. Romer.

It was agreed that the next day would be treated to a full day of tramping. The morning was devoted to examining the contour of the eighty which was adjacent to Adam's. Approaching the North side of the river about a quarter of a mile from the home they crossed to the other side over a fallen tree trunk, spanning the water. All day they pushed through the forest and thicket, walking many times single file. Occasionally great trunks of walnut and oak closed in upon them, but by groping their way, they dodged through the tangled underbrush. Their wanderings lay for the most part through swampy area, which would suddenly fall away. Occasionally short marshes, overgrown with wild oats, millet, and other eatable grains, dotted with little dark clumps of beechnut or blackberry vines, would obstruct their path. Leaving the river they approached much higher ground which had a heavy covering of huge trees.

They, seeing or meeting no human there was no want of life about them, for there was buzzing, chirping and chattering all around them from swamp, marsh, brushwood and tall trees. Once Adam stopped suddenly and whispered, "A deer ahead!" A red-coated deer was seen between distant trunks but out of sight in an instant. Squirrels by the dozen raced for their holes in the hollow trees as the two approached. There was no scarcity of birds; the pert sharp cry of the tiny chick-a-dee, or the call of the blue bird from a small knot-hole in a beech, or the bob-o-link in an open sunny grass plot, or the long drawn mewling of the cat bird, were welcome sounds. Before the close of the afternoon they spied clouds of black-birds and dozens of crows who kept a constant watch of their movements as they wearily trudged over this section of land. They, in their wanderings, circled the entire area between the Indian Boundary Line road and the Wabash.

That evening, sitting before the wide fireplace that provided some warmth and light, aided by the tallow lamp, they enjoyed large bowls of venison stew, and squares of honeyed cornbread. Have you ever enjoyed the small culinary tidbits from the neck of the deer (venison stew), or baked cornbread, taken from a cast iron kettle, all the while a handful of glowing gnarled and knotty oak-root coals keeping it redhot, these provided sizzling morsels and simultaneously, radiated a congenial atmosphere for the three who, indeed, would have regrets upon Henry's leave-taking on the morrow? There was much discussion about the available land that had been explored that day for Adam, Henry, and certainly his sister, Grandmother Elizabeth. They anticipated a less lonely and more pleasant life with him as a potential nearby neighbor. Silent and desolate as the busch might be, Henry's presence with a wife and family in the future certainly would add to the fullness of their lives and strengthen family solidarity.

Within the year Adam had purchased the additional eighty next to his original forty while Henry acquired a 190 acre tract on the other side of the river which was about a half-mile west of the village of St. Wendelin. This tract with a disbanding log hut, surrounded by a small clearing had been granted to a revolutionary soldier after the war, but it was not his choice or later purchasers to clear it and find a

homestead.

Years earlier, perhaps about 1840, Mr. Romer, a willing purchaser of many forest-covered acreage in the surrounding area obtained it for the purchase price of \$1.00 per acre. Obviously, Henry, his wife, Dorothea (Henery), with a growing family, living on land near Sharpsburg, needed a larger homestead, and by 1856 completed a successful deal with Mr. Romer. They were blessed with a family of 10 children, raising them to maturity before 1900, which simultaneously, gave me the opportunity of knowing each member and those of the next generation through long association.

The development of the 20 mile-square area in the two counties was truly magical in the next two to three decades. The dissatisfaction with social, religious, and economic conditions in the German homeland and the possibility of acquiring easy wealth brought more and more Germans to the New World. One must not overlook the personal concern of the German immigrants in participating in the religious involvement made possible by the zealous priests and sisters of the Precious Blood Society.

These members gave unlimited time and effort in providing religious services and educating the children in more than 20 Mission parishes for the last half of the 19th Century.

Less than a dozen settlements, centered by log churches, existed when Adam and his sisters came to this particular frontier, six of which had the advantage of great religious zeal of convent environment. Incredible is the fact that in a few decades the territory was dotted with many churches and schools, rarely more than two miles from each other since the population of a few hundred grew from 500 to over 1500. Small parishes of St. Anthony, St. Peter, Philothea, Sharpsburg, Burkettsville, Carthage, and others appeared in the last quarter. Burkettsville became a center on the Mercer-Darke County line with a frame church planned by settlers: Himmelgarn, Nordenbrock, Rummel, and Borgerding. The church at Sharpsburg was built in 1874 with the help of Robbins, Zenz, and Timmerman. While Philothea and Carthage had a large freed-negro population intermixed with German settlers.

According to the Catholic census of the archdiocese as reported by the Precious Blood Society, the seven mission centers in 1856 consisted of 710 families: Minster of 310; St. John 70; St. Rose 60; Cassella 60; Ft. Loramie 70; St. Henry 90; St. Joseph 50. The Society consisted of 11 ordained priests, 50 brothers and 120 sisters.

As Ohio was an adjoining state to two slave-holding ones, many negroes escaped, crossing the Ohio River and by way of the so-called "Underground railroad," found freedom among the Indians and German settlers in the counties of Mercer and Auglaize. For the colored people to settle in these counties much influence had been exerted by northern anti-slavery families who were interested in aiding the freed negroes since they were unable to help themselves. Mr. Augustus Wattles, a

native of Connecticut, moving to Cincinnati in 1830, realized the dire straits and ignorance of nearly 400 blacks in that city. The parents and adults had been slaves, now freed, but were shut-out from every avenue of schooling and employment. Seeing their predicament he encouraged many families to accompany him to Mercer County, townships of Marion, Granville, Butler, and Franklin. The members of his colony, with other freed blacks from Virginia, were scattered over many miles in Mercer County, centered mainly around the village of Carthage. Mr. Wattles made the first purchase of land for them in 1835, and with the financial aid of Judge Leigh of Virginia and the Trustees of the Estate of Samuel Emlen of New Jersey, they purchased 30,000 acres, extending as far West as Philopha by 1840. The Emlen Institute -- site of St. Charles Seminary-- was established for the education of colored boys, teaching them the art of farming and mechanical skills. Due to threats, and acts of hostilities by whites in certain areas, other than the whites around Carthage, many blacks sold their acreage and abandoned their homes. This is not to say that the whites should be entirely held responsible for the dwindling colored population in this county. Unable to tame the wild forest and make a living because of their customs, habits, dispositions, environment and ignorance, many blacks became shiftless and lost their farms.

The Emlen Institute, focusing on farming and mechanical vocations, had a weighty effect upon many black families and their children about Carthage. Though the population decreased in years and with greater rapidity after the Institute and acreage had been sold to the Society, many families remained and some intermarried with whites. This reduced colony boasted a Methodist Church and a public school as late as 1922.

Many of these emancipated negroes were kindly disposed toward Catholicity and had been converted, but a decline in adherence to the church was influenced by the proselytizing of other denominations, and the lack of transportation and communication with the various missions.

Adam's diary relates of a country-wide Catholic celebration in the autumn of 1858 when Archbishop Purcell visited a dozen or more mission parishes, performing the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the laying of the cornerstone of two new mission centers. We learn from his writing that approximately 500 black families--not all converted to Catholicism--were scattered over this large area.

According to an early history of Mercer County, published in late 1800, black families with names of Campbell, Oaks, Banks, Clark, Bowser, Boles, and others lived in log houses in the wooded territory from Carthage to Philothea. The black families of Banks, Bowser, Hurd and Boles continued to have their children attend the black public school in Carthage to 1922 at which time the schools were integrated into the one Parish School.

The Archbishop arrived at Ft. Lorame (his first stop) by way of a flat-boat on the canal and administered Confirmation

to 37 candidates in 1858. A procession of lay people, men, women and children accompanied by a score of men on horseback, escorted the Archbishop to Minster where he confirmed 150 persons. It appears that Adam on horseback joined the procession the next day at Minster and journeyed with the group to St. John, St. Rose, St. Henry, and Philothea where the Archbishop confirmed over 50 colored adults in the four parishes, including 15 in Philothea. The day after he laid the cornerstones of St. Peter and St. Francis he ended his journey with the blessing of the new graveyard of St. Wendelin though the first church had been erected there in 1856 with graves in the cemetery antedating that year.

It is of interest to note that the custom of meeting and escorting a bishop from one parish to another continued into the 20th century and ended with the advent of the automobile. It was in the years of 1903 and 1905, confirmed by the entries in my book of memory, that I had had personal experiences of two processions of this kind of flying-banner fanfare. My father, with his fringed-top surrey and prancing bays, accompanied by a dozen or more mounted parish horsemen, conducted the Archbishop from St. Paul's parish to St. Wendelin with a follow-up the next day to St. Henry. Yes, as a page-boy, dressed in a highly-starched Fauntleroy suit and new patent leather shoes, I was honored to assist my father on these two occasions, an affair I shall always remember.

In listing the many parishes established in the period, 1840-1860, one should not overlook Fort Recovery and its contribution to the social, economic, and religious influence on the extreme western part of the county. It had been laid out in lots as early as 1836, but began to grow only after the Lake Erie and Western Railroad chose it as a marketing point. Many business interests of all kinds were encouraged to cater to local and county people. Ft. Recovery had a population of nearly 1000 in 1860, served by a half-dozen denominational churches, including one Catholic, two schools with an enrollment of over 250 pupils, two hotels and three physicians.

Ft. Recovery is a historic site for it stands at once as a monument to the defeat of St. Claire and the victory of Anthony Wayne, though small indeed, it has a prominent place in American history. The buried remains of those killed at Fallen Timbers were discovered about 1851, placed in suitable coffins and buried on the south side of the village. To perpetuate their memory a proper monument, authorized by Congress had been erected over the site, but to bring more prominence to the town a series of block-houses and a stockade have been positioned on the site of the old fortifications of 1700.

According to the history of the town a wooden, iron-strap-ped box, containing pieces of silver and gold of \$14,000 valuation had been unearthed about 1852 near the base of a huge oak on the riverbank. It is said that it was the paymaster's box for supplies and pay of the soldiers. Many were the rumors after this discovery, thus bringing numerous ill-repute, quick-rich men into the area for lost treasures.

Jen Josu 1855 am 30 ten Inyazeeban
iff inspan Josson Anna Maria geboren

X. Am 25 ten Auguß 1857 iff inspan Josu
Josoff geboren Died 10/2/1861

X. Jen Josu 1859 am 26 ten Auguß iff inspan
Josu Channing geboren Died 7/2/1870

Jen Josu 1861 am 1 ten Wörig iff inspan
Josson Klara geboren

Am 3 ten Oktober 1862 iff inspan
Josu Josoff geboren

Darby am 29 ten Januar 1865 iff
inspan Josu Joserman geboren

Darby am 20 ten März 1868
iff inspan Josu Peter geboren

X. Am 10 ten Auguß 1870 iff inspan
Josu Quinn geboren Died 3/11/1873

William am 30 ten April 1873 iff
inspan Josson Elizabeth geboren

X. Darby am 18 ten Wörig 1876 iff
inspan Josson Bertha geboren Died 3/18/1876

Darby am 12 ten Juli 1878 iff
inspan Josson Barbara geboren

Coldwater, now a growing town, was planned in 1859 by Albers, Birgmeier, and Billerman. It had a slow growth until the establishment of the New Idea Corporation after 1900.

Adam and his family were the recipients of many benefits from improved transportation on the Canal and the railroads after 1850. The radical improvement of road beds in early 1860 and of better transportation facilities for wagons and other vehicles enabled him and other settlers to prosper. It was in the ten years to the end of the Civil War that Adam's family grew from one to five children. The death of a son, Joseph, born in 1857, dying in 1861, brought them much sorrow for typhoid fever had taken its toll early in their family life. A few years later another son, Henry, and a daughter Catherine, died of this scourge. A second daughter, Clara, born in 1861, after devoting more than 60 years of her life as a nun, died at an advance age of 80 years. A second son, Joseph, born 1862, continued to live and work the old homestead as an adult after the family moved to the newly constructed large, brick house on the 150 acres south of the river which had been purchased from Mr. Meinerding in 1880.

Grandfather Adam, a naturalized American citizen had been inducted into the Ohio Regiment for military service in the Civil War. The war of rebellion did not come upon the country suddenly. Ominous clouds gathered slowly, hung dark and menacing long before the storm broke. Two political parties, one for a concentrated federal control, the other firm in its devotion to States' Rights, created bitterness among the people. Men of influence in political positions of both parties eyed one another with grave distrust and when Ft. Sumter fell in April 1861, the excitement in Ohio was painful in its intensity. The citizens of Dayton who had not heard the news, read it in the two papers; The Western Empire and The Daily News. The people in the villages to the North beyond Sidney, those of the rural areas about Minster and in the parishes of Mercer County, heard many contradictory statements, pro and con, with respect to the declared war and to the need of the volunteers for the army. Ohio, being a neighboring state to Kentucky, had citizens divided on the issues of slavery and its allied problems. Voluntary enlistment recruiting of citizens and the States' military waged the fighting for the first three years. The first veterans who had enlisted for three years had now finished their duty, thus by 1864, since insufficient volunteers did not replace the old regiments, a draft program was introduced by the Federal government.

Provisions of the draft program allowed draftees to contract with volunteers as their alternates who in some instances received huge bounties or other valuable considerations for their services. Fortunately, Grandfather Adam, for induction on his way to Cleveland was able to contract with a young man as his substitute for the sum of \$300.

One of the big problems on the home front in Ohio was the large group of citizens who opposed the war and the high-handed action of the Central Government. This group was called,

"copperheads," for they discouraged enlistment, opposed the draft, and advised men not to present themselves at induction centers. Mr. Vallandigham, editor of the Journal in Dayton, was arrested and his office destroyed because of his editorials opposing the war. A few neighbors of Adam, draftees in 1864, had given government recruiting officers a merry chase for more than a year through the dense forest and backwood roads of Mercer County. The oft-repeated stories given by the families, no doubt true, indicated that their favorite hiding places were in hay mows, corncribs, and in hollow trees in nearby swamps. When the war ended in 1865, amnesty was given to all soldiers, both north and south, by the President.

During Adam's brief absence on his journey for induction, son John was born. Within the next eight years two more blessed their home, a son Peter in 1868, and a daughter Elizabeth in 1873. Elizabeth (Sister Bertranda of the Precious Blood Sisters) was a teaching nun for more than sixty years, dying at a mature age of over 80 years. Many members of this family lived beyond eighty for Peter died at age 94, and the youngest daughter, Barbara, born in 1887, died at the age of 96.

When Adam and his family moved into the large two-story brick home, located a few yards West of the church, bordering the old military road (Indian Boundary Line) in 1880 many other families had already established homesteads in all directions. To the West of Adam on the five-mile route to Ft. Recovery was his brother-in-law, Henry Stachler, his nearest neighbor. Dozens of homes, one-half mile apart, dotted the on-going dirt road to the village of St. Clair's Defeat. These families: Tunney, Hammon, Conklin, Lennartz, Hart, Mossing and Wolfe, all worshipped at the mission church of St. Wendelin or at the St. Joseph's Convent.

To the East from his porch, Adam could point with pride to the new brick church. The first home mission church had been planned and built by Father Reister and the early settlers Breitenstein, Esser, Fecher, Hoening and others in 1856. In the first years services had been held very occasionally, not even monthly, in the small building by a priest from the Himmelgarten Convent but with the influx of many families, a parish of 40 families of 150 members required a new church to be built. Religious services were held weekly and daily after 1890. A permanent pastor for the parish was obtained who boarded and lodged free-of-charge at the home of my grandparents after 1895 until 1906, at which time a new parish house had been erected.

For Adam and Elizabeth the thirty or more years had been very prosperous, allowing them to clear many heavily wooded acres on the two banks of the river. Even as late as 1885, huge walnuts, oak, and ash trees were felled by the hundreds and hauled into heaps to be burned. This wholesale destruction was necessary to clear the land for cultivation and to reclaim the swamp areas thereby improving the health conditions of the settlers. The 270 acres with more than one-half in cleared tillable land were marked off in checkerboard squares of wheat,



Old Log House 1914, Vacated 1890
And
New Brick House 1880. Church 1875



Adam's Last Journey

corn, oats, and hay. The large brick house at the time was noted as a mark of distinction and elegance. The rich Wabash valley had been improved by drainage, and was producing an abundance of farm products while the improvement in farm machinery and horsepower, available water from drilled wells, powered by windmills, took part of the toil out of farming. These benefits allowed more time for raising animals, clearing more land, improving homes and in constructing large grain barns. A great demand for foodstuffs, higher farm prices, and increasing population in villages and country, encouraged new settlers and second-generation families to acquire from 50 to 100-acre farms near and about this small settlement of St. Wendelin.

St. Wendelin was merely a cross-roads on the map with the church on one corner and a country store of two-story frame construction with an overhanging front porch. It housed the family on the upper floor and contained essential items for marketing on the ground floor. The son of an Irish immigrant, named Coughlin, owned the store and enjoyed a lucrative trade of bartering for eggs in exchange for goods with farmers of the parish. He with the aid of a huckster wagon and two mules expanded his trade beyond the local area.

With no free-delivery mail service for rural people, a corner within, and near the store's entrance, partitioned and separate from saleable goods, was the government's authorized local post office with a pigeon hole for each family of the parish. Butterfat from milk and cream was a valuable product on the farm for income which was collected by a member of the parish, Mr. Buehler, who delivered it to the creamery at Ft. Recovery.

About the year 1900 a room, for men only, was added to the rear of the store for drinks and with the introduction of hard liquor brought men from many miles around, including those who worked the oil wells in the two-mile square area south of the village.

Perhaps the most exciting and extensive development of industry in this area other than farming was the discovery of oil and gas in the late 1800's. This enticed men of riotous and unrestrained characters, living in eastern Indiana and western Ohio, to work in the oil fields during the day with much drinking and carousing during the night. One of these roust-a-bouts was a big, hefty, sun-burned 200 pounder. He of a short stubby beard and slightly manicured finger nails, a bulging neck hiding the shirt collar, with his reddish hair like his skin, and when sober was a rather good-looking sort-of-fellow. But his loud-mouth sputtering would invariably associate him with drinking and loose living. One evening near midnight, he and a half-dozen cronies, after many rounds of drinks, vowed they would direct and carry on the nefarious business for the remainder of the evening. Without question, the affaire d'honneur provoked more than the provincial fist fight between the group and the local farmers and workmen for the affair ended with the room in shambles and the foreigners driven out of the village, carting the half-dead, red-whiskered Hoosier with them.

He died a few days later which brought an action by the court to close the scandalous room. The rumor was that a baseball bat, wielded by the local bricklayer, had been the cause of his sudden demise but no criminal action had been instituted. The influence of the environment of the saloon, hard liquor, oil, and money had caused many heartaches among a few local families at the time, and had its effects upon them for years thereafter.

Radiating from the church corner were a few homes on each side of the four roads, which in the winter were deeply rutted and frozen, and covered with a heavy dust in the summer. Neighbors to the North of the store were the local carpenter and bricklayer. To the East was a farm with an oil well which provided natural gas to the village (gas was a by-product and more valuable than oil at the turn of the century). A quarter-mile beyond was a small local sawmill that supplied lumber for the construction of houses in the parish. A large sawmill riggen that processed logs from a foot to five feet in diameter was located West of Casella, owned and operated by John Link (Hans Link) and had a monopoly in providing cut lumber for the construction of large barns and sheds in the county for nearly a half-century.

To the South beyond the church and cemetery was the one-room red schoolhouse also adjacent to it, across the road, was the home of a disabled civil war veteran by the name of Hammon. To the West of not more than 100 rods was Grandfather Adam's stately two story brick house. It, with the high-towered brick church signaled an approaching visitor of the nearness of the village of St. Wendelin. Directly across from Grandfather's home after crossing a swinging footbridge one would approach a two-room cottage, the birthplace of one of the principal characters of this ancestral story.

In the interval of 15 years after 1885, my grandparents with the help of three mature sons, enjoyed a greater degree of prosperity. The clearance of more acreage, improved machinery, (McCormick binder and threshing outfit), more horsepower, an abundance of wheat, corn, and pigs, having better than average prices, brought more progress and wealth, and more suitable living for the family. This progress was mainly due to spectacular improvements in the application of natural farm fertilizers to the land and technological improvement of farm machinery. The crude, horse-drawn reaper supplanted the old scythe and cradle in grain harvest. The reaper became the binder in 1870 and was further improved by the attachment of an automatic twine-knotter and sheaf carrier. All of these have been superseded today by the grain combine which cuts and threshes in one simple operation. Horses have been replaced by the tractor and the self-propelled harvesting combine that now cuts small grain and soybeans, and with extra attachments separate, pick and shell corn in one operation.

After 1875, Adam had but a few miles to go to market his grain, cattle, and hogs. A big puffing and huffing monster was pulling steel-wheeled railroad cars out of Ft. Recovery and St. Henry to distant points. This mode of transportation gradually replaced the canals as the chief means of moving freight.

Today, 100 years later very little of the canal remains that mirrored the growth and wealth that it once brought to the farmers. In places, South of Minster, one can see moss covered locks and stagnant pools of water that once were a part of the canal system. Fortunately, many miles of the canal are to be restored for posterity in order to pay tribute to the courage of these Ohio pioneers who were willing to risk all for a better future and to pass on a rich inheritance to future generations.

Banks as financial institutions were few in number and none existed in this rural area. Tradition has it that Grandfather Adam had been known far and wide as the local country banker in the last decade of the 19th Century. Any gold dollars in his possession were kept in a secret compartment of a large handmade walnut chest which is a family heirloom in our 150 year old brick farmhouse near Dayton.

Trade and finance was conducted in gold dollars and Grandfather's diary and simple account book (also an heirloom) described his monetary dealings. According to the entries and his many cancelled note stubs he had loaned money to many settlers and businessmen in a radius of over 20 miles. From time to time farmers were compelled to borrow money to finance the purchase of new and improved farm equipment, animals and additional acreage. The economic progress in the last quarter of the 19th Century and that of the 20th, demanded new mercantile businesses. Simultaneously, this encouraged some adventurous men to engage in financial ventures with potential risks. What was the impact of these proposed new financial ideas on Adam? One might infer that he had been too conservative in loaning his gold dollars. According to one item in his diary, two businessmen from Union City, Indiana, urged him to enter the lumber industry as a partner or to loan them money to promote a new lumber venture about the turn of the century. Due to the risk involved of importing processed lumber from the Southern States, he declined the undertaking. This is not surprising since his knowledge was that of farming only. This lumber venture became one of the largest retail lumber organization in Central-Western Ohio, and by establishing many lumber supply dealers throughout Mercer County after 1900, it absorbed all local lumber agencies that had been supplying the rough lumber for the construction of barns and houses as well as the fine-grained walnut, oak, and knotty-pine for interior house trim.

I should acknowledge the fact that in criticizing or appraising the financial know-how of Adam, my grandfather, I might appear to be exaggerating his very successful farming enterprise. On the contrary, I should hasten to point out that other entries in his accounts supports my assertions of his efficient farming abilities. These entries reveal, supported by his diary, that he bestowed 1000 gold dollars (a relatively large sum at that time) upon each of his eight children during the twelve year period from 1888 to 1900. (A few pages from his ledger are presented in German script, including my translations, on the following page.)

Was' unsere Tochter Anna Maria bekommen hat

Mutter Joseph Anna Maria hat geschenkt		Daughter
am 29ten Januar 1884 für Johanna Maria		Anna Maria
Ehrentreu mit gegeben	25	One cow
ein Küch	0 28	Cook stove
einem Kleiderapparat	0 12	Clothes Press
einem Tisch & Stuhl u. ein Bett	14	Feed
einem Hochzeitkleid	30	wedding Dress
einem Kleiderschrank	0 11	Cupboard
einem Nähmaschinen	0 30	Sewing Machine
am 11ten Februar 1888 ein Pferd geben	45	Horse
am 13ten Februar 1888 500 für Gold geben	155	Gold Dollars
am 31ten März 1888 für ein Pferd	8	
am 23ten April 1891 100 für Gold	100	Gold
am 20ten August 1891 für ein Pferd	100	Gold
am 25ten Januar 1892 für 10 Acres Land	300	Ten Acres Land
am 25ten Januar 1892 für ein Pferd	300	Ten Acres Land
Zusammen	1000	

Was' unsere Sohn Peter bekommen hat

Sohn, Peter

Mutter Joseph Peter hat geschenkt		
am 20ten August 1892		
für Hochzeitkleid	30	Wedding clothes
ein Küch	25	Cow
ein Bett u. ein Tisch	8	Feed
am 3ten Juni 1898 für Gold		
am 1ten August 1898 für ein Pferd	1000	Gold dollars

Entries from his ledger with respect to gifts of gold dollars given to his children.

Name and Birthdate	Year Given						
	1888	1891	1892	1895	1898	1899	1900
Mary, 1855	200	200	400	-	200	-	-
Clara, C.PP.S., 1861	300	-	500	-	-	200	-
Joseph, 1862	-	-	1000	-	-	-	-
John, 1865	-	-	-	-	1000	-	-
Peter, 1868	-	-	1000	-	-	-	-
Elizabeth, C.PP.S., 1875	-	-	-	300	-	-	700
Barbara, 1878*							
*An interest in an oil well located on the North bank of the Wabash River.							

In summarizing, it would be of interest to take a hurried glance at some of the events, both joyful and sad, that confronted the parent-family of Jacob Abraham and Maria Fecher in Europe in the half-century, 1850 to 1900. In the course of time an occasional letter passed yearly between the parents in Europe and the children in America. No Record of correspondence was available of the two brothers who remained in Baltimore. However, Adam's diary expressed sadness at the death of one brother in 1890. Apparently, complete contact had been lost with them and their descendants. The curiosity of a member in the East after seeing a magazine article by my daughter, Julie Marie (Fecher) Zink, initiated his desire to learn more about a family in Ohio of the same name. Continuous correspondence and many fourth-cousins' visits of the members of these two branches, produced very happy meetings, the results of which supports much of the ancestral history of the two brothers.

The marriage of Adam and the sisters and news of their growing families had been relayed to the parents during these years while the corresponding news of the marriage of the sister, Walburga, to Leopold Wagenhauser of Munich and the birth of her four daughters, (Anna, Clara, Walburga and Josephine), had been received in America. It was but a few years later that John Adam received the sad news of the death of his sister, Walburga, when Josephine, (the youngest daughter, was three years old).

The father, Mr. Wagenhauser, deservedly, remarried, the union added two more daughters to the family. Both he and the new mother were very solicitous in caring for the family. A dreadful situation confronted the four daughters and the stepmother after six years due to the death of the father. However, the mother attended the stepdaughters in a good and proper manner as circumstances permitted. Through the efforts of Adam and the co-operation of the stepmother one of the daughters, followed by two later: (Anna, Walburga, and Josephine) came to America, financed by Adam and his sisters. Honorably and worthily, the three nieces were able to repay the expense of the voyage by assisting in the care of the growing families of their benefactors.

As would be expected, a family of many children was desired by parents in attempting to conquer frontier land and each child was an economic unit. It had been noted that Adam had a family of seven by 1878. Mary, Adam's sister married Max who, with pride, could point to four sons and four daughters. Their oldest daughter, Maria, married Franz Kremer of Maria Stein in 1871 and brought eleven children to maturity. The second daughter, Therese, established a home with August Knapke, all living within the shadows of the convent. Adam's sister, Eva Barbara, married Franz Renta in 1853, and with the assistance of four sons and two daughters, born before 1880, established a large homestead on the ancestral land of Rentz near Chickasaw.

The services of the three nieces were rendered to these families, including the Kremer and Knapke households. A most pleasant and reciprocal arrangement must have been made with them as related by their descendants. After completing their responsibilities over a period of years the three girls boarded a coach on the Cincinnati and Hamilton Railroad (CH&D) at St. John station and came to Dayton and Miamisburg, where they found suitable, domestic employment.

They, in time, married into families domiciled in the area: Anna married Julius Hohm; Walburga married Joseph Geis, their daughter, Mary added much to this exclusive research which had been further supplemented to a great degree by the sons and daughters of Josephine May (Frank May the father): Albert, Anthony, Clara, Anna, Lawrence, and Brother Julius, (a Marxist Brother and a personal friend).

Barbara, born in 1878, the last member to enter the household of Adam, and Mary the first to leave when marrying Joseph Miller in 1884, focused the year of 1880 as the actual beginning of the family breakdown. To blunt the effects of Mary's leaving, the parents contracted for a home on an acreage within a half-mile of her old home, at the same time they provided some essentials for simple living. The list of items given her according to a page from Adam's diary were: a cow, horse, cookstove, cupboard, sewing machine, a clothes press, feed for the animals and some gold dollars. The second daughter, Clara, Sister Quatia, became a nun in 1889. They showed equal love and provided her clothes and 300 gold dollars. Son,

Joseph, remaining at the old homestead after the family moved into the large brick house, married Rose Feltz of Cassella in 1888.

My uncle Joseph was a small, quiet, unassuming man, very cooperative and strictly honest. He was, however, no match for his wife, Rose, who was tall and stately, dark hair and grey eyes, honest, earnest, truthful, and had the appearance of an overbearing individual accentuated by thin lips, except when she smiled. Her brow, with hair rolled back appeared to be too high, thereby presenting an unaware, uppish personality.

Uncle John, born during the Civil War conflict, remained with the parents with son, Peter, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Barbara. It was in 1892 that Peter married a local young lady, Anna Lennartz, both of whom worshipped at St. Wendelin and were members of the church choir and dramatic club.

John Adam and the three sons cultivated the 270 acres as a unit from 1888 to 1892 and upon the marriage of Peter, purchased 60 acres from Mr. Keller, now a total of 330 acres. The original home farm of 120 acres, (less 40 reserved for the mother), one-third of the live stock, and 1000 gold dollars was given to Joseph for his loyalty and labor. A joint ownership arrangement of the land South of the Wabash of 210 acres was made with John and Peter, while the remaining two-thirds of the livestock was equally divided among these two sons. Each because of their loyalty and labor, they too received 1000 gold dollars.

Daughter Elizabeth, Sister Bertranda, joined the Sisters of the Precious Blood in 1891, following her blood sister Clara, Sister Quatia, who became a member of the Society in 1870.

The Society, constantly endeavoring to improve the educational status of its teaching members, established a Normal School and the training of the novices at Gruenewald in 1883. The new candidates in addition to receiving a secondary education were taught the household arts of cooking, sewing, knitting, drawing, and music. Upon the dedication of the larger complex and new Relic Chapel at Maria Stein in 1892, it became the future center of these activities until the dedication of the new motherhouse at Salem Heights at Dayton in 1923. I have happy memories of yearly boyhood visits at the Maria Stein Convent with the two sisters of my father, Sister Quatia and Sister Bertranda. In later years, about 1920, various future educational programs were discussed with Superior Ludovica, Mother Mary Emma and Mother Mary Agreda. It was under the regime of these three superiors that a community-wide educational program was established which brought national prominence to the Society.

The Normal School at Maria Stein provided limited undergraduate college training to 1914 but it needed teachers with academic degrees to fulfill the demands of Ohio's Educational legislation.

Subsequently a number attended the Sisters College at the Catholic University and St. Xavier in Cincinnati, Ohio, where many teaching sisters completed their academic training thereafter. In 1924-1928 I learned to know many promising members of the Society at the Catholic University pursuing graduate work who today are my most cherished friends. It was the sisters of the Precious Blood Order who encouraged me to do health research of sisters in 1925 and the first group to cooperate in it.

My aunt, Sister Quatia, had no opportunity to receive an education, at the time, however, according to her own version she learned the shoemaker's trade and became quite adept at making soft-sole shoes for the members of the Society until 1900. With the increased growth in population the need for Eucharistic hosts was urgent and upon her request she was placed in charge of the woodburning ovens that baked untold thousands of hosts in the next forty years. My greatest delight when visiting my two aunts at Maria Stein in the summer was to watch Sister Quatia manipulate the hot irons in forming the imprint upon the large hosts. However, I cannot discount my eagerness in tasting and eating the broken ones.

Sister Bertranda, on the other hand had the opportunity of Normal School training and attended many teachers' summer educational institutes held at Maria Stein from 1895 to 1911. She devoted her entire religious life to the education of children in various parts of the country and as an associate of Sister Laurentine Lennartz, (my mother's cousin), established the first parish school for blacks in Sedalia, Missouri in 1938.

My Grandparents shared their prosperity with the religious by bestowing money to the Society at various intervals. Adam's diary relates the attendance of the family at the dedication of the new sisters quarters and Relic Chapel in 1892. They did not overlook in providing money and comfort to the local parish priest who lodged and boarded at their home for many years - until 1906. Material and spiritual contributions have been continued by the 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations of this parent family in the present century.

For a moment raise the curtain of the past fifty years so that one may look upon their lives in this development. In less than fifty years the involved ones had witnessed great changes. Living as Adam, his sisters, and their neighbors, despite the absence of facilities to which we, today, are accustomed, they had enjoyed a beautiful country, uncultivated but rich and picturesque. It was the parades, religious celebrations, family gatherings, and merry-making that took the sharp edges off their loneliness and toil. In such a setting, little village communities were formed in this area of 20 miles square. Each village was centered with a village church and a parish school that created awareness of the essential and invincible human attributes of these men and women. The joys and sorrows of one of these communities, St. Wendelin,

constitutes the framework of this biographical story.

The results of their achievements are not foreign to me since I had lived and spent 14 years of my childhood here and had close contacts all my life with the people of this circumscribed German Catholic area in the extreme West-Central part of the state. As late as the middle of the 20th Century this area was still dotted with isolated villages, two to three miles apart, known as parishes of well built brick churches and lofty spires. Each hamlet contained a country general store, and a one-room red schoolhouse, ably managed by a teacher who was also the parish organist. Nearby was the home of the pastor and the teacher with a few homes of retired farmers, radiating on the periphery of the village. Due to the immediate proximity of a church and school to my home and that of the mother of my children, there developed a mutual attitude on the meaning of life by us which we attempted to transmit to our children.

We should not forget that there were later pioneers, descendants of the original immigrants, in the second decade of the 20th Century who had the courage to add to the religious and educational standards of the community when others about them were self-satisfied. This 2nd generation unit was not confronted with the extreme hardships of rough living as the forefathers had experienced in the 19th Century. Though convenient living in 1910 as we view it today was something still to be desired. Transportation was by horse and buggy, communication by telephone in the country was non-existent, no central heating system or interior plumbing, and no electricity for light and power. These conveniences, in time, would be made available, but it was the lack of education beyond the three R's that prompted a few of these 20th Century pioneers to seek new areas of knowledge, thus raising the educational status of the oncoming generations. The full scope and significance of the impact of this facet initiated by two, can never be fully appreciated by their descendants until their children have had the opportunity of evaluating the ever moving educational ripples set in motion by them. In humility, may I apply the old axiom: a generation or two must intervene before one can faithfully and honestly evaluate and criticize. Just as the future (our children's children) will judge us; so we all as work-a-day historians will tend to judge the past. As interpretation of life's situations changes from one generation to another so will the reputations of our forefathers change.

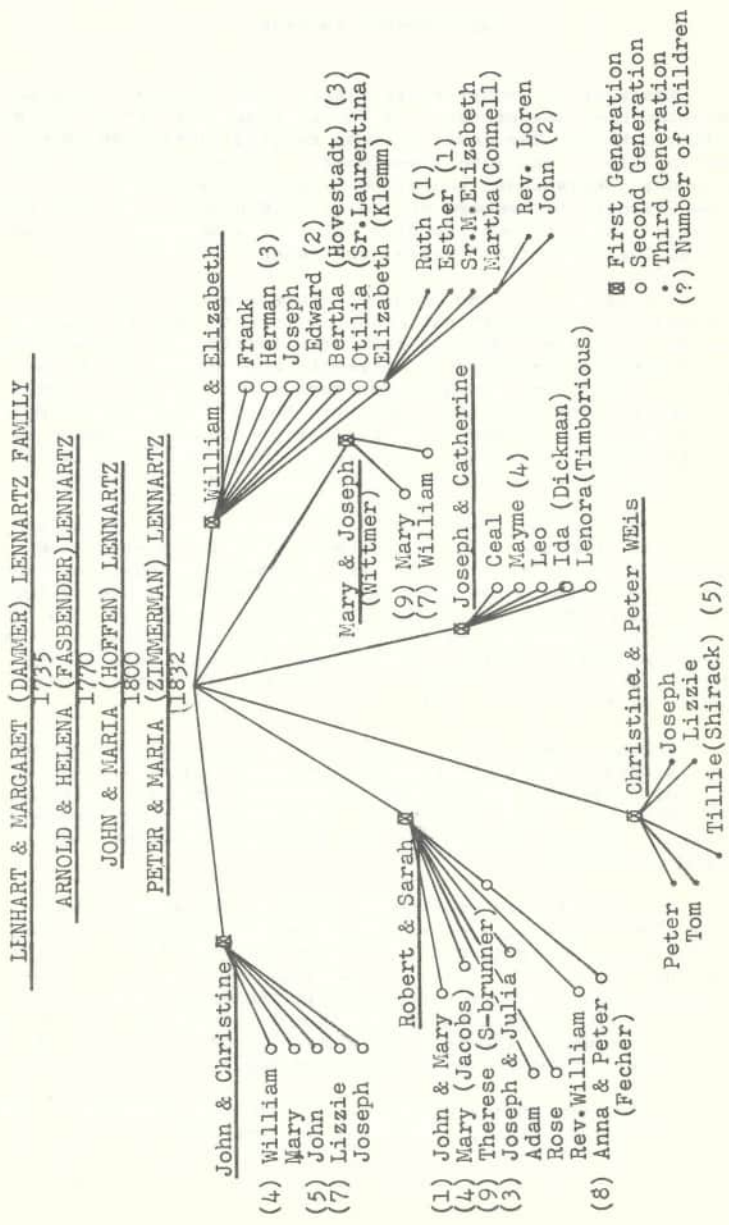
Thirty years later other emerging leaves (sons and daughters of the 3rd and 4th generations) were compelled to seek new areas of occupations and professions, other than that of farming. The propagation of large families, with an abundance of available farmland in Mercer County, had desirable economic and social values in the years before 1900 which diminished greatly in the three decades of the 20th Century. It was no longer feasible or economical for sons and daughters of this 3rd and 4th generations to remain in the area due to unavailable farm land.

Educational advantages had multiplied a hundredfold for

them since many private and public schools and colleges in nearby cities in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and adjacent states had been established. The parents, more affluent, were financially able to provide an education beyond the secondary school for them. Hundreds of young men and women, descendants of the old German stock, today, have college degrees and are filling important positions in education, industry, salesmanship, medicine, and nurses in hospitals in all parts of our country. They, too, are adorning and giving life to the ancestral tree.

At this point in time it would be well for all the descendants of the ancestral members of the Jacob Abraham and Maria Fecher Family to review the solid accomplishments, or at least focus attention on the inheritance that had been given them. What these settlers sowed in hardship and toil, generations of today are reaping untold benefits. We, knowing the difficulties and problems they encountered which they translated into situations of improved living, it is our obligation to equal or exceed their ambitions in our respective vocations.

Ending the biographical account of the family of John Adam and Elizabeth (Stachler) Fecher, it could be feasible to continue the life stories of their son Peter, my father. On the contrary, he, having been greatly influenced by my mother, Anna Lennartz, a knowledge of the ancestral family of Lennartz should be of immediate significance. Unquestionably we shall see presently that a high degree of environment and heredity of this family had greatly influenced the oncoming generations.



CHAPTER II

THE LENNARTZ ANCESTRY

Messages of ancestry experiences are shadows of the past, projected upon the present. A 200 year picture out of the book of life makes up the gamut of many related stories which will come to life as you turn these pages. Drawing upon memories of the older generations, supported by historical facts, and tales of experiences of members of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, I shall attempt to give you the background of the second involved ancestral family, the Lennartz Family.

The history of the Duchy of Prussia before 1656 is limited because of its political connections with that of Brandenburg and of Cleve. Each of the three territories had been ruled by its own Elector under the Suzerain and control of Poland. A Swedish-Polish conflict had been raging for nearly 100 years when Sweden took control of Northern-Europe by defeating Poland at the Battle of Warsaw. The Elector of Prussia becoming an ally of Sweden, secretly, was able to throw off the yolk of Poland which resulted in her sovereignty and independence.

A new Elector, Frederick I of Prussia took control in 1701 as an absolute ruler and crowned himself as Frederick William, King of Prussia. Prussia became an exaggerated bureaucracy. Lutheranism had been established as the state religion which created much turmoil among the minor dukes and much dissatisfaction among the rising middle-class and peasants. Compulsory military service, heavy taxes, absolute rule of the Emperor, and the consciousness of freedom and equality urged many to migrate from Prussia to Western Europe.

Lenhart Lennartz, the first known ancestral member was born in early 1700 at Hackhausen, Prussia, and had served in the army under the Second King of Prussia, Frederick William, II. This ruler, like his father attached himself to Sweden and Holland, adopting Lutheranism and Calvinism, thereby compromising Catholicity.

Arnold, the son of Lenhart, born in the same village about 1730, did military service under the third king, Frederick William the Great, who ruled from 1740 to 1786. Prussia with increasing military strength and prestige had questioned Austrian rule of succession in the German State of Bavaria in 1778. Subsequently, Austria acquiescing in favor of Prussia, augmented the power and prestige of the latter among the princes of Europe to an increased degree.

It appears that a brother of Arnold had migrated to America in Mid-18th Century, fought in the American War of

Independence and was buried in a military cemetery in New York State. A marker, inscribed with the name Lennartz and year of internment are striking testimony of its possible credence.

A familiar Christian name, John, appears for the first time in the Lennartz Clan in 1771. He was the son of Arnold and Helena Fasbender and served in the war against France at the battle of Waterloo, 1815, which ended the reign of Napoleon.

All men over 21 years of age which included John had been compelled to do periodic military duty for the protection of the Prussian Kingdom and its acquired territory. The Prussian Regiment had been known throughout Europe for its military efficiency and had been instrumental in defeating Napoleon in 1815. It being largely supported by an aristocratic land-holding class, known as Junkers. This political group dominated the European Aristocracy and continued to control the German Confederacy after the fall of Napoleon. Externally, the affairs of the Prussian Kingdom were peaceful but internally there was no peace among the people. Frederick William III continued the reign of an absolute despot, similar to his forebearers. The increasing wave of peoples' freedom and equality (known as the democratic revolution), and the adoption of Protestantism as the state religion, encouraged many Catholics to migrate to Catholic Bavaria and on to America.

John had married Maria Hoffen, (born in 1778 in Neuenkirchen, Prussia) about 1800, but sadness struck this young family for she died one year after the birth of her son, Peter, in 1805. Peter was reared by his father in the village of Hackhousen. Growing to maturity Peter learned to know of Maria Zimmerman in the village of Upperton and they married in 1832. He, being aware of the military experience of his grandfather, Arnold, and his father, John, and possible future conflicts with Austria with the uncertainty of religious and political freedom in Prussia, decided to seek a new home for the family. He and Maria and three children; John, Robert, and William, migrated to Bavaria in 1841, and a few years later to America. No history of their trip to America is available except the stories related by John and Robert (my grandfather), who were at that time eight and five years old respectively. John, the older, remembers coming to New York and later traveling to Columbus, Ohio. It is possible that they came to Mercer County by wagon from a canal port located on a waterway that joined with the Miami Erie Canal. According to family records three more children blessed the family in America: Mary born in 1844, Christina in 1848, and a son, Joseph, in 1850. Tradition and accounts of my grandfather, Robert, establishes a home in Mercer County about 1849, near St. Joseph's Convent of the Precious Blood Society.

An early history of the settlers in Mercer County refers to a Henry Lennartz, born in Prussia, 1836, who came to America with his parents (names unknown), in 1848. Henry had married in 1868 and raised four children; Dina, Bernard, Harman and Edward. A member of this family moved to Celina and carried on finance and trade. No doubt, this Lennartz family was a branch of the old ancestral family in Prussia and influenced

Peter to settle in Ohio. The early history of the County, edited about 1870, lists other migrant families with those of Lennartz; Sudhoff; Weaver, Eifert, Jacobs, Doll, Snyder and others, all worshipping at St. Joseph

It appears that the Peter Lennartz family had difficulty in making a living on the semi-cleared land. The parents, approximately 60 years of age, and the older sons having no taste for frontier grubbing decided after the last winter had settled in Mercer County in 1859 to move to Fort Wayne, Indiana. Robert, married in 1856 and with a profitable trade in shoe and boot-making, remained in Ohio.

The growing town of Fort Wayne on the shores of two rivers, had shown rapid industrial expansion with unlimited potentials and growth in population. With each returning spring many young men and women had been encouraged to seek employment in the newly established industrial plants in this growing town of northern Indiana, since fearless entrepreneurs demanded factory workers, clerks, and equally fearless salesmen to develop their businesses. The industrial progress had been an instigator for young men to enter semi-professional positions: realtors, attorneys, insurance agents, secretaries, and managers of small stores. Understandably, John and William, hearing of the better life in Fort Wayne must have pressured the parents to move in the summer of 1860.

Many young women, as we shall see, desiring more pleasant living than frontier household drudgery, found household employment in affluent homes in this thriving town. In the same year that the Lennartz family came to the little city, two sisters, Christine and Mary Elizabeth Levenberger, from Lawrenceberg, Indiana found employment in two of these homes.

The one Catholic Church in Ft. Wayne, St. Mary's was the central point of worship where John and William learned of the Levenberger sisters who also attended this church. The acquaintance and courtship of a few years completed two happy marriages; John and Christine in 1862 and Mary Elizabeth and William in 1864.

John realizing there was no need for the end letter Z, dropped it and was widely known as John Lennart, a successful realtor and insurance broker. He and Christine raised a family of five to maturity; William, John, Mary, Lizzie and Joseph. Christine, the mother, known as Aunt Christine from Ft. Wayne, was the favorite of all 2nd and 3rd generation nephews in Ohio. John, her husband died in 1905 but Aunt Christine lived with her son William Jr. for 20 years or more, dying in 1927.

Aunt Christine will always be remembered by me for her facial expression and her interesting conversation. She had dark brown eyes, very bright and piercing ones, planted about a small pinched nose. Flutters of pure white curls, covering her perfectly chiseled forehead, ended sharply at her ears. Her cheeks had the coloring of peaches, set off with cherry-like lips. At her advanced age, her neck, arms and hands,

though slightly shrunken, were still fair as a China Doll. She was a copious talker with a sweet voice, while her constant chattering about the good living in Ft. Wayne, flowed rhythmically with the forward and backward swaying of her rocking chair. William Jr. with whom she resided, had married Mary Belle who was a favorite cousin of my Aunt Rose, daughter of Robert and they with daughter Irene and Aunt Christine were frequent visitors in Ohio. Irene, age 20, spent many hours of merriment with us, her country cousins at the Lennartz homestead.

William, brother of John and Robert, known as Uncle Bill, with his wife, Mary Elizabeth, and his parents, (Peter and Maria), moved to Montrose, Missouri after a six-year stay in Ft. Wayne. It appeared that business opportunities were increasing farther West. Indeed my Uncle Bill had had a very successful business in Montrose. Nine children were born to this family during the period 1867 and 1885. Unfortunately, Uncle Bill's mother, Maria, lived but five years in this beautiful valley of Missouri, but the father, Peter, lived to 1887. Both are buried in Montrose.

Many miles separated the members of this family with those of Robert's in Ohio but in spite of the distance there were exchanges of letters, and family visits by their son Herman of Bolder and the daughter, Elizabeth, known to all of us as Lizzie Klemm. She had married George Klemm of Ft. Wayne. Lizzie Klemm was a favorite cousin of Aunt Rose and her brother Rev. William Lennartz. As a youngster at the celebration of Fr. William's First Mass, I remember Lizzie Klemm, one of olive complexion of a rich color with hair that glowed golden in the sunlight. Her face was lighted by brown eyes with long thick eye lashes.

It was a very pleasant surprise to me, nearly fifty years later to meet Martha Klemm, daughter of Lizzie who had married Cornelius Connell of Ft. Wayne, and their son, John, residing in that city. Another son, Loren Klemm, is an ordained priest, member of the Franciscan Friars of the Cincinnati Province. The family of Martha has had many visits at our farm home in Greene County, it being adjacent to St. Leonard's Seminary, Provincial House of the Franciscans. Martha has provided the very early and late 19th Century history of the Lennartz ancestry to an exceedingly praiseworthy degree. Otilia Lennartz, a blood sister of Lizzie Klemm, known as Sister Laurentina of the Precious Blood Sisters, was a companion teaching nun with Sister Bertranda and on many occasions the two taught in the same village and attended annual summer retreats with a vacation at Maria Stein.

William, the father of these nine children died in Montrose in 1907, but Mary Elizabeth, the mother lived for many years, and after her husband's death returned to Ft. Wayne. She lived with her daughter, Elizabeth Klemm until her death in 1941 at the age of 95.

Joseph, the youngest son of Peter, known as Uncle Joe from Sedalia, eventually moved from Ft. Wayne to Sedalia,

Missouri, where he died in 1915. The two daughters of his: Ida, (married Mr. Dickman of Muskogee, Oklahoma), and Lenora, (married Mr. Timborious of Sedalia), were frequent visitors at Robert's country home in Ohio. In reality, no greater and more marked warm relationship could have been displayed than that of the members of the Lennartz families. As late as 1958, upon the death of Aunt Rose - age 81 years, Ida and Lenora expressed their highest esteem of the hospitality and warmth of Aunt Rose and of the other cousins in Ohio.

The oldest daughter of Peter Lennartz, Mary, married Joseph Wittmer who also lived in Montrose with their two children. Both died after 1900 and are buried in Montrose.

Christina, the youngest daughter of Peter, married Peter Weis of Celina, Ohio. Her husband was a very successful businessman and local politician. Their sons and daughters remained in Mercer County and held annual family gatherings at Robert's home. Son, Tom of Celina, daughter, Lizzie, (a public school teacher), and another daughter Tillie who married the country doctor in St. Henry, were the principal sponsors of these happy occasions.

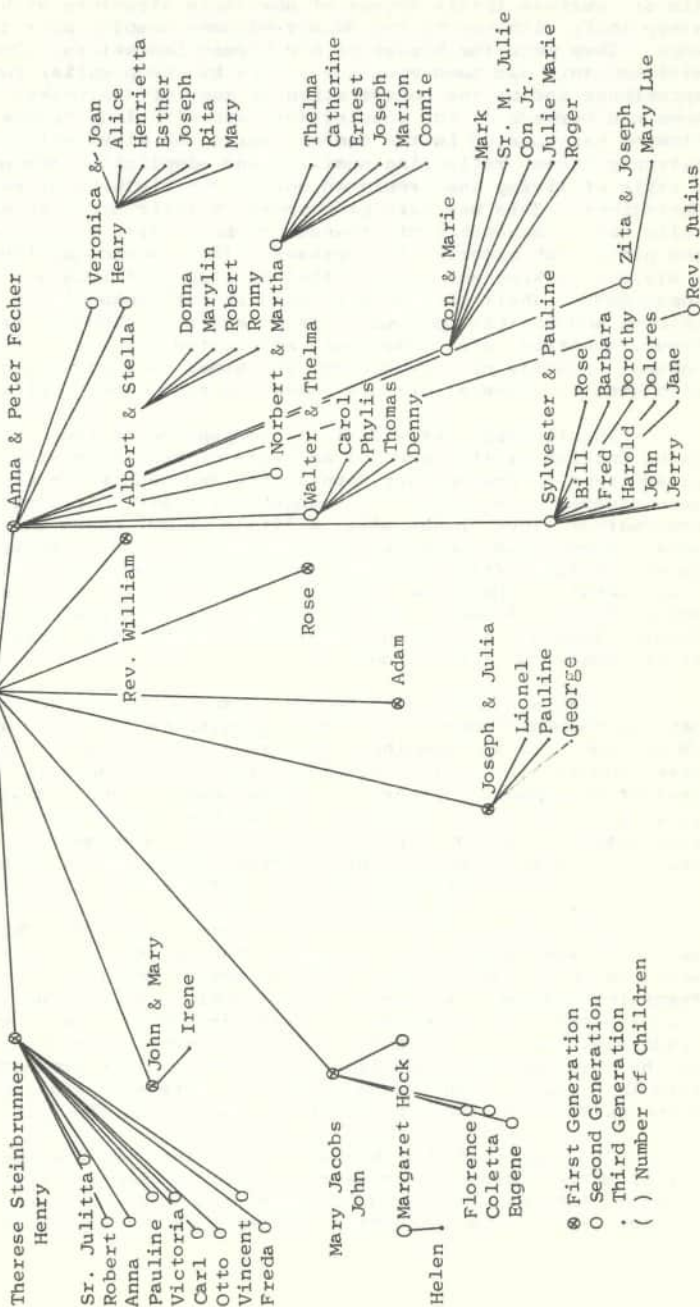
From this point our story must revolve about the activities of Robert, my grandfather and the members of his family. Drawing the curtains and eliminating them from this picture would be startling and disastrous since it would end the narration of many captivating life stories of this ancestral family, the progenitor of my mother, Anna Lennartz. I shall attempt to relate the amiable, lofty, and lovable characteristics of these members, for all were aligned to and reflected generous sentiment of sympathy and friendship to all, connubial love, and parental tenderness.

Robert, as a teenager was more interested in business and in meeting people than in farming. He walked three and one-half miles from his father's farm to Ft. Recovery for two or more years to become an apprentice to Mr. Roop, a cobbler. Applying himself diligently, he learned the trade well and soon became known, far and wide, as a first-class boot and shoe builder among the settlers in this limited area. He married Sarah Weaver, daughter of a Pennsylvania-Dutch farmer who came into the area of St. Joseph near the Convent of the sisters in 1855. The two married in 1856, purchased a two-story log house on a two-acre plot on the Indian Boundary Line, one and one-half miles West of St. Wendelin. Fortunately, the growing town of Ft. Recovery became a good trading post and demanded many handmade leather products for the home and farm, thus, promising Robert a good market through a local retailer, Mr. McDonald, for many years.

Sarah Weaver, my grandmother, was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1837 of Pennsylvania-Dutch ancestry. This ethnic group consisted of German speaking people from Silesia, known as Dunkards who migrated earlier from Holland, Switzerland and the lower Balkans. This mixed ethnic group upon migrating to America mingled with the followers of William Penn (Quakers), in the Lancaster area and were known as "Penn Dutch."

ROBERT AND SARAH LENNARTZ FAMILY

1860



- ⊙ First Generation
- Second Generation
- Third Generation
- () Number of Children

The city of Lancaster in the early 20th Century was bustling and progressive. Here and there, were remains of old times: curious little houses of one-story structure with very steep roofs with one or two dormer-windows peeping over the edge. They were the houses of old German Lancasters. One, visiting this old town would be struck by the peculiar foreign appearance and of the conversation of many of the folks. In the town and byroads of the country were men with long beards and flowing hair parted in the center, while the wives with pleasant matronly faces, reflecting humility and simplicity, demonstrated a style of living that reminded one of the pictures of early Christians. This was very pronounced in their dress of starched white cap, a handkerchief crossed on the breast, a white apron, and plain drab material for dresses. These women had inherited a style of baking and cooking that created delicious and wholesome foods. Their recipes are found in our cookbooks of today: chicken and pot-pie, ponhaus, sweet and sour cabbage, sauerkraut, spaetzle, etc. They were also noted for their delicious baking: shoofly pie, lebkuchen, Christmas cookies, rye bread with kimmel, cornmeal griddle cakes and many other delicacies.

The language was a dialect, hodgepodge of many idioms, using English as the base. I am aware of many expressions that passed from my Grandmother down to the 2nd generation and had been stamped on my memory in younger years as: "Grandfather and grandmother lives on the hill, a little up out where the road gets. When Susan (Susannah, grandmother's sister) marries Jacob she'll be fixed off good for the government will give him a war pension. Make the light out. Mom's on the table and pop's half-et already. You be good or the Belsnickle come. Jonnie stung his foot with a bee and it ouches him terrible. Kissin wears out, cookin don't."

Sarah's father, John Weaver, born 1807, near Lancaster, came to the Ohio country with his parents, brothers and sisters about 1830. It appears that they traveled by canal to the Ohio River and settled on land of virgin forest near Batavia, Ohio, East of Cincinnati. According to the names on the tombstones in an old cemetery at Batavia, the brothers and sisters of John were Susannah, Sarah, Jane, Dan and Jacob. John married Catherine Fry, born 1806, not one of the brethren, but a Catholic which, no doubt, influenced John and Catherine to leave Batavia and by canal boat from Portsmouth on the Ohio River they came to Columbus where Sarah was born Christmas Day-1837. The couple had three more daughters; Susannah, Jane and Marie, and two sons, Jacob and Dan, before moving to Mercer County in 1855. Examining newspaper accounts in local Ohio publications: Columbus Dispatch, Dayton Journal & Times, and Toledo Blade, one finds that hundreds of Catholic families were moving westward to the Ohio-Indiana state line since news of this productive rich land could be purchased at \$20 per acre with available ready markets for their produces in towns along the Erie Canal.

The family of John Weaver came to the semi-cleared country of Mercer County a few years before the Lennartz family moved to Indiana. It is to be remembered that John Adam and Elizabeth Fecher, my grandparents, had a going homestead to the



John & Catherine (Fry) Weaver
(Locating Grave at Ege, Indiana)
and
Robert & Sarah (Weaver) Lennartz



East of St. Joseph. The dozen or more Catholic families living in this Wabash valley worshipped at the Convent where a monthly religious service was held.

The small saw mill and corn crusher on the riverbank adjacent to St. Joseph's Convent was an excellent point to learn of new settlers and area activities. According to chronological dates, Robert learned of the Weaver family and the acquaintance of Sarah shortly after arrival for it was in 1856 that they were married in the nearby chapel and established a home in the two-story log house on the Indian Boundary Line.

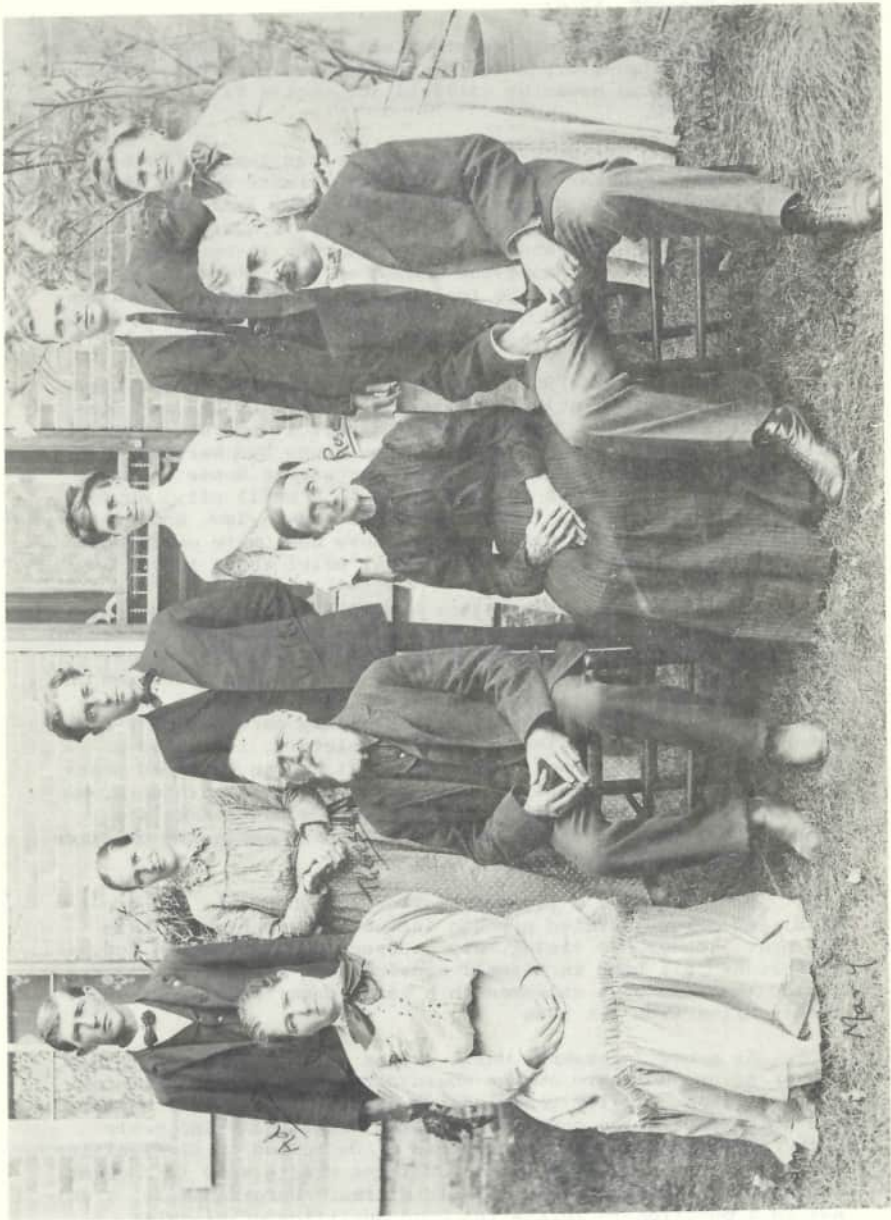
The history of the Mid-19th Century ancestral family of the maternal side reveals that Robert and Sarah (Weaver) Lennartz were the parents of Anna Lennartz, my mother.

It can be recalled that Sarah had three sisters. Her sister Susannah, known as Aunt Susan married Jacob Hammon, a wagon-maker who enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1863, and after having been disabled he returned to Mercer County and established his home (a small cottage) a few hundred steps West of the St. Wendelin Church. He supplemented his war pension by odd jobs among the local farmers, thereby supporting a growing family of eight children to maturity. Aunt Jane, the second sister, married Joseph Sondermann, whose trade as a blacksmith demanded him to be an artisan and dexterous in creating iron and wooden products. He was known as a wheel-wright, and his skill was known throughout the area. He and Jane lived in Ft. Recovery where they were known as one of the influential members of the Sondermann Clan. The family prestige, I am certain, had been augmented by their thirteen daughters who manifested this with much grace, for all were adept sales ladies in this growing town. One daughter joined the Sisters of the Precious Blood, Sister Gonzaga, an able teacher who became a supervisor in the schools of Mercer County. All members were intimate cousins and frequent visitors at the country home of Robert's. Upon the death of the parents they moved to California, and continued to communicate by letters with Aunt Rose and my Uncle, Father William. Learning of the death of Aunt Rose in 1958, they expressed deep sympathy and praised highly her unique qualities.

Jacob and Dan, the two sons of John and Catherine, remained with the parents on the farm to about 1880, but having greater opportunities and a less rugged frontier life, all moved to the small village of Ege, Indiana, near Rome City where the graves of the parents and the son Dan are entombed in the village cemetery.

Robert and Sarah in the first thirty years of married life, lived in the one and one-half story log house. His boot and shoe industry was conducted in the small area of the first floor of a lean-to, attached to the house. Through diligent and effective workmanship he developed a steady business and a ready market for his products. By 1867 they purchased 80 acres, adjacent to the two acres from Mr. Mossing and was in a position, financially, to erect a new brick house in 1880.

Within a period of 20 years a growing family of eight



children had been born in the log house: John in 1858; Mary, 1860; Adam, 1863; Therese, 1865; Joseph, 1868; Anna, 1870; Rose, 1872; and William, 1875.

The farm had been cleared of all debts by 1880 at which time the large two-story brick house had been erected. Keeping intact the old log house he utilized the entire first floor of it for his work.

Many farm neighbors and friends passed their time as guests in his shop for they enjoyed these visits due to his pleasant and friendly disposition which he demonstrated to all and at all times. One could not spend a few minutes of his pegging time and not hear and listen to his ever-to-be remembered homespun philosophy. Among the shoemaker's guests was a distinct and recognized village real estate broker who after a number of visits influenced him to take a hand at hardware and add harness to the boot and shoe industry in Ft. Recovery.

Within the year Robert acquired an interest in the hardware business which included boots, shoes and harness and directed his son-in-law, John Jacobs, to manage it and who later was assisted by Robert's son Joseph. John Jacobs had married Mary, the oldest daughter, whereupon they purchased a house on Wayne Avenue in the town which now had grown to a small city, approximately one mile square. Robert and his son-in-law, both intimately known by all citizens and business men, were encouraged to trade the hardware store for a local hotel about 1887.

The hotel that grandfather Robert acquired was the current combination rooming-house with sleeping rooms on the second floor and an eating and drinking section on the first floor. The building was a two-story structure with an entrance from the street, leading directly into the lower area, known as the saloon. The saloon was equipped with a highly carved mirror and mahogany bar, covering the one wall completely, the likes of which is a rarity and not seen today. It had an extended brass foot-rail along the front and many polished brass cuspidors, set at random, about the central, huge, barrel stove. Free food with the purchase of drinks was the customary and going practice at the turn of the century.

Subsequently, a few years after this business transaction, son Joseph married a young lady of the town whose home was near that of his sister Mary. Joseph, now of mature age, established his home in a small growing town in Indiana and accepted the role of a salesman in a large department store about twenty miles from his home.

As a boy I remember Uncle Joe as one who appeared to be a man of means and charm as one would display under the guise of prosperity and all its contributing graces. When visiting the old homestead in the country he talked brilliantly and gayly with family members, having no fear of detection of difficulties that he must have had at times for these visits were infrequent and usually accompanied by a child or two. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to relate the good qualities of his wife, since I had never met her. Uncle Joseph commuted the 20 miles

daily from his home to the place of business by electric inter-urban. Burning with high hopes and eager expectations, speculating on the possibilities of better and more affluent days to come, he was never able to complete his dreams.

After trading the hardware store, grandfather discontinued his skillful occupation of processing leather into useful products. All of his time and that of his son-in-law were now devoted to this latest business venture which ended in galloping debacle in a few years. Robert managed the affairs during the day while his son-in-law supervised the details of both, the rooms and the saloon, at night. My mother, Anna, then a teenager who had sincere filial respect for her father, related the details of his business venture to me as I grew into maturity.

It was his custom and daily routine to cart essential foods of meat, soups, etc. with horse and buggy in the early morning to his business while she and her sister Rose carried baskets of newly baked cookies, cakes, pies and bread for the day's business a few hours later. For them this task of walking the three and one-half miles to the town hotel was more than bi-weekly in the summer and continued for more than a few years.

Grandfather would never refuse to assist a neighbor even of the roughest toil. He was one of those happy mortals who took the world easy and gave little thought of what tomorrow had in store. He, being an openhanded gentleman, eager to help all in difficulty, it was but a short time when the family found the farm and the business had been mortgaged, including many personal monetary obligations. It appeared that his advisers, hypocritical friends, were more interested in satiating their self-indulgence than to acknowledge the value of a sincere friend. These saloon-squatters took every advantage of his benevolence and did not stop until all my grandparents' life earnings had been squandered. These cronies who came daily to the saloon, appearing worse from wear and tear of time and drink, found the warm spot of Robert's good nature, who was unaware of his mistakes and ill-directed hospitality. His extravagance expressed his generosity, his credulity of whole hearted faith in all he met, and his personal characteristics, mirrored rich spiritual values but poor financial ability. According to the family history he put no constraint upon these imbibing guests until 1900 when he found that his decaying business could borrow no more money from neighbors and friends. The end resulted in ultimate disaster of bankruptcy. Subsequently, Grandmother Sarah learned of these financial difficulties in 1900 that had led to this misfortune, a disgraceful country incident.

I remember her as a sweet, docile, feeble, elderly lady sitting and rocking in the homemade, split-hickory rocker in the front room, never leaving the house thereafter. She was small in stature while the most noticeable expression of her plain small face was simple resignation. She appeared to be always tired, ever ready with a tint of a smile but sort of wasting away in a slow but hopeless decline, eventually to her grave in 1903. It was the opinion of many that she died of a broken heart from the effects of the financial disaster and from

embarrassment and shame of this fiasco that was well known about the country side.

In the intervening years prior to 1900, Peter, son of John Adam, had married the daughter Anna, my mother, in 1892. Fortunately, they were able to save the homestead by paying all just and lawful debts of the parents. Grandfather had no more interest in the town but lived quietly on the farm with the unmarried son Adam, and maidenlady Rose.

It was Uncle Adam who continued to farm the old homestead while Aunt Rose provided every comfort for the grandfather until his death in 1917. Though neither of the two married, they maintained a welcome and pleasant habitat for brothers, sisters, and distant uncles and cousins.

Seeing Uncle Adam as a stranger or first view, one would probably consider him rather a strange looking man due to his squint-eyed expression caused by a nearly-closed left eye (an extreme degree of sightlessness due to an accident), and a half-vision of the right one. The many recognized facial scars, and other mild disabilities from past farm accidents, acknowledges his limited ability in managing animals and manipulating machinery. I remember him at age fifty, tall of stature, figure, slender and wiry, sallow face with gray shadow hair carelessly streaking his forehead. Examining these characteristics one would conclude his anxious countenance, and a somewhat sunken face, expressed reflection and purpose, not a genial one, but more searching and thoughtful. As I grew older, learning more about him, I found him frank, cheerful, absent of delusions and of an amiable disposition. His feelings and conduct would wear well with those about him as can be attested by his spinster sister - Rose. He admired her and they, together as brother and sister, cared for each other many years, both living beyond four score years.

Aunt Rose was beautiful of face as a monumental angel at her advanced age, indicating that her youth had not been denied the gift of beauty. There was no complaint of solitude, solitude even continued was not irksome to her. It was absolutely necessary to know her in order to like her for her face was expressive and gentle, her eyes bright and handsome and gifted with a winning beam and a smile that represented a language spoken softly and with affection. Her mouth and eyes were well proportioned, with delicate skin and a fine flow of curly gray hair well arranged. There should be no question in the mind of the reader why her cousins, near and far, were eager to visit the old ancestral home of Robert's. She was my Godmother in baptism and my favorite Aunt.

Uncle John, the oldest son of Robert must have been a handsome man in his youth. As a man of 50 years he impressed one with his athletic figure, pictured as one tall and solidly built, but slightly obese. He had a hearty handgrasp, firm mouth and with his pair of resolute gray eyes and impetuous posture demonstrated an eagerness to debate, usually politics. These facial characteristics contrasted well with his dark brown hair, sprinkled with gray. He, the Alpha of the family,

like his youngest brother William, the Omega, chose the teaching profession for further political and educational activities. After a few years of teaching he entered politics and was re-elected County Auditor of Seneca County in Ohio for more than 20 years. Unfortunately, at middle age his hearing failed him completely but with much diligence and ingenuity he became a skillful and unacknowledged lipreader. At the request of the Ohio Senator the President appointed him a member of the Intelligence Service during the First World War and presented him an achievement Award in 1919.

Uncle John married a beautiful girl, Mary Swing of Tiffin, who had had many desirable qualities in her youth. I remember her most vividly when she was beyond middle-age. She, at that time was stout, extremely and excessively fat. Her grizzled, auburn hair with innumerable swirls and twists about the face and head, and her large puffy grayish-blue eyes, were unable to detract one's attention from her bulbous nose. Her one ambition in life at this age was to bestow upon her one and only daughter all the gifts that had been her's in her youth: beauty, a bird-like voice and a ballerina of note. Regretably, all these gifts of her youth had been squandered the past thirty years after losing her voice at age 25. Though her soul flamed with rapture as she related the years of her youth, her stout old body shuddered with shame when she said, "I would still be young and beautiful if this old throat were different. My voice would ring to the end of the earth." She ought not have reviewed the old long ago for it would never return again. How fortunate that Uncle John was a counter-balance with his wit and pleasantries.

Rev. William Lennartz, C.S.C., after teaching a few years at the St. Henry high school decided to be a Holy Cross priest of Notre Dame, Indiana. He, one of a group of four who had been acknowledged nationally at that time, was a noted debater in the seminary. After being ordained in 1912 he became a history professor at the Catholic University of America in 1918, and the Provincial of the Junior Seminary in 1928. Due to the loss of the sight of one eye about 1920 he was unable to attain his greatest aspiration, a Bengalese Missionary in Southern India. Through fees from many of his lectures and the editing of his magazine, "The Bengalese," he was able to establish a number of mission posts in Bengal, India.

Fr. Will, my uncle, was responsible for the foundation of the Holy Cross Mission Seminary, known as Bengales Seminary in Washington. Here young Holy Cross seminarians, destined for foreign missions in Bengal, were trained by him and his associate, Fr. Michael A. Mathias. After the loss of the sight of one eye, his associate continued the missionary work and visited Dacca, East Pakistan, to learn more of the problems of Bangladesh. The medical needs of the people were so overwhelming that upon the return of Fr. Mathias to the United States they encouraged a young medical doctor, Anna Dengal and three nurses to form a religious community to respond to the healing needs in the East. This was the beginning of the Medical Mission Religious Community, combining religious life with the practice of medicine, now a community of over 700 women medical religious.

Coincidentally, I learned to know Anna Dengal in Washington in 1924, when she had received permission from Rome to begin the new foundation of sisters. Her enthusiasm and inspiration encouraged me to initiate the first health research study of religious sisters in the United States in 1925. The results of this study stimulated me to continue this research health work of sisters for the next fifty years. In this period with the cooperation of many sisterhoods I was privileged to conduct many mortality and morbidity surveys of Catholic Religious personnel; 100,000 sisters and 35,000 religious clergy in the United States. The first and original survey was made in 1925 and the last one in 1973, which was a ten-year epidemiological cancer survey of 230 sisterhoods. The health and demographic survey of the sisters and the clergy, covering 50 years, is presented in my latest book, Life-Style and Demography of Catholic Religious Sisterhoods and Health of Other Religious Groups, 1975. The beautiful character of Uncle Will was second to none except that of my Mother.

As we learned earlier, Mary, the eldest daughter, married John Jacobs to whom were born three daughters and a son: Margaret, Florence, Coletta and Eugene. A most interesting romance developed in the life of Margaret. As a clerk in a grocery in Ft. Recovery she became acquainted with all the girls in the town and two of her girl friends, hoping to create an interesting and unusual escapade, wrote Margaret's name and address on an egg (one of many in a case of 24 dozen). The case of eggs eventually found its way to a bakery in East Boston, Massachusetts, the Hock Bakery. Mr. Hock's son, William (age 22), located the egg in his daily routine and decided to learn more about this Margaret Jacobs in Ohio. One letter encouraged the second and within a year William visited the Jacob's family. The two were married in 1906, and Margaret became a member of the Hock Bakery. She with her husband continued the business for over fifty years, ably assisted by a daughter Helen, and her sisters.

The Hock Bakery was a complete unit with that of living quarters in a narrow, three-story brick building. It was strictly confined and surrounded by many similar three-story structures, housing whole families. The bakery proper with all its facilities was in the basement. Bread, pies, cakes, etc. were marketed on the street floor while the living quarters were on the two floors above. The second floor contained the family dining room and the kitchen and utility rooms thereby allowing ample sleeping rooms for the family on the third. With pride, it can be said that Margaret reared members of a beautiful family of solid character in these surroundings. An intimate relationship with Margaret's family emerged, and for more than 30 years there existed a distinguished family warmth and love between us. In 1930 on the occasion of a New York Life Insurance Club Convention of four days held at Swampscott near Boston, it was Margaret who insisted upon the care of our four-month old daughter, Julie Marie. The many visits at the Deaconess Hospital in Boston by her daughter, Helen, during the cancer convalescence period is one never to be forgotten by the family. Margaret had demonstrated the warmth, selflessness, devotion, and love of the Lennartz ancestry to the Nth

degree at all times.

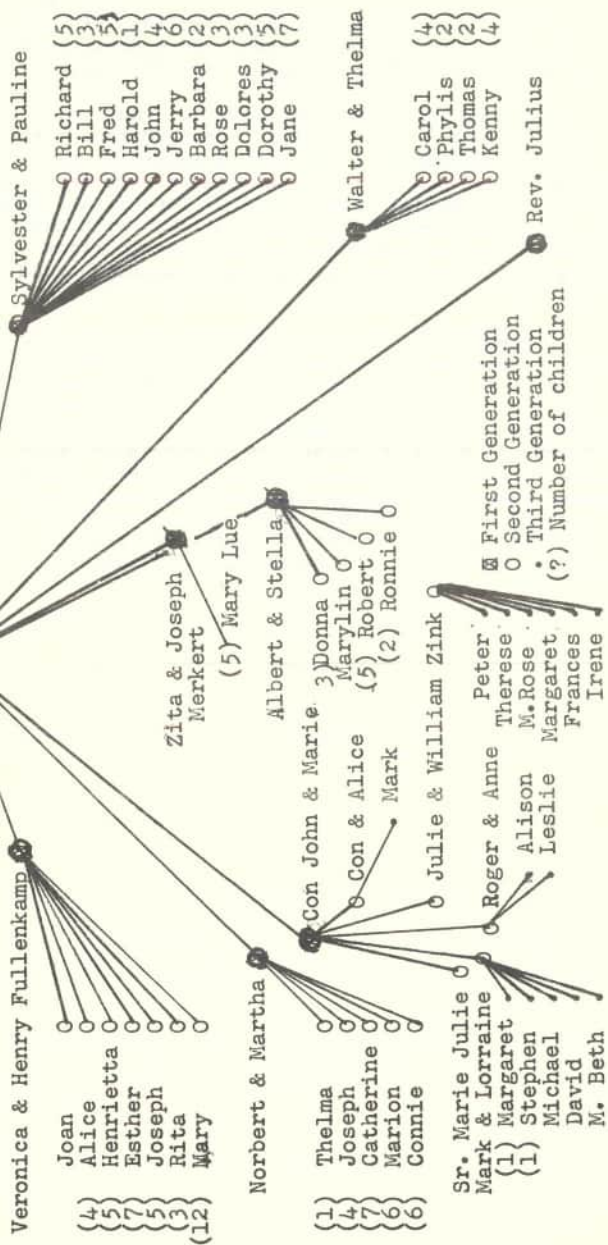
Therese, daughter of Robert, married Henry Steinbrunner, a successful farmer in Darke County, who reared nine children to maturity: Sarah, Robert, Anna, Pauline, Victoria, Carl, Vincent, Otto, and Freida. Sarah, the oldest, became a member of the Holy Cross Sisters (Sister Julitta, C.S.C.).

With much pride but with modesty I must repeat that if one had overlooked the desirable human characteristics and unusual accomplishments of the Robert Lennartz' family, the present and future generations would never have been apprised of the political, social, and religious impact this family had had upon the local community and the nation. With humble acknowledgement I recognize the world-wide contributions made by a few members of this progeny family, reaching beyond the 20th Century.

In summarizing the contributions of the religious personnel of both the Fecher and Lennartz families, one must add to those of the early generation, the priests and sisters of the 2nd and 3rd: Sister Julitta, C.S.C., (a cousin); Sister Marie Julie, O.S.U., (my daughter); Rev. Julius Fecher, C.P.P.S., (my brother); Roger J. Fecher, Vice President of St. Norbert's College, Green Bay, Wisconsin, (my son); Rev. Jerome Steinbrunner, C.P.P.S., (a cousin); and Rev. Loren Connell, O.F.M., (a cousin). It is obvious that the members of the 3rd and 4th generations, the leaves of this ancestral tree, have enhanced the beauty of this genealogical structure.

PETER & ANNA (LENNARTZ) FECHER FAMILY

1892



CHAPTER III

PETER AND ANNA (LENNARTZ) FAMILY

My father, Peter Fecher and my mother, Anna Lennartz, were married in the mission church of St Wendelin by Rev. Anthony Dick, the mission priest at the Himmelgarten Convent on September 17th, 1892. His obligations were to administer religious services on Sunday and perform marriage and burial rights during the week of the families surrounding the village of St. Wendelin. Both father and mother worshipped here and were active members of social and religious societies. Adam, father of Peter had negotiated with Mr. Keller for 65 acres, adjacent and across the road from his stately brick house for the newly-married couple.

The two-room cottage on it could not be occupied until August of the next year, 1893. Robert Lennartz, upon completion of his new brick house in 1880 did not raze his two-story log house since he continued his boot and shoe industry on the first floor and harness and other leather products on the second floor until he disposed of his interests in the hardware and leather store in Ft. Recovery in 1887. The vacant log house permitted my parents to occupy it temporarily for nearly a year, after which time the two-room cottage on the farm became their permanent home.

The village of St. Wendelin with its church, store, school, and nearby homes, completed the four-point crossroad. Fanning out in the four directions were the usual rutted roads in the spring, lightly covered with a heavy layer of dust in the summer, but furrowed and frozen hard in the winter. Going westward some five hundred steps toward the direction of my grandparents home, turning left over a narrow, swinging foot-bridge, one approached this two-room cottage.

It was in this cottage with a small overhanging porch at the front door, I was born on one cold blustering winter day in mid February 1897. My Godparents, Aunt Rose Lennartz and Uncle John Fecher, carried me to the village church to be baptized, Constantine John, Constantine in honor of the parish priest, Constantine Vogelmann, and John in honor of my Godfather, John Fecher. All present predicted that my future life would be filled with unusual experiences, some sad, but more joyous and happy ones due to my pleasant disposition and facial characteristics. According to the words of my Godmother, Aunt Rose Lennartz, "He smiled during the entire ceremony even when the salt was placed on his tongue and the baptismal water poured on his forehead." Viewing my baby picture my body was reasonable in size topped with a tiny round head set off with two small blue eyes which became rather penetrating brown ones later.



Mr. & Mrs. Peter Fecher
Constantine John
& Veronica--
Con & His Sisters & Brothers



A nickname in a small village, in school, or in the rural area was an indication of certain marked characteristics of the individual. Blessed with a dimple in each cheek, generating a continuous smile, I was dubbed with the nickname "Smiles". There was seldom a day when this name was not heard. "Smiles" it was and remained as my popular name for many years, including my high school years at St. Joseph's Academy, Rensselaer, Indiana. The name Constantine at times was both an advantage and a handicap during my life. For official business, military service, and for a distinguished honorarium it was Constantine John. As a boy and teenager in addition to "Smiles" it was Constant, but later as an adult, Con John.

At this juncture in time it is necessary to introduce a second personage, a golden-haired, blue-eyed girl born one year later. She, the mother of my children, was equally as important as that of the narrator, thereby augmenting our joint contribution to the social, educational and religious phases of the lives of our children. No doubt, a few of these attributes had been inherited from past ancestors and transmitted to 20th Century generations.

Much knowledge of those years would be lost to future generations if one were to consider lightly the experiences of the joint lives of our childhood and teenage periods in the first decades of the 20th Century which have been intrinsically influenced by the environment of our ancestors.

The first pages of my book of memory carries the pictures of the Christmas events of the years of 1902-1903. My older sister, Veronica, and my brother, Norbert, visited the aged grandparents, Adam and Elizabeth, in the stately brick house across the way. At the time they presented us with useful gifts and extended the greeting, 'Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year', in German. In turn we responded with the same German salutation after which we returned home with a sack of candy, an apple, and an orange. The practice of greeting the grandmother, Uncle John and his new wife Anna, continued for many years after the death of my grandfather, Adam, in 1903. Happily, being the godchild of Uncle John and a favorite of the couple, I would find a dollar bill hidden in a gift from him and Aunt Anna for they remembered me, personally, with gifts, money and favors, on many occasions.

Memories of my mother is the Introductory Chapter of my Book of Memory. Her prayerful attitude and constant utterance of the entreaty words, 'Jesus, Mary, and Joseph help me,' appear to be indelibly stamped upon my intellect. No doubt, the meaning of this ejaculation had been emphasized for many years, (as long as I can remember), for she exhorted all of her children and grandchildren to repeat these inspirational words whenever in difficulty.

One early memorable experience at age 5 years was an Eucharistic celebration of a 13 year old neighbor youth who was a member of the 1902 Communion Class. (The sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation were not administered under age 13 years.) This event was a very formidable affair for the

communicant and for me, his young candle-bearer for I accompanied him and carried the ornamental candle, his rosary, and his prayer book. No doubt, my formal dress of newly designed knickers, Eton jacket with a large turnover collar, and the new patent-leather shoes were the objects that immortalized this occasion for me, rather than the religious ritual.

Other early memories of mine were of tastes, both pleasant and disagreeable. It was the unpleasant ones of castor-oil, Scott's Emulsion, and the hatefulfulness of unsweetened licorice cough syrup that are most prominent. It is true that many communicable diseases affected the family but I remember one only, the mumps, in my first year of school. This could have been associated with the first reader which was my constant bed-companion at that time.

At age six I entered school and had the first opportunity of competing in the three R's with other boys and girls of similar age in the one-room village school. Eligibility of becoming an alterboy was possible as soon as one was able to read and recite the Latin Mass prayers from memory. This, I accomplished at the end of the first year and received first merit in competition with other alter boys much older and more experienced members of the advanced grades.

The one-room school which I attended was within walking distance of my home but at times I found the trip bold and daring. In the fall and spring my brother and I ventured a shortcut by crossing a nearby creek over a log, while in the winter it was trudging through the deepest snowdrifts or testing the thickness of the ice on the creek.

The schoolroom lacked present day facilities and comfort since a central, low, castiron, heating stove, accomodating three-foot cord sticks, supplied extreme warmth to its neighbors but had little effect on Jack Frost on the window panes. It was the chore of the larger boys to carry in the wood and keep a possible level temperature throughout the day. The absence of indoor facilities (plumbing), was supplied by two buildings at the far corners of the playground, each plainly marked 'Boys,' 'Girls'. The woodshed, filled with measured three-foot cordwood was at one side of the schoolhouse near the entrance. To an iron pump, bolted to a wooden base that covered a dug well, was a chained tincup, it was the cupbearer that satisfied the truly thirsty one. On other occasions it could have been the means of scrubbing an urchin or of another to drown the memory of a recent punishment with a goodly gulp of cold spring water.

A few oil lamps with reflectors hung on each wall, providing additional light on very dark, overcast days. Fortunately, with a rural one-room school every two miles the total enrollment in a school was from 25 to 35 pupils whose everyday comfort in the school was similar to that of the home. By and large, all children were eager to attend school and there was no need for a truant officer, and there was no absence.

Naturally, the first experiences of the first days were

vivid memories of mine. The new, shiny McGuffey Primer which cost 13¢, depicted human interest stories in letter sounds, words, sentences and pictures. Little was known of the phonetic method of reading as such, but this primer carried the essentials of the system. Unfortunately, this method was discarded by the school system about 1930, revived later in the mid-century and now in acceptance, thus in time restoring the reading ability of children in this last quarter. As a country school teacher with six years of experience, it is my opinion that this method as a base with other reading and spelling exercises embodied exceptional good reading skills.

The first pages of the primer contained the story and pictures of a cat running after a rat that was going for safety under a slightly raised box. The printed words, "The rat, the cat, the rat ran, the cat ran, the cat caught the rat," were phonetic in structure. The methods of combining sounds, words, sentences and pictures made a lasting impression on my mind and through it I acquired a competent reading ability.

My most favorite object of curiosity and wonderment in the schoolroom was the map box, located above the blackboard and to the right. Spellbound in the first row of the double school benches, I eagerly awaited the movements of the teacher in pulling the large maps on an actuated wooden roller from the box. On a nearby stand, adjacent to the wall was a miniature facsimile of the sun, earth, and moon, which, by rotating each of these properly, pupils could recognize periods of day and night, seasons of the year and various positions of the moon. Demonstrating this miniature universe and describing the countries on the maps by the teacher to the older pupils, opened many new ideas in my mind at age six, seven, and later years.

The complete series of McGuffey readers, primer to the fifth, was the basic curriculum of reading, spelling and orthography of the English language. The McGuffey Series is a collector's item today due to its valuable contents of moral and literary classic selections of American authors. Though we were limited in educational material these readers aroused a thirst for knowledge and provided additional reading material. Also made available at the time, were 5¢ booklets, covering more advanced American and English authors: Longfellow, Hawthorne, Cary Sisters, Emerson, Goldsmith, and Holmes in America. The English authors were well represented by Byron, Tennyson, Dickens, Coleridge and Shakespeare.

Much praise should be given to the country school teacher in the years before 1915. A teacher was required to be a good disciplinarian, janitor, sports director, nurse and musician. His education was equivalent to one not less than high school but after 1915 upon the passage of legislation, he was required in addition to the passing of a state teacher's examination, to have one year of teacher training in one of the four Normal Schools in Ohio.

Each school day began with the Lord's prayer and thereafter the teacher would present a written proverb on the

blackboard. It was to be a model for practice writing and to be copied in a special penmanship book by all competent pupils. On Friday, the collected proverbs would be reviewed, repeated and demonstrated to the school by pupils.

Homework in my home was not neglected for the assignments in the three R's and advanced studies were completed each night about the large dining room table. All members, young and old, were eager to complete their assigned tasks early on wintry evenings, after which corn could be popped in the pot-bellied stove, apples from the cellar to be roasted, and games to be played on the game-board.

My home being a short distance from the village country store, I, as a youngster remember the welcome tingle of the friendly bell over the door as one entered. The owner's appearance was typical of a country store proprietor of that era. He was a large man, gray-bearded, eagle-faced, square-shoulders, big-footed individual. His dark hair, amply touched with gray, failed to hide the thinning topknot. While working in the store he wore a heavy white apron but his white shirt sleeves were not always immaculate in spite of having sleeve-holders that looked like lady's stocking garters. He was very generous in handing-out sticks of peppermint and horehound candies to the children but in his financial dealing with adults he always looked sharply at them as if he feared to be cheated. This was surprising to me but my father was of the opinion that, perhaps, his practices in his sales and purchases were not always up-and-above board with customers.

As a boy of four or five years I would gaze in childlike wonderment at the amazing collection of articles. There seemed to be no end of shelves of yard goods of dress materials; bright, red-turkey calico with patterns of flowers and birds to make little girls happy. There were also red mittens and scarfs with boots, shoes, stockings or caps to match.

Previously, attention had been called to the corner, box-like post office near the entrance with a pigeon hole slot for each family in the parish. Bulk mail was delivered here daily to this rural Star Post Office which according to government regulations had to be completely partitioned and screened off from the store's contents. Down the right wall running the full length of the store was a glass showcase, containing pocket knives and watches on the one end while on the other were sticks of hard candies of many colors and kinds: horehound and rock, licorice, and gum. The price tags on knives varied from 10¢ to 50¢ but the nickle-plated watches were a dollar each, known as the dollar-watch. I, at the age of 10 years, always short of coins, found an ingenious way of owning one of these time-pieces by selling subscriptions to farm papers.

To the left in the store, behind a continuous counter, running the full length, were wall shelves, filled with groceries in small cans and packages that had been shipped in boxes from distant points. Under the counter were wooden boxes of bulk raisins, dates, dried apples, apricots, and Arbuckle's bean coffee. The storekeeper, holding a piece of wax paper,

12x12, would carefully lift the required dried fruit into a candy-striped paper poke, (bag), resting on the small platform balancing scale, ready to be weighed. All bulk items of sugar, salt, rolled oats, etc. that came in large barrels were transferred to large paper bags with a hand-scoop. After noting its weight, it was tied with a cord string, emanating from a ball of cord in a receptacle attached to the ceiling above.

There was no cash register but under the counter near the scale was the cash box, a push-in and pull-out drawer with a number of divided sections or slots in it to accomodate various coins and paper money. This drawer also contained a middle-sized ledger or account book, containing the accounts, both credit and debit, of the farmers dealing with the local store-keeper.

In the center of the room was the pot-bellied stove, surrounded by conveniently placed nailkegs for seats for men who, patiently, waited for their better-halves to make the necessary purchases. Under the stove was a fire-safety tin to catch hot ashes or fire brands that might fall to the floor, while around and about it were ash-filled cigar boxes or spittoons. There was at least one of these on each side of the stove to provide service for the men with the bulging cheeks. Customers, usually two or more, stood or sat, discussing the news of the day, waiting their turn to purchase, a process that could neither be hurried nor shortened.

Down the center in line with the stove were a number of wooden barrels, containing brown sugar, rolled oats, loose round crackers, flour, and salt. Over to the far left at the end of the room was a large wooden barrel of vinegar with a handy-tap to transfer the liquid to gallon jugs. Near it to the right, down two steps, into a part of the building were hard goods for the farmer. Here were jackets, work shirts, pants (bib-overalls), and post-office cubby holes for bolts, nuts, screws, rivets, and other small hardware. On pegs nearby were horse collars, bridles, leather straps, buggy whips, and a few bull-whips. The chicken and egg cases in this room were temporarily utilized but later removed with their contents to a nearby building.

In those days there was much bartering with the store-keeper of chickens, eggs, and butter for necessities in the home. Incidentally, some years later, perhaps at age 10 or older, I was able to barter squabs with him in the spring of the year. Otherwise it was the hotel-innkeeper in Ft. Recovery who was a ready buyer for them in the summer months.

It was on one of these squab-hunting expeditions in the large bankbarn when I created a family commotion by falling against the corner of a horse-manger thereby cutting a deep gash on the side of my head. The results of this lark for me was a stitched and well taped head, treated by Dr. Stevenson of Ft. Recovery, but also a loss of one work day by my father in a busy season of the year.

Cheese came in the form of a huge hoop, known as a cart-

wheel, seven or eight inches high. It, with an enclosed cutter in a glass dust-proof case lay at the end of the counter. Many small triangular shaped pieces would be cut to the order of the customer.

Adjacent to it was a bright red, large coffee grinder, actuated by two large wheels on each side. In it Arbuckle's bean coffee was ground, either fine or coarse, and invariably, the farmer's wife would have it ground fine, thinking it would go farther.

The younger generation of today would have difficulty in describing the mixture of odors of ground coffee, of newly-cut cheese, of the peculiar fragrance of salt fish, herring and codfish, and the aroma of mothballs that permeated this store. A combination of all these saturated all wearing material and yard goods.

Settling-up time for the farmer and the store-keeper was usually at the end of each month. It was at this time that the two sides of the ledger were 'toted', with a goodly credit on the credit side of the store. There would be an exception to this ledger balance in the summer months when the egg supply was heavy or in the spring when cockerels were in demand or in late fall when old hens were considered, 'Good Ridance.' Without exception, there was no exchange of money in most cases. Folks didn't shop, they traded. The credit of the farmer in the early fall was usually absorbed by buying additional supplies for the farm in hard goods, yard goods for the family, or boots and shoes for the boys.

In retrospect, I consider my growing-up period similar to that of any normal country boy, surrounded by rural environment but with an all-inclusive Christian teaching and a loving home. Born into a type of family, matched by saintliness of a mother, influenced by the daily recital of the family rosary at night and a short morning prayer of thanksgiving, I have been the recipient of a spiritual training never to be forgotten. Much religious inspiration for future righteous living experiences of our children had been received from these practices as well as those of their mother, who had had similar youthful religious training. Added to the above motivation and sweetened by the attendance of daily mass, three religious services on Sunday (early mass at seven, high mass at 10:30 and vespers in the afternoon at 2:00 P.M.), instilled complete confidence in the faith of Providence for the entire family. We, as a family, had been the beneficiaries of many pleasurable, beneficial, priceless, and meritorious rewards, both materially and spiritually, which had been completely unplanned by us.

Our children, having had the opportunity of knowing their grandmother, Anna, for a number of years until her death in 1947, and the grandfather, Peter, until his death at age 92 in 1960, expressed their reflections occasionally, based on many daily contacts. All appreciated the simplicity, modesty and personality of both.

My daughter Julie, who had had more intimate association

with both grandparents in her teen-age period, expresses herself in this manner: "My grandmother was a saintly and lovable person, working all day and far into the night to make everyone comfortable. It appears she knew what had to be done and no chore was too difficult and time consuming. I remember her as small in stature with soft white hair. Her cheeks had a deep soft color like roses and her blue eyes blinked in the bright sunlight like twinkling stars. She was my favorite and to her I dedicated my ideal literary gem at her death:

KIDNAPPED

The tiny face is round, sublime and sweet,
The span of years shimmers in her hair
So silvery. The cool blue dress petite
Reflects the texture of her skin so fair.

The tiny folded hands are knotted now,
Entwined in them, the beads we've known so long,
For on those very beads she taught us how
To live, and love, and make our life a song.

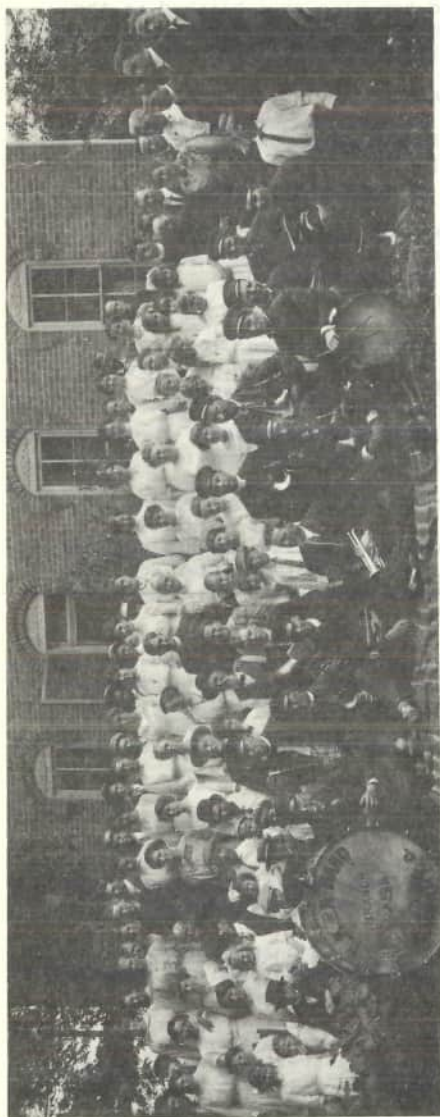
Her eyes so bright they almost laugh out loud,
The blue so deep God seems to shine right through
And now, how sweet her little head is bowed—
Perhaps you wish she were your Grandma, Too?
I call her, yet how listless she does stay,
O God! Your angels have carried her away!

"I remember my grandfather, who appeared at times to be stern and gruff in his manner but never cruel in his discipline. He had a kind heart, eager to praise and his surface gruffness would be allayed by the grandmother after some explanation. She was always the yeast in the dough, out of which came the sweet loaf of understanding and kindness."

The religious vitality of my parents matched that of my grandparents, Adam and Elizabeth, who had made their contributions in the 19th Century. My parents continued in providing benefactions to the local church in the form of money, alters, church bells, windows, statues, and material welfare to the local pastor.

The new pastor Father Ersing, the resident priest, lived in the new parsonage after 1907, but not having any means of transportation, my father supplied him with a horse and buggy at all times. The pastor was known as the horse-and-buggy priest who went about visiting the families of the parish, advising them, chatting with the old grandparents about the old world. Germany had been his birthplace and as a teen-ager, he migrated to America, to become a member of the Society of the Precious Blood. At my age of 10 years I was privileged to accompany him, occasionally, on a trip to the seminary or to a neighboring parish priest. Living within a stone's throw of the church, I anticipated being the mass server at the daily seven o'clock mass in the summer months.

Of minor importance were other parish activities, rendered by my parents which contributed to the welfare,



His First Mass, a Day Of
Celebration



Rev. William P. Lennartz



'Horse & Buggy' Priest

spiritually and materially, to the church. I referred the reader earlier to the experiences of father in conducting the Archbishop from one parish to another, escorted by a few dozen men on horseback. His highness on these Confirmation journeys would be conducted by no better prepared retinue than that of my father's. His visitation and the celebration of Confirmation was a welcome interruption of the daily grind of farm work of the people. There was always an enthusiastic reception and a day of feasting.

At this juncture in time I should remind the reader that the most striking milestone of parish activities, more colorful, prominent, and personal for me, was the occasion of welcoming my uncle, Reverend William Lennartz, my mother's brother, the newly ordained son of the parish. It was my father who specially prepared the family carriage for this eventful happening. Many days were devoted to the decoration of the vehicle as well as to the stepping trotters of his, all bedecked with ribbons and plumes. Every brass buckle, rings, and hames reflected the sun's brightness. Verily the horses champed their bits, arched their necks and glanced their eyes more proudly on this occasion. No doubt, they caught a little of the pride of Uncle Will's family upon the celebration of his First Mass. Perhaps the dignity of the affair caused my Father to reign them up more tightly than ordinary.

The carriage, colorfully decorated, accompanied by two dozen mounted men and boys, including myself at age 15 years, escorted my uncle from the railroad depot at Ft. Recovery to the Wendelin church, five miles to the east. The honored guest arrived in due time at the church and was greeted by visiting clergy, acolytes, school children, and parishioners, amid the loud welcoming sounds of the great church bells. After a short religious service and the blessing by the newly ordained priest all went to their homes, preparing for the next day.

I would be remiss not to remind the reader of the full-scale activity the following day. The Holy Mass by Father Will, concelebrated with a dozen or more priests of the neighboring parishes was performed at 10:00 A.M. It ended at noon with shouts of joy and hearty congratulations amid the reverberations of the deep hollow sounds of the great bell, mingled with the short sharp tinkles of the two small ones.

The day was a MEMORABLE ONE FOR ALL, ESPECIALLY for Fr. Will and the family. For this auspicious occasion, three hundred or more relatives, neighbors, and friends, gathered at the Lennartz homestead; brothers of Robert and the families of many cousins from Ft. Wayne, Tiffin, Boston, Sedalia and Montrose, and relatives referred to earlier, honored him with their presence. It was a gala event with feasting and visiting for more than a day. Neighbors, friends, and relatives provided food, drinks, and beer. The temporary constructed tables under the high maples groaned under the weight of an abundance of meats, salads, and garden vegetables, including the many toothsome pies, cakes and cookies.

In order to hand-on to posterity many pleasant memories

of my grandparents and parents, my children asked me to jot down some of my fondest recollections of events that were real treasures in my life. Some of these stories were most amusing, most hilarious and the experiences progressively ridiculous as I realized later. However, many were real gems of pleasure and ones of inspiration and motivation from them. Their merit must be evaluated in times of the period and situations as well as their effects from them. The tragedy in not relating them is that we take too much for granted and before we are aware of it, priceless family lore has slipped through our fingers. Half a century glides by before we realize that it is one's privilege and responsibility to transmit and record in black and white, that which should have been handed on.

All seasons of the year has great charm for rural children. These pleasures for our children had never been experienced by them until the family moved to the country on a 100 acre farm in 1940. Though only 10 miles from the center of Dayton their farm experiences could be easily translated in terms of my farm experiences which had been nearly thirty-five years earlier. However, my rural experiences were under more rustic conditions while theirs in 1940 had the conveniences available of our former city home in Oakwood.

My experiences on the farm at the turn of the century were vastly different; my country home had no electricity, no plumbing or running water and no central heating system. A wood-burning stove in the kitchen, and a cast-iron round heating stove in the combination dining-sitting room provided the family comfort by day. At night, woolen wearing apparel and many comforters supplied some measures of relief from the cold, though amply supported by quick runs, from the bedrooms to the heated rooms below, morning and evening.

Fortunately, two telephone lines, one from Ft. Recovery and one from St. Henry had been erected to our small village of St. Wendelin in 1900. By contract in 1907 with the Bell Telephone System, these lines were connected with the newly established, simple one-wire farmers' line in the rural area. Thus farmers could contact distant points through a three-wire telephone exchange box located in my parent's home. This telephone exchange contraption is now a family heirloom and one of the many antiques in our 150 year old house on Swigart Road.

There always appeared to be cheerful inefficiency by rural inexperienced families in handling this new kind of communication. "Please, talk into the mouthpiece and hold the receiver near the ear," was a constant reminder to the callers. Not surprisingly, the interested parties were alerted by shorts and longs of a set of bells, actuated by a crank at the side of the telephone box.

Since the single, one-wire rural line telephone of the farmers was electrically weak this system of party-line encouraged much shouting and listening-in on the conversation of their neighbors. It was a kind of communication, and the daily news of the rural area. However, when the local farmer's line made contact with the more electrically-powered line of the

Bell system, many of these acoustical difficulties were eliminated. One must admit that through the efforts of my parents a milestone had been reached in communication in the country, thus providing rapid contacts with doctors, businesses, friends, and relatives at distant points.

The two-room cottage with the middle partition removed in 1902 became one large room with the customary kitchen stove in one corner, and the large family dining table in the center, thus adding space for family recreation all around. A few years later the two-room cottage broke its seams, vertically and horizontally for my father added a parlor and a bedroom on the ground floor with two bedrooms above to the East. A spacious new kitchen was attached to the South of the cottage in 1906, thus providing many additional conveniences for my mother and the family. A new kitchen range with the warming oven above and hot-water tank attached provided instant hot water for the family. Within an arm's length of the stove was the sink and pitcher-pump which was located directly over a cistern underneath, thus it was no longer necessary for one to tease a frozen pump on a cold winter day for the family's water supply. The large dining room truly, became a family room for sitting, rumpus and gameroom, while a red-glowing potbellied heating stove replaced the old worn out simple kitchen range.

Within a period of ten years the family of four children had increased to ten, (eight boys and two girls). Sadness struck the family at the death of two sons who died in infancy from a malady, known as 'summer complaint' which in reality had been due to unpasteurized milk and other unsanitary conditions about the farm.

The original two-room cottage area was no longer a place to eat one's meal for now it was the center of all indoor activities: in reviewing school assignments, reading farm and childrens' magazines, leafing through the Sears Roebuck catalogue, or playing games of dominoes, fig-meal, checkers or card games of euchre and cribbage. I remember, vividly, the activities on many winter nights of hopeful and potential pleasantries of popping corn and eating spluttering, juicy, red apples, roasted on long skewers. All of us managed to complete the school assignments quickly which were tested and qualified by mother or father, and if successful, games, singing, etc. were in order.

Yes, this room had a small library: a series of Carpenter's Geographical Readers, dozens of 5¢ booklets on literature, historical and geographical subjects, and the monthly American Boy and American Girl magazines. In 1908, the family library extended its usefulness to me the next three years since a series of ten large volumes, known as The New Student Encyclopedia had been added. Mother had purchased this series from a traveling book salesman which created a questionable purchase in the mind of my father for traveling salesmen, known as "City Slickers", were held in ill-repute among country people. However, many of these salesmen provided important marketing functions of newly created manufactured

articles of convenience. Since the purchase of the encyclopedia was unbeknown by my father at the time, it caused him to become angry and he said: "It is a fraud and the egg-money you have saved for many weeks as a down-payment, will be lost, or if the books are delivered they will be worthless for family usage."

After a two-week traumatic suspense the books were delivered and the cost paid in full. All members of the family including my father, upon examining the contents, declared them an important addition to the family's educational program.

Surprisingly, these volumes were ready references and very helpful in my last three years of school under the new teacher, Mr. Dahlinghaus, who was constantly goading me to do extra-curricular tasks to qualify for high school.

In spite of the rumors about the business deals of these traveling salesmen, some traveling by foot and others in covered, one-horse wagons, they were usually welcome in many homes.

There was John-the-Greek, who came twice each year with the most fantastic assortment of dry goods and yard material, packed and strapped in two large leather cases. He would be treated to a cup of coffee and some baked goodies by mother. Simultaneously, his wares would be spread over chairs, and on the table for all to admire. There were imported laces and small rugs from the orient, multicolored dress materials, outing flannel for shirts and skirts, and oriental perfumes. Invariably, there was an exchange of money, or farm products, or, sometimes a bartered meal for a desirable article.

There were other travelers, sometimes called, "Traveling Tramps." The position of these individuals in the rural areas was between respect and rogerly since they possessed quips and tricks, bordering on dishonesty. Yet, many were honest, wandering from home-to-home, hamlet-to-hamlet, with the pack on their back. In spite of the dubious character of his type he was a welcome visitor for the children. All grown-ups would gather about his open pack of wares of rings, laces, trinkets, knick-knacks, and this-and-that for all were eager to hear his stories and watch his slight-of-hand and card tricks.

No home in the country was considered complete unless it contained a stereoscope and dozens and dozens of stereoscopic views, (stereo or three-dimensional picture). These pictures covered world-wide subjects with annotations: American and foreign cities, national parks, lakes, mountains, and geographical scenes from all continents. This educational gadget was the travelog of the times, very advantageous educationally and very economical in cost. Pictures were selling from 2¢ to 4¢ each and the stereoscope for the sum of \$1.00. It was the one-horse drawn wagon and the speciality salesman that brought this fascinating, valuable, and enjoyable piece of equipment to rural Mercer County.

Within a few years the Sears Roebuck catalogue carried these items, selling stereoscopes at the very low price of 24¢

to 49¢, thus competing with the traveling salesmen who at the time were providing high grade lenses at a cost of 75¢ to \$1.50 each. These pioneering salesmen brought not only knowledge and many hours of enjoyment but also enthralled all members of the family for years. Curiously enough, this pleasant and educational experience went down fighting after 1915 while today, a great stereo revival is underway which makes it a collector's item. Few of our present generation will ever be able to realize the charm, enjoyment, and world-wide knowledge this small gift had given millions of people.

The high thin voice of the rag-picker, "Any rags, bones, and bottles today for the rag-picker is coming down your way," could be heard long before he came in sight. The boys, including myself, gathered old iron, bottles and rags, weeks before, anticipating his coming which was twice each year. As the old tattered rag-man and his tired old horse, both looking as dusty and unwanted as the junk piled in the wagon, came swaying into the lane, we gave him an encouraging welcome for a successful transaction would mean a few more coins in our pockets.

With the capitol of the gypsy empire and its King, domiciled in East Dayton, many tribes of two or more families would begin their driftless roaming into the rural areas of Mercer County in the summer. The story, whether fictional or real, provides the version that Owens and Harriet Stanley came into the area of Dayton as King and Queen of the Dayton gypsies in the middle of the 19th Century and upon their death they were buried in Woodland Cemetery by their son, Levi Stanley. It is believed that their monument, a tall shaft, is the only one of its kind in the United States. The Montgomery County gypsies amassed large areas of land in the surrounding townships about the turn of the Century.

Stories of kidnapped children, horse stealing, poultry smuggling, and stealing of horse feed, caused fear among the children in the country.

On one occasion in the summer one of my brothers sounded a false alarm of approaching gypsies. Pointing in the direction of the tree-lined, dusty, gravel road we saw a dirty, rickety old buggy, very much bent down on one side, and drawn by a gray, sway-back pony with scant harness but reinforced with pieces of rope. It was carrying supposedly, a migrant tramp, ragged, but no better for wear and tear than his horse and equipment. When he stopped at the house we noted that his left arm and right leg were missing which created less fear for all but an impatient desire to know more of him and his way of living. He was neither a gypsy, a rag-picker nor a vicious tramp. He told us that he was an old disabled Civil War Veteran and had lost his limbs in the last battle of the war. He eked out an existence for himself and his pony with the aid of a government pension, supplemented by the goodwill and charity of the country people.

He, being a lavish and exaggerated story-teller, rewarding his listeners with his repeated time-worn pedigree and

military experiences of bravery in battles, (he had visited almost every state in the last fifty years). My mother, having inherited the temperament, generosity of her father, and supplemented by the pleadings of us boys to hear more stories, gave him a solid, wood-choppers meal. In due time she called us to do our chores whereupon she bade him godspeed on his way.

On a few occasions that summer the shout, "Gypsies are coming," alerting the family, was unmistakably correct. Immediately, my mother designated an older boy to be busy about the entrance to the barn while another tarried about the hen house and chickens. All were to watch every move of the gypsy squaw as she approached the house. Mother gathered the younger ones in the house with a determination that no gypsy could enter, by locking all doors. Upon the knock at the kitchen door, mother opened it, proffered some bakings to the begging squaw through the half-open door. Simultaneously she held a kettle of boiling water in the other hand but in full view of the prying and suspicious squaw. The troupe, usually, was made up of a group of two or three covered wagons, each carrying all the children and the family belongings. Each wagon with its one-spotted Indian pony in the front with a tag-along one tied on the rear, would stop near a house. Leaving the men at the wagons, the women would go from one neighbor to another, begging for food or clothing. The village store-keeper had many tales to repeat about his difficulties in handling a few of the women at the same time while in his store.

Periodically, a medicine show arrived in a gaily decorated wagon, with a covered top displaying a bottle of medicine with the catch-words, 'Cure for all aches and pains.' To encourage the parents of the parish to see his display, a leaflet advertising his coming would be given each child in school on Friday afternoon preceding the Saturday's exhibit. Invariably, as an incentive for fathers and mothers to attend his show and hold their interest and attention for later purchases, he would advertise his slight-of-hand and various card tricks. For greater sales technique, one peddler, formerly with a circus, exhibited some snakes, miniature wild animals and a midget. These medicine men were in competition with the Watkins door-to-door salesmen who charged more for medicine but perhaps had drugs of a higher quality.

A yearly event that was certain to create much excitement for both young and old was Jim Rhodes Big-Fun Show. His truck, carrying in bold letters the name of this traveling show contained the picture screen, the hand-cranked projector, a few folding chairs and all necessary stage material which included the draw curtain and makeup equipment. A small lean-to tent would be erected near the side door of the school containing additional stage material if needed. The main purpose of the tent was to provide the sleeping quarters for the showman, Mr. Rhodes, who was certain to be on his way to another school or church early the next morning. The designated evening for the show was advertised by the teacher and pupils a few days in advance, thereby assuring a schoolroom of spectators. Without electricity, the room was lighted by oil lamps.

The show began when Rhodes poured water into the carbide container and lighted the burner in the projector's light house. When properly adjusted to the screen, the oil lamps turned low, he began to turn the handle thereby causing the screen to become alive. Even though the movie was silent, all enjoyed the adventure and excitement of seeing scenes of far-away places. The pictures were clearly explained with conversational quips on characters involved. In addition to the movie, Mr. Rhodes continued with vaudeville acts, varied in nature. The children were amazed that a doll could talk and called the names of some of the children in the ventriloquist act. He was an apt cartoonist to the great delight of all. For a closing act he had enlisted the aid of a boy before the show began and when calling for a volunteer from the audience this boy would be his preference and was asked to come to the stage. After a lengthy introduction and discussion about his name, parents, sports, height, weight, and work, Mr. Rhodes called attention to the boy's shirt-tail, slightly emerging from the waistband of his breeches. Thereupon Rhodes pulled on it and out came a long string of knotted, gaily colored pieces of cloth, similar to knotted handkerchiefs. These continued to emerge as the boy ran through the audience and out the front door. After reeling in this long, trailing string of colored handkerchiefs, he embraced a huge armful of variegated material creating a thunderous acclamation. Parents and children praised him for his clean acts and recognized him as one providing genuine and praiseworthy entertainment.

Significantly, there were other local, interesting, and exciting activities surrounding the church and school. They are now classified as extra-curricular, and provided more opportunities for mental growth and educational development. These activities were given annually by a Lyceum Unit from a nearby town or by a highly organized group of musicians or lecturers, usually teachers, on religious and cultural subjects.

Indicative of acquiring dramatic excellence by parish members and pupils there were sing-fests and stage-plays by the young people and appropriate school programs rendered at Christmas and Easter by the pupils. These affairs filled the schoolroom to capacity for the local people were eager to observe their everyday friends as impersonate lovers and even villains. The parish chorus, glee club, madrigal or barber-shop quartet amused the crowd at the intermission. The auction of a box-lunch or a marching cake-walk would be utilized to raise funds for school equipment or library books.

Recitations, books, sports and games are the elements of childhood days. Today, one seldom can find a plaything that has been made by a schoolboy or girl. Our present day manufacturing of toys have an intrinsic value but it has taken incentive, interest, and creativity from our children.

Perhaps, the most common of playthings in the old days was the string ball because of the absence of the present day horsehide, rubber-centered, soft ball. It was truly an art to begin with a walnut center and with careful tension of wrappings

of cord, one would arrive with a satisfying finished round ball. There was virtually no limit in the use of the ball for rural children at home in the game of 'Andy-over,' or a game of ball at school.

The sling-shot made from a forked tree branch and two rubber strips with a leather pouch cut from an old shoe top, was as attractive to the boys as the popgun. The popgun barrel was a hollowed-out center joint of an inch elderberry stock which would accommodate a wooden plunger that actuated the missile of a dried bean, pea, corn kernel or any kind of ammunition that would fit into the barrel.

For additional marksmanship to equal that of Annie Oakley who had been born and reared in adjoining Darke county, boys would locate an old broken umbrella, stored for future repair. They, disassembling it, (one of the long steel ribs would be used for the bow and a half-length ribe for the sharpened tip) considered it a challenge to hit the bull's eye. Similarly, to test the skill of boys, was a hand-dart made from a three inch corncob with a slim nail or sharpened short piece of umbrella rib, driven through its length. In order to keep the missile on a fixed course a couple of feathers would be neatly bound to the body of the dart.

Homemade wagons and sleds were the usual means of transportation about the house and barn at chore time. A sled with oak runners, tipped with the steel from an old discarded buggy wheel, would have the capacity to haul a quarter to one-half cord of kindling from the woodhouse to the kitchen stove box. At school, the sled was the favorite object of the boys in winter for its lightning speed. It would be directed down a nearby long hill, carrying on it a pyramid of six or more large boys in prone position and topped by one or two small boys. The two large boys, forming the base of the pyramid, by dexterity of movement, would maneuver the direction of the sled to a half-circle near the base of the hill, thus catapulting all but one or two into deep drifts of snow.

Yes, a deep covering of new fallen snow was most welcome by all, boys and girls. It provided many winter sports including 'Fox and Goose Ring,' which apparently was the most favorite in winter.

Boys' aggressiveness and the bumblebees' hostility were correlated components that, invariably, terminated in a fight. It was my opinion that each of the two inherited from past generations an antagonistic instinct for each other. The proper weight, size, and shape of a fighting paddle, usually two to each boy, would be a constant challenge to the squatter's rights of the brave little bumblebee. It was only after the wielders of the paddles when bringing in their ally; the dog with the snap, or employ the trick of placing a partly filled water jug with its opening next to the hole that brought victory to the tricksters. A half-closed eye of a boy of yesterday was a rare feat but a belligerent bee with controlled accuracy, would at times succeed in breaching the swinging paddles. However, a boy was ever ready to barter it for the

contents of a thimble-size honey cell. Nesting holes of bumblebees that formerly lined the grassy banks of country roads are as scarce as collectors' items today.

Country living demanded certain tasks to be performed by each member of the family at various seasons of the year, thereby contributing much entertainment and a change of everyday routine. Spring was a happy time for the children for they were allowed to remove shoes and the long black woolen or fleece-lined stockings. The washing of feet was always a must before going to bed or for a change of footwear. The long legged woolen underwear was no longer necessary but replaced with a short upper and lower. All in all this free and easy living was very attractive for us until a stubbed toe, or an extracted splinter, or an application of a piece of 'salt pork' to a rusty nail wound. A mixture of hot salt water or an application of carbolic acid to any wound was the sure sterilization procedure for it.

In spring one could satisfy the thirst with a cool, sweet maple, sap drink from the tapped maple tree which could be attained directly through a hollowed-out, inserted elderberry stock. Later in the summer there were berries, free for the taking; mulberries, purple raspberries, blackberries, all choice foods for robins with whom the boys had a merry race in the early morning. The berry-pail, usually, a tin molasses bucket or an empty brass-colored, five-pound wire-bailed lard pail, would accommodate the picker. One of the choice spots for gathering the largest of plump, juicy blackberries was the old graveyard on the north bank of the Wabash, the old family burial grounds of the early settlers that I referred to in chapter one. This plot after having been neglected for more than a half-century was now a tangled mass of bushes, and small weed trees, obliterating tomb stones, hardly visible in the trapped vines of wildgrape and honeysuckle.

The early hours of picking were quite pleasant but the ambitious spirits waned as the sunbeams drifted perpendicular overhead, but it was all worth it when tasty jams, jellies and delicious pies were choice delicacies in midwinter.

When the garden came on there was a new field of epicurean experiences. The gathering of sweet, roasting ears, and later ripe muskmelons and watermelons were choice August delights. One should not overlook the chewy sweetness of a miniature stalk of molasses sorghum, or the juicy red tomatoe with a bit of salt when plucked directly from the vine. These and many other adventures were pleasures rather than tasks.

At the approach of autumn hickory nuts, some large ones with hard shells and large kernels were available, but popular to the country boy, for immediate eating, were the small ones with thin shells and sweet kernels. Walnut time came within the same month which proclaimed the presence of brown-stained hands, permitting one to have solied hands, legitimately, in school, church, and home. All these activities and more, year after year, were the tricks of being a country boy.

We had learned that Grandfather Robert after his financial difficulty lived with his son and daughter in the old home. The embarrassing and puzzling financial situation solved by my parents, actually cemented the ties of genuine affection and familial love of the family. In spite of the distance of one and a half-miles between the two homes there was daily or at least every other day a personal contact between members of the two families. We boys would be visiting the old homestead or grandfather Robert would have a chore to perform in the church yard or the cemetery at the village, creating shouts of joy and delight among the children whenever he approached the church yard to mow the tall grass. This would encourage the boys to load their homemade wagons with the new mowed hay and cart it to a nearby field where nodding horses and patient cattle would be waiting for the delicious clumps.

However, more fascinating for us was grandfather Robert's ability to remove well filled sections of honey from bee hives in the summer and late fall, since this was a performance that bordered close to magic. He could move his hands with great skill in soothing the noisy and supposedly angry bees. Indeed, it was at this time when his old, burned-out corn cob pipe was his greatest friend. Apparently, the bees enjoyed or despised the frequent and short puffs of ejected smoke that swiftly and completely encircled his face and descended rather quietly down through his short, white, grizzled beard and about his neck. Being of meek disposition, never disturbed by word or deed of man or beast, he would gently brush the clustering bees from his fingers and hands, never or hardly ever, with a sting. His favorite remark which paralleled his homespun philosophy was, "we've got to trust someone, why not let it be the bees."

Of all days of the week, Sunday was the day that brought all the members of the two families together at one happy family reunion. It was a pleasing sight, at the sound of the half-hour bell, reminding all of the High Mass in thirty minutes to see the three: Grandfather Robert, Uncle Adam, and Aunt Rose. On a few mornings, due to tardiness, it being no light matter on Sunday, Uncle Adam would drive the vehicle, jolting and clattering down the one and one-half mile stretch with clouds of white dust streaking behind. After crossing the farm bridge and up the gravel lane he would tie the horse to the hitching post, adjacent to the house. But on cold wintry days the farm horse and fringed-topped surrey would be sheltered in the barn.

Still more pleasing to the family was the annual visit of distant relatives; of cousins, uncles and aunts, young and old, slender and plump, appearing fashionably dressed to us, their country cousins. For each of us there would be a big kiss with affectionate caressing that would create much discomfort for us boys who were ignorant of such goings-on. This sweet lovable relationship and lively cheerfulness were attributes of the Lennartz clan. The younger generation of city cousins, reared among the bustling streets and patent-city culture, entered with ease into the rural habits of the country folks.

After a half-hour of conversation, covering city conveniences and entertainment, as compared to country living, young and old were suddenly stirred to action for the church bells, three in number - the great thunder-like one heard for miles, the pleasant appealing middle-size one, and the mild melodious tiny bell adding its high tones to the harmonious musicale - were calling the village people to the church for the Sunday High Mass.

The entire household, young and elderly, city and country cousins, hand-in-hand, quickly tramped down the thread-like gravel walk, over the single-file swaying footbridge. All arrived at the church as the last clang faded into the distance. When the services came to a close, usually 12:00 noon, the bells thundered forth again, each trying to outdo the deep laboring organ by piling ever higher and higher accordant notes upon the ears of the parishoners, winding up in full jubilee.

It was a curious spectacle to witness the departure of the parishoners after the services in winter since they came in carriages or bobsleds and departed with a smacking of whips and the clattering of hoofs. The horses with sparkling harness started off with a bound, throwing up a whirlwind of snow, nearly hiding us and the visitors from each other as we wended our way to the family home. The boys and girls would discuss what Anna, my mother, had prepared for the day's meal. Traditionally, a Sunday country dinner, summer or winter, to city cousins was a memorable occasion and one never to be forgotten. The dinner was served upon the dining table, antecedently elongated with three inserted table boards. In winter, a blazing crackling fire of wood chunks in the tall, barrel-like iron stove heaped warmth into the room which quickly removed the flush of frost-bitten bloom from the cheeks of the young.

The boys of the family sat on a bench built along the wall, providing at least six places on the one side of the table. There would be a bustling, scuffling and scuddling of arms and legs over and about the bench at the call of dinner. Woe-betide the urchin if he were hemmed in if nature called him elsewhere.

Such heaped-up platters of chicken, indicating that two of the largest and sauciest roosters had lost their heads the day before. Also plates of recently stuffed savory sausages would charm the eager eyes of all with many 'ohs' and 'ahs'. Notwithstanding, the cousins, confronted with many kinds of sweet cakes, apple and pumpkin pies, would crave and relish the open-hearth, oven-baked white and rye breads. These when spread with newly-churned butter and an ample covering of either plum, peach, or pear preserves were rare delicacies for them.

The after-dinner respite provided leisure time for social enjoyment and to review the past happenings by all members of the clan who had been separated for a year or two. The two well-loved uncles, John of Tiffin and William of Notre Dame, would relate their well known and some new stories which would

keep all in uproarious stitches. The keen enjoyment of new jokes was prompted by their mode of expressing the language, the manner in which they were related (creating living characters momentarily), and, the particular air and appearance of the jokesters. I loved to listen to Uncle Will as he related the tale of wonders of faraway cities, his activities as a seminarian, his ability as a superior debater at the great University of Notre Dame, and as the editor of the University Paper. As he related these experiences, I, as a teenage boy must have been spellbound with wide open eyes and mouth, drinking this in with a thirst for more, hoping and dreaming that I could imitate him some day and participate in what he termed, 'higher learning.'

Uncle John, not to be outclassed in entertainment, would relate stories of people who came to his office of County Recorder. Folks in the country were well aware of his total deafness but they did not realize that he was an excellent lip-reader. Unaware, unconscious informers and gossipers would supply, unwittingly, wanted or unwanted information to him. His experiences, as a government intelligence officer in World War I were most exciting. It was during this war when prejudices ran rampant against anything that related to the German language or culture. The German language had to be discontinued in churches and schools by order of the government and all derogatory remarks of our participation in the war was a criminal act, thus any remarks for or against the German language or practices would never be heard or acknowledged by Uncle John.

To a great degree, we, the children inherited the cheerfulness, kindness, amiability and the outgoing love of the Lennartz family. This is not to say that these characteristics were not present in the family of my father, but many members appeared to be more reticent, reserved, and uncommunicative. That of dogged adherence for ultimate success and to obtain a desired goal under all difficulties, were characteristics inherited from my father and grandfather. It is my firm belief that these attributes of die-hard determination of theirs must have influenced me in fulfilling the desire to reach a high goal in education, and the final completion of the 50 years of research in the health of sisters and the clergy. The combination of the traits of these two families influenced the social, economic, and religious life of all future generations.

Joyful events, sports, good eating, and country gatherings were the results of planned, seasonally assigned farm tasks at various periods. The spring plowing, cultivation, and seeding by my father and my brother, Norbert, began in April with the aid of two teams of horses; the one, a perfectly matched team of heavy drafts of star-studded sorrels, and the other a lighter weight team of off-colored bays. Each of these two teams could be supplemented by one of the two trotters as a third-horse-hitch when needed.

The garden, combined with the area for potatoes, approximately a quarter of an acre, having been plowed and pulverized a few weeks earlier was placed under the supervision of

my mother.

She never went out-of-doors in the summertime without wearing her blue or pink sunbonnet, edged with a large ruffle all around to protect her face and neck. She directed the spring work of the boys and girls in laying out squares for peas, beans, cabbage, lettuce, carrots, pickles, sweet corn and other vegetables necessary for the feeding of many mouths, summer and winter. Without fail, a few rows of old fashioned garden flowers were planted between rows of vegetables. Accordingly she declared the odor would discourage insects in damaging vegetables and this, no doubt, was true for she never failed to have an abundance of garden produce year after year, in spite of the fact that insecticides were unknown. The living and dining rooms were filled with the fragrance of the home-grown blooms, permeating every nook and corner, and artistically arranged in old-fashioned pressed-glass vases.

The large patch of potatoes provided many bushels and when harvested were heaped in a pile and buried under straw and ground. A few weeks later, cabbage, turnips, carrots, squash, and apples were added to the pile and when severe winter weather began all products were removed to the house cellar.

The summer days provided happy memories on weekend trips to Ft. Recovery to attend wild-west still picture shows at the nickelodeon. At the end of a busy week of willing efforts; storing hay, or shocking and hauling of grain sheaves to the barn to be cured and later threshed, my brother Norbert and I would receive a quarter for Saturday's night entertainment in town. On many occasions this sum of money would be augmented by the price of two or more squabs that had been purchased by the local hotel. Upon capturing the half-grown pigeons an extra large dip of ice-cream or an added, 'syrup-dope,' would be our week's anticipated taste experience.

On many Saturday summer nights, in addition to the picture show, a band concert would be rendered by local members who were business owners, salesmen, musicians or teachers in Ft. Recovery. Old and young, for miles around gathered in the city park, everyone having a gay and happy time with much singing, dancing, and parading up and down the streets. In the town house, known as the 'Opera House,' located on one corner of Main Street, stage plays of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' or 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' were sometimes performed by an out-of-town stock company. Minstrel shows, usually in winter, were performed by one or more troupes, consisting of a dozen black men or whites, painted black, who would make a colorful stage setting by having each man, dressed either in red, yellow, orange, or green dress suits. They would entertain the crowd for hours with their satirical songs, pantomimes, dialogues, dancing and acrobatic stunts.

On these Saturday evenings, late at night, the five-mile stretch, provided a zestful home trip for old Maude, one of the trotters. She had been a race horse in her prime, though now, ten years old she was off with her famous trot with long legs swinging easily and her narrow hooves beating rhythmically.

She maintained this speed, turning aside for another horse to pass if necessary, never slowing until she reached the barn at home. Yes, it is true that on one Saturday night my brother was compelled to stop Maude within a few beats for I, being half-asleep, lost my stiff straw hat. Fortunately, the buggy wheel missed the dust-covered leghorn by inches.

Two events in the late fall were attended by the entire family, the Ft. Recovery Harvest Jubilee in the first week of August and the Mercer County Fair at Celina in the last. The first festival of four days were devoted to exhibits of local farm produce, vegetables, farm animals, farm equipment and school displays in the town. Prizes were given for excellent exhibits in all fields and an award of a blue ribbon to the school that presented the largest number of pupils on a designated day. This honor fell to the Wendelin school in 1909.



My Father's farm wagon, drawn by his two teams of horses.

The Celina Fair demanded more preparation by the family since the distance of eighteen miles required an all-day trip with an early morning start and a late one home. The surrey with the fringe on top, drawn by the two trotters, was to carry all members of the family, drinks along the way, lunch at noon and a going snack. A bag of hay and ears of corn for the horses was tied to the running gear under the surrey. For the particular day many varied foods had been prepared: slices of home-cured ham; finger-licking chicken; coffee cake; cream pie and mouth-watering chocolate cake, and many other tidbits for in-between snacks. In spite of the fact that it was a day at the fair it was considered by the family as one of the great picnic days of the year.

The 1909 fair trip at my age of 12 years was the one that I remember most vividly since the entire family had a tour of the center of the town, Celina, before going to the fair-grounds. Celina being the county seat, the courthouse was centered in the public square which fascinated all of us due to its size of three stories and its huge square tower with a clock on each side. We had the opportunity of walking around the square one or more times, observing the movements of the long hands and waiting for the four clocks to strike the designated hour of twelve. Streets on the perimeter of the park were dotted with many hitching posts, providing parking area for various kinds of rigs and farm-wagons which was a most

convenient, unlimited parking area for tying horses and for a few curious-looking automobiles. The owners transacted business at the court-house or at nearby stores and business places surrounding the square. Offices of doctors, dentists, realtors, and lawyers were usually on the second floor. The street level housed a bank on each of the two corners, a drug store and a 5¢ and 10¢ variety store on the other two and a large department store occupied a half-street on the East and a men's store and lady's shop on the North. In the middle of the west side was the ice-cream parlor, containing little round tables for four.

The outstanding event was a treat to a soda for the family, the cost of which was 8¢ each. This was truly the start of a gala day at the fair.

In the year of 1909 we had an abundance of fruit and garden vegetables which permitted much canning of vegetables from the garden, fruit from the orchard, berries and grapes from the yard. I remember the temperature in the kitchen was excessive that summer due to the very warm and sultry days, which was immeasurably increased by the canning process. This demanded a roaring kitchen fire to heat additional vessels for sterilization of jars, pots, rubber rings, lids, clamps, and for the steaming of vegetables in the filled jars. Yes, in addition to the many details of canning, mother had to prepare the noon and evening meals for the day, but all this was necessary for the reward of good eating in the winter.

To supplement the diet, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, turnips, beets, and apples were wrapped in sheets of paper from Sears Roebuck catalogue and stored in the 'root-cellar.' It is to be remembered that there was no lack of wild game, beef, salt and fresh pork, ham and many kinds of poultry to be had throughout the winter months.

Now with the blustering wintry winds approaching which came far too quickly after the gathering of walnuts, hickory nuts and pumpkins, the happy carefree days of few clothes, of no shoes, of no stockings or caps, came to an end. The very idea of wearing those awful, bulky, black, woolen stockings, and long-legged underwear with buttons in front and back was more depressing for girls than for boys.

By and large, boys were more excited than girls to meet the new ventures of winter activities. The sports of boys were not restricted to the house since the large barn, now filled with hay and straw, provided innumerable slides, secret hiding places, and make-believe tunnels and caves. In exceptionally stormy weather, time would be spent in the farm workshop, devising snares, repairing wagons and sleds, and sharpening skates.

A rusty, old stove in the corner of the shop kept the temperature of a raw-edged day at a comfortable 75 degrees. The dirt floor was covered with sawdust while the clattered corners were crowded with shovels, spades, a sledge, crowbars, ropes and wire. My father knowing the value and usefulness of bolts, screws and cast-off small parts of old machinery, saved

them and were stored in boxes under the workbench. It, too, was covered with a veritable jungle of tools.

Boys on the farm had the opportunity of earning pin-money by catching small game animals of skunks, muskrats, and a mink occasionally, which had been trapped during the night. Checking traps was a regular routine for boys before going to school and on rare occasions the teacher would be compelled to send a boy home who had encountered a malodorous skunk that morning.

Thanksgiving Day, being around the corner all children looked forward to that day when the big gobbler with wings and legs high, would be the center of attraction on the farm dining table. For weeks the strutter would be confined to a special enclosure and fed with the best of grains to improve the quality of that Thanksgiving bird. The days of Christmas and New Year were days of repetition of past merriment and feasting but even with greater abandonment.

A growing farm boy had many chores to perform: the splitting and carrying of wood to the house; the feeding of chickens and other farm animals; and the milking of cows, both morning and evening irrespective of the temperature. It might appear to many today that these activities were real hardships and had disadvantages, but, in reality they were blessings in disguise. It was these forces that did a little chipping here and there which molded character and formed the crucible that changed the common iron to that of steel, thereby bestowing upon the country boy the true meaning of the dignity of work, of courage, of patience, of perseverance, of wisdom and a correct philosophy of life.

Life in the country was not all work and no play. Memorable were the days of hunting, fishing, nutting in the summer and fall, and many various sports the year round. In particular, one could be very excited when relating the jolly, lively, nimble-footed ice-skating matches of the boys and girls on the Wabash river.

Just as the gleaming pink and gold in the western sky was scarcely visible, the sun had been pulled minutes ago below the horizon, my brother and I, with strapped skates slung over our shoulders, were on our way for a night of fun and frolic. It was but a few yards to the nearby creek (branch of the Wabash), where the stretches of ice bade us fasten our skates quickly and securely. In spite of our hurried maneuvering, the icy air had invaded our exposed eyes and face and had penetrated our nostrils. Within seconds, we, with a few other boys and girls, challenging the zero weather, were off to the wide and deep river to the North. Periodically, these spirited affairs would continue late into the night, the results of which would be aching legs, some body bruises, semi-frozen face and hands, and a restricted orderly completion of morning chores.

Within a half-mile of the river was an old abandoned, water-filled gravel pit of a quarter-acre which also provided enjoyment of skating during the early winter season and up to

Christmas. Days of continuous zero and sub-zero weather in January produced a conversation between my father, Uncle John and the local storekeeper, that became more discouraging to us as the days passed. The three owned an ice-house jointly, which was filled, yearly, with newly frozen blocks of ice from the pond. The bad news of ice-harvesting came upon us suddenly and unaware which meant that there would be no more skating on the quarter-acre pond for many days. I must remind the reader that in those days artificial ice was unknown since the mechanical contrivances with the necessary chemicals were completely absent. There was no widespread use of electricity, even in small towns and none in rural areas.

So called ice-harvesting was a week of damp, freezing, backbreaking, and tiresome work from early morning to late at night. Much preliminary work had to be completed in advance so that when the pond was frozen from 6 to 8 inches or more in thickness all would be ready for the harvest. Local men would be hired, a horse calm and unafraid, properly shod with very sharp cleats would pull the ice-marker and the ice-plow across the pond. These two important tools for the operation had to be razor sharp to mark the size of the cakes so that all would be uniform in size and shape, 24 by 24 inches. The ice-plow was to cut deeper into the marked line whereupon the ice-saw completed the separation of long blocks of ice cakes.

On the sloping bank of the pond a wooden slide would be built from a wagon-high platform to the water level in the pond. This ramp would be the means of removing the long ice-blocks of ten cakes long, from the water. There would be much pushing and pulling with odd-length poles to maneuver the ice blocks to the ramp where, with ice-tongs, rope and the horse, the ascending ten-cake block would land safely on the platform. The attendant at this point would thrust a sharp flat iron bar into the marked seam thereby causing the natural ice to split straight and true into uniform cakes.

The most difficult and unpleasant work now began in the handling and hauling of the wet and slippery ice-blocks. Fifty or more cakes to a wagon load were carted to the village ice-house, placed in layers, ends-up with loose, dry sawdust sifted around, under and above each cake. The sawdust would insulate the ice from the hot summer sun and simultaneously, aid in freeing adjacent cakes when removed. The ice-house was about twenty feet high, 20 x 20 in dimensions, and generally filled to the top, which demanded an additional higher slide to fill the upper half of the building.

In our home we had an exceptionally large icebox, called a cooler that would accommodate a large split ice cake. The box consisted of an upper section which was lined with tin or copper to hold the melting ice. The water, channeled to a container resting on the floor, and indeed could cause a household tragedy if one forgot to check the container periodically. The lower section of the cooler was lined with shelves for food storage, temperature of which was about 40 degrees, thereby preserving liquids, meats, and vegetables for a reasonable period of time.

My brother and I found it great fun to remove a cake of ice on a hot summer day when needed, but we had even greater anticipated pleasure if it were on Saturday to make homemade ice-cream the next day.

Nearby neighbors in need of ice for cold drinks, or the making of ice-cream in the summer would afford a pleasant service for my brother and me since our compensation would provide an added Saturday's motion picture show, the Nickelodeon, or the purchase of personal needs..

In the reminiscing of events I dare not overlook those relating to family illnesses. and the what, where, and when the country doctor was called. My parents, having a family of ten children, encountered illnesses that were more than imaginary. Yes, during the period from 1900 to 1913, seven children were born: Albert in 1900, a second sister Zita, in 1901; Julius in 1906, Sylvester in 1908, and Walter in 1913, two brothers had died in infancy. Communication with the doctor was difficult before the telephone came to the rural areas, and he was rarely called to the home unless needed for the arrival of a new brother or sister. Memories of these half-dozen occasions were similar in setting for it was the doctor who came to the front porch with a hearty laugh and a big warm family greeting as he entered. His not too large black medicine bag, a narrow kind of two-story leather one, which when opened displayed rows and rows of small bottles of colored pills. The bottom of the bag was just large enough to accommodate a few instruments, while the upper sides contained bottles of elements of quinine, turpentine, compound cathartic pills, calomet, castor oil, and other herbal compounds.

When mother was ill we were wide-eyed, anxious and curiously waiting for the doctor to come from the bedroom. Children were never informed in advance about a new arrival but when the doctor emerged we expected to hear him say, "You have another new brother."

When there was illness the doctor would sit at the kitchen table, take a few pills from a bottle, perhaps from a second and third, and by mixing them with water the concoction was ready for use, accompanied with verbal instructions always. The doctor was never in a hurry but talked, laughed, and joked, bringing good cheer to the household and if necessary would remain all night until the person showed signs of improvement. The general practitioner was the best friend of the family and administered more medicine of psychology and common sense than pills from a bottle.

A family of six boys and two girls, having limited opportunities of buying wearing apparel and items for Sunday-dress at the local store, father was compelled to shop elsewhere. Every year there would be two or more shopping trips to a nearby village, three miles distant, by the name of Sharpsburg which was renamed Zenz City by a Mr. Zenz who opened a well-stocked dry goods store about the turn of the century. His stock of goods were readymade garments of suits, shirts, underwear, stockings and a large collection of shoes and knee-high leather

boots for men and boys. It was well known by all that Mr. Zenz bought up so-called 'Fire Sales,' in Dayton and sold the items at greatly reduced prices.

A visit by the family to the store would be a week or two before the opening of school in September. Each of the boys would be proud to exhibit a two-tone striped, turtleneck sweater, corduroy knee pants, and red-edged topped, knee-high leather boots during the ensuing year. Naturally, a large assortment of woolen underwear with long sleeves and long legs would complete the purchase. Children of many other families in the parish were not as fortunate as we were to present themselves with such an array of wearing apparel. Those, far from school, traveling to and fro by foot, were compelled to wear heavy-felt boots, homemade woolen shirts, pants and coats for warmth. One could write at length on the type of clumsy and heavy clothing that some country children wore in those days, but heavy woolens were necessary for warmth though not comfortable in the schoolroom.

Other shopping events of the family were made at Christmas, Easter, and First Communion celebration of one of the boys. On the occasion of my First Communion the first item to be considered was a suit of clothes which after some haggling over the price by my father, Mr. Zenz added a shirt, tie and suspenders, as additional inducement to purchase. The purchase being completed Mr. Zenz said, "To show you that my heart is right for I want you to come back for the other boys, your son can have a pair of dress shoes, (high button or patent leather) at half-price and a pair of stockings at no extra cost for this occasion."

After the horse-trading between the two ended and the deal was completed, money was given to Mr. Zenz. All items purchased were placed in a wire basket with money inserted in an attached tube and elevated to a wire cable above. The wire basket with goods and money were shot to the cashier's cage, located near the ceiling in the center of the store where the merchandise was wrapped, money change made by the central cashier, and shot back to the counter. Lowering the basket from from the cable, Mr. Zenz presented the package to me and the correct change to my father. All were happy and I was eager to display the new purchase to my mother upon reaching home.

Occasionally, before the hard winter season approached, father and the boys would make an extra shopping visit for leather boots, which would be treated with hot linseed oil before being worn. Father had a complete cobbler's shoe repair kit which was used periodically during the season, for with six growing boys, the best of leather soles on shoes and boots were not even a challenge to the hard usage given them. To provide father a breathing spell from the constant replacement of soles on leather boots a row of hobnails (round-headed tacks), protruding one eighth of an inch, were tacked to both soles and heels. In spite of these it did not discourage our activity of ice skating, but it could create some havoc on the linoleum and rag covered floors in the house. It was a standing order of my mother that all boots had to be removed in the kitchen before

entering any other part of the house and for removal of boots a wooden boot-jack, a gadget of an inch board, 4 x 12 inches, and slightly raised on one end with a V shape, was placed near the kitchen door.

Peter was a do-it-yourself shoe repairman whose cobbler's equipment was in an adjoining room attached to the side of the kitchen. This room also contained the brick-domed baking oven which was in constant use by my mother in the baking of a dozen or more loaves of bread at one time. (The generation of today will rarely or never see a dome-shaped oven unless they have the opportunity of traveling in upper Canada or visit some Indian Reservations.)

Half-soles of raw leather, purchased at the local store, would be thoroughly soaked in water at first, thereby creating a more flexible and tougher piece of leather after it had been reduced to one-half in thickness by application of a wooden mallet. Father with his complete set of equipment of iron lasts, proper soling tacks, and a keen leather cutting knife for shaping soles and heels, would produce a shoe-repair job that was the envy of any cobbler.

The kitchen had many duties to perform; a clothes closet to the left was a catch-all for farm coats, caps, boots and rough shoes, just beyond this was a pantry, adjacent to the kitchen stove, containing canned goods and cream, ready to be churned when fermented. The butter churn was a muscle-activated gadget which by a stomping action of an up-and-down plunger would separate the butterfat from the water. The churn was a slightly tapered barrel, five inches in diameter at the bottom and four inches at the top and three feet high with the handle of the plunger projecting through the opening in the lid. I remember on many days in summer, due to the heat, aching muscles and the aching desire to be out playing ball, I was constantly checking, yes, dozens of times, the progress of the separation in the butterfat, always hoping that the butter would appear shortly.

The floor of the low-ceiling kitchen was scrubbed with boiling water every Saturday afternoon or more often if necessary. I had described earlier that the focal point in the kitchen was the black, iron, nickel-lined stove with its large warming oven below and smaller ones above. These when opened would heat the room comfortably for the boys who gathered here on winter mornings before breakfast. Having no central heating unit in our home, the bedrooms on the second floor received little warmth from the stoves below. The temperature in both bedrooms was at a degree just enough to prevent one from detecting ones breath while the frost-flowers had been putting forth all day their daintiest, silverist petals on the panes of the only window opening in the room. The night before a cold winter morning the boys were allowed to undress for bed in the kitchen, leaving underwear, stockings, etc. on hangers behind the kitchen stove. The girls were privileged to use the warmth of the large living-dining room for their preparation, also deposited their school clothes in the rear of the pot-bellied stove. Thus all clothes of boys and girls would be pleasantly

warm in the morning. Hurrying two steps at a time down the stairway with great excitement and glee, the first would slip in between the stove and wall, a favorite warm spot, while the others would be slipping stockings and shoes on cold feet. It was on one of these mornings when washing my feet, my brother Norbert, in a bit of horseplay, accidentally poured boiling water from the teakettle over the calf of my leg. No doctor had been called or had been contacted at the time for he lived five miles away, but my mother used a home remedy of salve made from a local field plant, 'Mullein' that healed the injury over a period of several weeks. Oil, distilled from mullein was the standard home remedy for an aching ear, and had been used on many a little tyke to put him into dreamland.

Another morning delight was the breakfast served at the kitchen table. Slowly cooked oatmeal in a double-boiler, prepared the night before with thick cream was a real treat, and served with homemade bread, butter and jam. Though every other morning the family would be treated to fried eggs and home cured bacon or sausage.

From the spacious oven, weekly, drifted the most heavenly aromas from the big flat coffee cakes, juicy pies, and feathery cakes. As an extra treat some of the breaddough would be made into coffee cakes, and sprinkled with brown sugar, cinnamon, raisins and covered with sweet cream. No one could equal mother's coffee cakes. There was no timer, no thermostat on the stove and the temperature was regulated by judicious addition and placement of different size chunks of wood in the adjacent firebox. I marvel at the things my mother accomplished with the simplest equipment with which she worked.

She was five feet tall but with years of experience she could complete any task, was a wonderful cook and housekeeper. Her patience was beyond description for she was ready to stew, steam, bake, broil, and fry foods, three times a day, year after year.

The faithful kitchen stove ate a gigantic woodbox of split wood each and every day of the year. A reservoir on the side of the stove was kept filled with water for washing dishes and for instant hot water when needed for it was the hot-water heater of the times. The task of keeping the nearby woodbox filled for the day was the regular routine after school hours of one of the boys. Due to the fact that my brother Norbert had barn chores with father, this chore had been mine for a number of years, yet very pleasant and interesting in winter with the use of the sled.

We must not overlook another important function of the stove because it was the one appliance necessary to wash, boil, and iron the family clothes, thus using the entire top of the stove on many days. The family wash was the Monday morning chore, 'washday.' The laundry soap was homemade of lard, lye, and water, mixed and boiled to a certain consistency, (Toilet soap for personal use could be purchased at the local country store, under the trade name 'Castile, Buttermilk Toilet Soap'.)

Two large wooden tubs of water, one of clear cistern water and another, mixed with indigo blue (a clothes whitener), a hand-operated wringer, a wicker clothes basket with dozens of clothespins, and a copper boiler would complete the essentials for washday operation. A washboard was truly an important facility in preparing both fine and coarse garments before placing them in the copper boiler. Subsequently, after a ten-minute boiling process on the top of the stove, clothes were rinsed through the clear water and again in the blue mixture. The hand-operated wringer performed the duty of removing excess water, after which starch was added if needed. On clear days, winter and summer, all clothes, fastened with wooden clothespins, were hung on a permanent wire line in the backyard. Usually, clothes when brought indoors were frozen stiff in winter, therefore long underwear, stiff shirts, and dresses were supported by chairs in the kitchen while the smaller articles were draped over the clothes-horse.

The electric, mechanical, revolving heating ironer was hardly an idea at the time. The so-called 'sad iron' was heated on the stove for ironing curtains, bed sheets, and other garments. Mother, and later my sister, Veronica, ironed the stiffly starched aprons and ruffled sunbonnets of the girls and the highly starched round collars of the boys' Eton Jackets. These with the knee-length pants and high button shoes were known as the dress for the Sunday Best.

I would be remiss in relating my boyhood and teenage experiences if I did not acknowledge the influence of my favorite Uncle John, my Godfather, and his newly acquired wife, Aunt Anna Boebner, whom he married in 1905. She had worked in Cincinnati as a maid in a wealthy home for a number of years, thereby acquiring many personal niceties, city skills, and practices. Her ability to transfer a bit of urban culture to our family and to the parish was a distinct advantage. I was invited to live with them daily, for two years, caring for their first child, Magdalene. Grandfather Adam having died in 1903, they with grandmother Elizabeth, lived in the large house across the road. Though the distance to my home over the swinging footbridge was short indeed, it was a painful and dreadful experience to make the journey after darkness had fallen. Invariably, just after dusk a dreary and terrifying hooting of a screech owl would be heard in the nearby orchard adjacent to the path that led to the footbridge. Certainly, no longer than a few seconds of a hop-skip-and-a-jump, I was on the footbridge, and then with another I landed on the front porch of my home.

Aunt Anna Boebner was the daughter of Gottlieb and Magdalene (Link), and according to their family history, Gottlieb and his baby brother, Benedict, (a member of the Precious Blood order), had been carried by their parents to the small cross-road village of St. Wendelin before it had been established as a mission in 1856. The family tradition provides an unusual story of this family's journey by foot through the deep forest from Union City to this settlement, a distance of 25 miles or more. The parents of Gottlieb built a log house and store at one of the four corners which he sold after ten years to Mr.

Coughlin who continued the grocery business into the 20th Century. Gottlieb's parents purchased 100 acres a half-mile south of the mission church which later became the home of Gottlieb, his wife Magdalene, and their three children: Anna, born in 1874; Catherine in 1876; and John in 1880.

Anna, as an adult was of medium height and rather slender. Her hair was chestnut brown and it's dark soft sweepings, with light brown eyes, and slightly arched eyebrows, gave more prominence to her cream-colored skin. Her forehead was low and broad, her nose straight and her mouth firm and sensitive. The face was not a showy one but it possessed strong individuality and a character of utter selflessness. Aunt Anna of pleasing face and gentle manner was truly a lady.

Uncle John was of medium height and stately, dark hair with a sprinkling of grey, brown eyes, a neatly trimmed mustache with whiskers on each side of his face which seemed natural to his ruddy countenance. He had a tendency to repeat himself but this reflected his frankness and earnestness.

It was in my age period, nine to eleven years, when I had the opportunity of reading a few farm magazines in which certain advertisements intrigued me. I had my first experiences in selling Christmas cards, gold-eyed needles and thimbles, holy pictures and subscriptions of farm papers at this time. (No doubt, these were useful lessons in salesmanship that came in good stead at a later date.) The incentives for these many selling projects were prizes of little worth: a nickel-plated pocket watch guaranteed for a year but performed for a much shorter period; a three by three inch box camera with the necessary supplies to develop pictures but due to my inexperience, no successful picture was completed; and, a non-filling gold-tipped fountain pen which did little writing but more soiling of fingers and paper. It was usually my uncle and aunt who encouraged me to try these selling ventures, and in most instances, were my best clients.

With more freedom in the afternoon when Magdalene was sleeping, I had many opportunities of fishing along the tree-lined Wabash River which bordered the farm. My fishing equipment was a cane pole, twenty-foot cord, a cork for a bobber and a few fishhooks. Because of the thick foliage along the bank I would invariably be hooking my clothes or tangle my line in a tree, sometimes losing the bait and even breaking the cane pole. These were happy occasions and satisfying, but worth the effort of catching no more than a few small fish.

On one of these events distant footsteps were heard and crouching down among the entangled brush and peeping over a great rotten tree trunk all green with mold and blotched with pink and purple fungi, I lay half-hidden. Not a branch creaked or a twig snapped or any sound could be heard except the steps of the oncoming stranger. For a moment he was hidden but with more snapping of twigs as he forced his way through the underbrush, and holding a long string of fish, he was out in the open, only a few steps from me. He was a very small man, dark and weather-stained, indicating much outdoor living. His broad

brimmed hat, frayed at the edges and so discolored at the band that it was hard to say what the original color had been. Both of us seemed to have spied each other at the same time but speech failed momentarily. The stranger was first to say, "How is fishing today?" Pointing to his fish he continued, "As you can see they are biting." I, who had less nibbles than his number of fish, replied, "I have had a few bites but no fish. You must show me how to catch them." On further inquiry I learned that the stranger was an old fisherman, named Depweg, who had recently moved into the village and lived in a temporary shack on the riverbank nearby. With all my questioning of how to catch fish he would not give me the secrets of his success and I never learned whether it was his pole, hook, bait, or method of fishing that brought success. The neighbors avowed that he knew exactly how to attach the wriggly worm to the hook and then treat it with a kind of fish lure. Subsequently, I was encouraged by my brother Norbert to order a small box of so-called, "Fish-lure," as advertised in the farm paper, the cost of which was a dime, but to my disappointment the lure was more bait for me than for fish.

Electricity was unknown on farms in Ohio before 1910. For lighting there was an adequate supply of coal oil lamps in every home but the chore of cleaning lamp chimneys, trimming of wicks, and filling the bowls, occupied an hour of each day for the housewife. The parlor had its own particular, double-wick hanging lamp, which had a decorative globe, and could be raised or lowered from the ceiling. The glass crystal pendants surrounding the globe with their delicate tingle was a great temptation for us boys.

It was about 1911 that electricity was brought into my father's home when he purchased a home electric-unit known as, 'The Delco Light Plant.' It was a generating unit, powered by a small gasoline motor, thereby creating electricity and storing it in a dozen small storage batteries, similar to our auto-storage battery today. The reserve provided enough electricity for lights and other simple electric appliances for a day or two. My father was the first one to introduce this convenience in the parish but purchased only, after seeing the plant operate in the home of Mr. Andrew Schwieterman, at Cranberry Prairie, who had the agency in this rural area.

My father Peter, was very clever in introducing almost impossible semi-modern conveniences which were not available on farms in 1910. By a simple contrivance he had this small gasoline motor while generating electricity, pump water to a newly-installed water tank in the attic of the house. The family, now had instant running water directed into simple plumbing fixtures; a washstand, toilet-stool and bathtub. This was our first bathroom, installed on the first floor in an eight by eight closet which formerly was a catch-all clothes nook. The initial use of these conveniences was a memorable occasion for the family for it was an outright change from the Saturday-night's temporary tub affair and the elimination of the outdoor toilet. With respect to my earlier experience to and from the outhouse, I do not recall that it ever seemed a hardship to hustle to the distant six by six wooden structure to fulfill

one's personal needs. On the long, narrow, two-hole seat within, there was always a big Sears Roebuck catalogue for entertainment and for a make-believe purchase of well selected clothes. No doubt, the disagreeable cold wintry days and deep drifts of snow one encountered, have long been erased from memory.

Of great importance on the farm was free running water for livestock, usually supplied by a large water tank at the barn. In the spring of 1911 my father was in need of an additional drilled well, adjacent to the three barns. What was needed at the time was a man who could locate an underground water stream, a 'Water Witch.' An individual, owning drilling equipment, was in great demand in rural areas, and after learning of a well known and respected 'witch', father contracted for a well. This man, while onlookers of adults and children mumbled and giggled, concentrated a forked twig over various areas and noted its behavior. Within a few minutes, after moving about the buildings, he found the twig to bend suddenly downward, where upon he exclaimed, "This is the place to drill the well." He, without hesitation guaranteed my father that water could be had within 20 to 30 feet underground. Actually, water was located at twenty-four feet and for more than sixty years an ample flow has been available.

There appears to be no trickery involved nor is it a kind of witchcraft. Some scientists claim that it is not so much in the kind of tool used but it is the person who is sensitive to disturbances in the earth's magnetic field. Although, the forked twig was the beginning of this phenomenon, a variety of tools are now used to carry the impulses to the hands of the affected 'Water Witch.'

In the absence of power except human effort, the windmill was the important unit that supplied the power to pump water to the farm tank. A windmill is a metal structure, built 30 to 40 feet high, directly over a well operated by a simple hand pump. At the top of this contrivance is a large ten-foot slotted fan to be motivated by a stiff wind. The rotating fan activates the pump similar to hand pumping and forces the water through the pipes to the distant tanks. My father realized that for many weeks little or no breeze is present to operate the windmill, he therefore rigged up a mechanical device of the Delco Unit to a rotating shaft and belt to pump the water to the barn tanks.

Due to the absence of electricity for power at the barns he purchased a large stationary gasoline engine which with a similar contrivance of shaft and belt would pump water from the newly drilled well to the barn tanks also, thereby assuring an ample supply of water for the animals at all times. This large engine, performed the tasks of grinding corn, oats and rye for animal feed and also rotated a three-foot circular buzz-saw for cutting long tree-top poles into convenient length firewood.

Before the introduction of the power buzz-saw the only tools available for the woodchopper were the sawbuck (X construction), the hand-powered bucksaw, and the faithful axe. A

whole week of this back-breaking work by one man would show a very small pile of stove wood, but now with one day's work of the powered buzz-saw kindling, stove-wood, split in the sheltered woodhouse on odd winter days, would provide the winter's wood supply.

There had been an abundance of poles for firewood available from the tree-tops of cut timber on the farm for the construction of the large 40 x 80 farm barn which had been constructed in 1906. The previous winter, for weeks and weeks, huge trees of oak, hickory, beech, and walnut were sawed on the stump and skidded by bobsled to the homestead for milling into lumber. Neighbors who were in need of rough lumber brought their logs to this central point which were milled also at so much per board-foot.

Father contracted with the owner of a portable sawmill which consisted of a steam engine, log carriage with track, a five-foot circular saw and other necessary small machinery for milling lumber to move his outfit to our home. I remember as a boy that my mother boarded and lodged the crew of five men at \$2.50 per week per man for many weeks that winter until the job was completed. I was delegated to assist my mother and sister with the details of serving the meals and washing dishes. Fortunately, I was exempted from performing morning and evening outdoor chores, thereby avoiding the disagreeable winter weather. Accordingly, when spring arrived all logs had been properly processed for the construction of this huge barn in the coming summer.

Lest we forget, the preliminary designing for the construction of a huge 40 x 80 barn is a complex engineering feat for a master carpenter and mill owner, since there is much science and technology needed in prescribing and designating the various lengths, sizes, and kinds of lumber to be milled. For this large barn, three forty-foot long beams, 13" on the edge were necessary to tie the two eighty-foot walls together to assure support, firmness and endurance. In addition many other supplementary supports were needed: twelve short cross-ties of 20 feet in length having 8" on the edge, dozens and dozens of nail-ties of 12 feet long of 4" on the edge, braces by the hundreds of 3 x 3 of varied lengths, a few hundred rafters 30 feet long of 3 x 10 inches, and three hundred round tie-pins to be inserted at joints to hold beams and sections together.

Generally speaking, the frame of each of the two 80 feet skeleton walls are fitted and pegged on the ground. The tie-in of these two opposite walls is a very delicate matter and indeed an experienced, know-how procedure. With the aid of two forty-foot, perpendicular boom-poles, topped with pulley inserted ropes and powered by horses, each skeleton frame is brought into an upright position. With the aid of a dozen men with long spiked-end poles, the two walls are gradually maneuvered into place, tied together to each of the forty-foot cross beams, (14" on the edge) and pegged.

Barn raising if observed once in a lifetime is a never-to-be-forgotten affair for it is truly a community enterprise.

These experiences, few and far between intervals, will never be realized or ever encountered in the lifetime of my contemporaries.

I am certain every country boy and girl of yesteryear have had the delights of experiencing many community co-operative events. Annually, there would be participation in the threshing of grain in late summer, and butchering of hogs in winter.

After many long days of work in the summer of hauling, and storing of hay in the special horse barn, there would be weeks of cutting wheat, oats, and rye, and the necessary curing of the grain. Timothy and clover grasses had to be harvested under a number of ideal conditions to be effectively preserved and to be most nutritious for animals. Ideally one must consider the prime point of maximum sap in the stems, the drying and curing in the field within a few hours to hold all foliage, the proper elevation of it to the rear of a flat-bed hay wagon by a hay loader, and storing it immediately in the barn. (The packing of a well-proportioned load of hay on a farm wagon is an art and technique that can be known only by a country man or boy.)

The load of hay is transferred from wagon to the hay mow in about four to six hay-fork clumps. The hay-fork directly over the wagon, clutching in its embrace a half-ton of hay, is pulled by means of a rope and horse to the highest point in the barn, and by means of a mechanical device on the hay-track above it moves down the track to the proper place in the hay-mow. By a small attached trip-rope it will be tripped by a man or boy in the mow who regulates the clump to a desirable and precise spot, thereby reducing much effort in its removal later in the winter.

Folks who have had no experiences of farm life can never imagine or realize the mastermind needed to plan the harvesting of grain. Weather conditions of sunshine or rain, hail, and storms can terminate the harvest in happiness and good living or in sadness and restricted living. The period of harvesting grain covers many weeks, sometimes months; cutting when properly matured, the method of shocking the sheaves of each kind of grain, the necessary number of weeks for field curing, and the hauling and storing in the huge grain barn.

Happy are the thoughts of all country children of threshing days, also hoping that the event will be previous to the opening of school. Usually, the event takes place in August or September after the sheaves of grain in the barn have gone through another process of 'sweating' (drying-out). The threshing outfit: a self-propelled steam engine, water and wood wagon, and the grain separator is owned by one man and operated by a crew of three who move from one farm to another in a designated area until all jobs are finished. The farmer invites ten or more neighbors to help in moving the grain from the upper-most section of the roof-peak down to the ever-hungry grain separator, located between towering walls of grain on both sides. The rear of this machine with its twenty-foot elongated blower, extending a few feet beyond the rear of the barn opening, will disgorge the newly threshed straw into a stack which

when finished will be nearly as large as the barn itself. The task of creating a well-rounded, symmetrically shaped strawstack that will defeat all antics of wintry storms and snow is an art, the rules of which are known by one of the crew.

Sheaves are pitched into the front feeder of the separator and the grain will be hammered out, cleaned free of chaff, and sacked at the side from two chutes. A farm boy of 12 years can operate the job of changing the sacks as the grain flows out in a steady stream and by the flip of a lever he can divert it from one sack to the other. Two or three men are designated to carry sacks of one and one-half bushels of wheat or rye or two bushels of oats to a rat and bird proof grain bin in the barn.

The majority of farmers have a grain-bin for storage of wheat, oats, barley or rye which can be marketed later at a higher price or consumed by the family. Sacks are made of coarse, cotton woven, seamless pillow-like tubing, stitched at the bottom and hemmed at the top. To be certain that the farmer will not lose his sacks when leased to a neighbor or to the miller, each sack carries its owner's name stenciled at the top.

Periodically, during the year father carted a load of sacked grain to the mill, either for sale, or subsequently, exchanged it for flour. This type of bartering of grain exchange for flour was the going practice of all successful farmers. To accommodate the farmer and create good will, the miller would store the bartered flour at the mill and make it available when needed during the year.

I dare say few farm children of today have seen a threshing outfit and least of all has heard the huffing and puffing of the steam engine as it laboriously urged the complaining, grunting separator through its repeated digestion of sheaves of grain. Today harvesting is done with one operation of a mobile combine in the fields, eliminating the harvest crew, the neighborly community, and the abundance of wholesome country cooking.

As teenagers, my brother and I were eager to be hired by neighbors on threshing day at a dollar per day, not for the money and sociability only, but more for the food served. It was a full days job of threshing on many farms, from sunup to sundown. There was lunch in the morning about nine and also one at four with dinner at noon and supper after dark. A number of neighboring wives would help each household in preparing sandwiches, cakes, pies, etc. For dinner and supper there were loaves of home-baked bread, platters and platters of chicken and roast beef, mountains of mashed potatoes with thick natural beef gravy, and dishes of the finest garden vegetables of corn, beans, ripe tomatoes and slaw. In those days there was no shortage of gallons of milk and buttermilk, and cups and cups of coffee. The crew men in those days knew the need of the 'little brown jug' for its importance in keeping the head and throat clear from the cloud of dust that encircled the barn, inside and out.

The day after threshing was housecleaning and the renovation of all bedrooms by mother and family. There were no manufactured mattresses for all slept on straw-ticks and covered themselves with a downy-filled coverlet of goose feathers or a woolen-bat. All the boys had the task of carting the tired-old straw mattress of broken straw to the barnyard to be emptied, dusted, cleaned and filled with new straw. There was much horseplay by us upon our return to the house in pushing and pulling the odd-shaped, ballooned tick through the doorways, up the stairs and onto the bed. Perhaps the excitement was even greater that evening in our first attempt of sleeping on it.

The next day all hand-loomed rag carpets were taken up and carefully carried out to be dusted and aired. Floors were simultaneously, cleared of all chaff-like broken straw, and thoroughly scrubbed with hot soapy water. Upon the renewal of new straw on the floor the carpet was tacked securely on all sides, but not before much pulling and straight-line stretching had been exerted. How proud we were when finished to hear the 'squish, squish', as we walked across it. How different today, though, perhaps, more healthful with ready-made manufactured things for the home. Have we and our children lost the incentive to create, the ingenuity and the opportunity to carry out do-it-yourself tasks?

The neighborhood butchering day is a thing of the past for it has been abandoned in most rural areas since the preparation of all pork and beef products are processed and frozen by large packing plants. Meats of all kinds are delivered in refrigeration trucks to the farm home, whereupon, stored in the deep freezer for consumption at any time.

A week in advance of butchering day, usually, in late December when the temperature would be about 20 to 30 degrees, a half-dozen neighbors, husbands and wives, would be invited to help with the dressing of from four to six hogs, a chore too extensive for one family to complete in one day. The dressing of pigs is a multiphase job that demands the efforts of a number of people for the entire day.

A fire would be kindled under a huge iron vat in the barnyard early in the morning with several large stones resting in the red coals, waiting to be dropped later into the scalding water to keep it at an even temperature. The first order of events would be the killing of the pig with a twenty-two rifle (a task of my brother Norbert), and immediately, my father would sever the jugular vein whereupon the clear red blood would be caught in a flat pan, mixed with snow or ice (to discourage coagulation), which when combined with head-meat would yield the nutritious blood-pudding of yesteryear.

Two or more men from a raised platform would douse the pig a half dozen times into a nearby hogshead of hot boiling water and with the aid of metal scraper, remove the hair and at the same time prepare the head, ears, legs and claws for sausage products.

The pig was now ready to be suspended, head down, from a horizontal pole long enough to accommodate all pigs to be butchered that day. The above process would be repeated until all the gleaming white, 'lard-hogs' were finished and strung up. In dressing the carcass, a wooden-whiffle-tree would be placed between the hind-leg joints to keep the carcass open for removing the entrails, heart and lungs, and to hasten the cooling process.

It is really impossible to enumerate the dozens of necessary details to be performed before all pork products are processed. The head, ears, snout and jaws cooked with a cereal product is known as headcheese. The inners of the disembowled bodies were meticulously cleaned and used for sausage linings. The hams, shoulders, and sides are neatly trimmed of fat. It, when heated becomes a liquid and produces gallons of pure white lard. The crisp residue, after extraction known as 'cracklings', is a delicacy and a forgotten word and an unknown product by almost all American urbanites.

As evening approached and the major butchering task finished, there would be tubs of various sausages, a pan of hearts, of livers and of pigs-feet. The many neatly trimmed hams, shoulders, backstraps and sides would be cooling in the night's wintry air in an adjacent lean-to of the kitchen. After knives and butchering tools had been cleaned and sorted according to ownership, everyone was ready for the old fashioned country butchering dinner. The wives, with great pride, provided mounds of good country bakings of bread and cakes, vegetables, butter, cream and coffee and served with meat samples of almost every product made from the porkers, including a half-dozen kind of sausages, liver, sweetbreads and brains. The children had great delight in eating the crisp pigtails.

After doing more than full justice to the meal, dishes and platters far from empty, the men would gather around the livingroom table and enjoy the usual card game of 'Euchre', keeping score with white chalk markings on each corner of the table.

On the stroke of ten, since last minute night chores of all were still to be completed at their homes, all decided it was time to be on their way but not until my parents wrapped a heart or a part of a liver, and a mess of sausage for each family. This kind of wintry holiday provided the necessary breathing spell for country enjoyment by all. All anticipated a repeated performance of another butchering day and good eating when other neighbors would call for assistance.

The kind and amount of seasoned condiments used in the various pork products was a hand-down recipe from one generation to another, which, I believe, has been lost to the present generation. The advertised so-called 'Smoke-meat' product is a meager imitation of the pungent seasoning applied to hams, shoulders, bacon and sausages of years past. The process of smoking meat was a unique one for after weeks of pickling the meat products in a sugar and salt brine, each was removed and suspended by a meathook from an overhead pole for the smoking

process. Day and night, for many days all would be thoroughly saturated with smoke from hickory shavings, and thereafter wrapped and stored in a dry place.

On many occasions when attending New York Life Insurance Club Conventions in the thirty-year period, we would obtain many old-time salt and smoked hams and bacon in upper Canada, where the country people had not lost the art of this delectable taste-process of meats.

Butchering days reminded one of the approaching holiday season. Nothing charmed the imagination of our children to a greater degree than the story of the holiday custom of the old days. My favorite was the Christmas of 1907 when Santa came in the dead of night amid the hollow blast of the wintry wind as it whistled about the windows and doors. These sounds must have choked those of Santa's entry and exit in spite of the fact that all of us were allowed to sleep in the diningroom around the table. Mother allowed this because of the extreme cold outside and the comfortable warmth, inside, around the iron stove. Santa must have had great hilarity in distributing the dolls, skates, balls, gloves, bats, and capguns including an abundance of powder paper caps. Peanuts, candy, and small rag-covered storybooks were stuffed deeply in the woolen, homespun stockings of the very young children. Oddly enough, Santa found his way in and out, even though my father was visiting my mother's brother John on this occasion. At the first light of day that morning we found these many gifts about us.

The teacher of our one-room school would not be outdone and out weighed in generosity by Santa for each child would be favored with a sack of hard candy and a large ripe orange on the day before Christmas. Receiving an orange at the turn of the century was an event which was always associated with Christmas. Somehow, only very large oranges found their way to rural areas at the time. Together our family of eight, would plan to share an orange per day during the season, thus extending the period of pleasure of this rare and most desirable fruit. Not surprisingly, children of today give little or no thought to this citrus product since it and other allied fruits are at an arm's length at any time of the year.

In the majority of families, a week or two before the holiday, the main topic of table conversation was the Christmas tree; its type, size, and location in the woods. Our farm woods about a half-mile from our home contained many cedars, the species of which had been brought down from the far north by the glacier ice-cap and deposited over many square miles in southern Ohio. They continued to propagate, reaching a height of ten feet or more in the uncut forest.

Generally, on Saturday, boys of neighboring families, and my brother and I, made the gala journey to the woods, trudging along laboriously with boots and crunching new tracks in the deep snow on a wintry-day in mid-December. Within a few minutes we came upon the gray-colored woods, broken up by streaks of sharp-needled evergreens of cedar. When entering,

my brother and I headed for the tree which we had spotted weeks before in the summer.

Holiday excitement and freezing temperature caused every stroke of the axe to sink deeper into the bark of the desirable tree and within minutes it was tied to the bed of the sled. Neighboring boys had no difficulty in choosing theirs for many other cedars were all about and soon all were homebound. It appeared that the tree for this particular year was never more beautiful and it seemed to be much larger in the parlor than usual, nearly reaching the ceiling with little space for the huge star at the tip.

The day before Christmas was devoted to the decoration of the tree. The tree ornaments shaped like stars, or balls, icecream cones, angels, santa claus and animals, all covered with gold mesh and metallic, glittering materials, appeared to be the same each year for they had been stored quietly away in the attic. There were also many strings of beads of various colors and shapes to be draped over the tree, but the decoration was never complete until strings of popcorn and cranberries criss-crossed from side to side. Naturally, to decorate in this fashion, mother made all kinds of candy and cookies, shaped like miniature christmas trees, stars, and animals. Popcorn kernels had been popped the week before, ever ready to be strung on yards of white thread while some were formed in delicious popcorn balls. Tiny twisted candles held by a soft metal holder, were formed to the shape of each supporting twig, but carefully placed at random so that all lighted wicks would create no fire hazard. The metal holder was encircled with festoons of gold and silver paper medallions while other tree branches to complete the decoration, glittered with hanging miniature holy pictures.

In the semi-dawn of Christmas morning stood the decorated tree all aglow with the lighted candles, causing tinsel and bright metallic objects to sparkle like tiny stars in the early morning sky. The half-lit room took on a weird shimmering glow, casting everywhere shadows of many make-believe objects in this land of fairies. Nearby on the walnut stand, draped with a white covering, stood the lighted stable with Mary, Joseph, the donkey, ox, and a few shepherds adoring the Christ Child in the homemade crib. Approaching from all directions were other shepherds, sheep, and dogs on their way to greet the Newborn King. This picture with many gifts for all on the floor around and about made the many stories of Christmas Past.

Christmas services at the church were extremely tender and inspiring for there was a tone of solemn and sacred feeling in this little village since the religious service was held at five o'clock on Christmas morning. Generally, it would be a bright moonlight morning, extremely cold, and the crunching steps through the white frozen snow proclaimed mid-winter temperature. The crowing of cocks in the distance appeared to be telling of the approaching sacred festival while the bobsleds, filled with eager ruddy-faced families of young and old, blanketed under and over, and feet warmly booted,

whirled rapidly over the frozen ground.

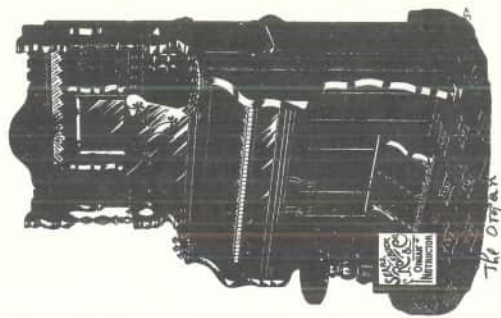
One could hear the shouts, 'Merry Christmas,' amid the tingling of sleigh bells and the clatter of horses' hoofs as all approached the church. Our family, living but a few hundred yards from the church, walked the short distance in a few minutes. Repeatedly, my mind reviews the beauties of these morning walks on Christmas morning with the dark church spire in strong relief seen through the naked branches of the trees that lined the road. The church lawn and cemetery was sometimes sheeted with a covering of snow and ice, which, here and there, sparkled as the moonbeams caught the frosty crystals.

On two occasions, after many weeks of repeated singing exercises of a designated carol, I was privileged to take a place in the choir-loft as a soloist to sing three verses of 'Adeste Fidelis,' with the adult choir with the resounding organ completing the refrain. Immediately, the solemn High Mass began with a special homily on the beautiful story of the birth of the Christ Child.

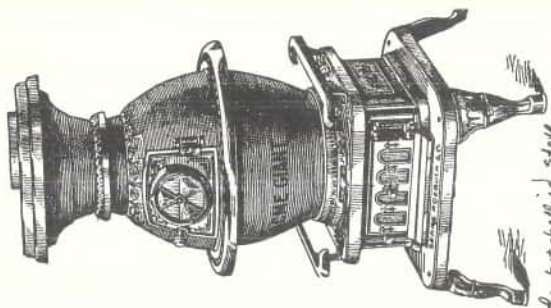
Another Christmas happening which I dare not neglect to relate, 1908, for it was truly one of the most important events in my life in shaping my early musical development. A few weeks before the holidays a mail-order for a parlor organ had been sent to Sears Roebuck by my parents with a note of expectation of its arrival before Christmas. The organ, protected and enclosed in a strong, wooden box, was shipped by railroad freight to the Ft. Recovery Depot, five miles from home, which arrived within the allotted time. With the aid of Uncle John, my father was able to transport it to our home on the large farm wagon. There was much excitement after school hours the day it arrived for the local teacher had been asked to help unpack it and test it for its quality which he found very praiseworthy.

The parlor assumed a new look of greater beauty and elegance since the organ enhanced the charm and attraction to the thick and lush brussel-carpet and also to the semi-overstuffed settee with four matching chairs and round walnut table which had been purchased from Sears Roebuck the year before. These accessories converted our home to a Parish center of neighborhood gatherings of sing-fests, and general amusement the year round.

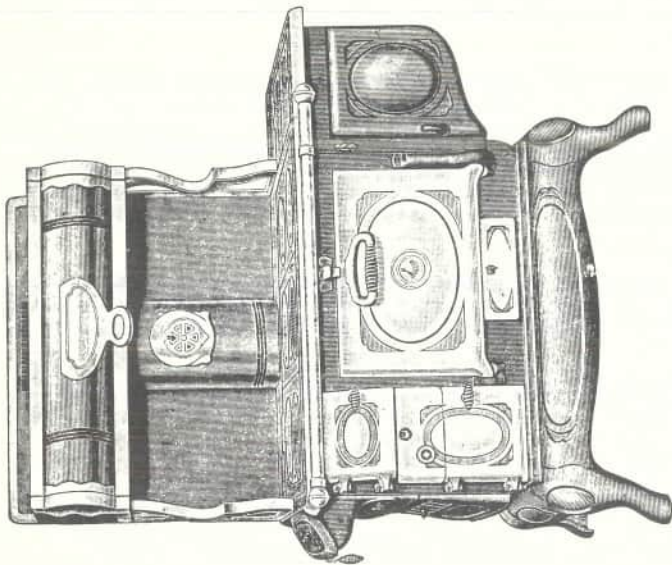
The stool that came with the organ had a round revolving seat which provided a marathon game of dizzy endurance for us boys until mother called a halt to it. She allowed me to remain but asking one requirement, that I be prepared to play one Christmas hymn for Christmas day. In a few days I was prepared and demonstrated the manipulation of keys of two Christmas hymns which I had memorized from songs in school. By trial and error, hit or miss, I accompanied the family's singing that Christmas evening. Incredibly, I played the hymns on black keys which would represent the melody in a key, either one of many sharps or of flats. For a beginner in note reading, sharps and flats are a bug-bear but in my case, having no musical knowledge, the black keys were sign-posts, readily



The Oilman



The fat-bellied stove



recognizable, for change of pitch from one interval to another.

A simple instruction book had been furnished with the organ and with the aid of it I learned to read notes and play a few simple tunes the next year.

In a sense this period was a milestone in my musical and teaching career for it was a commitment to my life's work. There was no sheet music per se, only printed sheets of words in English and German, the tunes of which were handed down from one generation to another. Other tunes I had heard on cylinder records of the early 'Morning-glory' Edison Phonograph and with a limited knowledge of note reading, the aid of my father who repeatedly sang melodies, and with the faking of base-chords, I was able to present a reasonable accompaniment to many songs.

The new teacher, Mr. Dahlinghaus, taught me the fundamentals of correct note playing, the last three years in my elementary school, which prepared me to enroll in the course of piano and organ at St. Joseph Academy in 1911.

School day memories vary because of circumstances, personalities, age, interests, and environment of the era. My school experiences, accordingly, could be divided into two periods, mainly due to the differences in the personality and efficiency of my two teachers. It is true that a change in age, physical and mental development, and environment of a newly constructed school cannot be overlooked in this evaluation.

The teacher, Mr. Dahlinghaus, as compared to my former one had had more formal teaching training and education, was younger in years and had the ability to create a thirst beyond book knowledge in the pupil that kindled the desire to achieve. Apparently, he must have recognized my latent talent and my desire for knowledge and interest in school work for he urged my parents to co-operate in this development. This, they fully carried out by having me attend every day. Absent days from school was the lot of many older boys and girls because of the heavy spring and fall work on the farm, but with the efforts of my parents I had a three-year record of no absence, thus affording my teacher the ability to prepare me for a successful completion of my eight years of elementary education.

The completion of the elementary grades in Ohio was based, solely, on the eligibility of the pupil in passing the Boxwell Examination, successfully, which was administered by the Office of the State Educational System in Columbus. It was a test of the candidate's knowledge of arithmetic, geography, history, orthography, and skills in reading and writing. Advanced elementary pupils in the county, who upon recommendation of the teacher, assembled the first week of June for the test. In the light of having had personal tutoring, my teacher was confident of my ability to pass the test in 1911, and upon this accomplishment I was now eligible to attend any high school in Ohio, tuition free.

After much consultation with my parents, the parish

priest, and the teacher, it was decided that I attend the high school academy at Renselaer, Indiana. There was no doubt in my mind that my goal in life was a teaching career and to perform skilfully on the piano and pipeorgan.

St. Joseph's College, an academy of four years of high school and two of college, under the supervision of the Society of the Precious Blood, prepared boys entering preparatory seminary for the priesthood. But in addition, it also offered a four year course for young men interested in a teaching career and a three-year commercial course for those interested in business. In acquiring an education beyond the elementary level much credit must be given to my teacher, Mr. Dahlinghaus who had been a graduate in 1908 of the teacher's course at St. Joseph. He painted a most singular picture of the school; its environment, the four-year teacher's curriculum, and the music department. I had the opportunity to acknowledge my indebtedness to this teacher in 1967, 50 years later, affirming the influence he had had on my life's career. Conceding credit to my teacher in attaining a high school education, I must recognize my two uncles, John and Rev. William Lennartz who sparked my imagination to reach the academic plateau of Doctor of Philosophy.

Preparing my wardrobe for a year's living at the school was a chore but also an enjoyment and a new experience for me and the family. This event focused the attention upon the first member to break family ties in leaving home and begin an educational career.

Fortunately, the school provided a small catalogue which indicated the necessary wearing apparel under the heading, 'Articles to be Needed.' Six white handkerchiefs, six pairs of black socks, three sets of underwear, four white shirts and ties, six towels, two nightshirts, bathrobe and sweater with name tags, two complete dress suits, two extra pants, two pairs of shoes, cap, soap, comb, brush, toothpaste and brush.

The purchase of a trunk and shopping with father and mother was an all day affair at the Zenz store. Reaction to all of these purchases was my father who chimed in frequently, "I don't know what he will do with all of these things. He didn't need them at home and I see no reason for all of them now." Mother would answer in her sweet undertone, "He is going to college, the other boys will have these articles, he will need them and we must be proud of him." Before the day was over the trunk was filled with the necessities. It is safe to assume that the where, when, and how in the use and the wearing of the articles were not as great a challenge for me as the declensions of Latin and Greek a few months later.

The summer months passed quickly, and the going-away time period appeared less than instantaneous. Subsequently, my departure from home, avoided the fall work of the distasteful cutting and shocking of corn. These thoughts created in my mind pleasant anticipations, yet, questionable inquiries of leaving home and future activities baffled me. The day preceding my going-away, September 6, 1911, mother arranged,

methodically: overcoat, suit, heavy woolen underwear, and socks in the bottom of the trunk to provide some protection against breakage of a half-dozen glass jars of home-canned fruits, truly a mark of Mother love. Finding the lower section of the trunk tightly packed, we assembled the smaller articles of apparel in the top section, thus allowing a convenient arrangement of personal effects, as cap, scarf, ties, a few books including a dictionary, note and writing paper, a bottle of ink and pens, (fountain pens were unknown), pencils, knick-knacks, and pictures of family members.

After many tears and good-byes and with whispered affectionate words from mother, father and I, with the trunk roped on the rear of the buggy we started the half-hour trip to the railroad station in Ft. Recovery, arriving there an hour before train departure. Having learned previously of a young man from the parish, Leo Himmelgarn, six years my senior, a husky six-footer, would be returning to the school for his fourth year, I was eager to see him since he had had three years at the school. Fortunately, he arrived at the depot earlier, and to my surprise there were a few boys of my age with him. They were from surrounding parishes and after having spent a year in the preparatory novitiate at Burkettsville, (a year of trial in the routine of prayer, contemplation as a religious, and qualifying for high school courses), were on their way to the same academy in preparation for the priesthood. Joy replaced sadness when seeing these comrades, thus replacing a cheerful countenance of mine that had been carrying waves of gloom. Father's encouraging conversation on the way cannot be discounted in this transformation.

A two-hour ride by train west from Ft. Recovery over the Lake Erie and Western Railroad brought us to Frankfort, Indiana, 80 miles away. A six-block walk with a much too heavy suitcase for my size brought a halt at the end of the first block. Being accompanied by Leo, who upon seeing my predicament, gave me innumerable assists in the next five blocks. It was he who had assured my father upon leave-taking that he would be a big brother to me. This, he performed with enthusiasm and effectiveness throughout the year on many occasions. It was he who introduced me to the student body as "Smiles," a descriptive name that remained with me throughout my stay at St. Josephs.

Within an hour we were on our way to the town of Rensselaer, arriving there at 3:30 P.M., on the Monon Railroad. The school having anticipated the arrival of many students from Ohio and eastern Indiana delegated a farm-hand (the academy was located on a six-hundred acre farm), to transport our hand cases on the farm wagon to the school, two miles away. The trunks were to arrive the next day. The reader must be mindful that with 100 or more students arriving that day each had to be assigned a clothes and a washroom locker, a bed for the night, and other instructions of the morning routine. The nearer one approached the evening the greater was the degree of frustration of the novice, and I was no exception. However, drawing strength and reassurance after doing justice to a wholesome supper of farm victuals, prepared by the nuns, I had,

oddly enough, a surprisingly pleasant evening. Priests whom I had met at my parish church in past years as their mass server, now teachers at the academy, extended a cheerful and comforting welcome. To my surprise I met two school chums from my parish who were preparing for the priesthood, Aloys and Andrew Brunswick.

Inevitably, a peaceful and full-night's sleep developed a cheerful composure with an ever-ready smile the next morning. In spite of the fact that at 6:30 A.M., Brother Cobb passed up and down the dormitory, swinging a heavy sounding hand-bell, I located the washroom and was decently attired for Chapel at 7:30. At 8:00, end of the mass, all filed single file to the refectory for breakfast.

It was at this meal that the Prefect (Disciplinarian), gave further instructions with regard to the daily routine of the school; the bell of Brother Cobb would be heard at 6:30, providing ample time for personal attention, be neatly dressed in chapel for Mass at 7:00; and be present at breakfast at 7:30. Furthermore, a designated place for each would be assigned in the chapel and in the diningroom, the roster of which would be posted on the bulletin board. Daily, there would be a short recreation period to 8:20 when regular recitations in designated classrooms were to begin. All classes would be of 50 minutes duration with 5 minute intervals for change of class shift, thus allowing four classes or study periods before noon. After dinner there would be classes or study periods from 1:30 to 3:00 P.M. with full recreation to 5:00 and study, thereafter to 6:00. Supper at 6:30 with a short free period to 7:30 and an hour of study to 9:30, and all to be in the dormitory at 9:00 P.M.

The prefect, very warm and personal, welcomed the student body and urged the older students to aid the freshmen in acquiring a knowledge of the school grounds and activities. He designated the first day as a free day for all, allowing each to unpack the trunk with the privilege of visiting the town in the afternoon but to return for supper at 6:30. Furthermore, the afternoon of each first Wednesday of the month would be the only town day, with all Wednesday and Saturday afternoons free from all classes and study periods.

In arranging my subjects for the year the Dean of the teacher's course, Rev. Hugo Lear, advised me to include Greek for one year, Latin and Science for two years and four years of German, English, History and Mathematics with two courses in teaching methods. Actually, my work was a duplication of that of the seminarians with the two additional courses in methods of teaching and of music.

One might say that one practical difficulty involved in each freshman class at the beginning of each year was the irregular and imperfect preparation of many students who had varied degrees of ability, interests and discipline, and therefore were enrolled in different class sections. As a result students in Latin, English and Math were usually divided into two sections. Happily, I qualified for Section 'A', and my

associates were seminarians who had had novitiate training and were well prepared at the high school level. These young men are now priests of many years, regarding them as truly dedicated men of the church, and are my most cherished friends today. Among them I am proud to acknowledge for outstanding services in the church: Bishop Pursley, Monsignor Waltz, Petigrew, Kuhn, Brunswicks and Koenig, and others that I greatly admire.

Inevitably, with a student body of cross-sectional flavor one would find boys with home behavior problems, the parents of which, hopefully, desired these to be solved at this private school. The major violations at the school (unauthorized town visits), would mean expulsion while minor infringements would cause a demerit, including walks on many weary Wednesday and Saturday afternoons in front of the Administration Building or the writing of a few hundred pages of history.

The school year was divided into two terms with a two-week vacation at Christmas and one week at Easter. My home being 200 miles to the East gave me six months of study from Christmas to the end of the year. Yes, I remained at the school during the Easter vacation. It would be natural for a boy of 14 to have days of longing for home and family the first year, thus a letter in my particular pigeonhole was a welcome guest. In spite of homesickness at times a busy daily work schedule, and sport activities were my best supports in earning a gold-plated button in math and in music at the close of the first year. Mathematics, including an intricate course in mental arithmetic were my desserts for I became very proficient in mathematical manipulation under the direction of Father Wagner who had received his Doctorate at the Catholic University the year previous. He chose me as his assistant the second and third year in tutoring students with math difficulties. A gold medal was awarded to the best student at the completion of a particular course, accordingly, upon his recommendation, I was in possession of a desirable medal at the end of the third year.

Intramural sports were not neglected at St. Joseph's for many baseball and basketball class teams competed for the honor of being 'Champs' for the year. In my first year I was a regular on the Midget basketball and baseball teams. The team was known as juniors in my second year but in the third year basketball tournament, Mat Lause of Dayton, myself and three other boys were 'Champs' for the year, the picture of the team is on display in the Gym, a spot referred to by my three sons who attended St. Joseph's many years later.

Returning to school the second year in September, I met two other teen-agers at Ft. Recovery Depot who had enrolled at St. Joseph for the coming year. One of these was Joseph Nordenbrock from Burkettsville, with one year of high school thus entering the 2nd year Commercial Course, and the second from the same village, Leo Schaeper who was eligible to enter the 2nd year Normal Course. Both were class members for two years in Mathematics, English, and German, thereby creating an intimate relationship, nurtured and cherished for the next 50 years.

Joe and I became fast friends throughout the next two years, each relating intimate stories of members of our families. He, one of 12, was eager to tell about the abilities of his younger sister, Anna Marie, (Mary for short), who was age 14 at the time. She, the sixth in the family must have been a challenge for her brothers and sisters, both young and old, in many of their family activities. It appeared that the older members, including himself, helped to promote her abilities at her early age because of her innate talents in many areas. According to his version, she at age 6, was able to write and read English and German fluently, and had ciphered her way through Ray's Elementary Arithmetic. The teaching sisters, testing her qualifications, placed her in the third grade upon entering, thereby becoming eligible to pass the Boxwell Examination at age 12 in 1910.

Evidently, she was Joe's pride and joy for he loved to tell interesting and fancied stories about her intelligence and her ability to play simple church hymns at parish services. Naturally, his related stories had created a mental image of her qualifications, therefore it could hardly be expected for me not to be interested in meeting her sometime. Oddly, it was some years later, without introduction, that I addressed her, unexpectedly, yet, in surprisingly pleasant surroundings.

During the three years at St. Joseph's, ending in June 1914, I completed the required high school units necessary to enter a college, and acquired the necessary background to direct a choir and operate a pipeorgan under the guidance of Dr. Rev. Justin Henkel, C.P.P.S.

Today, as I view these academic years I am conscious of many advantages received and the satisfaction of certain accomplishments completed at this school: 1) I was exceedingly fortunate in having highly educated priests for my teachers who were qualified and dedicated in their work and to the student's welfare; 2) with a daily time schedule of studies and activities I was able to make contact with many subjects and their fundamentals, thereby, earning sufficient high school credit hours in three years. Simultaneously, I acquired a basic knowledge of singing and music with possible performance on the piano and pipeorgan; 3) I had acquired a real dedication to the profession of teaching and its principles; 4) I had learned to systematize my work and to apply correct methods in research. I am fully convinced that these cultivated qualities had been instrumental in receiving a four-year competitive Fellowship at the Catholic University in 1924, ultimately, acquiring the highest degree of academic attainment.

My last year at St. Joseph was the year that Joe completed the business or commercial course, receiving his diploma in June 1914. His father and sister, Antoinette, attended the commencement exercises which gave me the opportunity of traveling by train with them to Ft. Recovery the next day. The trip home with them permitted me to learn more about Anna Marie from the sister, who, without doubt, supported the accounts of Mary's ability and intelligence given by her brother. According to the sister, Antoinette, she had passed the high school

test in 1910, now four years past, but was not allowed to attend a high school due to unjustifiable rural opinions at the time.

An education for girls, as viewed by parents, was unheard of in the country unless they wished to teach as nuns in the parochial school system. Since no high school existed in the village Anna Marie aided the local teaching nuns in the elementary grades and assisted at singing and playing the organ at church services.

Two of the nuns tutored her in high school subjects from three to five o'clock every afternoon. All of the laudable remarks of the brother and sister increased my curiosity and interest in more of the qualifications of this 16 year old sister. Secretly, I had the idea that perhaps I might be invited to the home the coming summer to renew acquaintance with Joe and his family. This materialized in a sense for upon leaving at Ft. Recovery they invited me to attend a parish festival at the church on the 4th of July.

An interval of a few weeks gave my brother and I the opportunity to visit the Burkettsville parish on the 4th. I admit there were many reasons for going to a festival that prompted me to attend. The entire family of Joe's: father, mother, brothers and sisters were at the festival assisting at various booths. Antoinette and Joe were busy at the icecream dispenser which allowed each of them to converse with me at times. They directed my attention to various members of the family and their booths.

Conducting a booth marked 'Fancy Stand of Needle Work' were a half-dozen teenage girls, including Anna Marie. Though some distance from us, their features were visible and I was impressed by Joe's sister's countenance, posture and dress. Her assuming gentleness and winning smile was displayed with grace among her associates in the booth as well as to the people who were eager to gamble for the fancy pieces of needle and thread on display. Her dress, appropriate, for the occasion was a selfmade knee-length skirt with a blouse of white. The beauty of her face and forehead was topped by a mass of curly, light brown hair, backswept into three thick curls, hanging beyond her belt. All of this was set off at the crown with a large white hairbow, reminding me of a huge butterfly.

Associating and speaking with Joe and his sister for a lengthy period with an occasional hand movement in her direction by her brother, it would be highly unlikely that she was not aware of my presence, Joe's old college-pal, often referred to in their home. Consequently, perhaps instinctively, mischievous movements of her eyes were directed toward the three of us with a smile, but playing about her lips on one occasion was a faint trace of coquettishness.

After an hour or two, visiting and recognizing young people in the area, and attempted turns on gambling wheels, my brother and I returned to the icecream booth for a last farewell and started the five mile stretch home with horse and

buggy.

Thus ended the day of the festival for me. Personally, I feel it is safe to assume that my blissful dream of meeting her in person was shattered because of inexperience and the shyness of a country boy. Perhaps the best of my fortune, either, passed me by temporarily or permanently, but for my readers the story must continue to unfold.

In retrospect, I should say that at this juncture in time, my life experiences had reached the second rung in ascending the academic ladder, while at the same time I had acquired a deep awareness of greater personal moral responsibilities. Lesser emphasis can be attached to the first phase of my life since my home, school and church environments had been directed and regulated by intimate and lovable people with an occasional challenging situation. By and large, integrating from first to second stage was simple due to the fact that with the passing of the three years at the academy which had demanded more responsibility, there developed a greater acceleration of acquired mental and moral trustworthiness. Conceding that systematized regulation at the academy could have squelched mental and moral responsibilities, nevertheless, it is most revealing to note how I acquitted myself when entering the third phase, the college period when physical, mental, and moral obligations were placed directly on my shoulders.

In the year 1914 legislation had been passed in Ohio, requiring all teachers in the Ohio elementary school system to show certification of one year of teaching training in one of the four Normal Schools in the State. To conform with the law as a young teaching candidate, I enrolled at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, (1914-1915). Taking into consideration my academic route to the teaching career, it was, unquestionably, a successful academic venture, a positive advantage. However, it must be admitted by any measure that it opened up new challenges for a young man of 17 years. Simultaneously, it shortened the preparation period for teaching by one year, creating eligibility to teach at the young age of 18. Saying all of this is not to pretend ignorance of many new challenges.

The enrollment at the University posed a problem or two for me, though anticipating no particular difficulties in being accepted, I was aware of diverse evaluation of high school credits by different institutions. A transcript of my credits had been forwarded promptly to the Normal School, and within a few weeks, with no questions raised, confirmation of my acceptance was sent by the Dean's Office.

The primary focus of summer activities was centered on the method of earning money; the train fare; required entrance fee; part payment of the tuition at registration; and a deposit for the room.

Fortunately, a young man of 25, Mr. Conklin, owner of the local village store at St. Wendelin, was in need of an assistant, a person of ability and maturity, to meet the needs of the farm people; collect hundreds of eggs, bartered for goods carried

in the huckster wagon, and transport dozens and dozens of eggs to the railroad depot to be shipped to distant cities. My tasks, consequently, were, sandwiching activities from store to the peddling wagon, and to the depot, throughout the summer. Obviously, unaware that the clock continued to tick, my all-encompassing thought was apparently focused on the problem of the coming school year. Even more significant was the fact I lost contact with Joe Nordenbrock after the 4th for he had been hired as a secretary in the distant city of Dayton. Paradoxically, the two years of our very warm friendship slipped nearly to zero degree in the next few years.

The train drew-out of St. Henry at 9:00 A.M. on a typical September day and within a few minutes we were passing through the village of Burkettsville, a distance of three miles. I must admit at that moment, seated on the right side of the coach, with head leaning against the pane, that very interesting thoughts passed through my mind in reviewing the pleasant conversation with Joe on the 4th. Coincidentally, I envisioned a mental picture of his sister, it playing hide-and-seek with the alluring idea of when, where, and how to create a future meeting with her.

The conductor coming through the car before reaching Greenville, punched my ticket and said, "To Carlyle?" "Yes," I said. He replied, "That is just a crossing of two railroads beyond Germantown. Your trunk will be removed and placed on the road to Oxford." The train gave a long shrill whistle after an hour of travel as the conductor tapped me on the shoulder and said, "This is the crossing, and wait at the country store. Your train for Oxford will be along in a half-hour." All directions were faithfully carried out and I arrived at Oxford station at 3:00 P.M.

Finding myself alone at the edge of the town with vacant lots all about, I started for the tall buildings on the hill about ten blocks away. On my way I passed the street, a few blocks from the campus that indicated the area of my rented room for the year. Accordingly, I approached the house, met the landlady who helped me to engage a dray for the transferring of my trunk. Needless to say I now had ample time to unpack my trunk and prepare for tomorrow's challenging undertaking.

The next morning as the sun's rays spread across the eastern sky in a fan-like array of streaks of red, pink, and gold, I directed my steps toward the small village church. No doubt, confronted with unusual and uncertain problems in the future, I was motivated to attend the morning Mass. Among the half-dozen ladies present was the assistant to the Dean of the Normal School.

The priest, Father Farley, upon seeing me at mass, assumed that I was a new student at the university, and at once welcomed me and became interested in my welfare. Learning I was a candidate for the Normal School, he called to the Secretary for an introduction, advising her of my intentions. In our conversation of some minutes I gave them a brief background

of my academic life, (St. Joseph was well known by Father Farley), the street of my room, the necessity of doing part-time work, and my aim in the future.

Both bade me farewell, she in turn said, "Come to the office later in the day and I will help you in arranging your classes." He said, "I want to keep in touch with you and try to attend my 9:00 o'clock Mass on Sunday." To my surprise in attending the Sunday Mass I was introduced to a Mr. James R., the University football coach. A few encouraging words passed between Father and the Coach in reference to my part-time work. I excused myself and they in turn wished me a happy year at the University.

The activity and experiences at the University were important yet critical in testing the social, educational and moral fibers of my character. Though only 17 I was experiencing a new kind of individual freedom in terms of study periods, attending classes and meeting social, economic, and moral situations. Co-educational environment with more cultural and worldly surroundings were factors to be judged and to be evaluated by me personally. I am prompted to say that I was hurled literally, into a uniformed kind of maturity, embarrassing at times at the beginning of this third phase of my life.

All the more unsettling for me was the lack of finances since my father had many other demands of a growing family. The beginning of the year was very trying to properly manage the available hours to earn money for food and room, buy textbooks, pay college tuition charges and to schedule adequate time for preparation and class attendance. The last point of finances needs no exaggeration for I was, 'Jack-of-all-trades' in the field of occupation. Fortunately, this was solved in a few weeks by the influence of the local parish priest in Oxford who was a close friend of the University football coach. Through their influence I was appointed custodian of all football equipment and the responsibility of attending to the minor injuries of the football players. Having a simple knowledge of anatomical structure of bone and muscle which I had acquired in my high school physiology course, I was in a position to meet the usual minor football injuries, promptly, and efficiently. My knowledge of First-aid procedures with yards of adhesive tape I could eliminate the pains of wrenched knees, sprained ankles and semi-cracked ribs to a minor degree. Equally important was the application of hot towels to bruised muscles and intensive massages of charley-horses to football players before and after daily scrimmages. My activity with the football squad was most pleasant in this association. I met and conversed with the 'stars' of the Miami squad: Red Blake, who later became head coach of the Army, Monk Pierce, and John Sauer of Dayton, and others whom I learned to know intimately.

My detail allowed me to travel with the team to other Ohio colleges during the season and to the annual football game at the University of Cincinnati on Thanksgiving Day, a yearly event. I am tempted to say that my varied experiences as a masseur this one year, oddly, was healthful, remarkably useful to myself, my children and friends later in life. I had learned

from these experiences that the removal and distribution of blood collected about a minor bruise would give relief in a few hours in most cases. I readily applied massaging to the growing pains of children, adult cases of overworked tennis elbows, sprained shoulders, leg, and back muscles.

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge my indebtedness to certain personalities at the college who were instrumental in aiding me financially and academically; Dean Minnich and his assistant, Professor Feeney in the Normal School, and Mr. Roudebusch, assistant to the President. The latter assigned minor college administration and routine tasks for the year which could not be summarized under any particular classification; waiter in the college diningroom, and an usher at public college recitals of plays, musicales, and college dances. Incidentally, when enumerating these tasks to my grandchildren who are now attending college as extra college curricular activities for the year, I hear a resounding loud boisterous laugh, truly a guffaw, from them, perhaps rightly so.

Evidently, the introduction of the parish priest to the two or more important persons at the college relieved my mind of finances, thus able to devote my time with enthusiasm and effectiveness to classes. I must admit that Professor Feeney, an educator of 40 years or more, made a positive contribution to my teaching methods which I happily applied in teaching reading and arithmetic. Today, we find the school system reverting to the reading methods of three or four decades ago while at this time I am unimpressed with the use of the simple calculator in the elementary grades, the results of which might have a negative reaction in the field of arithmetic, similar to the status of our poor readers and spellers, today.

It was late in October when a letter with an enclosed check informed me that my sister would be married in the village church and I was to perform the wedding march and Mass hymns. Having had no opportunity in operating a pipe organ the past summer I contacted Father Farley for permission to do so at the parish church which he readily consented.

A few days vacation from the regular routine of school and part-time work was a welcome respite in celebrating this affair. Groups of jolly folks, near and far, relatives of the two families came for a day of frolic on this occasion. The day was shortlived for in the afternoon and in the night the wind rose which brought gusts of snow and a thin blanket of white covered the ground the next morning. I awoke at an early hour and lay straight on my back with my feet crossed, and my hands clasped above my head in a symmetrical position. Closing my eyes a scene passed before me and without intent my will was directly and persistently fixed on a certain point and space in time that had been in my memory the past summer. The conversation of the 4th of July and visions of Joe's sister, Anna Marie, seemed to command my thought and spirit to the extent that I determined at the time to communicate somehow by mail with Joe in Dayton.

After returning to Oxford I addressed a letter to his

home in Burkettsville with a forwarding note. Hopefully, it would be recognized by the family and promptly transmitted. Within a week, a reply to my letter came, informing me of his work and his address in Dayton.

Efficient and proven methods of teaching were advocated by Dean Minnich and emphasized by the professors in all practice teaching periods in the McGuffey Model School which was affiliated with the University. Dr. McGuffey, the author of the McGuffey Readers, had been a teacher at Miami before 1900 and collected the contents of his readers at the time. Fortunately, Professor Feeney, my major professor, was a contemporary of his and practiced similar pedagogical skills.

The instructions and my practice teaching for the year ended in June, when my teaching qualifications were recognized by the Dean who presented me with a one-year elementary teaching certificate with an option of its renewal for two additional years. However, he suggested and advised me to consider the option of submitting to a teacher's examination within the year. If successful I could qualify for nine years of teaching without additional formal normal school training. I chose this option in February, passed the examination, presented the necessary knowledge and skills, and qualified with exemplar high grades as attested by the reproduced certificate.

Upon returning home from Miami in June I immediately searched for a teaching position for the fall. My egotistical idea of a solid and major academic accomplishment in teaching and the ability to perform on a pipeorgan was quickly squelched when attempting to contract for a parish school in combination with a parish church. Dotted throughout Mercer County were many positions of school and church combinations but to my surprise and dismay, teachers older and of long experiences had been hired in March.

Fortunately, the position of an organist was vacant at St. Anthony's Parish, though a teacher had been contracted to teach in the village school. Through the efforts of Mr. John Fortman, a member of the parish choir and also president of the school board of a country school two miles south, a combination contract was completed with the parish priest and the school board. For his interest and his kindness I have been deeply grateful and have demonstrated this sentiment to his family on all occasions, the results of which have created a deep and lasting affection and love between his family members and myself the past sixty years. This is not to say that other families in the parish have not been recognized by me for many were of equal importance, the families of Schroer, Vonderhaar, Huerkamp, Post, and others, the members of which have given similar responses.

The going salary for a one-room rural school teacher was \$50 per month and \$5 for janitor services. It must be remembered that the cost of living and other necessities of life were commensurable. In deed, my ability to save a few dollars per week was less arduous at the time than a few years later. The cost of living for board and lodging at the home of a

Teacher's Elementary Certificate

Issued by the County Board of School Examiners
of Mercer County, Ohio

SUBJECT	Grade
Actual Teaching	80
Orthography	80
Reading	90
Writing	80
Arithmetic	90
English Grammar and Composition	90
Geography	90
History of the United States	90
Physiology	90
Literature	80
Agriculture	90
Theory and Practice	90
AVERAGE	90

His Certifies That

Constantine Fischer
has furnished evidence of good moral character and of an adequate knowledge of the theory and practice of teaching, has passed a test in actual teaching, and is qualified to teach the subjects enumerated in Section 7830, General Code.

This Certificate is valid in any rural or village school district of Mercer County for *three* years from September 1, 19*17*.

W. J. Burnard Pres.
W. J. Burnard V. Pres.
S. C. Sherman Clerk.

Examiners

County Superintendent

This Certificate expires September 1, Nineteen Hundred *twenty*
(Date in words.)

Date of Final Examination:

Jan. 6, 1917
SERIAL No. *E-1574*

Grade required for a one-year certificate.—Average, 75%; minimum, 65%.
Grade required for a three-year certificate.—Average, 85%; minimum, 75%; experience, eight months.

nearby farmer was the paltry sum of \$2.50 per week. Coincidentally, the pay for my services in training the local parish men's choir and playing the pipeorgan at the parish church was \$2.00 per Sunday and \$1.00 for each weekday High Mass.

The complex situation of having two places of employment, two miles apart, brought a problem of transportation but the farmer, Mr. Schroer with whom I lodged solved this problem by allowing me the free use of his horse and buggy. Fortunately, he provided an open-bodied rubber-tired buggy in the pleasant weather of spring and summer, while on rainy and wintry days I had the use of his completely enclosed storm vehicle, thus providing me every comfort against all unpleasant days of the year.

The warmth, admiration, and affection of the parents and members of this family were unquestionably, and uniquely reflected by their self-sacrificing actions in my behalf. Barring all other performances this behavior was their everyday trait in all family activities. Truly, such rewarding and beneficial attention solved the transportation problem to the end of the school year. Obviously, I was comfortably housed with board at this farm which was within walking distance of the school.

Anticipating pleasurable satisfaction, but with some misgiving I held the first school session on the day after Labor Day in 1915. That Tuesday morning as I traveled down the road, a distance of a quartermile, the little red schoolhouse was to my left and in full view, showing off a few broken window panes. Approaching the school my thoughts took a turn toward my scholars, speculating on the number, their size, ages, and the number of possible grades. There were several children gathered at the schoolhouse door as I came up. It was a typically centered, one-door red schoolhouse, similar to many that dotted the central midwest rural Ohio every two miles. My "Good morning children," brought a hesitating shy response from the group who appeared eager to have me unlock the door, no doubt, wondering whether or not any changes or improvements had been made in the summer.

We found upon entering the one-storied brick building, scrubbed walls and floors, clean desks and a newly decorated metal ceiling. The room had a one-inch rod, centered near the ceiling that extended from one wall to the other with the usual large emblem, 'S' attached on the outside. This reinforcement added strength and stability to this small brick structure.

For me the room brought back familiar pleasant and some unpleasant memories of childhood days for it was this kind of room in which I studied the primer, first to the fifth German and English readers, Ray's simple to advanced arithmetic, and advanced history and geography. I could see myself in the small double-desk at the front with gradual recession to the single large seat in the rear. I allowed myself a moment to dream on the pleasant companionship I had with my last teacher in our after-school tutoring classes in preparation for the

Boxwell Examination. In effect, these thoughts interjected resolutions of total dedication to the teaching profession, which in reality, I was mentally experiencing events of my fourth phase of my life; the education of children and young people.

Other children came, large boys as tall as myself who could be my star baseball players, also girls who appeared to be properly trained by their German mothers. A half-dozen first graders, boys as scared rabbits and little curled haired girls as timorous birds, slipped by quietly. My approach was the position of a big brother, everready to solve any of their problems as we began classes.

As I intimated the schoolhouse was similar in structure to the one I attended as a child, however, the art of teaching and classification of educational attainments of pupils had been greatly revised. Eight grades had been introduced in all elementary schools with more intensive supervision of teachers by District Superintendents. The new 1914 educational legislation in Ohio for elementary, high school, and college was the beginning of the present Ohio educational system. The control of school curriculum was now centered in Columbus with all authority channeled through the County Superintendent and district supervisors who controlled examinations and the promotion of pupils. Uniform textbooks were prescribed, and examination questions were formulated by the State Board of Examination in Columbus, who in turn designated committees to grade them. The Boxwell Examination for high school promotion was now extinct.

Fortunately, the number of pupils in my first country school were less than thirty, from ages 6-16 years, thus making it possible to combine the group into a limited number of five major grades: first, second, combining third and fourth, fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth. In seating, the boys were arranged on the right and the girls on the left of the room with a large, elongated, box-like, horizontal, cast-iron stove in the center that divided the two groups. The larger boys, and only a few in number, were eager to keep an ample amount of cordwood near the stove, replenish the supply and prepare a basket of kindling for the next morning's fire.

The larger girls were solicitous in maintaining a reasonably spic-and-span room of dustless blackboards, dustfree desks, and a clean random-board floor. I found the schoolroom sometimes warm and cozy on a winter morning for a tramp or traveler had slept there, keeping the fire for the night. Both, he and I were thankful. The word vandalism was not as common as it is today. However, perhaps an apple or two would be missing from the desks, but the old fellow was happy for a warm place to sleep and never did any damage.

When school hours were over, being an agreeable companion and playmate of the larger boys and girls, I solved many disciplinarian difficulties that could have arisen during school hours while at the same time, by sharing responsibilities with the pupils, it created a successful competitive

boy's baseball and girl's volleyball teams, both were champions in the five-school area. Introducing art and other cultural niceties on Friday afternoon and preparing school programs for Thanksgiving and Christmas created a most delightful and happy school year for all.

These mutual ventures in and out of school aroused the ambitions and thirst for more knowledge of many of my pupils. Thus, many became successful farmers, while others entered other professions including the life of religious; four boys were ordained priests and seven girls became religious nuns during my teaching career. They, today are proud to refer to the association and activities of those school days.

Associating with young and old, and providing varied personal services in church and school, complex situations with direct confrontations would ensue occasionally. Inevitably, in each case simple solutions were found which had a sobering effect on any young man of 18 years and I was no exception. But I noted that I progressively became more aware of greater maturity; mentally, spiritually and socially in stature during the year. I must have been properly appreciated and recognized by many if not all my contemporaries, adults and pupils, for they speak with admiration and approval of our association as a teacher and organist, sixty years later.

With the first school year ending at the end of May, I was confronted with the problem of activity for the summer months. Again, I found employment at the local village store, performing duties similar to those of the preceding summer. The parish duties continued to July 1st but with the renewal of my contracts for another year with the school board and with the pastor, I invested \$175 in a twin-cylinder Excelsor motorcycle. Traveling from my home to the church seven miles away, and attending country dances and social festivals in other parishes, I was able to solve my transportation not only for the summer but also on pleasant days of the fall.

Though busily engaged in many tasks at the local store in this vacation period of 1916, I had the opportunity of many leisure trips in the evening, on weekends and on Sundays. With a complete day of freedom, a teacher associate Mr. Wellman and I had a motorcycle jaunt to the Celina Fair and another to the County Teachers' Institute.

Young people of the county had inherited the artlessness of rural customs in attending parish festivals, housewarming of newly-weds, or barn dances, without having a formal invitation, for all were welcome to attend. Consequently, that summer the young storekeeper, always spirited and jolly, and I as his companion, attended a number of these while his mother waited on the evening customers who, usually, were elderly ones, since most young people were at these affairs.

I was invited to attend a barn dance by a college chum who married a girl of the Burkettsvill Parish in June of that summer. Thus, with my encouragement and to render me a favor, the owner closed the store early to attend the

barn dance at the bride's home. My interest in attending was to show respect to my old friend Leo, now a teacher, but overshadowing this, I had a wishful thought of gaining some information of Joe, his present activity, and the possibility of meeting his sister, Anna Marie, now 18 years of age.

Significantly, upon arrival in the Overland touring car (owned by the storekeeper), we learned that Joe's brother, Theodore, (unfamiliar to me), and his sister Anna Marie were in the group of 100 or more guests. The majority of these young people were in the large farm barn, being entertained with singing and dancing. The barn had been cleared, the wide board floor properly waxed with paraffin and the music furnished by a group of six: two violins, a mandolin, a guitar, snap and a bass drum.

Upon entering the barn I recognized the girl with the three long, light brown curls reaching beyond her belt-line, while at the same time she presented a singular personality and image that I, instinctly, became aware of the fulfillment of my long, last wish.

'Tis strange but true, yet truth is many times stranger than fiction, we, living in homes only five miles apart had had no opportunity of seeing the other after that July 4th in 1914 until this particular evening, she going on 19 and I on 20. In effect it can be said as we learned later, that we were secretly and unknowingly interested in each other, unconsciously hoping to meet some day, somewhere.

The reader must be mindful of the fact that travel and communication in the country were still simple, automobiles were few in number and telephone calls were limited to local areas. Our ways had been parted to a great degree by my attendance at Miami University in 1914, and Joe's employment in Dayton. These conditions defeated a suitable opportunity of contacting the family since her home in Darke County directed her activities to the East and South, while I was preoccupied with teaching to the West and North in Mercer County. Providence had its own way of renewing our friendship in spite of unrecognized and unplanned actions on our part.

The face-to-face encounter with her at the wedding dance of my friend was initiated by me for I was eager to establish the correctness of my supposition as to her identity.

She, upon the conclusion of a dance number in which she participated, proceeded in my direction which gave me the opportunity of confronting her face-to-face. Hopefully, I entertained the thought of having the next dance with her, and she at the same time spied my approach. As I drew near she noted my dress, posture, and smiling face, causing her to stare at me with wide open eyes and statue-like gaze. Speech failed both of us, utterly, but for a second only, while our eyes remained fixed. With a surprised look her expression changed visibly from a kind of troubled delight to that of inquiry as if to say, 'who are you?' Instinctively, and unconsciously, I said, "Who are you and where and when have I seen you before?"

A sweet smile began playing about her lips and a soft dimpling of the cheek showed my presence and recognition had not been unfavorable. I continued, "Aren't you Anna Marie, sister of Joe Nordenbrock?" She met my steady, powerful eyes without a blink, whereupon I sensed the impossible dream of meeting at last this secret, ever-fleeting love in person. She did not answer me but again there appeared that trace of coquettishness playing about her lips as if to say, 'How do you know who I am?' With little imagination, I guessed her thoughts by the movement of her eyes and the impish-like toss of her curls, betraying a mischievous character. Here was her opportunity of keeping me in doubt as to her identity and to note my reaction. To me it appeared to be a subterfuge but it did have one advantage, by providing opportunity for both in testing our hopes, dreams, and ambitions on this uncommon and unplanned occasion.

At the stroke of the downbeat of the two violins she sweetly accepted the next dance number and clearly implied that there should be another and another. After a few dance numbers, creating embarrassment among the local country boys, we passed through the mammoth barn opening (the large barn doors had been pushed to the side), and found ourselves in the bright moonlight and starlit sky of a beautiful June night. Meandering some dozen steps, arm in arm, toward no particular place, she stopped suddenly with full parted lips and points of yellow light dancing in her eyes, chattered laughingly, "How do you measure by algebra the distance between the stars and moon? My brother told me you had been the envy of the class and that no problem in algebra was too difficult for you to solve." I, with a similar ease at bantering, responded with this chatty expression, "I am sure anyone who can enter the third grade after being in school but one day and to pass the Boxwell Examination at the age of 12 should have no difficulty in knowing that the stars are constantly winking at each other, moving about for a reason while the moon is out to watch their goings-on." So the chatter and banter began which ended some years later as one of the greatest romances of the Century.

This was the beginning of a kind of chit-chat between us in the next two months for we experienced a few periodic personal break-the-ice encounters. No doubt, this generation might have the impression that these chance meetings would initiate an extraordinary effort on the part of each to have many vis-a-vis bantering skirmishes. Not at all, there was no correspondence between us until late November. It is true we were interested in attending social gatherings, wedding dances, parish festivals and plays, all within a radius of our homes. Though each anticipated and hoped for another chance out-of-the-blue encounter. Two or three of these events proved successfully, thereby motivating both of us to explore new avenues of common interests; music, singing, and literature. I, the country teacher of twenty, the culprit, who instigated this love story, professed not to know how or even contemplated to woo or win this lady's heart. It was a fancy-free commitment, a sort of admiration only, while the three avenues appeared to be vulnerable points of interest and doors of access to more anticipated pleasantries.

World War I had encouraged composers to write many new love songs which are as popular today as at the time: Let the Rest of the World Go By; My Little Girl; 'Till we Meet Again; Keep the Home Fires Burning; There's a Long, Long Trail A'wind-ing; and dozens of others. Singing and dancing, and discussing these created no end of fun for the two of us, thus occupying much of our time at these few unprepared meetings. My limited knowledgeable musical theory and her innate musical technique and her understanding of some musical rudiments made it possible to discuss semi-classical songs such as: Sounds from the Convent Chapel; The Maiden's Prayer; Sing Me the Rosary; and some new musical compositions appearing in the musical magazine The Etude. Her alertness and memory were outstanding and surprising to me as she quoted verses from well-known poems, repeating exact dates and events in history and expressing worldwide geographical facts. Her German jocular idioms provided much amusement on these occasions, but little did I suspect at the time that this young lady had a memory unexcelled with remarkable mental capabilities.

It is true that the summer vacation passed far too rapidly, no doubt, accelerated by these periodic meetings of fun and frolic. If I remember correctly our last coming-together was one evening at the Ft. Recovery Harvest Jubilee in late August. That evening, by chance, I spied her with her two brothers and two girls in the milling group of bystanders, edging their way between concession booths that lined the one main street in the village. No encouragement was needed for me to appear in their view for within seconds I was introduced to the group, one girl being a Miss Klosterman, a close friend of Anna Marie's. There is little doubt that both of us were prepared for another gripbag of hilarious off-the-cuff understatements. By hook-or-crook we excused ourselves. Leaving the group we proceeded in the direction of the Huddle Drugstore. Upon my invitation and suggestion, an hour of enjoyment with a banana-split, was a covetable finale of the summer's activities. It must be admitted that both expressed regret and disappointment, for this meeting would be the last one until the next spring or summer. My school would begin within a week or two, the activities of which and those of the parish would confine me to the area of St. Anthony. She in turn described her work for the coming year, that is, to continue with the high school subjects under the guidance of the sisters, aid them in teaching, assist at the organ and continue her piano with Miss Kunkler.

As time was running out on us and preparing to leave the store, she said, "A young man, living on a farm adjacent to ours will marry a girl at St. Peter's Church, (a parish near St. Anthony), in October and the wedding will be in her church and the evening dance is to be at the bride's home. I imagine we will attend by invitation." My reply was instantaneous and without deliberation, "You may find me there." Without giving anymore thought to this we entered the street, spied her group and after a few more quips we all parted. They began their homeward journey by horse and carriage and I on my twin-cylinder Excelsor.

The second school year began with a new group of five

beginners, increasing the total enrollment by four since one eighth-grader had graduated the past year, a very intelligent girl, Leona Boehmer. She was my first pupil to attend high school, graduating in 1920 at the St. Henry High School. Incidentally, she was proud to relate to the Franciscan novices in Milwaukee, her chosen sisterhood, that she had had the privilege of riding on her teacher's motorcycle a few years earlier.

The school year began the first week in September. Having a similar routine as that of the previous year since it demonstrated greater ease and efficiency, for all recognized we were one large family. In time we presented the usual Thanksgiving and Christmas programs and competed successfully in the county school sports.

The thought of meeting Anna Marie at the October wedding dance continued to challenge me for the next few weeks, which one might expect. In a sense I was aware of a possible reaction to this meeting by her parents who could be present at the affair.

Viewing the matter in the light of her age, her mother whom I had not met, might question these established casual surprises, though innocent and pleasant. One of the striking merits of our going-on was the fact that my name at the Nordenbrock home was a household one which I had learned during the summer from our past mind-boggling, nonsensical, conversations.

A local country newspaper carried an item of the coming wedding as well as its date and place. Throwing all rational justifiable reasoning to the wind, I encroached upon the goodwill of the son at the farm home to attend the affair, hoping thereby that his presence would mellow my impatient desire for another tete-a-tete. By coincidence, this son was known by the bride and her brothers which created a blend of many social amenities for there were numerous introductions to those in the wedding party and to members of the Nordenbrock family. In spite of the hustle and bustle on the dance floor we were able to insert more of our nonsensical quizzes at intervals, much to our delight.

Considering a dream of mine, perhaps an impossible one at the time, I jokingly asked her if I might write her a letter sometime during the year, relating my experiences at the school and church. Her answer was a tantalizing one, "The post office is Burkettsville, but I doubt if you can spell it."

Halloween within reach and other holidays punctuating the end of the year, I assumed a card or letter on goblins would be in order. Forthwith, I took advantage of the holiday, Halloween, 1916, and wrote the first letter which contained a running history of goblins and witches and numerous quotations from James Whitcomb Riley's Little Orphan Annie.

According to her dated letter she without hesitancy replied in a few days with the following:

November 4, 1916

Dear Friend:

Greatly pleased to hear from you . . .
You certainly have the liberty of writing me. It is unnecessary for me to tell you that I shall save your letter, treasure it ever, and keep it where it is now, next to my heart Certainly enjoyed our last meeting as I have all of them, had a glorious time, wish never to end. The many miles between us, your teaching and the approaching winter Therefore, an occasional letter will be just like seeing you personally.

Marie

There were no personal meetings the remainder of the year, or for the next nine months, that is, until May 1917. I was busy with school and church activities and with no means of transportation other than the motorcycle, a number of personal letters passed back and forth every two or three weeks.

Thanksgiving came and passed while Christmas had more in store for both. Taking the initiative I mailed her a Christmas gift; the novel, Girl of the Limberlost, by Gene Stratton Porter. It was the story of the love affair of two young people with the setting on the edge of a swamp known as The Limberlost, near the Indiana and Ohio State Line. This area was a few miles to the West, adjacent to the school and church of St. Anthony, while the story described the joys and sadness of the young people in their adolescent period. I assumed it might arouse a degree of interest in my behalf since it implied the presence of personal friendship.

Attached to this leatherbound volume was a miniature Christmas card with this personal message: 'What shall I choose for your Christmas, all fair and sweet things I would say, the Gifts of Peace and Happiness and Love from the heart of a friend.'

In a letter dated a day later came this reply:

December 26, 1916

Dear Friend:

Received your sincere Christmas wish and the precious gift, Girl of The Limberlost. Glancing through its pages I am tempted to repeat the words of the Dreamgirl, "I have much place in my heart 'tis true and I am saving a great big place for you." My Christmas Day has been an exception from other years, by being remembered by so many friends and there was one among them especially dear to me, it being you. I hasten to send my heartfelt thanks and certainly accept your love-token. Please accept my fond wish for a thrice Happy New Year.

Yours, Marie

Recapitulating the high points of the few unpretentious jovialities and letters the past year, it appears each of us discovered it had been more than a friendly tittle-tattle. Each had the opportunity of measuring personalities, thus balancing likes and dislikes. Indirectly, we experienced through the avenues of songs, music and literature, progressively, a desire for more friendly encounters and wishful mental skirmishes, that had been always mild, tolerant, and sympathetic.

For the moment it is necessary to relate my activities for the remainder of the second year at St. Anthony. After the Christmas holidays, since my parish priest, Father Notheis, would no longer be the pastor of St. Anthony after July 1st, he became interested immediately in my acquiring a school and parish at Sharpsburg (Zenz City), by informing the pastor of my qualifications and my availability for the position. In March of 1917, I was engaged by the pastor and the school board of Zenz City to begin my services on July 1st for the year 1917-1918, with a substantial increase in salary. The salary for teaching would be \$84 per month for nine months and a flat salary of \$250 per year as organist and choir director.

I continued my two positions, organist and teacher, for the remainder of the school year at St. Anthony and found my musical activities as organist and choir director to be more challenging than teaching. They were numerous and varied; wedding masses, services for funerals, and the task of preparing a new mass by the church choir for a parish son, Reverend Henry Post who was to read his First Mass on June 1st. Father Post was a distant cousin of mine as well as his three blood sisters; Clara, Mary and Anna, who had dedicated their lives as religious. Even the mother of Sister Marcelliana (a distant cousin), was a niece of my grandmother Elizabeth (Stachler) Fecher.

By and large, by continuing a personal interest in these activities, I found an increasing personal smoothness with all parish members. Taking a long last look I am keenly aware that I, as a public servant to the community, had increased in stature the two years, adding much to the sum total of community welfare. It was but a temporary farewell to many old friends when leaving in June; a promise of many return visits in the future.

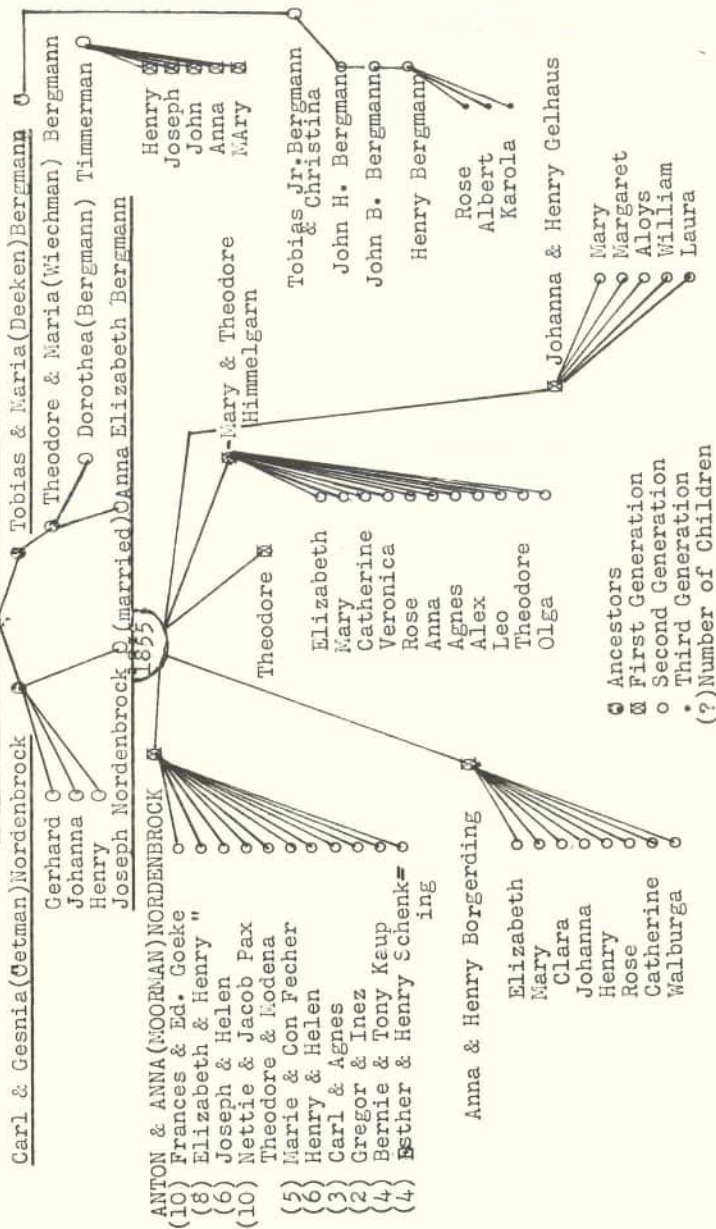
Drawing the curtain temporarily, and before relating the future happenings of our potential courtship, it is essential to have a knowledge and background of the two ancestral families, the progenitors of the second principal character, Anna Marie Nordenbrock. This biographical sketch needs to be sustained, historically, by the root underpinnings of the paternal and maternal families, who, with similar attributes; leadership, ambition, aspirations, and courage had greatly influenced the ongoing generations.

The experiences of the Nordenbrock-Bergmann and Moorman families in the 19th Century were analogous to the two ancestral families described in earlier chapters. The members of each had been entangled in periodic turbulent and peaceful

epochs of political, social, and religious unrest in Central Europe over which they had had no control.

I shall attempt to present the trunk, limbs, and emerging leaves in the next chapters.

NORDENBERG & BERGMANN FAMILY



CHAPTER IV

THE NORDENBROCK-BERGMANN ANCESTRY

There had been one grandmother, known as the aged centenarian in the Nordenbrock-Bergmann Family Ancestry. All writers have had difficulty in placing before its readers how a person veritably lived and moved at the time. Even the painted figure on a canvas with glowing colors is but a cold representation for it cannot communicate the vital spark to make it live again. Where shall I begin? In spite of the fact that I had no opportunity in knowing this grandmother personally in her younger and middle years, I am very conscious that I had been greatly impressed by her perseverance, leadership, faith, bravery, and unfadable selflessness that she demonstrated in the ten years that I learned to know her. The stories of her life from the lips of her granddaughter who lived with her over a period of more than 20 years had created my interest in learning more of her ancestry, of her childhood, of her girlhood, and family experiences in Europe.

No historian could provide more brilliant accounts of her activities, of her joys and sorrows, of successes and frustrations than the living stories that she had related. She accepted all her hardship with patient and enduring resignation which had been displayed by her accomplishments. The center of attention in introducing this ancestry must invariably focus on her person.

According to historical records, old St. Andreas Kirche (St. Andrew's Church), had been built in 1728 on the spot of an original small chapel, erected by missionaries in 814 in the wilderness on Mt. Crappendorf, a promontory of land slightly higher than the surrounding country. Charles The Great had been crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 by Pope Leo III at St. Peter's, Rome, and by direct request of the Papacy Charles had been asked to Christianize this newly established territory of France, (Gaul), Germany, and Italy.

Mt. Crappendorf and the surrounding country were a part of the Ancient Teutoberger Wald and was covered with huge Norway spruce and firs. Historical records state that at the time it sheltered wolves, bears, wild boars, and droves of untamed horses, thus providing excellent hunting grounds for the Dukes and Lords of the Grand-Dukedom of Oldenburg. On the border of this hunting preserve, about thirty miles to the South, was the small village of Oesnabruck in which domiciled a minor Duke who was subject to the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg. In the years from 800 to 1200, people from the Netherlands and Teutonic tribes from the East and West had moved into this area. Due to religious, social and economic advantages many families settled small villages of Cloppenburg, Crappendorf, Bopel, and others. The language of the inhabitants of these dorfs today consists of the vernacular similar to that of 100 years ago,

that is, a combination of German and Dutch idiomatic phrases.

With the influx of more and more families into this missionary territory a small tower-like church with a small entrance and high gun placements was built in 1200 to provide for religious services as well as a fortification for the defense of the village of Cloppenburg against skirmishes from neighboring groups. The original foundation of this old tower with some enlargement provided the footing of the present massive church structure, built in 1728.

My desire to learn of the customs, environment, and religious conditions confronting the ancestral family of Anna Elizabeth Bergmann, the Centenarian, increased with the passing years of contact with this unique personality. This interest had been greatly augmented by the accounts, narrated by the members of the 1st and 2nd generations with whom she had lived for more than 40 years. Paradoxically, I neglected to explore this area in the half-dozen trips to Europe from 1960 to 1970. No doubt, this was due to the fact that other ancestral regions were more searchable at the time. Progressively, as I accumulated information for the biographical sketches of the other ancestors, it became imperative that a research must be made to support official immigration documents, baptismal records and the official army discharge papers of her husband which were in the possession of the family.

Without exaggeration, I must admit that my journey to upper Northern Germany, Oldenburg, adjacent to the Dutch border, was a most fascinating one and the most fruitful of all my ancestral research in Europe.

Armed with reproduced copies of the old documents of the members of the Nordenbrock-Bergmann ancestry, I approached the little village of Cloppenburg. Recognizing the old church, accordingly, I wended my steps toward the pastor's residence. Upon my knock I met him, Fr. Alphonse Kuhlring, at the front door and expressed in German my purpose in learning more about the Nordenbrock-Bergmann families. Simultaneously, I handed him the reproduced official documents for his examination. Within seconds, I was invited to enter with his welcome broken English, "These papers are impressive, do come in and we will examine the old parish record books of 1800." In two hours of conversation and in examining the books on baptisms and marriages we located the entries of baptism of Joseph M. Nordenbrock, husband, and Anna Elizabeth Bergmann, wife, as well as their marriage in 1855.

Joseph M. Nordenbrock, son of Carl and Gesina (Oetmann) Nordenbrock was born in Bopel, a village 10 miles from Cloppenburg, December 28, 1821. The Godparents were John Oetmann, brother of the mother and Margaretha Nordenbrock, sister of the father. Searching the book of marriages we found that Margaretha Nordenborck married John Weichmann in 1825, thereafter known as Margaretha Weichmann. The baptismal entry of Anna Elizabeth read, Anna Elizabeth Bergmann, born June 27, 1829, daughter of Theodore and Anna Marie (Weichmann) Bergmann of Cloppenburg and was baptized the day after her birth in the

presence of the Godparents, Tobias Bergmann II, brother of the father and Margaretha (Nordenbrock) Weichmann, sister-in-law of the mother.

The entry in the marriage book stated that Joseph Nordenbrock and Anna Elizabeth Bergmann were married in St. Andrew's Kirche in 1855, witnessed by Henry Nordenbrock, brother of the groom, and Dorothea Bergmann, sister of the bride.

It is logical and not surprising, to find Margaretha to have been the Godmother of the two individuals who later became husband and wife, Joseph and Elizabeth Nordenbrock. These two could have known each other in childhood but due to differences in ages, this knowledge and recognition of each other had been lost over the period of years. His induction into the army of the Duke of Oldenburg caused further difficulty in losing each other's identity in the intervening years.

Equally revealing to me was the pastor's response to my question, "Are there any members of the Nordenbrock-Bergmann families in the area today?" His immediate reply, "Yes! the fifth generation of the family, Henry Bergmann and family are living on the original 20 hectares which belonged originally to the ancestral family in 1700. Instinctively, my response, "I would be happy to meet them and note if there is a relationship with the Centenarian Grandmother, Anna Elizabeth Nordenbrock, who with her parents journeyed to America in 1865." "We will walk to the homestead in a few minutes after a treat to tea and some biscuits," was his reply.

Within 15 minutes we started across a grassy-lane in the direction of a home, a typical German homestead of a medium-sized Normandy structured barn of beams, intertwined with brick and stones. Attached to it was a modern house of 15 to 20 years of weathering.

A distance of 200 yards brought us to a wooden farm gate, which when opened allowed us to enter a small grass-green meadow with some chickens, a horse and a half-dozen sheep, grazing.

As we approached the barn a surprising kind of photo-drama appeared. Yes, stamped on the front horizontal beam in eight-inch burned letters were these words, 'Tobias Bergmann and Anna Marie Deeken, 1813.' (The grandparents of the Centenarian, Anna Elizabeth Nordenbrock.) This was an incredible scene, a kind of scene such stuff as dreams are made of. Certainly, this verified the grandmother's narrative of her and sister Dorothea's early childhood days that had been spent with their parents and grandparents, Tobias and Anna Marie, in the old 1813 home. Her early description of this combination barn-like structure of living quarters in the front and an animal shelter in the rear was the completion of my dream, indeed.

We were met at the rear of the house, adjacent to the barn, by a teenage girl, Karola Bergmann, daughter of the owner. Fr. K uhling introduced me as a relative from America who was interested in learning about the ancestry of those who came from Cloppenburg about 1860. Fortunately, she spoke and understood

the English language well, a very advantageous plus for me when I explained my mission to her. Again there was a repetition of warmth, friendship, and confidence, demonstrated by her and her father, similar to that of the pastor upon my introduction.

The next two to three hours of German and English conversation that ensued between us revealed a mine of incredible disclosures. This was supported by old worn German documents of baptisms, marriages, immigration papers, and the army discharge papers of the family history of the descendants of Tobias and Anna Marie Deeken after 1800. The sheaf of thumbed, slightly dog-eared and crinkled sheets found in the metal family file were proudly displayed to me by Henry and his daughter, Karola, that afternoon. It was easy for me to turn the thin sheets as I read and examined them, one by one. But how can one picture the hopes, aspirations, and anticipations of one who had lived to be a hundred years, 25 of which had been spent in this surrounding, sandwiching a number of years of privations, sickness and deaths of loved ones on the high sea in a sailing vessel, and another 60 or more years in America?

In examining the early history of the origin of the family I found the ancestral tribal family had migrated into this vicinity between 1600 to 1700. By 1700 a recording of ownership had been made in the Deed Book of Records of 20 hectares, located on a berg about 300 yards from a church, in the name of Bergmann. No doubt, the name Bergmann had been derived from the expression, 'Mann von Berg.' (Man from Hill.) It is to be noted that from the earliest times the German law of inheritance stipulated that the eldest son upon his marriage, would inherit the homestead in 'toto' with a detailed provision for the support of the parents until their deaths.

When Tobias, born in 1770, (the eldest) married Anna Maria Deeken born in 1772, at Crappendorf in 1794, they inherited the home and 20 hectares which was supported by a recorded deed, dated 1794, in the file.

Their first son Theodore was born in 1796, and four years later, 1800, a second son Tobias II was born. A partly obliterated German-script paper described the construction of the combination house and barn, built in 1813. Theodore, the 17 year old was in a position to help his father in its erection while Tobias II, age 14, filled and cemented bricks and stones between the lower beams.

According to an old cancelled deed of 1820, Theodore had inherited the home upon his marriage to Anna Marie Weichmann but attached to it was a second deed of ownership which transferred the homestead to the second son, Tobias II in 1865. The reader at this time can speculate upon the why and wherefore of this transfer but will learn more of this unusual procedure as our story progresses.

Examining the family history on the first faded pages, written in a distinct German script, I judge it must have been written, by the grandfather Tobias which included a brief history of the early childhood and teenage years of the two

granddaughters, Dorothea and her sister Anna Elizabeth in regard to their spirit and sparkle as spent in the shadows of the grandparents. According to a badly faded daguerreotype of the family, (this photo process began about 1829), taken about the year 1840 or later, Anna Elizabeth as a girl of 10 or more years, and her sister Dorothea, a few years younger, appeared to have bright sunny faces and curly blond hair, both radiating sprightly dispositions. It is likely that in the next ten or more years more flower-like sweetness, charm, and grace had been added. It was about 1850 in the young womanhood days of the two girls that both of the grandparents died and were buried in the cemetery at Cloppenburg.

A second faded, rumpled page of contrasting script, written either by the father or mother, provided a knowledge of Anna Elizabeth's hand sewing and stitching of her accessories, the beauty of which must have been in competition with those of other associates. The dainty ruffle on the face of her bonnet and trim frock had to be different from those of other village girls since she was now 20 years of age.

Certainly, much more satisfaction and information was learned concerning this young lady when turning a few more pages as their contents were of more immediate personal interest to me. It was the story which she related to me in German in 1920 of the gala affair when the Minor Duke and his wife of Oesnabruck visited the little village of Cloppenburg.

It was the summer of 1849 when the Duke, his wife, and two young children toured the small village, (the grandmother's version - a wealthy family). This being an unusual occasion, an uncommon happening which brought the villagers, including Anna Elizabeth, age 20, to the village square to do them honor. A stranger or a passerby, unconsciously, would notice this medium-height, rather slender young lady with the dainty bonnet and respectful frock.

Upon a sign to the coachman, the carriage stopped near her and the wife addressed her personally. The incident created a pleased expression and a shy one which brought a glowing bloom of blush on her cheeks. Learning more about her character, ability and trustworthiness the family expressed the wish a few days later, to have her as the governess for their two school-age children if she would live with them in their palatial home in Oesnabruck. This was a great opportunity for her to add to her limited education and to acquire a culture far beyond that of the rural area.

She was privileged to accompany the children to the homes of the tutors and be present at their classes. Without question, these experiences broadened her early elementary schooling and gave her a background and training for the teaching of German emigrant children in America in 1870. Being associated with a wealthy family, she had many opportunities in visiting the large city of Muenster with its palatial and government buildings, to worship in the great Cathedral Dome and to attend social functions with this Minor Duke and Duchess as the governess of the children, when invited.

It was at a military affair in their home in Oesnabruck in 1854, where she met her future husband, Joseph Nordenbrock, he being a member of the military musical organization that entertained the group.

We had learned earlier that Joseph had been born in Bopel, a village near Cloppenburg, and having studied music for more than ten years, became very accomplished with the violin, thus, was assigned to the military musical corps upon entering military service in 1853. At his age of 44 years his military discharge papers described him as follows: five feet, eleven inches tall; handsome with erect stature; blue eyes, blond eyebrows and hair; a firm well-cut mouth, highlighted by a clean shaven lip and chin. There was a refinement of brow and nostrils which gave an expression of proud tenacity, slanted to courage.

In the evening of this musical entertainment she dressed herself with much preparation for she was to be present with the two children and there would be a number of young soldiers attending the military affair. Her garments were modest with no bright trappings. Never had her clothes been better fashioned or worn with better grace. She was in all black from her bonnet-ribboned, down to her pert shoes, all very sweet and simple without a line of ornament for she herself adorned it. There was no attempt at finery or smartness.

As she looked and listened to the music, by some strange chance, her gaze fell on one face, the violinist, and their eyes met. Where and when had she seen a face of similar features? It reminded her of a likeness of someone of years gone by. Could he be one of kinship, or friendship, or just a floating imagery? For a second she looked at him, her own countenance did not quail and simultaneously neither did his, but his eyes fell gradually to the musical score and when he raised them again she had averted her face. That night, and days thereafter, she allowed herself to think of him often and tried to recall his eyes and his faint smile for the hundredth time. Speculating on the when and where in the dim past if they had met if at all, and would they meet again, if ever.

It was Joseph who planned a chance meeting with her again and with the aid of the Duke a private musical affair had been arranged in his home as he was a lover of good music and the violin was his choice. She had been invited in advance by the Duchess who also gave her a knowledge of the violinist's interest in meeting her.

That evening as she entered from the adjoining room, he was struck by her modesty and her graceful walk. She, touching her skirt of white (rather than holding it) with her left hand and bearing a red rose in her right hand, made a courtly bow. One might say this was more of pride than humility, extending her hand she bade him welcome. After a short recital in the music room, the Duke and Duchess excused themselves and the young couple found themselves alone.

Obviously, their initial conversation was a course leading to the riddle of identification. Could they find any common experiences of days gone-by? The names of Nordenbrock and Weichmann aroused immediate recognition of early family associations. The primary focus of discussion was the name of Margaretha (Nordenbrock) Weichman. Both realized she had been the Godmother of each.

Margaretha, being the sister of his father was his aunt, but paradoxically, she was also her aunt since she had married the brother of her mother. This surprising and attractive story called for more family explorations. She remembered him vaguely as a boy of 15 years with a tangle of light colored hair falling over his forehead, with large pale blue eyes. His arms and legs thin and his trousers cut short at the knee which added to his spindly legs. How could this be the same young man now 33 years old, she mused. What picture did he have of her as a girl of 6 or 7 years old? Nothing less than a sunny face, topped with auburn to reddish hair that tended to curl, which accentuated a kind of glow. As it turned out each related their experiences of the past years. The high points of his was his experiences at the violin while that of hers was the privilege of living in an atmosphere that added to her knowledge and culture. The picture that emerged was one of romance which ended in a military wedding a year later.

A military wedding had been planned shortly before his applying for an army discharge which he anticipated in 1855, but which was not realized. In spite of this discouragement the wedding was celebrated in St. Andrew's Kirche in Cloppenburg and attended by the courtly couple and the two children. After the wedding, Anna Elizabeth returned to the ancestral home with her parents while Joseph, still in the army, listed his home as that of Elizabeth's at Cloppenburg. The family had an official document of immigration to America, dated 1856, but not obtaining a military discharge from the service of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg at the time, the family remained in Germany. Upon advice of the Minor Duke of Oesnabruck, who assured him of many privileges, he remained in the army for another nine years, July 1865.

As a young bride, Anna Elizabeth had an inexhaustible good nature, unlimited faith, cheerfulness which secured for herself an immovable place in the household affections. She soon became the center of the homestead and the house took on many changes with a gain in cheerfulness. As the seasons and years wore away, more and more flowers, potted plants and branches of flowering shrubs surrounded the combination house and barn. She, with a distinct ladylike touch of flowers, shrubs and trees emphasized the entrance to the house, thereby screening the rear structure, the barn section.

Elizabeth with her sister Dorothea, (five years younger) father, and mother created an ideal home for the rearing of her children. Within the next ten years four children were born to Joseph and Elizabeth: Mary-1857, Johanna-1858, Anton-1860 and Gerhard-1864. All were born in the ancestral home of her parents and lived there until all emigrated to America in

1865.

Political, economic and religious clouds were becoming darker and darker upon the European horizon after the middle of the 19th Century. The German states, both large and small, had been absorbed by a more powerful confederacy. The territory of Northern Germany was now a part of Hanover and many of the feudal privileges of the dukes were eventually abolished. The years from 1845 to 1870 were known as the 'Years of Revolution,' in Central Europe. The storm centers were Austria and Prussia, initiated by the people and directed by unscrupulous leaders. Prussia gaining final control of the German States and becoming independent of Austria within the next two decades, brought Bismarck as Chancellor of the German Empire under Emperor William. It was Bismarck's 'Blood and Iron' administration that brought leadership to Prussia by defeating Austria and France in 1870.

Confronted with these unsettled conditions, Joseph and Anna Elizabeth with the full consent of her parents decided to go to America upon his military discharge in 1865. Earlier, her sister Dorothea married Henry Timmerman and had gone to the new World and located in Cincinnati and later to southern Mercer County.

Elizabeth with the aid of her father applied for emigration papers at the office in Cloppenburg for the four children, her parents and for herself, all signed by Herr Niemöller, the Director, On July 6, 1865. Being in the military, Joseph's discharge and passport were signed by an officer of the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg on July 12, 1865. His document stated he was now free and unhindered to go to America by way of Bremen Harbor to Cincinnati and would be entitled to assistance if any difficulties should arise on the trip.

Her parents, as well as her husband and the four children were worried on taking this gigantic move but Elizabeth assured all that conditions would be better in the New World and there would be more freedom of action, of worship and of greater opportunities. According to the faded family records the ownership and written transfer of the homestead was deeded to his brother and his wife. Thus, Tobia II, and his wife, Christina, were assured by the brother that the homestead and the original 1813 structure would be their's and remain in the family of Bergmann. Fortunately, future generations and descendants of these two brothers can point with pride to this accomplished deed of much love and affection. The original 1813 building had been altered. A new house with modern conveniences had been erected by Henry Bergmann, a direct descendant of Tobis II, who now lives there with his wife and three children; Røsa, Albert and Karola.

For Elizabeth, her husband, the four children and her parents, a total of eight which included the nine-month old baby, the trip to America was, indeed a courageous undertaking. There must have been many doubts in their minds as to the future. Would there be sickness, hunger, poverty or want? She dared not have these dreadful doubts, now that they were

GROSSHERZOGTHUM OLDENBURG.

REISE PASS



Herzogthum Oldenburg.

Alle Civil- und Militär-Behörden
werden hierdurch ersucht

N^o 216.

Bezeichnung

des Inhabers dieses Passes

- Religion, ev. l. u. r.
- Alter, 44 J.
- Größe, 5' 11" 1/2
- Haar, br.
- Augen, braun
- Nase, gerade
- Mund, gewöhnlich
- Barth, kurz
- Geschlechtsform, männlich
- Geschlechtsfarbe, nicht angegeben
- Andere Kennzeichen

Unterschrift
J. M. Nordmann

Bemerkung

In dem gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt ist die Reise nach
Oldenburg durch den Krieg und die Unruhe
ganz unmöglich. Die Reise nach Oldenburg
ist daher für den momentanen Zeitpunkt
gänzlich ausgesetzt und wird erst
wieder aufgenommen werden, wenn
die Umstände sich günstiger
geändert haben.
Dieses Pass ist gültig auf die Reise
nach Oldenburg und umgekehrt.
zu reisen gültig ist, frey und ungehindert passieren und
wiederum zu lassen, auch in demselben nothigenfalls zur
Förderung ihrer Reise behilflich zu seyn.

Dieses Pass ist gültig auf die Reise.

Oldenburg den 15. März 1862.
Hoch- und Wohlgeb. Herr
Großherzoglich Oldenburgische Regierung
des Herzogthums Oldenburg



Wische

financially able to take this journey. Neither were they limited for summer and winter apparel nor amounts of bed covers of homespun flax. They carried with them many family keepsakes and a few pieces of furniture: a baby crib, a family walnut bed and the violin of Joseph. According to the grandmother's account, he was a trained violinist and because of his distinguished service of twelve years in the Army, the Minor Duke presented him with a violin of distinction and quality. Incidentally, the supposed valuable violin was lost to the family for nearly 100 years and throughout that period the family members declared it to be very valuable and similar to a Stradivarius. The grandmother, merely related that it was one of the most valuable at the time according to the Duke's version. Fortunately, it became lost after the family had established the homestead in America which occasioned me to focus my attention of its whereabouts in the rural area. I, knowing that certain members of the family had inherited an innate ability for the violin, and by diligent research I learned of its location. Luckily, it had been guarded and kept from harm by a descendant of the family. I have had the opportunity of examining its construction of many small and different kinds of wood and at the same time, I found deep in a hidden recess, the Latin label, 'Josef Guarnerius fecit, Cremona, Anno, 1720.' This instrument could be a fabulously valuable "Strad." Again, perhaps not, but it has the possibility of being valuable since there was little reason and chance of its custodian in falsifying its identity.

A branch railway connected Cloppenburg with the city of Bremen, and upon arriving they went directly to the public office and all were registered as to their place of residence, business, etc. Upon examining the documents, including that of the nine-month old baby, the officers in charge stamped all papers with the seal of Oldenburg. The next morning the boat train carried the baggage and the family from Bremen to Bremen Harbor, a distance of 20 miles. A sailing vessel built for 100 or more occupants with an adequate crew had been chartered to leave July 1865.

Unfortunately, the ocean voyage of a few weeks extended to more than a month. For weeks the stop-and-go vessel, in a kind of round-about course moved but a few knots in mid-ocean.

After more than five weeks the wind, suddenly, took a westward course but it was too late, a few of the migrants including two members of Elizabeth's family died; her mother, Anna Marie (Weichmann) Bergmann and her nine-month old Gerhard were buried in the sea in September 1865.

That never-to-be-forgotten evening, as the night was closing in all around the circle of the horizon, not a sailing vessel in sight, the Captain was heard to say, "The wind is veering westward and is stronger." He called all hands to the deck for the wind was coming up gusty-like. His orders, "All sailors to the deck and close-haul the rigging on the starboard tack." This brought the boat safely round and it took off at a new course to the West.

The next morning after the sad and tragic experience of the day before, Elizabeth sighted birds flying near the boat, screaming for food. She, still with unspent courage and determination said to the others in her best low-german idiom, "Thanks be to God, our prayers have been heard." All were still unaware of what the New World had in store for them but were happy that at last the dream of many years had come true as they went ashore in Baltimore two days later.

According to the account of Elizabeth their stay in Baltimore was a sad experience, for in view of the language barrier and unknown customs some of their money had been taken by fraud. They were tempted to return to Europe on the next boat but were deterred since they had insufficient passage fare. Instead they boarded the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and after grinding days over the mountains they arrived in Cincinnati. There was another 100 miles to travel before reaching their final destination, a settlement about twenty miles north of Greenville. Her sister Dorothea had married Henry Timmerman who migrated earlier to America, settled in Cincinnati where their son Henry was born and later to Mercer County, a settlement known as Sharpsburg. This small clearing contained a few log houses but the surrounding country was still busch country, dotted by a dozen of farm families.

They were informed in Cincinnati that this area was West of Ft. Loramie, an Erie Canal Port, and could be reached by this waterway.

Since traveling by canal boat to Ft. Loramie they would be compelled to travel 20 miles overland, it was decided to go by wagon over a newly constructed graded roadbed of a railway that would connect Cincinnati with Toledo. Happily for them, the roadbed had been cut through the forest, over swamps, rivers and hills to the north country beyond Greenville.

They sold a part of their belongings and purchased a wagon, horse, and an ox, thus providing transportation for their few belongings. A three-day trip brought them through the small town of Middletown, and on to Greenville for an overnight stay. It was in the hills and valleys, north of Greenville that a severe rainstorm broke. Darkness and much lightning retarded their travel for an hour or more. Elizabeth vouched that it was their prayers that saved them and their belongings from a flood of water that had passed through the ravine that night. The roadbed continued another 10 miles to a small village, Gilbert, to be known as Gilbert Station. A distance of another four miles to the West of this village brought them to the homestead of her sister, Dorothea Timmermann.

Within a period of 20 or more years many other German families named: Romer, Himmelgarn, Gelhaus, Hinders and Borgerding had settled in the four directions of Gilbert. The advantages of a future railroad station encouraged the Nordenbrock family to purchase land adjacent to the village. The family of six - Joseph and Elizabeth, her father, the two daughters, Mary and Johanna and their son Anton - settled on a one-fourth section of land in Darke County West of the station. A

two-story log house was their permanent home until the turn of the Century.

In 1874, a number of acres had been given by Mr. Romer for a church and a cemetery lot by Mr. Nordenbrock at which time the parish was named St. Bernard of Burkettsville. A priest from the French settlement of Versailles held monthly mission services until a member of the Precious Blood Society, Rev. Vanden-broeck, was assigned in 1874. A new church was completed in 1875, thus encouraging many more families to settle in all directions of St. Bernard. By 1880 the parish had grown to 25 families with 125 members.

Joseph and Elizabeth with their son Anton continued to cultivate the 160 acres after the two daughters married young men of neighboring families. Daughter Mary married Theodore Himmelnarn and were the first couple to be married in the new church in 1876. This family was very successful, materially, contributed to the welfare of the church and raised eleven children to maturity. The daughter Johanna married Henry Gelhaus and raised five children. A daughter Anna, born in 1866, married Henry Borgerding and raised eight children. The father of Elizabeth, Theodore Bergmann, made his home later with the older daughter, Dorothea at Sharpsburg, died in 1881 and is buried in the local cemetery.

The homestead adjacent to the village and for miles to the West in 1865 was covered with heavy forests. Here and there one would find small clearings, miles apart disappearing in the deep and forbidden bush country. These could be approached only by a rough and deeply gutted wagon trail. The small carved openings, consisting of a few acres of cleared land, contained a one or two-story log house and a number of log out-buildings for animals and simple farm tools. The small cultivated fields that had been cleared on high ground were scarcely noticeable. The plow with the aid of horses and oxen made very insignificant furrows between the green stumps and upturned dried-out roots. It was a tremendous backbreaking task for both men and beasts. The task for young Anton was hundredfold when both his father, Joseph Nordenbrock, and his brother Theodore, (born in 1868), died in 1879. Full responsibility of the farm and the clearing of many acres of new ground fell upon the shoulders of this lad of 19.

By combining their efforts, Anton, with his new wife, Anna Moorman, whom he married in 1886, and his mother, had the one-fourth section of land cleared of debt by the turn of the Century.

Very little catholicity existed in Darke County except at the French settlement around Versailles. The area of 18 miles South to Greenville had few or no Catholic worshippers while Mercer County, an oasis of Catholicity under the direction of the Precious Blood Society, had the twenty-mile square area, just five miles North, and was dotted with many churches.

Due to the scarcity of priests, the settlements of Burkettsville and Sharpsburg were visited on alternate Sundays by

the pastor at St. Henry. During the period 1866 to about 1884, the Nordenbrocks with other neighbors attended Sunday Mass at St. Henry. After 1875 a small parochial school appeared at the village, erected by Father Paul Reuter, which would house about two-dozen children. For a number of years - 1869 to 1875, children of the settlers, West of the village, attended a small log school near the Nordenbrock home, which was taught by Elizabeth Nordenbrock. Her memories recall that she received \$10 per month, tending her own baby, Theodore, in a cradle as she taught through the six months of Winter. (Note the reproduced 1920 photograph of the old log school house and the aged 90 year old Elizabeth.)



Educational facilities of a parish school for the children was not available since it was out of the domain of the Precious Blood Society.

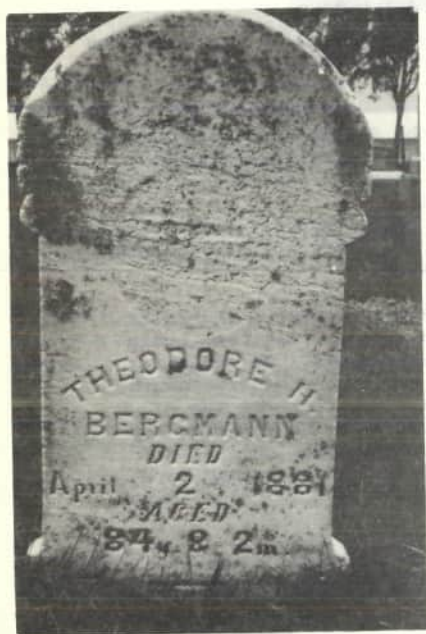
The distance of six miles to the St. Henry church was traveled by foot or on horseback along the railroad tracks since there were many swamps in the area. A mile South of the parish and adjacent to the tracks lived the family of Franz Moorman who had settled there about 1850. Anton, on his many trips for worship, or on business to St. Henry learned to know the daughter, Anna, whom he married.

From 1875 to about 1900, St. Bernard' parish (Burkettsville), had a dozen or more Precious Blood priests who administered religious services to the parishioners. In the first ten years the priests, on alternate Sundays, came from nearby village churches. After 1884, various superiors of the St. Mary's Novitiate (a preparatory seminary for boys within the limits of the parish), offered regular pastoral care at St. Bernard's. It was in 1886 that Anton and Anna Moorman were married in the little frame church by Fr. William Russ, Superior at the Novitiate.

It was during the last decade of the 19th Century that the village of Burkettsville (Gilbert Station), and the surrounding country began to grow and prosper. The railroad opened new avenues of city markets for country products of grain, meat, hides, and wool. The members of the Precious Blood Society had pushed their activities South and East, opening new missions and parishes in Sharpsburg, Osgood, North Star, and Burkettsville. It was to the Parish of Burkettsville that the Nordenbrock family had donated material goods of land, money, and needed church facilities. Above all one cannot neglect the personal kindness and love given by the members of this family to the resident pastor, Rev. Dennis Schweitzer from 1900 to 1907. Board and lodging without charge had been provided by it at which time a parish house had been completed.

Incredible is the fact that one should find the 1st generation of the two ancestral families, Fecher and Nordenbrock, to have performed similar charitable deeds in the interest and welfare of the Church, and had given personal consideration to the daily welfare of the pastors.

The ancestral Nordenbrock-Bergmann families are proud to present the religious personnel: three daughters of the Timmerman Family - Veronica, Stella and Pauline who had celebrated their 50th anniversary in religious life recently. Rosina Moorman of the Moormans, Helen Pax of the Nordenbrock family, and other priests and sisters of the ancestral family who had been cited previously. The spiritual vigor of St. Bernard's Parish has been outstanding in religious matters for it has given four young men and 18 young women to the services of the Lord the past 75 years.



Burial Monuments of

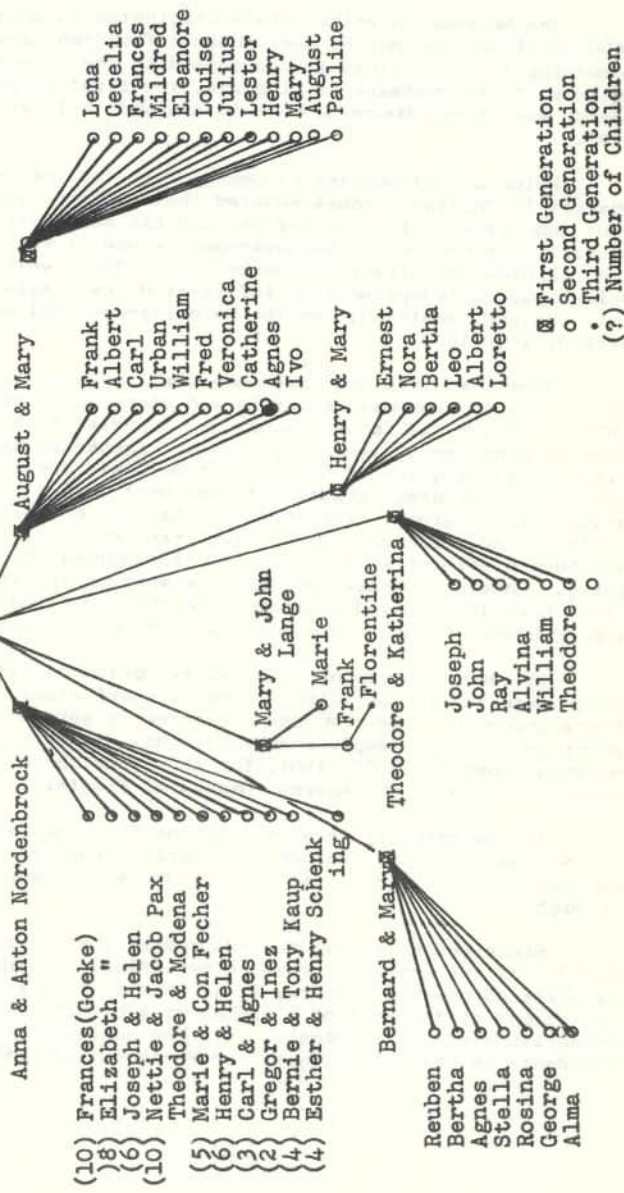
Theodore H. Bergmann and A. Elizabeth (Bergmann)
Nordenbrock. (The Centenarian)

M. AUGUST & MARIA MOORMAN FAMILY

1815

FRANK & LISETTA (SIEMER) MOORMAN

1840



■ First Generation
 ○ Second Generation
 • Third Generation
 (?) Number of Children

CHAPTER V

THE MOORMAN ANCESTRY

The Moorman Ancestral Stock originated in England in 1600, deriving the parent name Moorman from 'Man from the Moor.' According to the history as documented in the Archives of the Society of the Moormans of Virginia, the first ancestral personage was Thomas Moorman, born in England, Isle of Wight, 1593.

Being a contemporary of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers in England, Thomas adopted that religion and was an ardent supporter of it. George Fox and his associates had been severely persecuted by the Government since it was contrary to the religion established by Henry VIII. Their enthusiasm for a philosophy of independent belief carried their missionary work into Ireland, Scotland, and the Netherlands, (Holland), in the period, 1650-1670.

Thomas Moorman had three sons, all born on the Isle of Wight, one of whom was Zachariah who migrated to America about 1670, although his father Thomas had traveled from England to America a number of times previously. Zachariah married an Irish girl, daughter of Lt. Col. of Belfast, became a Captain in the English Army, traveled to the West Indies and eventually settled in Virginia. The ancestral history of this branch reveals he had received a large land grant and that the family had been prominent in Virginia politics during the next 100 years. However, Chiles Moorman, a member of the 4th generation, born 1786, moved Westward into Ohio, married Matilda Watson of Greene County, Ohio, who was buried in Xenia, Ohio.

In 1800, members of this family continued westward with other migrants to the Illinois and Missouri areas, and we learn that a grandson, Wilson Moorman, eventually settled in Chicago about 1900. I am deeply indebted to his daughter, Alda Blanche Moorman, born April 27, 1901, for this very thorough and detailed history of the Moorman Branch of Virginia.

The Moorman Archives recount the fact that all members of the Moorman Ancestry, Europe and America, can trace their forefathers to one of the three sons of Thomas Moorman of the Isle of Wight.

Since chronological records reveal that George Fox, founder of the Quakers, traveled periodically to Holland and established mission centers, it is plausible to assume that either one of the sons or a member of a branch traveled to the Netherlands and is responsible for the hundreds of Moorman descendants in Ohio, Cincinnati and Northcentral Ohio areas who

migrated from upper Germany after 1800.

Having a knowledge of this ancestral background my research of the Moorman Ancestry in Europe focused itself in upper Germany, adjacent to the Holland border, Duchy of Oldenburg. In a small village near the town of Damme, Germany, we find that M. Gust (August) Moorman, was born in late 1700. He, his wife Mary, and children, including a son, Franz (Frank) migrated to America and settled in Cincinnati in the second quarter of the 19th Century. We had learned German settlers had been greatly influenced by land agencies in New York and Baltimore to locate homes along the Ohio River and in the busch country near the Erie Canal. The names of Cincinnati and Mercer County were known by many as well, as its Catholic environment, it being in the Diocese of Bishop Purcell.

One of the most prominent families who had migrated from Oldenburg Province in 1834, was that of Henry H. Romer (Romer); They had known of other Romer families who had migrated to Cincinnati earlier. The mother of this family remained in Cincinnati while four of her sons moved North to Mercer County, purchased land, and established the village of St. Henry.

The early history of Mercer County and the diary of the Moorman family reveals that the son, Franz, son of August and Mary, was born in Germany, September 15, 1819, came to Cincinnati about 1840 and married Lisetta M. Siemer of Covington, Kentucky in 1848. Due to health, a lung infection of occupational illness, Franz and Lisetta, with a knowledge of wholesome living and potential possibilities of the area surrounding St. Henry, settled on a small cleared homestead South of this small Mission Center. A knowledge of their venture to this area had been related to Max Seitz and Adam, my grandfather, by Mr. Romer in 1850. It appears Franz's mother, Mary, came to St. Henry some years later, died there, and is buried in the St. Henry Cemetery.

Lisetta Siemer was born at Hogstadt, Province of the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg in 1825, who with her parents, Joseph and Mary Siemer, came to America about 1840 and settled near Cincinnati. The Siemer family and daughters lived on Pike Street, near the Mother of God Church in Covington, Kentucky. Two of the daughters married into the families of Thoman and Tabling. These two families had very successful businesses in leather and harness, catering to the needs of the Covington racehorse industry in Covington, Latonia, and Louisville, and are still great racehorse centers. Mary, daughter of the Thoman family married a medical doctor, Dr. Bramlage of Ft. Loramie who died at a young age, leaving Mary with two young sons. A third daughter married William Sauer, also of Covington.

Franz Moorman regained his health in this unrestricted and healthful atmosphere, and with the aid of four sons, August, Theodore, Henry and Bernard, and two daughters, Mary and Anna, cleared the wooded busch country, creating a desirable homestead which is still in the name of Moorman Ancestry. Franz and his family were known by all in the county for he

filled a number of county offices, County Supervisor and Director of the local school board for more than 20 years.

As a teenager, I knew the family of August intimately. His son Frank, was a teaching associate of mine in 1920. He can point with pride to the accomplishments of his priestly son, Rev. Gregory Moorman, C.P.P.S., who contributed substantially to the spiritual and material welfare of the Society of the Precious Blood in the 20th Century. Sons of Theodore, Henry, and Bernard were of my age who served their country in World War I.

Anna, daughter of Franz, born 1866, married Anton Nordenbrock and all attention must be focused upon her since her descendants give justification for the continuation of this ancestral story.

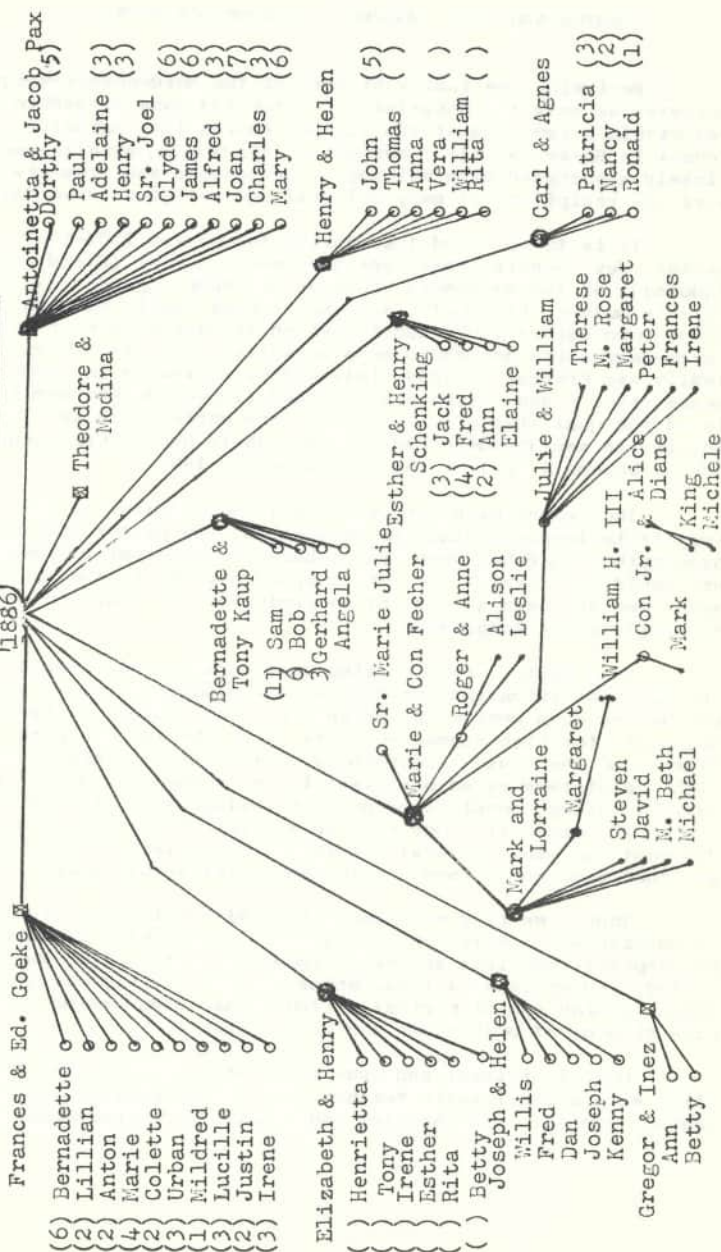
A retrospective view of the two principal characters in the 'Prologue' points to the fact that Anna Marie (Nordenbrock) Fecher, (her daughter), had been honored at the Commencement Exercises at the Catholic University in 1927.



Franz and Lisetta Siemer Moorman

ANTON & ANNA (MOORMAN) NORDENBERG FAMILY

1886



CHAPTER VI

ANTON AND ANNA (MOORMAN) NORDENBROCK FAMILY

Reviewing the family history of the Nordenbrock-Bergmann Ancestry we note the homestead of Anton and Anna Nordenbrock was within a few rods of the village church (St. Bernard), and school in Burkettsville. Members of this family, simultaneously closely associated with meaningful personages and organizations, were the recipients of many cultural and religious advantages.

It is to be noted that during the period 1902-1907, the pastor, Rev. Dennis Schweitzer had been a member (Board and Lodging), of the household of Anton and Anna. During this period Anton's mother, Elizabeth, and the growing family of nine children, born before 1907, had increased the membership of this three-generation household substantially. The first born in the family was Frances in 1889, followed by Elizabeth in 1890. Two years later a son Joseph was recorded (it was he who had related the qualities of his sister, Anna Marie, born in 1898), Antoinette and Theodore preceded her while Henry, Carl, and Gregor became a part of the family before 1907.

The reader might speculate with some degree on the measurable influence of the two personages; the pastor and the grandmother, had had upon the members of this family. However, one could only surmise the impact upon Anna Marie, who at the same time had been a constant companion of the teaching nuns in her early and teenage years.

Anna Marie, after passing successfully the Boxwell Examination (qualification for high school eligibility), at age 12, and having been denied the advantage of attending one became an apt pupil for high school subjects under the tutorship and influence of the nuns. Accordingly, her constant companionship with the sisters as an assistant in the elementary grades and their tutoring, conditioned her for college work, if and when she could obtain it. One must be mindful of the fact not to discount the many cultural attributes she obtained from them and that gave her a know-how in many intellectual areas.

Today, we find her home filled with heirlooms for the grandchildren: chairs and footstools covered with flowered needlepoint; hangings and bell-ringers of petitpoint; knitted, pulled, and woven wool rugs, while her quilted bedspreads of unique design and of perfect stitching had been awarded many blue ribbons at both State and County Fairs.

One significant and beneficial advantage was her association with a local music teacher, Miss Lilly Kunkler, in this teenage period. Miss Kunkler had received a comprehensive



Anton & Anna (Moorman) Nordenbrock Family

musical background in an Eastern music school, thus providing Marie with the necessary rudiments and techniques of piano playing. She progressed rapidly, performing reasonably at age 18, which created a thirst for a more intensive musical background and a desired musical career, eventually, qualifying her for a Bachelor of Music Degree, two scholarship awards in Europe, and a Master of Music Education in 1964.

Her father, Anton, at the age of 19 years lost the advice and help of his own father who died in 1879, thereby shifting the burden of building a homestead in the wilderness on his shoulders and his mother. Having had limited schooling in reading and writing during his entire growing-up period he placed great emphasis on the competency, ability, and resourcefulness of this daughter who read the Cincinnati Post to him daily. She was his sounding board and advised him of the grain and livestock markets. In all her reading she didn't overlook the pages pertaining to other people which gave her firsthand information of accomplishments in the arts and sciences and world affairs. No doubt, the father, impressed by her ability in analyzing and solving his problems said to himself, "She is like her grandmother Nordenbrock," which was his way of saying and thinking she was intelligent and a leader. It was during these teenage years she extended her range of observation, either by her own initiative of reading, thinking, or the influence of the association with the religious personnel of the parish.

Maturity brought recognition from both young and old for it was said she walked rapidly and resolutely, as if she knew where she was going and what had to be done. People gazed admiringly at the shining mass of auburn hair, done up in two thick braids, wound and pinned about her head in the German style. The curly, fiery ends that escaped from these windings when accentuated by an open-crown, white, sailor hat, reminded one of a huge sunflower.

Obviously, upon observing her at age 16, and again at the chance meeting, two years later, her age 18 years, I visualized and secretly admired the beauty of the natural curl of her hair and the unblemished skin of her face and neck where her collar fell away gracefully. Even the smoothness and whiteness of her arms where her sleeves ended, reminded me of one who could represent the ancestral people of Northern Europe. She, in her entire lifetime never indulged in a hair-permanent while her complexion, unadorned and without makeup, was her becomingness all her life.

Raising the curtain that had been temporarily lowered after the Christmas Holidays of 1916 with respect to our brief and very pleasant correspondence which began at Halloween, it is necessary to relate the development of the friendship and supporting correspondence with Marie in the new year. It is to be remembered that her response was rather mild and affectionate upon receiving the gift, Girl of the Limerlost, which encouraged me to be more daring in February, (her natal month), coinciding with Valentine's Day. I began my letter with a fond salutation and supporting expressions.

February 10, 1917

My Own Dear Valentine:

Did you say you have a big place in your heart for me? So you wish to be my dearest friend, won't you be my loving sweetheart too? I shall be thine and you shall be my valentine. I am enclosing two popular songs: 'Memories' and 'Turn Back the Universe.' How are you progressing in music, your classical numbers?

I am yours, Con

Realizing these words would be more challenging I did not overlook the avenues of music and song by directing her thoughts to our mutual interests at the same time. Her response:

February 16, 1917

Dearest Friend:

Your salutation was a dear one. . . You asked me about my music. I have 'Memories', I play and sing it many times for it makes me think of you. Also the song, 'Turn Back the Universe.' My music teacher will not allow much ragtime in my study. There are some very fine semi-classical songs and charming pipe organ numbers in the last two Etudes . . .

Sincerely your friend,

Marie

February 21st, 1917

Dear Friend Con:

Your valentine of some days ago was a great surprise. How did you know it was my favorite candy? I wish I could return the favor or share it with you . . . I can only say

"This Valentine letter
To you doth say
I'm your's all the time
For ever and for aye.
So when this you see
Do not forget
To remember me.

Your own, Marie

In truth, however, the daring yet precious fragments in my letters and the valentine gift created some mental

apprehensions. Mentally, she was disturbed when attempting to piece together these jigsaw riddles of tender endearments. Her words and mine were a kind of tantalizing duologues, new, yet old, but caused her serious mindful consideration since the thought of being someone's sweetheart was premature for a young lady of 19. Yes, her letter a week later carried depressing news and discouraging words.

February 25th, 1917

Dearest Friend:

I hope to be pardoned for this little note, which is to tell you that I wish to cease corresponding. Our former acquaintance, though not extensive, had been very pleasant. Although highly flattered by your salutation I do not wish to accept special attention from anybody for I wish to be everybody's friend. I think, you feel the same way. Alas, Dearest Friend, do not think for a moment that I wish to cease that loving friendship in which we were wound. Now don't you think if we cease corresponding for a while, our next personal meeting will be all the more pleasant? If you at anytime in the future wish to correspond once again I will be sure to reply, if you wish me to. Your sociability could not be excelled by anyone. It was a charm and your endearing promises and favors will be remembered by me always.

I sincerely ask you to write me soon and tell me if you are disappointed and if I owe you an apology, I will be glad to apologize.

Sending the sweetest love message possible, I am and wish to remain,

Yours,
Marie

Bleak as the future appeared to be, I, far from objecting entreatingly to the discontinuance of the friendly relationship, made a straightforward reply:

February 27th, 1917

Dear Marie:

Received your farewell letter yesterday. Was a little surprised you know. I am very sorry to learn that you intend to cease our much enjoyed correspondence. Since you sincerely have asked me to state my views, I must say I am very disappointed. If it is your wish to discontinue it will be my aim to do so but not my wish. Write me occasionally if you will and tell me how you are progressing with your music. It takes an abundance of patience to master a difficult piece. I would love to hear you play 'Memories,' it is a pretty ragtime waltz. I shall play and sing it often now for it will remind me of you.

Auf Wiedersehn. Always
your friend,
Con.

I had learned a lesson of prudence and recognized her thinking with respect to her age and her desire to be charitable, unselfish, and sincere. These matched her other attributes of humility, compassion, and devotion which had been enhanced in the process of her maturity. I recognized the fact that our next personal meeting in the future, the coming summer, could be a continuation of our friendly dialogue of the past.

Needless to say the remark on the soft touch of music in my letter brought an encouraging response a few days later. Curiously it began:

March 1st, 1917

Dear Friend:

I was deeply distressed and sad to receive such an unfavorable reply, never thought you would be disappointed, thinking, perhaps, that you would care to cease if I would only suggest it. I am very happy you stated matters so frankly.

Let us not dwell long on this subject but think of the good cheer music brings for it seems both of us are intensely interested in it. I, too, sing and play 'Memores' often but Oh! how I would love to hear you sing it. I am very fond of 'Reveries' and 'Duets,' but do not have the opportunity of playing the latter as you well know I need a 'Second.' I have heard that you will be teaching at Sharpsburg the coming year, just three miles from my home. This will give us an opportunity of doing a number of 'Duets' next summer, if I study and practice energetically until that time.

With much Love,
Marie.

I need not repeat that I was eager to continue a series of pleasant exchanges of friendship, of youthful gossip and of everyday activities. My attempt was to be more discrete in my salutations in the future. My phrases of greeting were mild, temperate, and occasionally tender as, 'Dearest Marie, My Dear Marie, or My Only Girl.' She, in turn, did not hesitate to introduce her letters with, 'My Dear Friend, Con, or Dear Chum.' Neither she nor I displayed a singular lack of warmth or excessive animated infatuation in our messages. Both of us appeared, eagerly, to relate our weekly experiences that would shed more light on our mutual interests in music and song. She was happy to relate her progress in music under the direction of Miss Kunkler and her mastery of certain semi-classical

numbers. She, specifically, referred to the preparation of a rather lengthy French Duet, 'Dance of the Demon,' by Eduard Holst. Subsequently, she mailed a copy in the next mail with the note that I might be her 'Second,' at some future day.

In the interim as these letters passed each other in the mail, the month of May rushed by bringing my second school year to a close while the end of June brought my organist duties to an end at St. Anthony's church. I was to begin my church duties as an organist at Sharpsburg on July 1st.

In spite of the fact that my new position at Sharpsburg was but three miles from my home, a number of incentives urged me to trade the two-wheeled motorcycle for an automobile of four wheels at the end of May. No doubt, the potential increase in salary would justify the financing of improved transportation from my home to my place of employment which would be daily the coming year. I must admit that in addition I had a more selfish, yet an irresistible motive, that is: the anticipation of visiting her in her home, meeting her parents, performing musical duets, and an occasional automobile jaunt in the country. Could I dare to challenge these thoughts in the light of her last letter and the gift of the musical duet, 'The French Duet?'

In the morning of one's youthful days one may have lively sensations, but how false and inaccurate are these judgments sometimes. I was ensnared to trade the efficiently performing motorcycle, sight unseen, no give or take, on a 1908 high-wheel Buick Roadster. Notwithstanding, with only a slight knowledge of a horseless, gas vehicle, I learned in a few days of the many motor defects and noted the worn-out tires of this decrepit, self-propelling trap. The original owner, a Ft. Recovery business man, appeared to be reliable in his dealings and I had placed full confidence in him.

Realizing how I had been victimized in this first encounter of trade I became cautious in my next sales confrontation. Knowing the Buick dealer, Andrew Evers, in Celina, I accosted him since he was an old friend of the family and had lived some years earlier in the parish. He had been a successful farmer, accumulated money and was managing ably the Buick Agency. He remembered me as a boy attending the academy as a young man, and with a future teaching career he was aware of my initiative, intelligence, and future potentials. Both he and his wife had been my early clients when selling gold-eyed needles, postcards, holy pictures and subscriptions to farm papers.

He, when seeing my predicament, subsequently, made it advantageous for me to exchange the 1908 roadster for a 1912 Buick touring car trade-in. This was to be a temporary arrangement only, for within a week or two he would substitute a new 1917, four-cylinder Buick Roadster, (a General Motors Coupe in competition with the Ford), having a retail value of \$775. For this exchange I was to ante \$400 in cash which I borrowed from my godfather, Uncle John, realizing that my father would not agree to this transaction.

According to the descriptive literature this roadster was the latest and the ideal in cars, with a folded-down soft top which could be lowered and raised with a flip of a hinged-mechanism that worked similarly to that of a good scissors. It was equipped with electric lights and a starter, had a trim sleek body as one would describe 1917 sleekness, other new appointments, and far superior to the Ford and other reasonably priced cars in its class. Conceding the fact that I had been hoaxed a few weeks before and that my friend had snatched me from the midst of uncertainty, I agreed to a verbal selling contract in using the car as a demonstration model among my associates for potential sales.

Armed both, with a very desirable product and an abundance of enthusiasm, coupled with visions of making sales that summer, I agreed to co-operate with him in collecting accounts for his business.

My one and only sale for a roadster to a teaching associate was not a disappointment for Mr. Evers for he was neither short-sighted nor avarice. They had no children and both he and his wife had a tenderness and esteem for me in my boyhood days which grew to a sort of filial affection and parental pride as I attained my teaching career.

With the close of the school year in May and approaching summer, both Marie and I attempted to renew personal meetings. The contents of our letters indicated a change of pattern of a chance-meeting to one of certainty by informing each other in advance of our activities. My letter dated June 2nd was as follows:

June 2, 1917

My Dear Marie:

There will be a wedding dance on June 5th at Philothea Parish, perhaps your brothers will bring you along, thus enjoy some dances and perhaps do a bit of ear-to-ear hushed harmonizing as of old, so many months ago. Between dances you could tell me about your musical progress and if and when we would be able to perform the duet, 'Dance of the Demon.'

Sincerely yours,

Con

* * * * *

It would be expected that the first meeting materialized as planned, which created much happiness and anticipating summer meetings for both. Her letter a few days after the dance read as follows:

June 7th, 1917

Dear Chum:

The fact of having again met a soul full of charm,

tenderness, and sparkle puts me in the clouds. The result of this affair made me feel brave, cheery, tender and true. I think we had some 'polka, hesitation, meditation, and one gem, 'Let the Rest of the World Go By.' I am sending you all the good cheer a letter can bring.

Sincerely,
Marie

June 11th, 1917

My Dear Marie:

Did you say the affair caused you to be brave, cheery, tender, and true? Now Dearie, these are your virtues. I can still hear the echo of your voice when we danced and sang the 'Gem.' I am attending a teacher's meeting at Celina on June 14th and will stop over for the wedding dance at Coldwater Hall in the evening. Hope you can be there. Do not forget a photo of yourself for it will help me to picture you all week and see you as you really are with all your virtues.

Always, your Love

Con

A letter from her informed me that she and her brothers would attend and would be eager to see me. Results of these meetings, a total of three, before the end of June. Though assuming and innocently made, prompted me to suggest a course of action, which carried some misgivings, though similar thoughts appeared to be in her mind, but who should make the first move?

Our mutual interests of dance and song, and to perform on the piano encouraged me to create a situation which would provide the fulfillment of a meeting in her home. Recent letters as well as certain singular, yet hinted conversations carried unadorned messages of a desire to know more about each other and the members of our families. Having never met her parents in the home an invitation from her would provide an opportunity of achieving both.

I had not informed her of my recent possession of the new streamlined Buick roadster, but in spite of the fact she knew of the five-passenger car only I courageous and undismayed wrote her for an invitation on June 21st.

June 21st, 1917

My Own Dearest Marie:

I certainly did love to read your dear long letter, have had it with me since receiving it. Don't ask me how many times I have read and reread it for I do not know. Wouldn't it be great to spend one of these June evenings by taking a spin?

You could be my guide and good angel, both in our journey and in discussing some of the intricacies of the 'Duet.' I shall be happy to hear from you always.

Yours,
Con

* * * * *

She, receiving my letter on Friday, did not object or find an alibi in not accepting a visit to her home, meeting her parents and taking a spin into the country. Having the knowledge of my ownership of a five-passenger car only (a vehicle, less desirable and foreign for this occasion), could embarrass her and discourage her in granting the request.

At a late hour that evening, all members of the family having retired, and being alone she must have had thoughts of all the happenings of the last six months. Through her mind coursed currents of conflict of this new affection, thus challenging her, but she repeatedly reminded herself that this new found friend was different from others about her. Friendship should be on an even plane, continued as in the past, creating much enjoyment with many hours of music and song. She must have discussed this with her parents for they had no objection in meeting a friend whose name had been a household one since the academy days with Joe. This was her letter:

June 23rd, 1917

Dear Friend:

This being Saturday evening. . . .how could I spend this late silent hour more pleasant than by thinking of you and writing you a note. I am not capable of resisting the temptation you suggested in your letter. How lovely of you to class me with the elect. I am trying to be a humble little self but not one of the elect. The suggestion of spending an evening with a 'spin' is most flattering and I heartily accept. Oh! how I would enjoy being with you in that way. Well Dearie, I must admit that I did hesitate to acknowledge the meaning of your remarks at times, but tonight may I tell you that you have a cordial invitation to call at my home. I think it is a great privilege for me to be at liberty to extend this invitation to any friend and you certainly are worthy of being a true one. I shall love to have you meet my parents who extend an all-round welcome to you. So please, do not hesitate about coming and shall set the date next Sunday evening, July 1st. Please write me if you can accept the invitation. Yours in all sincerity.

Marie

* * * * *

It is scarcely necessary to state that the desired and most pleasing invitation was cordially accepted. Much excitement was in the air for both the coming week. Purposely and by design, it was my desire to surprise her with the possession

of the Buick roadster. So it happened that when I called at her home that Sunday evening with the folded-down soft top and dustless, black, sleek roadster there were numerous, 'Oh's, Ah's,' and you never told me. She, snuggling up to me to show her gratitude said this eye-catching statement, "This surprise is overwhelming and I love you for it but I would have welcomed you had you come with some other car."

She looked lovely and youthful in her knee-length skirt and white blouse. Her auburn hair, fair skin, blue eyes and rosy cheeks with the flutter of surprise, heightened the brightness of her charm. Conversing in low tones about the beauty of the car and the desirability of taking a spin on this July night she realized her first duty was to introduce me to her father and mother who had assured her of a hearty welcome.

At that moment footsteps were heard, it was her father, a man of sixty years, tall and commanding with shoulders slightly bowed by time, care, and hard honest work. There were some penetrating furrows on his brow, indicating that thought had been busy over the years, yet his eyes beamed with love and kindness. After a very informal and comfortable introduction all approached the house which was about one-hundred yards away. The scene to the right depicted a small wicket gate, opening up a footpath that wound through some shrubbery to the door, with several pots of flowers, tastefully disposed about the door and on the grassy plot in front. Nearing the house, our steps making a noise on the gravel walk, brought a bright beautiful face to the front window, and suddenly vanished. In a moment her mother came tripping forth to meet us. She was attired in a pretty rural dress of white while her whole countenance beamed with smiles, sweetness and good humor. She was not tall but straight and her bearing conveyed strength for she appeared to be able to rise to any situation that might confront a growing family. She had the round, full face of a middle age rural beauty, light brown hair mixed with gray, very white skin, dark gray eyes, a complexion that was not rosy blush but a light brick-dusty color, extremely sweet and healthy.

The meeting was warm and affectionate which emanated genuine hospitality and put me immediately at ease. A few steps brought us to the house and upon entering, my first occasion, I saw the large diningroom, a picture of convenience, neatness and of spacious dimensions. It was a reproduction of other rooms in size, warmth and good cheer which I learned presently. In the interlude of mutual greetings, her baby sister Esther of four and one-half years, and another sister Bernadette of seven years, and an elderly and venerable lady of 90 years entered from a room on the left of this ten-room house. It was the grandmother who had been instrumental in bringing the family to America in 1865.

She wore a plain black, silk dress and her neat white cap hid the peeping little round curls of snow white hair. Her good humored motherly look -not old-maidish-gave an impression which can be best described as 'comfortable.' Yes, comfortable to the extent that even though she was going rapidly down the hill of life she was able to reflect the feeling

of comfort of youth from her personal self. The introduction was given in German by Marie, "Herr Fecher, Meine Grossmutter." Quite remarkable which surprised all, I responded, "Sehr Angenehm, Frau Nordenbrock."

The great-grandmother born in 1829 seemed to be a kind of connecting link between the old times and the new. Equally important was the dawning recognition of her knowledge of those early years, having been a contemporary of Bismark she was able to give a living early history of the unification of the German States, the Prussian domination, compulsory military training, and Catholic religious difficulties in the smaller states. I, being an avid reader of history brought us quickly on common grounds of conversation. I found she was ever ready to meet and greet me with noticeable enthusiasm and invariably be about when I appeared. The many 'tete-a-tetes' cemented a strong friendship between us which created a growing comradeship, encouraging me to think that she would be my defender and would champion my cause if needed. It was but a year later when another young man focused his attentions and the grandmother supplied good and precious support with considerate advice that influenced this desirable young lady, now growing into womanhood.

There is no gain saying that upon hearing my German response, "pleased to meet you," the grandmother became rather communicative for she had the easy talkative spirit of cheerful old age, complimented me on my German and continued to praise the kindness of the German people. At a suitable break in her conversation the father put his hand affectionately on her shoulder and said in a witty Low-German expression, "He has come to visit our Marie." This brought a light-hearted laugh which induced the group to continue to the next room, known as the 'front-room.' The term was a nomenclature name for this room at the time, indeed, a very suitable one for it was both, party and music room with a companion veranda stretching the entire front of the mansion overlooking the street.

The summer sun had wheeled itself low into the West, causing the horizon to turn into a dark blue while the slanting sun rays from its quarter-size came through the picture window and fell directly upon the piano and other musical instruments, lying aimlessly on its top. The room was furnished with many easy chairs, including rockers, a settee with complimentary end tables, and an antique walnut table, charmingly centered, bearing a vase of hand-picked garden flowers that focused one's attention.

After an hour or two of genial conversation, all of which conspired a delightful and witty atmosphere of rural old-fashioned hospitality, thoughts turned to song and music. In deference to their guest the mother suggested they would be happy to have me play and sing. Marie, evidently being very solicitous about carrying out the combined desire of attempting the duet, 'Dance of the Demon,' immediately hinted that perhaps all would enjoy this piece of four hands.

It seemed completely fitting to both of us to perform

this number at the first opportunity since each had been preparing it the past few months. Reflecting, unassumingly and innocently on the thought that we must not overlook this avenue of music that could provide many hours of future pleasantries, we immediately gave a glance at the more intricate phases of this piece of eight pages. In spite of these precautions in the reading of notes from opposite pages, keeping unity of time, and the over-embellishments, there resulted a number of musical entanglements. There were some surprises for the performers as well as for the audience in this first rendition, but when all was done a rousing good cheer was given by all. Simultaneously, she whispered in my ear, "We shall have many more tussels but we will crack it." Whereupon, without hesitation, I said, "You are sweet indeed for saying that when I caused the difficulties in the bass part."

It would be difficult at this time to estimate the importance of this mutual musical encounter for there appeared in our minds the need of future study and joint performances.

After the duet was concluded all were entertained with homemade lemonade (soft drinks were not available), and cookies and cake. At this time her brother Theodore appeared who was two years older and also had learned to play the violin. He, with my accompaniment on the piano gave a very delightful rendition of the popular waltz and song, 'The Missouri Waltz.' Marie in turn demonstrated her musical ability with the beautiful semi-classic, 'A Maiden's Prayer.' Her performance of great agility and interpretation of this number proved to me her technique ability in piano instrumentation. Would I dare to dream, perhaps an impossible dream, that at some future day I would be present at the presentation of the degree of advanced musical academic awards to her?

As the evening advanced the family party broke up for the night with a kindhearted old rural custom of shaking hands. The baby sister, favorite of the family, shyly, face slightly covered with a beautiful blush, extended her hand and said to me, "I hope I will see you again." She, not only saw me again but was the messenger, to and fro, from the local post office, carrying the hundreds of exchange love letters during the year I served in World War I. Later the mother and father retired after a friendly farewell, showing complete frankness and confidence.

After playing and singing a few more favorite songs including 'Memories' and the gem, 'Let the Rest of the World Go By,' it was time for my departure. As can be seen from the foregoing activities the time had passed far too quickly that evening. Accordingly, the desired spin in the new automobile did not materialize, but in the course of my leave-taking I discussed the activities of the Fourth of July, three days hence. This day would be a gala event at St. Henry for there would be a baseball game in the afternoon, a hall dance in the evening, a merry-go-round, a ferris-wheel, consignment booths, and many other participating attractions available to the public.

A number of my associates of young teachers: Dues, Weigel, and Dorsten and high school seniors: Bertke, and Vonderhaar had organized a baseball team in 1915 and invited a Delphos team of similar skill to play at St. Henry for additional entertainment. Having had early training in baseball and basketball at St. Joseph's Academy and at Miami University, and becoming rather adept in both sports, I was a seasoned member in both activities. Obviously with such a bustling day I suggested that she be my companion for the evening if not for the afternoon baseball game. Unlike most young women, neither in search for notoriety nor to display the slightest suggestion of pride, she declined the afternoon appearance but would accompany me in the evening.

The experience of the trip in the new car was relished by us with much enthusiasm but our presence in the dance hall and at the various booths created a flurry among some young people. Some young men of the surrounding parishes who knew her, also aware of her charm, and amiable method of discouraging attention, were grimly disturbed. We admitted on our homeward journey that this affair had caused side glances, 'a skew-and-a-squint' of some young women and men and were convinced that many rumors would float about the countryside the ensuing summer.

However, the climax of the evening was the leave-taking at her home. To add luster to the first 'going-out' which I wished her to remember always, I purchased the one and the only well-known box of candy, 'Whitman's Sampler.' Before leaving the car I presented it to her with many compliments of our first and many more meetings in the future. Very charmingly and excitingly she opened it to offer me some of the tid-bits but to our dismay we found one large candy hunk of small paper cups and chocolate.

Naturally, there was an unusual discussion of this predicament and more than a few frustrations for me. My words, "I purchased this from the most reliable drugstore in Ft. Recovery, the Huddle Drug, this, I cannot understand. The box must have been near a warm object in its shipment and I shall see Mr. Huddle tomorrow for you will have the best." It would appear that this awkward incident would create an embarrassing leave-taking (a new experience for both), but quite to the contrary, it veiled the situation.

I, with a nonchalant air, her hand in mine, escorted her up the gravel walk with much joking and hilarity about consuming a solid block of mixed chocolates. When reaching the door I thanked her for the very pleasant evening, squeezed her hand with a sort of engaging caress and said, "My dear Marie, please write me when I may see you again and we will, certainly, enjoy a new box of Whitman's."

As expected, Mr. Huddle, was equally embarrassed upon seeing the box of disturbed chocolates, now one solid large piece. With many apologies to me for we had been friends of many years, he presented me with a new one in exchange.

Frankly, what had happened which was not realized until some months later; the hot summer sun that Fourth of July afternoon, striking the door of the car, shielding the side pocket in which the box so snugly rested, performed the shocking conversion.

Continuing the story of this affair it is needless to say that a letter from her the day after that, 'never-to-be-forgotten' Fourth of July, expressed her sincere thanks which she closed with these words, "Oh Dear: You are too kind to me and how can I repay you for your courtesy and your generous and significant remembrance. I can only say that we must have another try at the 'duet,' and have more songs. Your affectionate friend, Marie."

Without hesitation I responded a few days later with, "My Sweetest Dear: You are in my memories always, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. I'm dreaming, still dreaming of my own Marie."

Midway between the warm days of July and the cool autumn days of September a constant flow of affectionate letters passed between us, expressing openness and warm heartedness. According to the contents of the letters, if my memory does not mislead me, they were written a day or two after a visit to her home or after an evening affair at a parochial or hall dance, or after a motor jaunt in the country. Our meetings, perhaps, two or three a month were evenings of great merriment with songs, music and dancing. The home atmosphere gave us ample time to rehearse the 'duet' while the singing of songs of the First World War created excited animation.

Many of these songs are still favorites of today: I'm Always Chasing Rainbows, There are Smiles, Keep the Home Fires Burning, I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles, Memories, I'm Sorry I Made You Cry, Let the Rest of the World Go by and others.

It was during this time that she improved her piano technique under the direction of the local music teacher and performed amazingly well in her execution of a number of semi-classical pieces: Melody in F, Sounds from the Convent Chapel, The Maiden's Prayer, and Sing Me the Rosary. I was busy with the pipe organ and new church music at the new parish position of Sharpsburg, and at the same time I played and memorized two syncopated waltzes, Florine, and Eileen and introduced some interesting duet flourishes of the Missouri Waltz with the assistance of her brother, Theodore, on the violin.

The musical magazine, Etude, provided a few pipe organ pieces but most charming of all was an issue that contained two extraordinary tender love songs of semi-classical quality, The Old, Old Love, by R. DeKoven, and Some Day I shall Hear You Calling, by Arthur Tate. These two were our favorites.

On our numerous auto jaunts each took a particular delight in the driftless chit-chat, much of which was non-sensical, tantalizing, and clever, mixed with mind-doggling and skillfully compounded quizzes. Our togetherness in the

home was more in terms of music, singing and practicing dance steps which were typical of that era.

With respect to our mutual attachments I cannot recall that there had been advances from the first to startle or alarm her. We never talked of love when together, though at times I tried to win my way into her graces and into her heart with music and song. It was the latter which allowed me to mimic some words with appropriate gestures, or with the tone of voice, the tilt of the head, the wink of an eye, with other facial expressions. Mutual affection appeared to steal upon us by degrees for both were of such tender and loving age, and interested in the same pursuits of music, reading and studying. To her, I was so young, so intelligent, so generous, so brave and everything that one would desire in a young man. Naturally, her lovely youth, beauty, charm, unselfishness, humbleness, ease in communication and enthusiasm, won favor with me. She carried an air and manner that inspired attention and respect and how could I remember her other than the vision of an angel. I realized only after her death in examining the hundred or more letters when leafing from one intimate message to another that this had been an exceedingly eventful period of our lives.

To bring into focus some of the highlights and happenings and to understand their meaning, it is necessary to unwind the reel that pictures the story of this memorable and momentous interlude. At first glance it might appear the contents of our letters were merely a continuation of former friendly chit-chat and bantering skirmishes with corresponding responses. 'Tis true that much attention could and should be concentrated on a relative happy, exciting, and stimulating companionship that had been engendered by these occasional eventful meetings. The letters of a few days later contained words expressing a mutual care and joy that appeared to involve us slowly and patiently. Simultaneously, we were concerned with the problem of the meaning of life and its significance to each other. Questions and answers were of this nature, 'Who am I' 'What is he/she thinking of me? Am I really worthy of this friendship?' As I remember now, both of us were trying to find a consistent meaning of this companionship and the ever growing affectionate responses. In periods of absence we were aware of the fact that the image of one was indelibly stamped upon the other for both indulged in the reveries of vivid imaginations.

Summer was on its way out and auto jaunts and charmingly home entertainments had been our pleasures the last months of 1917. Near the beginning of September one of her letters read:

Sept. 7th, 1917

My Dear Con:

After retiring last evening you were in my dreams the whole night through to the coming of dawn in some Heavenly abode. Would there be another time or times, similar to that of resting in your strong arms? I know that there will be if I comply to your conradship and try to feel worthy of you. How can I

refuse?

Always yours,

Marie

The conversation of the previous Sunday evening must have been on education and some complimentary expressions of affection for my response in a few days were:

Sept. 12th, 1917

My Sweet Marie:

You too have been in my dreams. At this moment I see those pretty eyes of yours. I do not remember their color but I know they reflect your many attributes, of understanding, warmth, and dignity. A certain poet has said the eyes are the windows of the soul and I have seen the sincerity in yours. Oh! those lips that I have never tasted. I dare say that I am not worthy of touching them.

Always yours,

Con

In my next letter I tried my hand at verse in its closing:

Sept. 15th, 1917

My Dearest Queen:

I certainly enjoyed the time I spent with you last evening. I have so much to write. . . I can only say

Your voice is of a mellow sweetness,
Your hair of a light brown hue,
Your eyes like pools of fire
That reveal a nature so true.
Though your lips like cherry blossoms
That burst in the month of May
Will be plucked as bright red
Cherries with caresses too,
Dear, when you say.

Yours,

Con

She objected in no way to these honeyed words for some days later she wrote:

Setp. 20th 1917

Dear Lieber:

Upon reading your letter I find your cheerful heart overflowing with generous happy feelings for me . . . truly cheerful and heart warming. Your eight lines of poetry are words of triumph, sounds that awaken me every morning at dawn. Oh! Dear, I need a bit more time. With deepest affection, I am yours in all sincerity,

Marie

Frankly, I felt that one of the most indirect and challenging method of expressing my thoughts and feelings for her would be to continue focusing on versification, it being pointed without conjecture or surmise. Therefore, hoping my lyrics might echo many of her thoughts, though I was equally aware of her difficulty in repeating them, I felt she would respond in course of time. There being a season for every purpose I ventured a more courageously approach by writing her a short message again in a few days:

Sept. 23rd, 1917

Dearest Love:

How shall I salute you? I can only write.

Goodbye to the one of my sweetest dreams
For she is the one I love it seems.
If it is she and I know it is
I'll send her the sweetest kiss.

Con.

Sept. 27th, 1917

Dear Con:

How shall I answer the question of the sweetest token? Oh! how difficult it is to refuse a confidential friend. But, pray give me ample time, won't you. Remember I told you some months ago like the Dream Girl, 'I have much place in my heart 'tis true, and I am saving a great big place for you.' Please repeat the four lines at our next meeting. I would love to hear them from you personally.

Always yours,

Marie.

It would however be a mistake to conclude that all was honey and no spice for I recollect there was evidence in the

content of our letters that anxiety, alarming confusion, and imaginative distrust appeared in the minds of both of us at times in these months.

I dare not burden the reader with the written substance of these questionable messages which mirrored problematical and imaginary actions. The reader might speculate a little rivalry existed in the field, for there were a number of desirable young teachers who could not overlook such a pleasing and covetable companion while others, sons of business men in nearby towns, learned to know her. Alarming, the most stirring incident and confrontation was that of a distant cousin in Cincinnati who presented a potential fulfillment of her burning desire; the continuation of her education. As we learned earlier this passionate craving of continued education had been uppermost in her mind and greatly magnified. Realizing my academic attainments, though limited, her letters and conversations expressed these sentiments, how could she be worthy if she were unable to reach that level? Yet, how could she go to college if she remained in the country?

Encouragingly, as her invitation was to repeat to her the words of my last poem I was a bit reticent and reserved in the conversation at this September Sunday meeting. Immediately, upon my arrival she related with much eagerness and enthusiasm about the activities of the week with her distant cousin from Cincinnati who was visiting the family and had suggested the possibility of her attending a college in Cincinnati this fall. She related that her mother and his were first cousins, knew each other in teen-age years and continued, intermittingly, a friendly relationship of correspondence and family meetings. The cousin further intimated she could live with his mother, with happy home surroundings and thereby fulfill her wish for a college education. Naturally, her desire was greatly augmented by these suggestions and the inducement he presented.

Though only a distantly related cousin, one I had never met, her description of his manly qualities, his college education and their pleasant goings-on during the week, created doubtful future consequences in my mind. With a little rivalry present, perhaps imaginary, I debated her action vehemently and questioned her on the attitude of her parents. She had not informed them of this move, thus my aim was to get their reaction and upon my suggestion they were apprised, the result of which was unfavorable and the conversation appeared slightly ruffled with a number of chilling moments thereafter.

Continued conversation increased the tension though perhaps I had pressed our love affair too forceful under the circumstances, thereby conjuring answers from her that were slightly muddled due to the atmosphere. It is to be realized there can be two ways, sometimes contradictory, in which the heart and mind respond to a mixed-up conversation. Curiously enough, though her responses were simple, and direct, they certainly dramatized a conflict in my mind. With some reluctance I bade her a good night and pleasant dream.

Many doubtful questions arose in my mind creating

debatable conjectures. Is her friendship and love for me, indeed, more marked than for others and will she eventually prefer me? She had never said, "yes," but on the other hand she had never distinctly and emphatically said "No." Again, she showed unhappiness when I reminded her of that fact that I was doubtful of her feelings for me. My letter to her the next day carried a tone of moderation, yet I did not omit a reference to her dubious attitude. It read as follows:

Oct. 1st, 1917

Dear Marie:

I do not know how to address you since the conversation of last evening. It seems to me that I have presumed too much in the past. I do not know how to take you or how to explain your thoughts and feelings. Last night after arriving home I reviewed our conversation. I am at sea, drifting somewhere and do not know where. You appear to be pleased with certain love expressions of the past but last night when I said, "Perhaps I might receive your love some day," your response, "That's asking much with some chance."

Please pardon me for writing these words for I am certain your mind was elsewhere at the time for I know your heart would rebel at these thoughts. I can never think of you hypocritically. Please may I close by saying:

I beg your pardon if it be true
I've written something insulting to you.
All came from the heart these feelings expressed
And hope the privilege all wrongs to redress.

Yours in all sincerity,
Con.

It is too early to relate the outcome of this supposedly formidable encounter without first reading her response. Prematurely, one could speculate on the outcome but the reader can take heart for it is not too late to find the answer in her precious letter that I received in a few days. It had been written two days after receiving mine and according to her version she must have been greatly disturbed.

Apparently she arose at a very early hour for she could not sleep that evening or the following one. Taking a walk about the yard and around the house, striving to identify this puzzling anxiety, she met her mother who from experience was aware of these youthful perplexities. A deep and abiding understanding passed between them for her mother begged her to be patient until she could unearth the meaning of it all. The second day with greatly depressed spirit she tried to help with the morning chores of the house but of no avail. Physically, she could not muster enough energy to carry on. Her thoughts were flitting from pillar to post on the debatable idea of registering at school as suggested by her cousin which resulted in negative responses of mine and those of her parents. Our

controversial dialogue of the evening and my misconceived departure did not alleviate her discomfort. She had been able as a teenager to find parish life useful, satisfying, and intellectual and now growing into womanhood it should provide an outlet for her energies and consolation. The church and school were more than places to pass the time for they had offered her social and spiritual rewards in the past. Thus instinctively, to alleviate her mental distress, she accepted the invitation to assist the nuns in arranging a stage for the coming parish home-talent play, 'Murder Will Out,' one in which she would be a prominent character.

Hopefully anticipating a letter from me which might contain cheerful and consoling words, this thought and the comradeship of the nuns, caused the afternoon to pass quickly, thus easing her mind temporarily. However, she managed to slip away from the school in the late afternoon and went straight to the post office as fast as her aching feet could carry her. She noted upon entering the Post Office that the 5 o'clock train had brought a letter which she instinctively seized. With fire on her cheeks, evoking a sickening sensation and, with panting breath she rushed home to her room where with greater mental disturbance and trembling hands she opened it.

For a brief moment it would seem rash to predict that she would not be able to meet the crisis bravely. Indeed, it is true that she fell upon the bed and buried her head miserably, in the pages of the letter while slow bitter tears ran down her cheeks that splattered upon the ink, partly obliterating the script. How long she lay there she could not remember but she had an illusion of being lifted up bodily and carried away by someone strong, her lover. She saw him approaching, bending over her, kissing her, and carrying her swiftly off to some place that took all her bodily weariness away.

With a start she awoke and found the disappearing rays of the sinking sun playing capers with the objects in the room.

It was no secret to the household that she was about the house for her grandmother and the mother had seen her walking with a rapid stride, apparently perturbed, up the gravel path and into the house. More significant however, was the fact that she did not appear at the supper table which revealed she had received less than favorable news. The grandmother decided to go to her room and upon entering she had no difficulty in recognizing a distressing situation and an opportunity to project a good word for me if need be, that is if I had been the 'anlage' (cause). Nonchalantly, she sat on the edge of the bed, stroking her disarrayed hair with a gentle caress and with a soothing voice spoke about the problems of youth . . . 'How lovers themselves often create petty follies that breed their own difficulties . . . Love does not have to do with wisdom, experience, or reasoning but is usually affected by a will-of-the-wisp creation in the land of youth.'

It is to be remembered that grandmother had kept school for the children in the area in her first years in America. A proverb written on the blackboard in the morning taught the

children not only a moral lesson for the day but it was also a model for penmanship exercises. She confronted with this dramatic situation, bits of wisdom flashed forth in her mind in spite of the sixty or more years since teaching and with a lilt in her voice and the magic caress of her hand, she offered two suggestive bits of advice: "Kurtz ist der Schmerz and ewig is die Freude," (brief is one's sorrow but endless is the joy), and, "Die Rose blüht nicht ohne Dornen," (the rose does not bloom without thorns).

Despite the fact that the sky seemed to have fallen a few hours ago these words of the grandmother and the chatty dialogue erased the tears from Marie's blurred eyes and brought color and a smile to her cheeks. Assuring grandmother that she would shed no more tears and with a dawning realization that both could have been at fault, she resolved to write me that evening. These were her precious words that supplement the story:

October 4th, 1917

Dearest Friend:

Believe me you are my dearest friend . . . surely surprised to have said these words . . . certainly my thoughts were absent to them. You must believe me that words spoken with lips and the heart absent have no meaning. I sincerely ask forgiveness with all my heart . . . I am heartsick and cannot retire without first apologizing. Goodness, how can I do that, meeting you personally? All I can do is to write through eyes filled with heavy tears. My brow is burning and my cheeks are hot and flushed. . . . kisses of yours on them like the first ones some weeks ago would again make me feel so good . . . I shall be, Oh! so glad to meet you again next Sunday and all of this will be a thing of the past. You are mine and I am your sweetheart.

Marie.

* * * * *

In retrospect it is most intriguing and amazing how often we attempted to conform to each other's thinking. Fortunately, the results ended with charitable consolation for there was always a willingness to give and take with generous satisfaction. Invariably, these qualities had been expressed in our letters after a confrontation. However to assume that both of us were not a shade richer in experiences and a shade wiser would be a mistake for indeed, I, had learned a lesson in prudence and would exercise more discretion in unravelling the meaning of some of her thoughts in the future for she always expressed the wish to be a friend to everyone. Paradoxically, some uneasiness still remained in my mind and perhaps for good reason since less than half of the race had been run.

I decided that future discussions of the cousin's activities would be considered in the light of his family's relationship. Simultaneously, I had to admit that the description of him, his visit, and activities of the week could be questioned.

Though she had related them innocently and freely, with unquestioned simplicity and munificent frankness.

There is no gainsaying that I gave serious, yet, sincere thought to a course of action in the future in order to create a greater degree of interest and perhaps develop a love for me. Instinctively, my mind reverted to various theories of human behavior to which I had been exposed in certain academic courses at the University in 1914-1915. One axiom that I had used in the three years of teaching to gain attention of the pupils was, 'The greater the degree of attention and interest that one could instill in another, the greater would be the response to a directed consciousness, thus alerted consciousness would influence the thinking and action of the individual.' Why not put this theory to a test at this time? Why not use a contradictory method of love-making by combining the past affectionate messages in my letters, with vague or indiscriminate gestures of friendship in our personal meetings? I was well aware of the fact that these acts should be more vague than discriminate and to be used for ultimate favorable results. Contemplating that these friendly confrontations would create situations that were not real (but would exist in her imagination only), how could I accomplish this without her becoming aware of my mischief? Indeed, after giving this thought-out scheme with much deliberation, nevertheless, being confronted with some misgivings of its success and possible dire consequences, I carried-out the idea.

I considered it a marked merit if at future meetings I would carry out my acts of old-time friendship of chummy skirmishes, of jabber and prattle. In the rendition of songs I would cause no excitement with acts of general pantomimes of my eyes, or tone of my voice. Indeed, I was of the opinion that this method should not appear as a direct confrontation. But why relate all this with an epilogue before the story.

Curiously enough, I risked the outcome of this debatable program the next Sunday evening.

When I arrived she ran down the gravel path, through the wicket gate to the auto as it came to a faltering halt, disregarding the past unpleasant episode. Slightly blushing with embarrassment but laughing excitedly, she gave me her hand and said, "How glad I am to see you." Equally responsive, I gave her hand a decidedly affectionate handshake.

She had the great charm of being lovable, incapable of being lukewarm and never a half-hearted response to anyone. My children not knowing her in her youth, I attempted to acquaint them of this tenderness, gentleness and willing kindness as they grew to maturity. That is, if, sometimes they found her words or suggestions created puzzling situations with, perhaps, equally questionable results, they should remember reading these choice words in her last letter: "I cannot insult anyone for everyone is my friend. This grace of tenderness I inherited from my mother, thanks to her. I am told that a life without friends is a dreary one. I truly can say I have many friends and how happy I am for this."

I am happy to reveal the evening's conversation was without doubt very congenial and to a substantial degree a rambling discourse on the meaning of love at an arm's length. It is a fact that the environment was ideal for a ride about the countryside at a snail's pace and bribed by a full moon in a starlit sky it was a perfect yet unplanned situation. Without a disturbing thought of where we were going or the ever tick-tock of passing time was our experience.

I carried out my tantalizing act. It would take little or no imagination to assume that two lovers would be discouraged to show a bit of infectious excitement of tenderness, a friendly tete-a-tete while ambling up and down over long country gravel roads where scarcely anyone passed. She well knew my ability of one-arm driving in the past which at the time was an inducement for her to recline nearby and accept the liberty of an occasional peck on her cheek or a brush on her hair. Unlike my behavior in the past there were no such goings-on tonight for the conversation was a kind of shadow-boxing or word-play of the meaning of love and friendship. There were many questionable gazes during the double-talk (sense and nonsense), discussion which I skillfully dodged with a shift to the bantering of days gone by.

Upon arriving home with little change, perhaps inwardly, we walked quietly and slowly up the narrow path to the house where I made no attempt on leave-taking other than to treat her as a friend. As the moon came out from behind a cloud I saw a puzzling expression on her face and two tiny teardrops slowly appeared in the corner of her eyes. Thanking her for a very merry evening of fun and frolic and squeezing her hand tenderly I bade her goodnight.

In spite of all of this joshing about love and friendship, my letter dated the next day, carried reassurance of my love for her. I wrote as a man and told her of my intimate life and my love. How my pride and personal dignity was involved and how proud I was of her; one possessing such an array of qualities: beauty, talent, charm, and gentleness. Brilliantly, I wrote these words:

Oct. 9th, 1917

Dear Marie:

Considering the definition of love and friendship as defined by Webster and the various meanings we might have given them, these are my true sentiments:

Sweetheart of mine, I'm dreaming,
Dreaming of you and your love,
For if I should procure it,
It would be Heaven above.

But I'll be ever waiting,
Waiting for you and your kiss.
My reward will not be vain glory
But the highest of heavenly bliss.

Con.

Her letter a few days later:

Oct. 13th, 1917

Dear Friend Con:

Your charming letter placed me in second Heaven. . . . Love is one thing one cannot put into words, My Dear! I don't believe anyone can describe the emotions that surged through my being. But Dear Heart, I know that no one can reveal the fact of his love in a sweeter way than you have in such meaningful verse. I have memorized your beautiful love song for it has great meaning for me but I must keep you waiting for a reason. I hope to tell you sometime. How soon? I do not know but I am hoping it will be soon. You must know that it is a real battle for me when I read your endearing promises to brighten my future. Do believe me.

Your sincere friend,

Marie

One can surmise there were some extremely important questions to be solved by her, for many barbed and conflicting thoughts were disturbing her. On the one side of the balance sheet were these items to be considered: her decision must be certain, not prematurely made, and her youth and intelligence must support the possibility of an education. Other considerations were offsetting these as she pondered: will I jeopardize this true love by waiting? He, going into military service the coming year, should I risk my future true happiness by attending school?

Yet, there is little doubt she attempted to answer these bothersome questions of friendship and love clearly and with honesty. In spite of my artful dodging at times it never deterred us in being frank with each other, for it was this richness of respect that ultimately solved our problems.

The differences in my approach had an effect on both our personal relations as well as in mind and heart. By applying even greater eloquence in versification I assured her that my feelings for her had not changed. Indeed, time promoted a greater consciousness of a needed companionship for happiness rather than friendship.

It was understood that I should call in two weeks and with Halloween being around the corner she reminded me of it being the anniversary of our most pleasant year of correspondence, thus, a celebration was in order. Halloween came with its goblins, pumpkins, cider and donuts and with it the singing of 'Little Orphan Annie,' by her young sister, Esther. Thanksgiving, a few weeks later brought a table literally loaded with good cheer which presented a picture of country abundance. These family gatherings of common interests, concern, and affection, came and went with the usual flight of time and demonstrated certain penetrating realities of their family life to me.

It appeared the two weeks were far too long for neither of us could endure the suspense, a letter from each crossed in their flight, telling more of our intimate thoughts and dreams. Again, serious consideration had been given by each to the reality of the importance of one to the other. It is not surprising that on the first day of the third week of November, the 5:00 o'clock train brought my short note.

November 20th, 1917

My Dear Sweetheart:

It is difficult if not impossible to refrain from telling you how much I missed you last evening. Somehow you were in my dreams all night, not realizing whether I was asleep or awake. Dear Heart! won't you agree that God saw fit to give us similar thoughts, desires, aims, and purposes to fulfill life's work? But, Oh Marie! this thought, will it be or not to be? It would be hard to part from heart to heart for we lived and loved and dreamed. Oh! I tried to forget but could not succeed in erasing the thought.

If you were her or I were there
I'd share my joy, I do declare.
But Dear Heart, with urgent tone
Your true love, for me alone.

Con

Her precious letter came a few days later.

December 1st, 1917

Dear Sweetheart:

Oh Dear! how much I miss you. It seems to me you do not realize that I really do. How can you think that this little girl could forget the many kindnesses and endearing promises? So please remember I shall always call you a very dear friend if not more. If anyone were to ask me how often I reread your letters and all the other dear ones I could make no reply. I rehearse your poems for they constantly echo through my mind, hour after hour, even in my sleep. If you had told me personally those dear sayings you wrote in your letter I certainly could not have refrained from giving you my most precious gift, A KISS. So at this moment I'm sending one by mail to you alone, Dear. Your true love.

Marie

The sun was reaching its lowest ebb that brief December Day (actually it was near the middle of the month), while its diminishing gray rays were out of sight long before it set. There was no question that midwinter had sank heavily into the stormy plains of West-central Ohio for a limitless blanket of snowclouds was blotting out the sky and in a moment it hid all

stars and the full moon as well. The wind came out of the North-east, always a forerunner of much snow, materializing in the next minute with violent gusts of wind that were driving fine powdery snow everywhere, increasing in violence during the night.

The next morning when viewing the whole countryside as far as the eye could see, there was a white, smooth, spotless carpet over soft swelling knobs and bumps in the weedless frozen field. To the North of the house the young orchard of naked fruit trees, like wooded ground, made a motionless dark spot on the white blanket beyond. In the distance, across the road, one could distinguish heavy smoke barely visible, curling as it attempted to rise from the chimneys of grandfather Adam's brick house. The entire day was a dark, stormy, gray-looking one and the sky had a dull, cold tint which appeared, periodically, between blinding clouds of thick heavy snow whirls.

The cold was excessive and the snowfall increased without interruption the next day which hindered me in traveling the three miles to my school. The description of Whittier in 'Snowbound,' could never have been more real.

"And when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown
on nothing we could call our own.

The familiar sights of ours,
Took marvelous shapes;
Strange domes and towers,

Rose up where sty or corncrib stood,
Or garden wall or belt of wood;
A smooth white mound the brushpile showed,

A fenceless drift what once was road
.
The bridle-post an old man sat
with loose-flung coat and high cocked hat."

Fortunately or unfortunately, a freezing rain had fallen the next night, covering the hidden landscape with a coating of gleaming, ice-glazed, solid surface of snow. I had no difficulty in tramping across fields and woods, unhindered by fences to the church and school three miles away. There I found a number of lingering boys and girls awaiting me.

There was more to this snowfall than all the odd-shaped phantoms, the whirling and howling wintry winds, and the heaped-up drifts over fences and roads. My sweetheart had to forego a Sunday night of pleasure with someone who was very dear to her. A letter written late in the evening indicated her unhappiness.

Dec. 17th, 1917

Dearest Friend:

You know Dear I just can't concentrate my mind on anything tonight. I feel so very disappointed since you could not be with

me. When considering the snow-covered roads and weather, I should have known the difficulty in coming. Papa teased me of disappointment but he was a good pal all evening, for I sang and played the songs for him. Oh Dear! How I wish our meetings were like of old. How you would look into my eyes which told me so much of your love and how you would cover my cheeks and hair with kisses. Are you coming Christmas evening? I do hope so. You must come for I'm certain if you do not my Christmas will be worse than ever. I wish I had a lifeseize picture of you. Please, give me one for my gift for I could in spirit see your personal self at all times. Sending you a whole lot more love than ever before, Your Dear Marie.

For nearly a week men and boys, shod with buckskins (felt-boots reaching to the knee), heads protected with homeknit caps, and hands with sheepskin gloves, shoveled snow and cleared the roadway for one-way travel between walls of drifted snow, allowing wagons, sleds or perhaps an auto to travel a few miles on adjoining roads. An occasional cleared turn-out, was cut into an adjacent bank for passing. These hilarious days were truly holidays for young and old which demonstrated an impressive community spirit that was greatly emphasized by the joyous calls from wives and daughters as the shovelers passed their farm houses, "Won't you come in and warm up with a steaming cup of coffee?" Dozens of piping hot mugs of coffee and sugar and oatmeal cookies were consumed with must gusto. Invariably, after a day's shoveling with farm chores completed, these young folks covered with blankets in straw-bedded bobsleds would race to distant villages with galloping and frost-covered horses, while sleighbells and dwindling screams of exhilarations could be heard, breaking the stillness of the evening. Such were the days of old of fallen snow, of bobsleds, of sleigh rides and country dances which the present generation will never experience.

The roads having been partly cleared she had no doubt that I would be able to visit her on Christmas, unless a huge covering of new snow should fall within the week. This she dare not contemplate.

When I arose on Christmas morning the sun was just dawning over the level fields of snow, the air was fresh, the sky cloudless, and all was indescribably beautiful. My first duty that day was to perform the organist and choir activities of Christmas Day at 10:00 at the Sharpsburg church.

Inescapably, I was compelled to view this Holy day as my last opportunity for a desirable Christmas program because of potential army services the coming year, thus I devoted much effort to its performance. The adult church choir and four pupils performed a joyful, holy, and unexpected program of Christmas hymns and the rendition of a sprightly arrangement of the Gloria and Credo for the occasion. We were highly complimented by the many parishoners who appeared to echo our gaiety and spirit. The villagers doffed their hats and uttered hearty good wishes of the season as they passed.

After the late afternoon religious services I was on my way to her home but rather excited with the thought that this could be an occasion long to be remembered.

Her last letter reminded me of the fact that it carried very definite and encouraging love expressions, bordering on an ever-deeping seriousness of more than friendship, which assured me that substantial progress had been made.

With little effort one could speculate that I, with my recent photo and her favorite box of candy, tied up with ribbon and bow, tucked under my arm, approached the house with extreme confidence in my expectations. Within a minute we found ourselves in the front room alone. Simultaneously, gazing into her upturned face, whispering softly to her of her contagious enthusiasm, her rare beauty and unflinching steadfastness, I presented the box of 'Whitman's Sampler' with this attached love note:

"Just the same Old Christmas Greeting,
Just the same great wish I send,
Just the same old message speaking
Love that loves unto the end."

Affording her time to read the note, I, with bated breath said, "Oh Marie! you are my dream girl but won't you be my true sweetheart for life?" Without hesitation she placed her arms about my neck, my arms encircled her waist and drawing her to me, each felt the warm lips of surrender, thereby entrusting to each other the tenderness of the age-old commitment, "I Love You." Not until I released her did she realize what this meant but she was happy for she said, "Don't take this dream away from me."

There is a strong possibility that we embraced with warmth, gentleness, naturalness, and dignity many times that Christmas night but the evening was far too short. It was a memorable one but little did we realize there would not be another Christmas evening for two long years for I was to spend the next Christmas holidays in the army, far from her.

This usual love letter was written by each the next day, revealing the pleasant hours and pledging our fidelity and trustworthiness for life. That of the 26th of mine carried this love message:

Dec. 26th, 1917

My Own True Love:

Something precious was given me last evening when you told me how much you cared. Those three meaningful words, 'I love you,' sealed with a kiss has made me very, very happy
May I say in closing,

How happy I am that I can say,
My love was answered yesterday.
It's a blessing shared I am proud to own

'Tis the greatest happiness of every home.

As one poet said to another: "This letter so gay with flowers to say, I'll be as true to thee as honey to the honey bee.

Yours forever,

Con.

Her letter which criss-crossed mine read:

Dec. 26th, 1917

My Dear Lover:

You know those three simple words, 'I love you' revealed a message of great meaning to which has placed me beyond this world. I sometimes think, yet in my teens, perhaps, I may have been frivolous in revealing my intimate thoughts and desires for I am not worthy of all this. How shall it be possible that I be worthy of your great love? What is going to happen if I cannot be a real companion to you? The thought of ever being equal to you depresses me but I am encouraged with the thought that we are still young and have many years to level our hopes and desires. I am trying my utmost to be worthy of you. May I be your true love always?

Marie.

The year came to an end with little loss of snow, and the roads, up-hill and down for miles around, were covered with a thick bed of icy-packed slopes. In spite of the fact that winds pelted revelers with snow and sleet, causing ruddy cheeks and numb fingers for both young and old, they took advantage of this season of ideal bob-sleighting.

The first week of the New Year was ushered in with hurricane winds of blinding snow storms of raging wintry blasts, more severe than those of a few weeks earlier. Winter had settled in January 1918 over that part of Ohio with much more snow and sub-zero temperature. The roads, only ribbon-like troughs of heaped-up walls of drifted snow were no longer passable for the angry winds filled them yet higher with the loose, light, powdered snow that swept merciless from surrounding fields. Even a reassuring day, handicapped by a fickle sun and slightly subsided wind, giving less than a temporary breath to earth and sky, could contribute no more than a leaden gray color to the surroundings.

This was but a calm before the storm for the dawn of the next day produced more high wind rows of glazed snow, piled higher and higher between houses and barns. There was little traveling on many days that month other than with horses and bob-sleds while some brave farmers invaded the storm and attempted to finish certain farm chores or go to a nearby village for household essentials. All were happy to remain at homes, Fathers feeding and watering the stock and carting wood and kindling to a nearby sheltered nook while Mothers and Daughters busied themselves with the everyday routine of the

home. Certainly, very few ventured into the country except the merry-makers who were fearless in challenging the frost-bitten air and mirror-like ice. They with ample energy of spirit, and with much stamping, and gesticulating had no difficulty in releasing the numbness and coldness after hours of skating.

Luckily, the two-week Christmas vacation was extended another week allowing me to remain home until the middle of January. On the first day of that week, daring and undaunted and armed with a new set of auto-chains, I started for the parish church and school. Little did I realize that a few road areas had not been cleared of the new blown snow of the preceding day. Fortunately with the aid of a few Fathers, some school boys and a neighbor's horse, the Buick came to rest in an adjacent shed near the school where it remained for nearly a month.

This created a situation that compelled me to remain in the village for three weeks, but having no difficulty in lodging with an elderly couple nearby, I was comfortably housed, feathered (tick) under and over in an antique canopied bed. Since the villagers had gardens and small meadows for animals I was well fed with hickory-smoked meats, home canned vegetables, and ample helpings of homemade bread and newly churned butter. Incidentally, I was able to purchase necessary wearing apparel and other personal necessities at the local Zenz store for this temporary stay.

To this disquieting situation, my sweetheart, always hopeful of course for a change in weather, responded with courage, frankness, and commitment. For nearly a month we had settled with some degree to our regular routine. I was busy with the school and church activities while she managed the many household chores of the large growing family. The illness of her mother caused the tasks of cooking, washing, mending and other household chores to fall upon the slender shoulders of one, going on 20 years.

Her weekly letters, relating her progress in music, playing and singing the old love songs, and viewing my picture, awakened happy memories of past days which apparently stood her in good stead.

Occasionally, words of discouragement crept into her weekly messages.

January 23rd, 1918

Lonesome Evening, Dear Lover:

I was overjoyed to read some of your heart-sayings again. Oh! how I long for your presence, Dearie. I certainly pass the time at night dreaming of you. I can't wait to have another confidential chat with you which has not been our pleasure for a month. You are the only person that I can share my joy and sorrow and I truly feel that I can take more than half of yours. I shall always remember the true kiss which sealed each other's trust and fidelity. May I say,

You are mine and I am yours they say
So let it be and feel right gay.
In dreams, dear lover, I'm with you
Caresses many, fond an true.

Marie.

Luckily, at the end of the first week of February a teacher associate, living in the area of St. Henry had been commuting by horse and buggy on week-ends. He proposed a trip near my home on the Saturday before the 11th of February, and a Monday morning return.

This kind act of his uncovered a plan which allowed me to see my true love on her twentieth birthday

To accomplish this I traveled by horse and cutter (a two seated sleigh), to her home that Sunday evening, with my Uncle John's winter equipment, consisting of a cutter of motley red and black upholstery, a buffalo wool-lined lap-robe for warmth, and a pony with bells to go with it. There is a strong possibility that I was extremely proud, (no shade of swagger), of this seasonably colorful display when arriving at the parish church to perform the regular Sunday's duties that morning.

I proceeded later in the afternoon to her home with this pleased enviable equipage, at the same time protecting myself with a pale green and white wool scarf with a matching 'Zip-felmütze,' (tasseled cap).

The winter was more kind that day than ever before for the sun was tempted to linger in the cloudless sky the whole day through. It, with its warmth, irritated the drifts to the point of some weeping at midday. In a few hours the month-old leaden sky turned to a wintry blue. As I approached the village of Burkettsville lean shadows of the afternoon were in control, announcing that darkness would come quickly. The warm disappearing crimson and golden rays of the sun could no longer hinder the approaching still, wintry iciness of the night. The sun had set and twilight dimmed to darkness. The leaden clouds of the afternoon had cleared but beams of a hidden but rising moon glittered and danced on bare branches that were still encased in ice by the freezing rain.

Subsequently, I caught sight of the full moon with its large round face rising out of the eastern sky. It with its glow and the growing starlit sky would make this night a memorable sleigh ride through the frosty moonlight for the two of us, our first.

I, when approaching her home entered the winding lane, passed by the house, which brought her to the window and in a minute to the door. The chilliness of the lingering twilight allowed her to remain there briefly and with a swooping wave of her arm, indicating a gesture of greeting, she closed the door and awaited my arrival. It is really understandable the meeting was a warm and lively one as she without embarrassment

allowed herself to be drawn for the long awaited caress of affection and a precious kiss.

Here at last after more than a month we viewed each other as we had dreamed; she, the young lady most beautiful and desirable, and I, the young man brilliant and manly best.

Within a short time the dinner which had been prepared for her birthday was served allowing a true cozy atmosphere to develop among the family - including the aged grandmother.

The conversation during the meal varied as each member discussed the experiences of the past month. There were family incidents that were rich with laughter, others of muffled mirth and some with old-fashioned sentiment that displayed a marked intimacy of the members. The dinner hour passed far too quickly and when the large birthday cake, decorated with twenty candles was presented to her, all sang 'Happy Birthday,' closing with many hardy cheers and good wishes for more years of health and blessings.

Naturally, attention was focused on a ride in the cutter by Marie whose wish had been affirmed by all. Terminating the birthday meal with ice cream and a wedge of the dainty cake all were prepared to see us off in the exceptional trappings. Within minutes we were comfortably settled in the cutter, snugly sheltered by the buffalo robe and with sleighbells jingling, four hands awaving, and with many 'goodbyes' echoing from the house we pulled out of the snow-covered lane. She created an image of captivating sweetness with the light-brown fox fur draped about her shoulder, and the light yellow chapeau half-hiding her head of soft fiery curls that were playing secrets with her eyes.

We made no effort to urge the pony beyond a slow trot when passing through the village for we were now traveling down an endless white road, unhindered by any traveler or vehicle, to some dream city.

The dwindling dusk of the crisp February night wrapped itself about us producing an atmosphere of carefree enjoyment, scarcely moving, hardly speaking.

The pony, relaxing his pace of a trot to that of a walk, passed mile after mile through disarranged partitioned drifts. He was apparently conscious of the part he played in this unusual first and last sleigh ride of ours.

The stars, imperceptibly, added some brightness but the moon with its light played shadows on the heaped-up drifts and wind-swept fields, producing an ever changing setting and creating a new picture at every moment. Even the winter-base trees displayed a beautiful pattern in the forked tops of the barren trees, thereby forming a framework about the moon that could be possible only on a night like this. There was something almost magical about the combination of this dramatic silhouette.

I, completely unmindful of the reality of time, when turning to my Sweetheart with the light brown curls and moonlit face, captured a vision of beauty, of 'such a sight on such a night, as I never before experienced, I was touched to express my most inner feelings and thoughts by saying, "Oh Marie! the 'Gem,' let us sing the gem for it is our dream." She in alto and I in tenor sang as never before, 'Let the Rest of the World Go By.'

"With someone like you, a pal good and true,
I'd like to leave it all behind and go and
find,
Some place that's known to God alone,
Just a spot to call our own.
We'll find perfect peace, where joys never
cease
Out there beneath the kindly sky

We sang this not once but a number of times including the many other love songs, the words of which meant so much to us. It would be most interesting to have verbatim the conversation of that evening, but obviously, with the singing and watching the moon and stars the hours rolled by, thus little of it could be recalled.

Notwithstanding the many delightful sunshine motor trips, rich brightly colored walks to the woods, and designed covert trips on the dark road to the village, this was our treasured one, a never-to-be-forgotten journey. Maybe it was the night, the moon, the sleigh like a chariot of the Gods done up in black and red, or the pony, no doubt, all added to this romantic setting

As I come to the end of this story of our memorable sleigh ride, perhaps, I have made the moonlight too soft, the stars too bright, and have painted the disappearing sunset with a magic brush, dipped too heavily in crimson and gold makeup.

I find that it is a memory, most uniquely beautiful, and significant, a retrospect of more than sixty years ago.

The run of the moon kept in tune with us, alternating from light to dark when gliding behind the fleeting clouds as it moved over the star-studded sky. It was still with us when we entered the lane of her home. Though the hour was not too late, my journey home would be much longer than by auto. I begged to be excused and promised to call on February 22nd, Washington's Birthday. This trip had been discussed with a possible all-day visit to a distant town if weather would permit.

I accompanied her to the house, presented the Whitman's Sampler as a small birthday gift and bade her a regretful but winning goodnight. With a heavy heart, and glistening tears in her eyes, she placed her arms about my neck and with an impressive and sweet kiss, said, "This is my Valentine gift." Simultaneously, bending over, I brushed the tears away with

kisses and said,

"Oh Sweetheart mine, Sweetest Valentine,
I'll never forget you, never for all time."

And so ended the most glorious sleigh ride which was never again in action but many times in spirit.

A glance at the dates of the next two letters: mine the 12th and her's the 14th, revealed the contents in terms of our experiences of the previous Sunday which expressed undeniably, messages of trust and fidelity. I continued my valentine message at the close of the letter,

"Oh Sweetheart mine, Sweetest Valentine,
I just can't forget you, never for all time.
But I'll always remember your sentiments so true
Which bring unmeasurable joy and thoughts of you.
Oh, but you're grand and your thoughts sublime.
Your character so noble which completely entwines
The soul of your Lover with the soul of the Loved.
God grant it never ceases, this confidence of trust.
But always remember, I'm yours all the time.
Please don't forget me, Dearest Valentine."

Con.

She in turn favored me with a beautiful and fitting birthday greeting with this verse:

"It's loaded with hearty good wishes
This letter I am writing to you,
And thanks for your favors so many
and all the dear things that you do.
They are more than I can reckon
Though I shall try all days of the year,
May joy be your portion forever,
My best Birthday Wish to you Dear."

Marie

* * * * *

Beginning the last half of the month of February the wintry landscape changed constantly by the daily waxing of the sun's warmth, though slightly retarded by the frigid winds at night. During the first week after the 15th the month-early spring rains impelled by angry winds brought increased balmy weather which could have been displaced by more frigid snow, but fortunately, the North-wind had turned tail, thus the warm rains within a week caused roads to be completely void of snow while mountains of dirty-gray sidewalls crumbled into nothingness.

It was this kind of day that greeted us on Washington's Birthday - 1918, as the early morning punching frost still hovered in the air that had painted the weeds and fences all gray with hoarfrost. Although here and there it had disappeared

where the sun had touched those that had turned their faces in its direction.

Bolstered by her eagerness, though not surprisingly so, we decided to go West and pass through the village of Sharpsburg (Zenz City), and tarry a while at the church and school where I was employed. It must be recognized that many unanswered questions pertaining to the coming events of the next twelve months were flitting through our minds, since the level of true friendship had deepened into love. We were apprehensive and dared not predict the future since I had passed my 21st birthday and would register for military service within a few weeks. For consolation and spiritual direction we made a prayerful visit to the church since I was confronted with church and school commitments for the coming year. Neither of us could disregard the meaning of a complete separation for a very questionable period, and an oversea's duty in the war zone.

Marriage indeed was not considered by either of us because of our youth and responsibility, although many young men and women applied this alibi before their date of induction.

After a demonstration on the pipe organ and a teacher-pupil one-scene act in the schoolroom, we were on our way to the site of the battle of Fallen Timbers, Ft. Recovery. Passing the beautiful shaft dedicated to the fallen soldiers, we approached the replica of the old fort with its inner block-houses which were completely surrounded by a ten-foot wall of sharpened, six-inch, rounded sapling stakes. A visit to the Huddle Drug Store located on the main and only business street in the town was certainly in order. When I introduced her to the owner, she bantered in a pleasing and lovely manner, "I am so happy to meet you because here is where my sweetest Sweet gets all of his sweets for me." It was not surprising to learn that Mr. Huddle presented her with a box of her favorite candy, Whitman's Sampler.

Within a comparative short time we were on our way toward the small village of St. Anthony, five miles to the North, stopping at the farm home near the one-room school where I had passed my two years of apprenticeship as a teacher, Mr. and Mrs. Schroer and their three sons were delighted to meet my best girl and have a visit. Having been considered one of the family for two years, they unhesitatingly related during the luncheon many stories of my teaching, as an idol of the girls, and the envy of the boys.

It is not surprising that the next stop was the St. Anthony village, where I had been organist and choirmaster for two years. Our ultimate destination was the Limberlost Swamp, the southern tip of which was about ten miles to the northwest of this small village. As we motored leisurely along toward this area our conversation was centered on the love story, 'Girl of the Limberlost,' I as Freckles and she as the 'Dream Girl of the Limberlost,' (the two important characters of this novel of Gene Stratton Porter). One might imply that each of us had been influenced by this love story, which created a

friendship that gradually evolved into love.

Continuing our journey we passed through the small village of New Cordon, a spring-flooded area on the Wabash River and in another ten minutes we arrived at the 14 room log house of Mrs. Porter, a museum near Geneva, Indiana.

Here at last was the spot which held our attention and interest for the remainder of the day since this was the setting of Mrs. Porter's novels, characterizing three strong and involved personages: The Harvester, Freckles, and the Girl of the Limberlost. The 14 room home had been her paradise at the Limberlost Swamp for many years, but now it was a living museum of her specimen of birds, flowers, plants, insects, moths, and other beauties of nature which had been the sole inhabitants of the swamp.

Due to inroads of civilization and much to the disgrace of so-called progress, these natural beauties of the Limberlost were lost to mankind and compelled Mrs. Porter to move to a territory farther North near Rome City.

The great swamp which included the Limberlost area covering nearly five counties in Northern Indiana had been gradually destroyed and fell prey to commercialism through the inroads of lumbermen, oilmen and farmers. Mrs. Porter attempted to enkindle the interests of the people to conserve the beauty of rare insects, birds, flowers and trees by using true human experiences of persons in her novel of Freckles, Girl of the Limberlost and Moths of the Limberlost.

We were privileged to meet the caretaker who related the story of the destruction of the Limberlost within the last 15 years. It appeared that long, never-ending ditches had been dredged to drain and clear the area to convert the land into onion, celery and sugarbeet fields. New roads had been cut through the woods and fields with a bridge here and there, while many oil wells dotted the countryside for miles around.

This destruction had disturbed Mrs. Porter to a great degree for all of this was once a paradise of rare beauties of nature. Therefore, to preserve them for future posterity she established the museum containing drawings of hundreds of flowers, birds, and moths that had inhabited this swamp.

The walls of the cabin were literally covered with pictures of every moth common to the Limberlost, life-like in every detail and painted in watercolors. The gem of her illustrations were her paintings in volume Moths of the Limberlost. Although all of her novels were profusely illustrated with the beauties of nature on the fly-leaves of all her books, she delicately wove these marvels of nature into the life stories of 'Freckles,' and the other two characters. The beauty of her prolific writings was her ability to use real living people as her characters and have them do the things they really did, and to say things that were really said.

Reading about the childhood and teenage problems of Mrs.

Porter and her sterling qualities of the characters in her love stories, naturally, Marie was deeply impressed with the educational difficulties of this young writer in her youth. There appeared to be a parallel in the lives of these two for each had a background of simple, unselfish living, no luxurious home but an inheritance of a clean mind, honest heart, ambitious soul and intelligence. Just as Mrs. Porter was able to fulfill her ambitions in writing by her own efforts with serious odds, so too, Marie, eventually fulfilled her ambition of a musical education. As I view the past fifty years she had the knack of applying her talents in many activities not only in the arts but also in all intellectual and moral pursuits, the results of which are echoed by her five children. Her philosophy was one of love of God, love of neighbor, and love of the arts.

Late in the afternoon, going South, identified as the main road since route numbered roads were unknown, we found ourselves within a short time in the long shadows of the Jay Restaurant in Portland, Indiana.

The occasion of having our first meal together alone in a simple environment, completely unknown to those about us, not discounting our endearing conversation, it created a most delightful and happy hour. Yet, she could not forget to remind me of the difference in education which plagued her no end. She was ever ready to face difficulties squarely, and straightway find a satisfactory solution according to her thinking which had created much sadness as one learns later. When the question of my leaving for military service was cited she indicated unhappiness and was scared at the very thought, anticipating many lonesome weekends. However, in conformity with some misleading expressions, it appeared she harbored the idea that this period might provide her the opportunity of attending college. Recalling our conversation I am unable to say which had been more pronounced, the choice of food or the serious discussion of our mutual problems.

When leaving the restaurant we found the sun had long since disappeared while a golden afterglow throbbled in the West with all street gas lights turned up, indicating a farewell by this half-lit village.

It is to be remembered that winter was still in control and on that late afternoon the last rays of the sun must have faded fairly away for a sharp stinging breeze began to whistle through the swaying naked trees. The night sky was moonless and almost starless for the only lights visible were those of distant farm homes, miles apart, until we reached the village of Ft. Recovery where the houses and lights were in proximity. After passing through this sleepy town on the Wabash the one thought of ours was to travel the five miles quickly to her home, relax in the front room, cushioned in each others arms on the settee and discuss the many pleasant experiences of that eventful day.

In reviewing the period from the month of March to that of August, I find it was more than marking the passing of time. It is true the next three months of school proceeded orderly

with the closing of the school year at the end of May.

Whispering of the coming school picnic started months before the event by both pupils and grown-ups, for all anticipated and speculated on the happenings of that day. Some would be sad while others excited and happy, but in any event it would provide conversation of the village for the long hot summer days. The school picnic of a rural school is a miniature one-day local country fair, a community project, in which all participated, thus making it a gala one. All were hoping and praying the rain would not make a point of showing itself on that day.

I invited Marie to attend the picnic, usually held a day or two after books, pencils, and paper had been carted home to rest, haphazardly, in silence in some corner, until the first days of September.

Needless to say the five-member school board had no difficulty in finding a choice area, free from tall grass and underbrush, and within walking distance of the village. Fathers had been delegated to supply ropes for swings, grain sacks for various jumping contests, small bags of potatoes and peanuts for relay races. Bats, balls, and gloves, (a usual contesting ball-game between fathers and the young men), were in evidence about the rough baseball diamond. One should not overlook the three-legged race, the 100 yard dash, the sack race and the games of marbles and ring-toss in which boys and girls of all ages would participate. Scampering about were dogs with an occasional brawl of loud yelping. They were the tag-alongs of the boys and girls and consisted of: pointers, pubs, coon and rabbit hounds, rat terriers, all slanting to the mongrel side. Mr. Bean, the owner of the woods provided 'Squirrely,' a little old rag of a pony with a shaggy mane and a long rusty tail full of burrs. There was no question that 'Squirrely had been the joy of the younger members, boys and girls, since the owner had arranged a turn for each. The mothers, days in advance, had their plans well organized in providing an abundance of food, breads, pies, cakes and cookies. This had been assigned to those mothers who were known for their culinary excellence.

There were chickens to be dressed, drawn, fried and cooled for the feast while all anticipated an ample amount of ham, the country staple. The country gardens were to provide beans, potatoes, onions, beets, and other vegetables, either from home-canned jars of last year or freshly picked ones from the spring gardens. The men constructed temporary tables, yards long from raw coarse lumber as evidenced by the skeleton construction underneath. On this day we find the arranged boards of oak groaning under an abundance of wholesome country-fare, carrying literally a wealth of good cheer and a day of endless contentment for all. There were white, brown, and rye breads of all kinds, the favorite of which was the rye that had been baked in an outdoor brick oven. Platters of heaped-up chicken were orderly arranged down the endless table to give even the youngest, his/her share of the choice morsels. Generously sprinkled about were the countless bowls of coleslaw, green beans, pickled beets and potatoe salads, tastefully

offset by colorful, halved, boiled eggs with deviled yolks, nestling comfortably in their beds. To give ample justice to all sweet-tooth dainties: cakes of dark brown, devilsfood, sun sunshine light and frosted like diamond pyramids were prominently displayed as well as cookies of every description: from small oatmeal ones to the large crunchy sugar coated cart-wheels.

On each end of the table were two, new well-scoured, galvanized tubs filled to the brim with homemade lemonade. Riding serenely on the surface of each were bits of lemon peel and an oblong cake of ice that had been recently removed from its sawdust bed in the village icehouse. For the benefit of all a new shiny tincup was chained to the handle, providing a cooloff sizzler for all who needed to slake a parched throat.

Not all participated in the events of the day for there were the aged who were inclined to be permanently exhausted and the shiftless individuals who had nothing-to-do.

Near the long community table, sitting in a semi-circular array in the shade of a great oak or a beech tree were a few men talking listlessly over the parish gossip or telling never ending stories of the smartness and cleverness of a grandson or daughter. The non-talkative were those emitting small whiffs of tobacco smoke from their corncob pipes, reflecting questionably on this idle talk. Others, lounging, sitting, or squatting in groups of two or three, were sufficiently interested in moving from time-to-time about the trees to avoid the summer sun.

The dinner produced great hilarity, though noiseless at times, all had keen appetites for one remembers that the taste of one choice food, sliver of cake, a wedge of pie or sweet-meat provokes another and by the end of the day the tables had been devoid of all food.

All participants: children, mothers, fathers, and neighbors broke up the party at sundown and returned to their homes and declared this year-end picnic had been one of the greatest.

The excitement of the school picnic over the month of June progressed rapidly into July and too soon to the end of August which brought happenings of dire and foreboding events, fearfully and terribly affecting our very lives for the next twelve months.

In the days after our visit to Limberlost, Marie's one thought was the improvement of her education and it became a compelling influence, dominating her very soul after learning the life of the 'Bird Woman,' Gene Stratton Porter. This fever increased to such an extent that it became an obsession with piercing personal concern. Temporarily, she found no time, or ignored time for serious consideration and deliberation, to the extent that she was tempted to give up her home, her lover, and all things that had been dear to her.

While current attention should have been centered

predominantly on my induction into military service, incredibly, the immediate point under consideration on those July days was a potential disruption of the courtship and of our love.

I had registered for military service on June 3rd and expected to be inducted the first week of September.

In truth, as I reread our letters, (written sixty years ago), revealing these expanding perplexities confronting us, the eventual consequences could have been much more serious than I had visualized at the time. The contents of our letters, thoughts, ideas, acts, and desires written in a puzzling and contradictory fashion, provide a mirror of what had transpired in the two months of July and August.

Her letter dated June 25th reads:

My Dear Lover:

You see I not only think of you as my lover I say it right out loud. You will be somewhat surprised to hear that I am preparing to attend summer school at Notre Dame. Registration is on June 29th with the term ending August 10th which should be many days before you go to the Army. I greatly detest to be barred of your company for a long period of six weeks, but, you know I have the greatest desire to attend school and intend to register for the fall term. Dear, you just won'd dare to leave for camp before I return. Perhaps you can arrange a visit to South Bend and return together. Remember, I must see you once more before Friday. I beg to remain as ever your sweetheart,

Anna Marie

It appears, based on our conversation a few days later, that a letter from her distant cousin in Cincinnati had been disturbing her in the month of June for it contained suggestions made by him like the previous year to enroll in a college in Cincinnati. Obviously, a letter to him in late June contained the message that she would attend Notre Dame for the summer and register for the fall term since her parents had recognized her maturity and desire and were financially in a position to assist.

When calling at her home on Thursday evening I was mindful, immediately, of a lack of knowledge of certain facts when she informed me she had changed her mind and intended to visit the folks in Cincinnati, her mother's cousin, to explore the possibility of further education in that city. Being aware of Marie's goodwill toward everyone with charity for all, I was a bit fearful that she could be misled. The past questionable acts and words of her cousin of last year as related by her had progressively affected me and caused distrust with respect to his intentions. Simultaneously, I was conscious of the fact that Marie, innocently, would be inclined to give a good account of him in deference to his mother who was a favorite of the family.

The conversation relating to the debatable questions of attending a college in Cincinnati and a potential visit were suggestions of his, similarly, to those of a year ago. They created difficulties that could not be minimized or ignored, resulting in an emphatic negation on my part. These obstacles were not solved that evening, causing a very unsettled relationship with heartbreaking potentials as revealed in her letter of July 1st:

Dear Con:

Wish you could be with me right now so that I could tell you how I feel over the parting of last evening. I certainly would walk a mile, do anything to erase the memories of last night. Please, may I tell you with a big, 'No!' that I am not going to Cincinnati but will stay with you as much as I can. How I wish I could have told you this last night, there would have been less tears and no heartbreaking parting.

Love from your little girl,

Marie.

Not accepting his invitation for a visit with his mother she was justified in writing them that she would remain home since I would be leaving for military service in a few weeks.

Being ignorant of subsequent happenings in the next week, I wrote her a short note, inviting her and her brother Ted to attend a farewell party for my brother Norbert on July 10th since he would be leaving for military service on the 13th.

A surprising and unexpected arrival jolted me from pleasant reflections that evening, as a young man of 22 years, dressed somewhat colorful with jacket, vest, pants and white shoes, emerged from the car as she and her brother stopped in the farm yard. He was of medium height, slim with sleepy pallid eyes and a shallow complexion. As I approached with discretion and misgiving, she said, "This is my cousin from Cincinnati of whom I spoke about at various times. He has been visiting the family the past few days and I urged him to come and meet you." His pleasant boyishness reflected an ill-at-ease composure when we were introduced.

A confrontation, causing more embarrassment, had been created by his presence which added further to the crackup of our friendly relationship. At the time she was unaware of and it would be unfair to consider this confrontation as a deliberate act of hers. In charity, I might say her acts that evening due to embarrassment were questionable, though innocent.

The excitement at the barn brought the four of us to the dance floor whereupon he asked her for a dance and which she accepted in order to relieve him of his discomfort and discomposure since his dress of formal apparel was a marked contrast to that of the group. To show courtesy to both and after two

or three interrupted dances I approached and requested the next number, and as he stepped aside she readily accepted. Scarcely a step or two had been taken by us when I promptly expressed my dubious opinion of her cousin. I said, "When recalling the difficulty at our last meeting and your response I am surprised to see him here. In my opinion the results of his presence adds more to our confusion. You should not have had him come without some explanation in advance for I question his visit at your home and his presence here tonight. I have little respect for him when considering his actions of last year."

I realized at once these words were perhaps too forceful and personal and should not have been spoken. Her outward behavior and disposition took a right-about turn of rigidity. Her reply, "You are not jealous are you? He is only a cousin." At that moment the dance came to an end and we walked over to him and her brother Ted.

Country fiddlers allow little time between numbers and within a few seconds the two were on the floor. Her brother Ted and I saw no more of them for some time and Ted seeing the situation, said to me, "I brought my violin along, let us have a try at the Missouri Waltz and a Strauss waltz at the house." He had an excellent musical ear and could harmonize the violin with the piano well.

After an hour Marie and her cousin came, nonchalantly, into the house and upon entering the room she said, "We were strolling up and down the roadway and upon hearing the piano and violin as we passed, we were certain to find you here." Ted and I continued the rendition of more numbers after which the four of us joined in a song-fest which alleviated some of the frustrations that had been created on the dancefloor. The clock ticked minute-after-minute and the hour of departure arrived.

When leaving the parlor I whispered - unheard by others - "I am taking you home." She replied in a similar tone, "Oh! are you? I think I'll go home as I came." Not to make a scene I ushered her to the kitchen to meet my mother and said, "I'm taking Marie home and will see you later." With this situation confronting her she complied tacitly and said to her brother Ted, upon reaching the farm yard, "I am going home with Con."

Realizing the trip would be far too short and also give little time to express my thoughts, I threw, tact, thoughtfulness, and discretion to the wind for I felt I had nothing more to lose when considering her recent behavior. Upon our departure, within seconds, yes, immediately, I voiced my opinion of his presence and his motives. "Marie, I am very disappointed and very confused about his sudden visit. I am of the opinion that you wrote him or his mother that you would be unable to visit them, thus his immediate call." She made a haltingly reply, "I felt this was necessary but I did not ask him to visit us." "That I am well aware of," was my reply and continued, "But what are his motives for his sudden appearance? I sense he has ulterior ones over and above his supposedly

dubious interest in furthering your education. He would be happy to have you near him, thereby hoping you will find an affection for him and enjoy the city environment." To this she gave no answer but produced an implied smile. In a confidential tone I said, "Marie, you know his mother but you have no knowledge of his habits or his character and why jeopardize your future when you know so little about him? According to your words he is at home with his mother and has no particular employment in spite of his college degree. Knowing your goodwill, sympathy, kindness and sincerity toward all, I am fearful you are being influenced with his suggestions and that you are yielding to overwhelming confidence due to the past friendly relations of the two families. You are playing a kind of roulette, wagering our open and tender love so declared by both of us, against his promises of hopeful and wishful thinking."

In spite of my confidential yet pointed conversation she defended his actions and found no fault with their doings of the evening. Arriving at her home she immediately opened the car door and departed with this challenge, "We are taking the train to Celina tomorrow and I shall learn more about him, Goodbye!" and ran quickly to the house.

Perhaps any lover finding himself in my position and considering her manner of departure would have written as I had in my letter of the 11th, the day after the barndance:

July 11th, 1918

Oh Dear! I do not know if I should have written all of this. Under the circumstances you could have been a bit nervous in introducing your city cousin to the country culture, the beauty of which he is ignorant and can never understand. Your indifference to the group, the act of ignoring me the entire evening, your inattention to correct reflection of his suggestions, and your slinky departure, I must write, QUILTS. I cannot play the roll of Flunky or be a crutch when needed. I am ready to throw in the sponge. I do not know how to think of you, Marie. In your letters you tell me of your love and how much I mean to you, yet, you are ready to throw all to the wind.

At some of our meetings you had been so lovingly good and trustworthy and now these strange acts of yours since he has come into the picture. There is no bitterness in my writing this, just sadness, nonetheless it has a way of a quiet deepening despair. Is this immaturity and are you too young and do you need more time? May I suggest that we forget about the past, forget about him, and not see each other for many weeks. Goodbye, but I'll be praying for you always.

Con.

After reading my letter of the 11th she immediately penciled a reply and her message was one of confusion, bewilderment and despair. It appears a conflict had been created with her parents when she informed them of her intentions to attend a college in Cincinnati and to room with his mother. They were well aware of the fact that these were his suggestions and at the same time they recognized possible potential difficulties. When reading her reply I could appreciate her situation as being on the horns of a dilemma; his pleading and suggestions, (she not mentally able to judge or unwilling to evaluate his insincerity), for a college education, versus the definite negative decision of her parents. Apparently, much confusion must have been present at her home during these days since the trip to Celina as planned by him was postponed for a day, but despite the parents' objections it was taken the next day on Friday.

This was her short and indecisive letter of the 13th:

July 13th, 1918

Dear Friend:

The mystery confronting me this entire week since Monday, is as yet incomprehensible and this little girl's heart is wholly overpowered, not knowing how fast to beat. I'm trying my utmost to ignore your last letter and will not answer your questions. If I leave home, will send a message. If not, you may call for a short time Sunday evening. If I come to a decision it will be necessary to see you no matter how I decide. May God bless you and your acts now and forever is my daily prayer.

As ever,
Marie.

The termination of this courtship appeared unescapably clear. Nevertheless, her decision to see me once more, irrespective of her future move, carried some degree of encouragement, but who would venture an opinion on the results of this mixed-up bag of perplexities? One might adopt the position all was over of this short and very loving courtship. Yet, how could anyone appreciate or speculate on the outcome not knowing all the details, the intimate love messages, existing compassion, and tolerance displayed by each in the past? These mutual characteristics had demonstrated how involved the two of us had become.

It is not surprising that a message of her leaving home had not been sent, but under the circumstances I was ignorant of past events in her home and those that had taken place on the trip to Celina. Thus there were doubts and misgivings facing me as I, hesitatingly, yet bravely called that Sunday evening. A meeting had to take place.

She came to meet me as I entered the farmyard, extended

her hand quietly, lovingly, and invited me to the house. The dim view of our recent debatable relations and her questionable message still harbored misgivings, for by all odds the gravity showed dead-center.

The consoling sequel of this episodic affair was, if at the time I behaved with exemplar restraint, I must admit she conducted herself with exemplar discretion under very powerful emotions. For her, there were to be no more secrets about the matter for she lost no time in telling me all that had happened when we entered the house. As far as anything that had been withheld there was none. Perhaps she should have been more revealing and should have given more thought and deliberation to his questionable suggestions, and the possible consequences before all had come to a climax.

As we entered the front room, she with tear-filled eyes, cameo-like upturned face, cream pallor of her soft clear skin with flushed cheeks and psychologically disturbed said, "The acts displayed by me and what I said are my complete responsibility. The contradictory situation in which I found myself on Friday crept upon me by degrees, day by day, through the cleverness of my cousin who emphasized at first the possibility of obtaining a college degree (not available in her rural environment). Simultaneously, he progressively exaggerated the idea of the convenience of his mother's home while in school, whereby I would enjoy the fellowship of relatives. His confrontation with my parents on Thursday caused him to pressure me to forget home and my relations with you. Truly Con, you must believe me."

After gaining her self-control she continued: "My mind was completely void of any entanglements since my one thought was that he is a distant cousin and our companionable relationship would be similar to younger years. I cannot justify my acts at your home and my sudden departure but I was deeply perturbed, giving no thought to your advice but thinking only of the former family relationship we had had with the widowed mother and her two sons. Perhaps my immaturity denied me the thought of the fact that maturity and responsibility had entered our lives. It might appear contradictory, but initially, the trip to Celina was his suggestion which materialized on Friday. I was truly innocent of his artful and insidious idea which he proposed in order to serve--his--original pur--purpose of--his--vis--it."

At this juncture her voice broke completely, compelling her to move to a chair, burying her hands for some minutes. Allowing her to gain her composure and to concentrate--she continued: "The debatable conversation between him and my mother on Thursday and again in the evening with both my parents and the parish priest who had been invited to participate, continued with no definite solution, yes, a very doubtful one. Not realizing his motives, I was neutral but biased, and at the same time mindful of the fact that this charitable act of the widowed mother would repay to some extent my parent's assistance to her at the time of her husband's death nearly twenty years ago."

My direct confrontation with my parents that day and evening unnerved my mother who in turn asked me to share her room for the night. My dear Con! I have no explanation for my obstinate conduct, including the trip to Celina the next morning, other than youthful immaturity and a furtive attempt to remedy an unfavorable, educational situation that had been beyond my control. My mind must have been completely detached from the logic of my heart in forgetting the past, starting anew, by giving no thought of future consequences. There is no denying that this did comprise a deep sense of dissatisfaction and an atmosphere of foreboding in my mind."

There was a distinct pause in her narration (at no time did I attempt to interrupt her in her frank accusations), and without hesitation and with more composure she continued: "Upon boarding the nearly empty coach on its way to Celina, he, immediately, in a more serious tone referred to my opportunity of relating to a more beautiful life in the city if I would choose to have it. He said, "By remaining in the country a college degree similar to his, would never be mine irrespective of whom I should love and marry. Your parents will be opposed to this thought but in time they will be reconciled and you, knowing my mother and her kindness, she will be a real mother to you. We will be living together in the city, you will have your education and there will be no more slaving on the farm."

"This was his first direct attempt to disturb my relations with you, hoping that his innuendo would get my reaction and support when considering my standby earlier on the educational proposal. As a vision, Con, your contrasting behavior and precautionary words flashed a series of future mental regrets; heartbreaks that would affect me, my family, and especially you. I made no comment to his overtures but deep in my heart the answer to his revolting words was a definite, No!"



Marie's Home

The one o'clock train, South, carried two very disgusting and disappointed persons. Dissimilar in character and effect; for the one a mentally disgusting conduct, and a disappointing loss in wagering the one-trump card of holding-out an educational

wish-fulfillment. The other, she, realizing her inability to recognize his covetousness, conceit, sham, and dishonest character, disturbed and nettled her disgustingly, 'How can I explain this to my parents and my one true friend?'

In respect to his mother, Marie felt a requirement of her parents would be to treat him civil while at their home.

Upon arriving home she apologized and related to her mother and grandmother, of the deceitful happenings on the trip. The father hearing of it later, asked him to leave on the morning train. Thus, with sadness, ended the friendly family relations of the past twenty years.

This simple and honest acknowledgement depicted her sterling character, never weak in the face of difficulty even under surmountable ones. In turn it reflected a true blue character with a heart of gold. The crux of the problem, the possibility of an education for his love, which, when it came to the 'nitty-gritty' she had none for him.

It would be a matter of extreme interest for one to speculate on the course of action that I had taken after hearing this honest, matter-of-fact self-confession. Being confronted with such contradictory situations I came to the conclusion that carelessness and incompetence of youth was not sufficiently compelling to forgive and forget at the moment. Also other, many troublesome and embarrassing questions should be asked and answered. Thus, I disguised a facial expression of blank severity: no smile, a clouded brow, compressed lips, a shrug of the shoulder, and the nodding of my head with these words, "So that is your story."

At the outset there was a need for dialogue but dialogue demanded recognition of all facts, and I was not prepared to acknowledge all in the light of her mysterious and very disturbing behavior the past days which, no doubt, was due to her youth and immaturity. Even with dialogue at this time the pattern of dialogue would have been like the pattern of a crazy quilt. Everything was chummy, allusive, with vague inferences, for all had happened so suddenly and swiftly. In retrospect, there were many emotional aspects at this meeting. The parting was tense for the discussion had touched to a great degree on one sensitive point which was, my 'No' to her repeated question, "Will you forget and forgive this compounded and complex affair of mine?"

My reaction must have created much mental disturbance, alarm, and consternation which had been greatly increased after receiving my challenging letter of July 16th:

July 16th, 1918

Well Marie: I do not know how to salute you but only as a friend in the future. In spite of your repeated responses, "Why not?" my answer is "It can't be the same as in the past. Obviously a simple, 'No!'. As I told you last evening I am terribly tempted to enlist with a teacher associate in the

Marines, thus fight two battles at the same time; that of love and the universal war. I shall be over Wednesday evening and tell you of my future plans and my future relations with you. Pray for me, won't you please that I may choose aright. Good-bye, Sweetheart.

Con.

Our future course of action can be readily recognized since our letters and personal discussions proved that our sense of good judgement still prevailed, and that both of us were eager to carry-on dialogue and continue periodic personal encounters.

At times there were frustrating and embarrassing situations. Nonetheless, these mind-boggling queries never created an affair that had been chased to the point of no-return since we knew that one meeting could not resolve the predicament and difficulty. Fortunately, the few personal confrontations provided opportunity for both to unburden intimate thoughts, ideas, and desires that only written words in a letter could carry.

Late in July after a Sunday meeting at her home I responded with this letter:

July 29th, 1918

Hello Dear Friend:

The conversation of last evening did once more give ample food for consideration and meditation. But viewing your present state of mind, I, as a gentleman, dare not influence you for you alone must find where your real happiness lies, nevertheless, I could give solace and suggestions. I dare say that our feelings, thoughts, ideals, and talents are similar, including our musical abilities, and these attributes are essential to true harmony and perfect companionship, but without a sacrificial, ever-enduring LOVE these are meaningless to me.

When I said to you last evening that your feelings were not true love you were terribly pained. I can only quote from the Harvester, to the Girl of the Limberlost. "Your actions are only loving caresses of a ten-year old girl to a brother you admire." You too, think much of me and hate to lose me and the loss would be that of a brother, but for me it must be true LOVE.

Somehow, I am glad that I can leave for camp for it will give us time to decide the future. Now, Honey Dear! won't you please look at the bright side of my departure for camp. It will make me sad to be away for many months with oversea's duty, but both of us must try to be happy in the interim for it will give us time to decide our future.

So Long, Con.

The rational of the content of this letter was to arouse

her attention and interest in my behalf by having her speculate on the content of my letter and to note her personal reaction to my contradictory implications, which were both negative and positive but supported by the increment of time.

This letter of July 29th which had been sent a few weeks before I would be called into military service proved a most stunning device as one reads her reply some days later. One is tempted to read and reread it for its content lay naked her inner-most thoughts like the cutting of a knife blade.

Apparently, for many nights sleep would not come to her. Her mind must have spun round-and-round in a whirl of speculations, resulting in questions which were like stinging barbs in her consciousness. Poor consciousness! It bore the strains for a night, another day and night, and another night, struggling and threatening to break at times, in tears but confronted always with these questions: Why did I create this situation? Was my desire for an education so important as to jeopardize the love of one who had become very dear to me and to sacrifice my future happiness? Is it already too late to make amends, to justify my inability to decide without he questioning my fidelity, loyalty and my love? I had been truthful, nevertheless, it had been terribly distressing for him to listen to my story? Will he try to understand my difficulty at the time because of mental pressures and strain?

Again, she could not sleep the third night, getting softly out of bed in the stillness of the night (wishing not to disturb anyone), she wandered to the window, leaning her arms upon the sill and finding the air peaceful and still and with much trepidation and fearful misgivings she began this letter:

August 2nd, 1918

My Dearest Friend:

As I watch the sky, the night is coming down and the first stars appear through breaks among the clouds. This is a sad hour because of doubt, mistrust and fear of another lonely night to come. What shall I do? What shall I write? What I write now may seem a contradiction of my acts of a few days ago but they were acts of indecision, blind disillusionment of mixed feelings, and I apologize for words spoken from my lips and not from my heart. Sometimes, certain instances occur during our lives that prompts us to do some very foolish things. In justice to you and myself I glanced through my old scrapbook, a year old and find therein many, yes, hundreds of true-hearted feelings (expressed in words), I had for only one person, namely you. All these were written from my heart.

One cannot write on the heart of another what you do not feel yourself, nor can you reflect anything other than the love one has planted in the lover's heart. My Dear Con! when you say you are ready to give all that you desire in return, then you know that I am in love with you.

My thoughts go back to that first evening when you and I

first met, then to the letter of Valentine's Day, 1917, when I asked you to discontinue our pleasant correspondence that I could not carry-out. How can I forget the summer night of last July - your first visit to my home and my parents? Torn by many conflicting thoughts I decided that you were a real friend, oh! so different than others I had met and knew. The Christmas of just a few months ago when we pledged our love and loyalty, there was no hypocrisy in that first kiss for it came true as an arrow from my heart. Now this dreadful nightmare, a bad dream which I hope is not true when I awake. Please, do not ask me to write again or be your sweetheart unless you are certain you can respect me as if this dreadful affair had not occurred.

Con, Dear Friend, if in the future you should ever bring sorrow or pain I shall try to remember the hours of the highest and most perfect happiness that you gave me.

Oh! how frequently you told me you would never cease our courtship and I believe that and do yet, my trustworthy friend. I beg to be granted that tiny portion of your big kind heart that if yet a friend, I wish to be your most loved one. In all sincerity.

Marie.

Little of incidental information of these questionable days can be gleaned from the pages of our last letters, but, when it is all said and done the full story cannot be told because of the lack of many details no longer in my memory. Nonetheless, the number of meetings and the letters point to the fact that nothing could have been more healing than these personal contacts in bringing to a climax all the currents of conflict, disunity, weakness, growth, and strength. Very significant was the fact we attempted to come to grips with the task of clarifying the points that created the questionabe contradictory situation.

The plain fact of the matter was that no easy solution was available, though both were determined to solve it, in spite of the fact that at times painful and disconcerting problems of love ensued. The predicament in which she found herself was her admitted responsibility which she so genuinely expressed in her letter of August 2nd. Truly, this letter was a masterpiece, for it as other messages of hers, gave a fresh and valuable glimpse of her honesty and sincerity as a person.

Assessing all pros and cons we became aware that a period of total separation would be an advantage for both. We decided that our last meeting would be a late Sunday afternoon, September 4th, the day before I was to take the train for camp. It was planned to be a short period of leave-taking, warm and friendly with observable joy and sadness. It was the kind that created a perfect understanding between us which helped the final farewell.

As I came into the farmyard, stopped the car, and advanced to the house, she came toward me with an armful of old

fashioned garden flowers which included a long stemmed rose which she placed in my lapel and upon meeting me she cried, "You are going away, and I want you to remember me in this manner when you are away." Her tears blinded her, glancing toward me with embarrassment, she brushed them from her cheeks. Indeed, at this instant I felt the ground had been cut under my feet for I was so fraught with conflicting emotions as never before, compelling me to turn and look away momentarily. She was the first to speak and hesitatingly said: "Now that you are going tomorrow the very thought makes me afraid for somehow it takes all my courage to hear of your going, now more than anything that has ever happened before. Having learned to know you so well, your delightful companionship and the many hours of enjoyment this past year, what shall I do for the many months ahead? But you will write me won't you? Write me every other day and tell me about Army life, what you are doing, what you are thinking, about everything, for that will mean great happiness and personal contentment. But, Oh! how I shall miss you." Continuing, "You will let me write to you or I will die."

I took her hands in both of mine and pressed them tenderly and at the same time kissing her tears from her eyes, I closed my eyes tightly in order to press back the tears welling up under my brown eyelashes. Simultaneously reluctantly, and with a firm step, I turned to the car to go, but after a step or two I realized this was not the conduct of a sincere and loyal knight. Retracing the few steps I encircled her weary body, fondly caressing her I made it crystal clear that September Sunday, 1918, that I had great admiration and respect for her and that she was my only true friend and also the most loved one.

Entering the car and with a fond farewell I drove away with an occasional tear rolling down my cheeks, while she started slowly toward the house, crying bitterly, for deep down in her heart she had a feeling that it would be a long time before she would see me again.

Of all the events in our lives the war service was probably the most decisive of all factors in clearing up our knotty problems. The next twelve months experiences provided anchorage for many of life's problems of the future.

Army life enabled me to see myself in relation to other men and those of the opposite sex. Like so many other men I was tossed into a pool of humans of good and bad characteristics: racial, physical, mental and moral. Morally, at times I was confronted with life situations, aggravated by both Army associates and camp partisans, all of which demanded instant decisions. Fortunately, I found my early spiritual training effectively supporting me to meet these real battles of life to the 'nth' degree.

For her a certain amount of solitude was her refuge in the first days of my military service which prompted her to take early morning walks, and with the support of the sun's warmth, she attempted to ignore and expel all the dreadful

thoughts of the last two months. Self-examination by contemplating on our past musical and inspirational meetings, allowed her to probe the meaning of life and encouraged her to project her thoughts into the innermost and secret depths of her soul by asking herself the meaning of love, how to interpret it or if God had created a lover for her. Her prayers were answered in due time with an immutable decision that provided her much consolation during the next twelve months.

The days of September phased into October as the golden weather continued into a lingering Indian Summer, which was enhanced at dusk by the half sunken sun as it dipped in the western sky, radiating streaks of amber, blue, purple, and tints of rich red. She took long walks in the open fields and nearby woods with her two young sisters, Bernadette and Esther since conversation with them would relieve her mind and offset the daily monotonous routine of the day and at the same time strengthen her by meditating upon the pleasant happenings of the year. Perhaps the most effective instrument at the time, with rewarding and beneficial results, was reading the content of my weekly letters with them. It was her little sister, Esther, who assured her peace with these words, "He will come back to you for he told me so secretly." Being encouraged by the members of the family and the daily visit to the nearby church she experienced comfort and solace, all of which converged to one focal point of peace with reassuring trust.

Advancing the clock to the third quarter of the 20th Century, sixty years later, the reader might wish to examine the contents of the many letters that had passed from the soldier boy to the girl he left behind, and, vice-versa, those from the lonely yet cheerful girl to him who was domiciled at various points in the U.S.A.

The time of sharing memories and acquiring a knowledge of the written messages of each in the next twelve months, portraying understanding, warmth, and inspiring confidence, is now the readers' privilege.

Dozens and dozens of letters recording my Army life activities as well as the daily thoughts of the one so dear to me will be the framework of this continued biography. The writing and perhaps the reading of them were tedious at times because of repetitions, but the saving grace was that I was able to lace the most staid happenings of the day with insights of personalities and humorous situations which I hoped would brighten the long wakeful days of one I could not forget. Little did I realize at the time that these precious messages, solicitously preserved, from destruction or loss, by her, now more than a half-century ago, were to be protected by her children for all oncoming generations.

CHAPTER VII

CHRONOLOGY OF WORLD WAR I

Upon arriving at Celina, the County Seat, on the morning of September 5th, I found more than a score of old friends, also army inductees who had assembled for the trip to Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio. This group was the county's semi-annual contingent reporting for army duty. The so-called 'troop-train' after a two-hour run arrived in Dayton, and sidetracked for two hours, allowed one to purchase postcards and stamps in an adjacent store.

Another two-hour run on the B & O Railroad with no more delay brought us near the western edge of the camp, known as the Detention Camp where we were to be quarantined for a week and receive the necessary inoculations. At this point an army officer took command, marched us, four by four, army squad mode, over a drill field to the Supply Depot. The personnel there attempted to issue wearing apparel according to respective sizes, also bed linens, mess kits, and toilet articles. Due to contrasting physical characteristics there was much swapping of shoes, breeches, jackets, rain and overcoats between the men. Urban Fox, a personal friend from Coldwater, six feet, two inches tall, traded his very short woolen overcoat for my elongated one that covered me from my head to the top of my shoes. Within an hour all had been issued the necessary equipment, whereupon eight men were assigned to temporary army tents of ground floor with eight chairs, bunks, and mattresses. With ample time to prepare the bunk for inspection (suitcase out of sight under the bunk), we, hesitantly anticipated the first army meal in the respective messhall.

The first day came to an end with the bugle call of 'Taps' at 10:00 P.M. My first opportunity to write Marie was the evening of September 6th.

Camp Sherman
Detention Camp
32nd Div. Co. 8
September 6th

Hello My Dear:

This is my first letter to you after we parted when your heart was so full of sadness. I mailed a few cards in Dayton which I hope you have received. Reviewing the leavetaking I feel that both of us will be firmer in our decision, happier, and confident when we find our true love. I want you to know that I firmly believe the sincere affection for each will grow in this period of absence. You, no doubt, are also experiencing

similar sentiments with utmost confidence in the future. I am very anxious to have a long letter from you telling me your thoughts, activities at home and church. We are located in the quarantine area, assigned to the above division and company, and housed in tents, eight to each with a chair and a bunk. Three of my associates are from Coldwater: Schindler, VonderHaar, and Fox which creates a pleasant environment. We had one day of army life yesterday: reveille at 5:30 A.M., drill from 7:30 to 11:00 with breathing exercises and calisthenics in the afternoon. I relish the change of life but miss you ever so much. Will take an aptitude test for possible promotion next week.

Your best friend,
Con.

Within a day she received my letter, which she could hardly wait to answer.

Sept. 8th

My Dear Little Soldier Boy:

How happy I was to read of your love, devotion, and trust in the future. I can't refrain from telling you the many times I repeat the words of our old love songs. They charm me for it is then that you are near me as in days of old. You must believe me when I say that I am truly in love with you. I am proud that you are a soldier boy and that army routine agrees with you and surrounded by friends. I hope the shots won't make you tumble. (I hear they are severe.) You will make a good score on the aptitude test, I know.

Your little girl, Marie

Sept. 11th

Dear Little Girl:

Don't be horrified at this wretched paper, I can't find any other on which to answer your love letter of a few days ago. I am writing this from Tent No. 9. The dirt floor is slightly sticky due to the week-old rains. The bunk is my chair while the small suitcase is my desk with a short tallow candle at the corner for my light. My Mercer County pals and the others are in bed. I must hurry for lights are out at ten, 'Taps.' May I confess, a whisper for your ear, that at times I feel terribly lonesome and depressed. To crown it all it is still raining while the chilliness penetrates my very bones which does not improve my dull headache and overall tiredness of body and mind. Perhaps symptoms of the 'Flu.' To reach the company's washhouse some blocks away one takes a muddy, winding walk of planks single file, and in the rain. Goodbye, but just as I am finishing this letter I'm rather disturbed in case you may conclude that I've got the 'blues,' but I feel it is the Flu. I assure you that all will be well in a few days. I have heard (a rumor), that many universities have organized through the

government, 'Students Army Training Corps.' Perhaps if I am successful in the test I shall be able to attend an Ohio college.

Yours, Con

Sept. 15th

My dearest Friend Con:

This is Sunday evening. I must write you for I miss you ever so much I am half dreaming that you are holding me tight in that last caress and hear your last words of assurance, "I'll be waiting for you If I could only see that love-light in your eyes I can't wait until I see you again. My baby sister and I remember you every night in our prayers. You have my love,

Marie.

Sept. 17th

My Good Angel:

Thank you again for thinking of me and your encouraging letter, especially the prayers and your dear sweet sister. I deeply appreciate the strength you have given me in your last letter which reached me when my spirits were low. I repeat, it helps me to carry-on and some day to have you, My Only Love. God keep you and be of good cheer until I return. Don't worry you may be sure that I remember you always, you are at the top and the first of my intentions. After the struggle I'll be seeing you in perfect harmony be assured forever. With much love,

Con.

Sept. 19th

My One Inspiration:

A thousand thanks for your very inspiring message. I, too wish that we were near each other so that I could hear what you write for I see mentally the sincerity in your eyes and heart. Since we are so far apart the pen is the only means by which we can express our thoughts. It is too slow but it has its good points for it forces our intimate thoughts into precise words. It fixes our feelings more solidly than speech which we might hesitate to express in words. Rereading what I have written, it confronts me, challenges me, but helps me in a very personal way of seeing myself in my relations with you.

Your true little girl, Marie.

Sept. 21st

Dear Honey:

About your personal concern don't worry about whether your life is worthwhile, about its disappointments, what it will hold tomorrow or whether or not you are directly engaged in some service as a nurse, you are doing much for all of us by remaining home. We need girls like you at the homefront to create confidence in ourselves. I beg of you when you feel sad and almost paralyzed renew your trust in me and my last words. Please, won't you be ready for a definite 'yes' when I come back to you.

I'll be waiting, Con.

Sept. 23rd

My Dear Love Far Away:

I am unable to tell you of the extreme pleasure I have when I receive my daily news from you delivered by my dear little sister. I just must die if a day should come when these cease. I found myself in dreamland last night just you and I in our own little home with a piano of course and one rocker. My head lay on your shoulder where I found real solace and true comfort. Writing these words brings tears and many happy memories. Please pardon me but you asked me to tell you of my hidden thoughts. What more can I say but, 'Through sorrow and pain wherever you are, your image shall remain within my heart, Sweetheart.'

Marie.

The long days of fading autumn and early weeks of October provided an excellent season for serious and reflective thinking. Periodically, I was sending her copies of popular songs and more difficult musical classics thereby encouraging her to develop her musical talents, which instructively could lessen the monotony. My letters were very personal, relating my experiences in the tent, drillfield, K.P. in the messhall, and hospital duties. She was greatly inspired and consciously proud of my grade of the army aptitude examination taken the third week. Success in this multifacet test qualified me as a candidate for the Officers' Training School, promotion to corporal and a transfer to a special group of ten. My general theme in all my letters was to create a greater interest in my work and to enlist her desire for a future life of happiness with me upon discharge.

The month of September to the end of the year of 1918, will be remembered in the United States as the period of the dreadful Asiatic Flu. Many thousands succumbed to this disease. Camp Sherman experienced the impact of it perhaps to a greater degree than any other center due to weather conditions, overcrowding, and the lack of proper housing and medical facilities.

The new recruits from Mercer County entered the Detention Camp on September 5th under very abnormal weather conditions and lack of personal facilities. By the end of September half of the contingent was sick with the flu and bed-fast. Due to a lack of hospital facilities and medical care four of the eight men in my tent died. Three young men from the group: Rummel and Rinder of Sharpsburg in Tent 8, and Overton of Maria Stein had died and were buried in their respective parishes. Many rumors of the severity of the flu epidemic caused serious concern of my health which caused much anxiety at the two homes.

My letter of September 23 informed her of the results of the aptitude test.

September 23rd

My One True Love:

Thanks a million for your thoughts and the dream which I know will come true if you say, 'Yes.' I have good news for you. The results of the army test of: quick thinking, accurate perception of spoken and written words, memory and intelligence produced a grade of 'A'. I was informed by the Captain of our company that ten of the company of 500 men would be candidates for the Officers' Training Corps. You see my three years of teaching and your company really sharpened my wits. There is a possibility of attending a university under the SATC program in place of the Officers' Corps. I have a slight touch of the flu or something but not serious. Today was the first day of instruction for the new class of ten, called 'Sergeant Candidates.' Each had the opportunity of drilling men in military formation, first as a squad of eight, later a platoon of 100. Fortunately, all went well without any embarrassment at a fence or wall. In the afternoon we had instruction in an informal manner in infantry logistics, solving certain military problems and methods in handling new recruits. Frankly, I would rather attend SATC at Ohio State since the captain informed us that it would be introduced there, starting the second semester in 1919.

More information later, my love, Con.

Oct. 2nd

Dear Sweetheart:

May I salute you thus for you are my true one. First I want to tell you how proud and thrilled I am to hear of your grade, 'A'. Father and mother were very interested in hearing about it and they hoped that you could go to Ohio State. I have a little secret, hidden in my heart, just for you. Maybe, just maybe, we together could attend the school while you are in service.

Good night your own, Marie.

October 4th turned out to be a day of decision for her. In reality it was the closing of an important chapter in her life for she felt that she had reached the milestone of maturity. With a fervent prayer of hope and thanksgiving she was prepared to fulfill a momentous decision, unequivocally. In her letter of October 5th she referred to a certain situation that had confronted her the preceding Sunday, giving no details. I was completely unaware of the place and time of the event.

That the reader might share some knowledge of this significant decision in her life it is necessary to advance the hands of the clock for nearly a year. The complete story was told to me at our first meeting after my discharge.

It appears that a report had reached Mercer County that I had contracted a severe case of the flu and was confined to the base hospital. Since four had died in Tent #9 this shocking rumor could have resulted from the content of letters from enlisted men of the county.

The persistent rumor induced Marie to visit my parents and family on Sunday, October 4th, to render comfort and to discount its accuracy since I had not informed them of any past serious symptoms. For alleviation and consolation the entire family visited the miniature Lourde's Grotto (a replica of the one in France), which had been constructed by the potential army recruits of the parish the year previous. It was adjacent to the village church and within a stone's throw of my home. This afternoon the family held a memorable period of meditation and supplication to the Blessed Virgin, asking her to protect their soldier boys: Norbert and me, and bring them back safe and well.

She related that on this solemn occasion, perhaps a misapprehension, someone had questioned her fidelity and loyalty to her soldier boy. When relating this episode to me later she vouched that she was mentally conscious of hearing the question, "Will you be true to him always?" To someone, somewhere I unconsciously answered, "Yes, forever and ever." Considering this a solemn pledge of loyalty and love for her soldier boy that had been initiated by some spiritual force, she held it as a sacred vow for life, to be her own secret and reveal it to me upon my return.

After returning from the grotto she and my father sent a telegram to the Commanding Officer at the camp, inquiring about my physical condition. Subsequently, a reply from him advised them that I had been off-duty for a few days but was now physically able to assist in the hospital. All were happy to hear the encouraging news which induced her to write me that evening.

October 5th

Dear of Dearest:

If you hear from the Commanding Officer about a telegram do not be alarmed for we were worried about you. A wire from him informed us that you had been ill but available for duty in the hospital. I hope that you are feeling much better when this letter reaches you. I missed you so much last evening and what terrible thoughts I had of your illness. Dear Heart, I wish it were 1919 and once again I could see my one true love. I realize now more than ever that being separated for a period has been good for both. But this past month has been miserable. It was a real test for me which was solved by an experience today, October 4th. You will probably be eager to hear about it but please wait until you come home to stay for I will tell you all. I know positively that I love you only and never doubt my fond love I have for you.

Yours, now and forever, Marie.

My answer to her encouraging letter:

Oct. 7th

My Loyal Sweetheart:

Your lovely words have told me all and someday I shall hear them from your lips but reading them tells me of your kindness and charitableness for all. Both of us have discovered that the written words helps us to reveal to each other what is in our hearts. I deeply share the enjoyment of your experiences and the hidden secret of the 4th. I feel that our love is ever more precious and lasting.

Always, yours, Con.

Her response was apprehensive yet hopeful and optimistic.

October 9th

My One True Love:

We were happy to read that the quarantine had been lifted at the camp and that the YMCA and Chapel is now available for all soldiers. We are worried about your duties at the hospital but available medicine is encouraging. Do be careful for everyday we read of men from surrounding parishes dying in France and at Camp Sherman. Two of your friends of Sharpsburg, one my cousin, were buried yesterday, the ceremony of which I attended. Have you heard from your brother Norbert? It is now more than a month since your folks have heard from him, causing great distress for your mother. I do not think you will see France (what a pity, don't tell), but how much better to take a 'Honeymoon'. You need a better half - that's me, Marie

Fortunately the letter I wrote her while in quarantine had been mailed in which I informed her that I had recovered from the 'Flu' and that there was a possibility of accompanying the body of Fred Overton of Maria Stein, one of the eight in Tent #9, to his home parish for burial, since I had been asked to identify the body at the morgue. But to my dismay, headquarters modified the original provisions a few days later stating that commissioned army officers only were eligible to escort bodies. In retrospect this was my one and only opportunity of visiting my home in my army sojourn.

This was her letter of October 11th:

Dear Old Pal:

So sorry that you were unable to accompany the body of Fred Overton of your tent and whom you identified at the morgue. This would have been an opportunity of a pass for a few days. Many of the local boys have received furloughs on weekends. Instead for me I can only entertain wishes. I wish you will be on your way home when this reaches you, wish I could go on guard with you if that be your lot, or be with you in the kitchen and help you. I wish that you would be on the 9:00 o'clock train tonight and sing and play as of old. I wish we could go motoring tonight if only a mile. I wish, I wish, I wish I were in your arms right now. True blue as ever,

Marie.

Piecing together the many choice remarks of renewed love in her letters I recognized an emerging trust and affection for me. However, I also realized that the absence of many more months could create sadness, loneliness, and utter discouragement that could test our resolutions and determined objective.

The most startling news of all, truly very sad and discouraging, was my unexpected transfer to Buffalo since she had anticipated an early discharge since the headlines of all the papers carried the possible surrender of Germany within a few days.

I had been informed by the Company Clerk at Camp Sherman that my transfer would be October 20th, and due to the encouraging news of an immediate or near surrender of Germany, the Officers Training Corps of the Infantry had been cancelled at the Camp, thus effecting my instant transfer to the Officers Motor Transport Corps with headquarters in Buffalo. This transfer caused me to lose all my friends in the Mercer County contingent, who remained in the Infantry at the Camp. Fortunately they were discharged in early 1919.

The Officers Motor Corps was a contingent, newly formed and staffed by men from Texas who had been in the transportation division the past two years. Thousands of cars and trucks had been manufactured for the government to be shipped overseas but with the prospect of peace these vehicles were to be moved to some central point or depot for storage and later

disposed.

The new transportation corps was lodged in the one wing of the Buffalo Armory in the center of the city, thereby providing many advantages of civilian life for me. The period from November to the first of the year was a very pleasant one since the routine of daily life was much like that of a student, less the task of periodic tests or monthly examinations. A course of auto mechanics and supervisory training at the Pierce Arrow Auto Company, domiciled at Buffalo, had been scheduled every morning for a month. The Pierce Arrow Company in 1918 was the royal auto company in America in the manufacturing of a quality car with international prestige and on par and price with the English Rolls Royce. The afternoon and evening periods were our own with the exception of periodic supervision of the changing of the guard around the armory. How fortunate for me, this was my first opportunity to attend stage shows and musicals of high caliber that were only available in the larger cities: Buffalo, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore or Washington.

The younger generation of today who have all the advantages of travel and educational facilities are unable to realize the tremendous influence the arts, music, cultural exhibits, and contacts with educators had had on my life. All these fostered greater academic pursuits a few years later.

Being in the downtown area with a Red Cross Booth, one-half block from the building we had the satisfaction of an appetizing cup of coffee or chocolate with donuts galore for the asking, day or night. Hand-knit sweaters, socks, gloves and postage stamps were available, if needed.

The armory at the time was the only and important civic center of this large city thus providing a center for large government and civic entertainments. Independent civic centers and sports arena's were only ideas in the minds of the city fathers at that time.

A home-like atmosphere was a privilege and an enjoyment on Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years for me and an associate soldier boy. On two occasions we were invited to a festive dinner and entertainment on Thanksgiving and Christmas at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jank of Buffalo.

The two daughters, Hattie and Helen, brother Ed, and the father and mother provided an unprecedented hospitality from early morning to a late hour of the night. A warm and intimate friendship developed with this family for it was at their home that my sweetheart and I honeymooned a year later.

My stay in Buffalo allowed side trips to Niagara Falls, visiting country districts and villages in Canada, lake journeys on steamers and viewing the canal locks. Indeed, these experiences were very personal to me, giving me the opportunity of imparting much information to the pupils in the little red schoolhouse upon my discharge.

My first letter to her after the transfer was on October 25th:

M.T.C. 573
Buffalo Armory
New York

My dear Little girl:

This letter will be a disappointment but I mailed cards from various cities: Columbus, Cleveland, and Erie with some of the details of my transfer. The company clerk informed me some days in advance in secret, thus I was unable to give any information until orders had been received. This corps, consisting of experienced officers of two years, and a few men from Indiana and myself, have been assigned to this newly-formed organization; Officers' Motor Transport Corps, address as above. At this moment I am billeted rather comfortably with all modern conveniences on the third floor of the armory in downtown Buffalo. My only complaint is that not one of my Ohio friends is with me and now I'm so far from you. The future is uncertain for the most contradictory rumors and wildest yarns float about. I believe that we will remain in the U.S.A. and aid in the disposal of surplus army cars and trucks. Since we have been issued oversea's equipment it is possible that we might take a trip to Europe and relieve the transport corps at the front. But don't worry, the worst is over and with all the news of peace I may be home soon. The city is celebrating with many parades, paper streamers everywhere over buildings and streets. There will be a Victory dance in the armory tonight, though peace has not been officially declared. I send you peace and my fond love,

Con.

Her letter of the 27th carried disappointment and heart-breaking sentiments but also praiseworthy and encouraging words:

My Dear Soldier Boy:

You know I feel proud that you are with the colors and it was really providential that you were called. Perhaps you will not believe this but it is true I would have ceased our courtship for a period. To do this would have been miserable for me and I know for you but these last two months have been wretched and disheartening. Without your lovely letters I would have died. I knew that I loved you dearly but since our parting on September and my experience of October 4th, peace and happiness is mine and will be yours forever upon your return.

Yours, and forever,

Marie.

November 1st

My dear Sweetheart:

It makes me sad to hear of your unhappiness and the thought of being so far from you. I shall continue to write ever day if time permits, but delivery may be very irregular if we should be moving from place to place. To help you in moments of sadness and despair I am mailing you a few new popular songs and my picture. This will remind you of my true love, place it before you and ask it often, "Will you always be mine forever and ever?" It will respond, "Yes, forever and ever."

Con.

Eager to tell her of my new duties, of the new course in auto mechanics at the Pierce Arrow Company, and the many advantages of being in Buffalo, I wrote her the next day, November 2nd:

My Own Love:

I must write you that our new army life is more pleasant; a student life with a college course in auto mechanics at the Pierce Arrow Company. A two and one-half hour session is held in the morning thereby giving me the afternoon and evening free. I shall have the opportunity to attend cultural activities, city buildings and art exhibits, Niagara Falls, and adjacent Canadian villages. I intend to take advantage of all new experiences and relate them to you in the next fifty years if you will allow me. There is no doubt in my mind that you will be my one and loyal listener. Remember, I am always eager to read your lovely messages.

Sincerely yours,

Con.

Having had no letter from her for a number of days I wrote her again on November 4th relating my trips to Niagara, the ride on a Lake Steamer, Canadian visit, and the celebration in Buffalo.

My Dear:

I am eagerly awaiting your letters, no doubt, my transfer has caused the delay. I intend to visit the R.R. Station today and find the shortest way home if a furlough is granted. The Top Sergeant informs me that this is possible if no order for a definite movement of vehicles is given. Just returned from a morning session at Pierce Arrow and intend to mail you a few new songs today. Tomorrow afternoon to Niagara, Canada and perhaps a ride on a Lake Steamer. Some day we shall have a ride on one of these. The big hall of the armory is being prepared for a civic affair, the decoration of which will be held for the Thanksgiving festival. The headlines in the paper states peace will be declared on November 11th at 11:00 A.M.

I desire all your love my Dear,

Con.

November 8th

Dear Con:

I was greatly surprised to receive the new music but above all the precious letter inside. You are so kind but do not send me more for I cannot appreciate them when you are not here to sing them. Dear me, those Sunday nights of long ago were real treasures which I really did not appreciate and value as I should have. Imagine, I heard from the dead-letter office in Canada, stating that a card was there for me if I would send them 2¢. Now Con I would never leave anything in the dead-letter file from you and so I mailed them 2¢ and am now broke. Try to get a furlough for Christmas, I need to see you.

Truest blue,

Marie.

Simultaneously, with the days of the last two weeks of November came a change of duties of the company. Fifty or more Pierce Arrow cars and trucks were to be transported across New York State to Albany, down the Hudson River road and through New York City. They would be transported by way of large ferry boats to the Jersey side and on to Wilmington, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, to Camp Holabird. Since peace had been declared on November 11th there would be no more shipments of materials to Europe since Camp Holabird had been the shipping point during the war, it now became the storage area in the East for all government army vehicles, manufactured and contracted with the motor industry.

Our first convoy of vehicles to Baltimore on November 15th was an occasion of extreme satisfaction to me for it provided an entree to men of commissioned status, including the captain. The Top Sergeant of the company, whose duty was to lead and direct the convoy of vehicles, recommended me to the captain to be his first assistant. Surprisingly, after the first day, due to other details of his office, he asked me to continue to guide the convoy with his truck, subject however, to the directives of the Captain and Sergeant who were leading the truck train with a Pierce Arrow Car. A dozen or more convoys from Buffalo were transported in the next two months through hamlets, towns, and cities of New York State as well as from Boston, Bridgeport, Allentown, and other eastern cities to Baltimore. This was our lot for the next two months, with periodic visits to our headquarters in Buffalo.

Experiencing these trips was my good fortune for they gave me first-hand knowledge of the people, their culture, and habits as well as the geographical and historical atmosphere of the Eastern cities. I did not overlook any occasion that



The Armored White Car



Camp Hollibird
Liberty Truck



Chow Time



Cranking-up



provided pleasure and knowledge of the cities: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington. Invariably, I would associate my book knowledge with the real objects of interest: Niagara Falls, Canadian trips, Five-finger Lakes, canal system of New York and Pennsylvania, Hudson River, Grant's Tomb, Woolworth building, Statue of Liberty, Boston Commons, Ocean steamers and historical points in Philadelphia. I did not overlook: Liberty Bell, Carpenter's Hall, Betsy Ross's home, Independence Hall, and many other historical Revolutionary settings. My trip to Washington was a three-day furlough in conjunction with a visit to my Uncle, Rev. William Lennartz, a Holy Cross priest, professor at the Catholic University of America and Provincial of the India Mission Seminary. The ancestral history of the Lennartz family had referred previously to the story of the Bengal Missions that had been initiated by Father Lennartz in 1917. The revenues from his lectures and the Bengalese Magazine provided funds for the mission centers and the education of young men, preparing for this dedication. His great desire was to be a missionary in India which he never realized due to an eye injury. Subsequently Father Mathias with the aid of Mother Dengal and the Medical Mission Sister continued his work.

The sum total of all my travels and army experience increased my thirst for more knowledge which I was able to satisfy a few years later.

My first letter describing my change of military routine to actual transportation of army vehicles was on November 15th.

Nov. 15th

My Dear:

I received three of your delayed letters and one from Father Will, delivered before starting our first convoy of trucks and cars for Baltimore. The First Sergeant and I, as his assistant, led the train of 50 vehicles to Lima, New York, a distance of 60 miles. Early in the afternoon of the first day the Sergeant asked me to relieve him and continue driving which became my task for the remainder of the trip. He and the Captain were leading in a Pierce Arrow car. On the second day we passed through Auburn, around the Five-finger Lakes, to Utica, and on to Amsterdam which gave us a first view of the Catskills from a distance. There were many small villages nestled in the foothills. The road wound up and down and around the hills, bordered with interesting rock formations. There is little top soil but good dairy country and many orchards. With many small hotels and inns we could spend a week's vacation in this scenic area after my discharge. Today, the third day, we went over the Catskills to Albany, saw the beautiful Hudson, crossed over and down the East side. You will forget all about unhappiness when seeing the typical Dutch houses, quaint, beautifully painted with flower designs and small vegetable gardens in the front. This is Sleepy Hollow country and one can see the Dutch ancestry in the country and villages. Some day I shall tell you about it and read the 'Legend of Sleepy Hollow.'

These last two days have been tough - from 4:30 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. with beds of army blankets on wooden floors in a police or firehouse. During the day we stopped for beans, etc. along the highway and dinner at 7:00 in a public building. The snow and ice in the mountains made our travel very hazardous and it was necessary at times to use fence rails or branches of trees in front of the rear wheels to maneuver the curved hills. In spite of these difficulties I would not have missed any part of the trip to date. But I do miss you and how grand it would be if we could have just a minute together. We have a long future ahead with music. Make this your college year until I come home.

Always yours,

Con.

November 25th

Dear Lost Soldier Boy:

I have been thinking about you so very, very much these three days. I could not imagine where you are since no letter has come my way for three days. I try to overcome the thought of getting a letter from you every day. I am aware of daily moves, but it is so good to hear from you. I would love to hear your voice again. Just to have you here on Christmas would be the greatest gift of all. I think you will be home soon for many boys of the county are being discharged at Camp Sherman. You wrote about joining the SATC in a university, but, please come home first. Perhaps we can enter the same school. I wrote you a long letter Sunday evening for I was so dreadfully lonesome and blue. I cannot tell how eager I am to see you again. I am not worthy of you but I love you so much, Dear. I mailed you a box of eats for Thanksgiving. Please come home.

Marie.

After delivering the convoy of 50 trucks and cars in Baltimore we returned immediately to Buffalo by train and spent Thanksgiving there. It was on this occasion that a buddy from Indianapolis and I had the delightful visit with the family of Jank. The contingent remained in Buffalo until the New Year which gave me the opportunity of describing in greater detail the experiences I had in New York City and down the Eastern coast to Baltimore. Upon arriving in Buffalo, three of her delayed letters were given me to which I responded with my letter of the 26th.

Dear Lonesome One:

We arrived in Camp Holabird yesterday but returned by train to Buffalo on a night coach, no bed accommodations, arriving late this morning. But to my joy in spite of a sleepless night, three of your letters were awaiting me. I wrote my last letter in Newburgh, General Washington's Headquarters in the

Revolutionary War. Coming down the Hudson highway we had a glimpse of the River at times above New York City and saw the large fleet of battleships and destroyers, U.S.A. I had a beautiful view of the skyline of the city. Crossing over on a large ferry boat we lodged in Newark for the night.

Since we were to remain here for a few days a 'pass' allowed me to see some of the sights of New York: Woolworth Building, Fifth Avenue, St. Patrick's Church, Wall Street, etc. I also attended a marvelous ice show at the Ice Palace. Then on to Philadelphia, arriving there on Saturday giving us a day in that city on Sunday. We had meals and bed for two nights in the K. of C. Hall, adjacent to the Cathedral. I visited as many of the historical buildings as possible, the experiences of which I will relate to you, hopefully soon, and take away all of your sadness. On to Wilmington, Trenton, on Monday, permitting us to lodge in a small armory in Elkton, Maryland. Oh! how I wish I could relieve you of your sadness. Have your brother Ted take you to a dance at St. Henry and visit Marcy, occasionally. Do attend some parties in the parish before and after the Christmas holidays. I am afraid your sadness will cause you ill health and develop a serious sickness. What a blow that would be to your soldier.

I love you, Con.

She, realizing the danger of ill-health from continuous anxiety and worry adopted a measure of improved spirit and contentment. She, entertaining the possibility of my Christmas furlough, was determined to renew her pledge of loyalty and fidelity on the anniversary and prove her love for me. In spite of adverse circumstances and no Christmas furlough the New Year brought her encouragement and new hopes. Her former spirit of fun and frolic could be observed in her letters which had been influenced by my possible discharge, the passing of time, and the peaceful ending of the war. Her letter of December 15th appeared to be carrying a note of hope.

From Your Bad Little Girl:

Just mailed my Christmas cards, one to you with a 'Merry Christmas' on it for I am keeping all my love for you on that day, our anniversary of love. I'll not give up hope until the last train pulls in that evening. I am no longer praying for peace but have Santa put you in my stocking that evening. I am no longer crying or lonesome but reviewing all the pleasant memories of the past year, erasing those of July and August, forever. My desire for an education caused these heart-breaking days. These months of separation have given me a new look on life and I now realize how much I need you for my happiness. We are both young and will find a way of acquiring an education.

Always yours,

Marie.

December 20th

My Dear, Smile and Read:

I am afraid this short note will be a disappointment but smile and remember the beautiful Christmas of last year when we pledged our loyalty and love to each other. Let us repeat it in silence on this day. I cannot be with you. No furloughs due to the uncertainty of our travels. All our dreams have been shattered but every cloud has a silver lining. I bring you lots of good cheer and a renewed kiss by way of Santa.

Yours always,
Con

* * * * *

Two Days before Christmas

Dear Absent Lover:

This is the 22nd, week of our Forty-hour Devotion and I have been in church most of the day, pleading for a furlough for I want you so much to renew my loyalty and love to you. I attended services tonight and spoke to Joe Kaup and Ed Rummel who have been discharged from Camp Sheridan. It was good to see them and we resurrected some old happenings of past days but I want you. A merry Christmas to you and a true blue kiss. I was unable to finish this letter until today, the 28th, for I had the flu and some kind of heart ailment. I am weak from a lack of food but now on the mend. Oh Dear! I should have all this on my 20th year, so unhappy and no Christmas. All this will end happily, I know Dear, but it is as hard as stone to wait so long, but I promise I'll be more cheerful in the New Year.

Much love,
Marie

* * * * *

January 3rd, 1919

A Kiss For You:

Well honey received the best message ever, a true kiss from you on our anniversary. Your love message gives me courage. Do repeat them in every letter until you see me. Many of my letters have been descriptive matter of the country and cities I have visited, perhaps not too many honied words but you can read my love between the lines. I imagined you at my side and be assured, we together will be repeating these experiences. I am so sorry to hear about your illness but that you are now on the mend. You must be more cheerful in this New Year for some day soon your worries will be over. I thank you for your prayers and our Blessed Lady will bring me back safe to you. Now Dear, do not cry or worry, I am alive, the war is over, and time Will bring me to you. I am happy that you can knit

but do not forget your music. Sing and play the old and new melodies. I am in Allentown, Pennsylvania since our company will move the large army trucks, 'White and Liberty' (see en closed picture), to Baltimore. We are at present lodged in the horsebarn at the fairgrounds. Here is where the great trotter, 'Dan Patch' made his record of 1:55. This trip gave us an exciting view of the Susquehanna River, WilkesBarre, high mountains, tunnels, with heaps of coal and coal mines everywhere. We passed through 'Pennsylvania Dutch' country of spic and span farms and villages. I do not know when I'll get the discharge but, "I'll be Loving you Always". You have the melody, and you are my sweetheart.

Con.

* * * * *

It was near the end of February when the headquarters of Motor Transport Corps M.T.C. 573 was transferred to Kearney, New Jersey, adjacent to New York City across the Hudson River. The doughboys had been returning by the thousands from Europe during the first months of 1919 with many 'hero' parades down 5th Avenue. It was also true that my friends at Camp Sherman were being discharged, news of which provided ample tears and heartaches for my sweetheart. It appeared that the Transportation Corps would be the last dismembered unit. It was essential for all army vehicles to be stored in certain depots.

Because of my education and ability as a typist, the Captain had me promoted as assistant Sergeant in the Quartermaster's Corps. In addition to the duties of company clerk I was responsible for company cars, equipment, food and daily necessities of the company.

The next three months allowed me more freedom of action and the ability to schedule my time when off duty. This is not to say there was a diminished performance of functions, Actually more, but all were definitely scheduled by the Captain. I had no difficulty in receiving a pass to New York City, visiting Wall Street, Fifth Avenue, Times Square, the Statue of Liberty, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Macy's and to view the many parades of returning soldiers. These experiences were truly exciting and very educational.

Occasionally, the Mess Sergeant and I would ferry over to Governor's Island with a one-half ton Dodge and pick up supplies for our group of about 30. All married men had been discharged. As time approached, the beginning of May, the Mess Sergeant had been discharged and our company dismantled to a group of 15: The Captain, a few mechanics, and a few 'Non-coms.' This brought me the promotion of Sergeant of Supplies and office clerk.

The duties of mine for March and April had been varied: writing and filing of daily reports to headquarters of all activities of the company, the movement of cars and trucks, and the reporting of all company supplies. During the last two weeks of May I completed the discharge papers of the remaining members of the company, formulated my own discharge papers,

which was signed by the Captain providing my transportation to Camp Sherman. I arrived at this Camp on May 25th, the personnel of which completed all final papers and provided me with new army equipment, back pay, transportation to my home and a Certificate of Discharge.

It was on March 5th when I had the first opportunity of writing Marie from Camp Kearney, New Jersey.

M.T.C. 573
Camp Kearney
New Jersey

Dear Little Girl:

I am writing you on my third stage of army service as assistant to the Supply Sergeant and Chief Company Clerk. The entire company has been transferred to Kearney since all our activities will be in the East. It appears that we are approaching, nearer and nearer, to the day of dismantling the company since the transfer has reduced our group to approximately half. I am known as the Acting Sergeant and Chief Company Clerk. This promotion creates more duties in the office only but definitely scheduled by the Captain. This will allow me greater freedom of action and, no doubt, more visits to New York City, it being within fifteen minutes by ferry across the river. Of course, this new detail cannot go on forever. The past year in the army and your absence has had merit for they have brought definite decisions. This has been a life of adventure and freedom from care that must end soon. You know there is no need for me to tell you that our love has grown from a withering sprout into a mighty oak. Our letters have declared over and over that that you were born for me and I for you which we will realize when we meet again. May the Almighty protect us always and our love, never to be marred by the smallest of doubt.

Con.

* * * * *

Fortunately with renewed spirit, Marie accepted the discouraging news of 'no furlough' and accepted my advice to be her old self of bygone days, attend parties, and renew companionship of old friends. Her letter of March 7th carried messages of her former disposition and personality of witty remarks, merriment and jollity. However, equally mixed with these were entreatings remarkable messages of her love for me.

March 7th

My Dear Absent Teacher:

On Sunday night I play the piano, I mean I play at it sometimes and think I'm in the II grade at present. Don't you think I am progressing rather rapidly? I had a good teacher on Sunday nights long ago but the 'Being' disappeared and never came back. I paid my fee and I can't understand why he eloped. I curl my tossed hair, wear sunbeam smiles, tell him often, 'Gee you are cute' give him chicken, pie, olives and cream,

Honorable Discharge from The United States Army



TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify, That* Constantine J. Hecher
† 3858451-1st Lt. Col. M.T.C. Unassigned - last assigned M.T.C. 573

THE UNITED STATES ARMY, as a TESTIMONIAL OF HONEST AND FAITHFUL SERVICE, is hereby HONORABLY DISCHARGED from the military service of the UNITED STATES, by reason of 1. E.T.S. per para. 6, U.S. Ar. 106, 1918

Said Constantine J. Hecher was born in Wendelin; in the State of Ohio

When enlisted he was 21 years of age and by occupation a Teacher. He had brown eyes, dark hair, dark complexion, and was 35 feet 4 1/2 inches in height.

Given under my hand at Camp Sherman, Ohio this 24 day of May, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen

FRED H. ZINN,
MAJOR INFANTRY U. S. A.

Commanding.

FORM NO. 225, A. G. O.
Oct. 9-18

* Insert name, Christian name first; e. g., "John Doe."

† Insert Army serial number, grade, company and regiment or arm or corps or department; e. g., "1,500, 477 - Corporal, Company A, 1st Infantry"; "Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps"; "Sergeant, First Class, Medical Department."

‡ If discharged prior to expiration of service, give number, date, and source of order or full description of authority therefor.

2-5154

our men who was killed, crushed between his truck and a loose railroad car. There will be at least a dozen or more reports to be written to headquarters.

The company returned today which means about a day and a half of clerical work to record number and type of all vehicles, gasoline used and all other expenses. Tomorrow, I will go for supplies to Governor's Island which is near the Statue of Liberty. Perhaps see more of New York before I am discharged. Goodbye, and will see you soon.

Con

* * * * *

May 20th

Dear Honey Bunch:

The past week I have been completing discharge papers for all members of the company. So here I am on the eve of leaving M.T.C. 573 and old friends. All are now discharged to the last man which is myself. I will be on my way to Camp Sherman for discharge about the 25th. Will write or call you from there. I must close this last army letter with a bit of our oldtime versification:

"Oh! what a wonderful day I've not seen in years
For there will be many caresses and never more tears.

Place your tiny arms around me Honey and hold me tight
I'd like to be your supporting man and never out of sight.

Your love is my love and always will be mine.
Please, never fret or pine, it never will decline
Therefore, hold tight my dear the love that is forever thine."

This is the prayer of your returning soldier boy.

Con

* * * * *

Receiving my last letter from Camp Kearney, Marie at last realized the truth of an early discharge which opened her mind and heart with anticipation to this period of spring. It was May, the apple trees were in bloom, the spring garden was a carpet of green, the bright leaves on the maples and the flowering shrubs were alive with robins, cardinals, blue birds and others, twittering and darting about. The soft fleecy clouds hovered over the blue sky creating a glorious day and all future days for her. The letter informed her of my discharge in a few days, whereby I would complete my own service-record for the year, signed by the Captain who would provide money for my transportation to Camp Sherman.

CHAPTER VIII

RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE

According to my recollection I arrived at Camp Sherman about May 22nd for the necessary proceedings for final discharge, physical examination final pay, and an issue of a new army uniform. In spite of the new army outfit I purchased a civilian suit with belted coat (the style at that time), shirt, tie, and shoes in Chillicothe, and wired her that I would be in Greenville on Sunday afternoon, May 29th. The electric inter-urban car, running directly from Dayton to Greenville brought me to the St. James Hotel in the early afternoon of this memorable spring day. Due to a punctured auto tire (an experience not new in the days when tires were poorly constructed), Marie, with my sister and brother, arrived about an hour late.

At last, happily, we were in a strong embrace and instantly our lips met. Undisguised, she committed herself to the kiss of gentleness and naturalness, simultaneously, initiating a mutual sigh of breathless joy, hoping never to end, she whispered, "I was dreaming of this all year, do not take this dream away from me." The passing year was a millenium that had been filled many times with many doubts and heart-breaking moments. This of course, would be natural in view of the questionable and confused leave-taking that September of last year. The departure at that time was no uncomplicated matter and we knew that it would require a certain amount of give-and-take. The many hundreds of letters, criss-crossing from East to West plainly demonstrated that each of us was more eager to give than take. The circumstances of absence and the constant postponement of my discharge created temporary frustrations that created the crucible of a pure steel of love.

The trip to her home was one filled with joy, happiness, open-heartedness, and absence of all formalities and bashfulness. In due time I was again united with the members of her family who considered me as one of them and demonstrated their affection with an abundance of hospitality and love. With much pride her six-year old sister, Esther, was my constant companion and related about her privilege of carrying the many hundreds of letters from and to the local post office. She did not fail to tell of the many happy hours she and her dear sister spent together upon the receipt of one, but also the sadness in the absence of an anticipated message.

After a two-hour visit Marie accompanied us to my home, where equal excitement, enthusiasm, and love was shown by my family. Seeing me was a great relief for my mother who said, "If, only, your brother Norbert would be with us, I would be so

happy." For all past homecomings never before did my presence create so much happiness and personal affection among all members in their welcome. As for Marie she was radiant at the dinner that evening, her high spirits infected all members at the table. The listening and relating of the experiences of the past year of each member completed the happiness of this memorable event. The talk of the family members ran as usual on rural topics and events that had been related directly to our absence. Mother spoke of her disappointment and anxiety of Norbert's whereabouts since they had had no message from him after he had been called to the front in the first days of November. My father and brother Albert reviewed the fall and winter farmwork and chores without the help of us. Sister Zita spoke of the many meetings with Marcy and Marie and the many letters written to me, accompanied by packages of goodies. Indeed, my younger brothers told of their many visits to Marie's home and their school experiences. The incident of the pilgrimage to the parish grotto by the group on October 4th, and the wire to the Commanding Officer at Camp Sherman by Marie and my father, were related minutely and distinctly. This was a deeper matter for Marie than others realized. She, raising her eyes, gazing searchingly into mine said, "Oh! what a memorable day that was for me."

After a period of calm reflection on the happenings of the year, Marie introduced a new subject for consideration. She, being fully conscious of the fact that I had been happy and fully occupied with rural school and parish activities in the past wished to learn whether or not my army and city experiences had changed my ideas of country environment. Opening up the topic she said, "Con, you have seen many stage plays in the East, do you find that the players have given you a different picture of city worldliness of life than this country environment of peaceful living?" How would I answer? What could I say? My response, "I did enjoy legitimate stage pleasures in a sense and was momentarily grateful for the opportunity of seeing them but meditating later upon life's problems one recognizes the underlying sham and hypocrisy of it all."

Marie leaned back in her chair and meditated upon these words of mine which appeared to be of intense concern to her. She had discovered what she wanted to know and it made her happy, for I was still the country teacher and would continue to find satisfaction in my occupation with probable future additional academic work. I continued, "It appears that one enjoys the whole affair of city entertainment and superficial culture at the time but suspiciously dissatisfied with it the next moment. One day would be much like another. Something new one day would generally be repeated the next while the on-lookers always hope and expect it would be different tomorrow."

Later that evening my brother Albert returned us to her home where I remained for the night.

Marie's conversation of wit and humor at my home was the prologue of her conduct with me that evening. Our entire evening was devoted to dreams in progress, confined with mirth and

gravity but mutually respected. This being our first meeting and alone together since that eventful leave-taking in September, she triumphantly related the story of October 4th, which to her was both psyche and spiritual. Propitious happenings during our courtship, though sometimes discouraging, she was convinced that the message was truly a revelation to give her peace and happiness for life.

The immediate hours of laughter and tears, conscious and insensitive dreams, romance and love had been pressured by the ever tick-tock of the clock, which at last instinctively brought us to the realization that it was no longer a late hour but an early morning one.

Fortunately, the ground-work for this eventful evening had been planned by me months in advance. Instinctively, I sensed the true meaning of her love in all her letters and the eventful incident of October 4th. Yes, I surmised that her thoughts of apparent insurmountable knotty-points of education, and the status of being a respectful wife of one other than a country teacher had been completely dislodged.

I had the opportunity of selecting a small brilliant cut diamond, set in platinum, while in the New York area. Though it was only a fraction of a carat (my army dollars were few and far between pay days), I was impressed with its delicacy, a daintiness so like her tastes.

Before retiring to our respective rooms for a few hours of sleep at this early morning hour, and before the stars disappeared and the sun inched itself above the horizon, shedding its warm rays over the earth, I presented a tiny, velvet covered, lily-shaped box to her, the content of which was hidden by a snap-lock covering. As gallant as any knight of old, opening the case, removing the tiny object, simultaneously, taking her hand and gazing into her tear-filled eyes I said, "Will you, my true love and only sweetheart, allow me with this tiny object to ring you forever and ever to the one who is not worthy of you but desires to face all of life's problems with you?" She, with quickened pulse and cheerful heart responded in the softest audible voice, "Your words have been in the secret recesses of my heart these many months. You have satisfied my aching heart and completed my happiness for life."

Being unaware of the ever-beat of the clock, the night had faded hard in the diffused light of the morning sun. Caught in the ecstasy of our memories, we were insensitive of the golden sunrise of that last day of May, but were compensated, hundredfold, by the joys of those bewitching hours, vitalized by expressions of deep loyalty, faith, and love for each other.

In view of the swiftly passing days into early June, yet it had only been a week or two since my discharge, I became disturbed in attempting to find a teaching position for the coming year for not one was available. I was not too optimistic in finding one since contracts for teaching and organizer positions had been completed in March. Surprisingly, a one



Marie
and
Three Younger Brothers



Esther—6 years old
My Goodwill Ambassador



Marie
Pres. Hughes Univ. Ball



Anton & Anna Nordenbrock



Marie—Age 19 Years

room country school, east of Minster, was still available. Regrettably but without choice I accepted the position, (one similar to my first year of teaching experiences in 1915). In reality this would entail lodging with a family near the school each week, and permit me to visit my home and Marie's on weekends. She, above all, felt the heaviness of another year of many winter nights without her beloved in her Dream Castle.

Her brother Ted had been married in late June. She as a bride's maid and assisting with the necessary wedding preparations, though joyful for others, added more to her complexities. The eventful days of festivities, excitement and greetings came and went. There was no mistake about the fact that her participation in this affair and my lack of a parish teaching position, undeniably reflected much discouragement and created grave doubts for us of having our wedding within the year.

My homecoming had not changed her morning routine of visiting the nearby church. In obedience to her natural instinct of relying on Providence to bring her soldier boy home she was predetermined to find consolation and a possible solution to the instant and pressing new difficulty by attending daily mass. It had been the church that filled the emptiness in her heart the many months, thus she lost no confidence in the fact that the Hand of Providence would provide a meaningful year ahead.

It was a clear and brilliant morning in early July. The sun's rays spread across the sky in a fan-like array of soft colors with tiny curls of clouds, looking like the hair of angels spreading themselves out like a fan of ever-changing colors and becoming more pale as the sun rose in the sky. It was just such a day when the very atmosphere was charged with anticipative blessings. Indeed upon leaving the church she was hopeful yet breathless and doubtful.

It seems almost incredible that on this morning attending the early service with a dozen villagers was a schoolmate of hers whom she had not seen for many months. Both had completed the grades at Burkettsville. He had attended the same academy with me for three years, completed the teacher's course, and had had two years of teaching in a one room rural school before entering military service.

He and Marie reached the steps leading from the church at the same time and immediately began a conversation on the happenings of the past year. It is true that he had a shy rather effeminate sort of character and with some faltering he informed her he had contracted for the teaching and organist position at Carthage in March for the coming year. With an odd kind of giggle (a familiar habit of his, known by all), he said hesitatingly and uncomfortably, "This is my first attempt to direct a choir and to play a pipe organ. The idea of having a teacher's house and not married gives me the creeps and a skittish feeling."

One might call it one of her disturbingly brilliant acts,

for within moments, with blue irresistibly twinkling eyes and a faint contemplative smile, she responded, "Con has recently returned from Camp Sherman and has been unsuccessful in finding a parish position since all contracts had been completed earlier in the year. He was offered a one room rural school near Minster which he will accept if no other is available." She, approaching a step nearer with a more expressive tone of voice, conveying a personal interest in his behalf, said, "You know there is a possible opportunity and an advantage for you by exchanging positions with Con for one year, which would allow you to prepare for a future organist position. This, I know he would gladly consider and I would be deeply grateful to you for this substitution, it would fulfill our great desire to be married this year."

She with equal calm continued, "By your doing this you do not feel that we ought to wait longer to be married?" This sort of diminutive plea brought an instant response and after serious reflection, he said, "Yes, I shall be happy to have Con take my school. You well know that I have had the greatest respect and admiration for you through our school years. Con and I had a close association as college chums, though he had less difficulty with books and was very effective as an organist. I shall contact the president of the Carthagena School Board today and have them accept my resignation and inform them of Con's qualifications."

My good friend and I carried out the necessary details of the transfer. Within a week the Carthagena School Board completed the agreement of \$125 per month for the school year. Simultaneously the school board at Minster eager to find an acceptable teacher agreed to the transfer. It is to be noted that my well-wishing associate taught for one year only, discontinued teaching and accepted a position with the State Board of Parole of Ohio.

In the month of June my brother, Norbert, had returned safe and well from overseas, discharged at Camp Sherman, and decorated with a 'Silver Star' for bravery under fire at the front. According to the personal account of Sgt. Francis Clark of Xenia, Ohio, his immediate non-commissioned officer, my brother volunteered to carry a secret message from his platoon to another under fire on November 5, 1918.

Seven American divisions had concentrated at Sedan, a large German Bridgehead located at the coterminous point of Belgium, France and Germany. He delivered the message without harm and was cited by his Commanding Officer for bravery with an entry in his military service records to be awarded the 'Silver Medal.'

Of all the excitement reverberating to every corner of the Nordenbrock home none exceeded that of the news of the coming wedding. Cheerfulness and happiness reflected the attitude of every member, from the youngest of six years to the elderly grandmother of ninety.

Preparing for the impending day: the how, when and

Distinguished Service Cross Pl. 1st Lieut. Robert H. 3528728

During the action of the 1st Infantry near Sedan, France, November 7, 1918, for conspicuous acts of gallantry. When his platoon and one other had become lost, he volunteered to establish liaison between them and the rest of the company.

Although subjected to deadly machine gun fire in crossing open spaces and ravines, he showed utter disregard for personal safety and extreme devotion to duty, continuing ~~on~~ at his task alone until he had found the company, when he returned and safely guided the two platoons safely to it at a time when their arrival was most effective.

The Citation

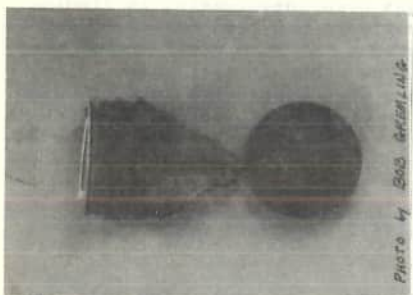


Photo by EAG GREENLAND

The Service Cross



Gen and Herber

where, demanded more than ordinary consideration and serious thought by us since the new school year was to begin in two months.

Despite the fact Marie had recently experienced the many details confronting a bride, essentials, other than the conventional and established procedures, many had to be modified, including the significance and the solemnity of the occasion. Knowing the importance of such essentials she had these intricacies quickly and immediately solved by saying, "My wedding will be a very simple procedure; one bride's maid; both bride and maid will appear in navy-blue suits; (a disturbing and unheard of bride's raiment in the country at that time), the wedding feast will be on October 1st, high noon at my home; and to be preceded by a solemn mass with Father Will, the uncle, as celebrant. Father Schweitzer the local pastor, and Father Schweiterman, Rector of the nearby Novitiate as assistants." Her one concern and desire was my approval of these innovations, and I readily agreed to all.

With the wedding day on October 1st it took a stint of brushclearing for me to solve my many entanglements: the opening of the parish school on September 15th; an organist substitute for the two Sundays; the method and financing of the affair; and scheduling the honeymoon trip to Niagara Falls. Insurmountable as it appeared with no recourse of salary from teaching not yet earned, I was able to solve each with mental agility and resourcefulness. The school board allowed the school term to begin on September 15th, with one month of salary in advance and a two-week vacation for the children. The pastor, Father Boniface Russ, former Seminary rector at the adjacent institution implied that the parishoners should have no difficulty in their devotions without an organ for two Sundays.

We planned a leave-taking immediately after the wedding dinner to board the L.E. & W. Railroad at Coldwater for Cleveland. By taking an overnight Lake Steamer in early evening we would arrive in Buffalo in early morning. I had not forgotten the generous and hospitable family of Mr. and Mrs. Jank, two daughters Hattie and Helen and brother who had welcomed the two soldier boys on Thanksgiving and Christmas while in military service a half year ago. They, upon receiving my message were delighted and honored and extended an invitation to spend our honeymoon at their home.

The month of July had slipped by too quickly and the first days of August reminded us there were many wedding details to be completed. The last two weeks in July provided sufficient time for the participants in the ceremony to acknowledge their desire and enthusiasm to share in our happiness. Announcements had been printed promptly and were in the mail by mid-August. Within due time both of us had chosen appropriate wearing apparel for the ceremony as well as the so-called 'going away' attire. The ritual being a double-ring one, we chose yellow-gold companion rings, (platinum was too expensive), the outer circle of each was etched with a dainty fleur-de-lis, (both rings are now heirlooms of the family).

For her wedding gift it was the desire of her parents to provide the necessary household items and furnishings for the home. These included: a well-stocked kitchen; table, chairs, etc. for the dining room; furnishings for the parlor including the piano; and a complete bedroom suite. Many of these desirable articles are treasured by my children and are heirlooms in the 14 room, 150 year old house on the farm.

I remembered her with a tooled leather handbag of oriental design, its secret compartment enhanced with twenty, crisp \$20 bills to be her's for the trip. She in turn gave me as a keepsake, a gold stick pin topped with a miniature pearl.

It was highly unlikely for us with all the outlay of money to invest more than the minimum in a second-hand automobile. This effected the purchase of a 1915 runabout 'T' Ford which solved our transportation problems for the next two years.

The end of the two weeks of school ushered in the two weeks of extended vacation to the great delight of the pupils but perhaps to the disagreeableness of the parents. However, it gave the pupils the opportunity of learning first-hand the personality of the teacher and many complimentary remarks of my method of teaching and discipline had drifted back to the parents. More than fifty years later, pupils who had acquired professional status, related that the two-week vacation was a tantalizing one for they had anxiously anticipated the resumption of school activities at the time to learn more about the new teacher and his bride.

I had purchased a dozen laying-hens a few weeks earlier which provided daily chores for one of the pupils in my absence. It had been allotted to one who in time chose a religious dedication, Father Hartke. But my choice at the time was mildly contested by a number of other boys in the neighborhood. This problem I solved by having all participate in the chore.

The first day of October was ushered in by the weatherman with an overcast sky. Shortly before the ceremony at the local church, two blocks distant from the homestead, a storm arose, bringing black clouds and torrents of rain that suddenly and speedily disappeared, allowing the wedding party, relatives and friends to proceed to the church.

One need not relate that the small church was filled to capacity: Marie's immediate family of ten, five sisters and six brothers, three of which were married with growing families; my older sister with a young family; another sister Zita the bride's maid; my five brothers; dozens of cousins and friends; and many parishoners had crowded the small frame church church, allowing standing room only.

Her father, Mr. Nordenbrock, tall, stately, and proud, escorted her down the aisle, and upon presenting her to me a tiny teardrop slowly disappeared down his cheek. It was an auspicious yet momentous occasion for the village; a solemn wedding ceremony of three priests, the likeness of which had

never been experienced in this rural community. The usual and important vows of loyalty and fidelity were spoken and pledged with the ritual of a ring solemnity. The solemn mass followed immediately, closed with the priestly blessing over the couple and to all, attending the mass.

At the end of this crowning ceremony, to everyone's surprise, the sun was lazily peeking through the clouds and no rain. The wedding party was taken by auto to Marie's home. Others, mainly children and teenagers preferred to stroll, leisurely, chatting with cousins and friends whom they had not seen for weeks. The parishoners, mostly young friends, departed as they came in parades in automobiles, carriages and horses. There was much hilarity, blowing of horns, smacking of whips, and clattering of hoofs, thereby creating a bit of consternation among the sauntering teenagers, causing them to edge nearer and nearer to the grass-covered sloping roadside to duck the dull colored splashes from partly filled ruts.

Without any surprising lack of urgency all assembled in a short time at the house and the spacious yard. The honored and invited priests were brought immediately by the second automobile and within a few minutes the wedding party, distinguished guests, and parents were seated about the huge elongated table while a toast of a dozen lines was rendered by Marie's young sister, Esther. According to her version some years later she had been thoroughly trained for weeks in memorizing and reciting these lines by the good sisters of the parish.

During the hour or more of sumptuous feasting, interspersed with warm and affectionate conversation, punctured intermittently with a pun or story by Father Will, new and darker clouds of an approaching storm appeared. The rain came down in torrents but in spite of the downpour we were compelled to meet the train schedule at Coldwater.

With the blessings of the parents and the often repeated comments of Uncle Will, "I have tied a tight knot and it can never be broken, now sail away on the magic carpet into the wide blue yonder." We started for the station at Coldwater about 15 miles to the North.

Little did we realize that a possible catastrophic, embarrassing situation was in the offing. It materialized in a ten mile run in the downpour with the Apperson automobile. Incredibly, it died a sudden death, and with all the wheedling of words and wielding of tools it was dead beyond immediate revival.

After an eternity of lapsed time another car appeared carrying Dr. Charles Sullivan, the local young M.D., who had recently arrived to practice medicine in the community. He truly was the angel and sincere friend for life. He, realizing our difficulty in attempting to catch the train in Coldwater with only a few minutes available, transferred the baggage and occupants to his car. Praying, and with a few minutes of borrowed time we had hopes to make the scheduled train time. But



Rev. William P. Lennartz,

Con & Marie Fecher
Hattie & Mildred Jank
Lake Steamer to Buffalo



all was in vain, the train was pulling away as we approached and on its way to Celina ten miles distant. Unimpressed by this almost insurmountable predicament the young M.D. exclaimed: "We will go to Celina and catch it." The 'Pot of Gold,' at the end of the rainbow materialized for us for only by seconds we boarded the train just as the sun slanted its rays through the disappearing shower. At last we were sailing truly on the magic carpet into the bright sunlit sky.

It wasn't until we were comfortably seated and able to capture our second breath that we realized this hectic, last minute episode. It was a blessing in disguise and avoided more than a few embarrassments since the boat had a two-day sailing schedule, leaving Cleveland in early evening and arriving in Buffalo the next morning. How fortunate that the first leg of this lovely honeymoon trip was in no way marred. We anticipated that all future events would fall into their proper slots, like the parts of a jig-saw puzzle.

The train trip of four hours provided us with much day-dreaming, some activity and much talk, mostly chit-chat and tittle-tattle about the experiences of the morning and of the ensuing boat trip. Our chit-chat was more than small talk at times. She, 22 years, and I, 23, were aware of greater responsibility to each other and potentially to a growing family which we anticipated and desired. Jokingly, but with gravity and sincerity, each said to the other, "If by chance we need to argue, let us argue about how each of us can outdo the other in love, and how we can promote more freedom, hope, and desire for each other." Perhaps it was an inspiration when I said, "We are still young and have the world before us for greater careers. We, in time, can acquire college degrees." Her reply, "Nothing could be more exciting. I intimated this in my letter to you at Camp Sherman in October when you were awarded the promotion."

With respect to our discussion of the overnight boat trip, trip, I vouched that if the lake would be bumpy it would be miserable for me, for I always had difficulty riding whirling gadgets at amusement parks. She brushed all these disheartening utterances aside and said, "This is my first trip on a boat, it being my honeymoon, one with a man like you whom I dearly love, it will be the loveliest trip of my life."

With much of the kind of chatter little did we realize the awareness of passing time. The afternoon brightness gradually faded into a hazy background of passing landscape. Rolling hills on the right and flat disappearing plains on the left with large homes near the edge of the lake silhouetted the lengthened shadows. This western suburb of Cleveland of wealthy homes surrounded by trees of multicolored waves of reds, browns, yellows, orange and gold provided everchanging gorgeous scenery with every click of the car wheel. In a few minutes we noted the fast approaching train was passing through house-lined streets, thus drawing nearer and nearer to the inner city. Within seconds the cars passed through myriads of short and long tunnels while the fading daylight cast shadows in the dimly lighted car, periodically. Unexpectedly, the train came

to a sluggish jog and with a sudden jolt came to a shaking halt, nearly throwing us out of our seats.

The two suitcases which I carried when leaving the Coach increased in weight correspondingly with each measured step from the coach to Grand Central. Luckily, we had no difficulty in locating a taxi-cab at the station (dozens were for hire), and within a half-hour we and our limited baggage were transported within a stone's throw of the large lake steamer, now tied up at the wharf.

There was much commotion and feverish excitement all about, cargoes of various types, shapes, and weights which were shoved or rolled into the ship by a motley, rough looking, tough customer crew. The 'roust-a-bouts,' had an outward appearance of the same hue from their shoes to the top of their heads. Their coffee colored chests, necks, and faces matched their dust covered dark brown clothes. Those with shoes, sandals, or bare feet, appearing to be shod alike, were carefully loading the hold with boxes, bales, barrells, agricultural implements, brooms, baby-carriages, bags and, as one passenger remarked, "Heaven only knows what they'll roll on next."

The gangplank was already in place to welcome the passengers who were to take the night jaunt. When entering the first deck all guests were assigned and ushered to their respective staterooms. The accomodations, according to Marie's version, was truly a superb hotel on water. The stateroom, though small, had suitable appurtenances including a three-quarter wide bed.

With fog horn blowing, bells clanking and much shouting, the steamer began its journey right on the hour of eight o'clock. We were less than comfortably settled in our room when the ship's gong announced with resounding tone that dinner was being served in the diningroom; a glass-enclosure on the second deck overlooking the wide span of water. We took a few turns around the upper deck, known as the promenade deck, and found the October crisp and pure air had produced an appetite fit for the occasion. It was a sumptuous meal, consisting of six courses of various kinds of fish and prepared with culinary art. This was our first communicable meal and alone. Truly, without question, we assured each other our life would be one of merriment, intimacy, inner warmth, hope, light, and grace.

The passing of time for us was non-existing, but to the world the sky had softened down to dull-pinkish tones and the stars began to appear. The moon rose early that evening and spread its light over the lake that softened the red and green lights on the shore some distance away, as we ended the meal. Though late, the men were still lowering delayed cases and boxes from the deck to the open hatch. We watched in silence until a mate directed us to the deck above since the ship would be on its way shortly.

The steamer hugged the half-mile distant shoreline in the first hour, thereby providing the passengers with many unusual landscapes, bird calls, and far-off musical strains. Even as

darkness approached we spied many out-of-the-way homes along the shore, nestled among tall cedars, throwing their silhouettes against the distant horizon. A heavy bell was ringing in some monastery as its dull booming came and went with the breeze. Other church bells with their quiet tones, like a song, directed our attention to other adjacent buildings whose dim light faintly radiated illusive images through the stained-glass windows that produced the soft stillness of the oncoming night. Occasionally the lonely wail of a train whistle could be heard, deep in the distant forest. As we approached near Erie a distant town clock boomed out the hour of ten.

In time the evening tapered off and waves began to roll, and tore at the railings, whipping spray across the bow. We grabbed the railing on the bridge to keep our position for the seawaves increased in size and in no time the bucking and lurching ship had difficulty in staying on course with tons of water crashing into its port bow. We were told this was not an uncommon journey on the lake but it was of sufficient severity to encourage all to find their stateroom for a welcome respite, or really was it as the storm increased.

For us, a new day had dawned the next morning and with a limited amount of daylight entering the porthole, it is understandable that we had no perception of time. There appeared to be much excitement all about and around the ship and the pier. With unusual haste in preparing for the day, which for us would be one of the best yet to come, we scampered to the outer deck and with a quick look-around noted the hurry and bustle of the crew as the steamer was being tied firmly to the wharf. To us this meant Buffalo, the end of our first sailing excursion.

Buffalo was a thriving, prosperous port, warehouses were everywhere along the docks. The many incoming and outgoing boats, large and small lined the harbor, greeting the city with screaming steam sirens, whistles and bells.

The reception at the Jank's home was truly a homecoming experience, a warm grasp of friendship welcomed me and the bride with a motherly warmhearted kiss by Mrs. Jank. She and the girls, Hattie and Helen, prepared a welcome that was to unite old friends. Yes, more than cheerfulness, for it was a hospitality that had been unreservedly expressed by the entire family. Mutual greetings were the order of the day, interspersed with song, dancing, and recounting friendly family escapades of mine the past Thanksgiving and Christmas. Rather than concentrate on a mid-day meal after a hearty breakfast, there was snacking from the kitchen sideboard until the early evening meal. The evening entertainment was devoted to many contesting feats of checkers, enumerable chance movements on a gameboard, and a card game of 'hearts,' to a very late hour. However, we discovered we were not only among dear friends but that Buffalo was a good place to spend the first week of our honeymoon since I had remembered many familiar street and buildings.

The three girls and I made a one-day mini-visit in and

around the large civic center and armory. Simultaneously, I related many of the pleasant events I experienced a year ago: encounters with soldiers; civic meetings and dances in the decorated armory; Thanksgiving and Christmas at their home; the solicitous catering of the Red Cross in providing doughnuts and coffee, (the Red Cross hut was still in operation for the soldier boys). I did not omit telling about the delightful musicals, Vaudeville and stageplays in the adjacent playhouses. With no additional encouragement from me and certainly no refusal, by then, three hours of comic theatrical numbers of dialogue, pantomime,, songs, dancing and acrobatic performances were enjoyed by us in one of the time-honored prototypes.

Another day was pleasantly wasted in the smart shopping downtown area, by viewing richly decorated store windows of men and women's specialty shops of dresses, fur coats and jewelry. While rambling and browsing through the crowded streets we discovered a reputable photographic studio. Its exhibits encouraged us to make an appointment for the following day, the result of which was the completion of a desirable wedding picture of a youthful, energetic, and lovely likeness of each.

How could one question to see the sights of Niagara Falls, the honeymoon lovenest of thousands of couples for more than a century? Therefore a day later we attempted the desirable trip, experiencing an event that was more than viewing tons of water, roaring haphazardly over a huge rocky precipice into the deep canyon below. The most exciting, yet, venturesome affair was the walk under the miniature, 'Maiden Falls,' approximately fifty feet wide which had been created by the disintegration of a small portion of the enormous rocky overhang in years gone-by.

Clad in oily, water-repellant rubber suit and hood, we were directed by a guide to approach the area under the miniature falls by descending a hundred or more feet to a ledge below. Truly it was a magnificent shower as the water cascaded over our heads into the abyss below.

Equally fascinating was the boat trip, 'Maid of the Mist,' in the gorge which carried us within a calculated distance near the onrushing, tumbling waters through the variegated colored mist, partially obscuring the huge rocks at the base of the falls. This was a scene of great beauty for the waters reflected not one or two but three perfect bands of rainbow colors. However, one should not discount the boatripe, a one-mile jaunt, down and up, the gorge which provided a view of an abysmal canyon of two weathered, rock-lined walls that had been cut and gauged over many centuries.

The end of the first week came far too quickly in our round of varied activities, ending the week with a tour through the Pierce Arrow works, and a complete day's visit with the Jank family.

The honeymoon leave-taking was a difficult one, for we had experienced the warmth of a hospitable family of great simplicity, accessible personality, and one totally identified

with an everyday routine of needful pursuits. As a matter of fact a promise of Hattie and Helen to visit Ohio the next summer with their parents, if possible, was just the refreshing element to create a sunny atmosphere and dry the unashamed tears that appeared all around.

Leaving Sunday by train we traveled to Notre Dame to visit Uncle Will, Father Lennartz, whom we promised to visit during the two-week vacation. Fortunately, he had been transferred from the Holy Cross Seminary in Washington to the Junior Seminary at Notre Dame as Headmaster in September.

We, viewing this school for the first time, beholding the gold-leaf-covered chapel dome and the buildings surrounding the famous Notre Dame Quadrangle, observed a picture of exceptional symmetry. This college, though small in student body, was known far and wide for its lakes, buildings, campus, football, and excellent scholarship.

Indeed, unlike the experiences of the previous week among the simple and wholesome folks in Buffalo, we were compelled to adjust instantly to diverse circumstances, a task not too difficult, since we had experienced many adjustments the past year. However, in our later educational pursuits we were subjected to a greater degree of change in fulfilling an instant decision-complex which we carried out successfully. This greatly influenced our future course of life.

Of note was the invitation to visit and dine with the President, his assistant, and Father Will, which provided a most instructive and delightful evening.

Simultaneously, these few days gave us the opportunity to visit friends of my uncle: Father Ward, the novelist; Father Cunningham, a classmate who concelebrated at the First Mass of Uncle Will; and the Registrar. The latter, when learning of Marie's correspondence the year previous, was eager to comment on various courses of study. The influence of these persons no doubt had a bearing on our future pursuit in academic work. It could hardly be expected that much interest on immediate academic participation could be considered that evening for our immediate activity would be the duties of a newly established married couple and my combined duties of a parish teacher and organist. We approached these anticipated obligations with confidence, courage and enjoyment within the next few days, arriving at Carthagenia on October 15th.

CHAPTER IX

THE CONCLUDING CHAPTER, 1920-1965

It is appropriate to review at this turning point in time, the progress of these forebearers who had produced conveniences and comforts.

There are few or none living today who can remember when there was no transportation by steam. Lines of railway cars could be seen in almost every square mile of civilization in 1920, while today all are disappearing rapidly. A century ago electric communication was not an idea in the mind of man. Now there are millions of electric wires, and they too, are being replaced by wireless communication to the furthest parts of the earth. The telephone was a toy and seldom found in rural areas before 1910. Now, its use is universal and it seems as if it has always been in existence.

It required a month or more for our ancestors to cross the ocean, now one spans it in a few hours by airplane. A century ago most of our ancestors had to work at spinning and weaving cotton and wool to keep themselves and the rest of their neighbors in clothing. In contrast, steam spindles and electric looms have so improved in effectiveness that good clothing is no longer a luxury. Lamps of any kind were almost unknown until the turn of the century, for log cabins were usually lighted with tallow candles and bee's wax, though our ancestors, fifty years earlier, burned a wick in a little vessel containing grease, tallow, or wax.

We of the 20th Century when carefully considering and reflecting on today's conveniences, note that the comforts, luxuries, indeed, the necessities we enjoy today had been discovered or invented after 1920. We wonder how our ancestors managed to exist without a few of the wonders which we consider essentials today.

The twenty odd years between 1900 and 1920 were a period of slow growth and change but which accelerated greatly after World War I. The electric self-starter and headlights on automobiles became indispensable while trucks and rubber-shod tractors followed subsequently.

As there were no enclosed cars, grandmother wore a linen duster and broad-brimmed straw hat, tied with a huge veil with bows under the chin, and father - a cap and coveralls.

Grandfather used a straight-edged razor which he sharpened on a leather strap and by 1905 men's beards went out but the mustache remained for another ten years. The family sang

around the organ or piano in the parlor. By 1905, the morning-glory horn and cylindrical record Edison phonograph became a reality while the nickelodeon, admission 5¢, blasted its welcome music down the main street of the village.

For years these items had been peacefully residing in some junk or second-hand store, known as white elephants that had been dumped at housecleaning time to make way for the newer furniture and labor-saving appliances. These are the collector's items of today.

Thousands of men and women deserve mention who have contributed prominently to literature, statesmanship, science, and other fields of effort and endeavor, not omitting inventors, poets, orators, painters, musical composers, physicians and physicists. May we not anticipate and predict that the descendants of this generation, (the leaves of the ancestral tree), will achieve and contribute to the prosperity of mankind in the 21st Century?

In the past eight chapters I have attempted to give insights into the thoughts, contributions, sacrifices, and fruits of the activities of many dedicated people of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th Century. These people had the will and the determination to shape the pattern of their environment and to tame the wild land. Perhaps these ancestors were not intellectuals if one considers intelligence as a vast storehouse of facts. But their accomplishments had demonstrated leadership, unusual abilities, and a dedication to change, thereby improving the environment of the times. By their self-sacrificing devotion they bestowed tangible and permanent values on their immediate descendants and their 20th Century offsprings.

1920-1929 INTERVAL

The first year at Carthagena, 1920-1921, was one of great happiness for us due to the sociability of the parishoners which could not be matched by any group.

Marie deftly wove, unconsciously, a pattern of homespun qualities of openness, understanding, and selflessness among the mothers while the younger women focused their attention on her attire, graciousness, affection, and pleasing personality. On the other hand, I had little difficulty in satisfying the parents whose children were my first concern.

By applying, effectively, the teaching skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic in the lower grades, and a similar proficiency in the upper, I thereby eliminated many disciplinary problems, which assured parents the school was meeting their wants. An art course of simple dimensions: lettering plate, pencil sketching, perspective drawing, and the use of water colors was the regular Friday afternoon routine. I emphasized music and singing to the extent of developing school programs for Thanksgiving and Christmas entertainments which created great community spirit with a spillover into adjoining parishes. These festive programs were community affairs with young and old participating in the overall decoration of the schoolroom, construction of a stage, moving of the piano, and completion of many other details. Two to three evenings were devoted to these renditions by school pupils and teenagers who by their participation, assured the attendance of rural families from many miles around, filling the schoolroom to capacity each night.

Varicous approaches were possible in creating goodwill, but the best chance of success was an understanding of the existing culture of the people. We had been born and reared in this environment, and with a degree of refinement, we applied it accordingly.

We were the recipients of many personal favors and gifts of rural hospitality: freshly baked goodies; pork and beef products at butchering time; personal services of many kinds; and, family home entertainments of winter sleigh rides and local dances. Since there was no resident parish priest, (Father Boniface Russ, retired provincial of the nearby seminary, provided the daily religious services at the church), these people of innate generosity were inclined to give of their abundance and kindness to the second prestigious individual of the parish, the teacher. Being affected by their extreme kindness and goodwill, daily, we experienced one of the most joyous, contented, and cheerful year of our life.

This style of an all-year honeymoon which continued in

the second and third year teaching stint at Carthagena, was truly conducive to a future happy married life.

What has been written, though brief, goes a long way toward providing much of our community participation in these years. Because of our focus on parish involvement the first year one might consider that our nuptial and domestic tranquility of married life had been sacrificed. On the contrary, strange but true, the preoccupation and shared responsibilities of these community projects and activities brought a togetherness of greater respect for each other.

The first year of teaching came to an end near the close of May with three months of vacation to the beginning of September. The parish had not been remiss in providing a small garden plot adjacent to the rent-free teacher's house, thereby enabling us to plant an early spring vegetable garden for the summer and winter.

Marie's garden experiences had been extensive under the tutelage of her mother for in her home; green beans, peas, tomatoes, etc., had been measured in bushels by her mother to supply the needs of a growing family, summer and winter. Hundreds of glass jars filled with fresh vegetables had been subjected to a steam process, (the idea of frozen foods had not been born), and arranged on yards and yards of shelving in the cool cellar. Naturally, she did the same on a very limited scale.

Amidst these garden tasks I participated in baseball that summer as a member of the 'Celina Red Caps' with a high degree of success and had a successful basketball program the following winter season. There was a delightful and pleasant week's visit of Hattie and Helen Jank of Buffalo. This occasion brought a trip to Cincinnati aboard a riverboat down the Ohio River to Coney Island. An advanced letter had been mailed to the cousins in Cincinnati to meet them, if possible at this fun-resort. This fact was our idea to resolve the provocative confrontation which had taken place two years before. No shade of doubt remained in our minds that gigantic strides had been made in renewing past amicable relations with the mother.

The introduction of cultural innovations of art, music and simple dramatics in the first year had sparked the ambitions of many pupils. Simultaneously, it created a desire of parents in having their children learn the rudiments of music and piano playing. A half-dozen or more parents expressed the wish of a musical instrument, a piano, in the home. Therefore, to meet the needs of these families I contacted Mr. Bernard, Manager of the Coldwater Baldwin Agency. His efforts resulted in placing seven 'Ellington' pianos (second to the Baldwin Grand) that summer. Ironically, to our surprise, my assistance in this endeavor netted a monetary return far in excess of my year's teaching salary. This additional income, substantially increased our savings account.

The aroused interest in music created a large class of students in piano the second year who were eager to learn

the rudiments and technique of piano playing. Marie in assisting me received the benefit of sharing her elementary musical knowledge with children which planted the germ of an enlarged potential musical background for her. Eventually, she received a Bachelor of Music at the Catholic University in 1927, two musical scholarships in Europe, Paris and Leipzig, and a Masters in Music Education from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 1964.

With respect to our methods in teaching, both of us believed the most effective way in imparting knowledge was based on friendship and student confidence. I was fortunate in having had training in progressive teaching methods at Miami University in 1915, while many teachers in rural areas had had no opportunity of pedagogical training previous to the new educational legislation in Ohio of 1914. Whether or not, if, indeed, greater evaluation on the new progressive methods at that time ought to be debatable. It is very refreshing to receive favorable opinions from these pupils fifty years later.

My teaching procedures and methods attracted the attention of the school board. Yes, my methodology had exhibited a basic foundation in reading, (combination of phonetics with pictures and words), and in arithmetic, (a joint process of addition and subtraction, as well as that of multiplication and division), among the first graders. Aware to a greater degree were the pupils in the upper grades of the changed atmosphere in the schoolroom due to their participation in art, music and periodic school programs. I, discarded the old authoritative theory that had been and currently practiced by many teachers in the area by introducing pupil participation in school activities, both inside and on the playground. My increased knowledge of history and geography from extended army travels and military experiences, implemented the subject matter of these courses, thus creating interesting hours of teaching as well as sharpening pupils' appetites for more comprehensive advanced data.

It is not surprising that a pronounced determination of retaining my teaching services for future years had emerged in the parish. A most favorable impression had been made upon pupils, their parents, and the members of the school board, thus increasing my salary by 10% greater than the going salary of other teachers the second year.

History is not the facts of the past only but more truly the tools that shape the present and the future which we pointedly demonstrated by the action taken by us at the end of the third year. Deftly weaving the background of the past three years with the potential possibilities of the future, we came to the conclusion that a courageous step must be taken, here and now, if we were to reach our goal of quality education.

Many young people do nothing about potentially available opportunities whatsoever, and appear to have no visionary capabilities since they are merely interested in performing the required daily routine.

On the contrary many factors were urging us to meet the challenge of further education. Therefore, after balancing all 'pros and cons' we decided that a 'break' from rural teaching career should be carried out at the end of the third year.

Perhaps one of the more influential contributing factors that spurred us to change our future life-style was the periodic personal visits and contacts of individuals who had had advanced education with promising careers. Obviously, the privilege of associating with seminarians and professors at the Precious Blood Seminary, adjacent to our home, was an unmixed blessing. We were influenced by clergy personalities: Father Boniface Russ, former Rector and now the local pastor of the parish; Father Othmar Knapke, Rector; and, Father Wagner, professor, (my math teacher at the academy) Having been graduates of the Catholic University in Washington, each was of the opinion that my future activity should be in the advance academic field and to pursue that phase presently.

A delightful contrast to the visits of the professors were the periodic drop-ins of students, (seminarians), old college chums of mine at the academy, 1911-1914, with whom I attended classes in latin, greek, math, music, english, etc., and who accorded me much encouragement.

The final decision with respect to this change revolved around the question of financing the academic project. But with a prospective view, we had planned the groundwork well. The salaries of the last two years of teaching had been greatly enhanced by my earnings in the marketing of pianos.

To assure a substantial backlog of savings I contracted as a part-time life insurance solicitor for the county with the 45-year old Royal Mutual Life Insurance Company of Des Moines, Iowa, under the supervision of the State Office of John Staudt, General Agent, and his brother, Clem Staudt of Canton, Ohio, in the summer of the second year.

Viewing the idea of a teacher as a part-timer in 1920 was not foreign to the marketing of life insurance since other semi-professional groups: attorneys, accountants, realtors, etc. had been utilizing life insurance soliciting as a complimentary service to their normal activity. Life Insurance as a profession did not see the light of day until 1928 when the College of Chartered Life Underwriters had been organized and chartered to grant the degree of C.L.U. Also a halting action by many life insurance agents and the general public delayed it over 20 years. The period after 1960, demonstrated that a C.L.U. degree was an important attainment in planning a life insurance program for a family and solve the complex problems of business. Today, with more than 30,000 members holding the degree and more than 50,000 students preparing for it, the horizon of professional life underwriting is bright and clear. It is in great demand by the insuring public.

The concept of life insurance as a profession was but an evolving idea in the minds of a few college professors in 1920:

Dr. Griffin M. Lovelace, John A. Stevenson, and Dr. Solomon S. Huebner. Fortunately, my contact with these three teachers was in 1921 at the Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh which sponsored a course in Life Insurance Fundamentals and Salesmanship. It was through the influence of Clem Staudt that I was invited to attend the Carnegie School, financed by the Staudt Agency. Ultimately, the College of Chartered Life Underwriters was authorized in Philadelphia to grant degrees in 1928.

Clem Staudt had recognized my capabilities. He and Mrs. Staudt, were eager to establish a close friendship and invited us several times to their home before the end of the school year. Indeed, a life-long acquaintanceship had been established with the family, thereby providing Mrs. Staudt (a registered nurse), the opportunity of contributing much needed information on prenatal and postnatal care of our first baby, Mark. Her kindness deserves high praise and our sincere thanks.

For one to conclude that the personal contact with the three professors and attending their lectures was merely a passing interval of time would be a gross misinterpretation. On the contrary, their influence had a powerful and controlling pull in supporting my return to college, with a major in economics, thereby combining academic college teaching with the advancement of life underwriting profession as my future career.

It was with some reluctancy and with deep regrets I informed the school board in March of 1922 (a few days after the birth of our first born, Mark), of our decision to return to college for further study at the close of the year. The impact of this news on the board members and majority of parishoners was decidedly displeasing and discouraging. From their point of view, the loss to the community and to the children would be a disaster, now that they had been subject to numerous innovative social and community functions and the loss of progressive methods of the three R's.

As might be expected extraordinary monetary inducements were offered by the school board for us to reconsider the step. But we were fully convinced the time had come for us to break decisively with the past and to ride again into the 'Blue Yonder.'

I would be remiss if I failed to call attention to the goodwill and benevolence of the pupils. They presented us with a very personal gift (an heirloom in our home), upon our departure.

Our future living, with no income implied sacrifices, of course, for it would entail a life-style change. But, since the crux of the decision revolved about a sacrifice with a favorable end result we were prepared to meet the challenge.

Not for a moment should one consider our momentous change of life-style to be a 'Crack-brain' upshot. In March of the year, for further college work, I requested the Registrar of

Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, to evaluate my three years of academic work at St. Joseph's and the one-year normal training at Miami. Within a week this message, the University would allow me 13 credits of high school units and 20 hours of college credits, applicable to a bachelor's degree in economics. Being a more mature student, knowledgeable, and with a balanced judgment and responsibility and with Marie's challenging and adventuresome spirit, I concluded the required additional academic work for the completion of the A.B. degree in economics could be accomplished in two summers and two full academic years. At the same time we were relying heavily on our ability to adjust quickly and correctly to change, if required.

The succeeding two years and the unforeseen additional three years of graduate work, indeed, were as exciting as they were constructive.

The school term at Carthagena came to an end in the last week in May which had been heightened with a year-end picnic. A school souvenir with an attached miniature picture of the teacher and the names of all pupils inscribed within was given to each, thus ameliorating to some degree the going-away gloom.

The first week of June ushered in many activities necessary in the renewal of college life: a house or three-room apartment had to be leased; the trucking and storing of excess household furnishings, and, the moving of the family and necessary personal and household articles for a two-year stint at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

Fortunately, a one-half double of three rooms located a few blocks from the university, and owned and occupied by three maiden sisters, the Fallons, was available, who requested a very small nominal rental. Marie's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Nordenbrock, overwhelmingly, endorsed our actions. Voluntarily providing the necessary storage space for our excess furniture in their large farmhouse, while her brother, Ted, whose business was household furnishings, transferred the piano and other essential objects to the three-room apartment.

The summer semester began the second week of June and with the three-day break at July 4th, Marie and the four-month old son, Mark, came to the new home.

I had a discouraging thought of our stay at the rented apartment, partly in consequence of the ages of the maiden-ladies and their inexperience of the behavior of a small baby, but Marie's contrasting viewpoint was more optimistic. She upon hearing my description of the three sisters: Mary, Ann and Lizzie, combined with an innate woman's intuition, vouched there would be no difficulty and that Mark would create a responsive and harmonious family atmosphere.

Mary, the eldest, a neat person of small stature and a shock of perfect white hair, covering a pale face, was always immaculately dressed. She appeared to have a frail constitution for her face showed fine delicate wrinkles and forehead as carved lines of weariness on her cheeks. Her age of 60

years offset this with the beauty of her facial expression, while her disabilities were secretly veiled with a constant smile and kind encouraging words. Her health condition required her to remain at the home and its care while the two other sisters were employed in the services of sorority and fraternity houses.

Indeed on this beautiful sunshine July day upon arriving at the one-half double, (the new home in Oxford), hopefully entertaining the wish it was to be our home for the next two years, we met Mary who was eager to greet the mother and the new baby, for both had been briefly, yet clearly described by me.

Marie without hesitation offered baby Mark to Mary who was at the side of the car, gesturing to assist. Obviously, alerted to the significance of the surrounding, Mark gave a good account of himself by returning his four-month old smile in response to her's and seized her outstretched hands simultaneously. Not surprisingly, in the same breath he became the darling of Mary who, one year later, with much pride, presented him to the judges in a 4th-of-July baby contest as a model youngster. At that time he captured first prize which gave us undeserved publicity, but to Mark, it was a ten-dollar gold piece and his picture in many storefronts of this small town.

Within an hour Ann arrived home with pleasurable expectation to greet the new baby who carried the Irish name of Patrick also. She was taller than her sisters, a bright, dark-eyed, rawboned individual, a triangularly shaped face with slightly sunken cheeks, and thick silver hair parted in the middle, drawn tightly over the ears. These features were highly modified by a curved mouth that seemed to be always smiling and ever-ready to spring an Irish joke on herself with an accompanying 'Jack-in-the-box', head movement. It was Ann who carried the coal bucket and did the necessary tinkering about the house.

Lizzie, preparing the daily evening meal for the boys at a fraternity house, came in after dusk but no less interested in the new-found friends and especially to know more about this German-Irish boy as she termed him. She, the youngest, middle-aged with streaked gray hair, short in stature, youthful, plump cheeks of dusty freckles, slender, black eye brows that covered large pebble-eyes, and a mouth given to trembling, depicted a rare Irish beauty of unlimited kindness. She moved about with a slight limp due to a crippled ankle and her friendly disposition and humor caused her to be known as the 'Sweetheart of Sigma Chi.'

During this stretch of two years our style of living changed in a number of ways. We kept the car since there would be need of it for an occasional trip, stored in a nearby neighbor's barn without charge. Many economies had been introduced by eliminating the purchase of newspapers, magazines, movies, and other entertainments since the University offered a cultural program of a half-dozen or more numbers during the year, free of charge. We were constantly economizing in the purchase

of food but never sacrificing quality. The meats were the cheaper cuts, and the eggs, butter, milk and vegetables were purchased at the farmer's market at a discount. Marie had an ingenious way of preparing all foods, and her soups and dishes were always wholesome, nutritious, and palatable, the art of which she inherited and acquired in her home. In the making of clothes for herself and Mark no one could equal her originality of design and with the aid of a 'Portable Singer,' her attire was faultless and that of Mark's, dainty and cute.

In retrospect, we were never conscious of sacrificing essential needs. In terms of today, some might view this as a period of poverty or sacrifice, but we never considered it in that manner since our past experiences had been of simple rural living; a frugality with which we were truly acquainted. I must admit the desired goal of completing my undergraduate work in two years was a guiding factor in all of our activities.

The sweep of events of the summers and the two years revolved mainly around college activities. Dr. Edgar A. Brandon, senior Dean of the Liberal Arts College, and Dr. Edwin S. Todd, Dean of the Economics Department, provided fruitful and honest advice in scheduling the necessary required course. Dr. Brandon was a tall and upright figure, enveloped in a clearly brushed semi-swallow-tail coat with a single fresh white rose of delicate fragrance resting daily in his lapel. His broad shoulders, supported a head not really massive but distinctive, topped with crew-cut, grayish-auburn hair that gave him a distinct military appearance. This bearing was further accentuated by his trimmed mustache and short prim goatee. He, of ruddy complexion, having passed three score years, showed no trace of mature age in spite of his life-long devotion to students in their academic pursuits.

One viewing Dr. Todd for the first time would consider him a legislative representative of the state, carrying marked dignity and self-respect. He was of medium height but a blockish, black hat, topping his gray sprinkled hair made him appear taller. Though 60 years of age he had a fair smooth skin with a few tiny lines on his forehead, while his narrow black, perfect bow-tie had no difficulty in hiding the small dimpled chin. He was a walking enthusiast and it appeared his rhythmically swinging arms with tightly clenched hands extending beyond the highly starched cuffs, was his method of maintaining his youthful vigor. Dr. Todd had the gift of remembering the names of students which established quick intimacy and trustworthiness. Simultaneously, his academic prerequisites and my maturity, generated a feeling of immediate friendship, effecting many personal favors in my behalf, one of which was his striking letter of recommendation for the four-year fellowship award.

Both Dr. Brandon and Dr. Todd, knowing of my academic background, teaching experiences and military training, suggested I focus my attention on all prerequisite courses in the first twelve weeks of summer and the first semester of the coming year.

With all my inventive, daring, and imaginative support of military and academic experiences, I, painfully, realized the summer program was more than wishful thinking, since I was short of precious available time in completing the required assignments of freshman English, and Mathematics. Both had been condensed in two six-week periods, challenging me to the utmost. One specific example of difficulty was the daily writing of a theme in English composition for it had to comply with the particulars of: a novel; a fairy tale; a mystery story; a myth; or any kind of narrative that had been assigned for the day. It is only fair to point out that my first attempt at Freshman English in the first week leaned heavily on the 'unsatisfactory.'

A few conferences at the end of the week with the professor when learning of my limited language background advised me to seek the aid of a tutor, Bergen Evans, who was an assistant in the English Department. After a certain number of consultations with him on the writing of essays there began to emerge certain observable approaches and in his technique which were very advantageous resulting in a grade of "B" at the end of six weeks. Dr. Evans is recognized today as a widely acclaimed International English scholar.

Invariably, my usual topic of conversation with Marie when editing monographs and books on my health research projects of sisters and priests in 1960, would relate to these serious difficulties of my freshman English in the summer of 1922. I must admit that with the coaching of Dr. Evans and the assistance of Marie who had a very imaginative mind with a flow of ready words, brought me a satisfactory and successful grade.

Beginning in September the English course for juniors, 'American and English Literature,' was a welcome relief and a delightful contrast to the never-ending routine of theme writing.

Being a keen student of mathematics including accounting, statistics and investment, Dr. Todd encouraged me to join the College Commercial Club for the two years. With a background of music and singing, I did not disregard the advantages of being a member of the Glee Club and the Festival Chorus since these two organizations provided two annual tours during the Christmas holidays in giving concerts. All sponsored by college alumni groups in the principal cities of Ohio.

I realized after a few weeks in pursuing the course of 'Principles of Economics', I had the ability to apply economic theory in its practical use in everyday business problems, the skill of which was due to my past experiences and maturity. This had not gone unnoticed by Dr. Todd for he suggested I devote additional voluntary hours in the next year to do some research in the field of taxation in Ohio. Following his advice in exploring the complicated taxation legislation of Life Insurance Companies in Ohio, I wrote a thesis of my findings and conclusions and earned a Bachelor in Economics with Honors at graduation.

Certainly, it is not premature to assess the activities of the mother of Mark during the summer and school years in Oxford. Her desire of engaging in and enjoying college life had been her most precious yearning since 1918. Therefore, to recapture the objectives of what had been denied her (through no fault of her own), she enrolled in September for two courses, piano instrumentation and theory under Dr. C. W. Towner at Oxford College for women. This institution was a small renowned institution of many years, adjacent to Miami University Campus.

It is worth relating that she had a 'plus' to start with when initiating this program. A number of factors had contributed to her qualified success; the desire for a musical education; an unbounding enthusiasm; and an unusual memory.

To carry out the musical program it was supremely important to correlate her time schedule with that of the baby. Fortunately, perhaps coincidentally, the behavior of Mark at the first meeting with Mary and the continued happy responses of both, (his time was her time), their relationship had developed into an intimate comradeship. He unconsciously and unknowingly created the prerequisite of available time for the development of his Mother's musical education.

In spite of adequate time for preparing my assignments there were mid-semester tests and final examinations to be met. I remember the mid-semester test in March of the first year more than others, perhaps due to the entrance of spring. I arose early on this particular morning about 5:00 A.M. (a feasible time for reviewing the semester's work), since Winter had been on its way and the roar of March winds were no more heard in the tossing nearby trees. Along the still brown boughs, a faint veil-like greenness ran. I noted the warm air was soft and soothing for spring was just around the corner. The water, welling out of soaked earth, trickled down the side of the street gutter. Bees were neither abroad nor the red of the apple buds showed signs of spring, but the high song of the thrush poured forth his song which was conducive to the review of my past semester assignments. All was quiet and pleasant at this early hour which in terms of college grades was very rewarding.

The second summer was a most satisfactory and pleasant one for us and also the Fallon Sisters. It provided a breathing spell of two weeks with a change of atmosphere from the regular college routine. There were still summer hours for me to acquire but with all the required core courses completed I was able to choose cultural subjects of my liking in the two summer semesters. Fortunately, I had another stroke of good luck in fulfilling my language requirements. Dr. Handschin, German born, and my major language professor, realizing my knowledge and ability to converse and translate German, advised me to translate certain technical German books for advance examination. This I did successfully and upon completion provided many additional credits, known as 'Hours in Absentia.' These covered the deficiency of my two units of high school and additional college credits.

The second summer, Mark no longer an infant, (one and one-half years old), he was eager to explore all avenues to satisfy his curiosity. His daily contacts with Mary and her encouraging responses, not discounting those of her sisters, exhibited certain striking characteristics. Mary alluded to these in the the Baby Contest which had not been unnoticed by the three judges on the 4th. His physical history from birth to the day was ably described by Mary and with an ideal height and weight record at the time, he 'Stole the Show,' and was declared the 'Prize Baby,' among a dozen contestants. Much publicity had been given to the occasion by the local paper, but most desirable was the award of a \$10 Gold piece which was his cherished possession to 1935. I, with much hesitance, returned it to the Treasury by order of President Roosevelt which was the greatest 'Faux pas' of the century.

The delightful event of the 4th was the beginning of many pleasant events that summer since the Fallons considered us a part of the family and cordially greeted by their relatives and friends. Their country Irish cousins, living near College Corner, provided many Sunday visits in their woods and an occasional excursion to the nearby Hueston Woods, concluding each affair with a picnic snack. Hueston Woods at the time covered many acres of tall trees, cedars, underbrush, blackberry bushes, also large glacial boulders, and a shallow, stony-bottom creek of miniature Waterfalls that followed a winding deep ravine of solid rock. Today Hueston Woods is a national park and a famous vacation spot in South-western Ohio.

These early summer visits opened up later jaunts to this spot for blackberry picking which yielded many quarts of juicy deserts. These, with cans of cherries and peaches, picked from trees in the backyard, provided a welcome addition to meals.

The ever fleeting time of the two summer session brought me to the status of a senior student at the beginning of the second year. This attainment thoroughly supplied the desired satisfaction of realizing the goal of graduating in June. We no longer needed to inch our way in the pursuit of a temporary life-style that had been practiced the past two years. Marie continued musical courses with Dr. Towner at the Oxford College for Women which brought her to the second step or rung of her musical ladder at the end of the year.

In retrospect the many experiences of the second summer did not fail to reveal misgivings of two doubtful events that were to culminate before the end of the year. The very thought of one and its suspense had a depressing effect since word of her father's terminal illness had been received in July with death occurring in November.

There is little to relate about the activities of the months of September and October, except, we were seduously busy with tasks about the house preparing for the winter: rigging the coal base-burner; arranging for another bed for my brother, Sylvester, who would attend the McGuffey High School (a model school for teacher training at the University); and the purchase of an additional youth bed for Mark. Yet, these tasks with my

college work were only a part of the story. Yes, in addition to these there was a period of wait and suspense in the first weeks of October.

The second event was one of joy and happiness, though carrying with it mental suspense and uncertainty. It ended blissfully; a dark-haired girl came into the world on October 13th. Due to the absence of a hospital in Oxford there was the added responsibility of a prenatal trip to Mercy Hospital at Hamilton, Ohio, 15 miles away. Fortunately, the hour for the trip to the hospital came at 10:00 P.M., October 12th, and the new arrival appeared about 4:00 A.M. the next morning. This college pioneering adventure brought us our daughter, Mary Margaret, one of our most cherished members of the family who is now known as Sister Marie Julie, a member of the Ursuline Sisters.

The Christmas holidays were in the offing, indicating autumn had given place to winter with a light blanket of powdery snow during the night, disappearing in the day's thawing, with repeated freezing and thawing. The roofs of the houses displayed partly their natural color but were offset by white contrasting fields in the sloping roof channels. The morning sun formed huge icicles at the eaves which appeared later in the morning.

Four days previous to the beginning of the Christmas holidays by leaving Oxford in early morning we arrived at her Mother's home in Burkettsville in mid-afternoon, the second visit to her home since the father's death.

In those days, night driving was seldom attempted since the first low-watt headlight bulbs were about as effective as the glow of a lone firefly. Occupants in an open car were at the mercy of wind, rain, and snow in spite of some protection from removable and rehanging canvas curtains with isinglass peepholes for light and visibility. Accordingly, the two babies, enveloped in woolen snow suits and caps with a heavy auto robe, tucked around and under the four of us, (auto hearters were unknown), we began the trip.

Passing the college buildings on High Steet, all in emptiness, we came into the village of Darrtown, a distance of eight miles to the East. A few miles North we entered a similar village of Seven-Mile (home of Governor Cox), and then on to Camden, arriving in Eaton within an hour. The wintry sun rays had not added much heat to the coldness of the day but the travel had been pleasant since the babies were happy and we noted that half of the distance had been covered to our destination.

A respite for the babies was in order thereby providing food and warmth, resulting in renewing their pleasant dispositions which assured us we should arrive at her home in the late afternoon.

The house was all ablaze with lights since the dark dreary sky brought dusk at an early hour. The Nordenbrock

household had lost some of its charm after the death of the father but that did not discourage the Mother, Henry, Carl, and the two sisters in giving us a hearty welcome and reception by displaying deep emotion and affection. This created exceptional marked excitement especially between Esther and two-year old Mark.

Upon entering we were relieved of our heavy woolens and other wraps which we deposited in the rooms above to be our apartment during the stay. Mark and Mary Margaret remained downstairs with the grandmother, and after eyeing the surroundings and the new face of grandmother, unhesitatingly approached her which brought her enjoyment. Memories of pleasant incidents in the life of her growing family, spontaneously and retrospectively, momentarily passed before her, adding more to her happiness.

Christmas was a new experience for Mark, noting the two filled stockings at the fireplace, he found a stuffed rabbit, horn, story books, an orange, apple, and some sweets, likewise a teddy bear and a rattle in his sister's.

Within a week the big grandfather clock ticked off many short hours of the six days, bringing the magic hour of New Year's Midnight, which took us by surprise. The church bells began to ring, the siren at the fire station blew loud and shrill, and the New Year of 1924 was born. For us, it was the beginning of a year that brought us fulfillment of unbelievable dreams.

The end of January with the final examinations of the first semester completed, and meeting all the requirements, I was within 16 hours of my college A.B. goal.

The hand of providence or was it a woman's intuition that directed the attention of Marie's to a news item in the Knights of Columbus magazine, it read:

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS ARE OFFERED TO SCHOLARS

A four-year fellowship will be awarded to 15 college graduates with Bachelor's Degrees in the United States for the year 1924-25 with a three-year renewal. Academic requirements are to be met in English, Science, History, Math, and one Foreign Language. The highest grades in these subjects of the first 15 scholars will qualify them for the award. A letter of recommendation from an officer of the University should be submitted at the time.

Marie's first response was, "You must have a try at this for I know you will be one of the 15 who will qualify. It would be breath-taking to live in Washington for four years, you would have a Doctorate degree, and I could continue my music at the Sisters' College which is affiliated with the University, and at the same time receive a Bachelor of Music Degree. Imagine, all of us, including the children, would be exposed to the culture of the Capital for four years." Hesitatingly, I said, "Do you really think that I could be one of them?" What was her response? "You certainly can be and I

shall write for an application today, and you in the meantime inform Dr. Todd of the fellowship, and have him write a letter of recommendation."

Within a week the application had been received, completed, and a letter of recommendation from Dr. Todd with a personal note from President Hughes was returned to Washington, D.C. A letter from Monsignor Edwin Pace, Director of Studies at the Catholic University informed President Hughes the application had been accepted, the examination questions of the five subjects would be in his office and would be taken under his observation on May 1st with all questions and answers to be returned to the office of Monsignor Pace.

Letter of recommendation from Dr. Todd:

School of Economics
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio
March 29th, 1924

The Director of Studies
Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.

Mr. C. J. Fecher is a senior in our University School of Business. During his career he has maintained a record of Phi Beta Kappa. He was kept out of Phi Beta merely through a technicality.

As a student, Mr. Fecher is above reproach. I regard him as a man of fine ability, good judgment, refinement and open mindedness. He is one of a few whom I gladly recommend for graduate work. He is well qualified and has performed some research work the past year for which the University will award him the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Economics with Honor in June.

Sincerely,

Edwin S. Todd, PhD, Dean

Events were fast closing-in on our stay in Oxford. I had been exposed to the examination questions for the scholarship award in the office of President Hughes on May 1st, with all papers promptly returned to Washington. The farewell party of the senior graduation class, sponsored by the President and Faculty of the University was conducted at the Gym in May.

President Hughes, had met Marie at various functions during the two years, noting her maturity and charm, and our combined status at the college, invited her as a special guest. This affair was one of the yearly highlights and for Marie it was one of her greatest in college activity.

Upon the announcement by the Captain of the ball for the Grand March, President Hughes invited her to be his partner in leading the group around the circular dance floor. I, in turn, had the honor of escorting Mrs. Hughes.

Commencement exercises were held in the first week of June, receiving the degree 'Bachelor of Arts, Honor in Economics.' I extended thanks to many who had been instrumental in the success of this endeavor. First, unquestionably, to my dear wife who had given much aid and encouragement. Neither could I neglect expressing my appreciation to the Fallon Sisters, my professors, and the many friends who had supported us at all times.

On June 9th, I received the message of my success of the award of the four-year Fellowship:

Office of the Director
Catholic University
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Constantine J. Fecher
222 N. Main Street
Oxford, Ohio

Dear Sir:

I take pleasure in informing you that you were successful in the examinations for the K. of C. Fellowship held May 1st, 1924.

I shall send you for your signature, the form of agreement which is the basis of tenure for scholarship.

Very truly yours,
(Msgr.) Edwin A. Pace
Director of Studies

Before leaving Oxford I informed President Hughes of my success in the contest for the Fellowship, which brought his congratulatory letter:

Oxford, Ohio
June 30th, 1924

Dear Mr. Fecher:

I was greatly pleased to have your note telling me of the award. I wish you a great deal of happiness in this work and feel certain that you will acquit yourself with distinction. Please give my kindest regards to Mrs. Fecher whom I was very happy to meet again at our party. I hope you will find your years in Washington, delightful and profitable. With all my best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,
R. M. Hughes, President

The agreement of my scholarship tenure at the Catholic University included tuition, incidental fees and board and lodging in Graduate Hall for a period of 10 months for four scholastic years. The qualification of a married student for

the Fellowship had not confronted the University in the past, and the news item in the K. of C. Journal contained no reference to this status for eligibility. It was my duty to inform Msgr. Pace immediately of my particular situation, a married student with a family. I, therefore suggested a cash allowance for the 10 months of each year, a suitable substitute for the board and lodging in Graduate Hall.

His reply contained startling and discouraging news for it stated that the Rector, Bishop Shahan and he were of the opinion that no exception could be made since Graduate Hall had been built for the accomodation of these scholars.

It is safe to assume that we were prepared to meet this situation. Having received strength and inspiration from other pioneering experiences with favorable decisions, Marie and I, enumerated all the pluses in our favor as well as those in behalf of the University. In my reply to Msgr. Pace we did not fail to emphasize maturity, recognized ability, and my military services for additional support.

Psychologically, the K. of C. award had created a personal ambition of greater advancement for me, including that of professorship in the field of economics. For Marie, she visualized the degree of Bachelor of Music in the next years at the Sisters College. Therefore both were catapulted into a potential position of fruitful continuation of academic work, which we hoped would not be denied. My response, carrying supportive yet reasonable considerations for their favorable decision, materialized in a most gratifying termination. The letter of July 24th from Msgr. Pace carried the message of four more years of specialization in Economics.

Washington, D.C.
July 25, 1924

Mr. Constantine J. Fecher
222 N. Main Street
Oxford, Ohio

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of July 11th, I write to say that your statements have been submitted to the Rector of the University. He instructed me to inform you that in view of the special circumstances and the considerations which you presented, an exception to the usual practice will be made in your favor. A cash allowance will be given you in monthly installments for 10 months of each scholastic year.

Very truly yours,
(Msgr.) Edwain A. Pace
Director of Studies

We remained in Oxford until late in June, and after selling our limited secondhand furniture to neighbors, moving the piano and a few personal belongings we were prepared to visit

her mother.

Our time for leave-taking arrived the next day which prompted a few tears among all, but for the Fallon Sisters, the departure of Mark was a downright painful one for he had been their constant companion the two years. With many promises of returning visits (fulfilled after our sojourn and return from Washington), we began a pleasant journey to the North. We were constantly reminding ourselves of our good fortune in launching the program which we set in motion two years before. By recalling and recounting the many experiences that had been rewarding and beneficial in that period we were reminded of the fact that perhaps we had reached our goal of the half-way mark in adding substantially to our academic storehouse, certainly we enlarged our acquaintance with college personnel.

The two months of August and September, traveling among our relatives and friends in the 20 miles square area provided the renewal of old acquaintances and necessary relaxation for the four of us. My parents enjoyed our periodic visits who doted much love and affection upon the babies. Scarcely knowing them, an absence for another four years would cause them much loneliness. We had the opportunity of sandwiching a visit with my married sister and brother and a few night's visit with Aunt Rose Lennartz at the old homestead. Whenever circumstances permitted, a half-day visit with my Uncle John and Aunt Anna was our obligation who had been my benefactor on many occasions. Visiting the families of her three sisters added little time for serious meditation but were days of real pleasure, recalling family events of the past and the more recent ones of the past two years.

The four children in the family of each sister, centered their attention upon Mark and his nine-month old sister. The conversation at these family gatherings were chatty, casual, often ungrammatical, but it represented bits of ludicrous events of an average American family, intermingled with warmth and much love.

Three days were spent with them at threshing time on the farm and three family homecoming picnics with a gala one at the Nordenbrock homestead before the summer ended.

We had hoped to visit families in the three parishes of my first rural teaching activities but time did not permit, thus, we were limited to that of Carthagenia only. It was difficult to choose the families to be visited for so many remembered us as bride and groom of 1919, the recipients of their generosity. News of our presence quickly spread among the parents and the children who upon our approach would say, "We were told that you will be back with us. Why not?" Meeting these families reminded us of their generosity, goodwill, and hearty welcome of the past which they again displayed upon this visit. For us these pleasant renewals created poignant and moving experiences.

A third area that we dared not overlook that summer was the personnel of St. Charles Seminary, the institution adjacent

to the little teacher's house at Carthagena. The seminarians, old associates, were widely excited to hear about the Fellowship Award. Each had a hidden wish that some day he could attend that institution since Father Wagner, Father Kenkel (a student of last year), and Father Knapke, current provincial, had been exposed to the philosophy of that great institution. My visit with these three professors was very important in learning first-hand information of this famous institution; academic order, form, policies, and location of the school and the surrounding environment.

My insurance contract with the Staudt Agency, affiliated with the Royal Mutual Life Insurance of Des Moines, had been continued the past two years while at Oxford. In reviewing the record I had been able to underwrite \$50,000 of life insurance during the period. The commission of this production supplemented our diminishing savings account but also allowed us to calculate temporarily our probable monetary reserve at the end of the two years. We had given little thought to the financial involvement entailed in meeting monetary requirements of a growing family in the future until I was granted the Four-year Fellowship. By taking stock of savings in July 1924, we found that by continued frugality we could meet the family budget at least for one year.

Throughout the summer months of 1924 an additional amount of life underwriting of \$50,000 had been obtained in the rural area of Mercer County. Genuinely supported by this added increment our thoughts were highly brightened for a very successful and delightful year in Washington if we continued our usual practice of economy.

It was not easy for us to convince grandmother Nordenbrock that our trip to Washington, a distance of 600 miles, should be made by automobile rather than by rail. People in the Central States knew of the one road to the Eastern United States, the National Road. This crossed Central Ohio by way of Columbus, to Wheeling, over the Ohio River and on to Washington after crossing the Appalachian Mountains. Roads had no route numbers, creating no difficulty in the country, but complications were many when entering a city with no markings that pointed no definite direction to the highway.

Traveling in the twenties, as I remember the events of our five-day journey, could have been a little less than a matter of survival, or at least we could have experienced a breakdown with a week of detainment somewhere in the mountains.

We were unaware of overnight accommodations confronting us in the early twenties for the hodge-podge of so-called 'Cabins' located on the outskirts of a town, and equipped with secondhand V-shaped bed springs. These came into service after 1930. Viewing the twenties, many of the landmarks by which we were haphazardly guided through towns have long since passed from the scene. Today we see few or no signs, 'Rooms for Rent' along the highways, although it was common for homeowners along the searchable, hard-to-find routes at that time,

to offer such accomodations from 50¢ to \$1.00 per night for lodging.

Tourists tody upon the termination of an auto jaunt are tempted to say, "We stayed in such a lovely motel last night. Do stop there sometime, it is an AAA recommendation."

After a number of days of packing essential clothing, winter and summer wear, necessary domestic articles for light housekeeping and personal articles in a large six-by-six foot box, we shipped the contents by freight to the Washington depot. A day later we were prepared to begin our journey on October 1st, the fifth anniversary of our wedding. It was truly a difficult task to bid farewell, and a heartbreaking one for her mother who had obtained much solace that summer of our presence and particularly that of the children. Leaving had to be faced and as a matter-of-fact parting has been and still is a part of the lives of humans.

At 20 to 25 miles per hour, with no impatience, and allowing sufficient time for a midday break, the first day's journey was pleasant and comfortable. We arrived beyond Columbus for the first night's lodging, and near Wheeling for the second. Due to a defective spring in the auto timer, (ignition rotary), we were delayed a complete day in attempting the Uniontown Mountain, the first western range of the Appalachian Mountains. After many unsuccessful trials the defective spring was found and replaced and we continued our journey late in the afternoon. Within a short time we realized we were in the mountains and with night approaching rapidly, we decided to continue toward Bradock, 20 miles beyond, though the night was ink black beyond the headlights. No tourist sign appeared anywhere in this town, thus compelling us to continue into an unknown region.

Luckily, a mile or two beyond we spied a sign 'Overnight Guests'; a country frame and log house of four rooms, two up and two down, an accomodation of which we were happy to accept. Having had no substantial meal since noon, the middle-aged wife after learning this, insisted to prepare a country salad, meat, and bread which we ate with gusto. Our darlings were well behaved and recognized the situation.

After a breakfast of flap-jacks and sausage, (the hospitality of these simple farm folks was indeed praiseworthy), we were off, up, and through the mountains for a hundred miles, and after passing through three long tunnels we arrived in Frostburg. The fifth day brought us to the Northwest Section of Washington where we diligently inquired our way to the Catholic University which was located in Brookland (a suburb), in the Northeast section.

We had no difficulty in arriving there in the early afternoon, thus allowing us time to note the large complex of this institution and dozens of religious houses affiliated with it, including the Sisters College. We were fortunate in finding two furnished rooms for a week within a few blocks of the school and the small business block of Brookland.

My visit with Fr. Kenkle at St. Charles Seminary during the summer had been extremely important for he provided me with the name and address of his major professor, Dr. Frank O'Hara, Dean of the School of Economics, who in reality would be my graduate major professor for my doctorate. Fr. Kenkle had received his degree in June of 1924 and established a very close relationship with the professor and his wife, Mrs. O'Hara, an English teacher. With little effort and inquiry, I noted their home was less than two blocks from our rented rooms. Therefore a telephone call the next morning brought an instant and encouraging response to visit him as soon as it was convenient.

Dr. and Mrs. O'Hara displayed the warmth and graciousness of Mid-eastern hospitality, for both had been born and reared in that atmosphere. Upon entering their home they were eager to learn about my past activities and my family since Dr. Kenkle had informed them of our coming. Before the day ended I had been relieved by them of many frustrations and possible questionable suppositions and with respect to other details. A house with three rooms on the second floor had been located and leased for a year of Mr. Dufficy, the Grand Knight of the Washington Chapter of the K. of C. Dr. O'Hara and I mutually agreed my major study should be in Economics, a first minor in history and a second minor in sociology; while a tentative research topic for my doctorate thesis had been discussed. Simultaneously, I recognized qualities of graciousness, amiability and self-giving of Mrs. O'Hara who voluntarily offered a homey atmosphere for my family.

In assessing this first and many subsequent meetings with these newly-found friends many countless and meaningful benefactions had been given us during our stay in Washington; a parallelism of parental relationship. We had to admit we had a plus to start with on the journey of this well-nigh illusionary dream of ours.

Unfortunately, we had a rude awakening. After a few weeks we realized that all living expenses were 25% higher than in Ohio. Eggs were \$1.00 a dozen, milk at 25¢ a quart and comparable higher prices for other essential foods. Housing was scarce but we were fortunate in having the second-floor double at a nominal rental, though a mile from the University this required the extra cost of an automobile.

To pursue our goals similar to that of the past two years we were compelled to ride the crest of the wave of economy.

The three rooms and small efficiency kitchen with the purchase of a second-hand table, three chairs, a large and two youth beds, and a dresser with a 12x12 looking-glass on the top, provided livable quarters. Out steamer-trunk, carrying my suits and her dainty wearing apparel in shipment, was most convenient for the extra wardrobe in the apartment.

Dr. Frank O'Hara, brother of Bishop Edwin O'Hara was an arresting figure, tall, lean, well built with broad shoulders, aquiline nose, sapphire blue eyes and a full cloud of smoky-gray hair. In his work as a teacher he fulfilled the axiomatic

expression perfectly, 'To be able to lead others a man must be willing to go forward alone.' His academic training had been completed at the University of Berlin, receiving his doctorate in 1904.

Mrs. O'Hara's warmth and genial kindness of her nature shone through her eyes like the brightness of an open lighted window. The tone of her voice of simplicity, grace, and naturalness was a part of her but nothing was more striking in accentuating her countenance than when she flashed a quirk of Irish wit with the accompanying life of her eyelids. She had been educated at the University of Minnesota with a Master in English.

The faculty personnel of the Catholic University ranked with those of Harvard, Yale and other distinguished institutions of learning. In terms of Catholic philosophy, Catholic social approach in economic life, and the application of morality to sociological problems (if one can distinguish between Catholic economic and social thought and that of the secular and materialistic), it must be admitted Rev. Dr. John A. Ryan and Rev. Dr. William J. Kerby must be considered 'First' in their respective disciplines. Simultaneously, Rev. Dr. Peter Guilday was the outstanding historian of the day who was in great demand as a lecturer throughout the United States. His lectures constantly stressed the fact that the cause of true liberty as advocated by our first President, George Washington, had been advanced to a greater degree by the Catholic Church in Maryland than by any other organization. President Washington admitted that philosophical thinking had been greatly influenced at the time by Cardinal Gibbons. He, as President, steadfastly preached to his associates in congress that the cardinal principles of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness should be the foundation stones of the constitution.

Dr. Guilday's works are many and monumental and still considered as first-hand source material for history scholars. It was my good fortune to have had Dr. O'Hara and these three men directing me in my graduate work. Without exaggeration I must say their combined influence (meta-psychosis), patterned my conduct; morally, economically and academically, throughout my life. There is little doubt it was a part of this overall indoctrination that supported me in my research in the field of health and demography of Catholic Religious Sisterhoods for the next fifty years.

My first year of graduate activity was devoted exclusively to the required courses in my major study, economics, and the two minors, history and sociology which allowed me to discuss daily, research projects for my doctorate dissertation. In the final analysis my ideas slanted toward a health research project of American Religious Sisterhoods since my four advisors as well as the moral support of the Rector, Bishop Shahan, were in sweeping accord with the proposed topic chosen. Underlying the considerations in the selection of a very debatable and unknown subject, there were manifold reasons for this choice: 1) my knowledge of Life Insurance Underwriting and its allied field of health; 2) my acquaintance with two widely

known life insurance actuaries, Dr. Hoffman of the Prudential and Dr. Dublin of the Metropolitan; 3) the easy access to comparative data in the Bureau of Census under Dr. Davis, Chief Statistician; 4) potential support of the sister personnel at the Sisters' College; 5) the Catholic University as the ideal center for the research of health of the religious which had been controversial for years; and 6) the assistance of progressive sister students at the Sisters College.

A young medical doctor, Anna Dengal, had received permission at the time to begin a new foundation of sisters, known as Medical Mission Sisters. Her enthusiasm in organizing a religious community, combining religious life with the practice of medicine a 'First', had provided additional support. Her endeavor has grown to an international community of 700 women religious in the past 50 years.

Having met Father Mathias, the successor of my uncle, Father William Lennartz, as provincial of the Holy Cross Mission Seminary in Washington, he advised me to visit Dr. Dengal for her suggestions in this research. After discussing my topic at some length with her we learned certain phases of our health activities would be interrelated, simultaneously encouraging me to a greater degree in conducting it.

Unconfirmed literature, before 1925, describing the unwholesome living environment of religious, monks and nuns, brought a negative response from health authorities in both Europe and America. A scientific study on this debatable point induced newspapers and magazines to give wide publicity to the proposed study, creating an international topic for pro and con discussion.

Having decided on the subject it was my duty to explore all avenues of historical background of health of religious in Europe since none had been made in America. Diligent and meticulous research in the Library of Congress and the Surgeon General's on health studies of monks and nuns, made in France by Deparcieux and in Germany by Cornet, flatly contradicted the health reports that had circulated previously in medical journals in Canada and in the United States.

Equally important in developing the thesis was to formulate a method of procuring the necessary vital statistics from religious communities who might be willing to co-operate in the project. Obviously, the most successful method of stimulating the interest and co-operation of a Mother Superior would be through a referral from her representative member student at the Sisters' College and a recommendation from the Rector of the University. The vital statistics of births, occupations, deaths and cause of death, if deceased, of each member was on record at the Community House for safe-keeping but not for public inspection.

The Rector being most co-operative had urged the sister members at the college to contact their Mother Superiors to participate in this important study. Accordingly, the methodology of gathering the data was very successful, yielding



Mark, 'The Prize Baby'
Mary Margaret 'A Day at The
White House'



results far beyond my expectations and those of my professors. With a reasonable amount of qualified data on 35,000 members, living and deceased for the 25 year period, 1900-1924, available, a meaningful research project was in-sight, thus assuring me ultimate success in reaching my goal.

Our family life at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dufficy was a duplication of warmth, friendship, and cultural environment which we had enjoyed at the Fallon Sisters. The holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas carried the traditional Irish customs with the old-fashioned English Plum pudding of flaming tongues of fire, served with hard sauce at the Christmas dinner.

Mrs. Dufficy, though born in Ireland, spent her early adolescent days as a nurse in Buckingham Palace in London. Her figure was tall with chiseled and polished features of typical Irish stamp. Her head of coal black hair, blue eyes, beautiful white skin and lovely hands accentuated her comeliness. As a mother of two boys, ages 10 and 12, her loveliness still carried the beauty of her youth. She, like Mrs. O'Hara, had the Irish accent with the same lilt of voice and lift of the eyelids when reciting one of her witty verbiage. Mark, three years old and Mary Margaret, one and one-half years, were a part of the Dufficy family before the end of the year.

As the clock ticked off the hours and days the end of January 1924, the beginning of the second semester, a pleasant and surprising suggestion was presented to Marie by Mrs. Dufficy. She, having learned of Marie's musical background and her desire to attain a degree in music, urged her to enroll at the Sisters College in the second semester. To Marie the meaning of this step would be more than an enrollment and a degree for she was aware of the fact that if Catholic laywomen were to stand, shoulder to shoulder, with men in the future, their need for knowledge in particular disciplines would be equally as important. Unquestionably, she felt a positive contribution could be made by her in music, whereupon she enrolled, yet not overlooking the ultimate goal of a degree. This was again the renewal of her life-long dream of an education and it appeared, the parts of the jigsaw puzzle were still falling into their proper slots.

Being aware of our dwindling bank account and the debatable question of the extra academic expenses involved in pursuing a course in music, we decided in favor of undertaking it since we had had financial challenges in the past which had been solved. How could we ignore this fortuitous, yet never unpredictable attainment which to her was another step forward?

Her response in meeting the extra expenses was, "I will economize in the kitchen, apply as a pianist for a few hours in the evening, three nights per week, at the local 'Movie House,' (still pictures)." This was a few blocks down the street. She, no doubt, had planned this in advance for she obtained the position immediately, for a period of six months. In spite of our thrift and careful management the dollar

indicator pointed to 'O' on June 1st, 1925.

Academically, the first year ended harmoniously in June for I completed the required credit hours in sociology with another year to be devoted to history and two more to economics. My time schedule for all reading requirements was well planned for the next two years, thereby allowing ample time in collecting all vital statistical data, with analysis and interpretation, not overlooking the writing of the thesis. The two actuaries and Dr. Davis of the Bureau of Census gave me ample support for comparative data and professional advice.

Our financial status encouraged me to renew my relations with the Staudt Agency in Canton, Ohio, who were eager to renew my contract with Royal Union Mutual and to forward the business through the office.

My previous experiences in salesmanhip and knowledge of life insurance with many potential clients among faculty members, students, school employees and local business men, effected the writing of over \$100,000 life insurance during the vacation summer of 1925.

The picture that emerged at the beginning of the second scholastic year was most encouraging and promising. Financially, we found my life underwriting during the summer had placed our financial status in balance and was further augmented by an assistant teaching fellowship in economics at \$1,000 for the year, and a secretaryship at the K. of C. Evening Law School at \$125 per month.

The savings account with current income allowed us to meet all tuition expenses at the Sisters College, private lessons in piano and pipeorgan for Marie as well as all expenses that would be involved in completing my thesis. It was convenient to rent an apartment within walking distance of the school and employ a girl, part-time to care for the children. Since there was a need for a more dependable auto, we bartered the old buick for a dodge of lesser vintage.

When considering my progress on the health research of sisters, I found approximately one-half of the necessary vital statistics had been received, anticipating the other half before the end of the year.

Since international interest had been emanated by this study, contacts had been made with the Registrar-General of England, and health authorities in France, Germany and Italy to convey credibility to the study. Due to advanced scheduling of these factors and the professional advice of Dr. Hoffman and Dr. Dublin for the completion of my research, the doctorate appeared to be available in June 1927. In addition to these important advantages I had the able assistance of the Bureau of Census under Dr. Davis and the personnel of the Congressional Library and the Surgeon General's Office, both domiciled in Washington.

With great courage and confidence we approached the

second academic year, unhesitatingly, realizing that by minutely scheduling our time we could achieve our goal in the next two years. If an unforeseen technicality should arise both of us had the ability to meet instant emergencies with instant actions.

The Registrar at the University, having recognized the past instructions of Dr. Towner of Oxford College said Marie could fulfill all the requirements for the degree, Bachelor of Music, in the next two years. She with her life-long friend and associate, Sister M. Marguerite of the Ursuline Sisters, had participated in the same classes, under the tutelage of renowned music professors; Dr. Mrs. Ward, Professor Henneman and Malcolm Boyce. They received the Degree of Bachelor of Music in 1927 in the presence of our 2½ year old daughter, Mary Margaret, now Sister Marie Julie, who 50 years later is a member of the Brescia Music Faculty with Sister Marguerite.

The respective sister communities co-operated and had forwarded all vital statistics by June 1926 for the requirements of my doctorate, thus with the help of the two actuaries and the Bureau of Census in the last scholastic year, the data had been analyzed, interpreted, and compared with the national census of white women in the United States.

Six important mortality and life expectancy tables were formulated for two occupational groups of sisters, teachers and non-teachers. In analyzing the death rate we found the sisters had a lower overall death rate and a two-year longer life expectancy as compared to the white women. In spite of these advantages the sisters had an excessive high death rate from tuberculosis. Further analysis indicated the teaching sisters, proportionally 60% of the sister population, had consistently higher death rates at all ages than the non-teachers.

My thesis, the final report of my research, was edited in book form, The Longevity of Members of Catholic Religious Sisterhoods, 1900-1924. Of the one thousand copies printed, 500 were mailed to all sister communities in the United States and 400 presented to the University for distribution to University Libraries throughout the United States and Europe. Nationwide publicity had been given to the health findings; a feature article was presented in Time Magazine both in European and American issues, while editors of America, Commonweal, Columbia and Bruce Publishing Company were lavish in their praise of this original research project and considered it a 'First' in the United States.

Until this research had been completed and the final results published, statisticians, health authorities, as well as the Catholic hierarchy and the sister communities had been in doubt of the true health status of religious members. In uncovering the excessive tuberculosis death rate of the young teaching sisters, a positive contribution had been made in the field of health, simultaneously, expanding the material and spiritual welfare of the church. This contribution was apparently evident when I, as a guest speaker, was invited to present my findings to the Catholic Educational Association of

Teachers in the summer, thereby alerting the Mother Superiors and the teaching sisters to the scourge of tuberculosis.

Within the next decade the major communities erected efficiently equipped hospitals, sanatoriums, infirmaries, and rest homes for the sick members. Obviously these improved health facilities with more rigid pre-entrance physical requirements plus the overall improvement in medicine brought tuberculosis under control as well as the complete elimination of it among the young teaching sisters by 1940.

To have written other than all these fast-moving experiences of our five years in college one might have misinterpreted the 'why' and 'wherefore' of the contents in the Prologue. Inevitably, the completion of this Epilogue champions the totality of real things and events. At the same time, providing the atmosphere that it had given as described in the Prologue.

Countless details had to be completed previous to the day of commencement. Our first duty was to inform our respective families upon achieving our desired goals with a personal invitation to be present. Rewarding and beneficial was the news of our graduation which created extreme happiness for the Mother of Marie. Almost unconsciously, though partly in consequence of the fact that her daughter had been denied this goal in her youth, she resolved to grace the occasion with her presence. She had anticipated this happy and pleasurable trip for many months since it would give the added opportunity of seeing Mark and Mary Margaret (now 3 years older), and to celebrate the momentous affair with us.

Though a period of three years is short in one's lifetime when considering the passing of time, the grandmother had experienced many days of loneliness and worry in the period. Agriculture had been in doldrum since 1925, ultimately, all industry and business experienced the Depression Era of 1929.

In recognition of an unusual event in the history of any university at the time--conferring simultaneously degrees to a husband and wife--the Washington Sunday Star arranged for a picture in its Sunday Issue that was spread across the front cover of its Photogravure Section with this caption: Mr. and Mrs. Constantine Fecher, both of whom received degrees at the Catholic University on June 15th. Mr. Fecher, that of Doctor of Philosophy and Mrs Fecher, Bachelor of Music. They have two children.

Grandmother Nordenbrock's visit to Washington gave us the opportunity of fulfilling many of her dreams in seeing the Capitol City. Dr. and Mrs. O'Hara provided her comfort and entertainment in their home for the week. In addition to a Potomac River jaunt to Mt. Vernon, we visited the Capitol, White House, Art Centers. and other historical places.

After a gratifying and lovely week in Washington, thereby fulfilling her life-long dreams of the Capitol City, she was prepared to return by train to Ohio.



The Washington Star



Mrs. O'Hara & Marie

Mr. and Mrs. Constantine Fecher, both of whom received degrees at Catholic University on June 15. Mr. Fecher received the degree of doctor of philosophy and Mrs. Fecher that of bachelor of music. They have two children.
© Clarendon Photos



Dr. & Mrs. Frank O'Hara



Grandmother Nordenbrock
Mark & Mary Margaret
Mt. Vernon

The time had arrived when we were compelled to say 'Farewell' to our many distinguished and intimate friends for this leavetaking demanded recognition of their many favors, and our pledge of future visits.

To continue my health research of religious was more than a promise to my major professors since they were of the opinion that it was a 'First' in America and certainly demanded further study. I continued and expanded the research the next 50 years.

The many sister and clergy friends who had been our class associates at the university cherished the idea that our sons and daughters must attend their academy at a later date, since a sort of parental relationship had been established with Mark and Mary Margaret. A later observation, ten or more years hence, confirms the fulfillment of these tentative promises.

Our first trip to Ohio, a week later, was an enjoyable one in an enclosed Dodge Coupe of late model, more horsepower. It had many personal travel conveniences. The journey of three days was a time of sharing our memories of the past three years. We had gained stature, now more mature, possessing many unusual experiences that inspired hopeful dreams. We were now prepared to make our mark in life, instilled with a faith, we could provide the qualities of a good life for our children.

Returning to the Ohio County after a personal absence of five years we found many things unchanged and some distinctly changed. Perhaps the most remarkable fact, yet not surprising was the financial loss of the two Nordenbrock farms. Diminishing returns had been regular since the death of the father in 1923. The economy in the U.S. worsened in all industry, including finance after 1925, ultimately ending in the 1929 depression.

Frustrations in one's life can easily lead to unwise and often harmful solutions, irrespective of the field in which cross-purposes occur. Innovations in Catholic religious practices before 1965 could not be challenged by laymen or the clergy. Concepts were either black or white and never had a vagueness of spiritual perception.

A religious difference had emanated in the thought and practice of one family member, with my parents, a condition that would not have arisen forty years later, following the Declaration of Vatican II. Wise or unwise, my small family group chose to be neutral, thereby attempting to equate the differences but without success, although a harmonious rapport had been created with each party. The differences had not been solved for many years, causing many anxious moments of sorrow for the members of the family. Ultimately, the religious innovations and time resolved the trauma.

Armed with the inspiration of professionalism, initiated by the three college professors: Dr. Huebner, Dr. Lovelace and Dr. Stevenson, and with the potentials of the College of Chartered Life Underwriter, I had no other alternative but to

devote my life to the profession of life underwriting. I was amply prepared academically to teach and apply the dimensions of professional life underwriting to all phases of taxation, finance, business ownership, statistical analysis and health problems.

Devoting the summer months and the remaining part of the year 1927, to life underwriting for the Royal Union--now no longer mutual since it had been converted to a stock company-- I realized my future career in the insurance industry would demand a life insurance company of long experience and purely mutual in character. Fortunately, I chose the New York Life Insurance Company of New York, founded in 1842 which had both, a career and retirement contract for its representatives.

The position of teaching and establishing a home in a growing city was not overlooked by us. The rational of these two components encouraged us to choose Dayton, Ohio, to be our future home since the two important and decisive factors in this choice were the potential business and industrial growth of that city, and the possibility of teaching C.L.U. courses at the University of Dayton. Thus, I could prepare students for the degree of Chartered Life Underwriter and stimulate a desire for professionalism among them.

A 20-year contract with retirement privileges was entered with New York Life on February 23, 1928 which in reality was the beginning of a 50-year life-long course of action with that company. Simultaneously, the teaching of C.L.U. courses at the University materialized a few years later after I received the degree of C.L.U. from the College of Chartered Life Underwriter in 1931.

The year 1929 ended with more than dramatic action for the Depression--covering more than a half-dozen years--exerted more intense fluctuations of upswings and downturns on certain businesses as compared to others. Life Insurance Underwriting usually carries a lag of, three to four years which was a definite advantage for me in the next five years.

We were blessed with a son, Con John Jr. on December 31, 1928. His mother was of the opinion that one of her sons should carry my christian name in honor of my accomplishments.

My Life Insurance production of over \$200,000 qualified me for our first New York Life Top Club Convention, held at Briarcliff Lodge on the Hudson River. This was our first business contact with Home Office Personnel, to be remembered always for it encouraged me to repeat, annually, this two week compulsory vacation period by qualifying for the convention annually for the next thirty years.

Our bank account justified an investment in a new Dodge Car in February 1929, simultaneously we were encouraged to contract for a home in Oakwood in July of that same year.

1930-1939 Interval

The decade, 1930-1939, ushered in the Great Depression of 1929 like a lion in its wake, leaving widespread bankruptcy in banking and industry, destroying social commitments and creating untold suffering among the elderly. Dayton had been the cradle of Building and Loan Associations. Out of a total of 21, only seven were able to counteract the political, legal and financial shysters who, for financial gain, wished to destroy these organizations. This is not to say the true professional members gave their blessings to these double-dealing schemes. Indeed, trustworthy members were progressively attempting to defeat the actions of these manipulators.

In examining my record of life underwriting I find 1935 was the most depressing year, which, no doubt, had been due to severe unemployment and diminishing current income of the majority. This depressing situation had been further aggravated by the government, evoking a moratorium of all withdrawals from saving accounts and life insurance values. Fortunately, I had been in a position to reach the goal of \$200,000 of written business annually, including 1935, thereby qualifying for ten club conventions for the 1930-39 period. These meetings had been sponsored by New York Life in various sections of the United States and Canada: Quebec, Baniff, Los Angeles, Colorado Springs, Miami, etc.

Due to increased economic growth generally, inflation and new business establishments in the last years of this period, club requirements had been increased to \$400,000 of written business annually. Simultaneously, my business status in the community had been progressively enhanced, establishing it on a professional basis by receiving the C.L.U. Degree from the College of Chartered Life Underwriters in 1931. Also community prestige by introducing C.L.U. courses at the University of Dayton in 1932. I cannot discount the importance of attending these club conventions for they were geared to social, academic and professional matters and conducted in conjunction with Home Office Personnel for two weeks of professional orientation.

Accordingly, when reviewing the enumerable amenities received, fostering personal and permanent friendships nationwide, creating valuable contacts with Home Office men, and assuring a knowledge of the techniques of their departments, we, indeed could not be remiss in neglecting our indebtedness to all who supported us in achieving these goals.

Highly unlikely, there would be less activity in the field of music by Marie who had been so clearly involved, life long, in this endeavor. Astonishingly and surprisingly, the birth of a new baby, a golden-haired, blue-eyed girl, Julie Marie, born 1930, did not deter the mother in organizing her first childrens' music class--two of her own and four in the neighborhood-- in May 1932.

Receiving the degree in music in 1927 was only a prelude to more of her accomplishments and honors in this field. She had been awarded an eight-week musical scholarship to the Paris Conservatory in France 1933, and one to the Royal Conservatory in Leipzig 1935, by the Progressive Musical Organization of St. Louis. In France there were personal contacts with three international teachers; Alfred Cortot, Wanda Landowski, and Nadea Boulanger, while the Conservatory at Leipzig provided: Robert Teichmeller, and Gisela Tiedke who were equally notable.

With the background of European training, the Dayton Radio Station, WHIO in September 1935 invited her to arrange for a 30-minute, 9:00 A.M. Junior Musical Appreciation T.V. Show, utilizing her pupils as demonstrators, one of which was our four-year old daughter, Julie Marie. Within the next five years, Julie Marie with additional tutoring from Florence Trumbull of Chicago, performed a two-piano recital of Mozart Sonata in G Major in Cincinnati Music Hall with her teacher.

The administration at the University of Dayton did not overlook the possibility of introducing some cultural courses in 1938, one of which was a major in music, directed by Mrs. Fecher. One of her pupils, Richard Skapik with additional training at the Julliard School of Music developed as a concert pianist a few years later.

Our two college-born children had reached high school age; Mark entering St. Joseph's Academy after a year at Dayton Cathedral Latin School, and Mary Margaret, the Academy at Maple Mount, Kentucky. Both of these institutions were being conducted by our former associates and friends at Catholic University. Constant communication with them in the intermittent years aided us in remembering our promises which had been made a decade earlier.

During the last half of this period, September 23, 1936, our youngest son, Roger James was born. The preceding summer months represented no challenge for Marie and, indeed not for me since Hotel Cornado, California, was the designated spot for the year's Club Convention. This coincidence of events encouraged us to enjoy an auto trip to the West by way of Yellowstone, the Columbia River Highway, with a week at Paradise Valley on Mt. Ranier. The trip down the California coast allowed us to visit many Mission Centers, eventually arriving at the Club Convention in early September.

1940-1949 Interval

After attaining certain goals in life we attempted a move, one that is the ambition of many; the undertaking of a change in our life-style. We had never lost our love for the land that we had known in our youth. There were certain rural visions that our ancestors had instilled which we could not forget: respect for trees, things wild and free, the natural beauty of the morning sun, the evening sunset, and the stars in the sky.

European Master Session

Leipzig, Germany

1935

European Master Session

Paris, France

1933

This is to Certify that

Marie N. Fecher

By Reason of Commendable Activity in Furtherance of the Progressive Series Movement

Was Awarded a Scholarship Covering Study in Paris, France

AND ATTENDED SESSIONS UNDER

Alfred Cortot

J. Wischnegradsky

Wanda Landowska

Yvonne Lefebure

Nadia Boulanger

Alphonse Marre

Progressive Series European Session Committee

John S. Drake
Chairman

Henry B. Campbell
Director



To accomplish this and to renew the pleasant experiences of this early rural living we purchased a 100 acre farm on Swigart Road, 10 miles from downtown Dayton. This proved to be a milestone in the life of our family since this forward step combined conveniences and services of urban living with simple, natural, and God-created environment.

The farm had guarded an old red-brick and stone farmhouse of ten rooms, built in 1845, had stood proudly for 100 years, and was prepared to provide shelter for another century with a little additional loving care. A number of potential buyers, apparently, were of the opinion it would never be lived in again since it had been abandoned for several years. Not so, were our thoughts and those who could recall many childhood memories of pleasant happenings within its walls. These two contingencies assured us an unconditional purchase to the chagrin of other would-be purchasers.

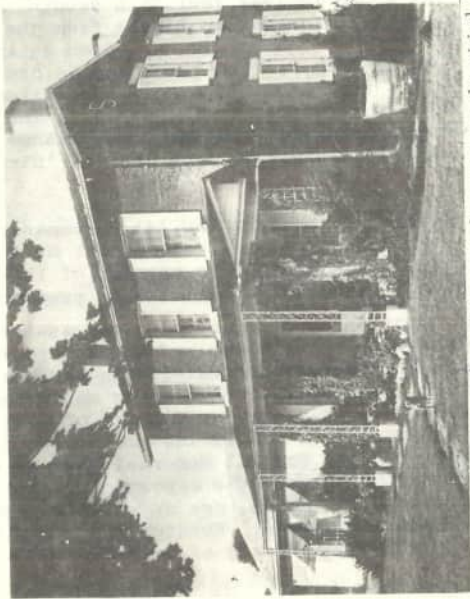
The old house was innocent of wiring as it was of plumbing and central heating. Fortunately, the original shell of 13" walls had never been disturbed, allowing us to install all requirements for comfort, and at the same time adhere to simple, straight-line architectural design, inside and out. Luckily, rural electrification reached the area in 1940, thus providing us with the use of electricity, a stoker coal furnace, and an ideal plumbing arrangement, supported by free running spring water in a basement room. In utilizing an infinite number of board-feet of walnut lumber from grain bins and barn siding for room paneling, refinishing old ash floors, and opening unused fireplaces, we completed the essential facilities.

A combination music and family room 16 x 32, split-level, cathedral design was added in 1944 (our 25th wedding anniversary). Walls were built of foundation stones from the old barn. The upper structure yielded the room's hand-hewn ceiling beams and wall paneling, while timbers from horse stalls provided the jambs and doors. This room acquired a most sophisticated air with its two entries of three descending steps to the marble floor below, its huge fireplace, and large bay window. Also was enhanced by the salvaged marble from the old 'Strand Cinema' in Dayton.

The era of living on the farm and its encompassing activities etched a specific impact on each member of the family. For the reader to fully comprehend the meaning of this change of life-style upon all members, permit each to respond. Mark:

Having had the opportunity of renovating and assisting in minor construction of the house and farm, performing tasks that demanded punctual and culminating adherence, care of livestock, manipulating farm tools and other assignments, demonstrated to me the dignity of work which in turn spurred me to follow the profession of surgery. A Fellowship at Roswell Memorial and one at Lahey Clinic in Boston gave me the opportunity of assisting in intricate surgical cases, one of which was that of Sir Anthony Eden of England. Eventually, I qualified as a member of the Diplomat Board of Surgeons and a

How the Con Fechers made an attractive home out of a gloomy, old, abandoned farmhouse



WHEN Con J. Fecher, CLU, and his wife bought 103 acres of rolling farmland in 1940, no charge was made for the derelict house which stood on the property. The house, built in 1845 (the year Nylc was founded), had been unoccupied for more than a decade. No one but the Fechers thought it could be made livable again.

With the house came the original title to the land, a grant signed by President James Madison. It was made out to Judge John McLean, an early Greene County attorney who fought against the establishment of public schools. As a bachelor, he saw no need to pay for the education of other people's children.



The Fechers and their five children moved into the house at Christmas-time, after heat, plumbing and electricity had been installed and a new kitchen wing had been added.

Then the real work began. The old wide ash floor boards were refinished and the disused fireplaces opened. An old grain bin made of walnut boards became paneling for two rooms.

The family, in 1944, decided to add on a combination music and family room. Due to wartime building restrictions, they had to supply their own building materials.

The walls of the wing which houses the family room are built of stone. The stone came from an old barn which also yielded the room's hand-hewn ceiling beams. Horse stalls provided wood for doors and the room's marble floor was salvaged from the old Strand theater in Dayton.

▲ **ABOVE**—The Fechers' rebuilt home was publicized in November, 1938, in "Camerica," Sunday Supplement of the *Dayton Daily News*.

▲ **LEFT**—The carpet in the living room, once the farmer's best parlor, was woven by Mrs. Fecher of wool from the family's own sheep.

"We all learned to love work and pull together in those days," says Mrs. Fecher. Even though the children are all grown and away from home, the Fecher address is the same as it has been for 18 years: 4169 Swigart Road, Dayton, Ohio.

About Con J. Fecher

MR. FECHER, Senior Post Nylc of Dayton Office, has represented the Company since 1928 and has been a consistent Club qualifier. He is a graduate of Miami University and holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Catholic University. One of Nylc's first Chartered Life Underwriters, he earned his CLU designation back in 1931. Mr. Fecher served as president of the 1951 Agents Advisory Council.

Fellow of the College of Surgeons. Today, my sons and daughters have the opportunity of experiencing a similar life-style on a 250 acre farm near Knoxville, Tennessee.

Mary Margaret - (Sister Marie Julie, Ursuline Sister)

Personally, I have little to contribute to the meaning of life on this farm since the time of its purchase coincided with that of my commitment as a member to the Ursuline Sisterhood in 1941. However, the one year on the farm provided an ideal environment for me in contemplation, reflection, and concentration on spiritual things, inherent in the dedicated profession I was about to consider. Constantly and equally impressive, I had experienced the meaningful life-style of Kentucky rural people in my contacts with them. This period was very marked as a music teacher and parish organist. After the Declaration of Vatican II, allowing sisters more self-expression, I had the opportunity of spending many days on this farm annually, and have noted its beneficial and conducive elements of relaxing labors of love among the family members including members of the second generation, who are now enjoying farm life

Con John Jr:

Moving to the farm at age 12 I noted how rural, cooperative family activity tended to strengthen family bonds. These down-to-earth farm experience gave me a sense of independence and self-reliance, while at the same time all were tempered by family social solidarity, thus demonstrating the old axiom: all for one and one for all. How did rural living influence me as an adult? Many rural problems demanded resourceful and quick-thinking decisions that prepared me to utilize similar techniques in today's dentistry and in financing various building projects without stress or strain. There had been no obstacles with respect to isolationism, no scarcity of social and cultural contacts and lack of educational facilities. Ease of communication, transportation, and financial resources of family provided the benefits of urban living even to a greater degree in this environment. I would be remiss if I failed to point out that I can perform more quickly and efficiently challenging cases of reconstructive dentistry due to this early training in mechanical devices. I received the D.D.S. degree from Marquette University in 1954.

Roger James:

When asked what motivated me to devote my time and energy later to maintenance of facilities and buildings, budgeting and financing of two colleges: Calumet of Chicago and St. Norbert's at Green Bay, the underlying impetus really dates back to my youth after age 4 on the farm when I had close daily contact with the family to complete the simple daily chores assigned, and to the academic atmosphere of music and art, finance and business with Father and Mother.

I can close my eyes now and see every move of father and mother in shaping the 100-year old brick structure with the additional architectural cathedral music room, to conform to their idea of a living museum of comfort, culture and tradition. This philosophy was greatly augmented by a Chicago friend of Mother's (a maiden lady of 50 years), who after viewing the environmental potentialities of this rural setting said, "This is the ideal place for all of my father's antiques (stored for the past 20 years), as my contribution to your endeavor, if you will accept them." This uncommon offer was a remarkable one in an odd way but she was mindful of the fact that her kindness was providing her an excellent gratification in fulfilling her father's wishes, simultaneously, bestowing her personal keepsakes upon a dear friend, (my mother), whom she dearly loved. As long as I can remember, I dare say with great humility, that mother's personality attracted many sincere life-long friends who remembered her with personal effects throughout her life.

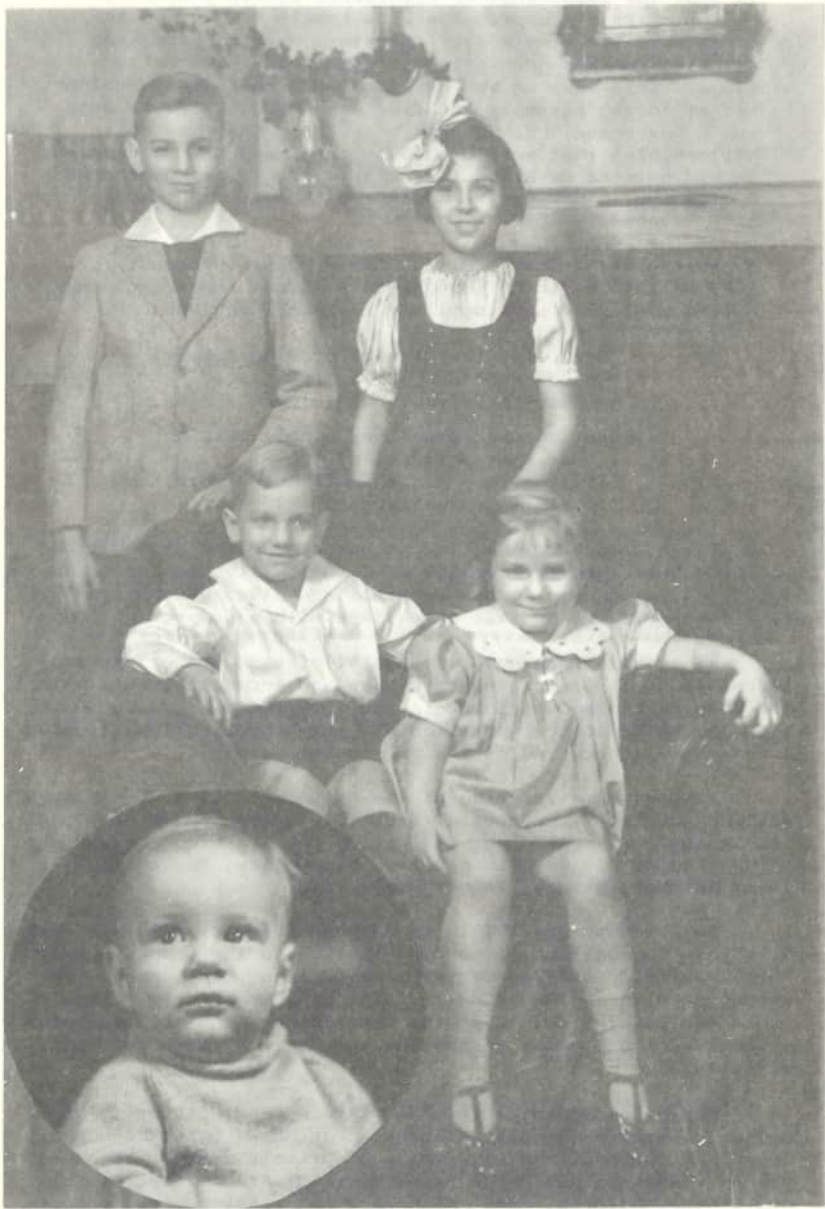
When I was 14 years old I had the desire to prepare for the ministry which I completed in 1962. Due to many religious innovations after Vatican II, I decided to combine religious efforts with financial problems of colleges directed by religious communities. Economies and youthful training from my parents, supplemented by academic courses in business and administration were the determinants that aided me in solving some of the financial challenges of these colleges. The degree of Ph.D in Business Administration was granted me at Indiana University in 1970.

Julie Marie (Fecher) Zink, (wife of William H. Zink, D.D.S.)

I consider the change of environment in my early life from urban to rural, a most significant factor. It fostered a genuine earthy state of living that promoted unique freedom for thought and activities. This freedom once found expression when I was a freshman in college. The 'farm move' was the subject of an essay which received recognition and later merited publication - Where Seven Hearts are Young and Gay, Family Digest, April 1949.

. . . It was the turning point of our lives. Just yesterday we had packed everything from the big grand piano to the red tricycle in the massive moving van. We were moving to the country to be 'city farmers'. . . . He who owns the land breathes the air of a free man. Through industry and thrift our acres have become for the entire family a sacred heritage. They are the cornerstone of our freedom and the guarantee of many things; security, a love of nature and respect for the gifts of God, a true philosophy of work, and foremost, family unity.

Now three decades later, one of our five girls, the 10 year old knows the same exhilaration of living close to nature, the magic of its changes, and the demands it makes on all creatures for survival. Her twinkling brown eyes



tells us she relishes this 'farm venture'.

In 1964 the happenings of providence combined with the tricks of Fate prompted the Zink family to live on the homestead, after my Mother's death. We find ourselves now with another generation's 'life story' on the same stage. This time we add one devoted grandfather, another set of loving parents, and five daughters. Today's acts are a new scene, but we draw heavily on the same basic philosophies that were etched in the lives of those portrayed herein; devotion to family, love of neighbor, and dedication to making the world a bit better because we have touched it.

A gravestone of John McClain, the original owner of the land in 1812 rests by the garden's picket fence and under half-grown lilac saplings. It is inscribed thus:

Here lies the remains of John McLane,
who died October 21st, 1848, aged
eighty-three years and eleven months.

Let no one disturb my humble cot, nor
break my peaceful rest,
Till corrupt earth shall be no more, and
saints be continuously blest.

R.I.P. John McClain, for we have found the same blessed solitude here amid the turmoil of life's daily problems. We, too, will follow you to humble rest, and other generations will take the forefront on this same stage with a new set of props.

With this background of thought of each member one can speculate on their future activities and accomplishments which had been varied and mirrored in the 1940-1949 interval. Omitting the chronological position of each happening I will refer to each as it occurred in the particular decade.

My part-time teaching at the University with Life Underwriting had been academically fruitful, economically very profitable and very rewarding, qualifying for ten club conventions at very desirable vacation spots: Sun Valley, Mackinack Island, Sulphur Springs, Palm Springs, etc.

On February 23, 1948, (my 20th anniversary with New York Life), in recognition of my contribution to the Company and to the 'Chartered Life Underwriting Profession;' the Company presented me with a gold watch, a 'Life Club Membership' ring, and a testimonial dinner at the Home Office. On this occasion I informed the Company of another ten years of underwriting activity.

Marie, resigning after two years at the University of Dayton, established music classes at the E.D. Smith Elementary School in Oakwood, and two groups of private music students at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base; Wives of Army Officers, and one of the children. She, with more maturity, musical experiences in Europe and National Musical contacts, had made her

greatest contribution to musical excellence in this decade. Pages in the large Family Book carries many printed musical programs of her students who had executed works of Chopin, Beethoven, Mozart and other composers. It was in this decade that her daughter, Julie, at the age of 10, performed the Mozart Sonata at the Cincinnati Music Hall.



10 Downing Street
Whitehall

May 25, 1956.

Dear Dr Fecher,

Thank you so much for your letter. I was delighted to hear from you again. I saw Cattell quite recently in England and was asking him about you. He told me what a success you have been making of your new task.

I send you every good wish. If you ever come to this country, I hope that you will let me know.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Eden

Mr. Mark P. Fecher, M.D.

Letter from Sir Anthony Eden
Prime Minister of England

Upon completing his medical training at St. Louis Medical School, our son Mark married a fine helpmate, Lorraine Seboeck of St. Louis, served overseas duty for a year in Japan where their daughter, Margaret Ann, was born. Upon discharge, he and Lorraine (she was prepared to go to the end of the lane with him), spent five years in graduate work in vascular and cancer surgery, as a Fellow at Roswell Cancer Research Institute, and a year at the famous Lahey Clinic in Boston. Because of the efficient Lahey Surgery, Sir Anthony Eden, Prime Minister of England, designated this Clinic to perform his particular complex surgery in Boston. Dr. Richard Cattell, Clinic Head Surgeon at Lahey, and Mark, his First Assistant, completed this successful specialization.

Academic work in college, high school, and elementary challenged the other four. Sister Marie Julie (an Ursuline sister), similar to her mother, taught private music groups and held the position of organist and choir director in rural Kentucky parishes. Con Jr. completed four high school years at St. Joseph's Academy and four years pre-med at the University of Dayton. Julie Marie commuted to Julianne High School for the required years. Her high scholarship and extra curricular activities obtained the honor of 'All Julianne Girl', in her senior year. Her college years were spent at Mt. St. Joseph on the Ohio, receiving a B.S. in Education in 1951. Roger at age 12 did one year at Cathedral Latin School in Dayton and three succeeding years at Brunerdale Academy at Canton, Ohio.

1950-1959 Interval

Obviously, with a loyal clientele, interested in business insurance and programs, I continued Life Underwriting, co-ordinating it with the teaching of C.L.U. courses to prospective agents and students at the University.

Club conventions continued to be our annual dessert and at the 1951 Club I was elected by the Field Underwriters, National President of the Agents' Advisory Council. For this professional service which included the idea of writing non-medical insurance--its first--the Company rewarded me generously. The succeeding year I was allotted a two-page advertising spread in Look and Life magazines in 1953, displaying, pictorially the import of life insurance as it affected one of my ideal family clients, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Guess of Dayton, Ohio.

I did not disregard my obligation in furthering the cause of improved health among the sisterhoods. In the interim of 20 or more years after the completion of the first health research of sisters I kept constant communication with many Superiors by mail and personal visits in providing health information. Catholic magazines and diocesan papers continuously publishing results of the 1927 health research. With constant urging of the Office of Conference of Major Superior of women, many communities were prepared to co-operate in a second health

Contact!

Published bi-monthly during the school year and once during the summer by St. Joseph's College, and entered as second class matter March 4, 1942, at the Post Office at Collegeville, Indiana, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

FERRY GLADU and ED MENKHAUS CO-EDITORS

VOL. 26 — NO. 19 RENNSSELATER, INDIANA JAN. 1964



Seated — left to right, Sister Marie Julie Fecher, Mrs. Con Fecher, Sr., Dr. Con Fecher, Jr., Father Roger Fecher, C.P.P.S., Dr. Mark Fecher.

The Fecher Foursome may not exactly be an organized crew, but they are an unusually organic group of Saint Joe alumni — a father and three sons — and a distinguished set in that all went on from their Alma Mater to graduate schools to become professional leaders.

Con J. Fecher of Fort Recovery, Ohio, studied at Saint Joseph's academy and junior college from 1911 to 1914, then became an Ohio elementary school teacher, saw duty in World War I, married in 1919, and returned again to teaching. In 1922-24 he completed requirements for an A.B. from Miami university; then, with the aid of a four-year fellowship, pursued graduate studies at the Catholic university of America. When in 1927 he got his Ph.D. in economics and Mrs. Fecher a Bachelor of Music degree, they made front-page news in the papers of the national capital as the University's first graduating couple. During thirty years as an underwriter with New York Life, in 1931 Con became a charter member of the College of Life Underwriters and a special consultant of the company. After 1935 he was also a part-time instructor at the University of Dayton; following his retirement from active insurance business he has been more completely engaged and in 1962 was appointed professor of economics.

Dr. Fecher's 1927 dissertation was a statistical research into health, morbidity, and mortality of nuns; it involved 25,000 case studies of nuns in the United States

from 1900-1925. Being the first of its kind, it was widely received by sisterhoods and was influential in encouraging certain changes in procedures to promote better health habits and lengthen life expectancy. 1957 saw publication of a second study by Dr. Fecher covering 90,000 nuns. In June of 1960 he received the University of Dayton alumni award of \$500. This, plus other grants, enabled him (with Mrs. Fecher) to spend several months of his 1962 sabbatical leave in Europe extending his researches to include clergy here and abroad.

People's health has been a central concern with the Fecher sons. Dr. Mark attended Saint Joseph's from 1935 to 1940, later received degrees from the University of Dayton and St. Louis medical, did army medical duty in Japan, then continued special surgery residencies in several hospitals over the country for some years, finishing with a fellowship in surgery at Boston's famed Lahey clinic. He is now a general surgeon in Knox-

ville, Tennessee, specializing in vascular and cancer surgery; a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, and diplomate of the American Board of Surgeons. Dr. Mark and wife have five children.

Dr. Con Fecher, Jr., spent four high school years at St. Joseph's, 1942-46, went on through the University of Dayton, thence to Marquette dental school, and into Air Force dental duty in Korea. He is now practicing in Dayton, Ohio, in special reconstructive dentistry; has a wife and son. Father Roger Fecher, C.P.P.S., attended Saint Joseph's from 1953 to 1955, was ordained in 1962, and is now studying physics at the University of Chicago.

The Old Grad of 1914 has two daughters. Sister Marie Julie is an Ursuline nun with a Master's degree in music from De Paul university. The younger daughter, Julie, is a graduate of Julienne in Dayton and has a B.A. degree from Mount Saint Joseph on the Ohio,

An SJC Family Of Professionals

Foundation, 1964-1968.

I discontinued teaching at the University and devoted all my efforts to this project. Completing the research in 1968 I edited the findings in 'Paperback' form, Environment and Cancer.

Due to the illness and complete incapacity of Dr. Nix, the New Orleans Office was unable to function after 1968. Sister Mary Daniel, Executive Director, and the members of the Executive Board of LCWR of Washington, decided to continue the cancer research for another five years (1969-1974). Their office assumed some of the duties, formerly assigned to the New Orleans Office while all medical reports, autopsies and death certificates were forwarded directly to my office in Dayton. These were medically evaluated by Drs. Sigismund Peller and Mark Fecher, without cost.

With more than two hundred communities of sisters cooperating, our combined efforts brought the ten-year cancer research to a successful conclusion in 1974. The results of this project, combined with a 50-year history of the improved health of sisters and their increased longevity was edited in book form, Life-Style and Demography, 1975. Approximately 2,000 copies have been distributed among interested persons and institutions in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

In the 50-year period of my health research I met many distinguished persons who contributed much to this scientific endeavor. With great humility may I say I was honored on four occasions. The Faculty Award in 1960 by the University of Dayton; chosen K. of C. Man-of-the-Year by the Knights of Columbus; made an Honorary Citizen of the City of New Orleans, 1964; and awarded the Vatican II Commemorative Medal, bestowed by Pope Paul VI in 1966.

The striking merit of my contribution to mankind emphasized the fact that the conservative life-style of the sisters the past half-century, had increased their length of life by four years as compared to other white women and that the type and sites of cancer differed substantially with a rate 25% less than both married and unmarried women.

Marie's apparent recovery from the malignancy ushered in a note of optimism and extreme hopefulness in the last five-year interval. She had passed the 5th year and then the 10th year without the reoccurrence of the terminal illness. The potential bright future encouraged us to take a number of European tours, the last of which was a three month sojourn in France, Spain, and Portugal, celebrating her 64th birthday on the 'New France Steamship' in February 1962.

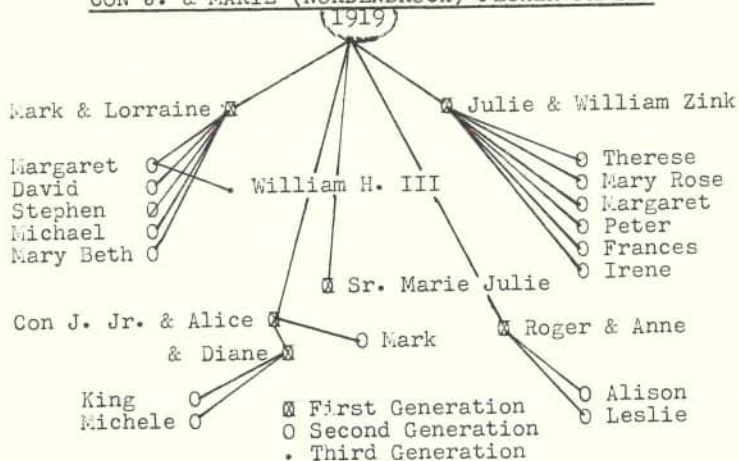
Paradoxically, the ten-year cure theory based on acceptable premises had some exceptions since reoccurring symptoms of her former illness surfaced a few weeks after our European return. We were again, confronted with the former momentous tragic plight.

With the best medical advice and applied therapy all appeared fruitless. Fully aware of its terminal aspect, she began a personal therapy of mind-over-body by enrolling for the graduate course in Master of Music Degree at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music which she determined to complete in a given time. This effort of dogged perseverance was her best therapy, extending her life for an additional two years, thereby qualifying her for the degree in 1964, a few months before her death.

Death is inevitable after birth, but death is merely the end of mortal man while the spirit carries on. Her sons and daughters, generation after generation, will examine and evaluate the tiniest fragments that made up the mosaic of her life. We hope their lives will be fuller and richer as they gaze upon and admire her handiwork of needle-point and fine quilting which merited many Ohio Blue Ribbons. These material accomplishments, and her mental and spiritual attributes enunciated in this biography, will be the choicest heirlooms of future generations.

In closing I am urged to write that her measure of success was not self-esteem, nor popularity, but a measure of goodness. Her unaffected 66 years of living continued to show the family how to live so that at the end of life all can have what each has given.

CON J. & MARIE (NORDENBROCK) FECHER FAMILY



Family Events After 1964

- 1965 - Farm Initiation, Julie and William Zink and Family
- 1966 - Death of Peter Zink
- 1968 - Birth of Irene Zink
- 1971 - Marriage of Roger and Anne Rohlof
- 1971 - Death of Alice (Focke) Fecher
- 1972 - Birth of Alison Fecher
- 1973 - Marriage of Margaret Fecher to William H. Stadtlander Jr.
- 1973 - National Honor Scholarship to Therese Zink
- 1973 - Marriage of Con Jr. to Diane Merrit
- 1974 - Birth of Leslie Fecher
- 1975 - National Honor Scholarship to Mary Rose Zink
- 1977 - Phi Beta Kappa Award to Therese Zink
- 1977 - Birth of William H. Stadtlander III
- 1978 - Marriage of Michael and Cindy Connor
- 1979 - Marriage of Mark and Ellen Rill



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The University of Dayton Press
Box 534, Dayton, Ohio 45469.

