

Tales

No. 14
Spring 1990

U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 44
Oblong, IL

from the general store



Tales' old subscription policy is all washed up!

Because the U.S. Postal Service has ruled that **Tales** can no longer be inserted as a supplement to second-class publications using the past procedures, we are making required changes in the magazine and distribution methods. Specifically, we will no longer offer direct subscriptions.

But you'll still be able to receive your favorite historical and cultural resource the same as always. **Tales** will now be available as a premium for making a tax-deductible contribution to Tales from the general store, inc.*

For contributions of **\$10 or more**, you will receive 4 issues (one year) of **Tales**.

For contributions of **\$25 or more**, you will receive 4 issues (one year) of **Tales** and a **Bellair General Store print**.

(Of course you know how much we would appreciate larger donations to go toward publishing costs and the purchase of computer equipment and supplies.)

* This is only for future *Tales* readers. Current subscribers will continue to receive the magazine until their order expires.

To receive *Tales*, make your donation payable to:
Tales from the general store, inc.

R.R. #2

Oblong, IL 62449

(IRS #37-1107230)



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On the cover

Between 1908 and 1912, amateur photographer Frank Sadorus took pictures of life around his family's east-central Illinois farm. Years later, 350 glass-plate negatives of his were discovered. The cover photo of Frank's mother, Phoebe Brown Sadorus (1844-1935), is featured in the 1983 book, *Upon a Quiet Landscape, The Photos of Frank Sadorus*, published by the Champaign County Historical Archives at the Urbana Free Library.

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By Jane Parker Brown

A family genealogist offers a step-by-step plan for you to research your own family background.

Vaudeville days in Champaign-Urbana

By Tammy Cohen

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By Ray Elliott

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By Melissa Bailey and Toni Hunter

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Tales from the general store

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Two projects miles apart with similar goals

By Ray Elliott

Channel One, the Whittle Communications daily 12-minute news program for high school students, is now being viewed by students in 400 schools across the nation. Christopher Whittle, chairman of the Knoxville media corporation, told a news conference in early March that 2,900 schools in 34 states have signed up for the news program that will also provide those schools with one television for every 23 students, a satellite dish, two video cassette recorders and free installation. He predicted 8,000 schools will be signed up by December.

Students viewing the program have been reported by the Associated Press and local media to think Channel One a good idea, the programming acceptable and the controversy over the use of commercials unfounded. But then students aren't always given a voice in determining what is educationally sound for them.

Despite the strapped financial condition of the school district where I teach, proposed budget cuts and lack of educational equipment and material, Urbana High School turned down the Whittle offer, even though the faculty (56 percent anyway) voted in favor of accepting the proposal 46-36. That margin wasn't enough for Principal Craig Zeck to implement the program. He wanted a larger majority, a clearer mandate, and says the proposal may be reconsidered in another year or two when the program has been around for a while.

Of course, this has little direct bearing on *Tales* and the *Tales* project. It certainly hasn't caused the kind of setback the postal decision did in disallowing the magazine to be mailed as a supplement to second-class publications. Still, it is disappointing from an educational perspective.

Other events, however, have been more uplifting for the *Tales* project. While opportunities for programs and equipment like the Whittle offer haven't been available to us, positive things have been happening. As a result of the story on the Heath family business, I am working with Dick Heath on a book from his perspective that presents the story of the Heath family, the sweet to the bitter, as a metaphor for what happens to American family businesses.

Dick had completed a manuscript of the story when I interviewed him for the *Tales* article. I'm working from that manuscript to complete a book I hope will help provide much needed funds and computer equipment to pay staff members and publish the magazine.

We need a staff to rebuild the circulation lost as a result of the postal decision, to sell advertising, to write grant proposals and to secure equipment that all becomes more necessary as the project grows and moves into the nineties and toward the 21st century.

A class in magazine writing and production will be offered at Urbana High School next year. The class has 18 students signed up for the year-long course and will provide much of the material for *Tales*.

Until then, we've received several student-written submissions. This issue has more student-written material than any issue since I left Oak Lawn Community High School after the 1981-82 academic year. Tammy Cohen, a student in one of my English classes, turned a term paper on vaudeville in Champaign-Urbana into the story that appears on the centerspread.

Cindy Alspach, a student from Oblong High School, accompanied me on an interview with Basil Ikemire of Pierceburg after mail carrier Pete Davis of Robinson suggested Ikemire would make a good story. Working by phone, through the mail and several rewrites, Cindy turned out a story that shows a man with a quiet pride and a strong work ethic.

And two Sullivan, IN, students wrote the story on the building of a gravel road near Farmersburg, IN. Tom Gettinger, managing editor of the *Sullivan Times*, ran the story in that paper and sent it to us for consideration.

This student involvement makes it possible to teach writing as I think it is best taught: for publication and an outside readership rather than for the teacher. It also makes it possible to allow students to learn about their history and culture in a hands-on way from the people who lived through the times past and who were a part of that culture, which brings the generations together in a meaningful way.

Finally, I am accompanying six Urbana High School students to the Washington Journalism Conference in the nation's capital where they will meet with top high school journalists from around the country and learn from professional journalists and top government officials. You can look forward to reading more about that from those students in the next issue of *Tales*.

So while I've been disgruntled with the defeat of the Channel One proposal because I think it is an educationally sound program for all students that will involve them in their world, the positive aspects listed above have been heart-warming. When young people are involved and given the opportunity to pursue their education in a meaningful way, good things happen.

It's interesting that none of these things really costs the taxpayer much in the long haul. All of them, though, including Channel One, are opportunities that can ultimately bring priceless rewards to society. That's not to say that money isn't necessary.

As for the *Tales* project, we'll be looking for ways to involve more students, reach more readers. I only wish that were as easy as Whittle Communications has made it for students to view Channel One.

How to Order Back Issues

Issue No. 1

General stores, hermit Walter Whittaker, Augustus C. French Maplewood estate, storyteller Thornton Stephens, frog gigging, subsistence farming

Issue No. 2

Hog butchering, meat curing, butter churning, dressing chickens, Homer Adkisson's homemade car, tall tale of an Irish folk hero, benefit concert in Bellair, country living, old-time country doctor and his horse, Marvin Harrison's haunted clock

Issue No. 3

Burl Ives, spring fair, furniture refinishing, rug braiding, quilting, first signs of spring and childhood memories, "An Ode to the Outhouse," "Professor Whistledick and his Cure-all Elixir" by Thornton Stephens, Palestine history

Issue No. 4

One-room schoolhouses and the teachers and students who attended them, cooking and canning with Grandma, summer barnraising, ice cream social, White's country store, Merom chautauquas, powerhouses, fishing, gathering wood

Issue No. 5

Harry Caray, early schools in Crawford County, blacksmith Jim Tingley, George Gullett's baseball memories, trapping, recycling garbage into fuel, memories of an old man, "Cyrus Peck" by Thornton Stephens, pet squirrel, train trips, superstitions

Issue No. 6

Studs Terkel, printer Moran Keller, caning chairs, making molasses, the old Sears catalog, "If Grandpa could see us now," political actions committees

Issue No. 7

Salt project in Maine, wild asparagus, Thornton Stephens collection of tales, Bellair history, Morea, how not to catch a cow, the hanging of Elizabeth Reed

Issue No. 8

Barnstorming race driver Bill Richter, fiddle player Harvey "Pappy" Taylor, "Aunt Melinda" by Thornton Stephens, old-time carpenter and Bellair restoration, prairie preservation, poetry, Walter Whittaker tribute

Issue No. 9

"Enoch's Comin'" by Ray Elliott, madstone as folk belief, memories of oil boom days, a child's pet remembered, St. Francisville history, poetry, country photo scrapbook

Issue No. 10

Thornton Stephens tribute, fortune telling with tea leaves, secret trapping bait, child discovers true fate of her grandfather, a family's pet pig, Benjamin Franklin autobiography

Issue No. 11

Oakland, old-time country editors in Champaign County, the Tin Lizzie, girl comes to terms with young sister's death, for sale: rural America

Issue No. 12

Heath candy company, art of storytelling, Edwardsville's Main Street, Finn family tradition of harness racing

Issue No. 13

Illinois Indians, harness maker Dick Elliott, "The Hunt," Urbana High School student essays

Single copies each \$2.50

Send payment with order, specifying the issue number(s) and number of copies to:

Tales from the general store, inc.

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Oblong, IL 62449

Mail's Here

Once is not enough

Please enter a (year's worth of *Tales*) in my name. We received you paper once in June and enjoyed it immensely. I grew up near Walt Whittaker, five miles north of Lawrenceville.

— NORMA JONES
Clay City, IL

Retired teacher enjoys reading *Tales*

I'm a retired teacher of many years ago who graduated from a one-room school and later taught in a one-room school—the last year being just before consolidation.

I spend quite a bit of time reading (with a magnifying glass, I'm sorry to say). I've enjoyed reading the (*Tales* magazines that have) been enclosed in my *Robinson Daily News*. I have the No. 12 issue I enjoyed.

— DOROTHY G. RICHEY
Robinson, IL

Editor's Note: Because of postal regulations, Tales is no longer inserted into newspapers such as the Robinson Daily News. With a contribution to Tales of \$10 or more, you can receive a year's worth of the Tales magazine (four issues). Write to Tales from the general store, R.R. #2, Oblong, IL 62449.

Her husband is a fan

My husband really enjoys reading *Tales*.

— MRS. GILBERT LAUNER
Beardstown, IL

Reader helps out in book search

I like *Tales* very much and have every copy so far.

Olin Ulrey of Akron, OH, said in the "Mail's Here" (*Tales* No. 13) that he would like to get the book, *Five Senses, Four Seasons*, by Harris Hitt. There are two more books by Harris Hitt: *Winter, Summer, Spring and Cider* and *Running Boards and Rumble Seats*. There may be another book or two.

He can write to: Vintage Press Inc., 516 W. 34th St., New York, NY 10001.

— EMMA SNYDER
Casey, IL

Artist knows area

I know the Bellair/Oblong area well. I have done paintings and

drawings down your way for more than 40 years.

— PHILLIP OSCHMANN
Burbank, IL

Indian lore makes for interesting reading

Enjoyed your article on the Illinois Indians (*Tales* No. 13). I doubt Chief Illiniwek will ever adopt authentic garb.

(The) story reminded me of a wonderful story I'd read not too long ago: *Little Big Man*, reissued last year on the 25th anniversary of its first printing. It's a splendid tale of the supposed survivor at Custer's Last Stand, rich in Indian lore and humor. My brother-in-law, who recommended it to me, described it as a cross between *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and *Huck Finn*.

Anyway, keep up the good work.

— STEVE HELLE
Chairman
Dept. of Journalism
University of Illinois
Urbana, IL

Indian story inspires craftswoman

I received the Winter 1989-90 issue (of *Tales*) recently. I was happy to see the Indian blankets. I spend my days doing crafts and recently started a crocheted Indian blanket. It was suggested I crochet the fringe as I went, and I really didn't know why until I saw your article. Now it makes my blanket even more enjoyable to do.

— ALICE TURNIPSEED
Pawcatuck, CT

Finns deserve tribute

It was a wonderful article that Tom Shinn wrote on the racing Finn family (*Tales* No. 13). It's such a pleasure to see such a fine honor paid to members of a family that has dedicated their lives to the racing profession.

Our father, Harry Wood, also owned, trained and raced harness horses when the elder Finns were raising their families, and we all shared a lot of special moments and times—some good, some bad. We grew up with the Finn children and were many times friendly competitors. I don't ever remember any harsh words between our families if their horse outperformed ours or ours theirs. There never seemed to be an element of greed that we see so often these days—only a bunch a

guys doing their best at a sport they all loved.

It does my heart good to know that as long as there are Finns in the racing business, some of the past will stay with the industry and it will persevere as a sport rather than just a business.

What a fun and unique family the Finns are. Our congratulations to them for this recognition. And thanks to Mr. Shinn for an article well researched and well written.

— MARILYN WOOD
BARKLEY
Greenup, IL

Appreciative readers always welcome

I loved the last issue of *Tales*. The kids' stories were fantastic, and the Illinois Indian piece was wonderful. Hope (the magazine is) working out as well as it looks.

— MICHAEL LUFRANO
Allston, MA

I really enjoyed the latest issue of *Tales*. The article on the Illinois Indians was interesting—I had no idea how much Indian history had to do with the state of Illinois.

— STACEY E. GUIFFRE
Long Beach, CA

It is great to see *Tales* again.

— KIM C. COX
La Jolla, CA

You do what you have to do

So happy to have you back publishing. Since I am involved in family history (a number of my lines—McCarter, Pettyjohn, Hamilton, Parker, Lackey, Montgomery, Attaway, Highsmith, Pinkstaff and Seitzinger—were early pioneers of the state of Illinois, settling near the Lawrence/Crawford county line), I am a mite disappointed but understanding that it has been necessary for you to expand the area of your concentration.

Better to share than to lose your publication entirely. I wish you much success in your endeavors.

— MARGARET McCARTER
CRAVEY
Indianapolis, IN

A satisfied customer

I enjoyed reading *Tales* (No. 12). The articles were interesting. I bought a Heath candy bar the next day!

— KELLY BROWN
Urbana High School
Urbana, IL



The International Order of Odd Fellows Orphan's Home Band parades down State Street in Westfield, IL, as part of the festivities for I.O.O.F. Day June 5, 1910.

Photo courtesy of Bob Stutesman

Did You Know...

Group will attend journalism seminar

Six Urbana High School seniors will accompany English teacher and *Tales* editor Ray Elliott to the Washington Journalism Conference in Washington, D.C., April 25-29.

Affiliated with the National Press Club, the conference offers students the opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes view of journalism from professional editors and reporters. Seminars and workshops will feature a wide variety of topics, including scholastic press issues, ethical standards, secret sources and the anatomy of a story.

Students will also visit congressional offices and participate in writing workshops led by national journalists.

Many nationally known educators, journalists and political figures will participate in the conference, including William Bennett, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy;

James Brady, former White House press secretary and current vice chairman of the National Organization on Disability; Carl Sagan of the Center for Radiophysics and Space Research at Cornell University; Andrea Mitchell, NBC White House correspondent; and David Gergen, editor of *U.S. News & World Report*.

The students will also tour Arlington National Cemetery and the Smithsonian Museums and attend a performance at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Program brings young & old together

An educational program taking root in the Chicago suburbs is trying to remove the negative stereotypes many young people have about senior citizens.

"Intergenerational education" involves older people sharing their experience and wisdom with school-aged children. For example, a retired radio community affairs manager instructed a group

of fifth graders at Gavin Elementary School in Chicago Heights how to take photographs.

And at Evanston Township High School, about 100 students are inviting older people to be their guests at a prom in May.

"We have to do something about changing the attitudes of children toward aging," educator Helene Block told *The Associated Press*. "As it is, they are growing up with negative stereotypes—and this is the generation that eventually will be making policy decisions on Social Security and other important issues."

Share your news, photos in *Tales*

If you have any historic photographs or present-day ones of scenic views or activities in the Midwest, lend them to *Tales* for publication in the Did You Know section. Help share the cultural heritage of the area with other readers.

Also, let readers know about

upcoming events in your area, or pass on some interesting local history through Did You Know.

Include your name and address with all photo submissions so we can return them.

Skirmish led to tragic ending

When Civil War broke out, brothers Archibald, Joseph and William Maxwell entered the Union Army. Joseph was killed in the Battle of Stone River. When the two brothers were going home on furlough, they came upon a crowd of people at a church on Allison Prairie in Honey Creek Township, which contained many former southerners. A voice called out, "Hoorah for Jefferson Davis," which so aroused Bill Maxwell that he drew his pistol and shot into the crowd, wounding one person.

By daybreak the next morning, Nov. 2, 1864, a mob of Copperheads (the Knights of the Golden Circle) from Crawford and Lawrence counties surrounded the Maxwell home. The people said

they had a writ for William's arrest from the Lawrence County sheriff. The Maxwells refused to surrender Bill, and the mob opened fire on the house. A daughter, Elizabeth Maxwell, who was aroused from bed by the noise, was struck and seriously injured. She died seven weeks later after suffering untold agony. William was also wounded.

Under a guarantee of safety, the father and two sons agreed to accompany the mob to Lawrenceville. There it was discovered that the mob had no writ nor any authority for its actions. However a warrant was sworn out for William's arrest on the charge of intent to kill. He was tried and acquitted. The wound on his leg proved to be serious, and he died in early 1865. The mob bragged that it had used poisoned bullets, and the doctor was of the same opinion.

— *History of Crawford County Illinois*
Crawford County Historical Society

1983

Continued on p.



By Jane Parker Brown

Unless you have an insatiable curiosity to know why you are who you are—a kind of pioneering spirit in reverse—and love to write hundreds of letters, enjoy tramping through overgrown and neglected old cemeteries, wade through stacks of old musty courthouse records, spend endless hours reading and researching in libraries, and have an unbound spirit of adventure and love to find saints and scamps in your family tree, then tracing your family genealogy may not be for you.

However, if you've decided to take the plunge, you're in for the greatest adventure of your life. You will become an immediate addict to know more and more.

Lots of folks give credit to Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*, for starting the national interest in genealogy. Not so. Genealogy is one of the oldest pastimes ever. Even the Bible is one monumental genealogy record.

Recording your family history need not be expansive nor extensive. You may only be interested in going back three or four generations. In that case, you probably will never have to leave your living room. You can just write letters.

But if you want to know more, the process can take you to new towns and states and even new countries.

I began recording my family dates and information when I was in high school in the 1940s. But I did not really pursue my recording, nor go into any kind of research until 15 years ago. How I wish I had been encouraged to follow through when so many of my older relatives were still living.

Where to begin

Maybe the better question is *when* to begin. And that's as soon as you have your first question about your family history. The younger you are, the younger your oldest living relatives are and the more they will be able to help you and remember their own parents and grandparents.

Most families have old photo albums with pictures of ancestors now deceased. Many times the pictures are not identified, and unless a living family member can tell you who they are, where and when and why the picture was

taken, then you can see right away how much family history has slipped away.

Researching your family history is not like other hobbies or leisure-time activities such as golf or photography. It does not require a lot of equipment. You need lots of sharp pencils (do all of your initial work in pencil so you can easily change any errors) and two three-ring, loose-leaf binders (one for unfinished research and one for your permanent family records).

You will want some pedigree charts. (See Figure 1) Notice how the chart has already taken you back four generations. You start with No. 1 and your own name and information about you goes in the No. 1 space. Your second pedigree chart allows you to continue backwards even further. The second chart starts with the last generation from your first chart.

Since you are taking the time to keep all of these records, you should give serious thought to the kind of paper to use for the perma-

nent family history. Ordinary bond paper will yellow and become brittle in less than your lifetime.

All of your words and pictures should be recorded on permanent paper of 50 percent cotton content or rag bond, Permalife document bond or ledger-mounting stock that will last 500 years or more. All city, county and national records are recorded onto permanent paper stock. It is well worth the few extra cents to make your family book a lasting record.

You can draw a copy similar to Figure 1 and make 25 photocopies for starters, or you can order a supply of preprinted forms on special durable paper from the Genealogy Club of America (Suite 600, 19 West South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101).

You will also need family group sheets, which are also available from the Genealogy Club at the above address. (See Figure 2) The reason for having uniform-sized sheets is so you can make copies of your information to exchange with other family members, and

you'll each be able to understand what you've done.

You'll also want to make up some family questionnaires. (See Figure 3) Give these to all of your family members so they can fill them in for you. Mail copies to relatives in other states and cities. A cassette tape recorder will also come in handy later.

Filling out pedigree charts

Pedigree charts are really simple to fill out. There are a few standard rules to make the charts consistent and easy to read and understand no matter who fills them out. It also saves a lot of re-copying later on.

Step 1. Study the five-generation chart in Figure 1. Right away you can see the names, births, marriages and deaths of four generations of direct ancestors. The fourth generation is shown by name only, but that fourth generation name will be the first generation name on the next consecutive chart. This enables you to extend any family surname as far back as you can and your numbering

system will be easy to follow.

Step 2. Record each person's full name, capitalizing the surname. For example: PARKER, Newman Ellsworth.

Step 3. Record the day, then the month, and then the year for all dates. For example: 5 Feb. 1867.

Step 4. Always record the smallest geographical area first. For example, Flat Rock, Crawford Co., Illinois is recorded as: Flat Rock, Crawford, IL. Use the standard U.S. Postal Service abbreviations for states, but don't abbreviate cities or counties.

Step 5. Any information that is not proven, such as a birth date, should have a question mark beside it in parentheses.

Filling out

family group sheets

Start a family group sheet for every marriage of every person on the pedigree charts.

As you search further into the past, you'll discover several good reasons why there were second marriages. Epidemics claimed one spouse or the other, wives faded from the picture after 11 or more children, and husbands collapsed from back-breaking work or were killed in wars or Indian raids.

The following are some suggestions for completing the family group sheets:

1. Record names, dates and places the same way as on the pedigree charts.
2. All uncommon first names, such as Evelyn for a male or Georgie for a female, should be underlined so that you and others understand that no mistake was made in recording them that way.
3. If there is more than one marriage for either spouse, make sure you reference them by name so they will be easy to locate in your family history book.
4. Be sure to fill in the name, address and date of the person who supplied you with the information on each family group sheet. You may also want to indicate your relationship to that informant, i.e. a niece, grandson, etc.
5. Place an X next to the number of the child who is your direct ancestor.
6. If any child was a twin, adopted, a step child or stillborn, add that information next to the child's name in parentheses. After you get your pedigree

Searching your own family tree

Name of Compiler Jane Parker Brown FOUR GENERATION ANCESTOR CHART
 Address Rt. Box 32 Person No. 1 on this chart is the same person as No. _____ on chart No. _____ Chart No. 1
 City, State Genoa, IL
 Date 21 Jan 1976

1 PARKER, Isaac Thomas Gordon
 b. _____
 p.b. _____
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

2 PARKER, Newman Ellsworth
 b. 5 Feb 1867
 p.b. Crawford Co., IL
 m. 23 Mar. 1887
 p.m. Crawford Co., IL
 d. 16 Sept. 1908
 p.d. Colorado Springs, El Paso Co., Co.

3 PARKER, William Lloyd, Sr.
 b. 30 July 1897
 p.b. Crawford Co., IL
 m. 6 Dec 1924
 p.m. Meridian, Lauderdale Co., Miss
 d. 4 Aug 1978
 p.d. Belvidere, Boone Co., IL

4 Priscilla Jane Lackey
 b. 6 Jan 1866
 p.b. Lawrence Co., IL
 d. 13 Dec 1935
 p.d. Crawford Co., IL.

5 PARKER, Katherine Jane
 b. 17 Jan 1924
 p.b. Corinth, Alcorn Co., Miss
 m. 4 July 1944
 p.m. Genoa, DeKalb Co., IL
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

6 RAY, Hubert Hlogzo
 b. _____
 p.b. _____
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

7 RAY, Sara Camille
 b. 24 Sept 1904
 p.b. Meridian, Lauderdale Co., Miss.
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

8 Katherine Camille Jones
 b. _____
 p.b. _____
 m. _____
 p.m. _____
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

9 BROWN, Frederic Warren
 b. 21 July 1922
 p.b. Genoa, DeKalb Co., IL
 d. _____
 p.d. _____

Figure 1

FAMILY GROUP No. _____ Husband's Full Name BROWN, Frederic Warren Sr.
 This information Obtained From: _____
 Birth: 21 July 1922, Genoa, DeKalb, IL
 Chr. and Burial: _____
 Mar.: 9 July 1944, Genoa, DeKalb, IL
 Death: _____
 Burial: _____
 Places of Residence: IL, WI
 Occupation: Farmer, Church Affiliation: Methodist, Military Rec.: _____
 His Father: Byat Charles Brown Mother's Maiden Name: Charibel Myers
 Wife's Full Maiden Name: PARKER, Katherine Jane
 Birth: 17 Jan 1924, Corinth, Alcorn, Miss
 Chr. and Burial: _____
 Death: _____
 Burial: _____
 Compiler: Jane Parker Brown Places of Residence: _____
 Address: Rt. Box 32 Occupation if other than Housewife: Journalist Church Affiliation: Evangelical/GoSp
 City, State: Genoa, IL City, State: Genoa, IL
 Her Father: William Lloyd Parker Mother's Maiden Name: Sara Camille Ray

Child's Name in Full (Address in order of birth)	Child's Sex	Day	Month	Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province, etc.	State or Country	Age, Sex, or Chr.
1 <u>Kathy Lee</u>	F	1	Nov	1945	Sycamore	DeKalb	IL	
<u>Dennis Joe Clementy</u>	M	10	Sept	1966	Hayward	Sevier	WV	
2 <u>Melanie Sue</u>	F	28	Nov	1949	Sycamore	DeKalb	IL	
<u>Stanley Bushman</u>	M	27	Dec	1969	Stirling	Whitehall	IL	
3 <u>Robin Eric</u>	M	17	May	1952	Sycamore	DeKalb	IL	
<u>Paula Christine Jensen</u>	F				Genoa	"	"	
4 <u>Frederic Warren II</u>	M	17	May	1958	Sycamore	DeKalb	IL	
<u>Patricia Agnes Moore</u>	F	2	June	19	Mt Vernon	Knox	Oh.	
5 _____								
6 _____								
7 _____								
8 _____								
9 _____								
10 _____								

Figure 2

charts and family group sheets drawn up, you're ready to fill in the other information you need.

Start with what you know about yourself: when you were born, where you were born, who are your parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, when and where they were born and married and so on. Use your family history questionnaire (See Figure 3) as a guide. You may be surprised at how much you already know.

Now go back to the beginning and cite all the references available in your family from birth certificates, old family Bibles, photographs, old diaries, etc. Then make a list of older relatives near you who can answer some of your questions or perhaps tell you some interesting anecdote about your family. Face-to-face interviews and conversations with older family members are invaluable and can be very revealing experiences.

You're likely to get different responses when you explain to your family what you're doing. One member might say, "Wonderful! I was hoping someone would do this." Another might think you're some kind of misfit on the family

tree. Still a third might be apt to tell you in no uncertain terms to mind your own business and leave it alone. I always found that third person to be the one I most wanted to talk with. They're the ones who most likely remember the juicy stories and tidbits from the past.

Here's where a tape recorder and blank cassettes come in handy. Don't trust your memory or your notes. Small pocket tape recorders are becoming less expensive. I prefer a voice-activated one because it only records when someone is speaking or there is a noise.

These interviews are a never-ending source of surprise and diversion, sometimes leading you in a direction you hadn't thought of. Interviewing elderly relatives requires thoughtfulness as well as tact. As a courtesy, make an appointment no longer than an hour and a half. You can always set up a second or third interview, if necessary. Be careful not to assume that they don't hear well and shout at them. I have found that talking slowly and distinctly assures them you are not there to harrass them.

The best way to phrase your questions is to begin with one of

the five Ws or H: who, what, where, when, why or how. Ask your important questions first, in case your interview is cut short for some reason. Don't try to make them stick to a certain question. Sometimes their rambling can produce more information than you asked for.

Also, don't overlook the value of long-time family friends and neighbors as sources.

Letter for interviewing by mail

When you need to write to relatives at a distance, you may want to have a form letter photocopied. Keep it simple and to the point. I've used the following letter for much of my contact with relatives.

Dear (name of relative),
 I am trying to gather information on our family in hopes of putting together a family history. I would be grateful if you could fill in the blank pedigree chart attached to this letter and return it to me.

It would be helpful if you could refer me to other relatives who might have information about our family. And, of course, I would appreciate any information you

can give me on family-related public documents (Bible records, certificates, photos, charts, diaries) that I might copy and return.

Thank you for your time and help.
 Cordially,
 (your name)

One big courtesy you should not fail to include is a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Postage is one thing that will cost you, but you are more likely to get a reply if you enclose an SASE with your inquiry letter and charts.

Local and public records

When you really get into your search, there are two terms you'll become familiar with about the types of information you're recording. The oral facts from relatives and written histories are called "secondary" resources. While these are helpful, you'll always want the "primary" sources for dates, persons and places as positive proof in case you ever decide to publish, join the Daughters of the American Revolution, or use any of the material to inform others in your family that the facts you've spent time gathering are reliable.

Local public records include

birth, marriage and death records at the courthouse; wills, probate documents and land deeds; church and cemetery records; and records of an auction.

These records are important for several reasons. First, you may be able to trace your family back another generation. For instance, if you know your grandfather was born in Springfield, Mo., you could write the courthouse there for his birth certificate. That document may tell you who his father was, thereby giving you another generation.

Secondly, these records might authenticate some of the secondary information you're not sure about. Also, some documents are signed by your ancestors, which makes them seem more real to you. There is no excitement that can be compared with being the one who finds a long-lost connection or a special story about the past.

You may find an old will by a mother who chastised her wayward son by leaving him "20 pounds to be paid him by my executors at such times as the

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Vaudeville Days

in Champaign-Urbana

By Tammy Cohen

Vaudeville refers to a circuit of theaters that hosted performers of all sorts who traveled from city to city, earning their living on the road. The word is adapted from *Vaux de Vire*, a French name given to songs sung in the valley near Vire, France. The term goes back to the end of the 14th century, nearly 300 years before the conception of vaudeville in America. The nature of a vaudeville act varied from theater to theater—sometimes prim and proper, but occasionally a little off color. Despite the wide spectrum of acts and tastes, vaudeville spread rapidly throughout the United States.

At the same time vaudeville was gaining in popularity, the twin cities of Champaign and Urbana were growing as well. The area was described on a map of the day as "a thriving and beautiful city in the centre of Champaign County, and in the midst of a vast territory of land, it is the county seat and where the business of the County mainly centres." Urbana had grown rapidly since 1833 when the first court was held in a log stable. Modernization was evident as the first electric cars ran from Urbana to Danville, and the railroads were bringing both people and merchandise to Champaign-Urbana.

The cities today are centered around the University of Illinois and the agriculture of the area, but they were settled slowly and grew mainly after Urbana was named the county seat in 1833. The first Methodist Episcopal Church was built on a lot that cost \$3 in 1840; the first Champaign County fair

was in 1852; the first mail carried by railroad from Chicago to Urbana was in 1854; Champaign-Urbana's Republican Party started in 1856; and the first use of gas was in 1869. The Illinois Industrial University, later renamed the University of Illinois, was founded in 1868. Electric lights were first used in Urbana in 1885.

Life in Champaign-Urbana during the vaudeville years was simpler and the entertainment choices were not nearly as numerous. University sporting events were attended almost exclusively by students.

"The football team only had a part-time coach," said longtime Urbana resident Charles M. Webber. "There wasn't much to do. Vaudeville was it. People didn't go out much—a few social events, a few movies—but that was about it."

Playing cards was a popular pastime, but a limited form of entertainment. Most residents went to the local theaters. A Champaign resident since 1923, Edith Keck, agreed that vaudeville was the thing to do and called it "a grand event."

Theaters and opera houses were popular in the twin cities. In 1899 the Walker Opera House brought in top acts and shows from Chicago to fill its 350 seats. It was a successful business until 1914 when the facility was so run down that rats reportedly fell through holes in the ceiling and landed in the audience.

Barrett Opera Hall, Eichberg Opera House, Illinois Theater and the Merry Widow all were frequented theaters. The Illinois was the most popular. At the turn of the century, it hosted major

Broadway shows that arrived by rail in time for an afternoon matinee. The shows performed, however, were similar to ones performed today—Shakespeare, other dramas, tragedies and a few comedies—but all of the shows were aimed toward the upper class, often with ticket prices to match. So although Champaign-Urbana wasn't culturally starved, there was a lack of variety.

The American version of vaudeville began with Benjamin Franklin Keith. Attracted to show business at an early age, he decided in 1894 to turn his dime store into an outlet for continuous variety shows designed to please family audiences.

Up until this time, the most similar form of this kind of entertainment was called variety. Although over the years the two have become synonymous, variety originally tended to be much more crude and vulgar and was geared toward rowdy men and prostitutes. Variety thrived in the beer halls. But then the nature of the acts were cleaned up in the hope of attracting more respectable audiences. The two entertainment forms then merged together to create what is known today as vaudeville.

"In vaudeville there was nothing vulgar," Webber said. "It was just lighter. It was just good pastime entertainment. Most of the shows were good shows."

As vaudeville permeated the smaller cities of the United States, one of the two main circuits, the Orpheum, came to Champaign-Urbana. The Orpheum Circuit operated in Chicago, out west and in western Canada, while the other major circuit, B.F. Keith's, ran



The original facade of the Orpheum Theater in Champaign

Photo courtesy of the Preservation Society of Champaign-Urbana

east of Chicago and in eastern Canada.

The Orpheum Theater in Champaign was completed in 1914 and had a seating capacity of 851. In December of that year, an advertisement announced the "New Orpheum direction, F&H Amusement Co., Management, Marcus Heiman PLAYING HIGH CLASS VAUDEVILLE" to open in the downtown area. Even the physical structure of the theater was a part of the vaudeville culture. The Orpheum was a one-third scale model of an opera house in Versailles, France, and had a double-shell system (the inner shell allowing for a variety of stylistic decorations while creating excellent acoustics).

"It was quite glamorous with dark green velvet and chandeliers that were so beautiful," said James Russell Vaky of Champaign, who frequented many vaudeville shows. "The ushers impressed us. Every seat was reserved."

Another theater in downtown Champaign that opened in December 1921 was also touted for its grandeur. The Virginia Theater, which is still in operation today, has intricate decorations on the walls and ceiling. It was modeled after the most famous vaudeville theater, The Palace in

New York City. The theater is overwhelming with its domed ceiling, spacious cupolas and a majestic balcony.

The Virginia was the farthest theater from the railroad station (3 1/2 blocks), which made the transportation of sets and props more difficult. It was not a part of either of the two circuits and mostly featured other theatrical performances and movies. But it still occasionally received acts from the circuit.

Traveling the small towns and large cities, vaudeville was accessible to nearly every economic level with the exception perhaps of the highest and the lowest. Many fans of traditional theater considered vaudeville to be a cheap form of entertainment and its performers equally bad.

Vaudeville patron Mary Hussey, who has lived in Urbana for more than 65 years, recalled a conversation with friends whom she thought might have seen vaudeville shows.

"Although I couldn't see them, it was almost as if their noses were turning up," she said. "One lady said, 'No, we never did pay any attention to that.' Although, I suppose there have always been theater snobs."

"There were always a group of



Children fill Champaign's Virginia Theater in 1934 for a Christmas Party.

Photo by B.A. Strawch
courtesy of the Champaign County Historical Archives

and Conservation Association

people who felt that way," Webber said. "They went to operas, and although operas are nice, vaudeville is something completely different."

Theater critic Acton Davies referred to the medium as "a place where a great many bad actors go before they died."

Among those "bad" actors who performed on vaudeville stages were W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, Bob Hope, Danny Kaye, George Burns, Gracie Allen, Gypsy Rose Lee and her sister, June Havoc, George M. Cohan, Joe Jackson, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Fred and Adele Astaire, Jack Benny, Fanny Brice, Milton Berle, Elsie Janis, Eddie Cantor, Eddie Foy, James Cagney, Mae West and Will Rogers.

On Jan. 4, 1915, Will Rogers, "Noted Oklahoma Cowboy," and the Ching Ling Hee Troupe were advertised at the Orpheum along with Great Carter the Magician and two other acts. A review in the local *Courier-Herald* read:

Big Variety Bill at the Orpheum. Topping a splendid five-act vaudeville show, now at the Orpheum, Will Rogers, the Oklahoma Cowboy entertaining with his roping and comedy talking. Mr. Rogers does his usual rope tricks and has a number of

comedy jokes. The Big City Four, four very neat appearing young men sing nine numbers. They have very good voices and proved to be a decided hit. Lilla Davis and company in their original satire on suffrage have a bright little playlet. Dow & Dow, two Hebrew comedians, have an original line of songs and comedy, and the Tyler St. Clair xylophonists are talented musicians.

Will Rogers was just one of many famous performers, including the Marx Brothers, Bill Robinson (billed as "the black daffydill") and Al Jolson, who made their stop in Champaign-Urbana. The local legend is that Jolson used to sell tickets out in front of the Orpheum. Not recognizing him, students asked if it was really Jolson coming to the theater or someone in his place.

Other famous names who came to the twin cities during these years were Sarah Bernhardt, the Barrymores and Italian tenor Enrico Caruso. Comedian Red Skelton appeared at the Virginia in the 1930s during vaudeville's waning days. But the performers did not have to be famous in order to be memorable.

"I remember a tall, slender man in a long topcoat," Hussey said. "He had the unusual ability to

make himself 'disappear' by pulling himself inside the coat until he looked like nothing more than an empty coat. Then he would perform various tasks as just a coat.

"There was another act with three men in it. One was very tall, one was medium height and one very short. But they were all dressed alike and would do everything in unison. It was absolutely hilarious. Something like that nowadays wouldn't seem that funny, but back then ..."

She said many acts were sill and seemed to have no point to them. And yet, they seemed to be the ones that made audiences laugh the most.

"There was every kind of act," Hussey added. "Mostly comedy. And it seemed that mostly men came. Vaudeville didn't have to have a plot. If you could do something, you did it. That was the nice thing about vaudeville; it had two sides. It gave audiences a great variety, and it allowed people doing the acts to find out what they could do best and what would go over best."

A vaudeville bill could have as little as two acts or more than 10, each different from the other. There were actors, singers, dancers, musicians, acrobats (es-

pecially tightrope walkers), magicians, comedians, animal acts, child acts and even freak acts. The various backgrounds of the performers themselves also added to the diversity, each sharing with thousands of Americans his or her own heritage, talent or oddity.

In the early years, a patron paid five cents for the privilege to see "Miss Alice Somers—Champion Clog," "Ethiopian Song and Dance with Joe Lang," "Starlight Waltz with Miss Josie Farran" and 14 other acts.

Vaudeville has been described as "a treasure house of individuality" and perhaps one of contradictions, as well.

Along with Al Jolson, Eddie Leonard was best known for his "blackface" minstrel routine. There were many other white actors whose entire act was to be black, and there were blacks who dressed as whites. Julian Eltinge was heralded as "the world's greatest female impersonator" and Vesta Tilley was a famous male impersonator.

Animal acts, though at times amazing, sometimes bordered on the ridiculous. For example, one act featured mules who danced, fought, then made up and kissed each other. Another one featured a

litter of dogs performing plays with monkeys as directors.

Contortionists were extremely popular with audiences. Some could stretch and bend into knots; others were so skilled at changing their face and physical appearance that they could turn into a completely different looking person.

In one act, a sweet little girl danced and sang as a man burst forth from the audience and cried out, "Ellie! How I've missed you!" As "managers" restrained him, he protested that his daughter had been snatched away and her mother had died. The audience, believing this was true, became physically involved. Men fought back the managers as father and daughter were reunited to a cheering, crying crowd.

Comedy routines and jokes that once made audiences roar with laughter would undoubtedly be considered tame by today's standards. For example: "Did you send for the doctor when the baby swallowed the collar button?"

"You bet I did. It was the only one I had."

Or: "Last winter I met a charming gentleman, a southern planter. He was an undertaker from New Orleans."

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The day the Bellair Bank was robbed

By
Ray Elliott

Between the St. Valentine's Day massacre in Chicago on Feb. 14, 1929, which sent rival gangsters to their deaths, and the Stock Market crash on Oct. 29, 1929, which plunged the United States into its worst depression in history, the Bellair State Bank was robbed on May 22, 1929, and sent the small community in southeastern Illinois into a manhunt and period of excitement it hadn't known since the beginning of the oil boom.

More than 60 years have passed since then. Homer "Putt" Adkisson was the bank cashier at the time of the robbery. A few years prior to his death in 1987 at the age of 83, Adkisson recalled the events one day under the shade of two trees outside his small shop near his Bellair home. Despite the passage of some 50 years that were marked by a decrease in hair and an increase in weight, Adkisson remembered that robbery as if it had only happened the day before.

It was his clear thinking and quick wit that had saved four women, another man and himself from being locked in the room-high vault.

"I was in the bank alone at the time, and I saw these two fellows (Earl Spencer and Floyd Bowen) drive up," he said. "One of them went into Nancy's (Bell) store. The other one came in the bank. He asked for change for a \$5 bill. When I went to get him the change, why he shoved a .45 in my face and told me to stand still, that I wouldn't be hurt.

Armed with a shotgun, Spencer followed three fleeing women and Charley Bell into the general store (next door to the bank) he operated with his mother, Nancy. Spencer took the small caliber pistol Bell was trying to remove from a drawer and herded the Bells, Nell Earlewine, Vivian Shook and Elizabeth Goodwin into the bank. With everybody in sight safe inside, Spencer sent Bowen to the door with the shotgun and took over.

"He made me get the money and put it in a black bag," Adkisson said. "And, uh, I couldn't think, uh, what the combination was to, uh, the bottom part of the safe. I told him I'd have to go in front and get that paper that showed the combination. In fact, I was a little excited."

Adkisson laughed, then said the man followed him to the front, thinking perhaps he was going after a gun.

"Let me look in there where you're going to get this paper first," the gunman said. And after he looked in and was satisfied there was no gun, he added, "O.K., get your paper."

Adkisson then unlocked the safe. There were half dollars and quarters in the bottom chest, along with dimes, nickels and pennies. The gunman took everything but the pennies in the silver line.

"There was \$90 is gold on a shelf where you couldn't see that I forgot to give him," Adkisson recalled. "Four \$20 dollar pieces and two \$5 pieces. He already had the paper money out of the drawer

and out of the safe in his bag—took \$925.80 in all."

Then the gunman turned to Adkisson and said, "How much money you got on you?"

"Five dollars."

"Let's see."

Adkisson pulled out his pocket book and showed him. The gunman said, "Well, just keep it."

Before continuing the story, Adkisson shifted on his stool, cleared his throat and chuckled quietly.

"When I was goin' out to get the combination, he thought I was stalling and punched me in the ribs with his automatic. So after I got all the money, he said, 'All of you get in the vault.' I was the last one to go in, and he shut the door.

"When he went to turnin' the handle, why there was a slot like that," Adkisson said and held his hands in a 2 inch by 1 inch rectangle. "I stuck my two fingers right in those slot. That kept the plunger from going in that slot."

But the gunman turned the plunger and believed it was locked. When he heard the car

start, Adkisson got a gun from the shelf, ran outside and started shooting at the gas tank on the Dodge Coupe.

"One of them missed the gas tank about that far," he said and held up his hands about 8 inches apart, "and went between the gas tank and the tire. Two of them hit the turtle back of the coupe. Two bullets missed the car. They went down and hit Uncle Ham's (Adkisson) house. Went through the front wall and through another wall in the house. Uncle Ham told me, 'You don't know it, but you might have killed somebody.'

The two bank robbers headed southeast out of Bellair on the angling road that went by the cemetery and John Downey's house.

"Daniel," Adkisson said, "hailed them and said, 'Now there's a bridge out, boys. You can't go through. You might as well turn around and go back.'"

So the gunmen drove back to Bellair and around the square, heading east toward where Alva Warner and Adkisson lay with

shotguns behind the hedge at his house. But the fugitives turned and headed south out of Bellair. Warner and Adkisson chased them three miles.

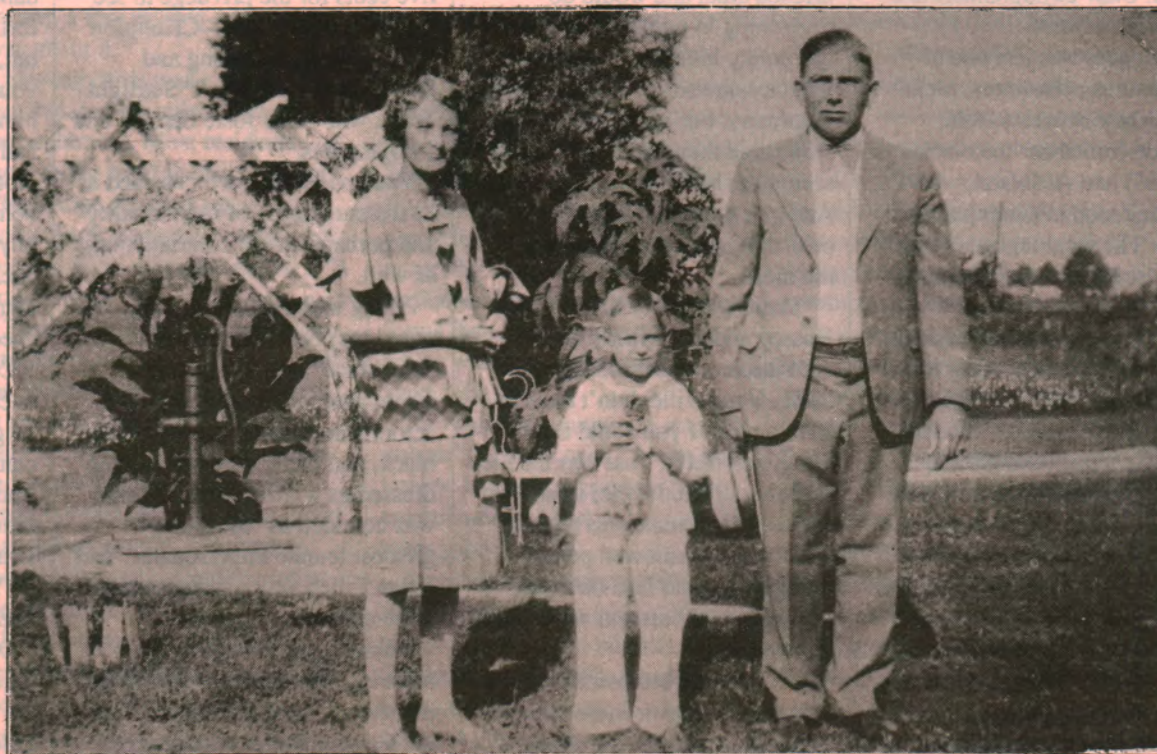
By this time, the bank robbers had headed east and found another bridge out. When they came back, Ches Knicely and Emmitt Owen hid in a fence south of Ping's and shot the tire and back glass out of the car.

"The tire didn't go down for a while," Adkisson said. "But when it did, they left the car and set the shotgun down by a rail fence and went on. Some of the gang—I wasn't with that bunch—found it but thought it was a trap. George Hargis was with them, and he'd been overseas in WWI. He said, 'I'm not afraid to go and get it,' and he did.

"Well, they got away. But they was sittin' someplace over in Indiana when a cop recognized them. Bowen, he picked up his gun and she jammed. The cop shot him once right in there, and the next one got him right here," Adkisson pointed to the side of the face and then put a finger to the center of the temple. "And that stopped him.

"Then Spencer, he shot him right here," he said and pointed to his mouth. "The bullet went in his mouth and came out in his neck, just missing the jugular vein. Took two teeth out in front and took a jaw tooth when it came out. Spencer served some time and got out. Don't know whatever happened to him."

After completing a sentence in Indiana, where he had been returned on a parole violation, Spencer was sent to Crawford County in November 1931 and sentenced to One to Life in Menard Penitentiary. He served nearly 11 years before being released and died shortly afterwards.



Homer Adkisson, right, was a clerk at the Bellair Bank at the time of the robbery. His wife, Vera, and son, Earl, are also featured in this 1929 photo.

Photo courtesy of Vera Adkisson

Ray Elliott is editor of Tales from the general store and teaches at Urbana High School in Urbana, IL.

A road that brought people together

By Melissa Bailey & Toni Hunter

Retired produce trucker Johnny Drake of Farmersburg, IN, is one of the few people who remembers seeing the building of a gravel road. But it wasn't just any gravel road, and it wasn't as unimportant as it may sound. It was one of the first gravel roads built in America, near a small place called Middletown, IN. Middletown is now known as Prairie Creek, and the gravel road he talked about is still used today. It runs along the Sullivan-Vigo county line northwest of Farmersburg.

Drake was a waterboy, but he saw firsthand what hard work was like "back in the old days." He talked about the work that was put into the roads and even about some of the men who did the work. He described what the scenery was like along the road, especially the apple orchards that were said to have been planted by Johnny Applesseed himself. Most importantly, he talked of the reasons why the road was built.

Drake came from a family of nine children. While he was still very young, his father died. The gravel road was built sometime before he died, although Drake doesn't remember the exact year.

He thinks maybe he was about 13 or 14 years old at the time. All nine children helped carry water through and usually brought home about 50 cents a day. On a really good day, they made almost a whole dollar, but days like that were rare.

The nine Drake children each shared the work and provided equally for the family. Carrying water was a good summertime or after-school job. In the summer, the children and the men worked from about sunup until 5 p.m. During the school year, the children would rise at sunup and fill their water jugs.

"We'd run down to the men with the water right after school," Drake said.

He lived almost a mile south of the gravel road and usually walked or ran the distance. Sometimes he caught a ride with one of the men who drove a gravel wagon.

"Our job was to carry the water to the men," he said. "When it came to watering the horses, the man driving the team was responsible for that job."

If it was very dry or dusty, water jugs were attached to the sides of the wagons. The water trickled out onto the road as they drove along, which helped keep the dust down.

"A man like Bert Wood would

come along and say, 'Hey, I can build this road for so much money,'" Drake said. "This was called bidding off the road and was usually how a person got started (in the business)."

Bert Wood was the boss on this particular road. He was also the man who paid Drake and the others. Wood's job wasn't all that hard really; all he had to do was keep the other men busy.

"Bert was a big man with a loud voice," Drake said. "He could really get out there and yell. And boy, when he did, those men really listened."

Another man named Milt Certain was the pit boss. He worked in the gravel pit, which was about half a mile northeast of Middletown and about two miles northwest of the gravel road. Certain's job was about the same as Wood's, but not quite as important.

There were two horses on every team, and at least 25 teams to carry the gravel every day. Some of the men who drove the teams were Henry Fenton, Ed Deal, Early Ring, and Morris and Floyd Teager. The Model T had just recently come into use, and at least two of them were used to haul gravel. They were driven by Maynard Gaskins and Ted Taft.

"Trucks back then were easier to shift," Drake said. "You didn't worry about tearin' out the gears."

The first thing that had to be done in building the road was to have the dirt or the ground leveled. The next step was to measure and mark the width of the road.

The road was approximately 8-10 feet wide. Markers, which were only a few 2-by-4s laid end to end, were used to keep the road straight. The boards were laid on their sides with three in a line on each side of the road. When the length of one board was filled and crowned, it was moved up to the front of the line. Gravel was hauled from the pit to the road where a snatch team was waiting.

A snatch team was two horses used as extra strength for dumping the gravel. The snatch team was hitched to the team that brought the gravel, and the four horses pulled away as the gravel was dumped in order to be spread out.

A wagon was 18-20 inches high on the sides and had endgates on both ends that could be opened or taken out. There were two 2-by-4s lying side by side in the middle of

the wagon. Two men with crow bars propped one side of the wagon up in the air. The 2-by-4s in the middle were turned out by one man at the back of the wagon and the team driver. This was how the gravel was emptied; no shoveling was needed.

The gravel was then leveled off, the boards were moved away from the side of the road and another section was prepared for gravel.

Two Ford Model T trucks were a big help in the building of the road. They, of course, could move much faster than the horses, which only moved about five miles an hour.

"Underneath the truck bed was a lever you pulled that opened up a hole in the bed," Drake said. "When the hole was opened, the truck bed would rear up in the air and the gravel would spill out the back. Then they'd jam the truck in gear and take off in a hurry."

This gravel road was also the county line road that separated Vigo and Sullivan counties. It was about one mile long and took quite awhile to build. Drake wasn't sure just how long it actually took, but he remembers it taking somewhere between 800 and 900 loads of gravel to complete. One wagon load covered about one and a half square yards of surface. The Model Ts didn't hold quite that much.

"Them old trucks only held about one yard of gravel," he said.

Usually the wagons didn't stop at the road when they finished dumping the gravel. Instead of turning around and going all the way back to the gravel pit, the men would drive on to Scott City, a "big, booming coal town" back then, and pick up a load of coal to take back home.

Drake said the main reason the road was built was "just because we wanted better." Also, with the new Model Ts coming into use, the need for better roads had increased.

What Drake liked most about working along the road was the scenery and the chance to be around all the people. As he started out every morning with his water to meet the workmen, he would stop and talk to the people who lived along the road.

The older people liked to sit on their porches and watch the men work, and they always had to stop Drake and have a word with him. Drake said sometimes he'd stand

there for an hour, listening politely, while the old men talked.

"You felt like you had to listen, so you don't hurt nobody's feelings," he said.

One old man named Joe Weir lived on the west end of the road. "Old Joe wanted to talk about the big mistake General Pickett made at Gettysburg." Another man named Nick Yeager liked to talk about how great his grandfather was in the Revolutionary War.

"I always stopped to listen to some of the talk," Drake said, "but not a lot of it."

His favorite subject was probably the apple orchard along the road. "Everybody loved cider, and we had plenty of it," he said. And everyone in town was sure to do his or her part to take care of the orchard, too.

Wheat fields were threshed close to the orchard which left big piles of straw. Foxes lived in the straw and were considered bodyguards of the apples. They protected the trees from rabbits.

"Those rodents liked to get in there and eat all our apples," Drake said, "but foxes could keep 'em out."

The rabbits could kill the trees by gnawing on the trunks. It was practically against the law to bother the foxes in the orchard.

"If one of us kids got caught throwing a stone or something, we couldn't expect anything less than a tanning in the woodshed," he said.

The cider was kept cool by putting it in a jug and lowering it down into a well.

"Henry Fenton had a 40- or 50-gallon well," he said. "He could keep anything he had cool in that big ol' well, like his cider, milk or butter."

Apples were stored in a hole dug in the ground. "They were there for everybody, though. Everybody shared what they had."

At times of celebration, the cider was even mixed with a little "white lightning." Drake recalled the wedding of Joy Yeager and how happy the men were at work.

"It was always such a joyous time whenever there was a wedding in town, or the birth of a baby," he said. "Everybody was celebrating." The work on the road went along smoother and faster, and even Bert Wood got into the spirit. "He'd call a break and everyone would pass around the cider."

But most of the time, the work was strictly business. Things were quieter when there wasn't any big news to share. The saddest work days of all, though, were the ones after the death of a well-known and well-liked person.

"Everything was so quiet and solemn," Drake said. "Everybody was mourning and usually they got to go home early, so everybody got together to give each other their sympathy and comfort."

Authors' Note:

We were eager to learn more about history in the making. We thought Johnny Drake would be a good source of information and picked a subject he was interested in.

We started by recording an hour-long interview. We used what Johnny gave us to write out a summary, and then asked more questions to fill in the holes. Most of the information we used came straight from Johnny Drake. Some, however, came from his younger brother, Lowell.

We felt that talking to Johnny was a good learning experience. He's a man who actually saw history in the making. We got an idea of how much harder the work was then than it is today. And there was no time for laziness; everyone did his share.

We also learned a lot more about Johnny and what his life has been like. He survived the Great Depression, he was the first area man to drive a truck to Florida and bring back a load of oranges, and he has traveled across the United States on a train.

Today he still works at North Central High School as a part-time custodian. He lives in Farmersburg with his wife, Zelma (Akers). He's worked all his life for everything he has, and he probably never will stop working. Johnny feels each and every day holds the promise of learning something new.

"Just when you think you know it all," he says, "you learn something else ... no matter how old you are."

Bailey and Hunter are 1989 graduates of North Central High School. They wrote this article as senior English students of teacher Jack Wood. It was first published in the Sullivan Daily Times on Jan. 17, 1990. It is reprinted with permission.



Forging a work ethic

By Cindy Alspach

He's not an imposing man, and yet something about 84-year-old Basil Ikemire of Pierceburg, a wide spot in the road six miles south of Oblong, makes him stand out in his community. Perhaps his wit, his easy-going personality and the fact that he has served area residents for almost 60 years as a blacksmith and feed miller are among the reasons.

He began his working life as a blacksmith and mechanic in Greenbrier, a few miles on south. It was 1929 and a dollar-a-day profit meant big business. It cost a quarter to get plow shears sharpened or a shoe put on a horse.

"When I first started, I just blacksmithed and worked on Model T Fords," Ikemire said. "Everything was in the Depression, you know. You didn't have any money. We had to do with what we had."

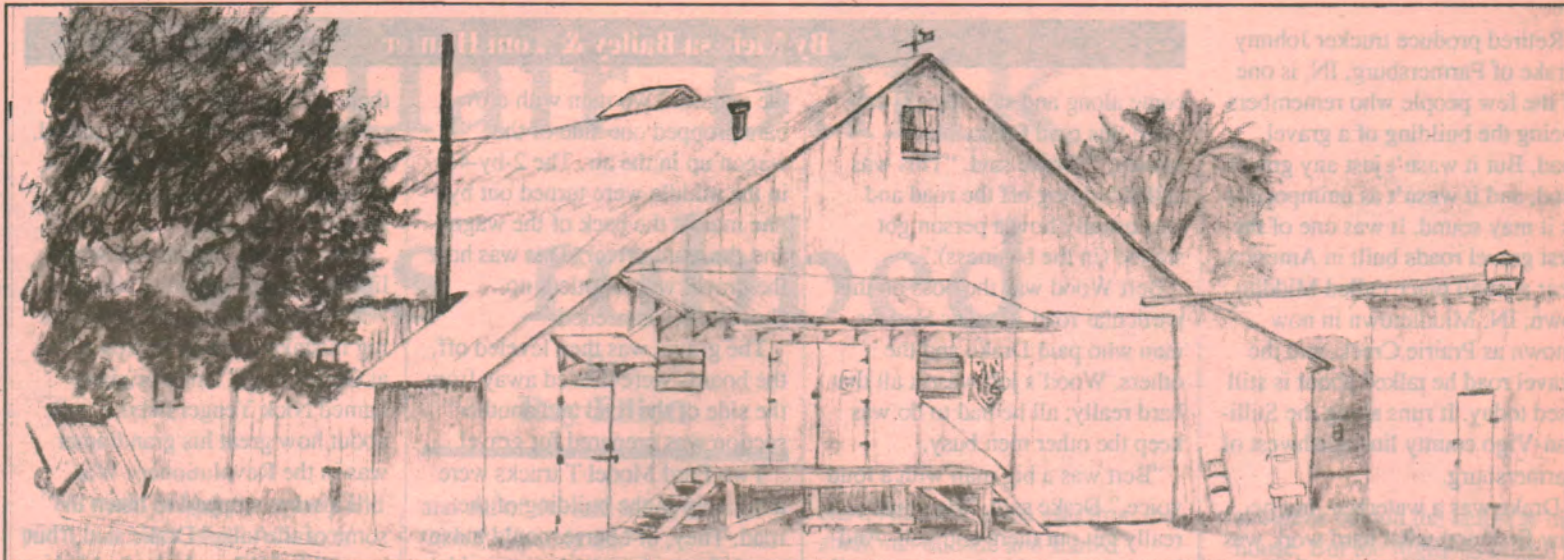
"Then about 1931 or '32, there was a lot of blacksmith shops in the country. And jus' starting out, it was kind of hard to get my business built up. I wasn't doin' too well when ol' man Harry Wiseman of Willow Hill—he owned a blacksmith shop in Willow Hill—he come over and talked me into going over there an' running his shop."

After only a few months, Ikemire returned to his own shop in Greenbrier. By 1935 some of his neighbors convinced him to add a feedmill to his slowly growing blacksmith shop. An extra room was added, but the expansion didn't end there.

"About 1933 or '34, I don't remember the year, Earl Allen of Palestine talked me into running an ice route out of Palestine. So I did," Ikemire said matter-of-factly. "I run the ice route until REA (Rural Electrification Administration, which brought electricity to the rural areas) come in. That was in '42 here, I reckon. I continued the ice route then until we moved and I bought this place here in Pierceburg in 1939."

Operating the ice route, mill and blacksmith shop proved more than one man could handle. And even with two hired men, meeting the demands of a rural community required Ikemire to work 12 hours a day, six days a week.

"Started at six in the morning, and we worked 'til six at night," he said. "We were just covered up all the time. At that time everybody that lived in the country had a few cows, chickens and hogs. They all needed feed."



Drawing of Ikemire's Mill by his son, William Ikemire

The Ikemire Mill that stands today was built in 1945. But the business eventually required more room than the original building allowed.

"We had it (the mill) in the front of the blacksmith shop before then. In the forties we were the busiest, and at times we started in the morning and we didn't stop all day unless we run out of gas. We'd run right through the noon hour lots of times. We worked Saturdays, too. We only left for a day or two an' left somebody runnin' it while we were gone. We never took what you'd really call a vacation."

Once while working the hammer mill, Ikemire lost his thumb when

the belt came off. The man working with him had had a flat tire and Ikemire told him to go ahead and fix the tire. In the meantime, a customer brought in some oats for grinding.

"It was just because I didn't wait," he said. "You see, a hammer mill, they turn between two and three thousand times, and if the belt comes off, they'll coast a long time. I went in there in a little too big of a hurry and the belt jumped off. I grabbed the belt up and, instead of waiting 'til the mill quit working, I just put it on there. It was running. Caught my thumb in there and mashed the end of it."

Ikemire went to the doctor in

Oblong rather than to the hospital in Robinson. That would have taken time and money he didn't have or want to spare.

"Cost me \$10 to get it fixed up," he said, raising his hand. "They had to peel it back to the knuckle. Then he sawed it off. I told the doc I could hold it down while he worked on it. Every once in a while things would get dark, an' I was afraid I was going to pass out. I'd tell him he'd have to wait on me a little bit. Then as quick as I'd straighten up, he'd go after it again."

The accident didn't really slow him down, though. And Ikemire's mill continued to operate over the years. But by the 1970s business

steadily declined and he had to cut back to one hired man. Considering the economic problems in the country at the time, though, he was fortunate to keep the mill opened at all.

Then on Jan. 1, 1989, Basil Ikemire officially retired from the mill business at the age of 83.

"I just hated to quit," he said, regretfully. "Jack Arnold owns it now. He makes feed. He only works about eight hours a day, and Saturday afternoons not at all. Saturday was our best day, oh, for the last few years."

Quitting the mill business didn't mean he retired completely, though.

"I still work," he said. "I mostly make porch swings. I made 10 this summer. And then I do some blacksmithing yet. I got my forge."

Now he can take the time to talk about his lifetime of work and recall his younger days, take time to compare life then to life now.

Ikemire attended a rural one-room schoolhouse for grade school and later went to Oblong for high school. Although the kids haven't changed, he said, the student/teacher ratio is better and the subjects that are taught are much different.

"We took four years of English, two and a half history and I think we had to take two years of math. 'Course we took all four if you wanted to. We had Latin. We didn't have any other language. But now they have computers and stuff like that."

"When we got through school, though, we could figure," he said. "They don't teach stuff like straight math anymore—like how to guage a wagon."

Other aspects of life were different, too. Back then, the main road running north to Oblong was no more than a gravel track. And yet it was a major road even then.



About 15 years ago, Ikemire was photographed working at the anvil in his shop as Bob Boldrey looks on.

Photo by Carl Chang

"All there was (besides the gravel road) was mud lanes," he said. "I had a 1918 Model T Ford, and we'd go as far in it as we could go and walk the rest. That was the only way we had of going."

But the times weren't all that hard. Ikemire recalled that when he and his wife were just teenagers in the 1920s, they often went to parties.

"Maybe two or three in a week," he said. "There'd be as many as 100 kids there. We'd just gather up and they'd have games for the young people to play. Sometimes we'd have music. There wasn't very many people played music at that time, so when you'd get somebody who could play, you really enjoyed that."

Another favorite pastime was baseball. In the 1930s and '40s a lot of the small towns had teams, and they'd play on a diamond just south of the mill in Pierceburg. Ikemire recalled a time when a man on one of the teams was killed during a fight after someone cut him.

"Not long after that I remember my dad played some," Ikemire said and started to laugh. "When he'd know there was a ball game, he'd always come down here to Pierceburg. There was a bunch of them here and a team from somewhere was supposed to come and play. They didn't show up, so dad and a bunch of these old men got up a team. Played them and beat them."

Baseball, parties or whatever, life seemed less complex to Ikemire in those days. It didn't

take as much to please people back then. He recalled having what was considered a rare luxury 60 years ago—a radio.

"We got a radio when we lived in Greenbrier in the early '30s. It run with a battery. And there weren't very many radios in the country. If there was anything special, like an election, we'd have a whole crowd to listen to that."

He also had a telephone, which was his only fixed household expense. It cost a dollar a month for service, he said and grinned. But it was really a time of self-sufficiency and the dollar wasn't readily available.

"We always had a big garden," he said. "And most of the time we had a cow and raised hogs for meat and a few chickens. When my wife and I started housekeeping for ourselves, we went over to the nickel store and bought \$9 worth of groceries to start up with. We had everything we needed."

If he were given the choice, however, Ikemire said he would rather live in the world of today instead of the world of his youth, even though there were benefits to life in those days.

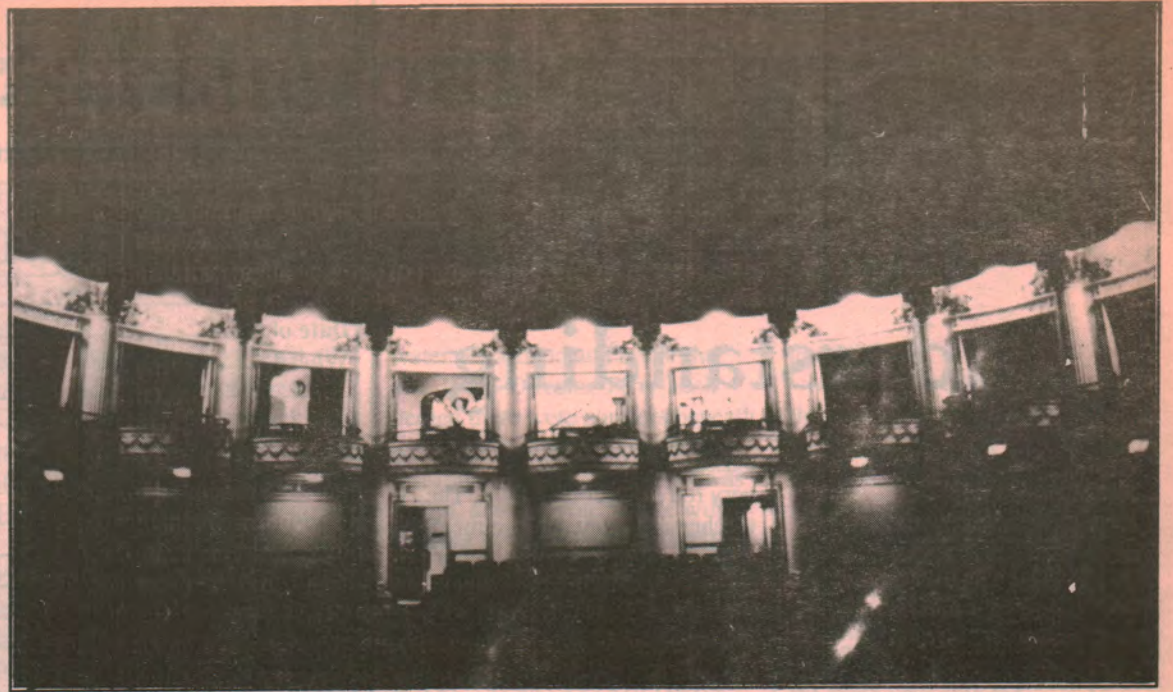
"It was quite an experience to grow up during that period and see the changes that come in the '20s up to now," he said. "I suppose I'd rather live now. But I suppose we enjoyed ourselves more than than we do now because the whole community, it seemed like, was together more."

Cindy Alspach is a senior at Oblong (IL) High School.



Ikemire still worked at the feed mill until officially retiring on Jan. 1, 1989.

Photo courtesy of Dorla Shook



The interior of the Orpheum Theater in Champaign

Photo courtesy of the Preservation and Conservation Association

Vaudeville

continued from page 9

Despite those who look down on vaudeville, it grew to have a wide following. For every 10 people who chose vaudeville, only one chose an alternative form of entertainment in 2,000 theaters scattered across the United States and Canada.

Historians have made parallels between vaudeville and the Progressive Movement. They have also tried to tie in the concept of "work hard, dedicate yourself, lead a clean life and you will get ahead." However, vaudeville only real purpose was to entertain, or as one circuit operator put it, "to amuse or distract." Because of the efforts of B.F. Keith to limit vulgarity, sexuality, racism and any other off-color elements on the circuit, millions of Americans were provided with a wholesome form of entertainment.

Vaudeville had particular significance during the early years of the Depression. Despite the vast gloom and despair, vaudeville performers never reflected those sentiments. Those who could still afford to see the shows were able to slip into the magic of the theater and forget about the economic crisis for a while. The fact that fewer people were able to treat themselves to vaudeville shows eventually contributed to its decline.

Increasing technology also meant the vaudeville days were numbered. Up until 1896 the live acts were the sole form of theater entertainment. That year motion pictures were introduced to the nation, initially as a way to clear audience out of the theater for the next show or just as an added feature. But the acts themselves remained the drawing card.

Radio was still a relatively new

invention, but it was gaining in popularity for its versatility and innovation. Nearly every station hosted its own "variety show" similar to the acts on the vaudeville stages and with many vaudeville stars participating in them. Perhaps listeners could not see the "Lovely Genevieve" as she sang a tune or see the facial expressions of one of the many comedians who were broadcast over radio, but in the end, listeners got more entertainment for their money.

For movie and theater fans, 1927 was a hallmark year. "Talkies" were introduced with the release of "The Jazz Singer," starring Al Jolson. Talking pictures took the nation by storm and easily found their way into the theaters and opera houses that had served the vaudeville circuits for so long. And again, they often featured those very same veterans of vaudeville.

Gradually it became customary to show the talking picture as the featured attraction and the use vaudeville acts as a supplement.

As the Orpheum circuit slowed down, Champaign's Orpheum Theater was forced to feature fewer shows. The Virginia had already begun showing more movies than live acts. A screen was installed when it was built and so the theater had little trouble making the transition from vaudeville to movies.

By 1935, vaudeville had virtually disappeared. The only remnants were the magnificent, looming theaters that were now filled with movie-watching audiences. After 50 years of entertaining and enchanting people of all nationalities and ages, the circuits ended.

Today, the Virginia Theater shows recent releases, although the enormous house is rarely filled to capacity.

The Orpheum, which was originally designed for live acts, had trouble keeping pace with the movie houses and eventually closed. Throughout the years, there have been attempts to reopen the theater but with no prolonged success. In 1967 the Orpheum was modernized and much of its original vaudeville-era look was changed. In 1987 the Orpheum closed for good and remains empty.

Although many of the theaters that were once filled with rising stars and eager audiences are now empty or gone entirely, the legacy of vaudeville remains. Radio broadcasts, television variety shows and community shows are all remnants of the bygone days of vaudeville.

Alfred Lunt, a vaudevillian who went on to succeed in other forms of entertainment, lamented the passing of the era with a tribute to its performers:

"Their sincerity was greater than their artistry—their eagerness to please was beyond their capacity to please—but they gave their hearts and their lives and it was not their fault that that was not enough."

Tammy Cohen is a junior at Urbana (IL) High School.



All a matter of understanding

By Yao Jiang

I arrived in the United States from Beijing, China, in June 1985. Unlike other foreigners who learned a little English, I had learned none. I didn't even know the alphabet.

After my 40 hours of sleep, the result of the long flight, my dad started to teach me English. He told me how to say, "Hi," "What's your name?" and "Sorry." He forgot one thing, though. And that was a big mistake.

After three days of rest, I went to Ramany Junior High School in Arkansas where everybody spoke English. Since I was the only one who spoke Chinese at Ramany, I started getting into trouble. My problem was not with the teachers or students. My problem was the bathroom.

Ramany has six restrooms—three women's and three men's. After second period, I wanted to use the restroom. My dad did at least tell me how to identify whether a bathroom is for a male or female: "Ladies wear skirts and the guys wear jeans."

I found all three women's rooms, but a men's room was nowhere to be seen. After every period, before I went to my locker or to the next class, I looked for a bathroom. The school was big. I walked around in circles, but it was no use.

When the fourth-period bell rang, I ran out of the classroom. I was running through the hallway like crazy. I wanted to ask people where the bathroom was, but Chinese was not offered as a foreign language at Ramany.

When I got to the fifth-hour

class, I was sweating. My face was very red and I could feel it. The teacher said something to me. I didn't know what she said, but I bet it was something like, "Why are you holding your legs like that?"

Finally, I couldn't stand it any longer. After fifth hour, I didn't go to the next class. I decided to use the women's room. Obviously I wasn't going to go in with all the people inside. I let the sixth-hour bell ring and waited. Fifteen minutes passed. I was counting every second. The bathroom faced two long hallways, so I could see pretty far. After I took one more good look and heard no more footsteps, I went in.

I was lucky. There was no one in the bathroom. But when I came out, I ran into something ... someone. I smelled perfume. I heard a scream. And I looked a girl right in the face. It was a good-looking face, but all I could see at that moment was a person sitting in the jail. It was Yao Jiang.

"I'm only 11. I'm too young to die," I said in Chinese.

The girl was puzzled and said something back loudly. You guessed it. I don't know what she said. And that's when a teacher approached us.

"Why a female teacher?" I murmured in Chinese and wondered what heaven looked like.

By the time I got to the principal's office, I went wild. I started to yell in Chinese. After communication failed, the principal found my name on the cover of my notebook and called my parents.

When my dad translated to the principal what had happened, the principal laughed wildly. I wasn't embarrassed. I didn't care. I was just glad that nobody was going to shoot me, and I didn't have to go to jail.

The next morning when the school bus arrived at Ramany, I didn't go to my locker. Slowly, I walked home. I was too embarrassed to face school. My dad didn't find out about that part until two weeks later. Donna, the girl who ran into me, is now my friend. Fortunately, she never told anyone about my little "accident."

Yao Jiang is a 1990 graduate of Urbana (IL) High School.

Family History Questionnaire

Contributed by _____
Name _____
Address _____
Date _____

Child of _____
Name _____
Date of birth _____ Date of death _____
Where _____ Where _____

Buried _____

Date of marriage _____ Where _____

Child of _____
Name _____

Date of birth _____ Date of death _____
Where _____ Where _____

Buried _____

Children's Name Date of birth Married

Other information (will, family Bible, moved to, church records, etc.)

Figure 3

Family Tree

Continued from page 7

overseers to this my will shal (sic) judge meet (that is to say) when he doth take good courses as to live orderly, and to follow the cordwainer's (shoemaker's) trade, and is clear of such debts as he now owes. ..."

Not only have you found clues as to who he was, but you learned what kind of person he was. This is the type of information you can use to help make your ancestors real people.

Marriage certificates list a woman's maiden name, residence, place, date and minister.

Birth certificates list date, time, place, sex of baby, perhaps his or her name and the names of the parents.

Death certificates list name, age, date and place of death, cause of death, and doctor's name. I have one that tells where and when the funeral was held and in what cemetery the person was buried.

Census records list head of

household, his or her age, place of birth and occupation. They also includes names of the spouse and children, their ages and places of birth. Sometimes other family members live in the same household—the mother of the wife or orphaned children of brothers or sisters. Also check the records of others listed on the census next to yours. They will be the neighbors of your family and quite often are related.

Local historical or genealogical societies

Nearly every community has a historical society and will have records of interest and value to you in your search. Some areas also have genealogical societies. Join one or both. Genealogical societies often have guest speakers and workshops featuring experts in certain research areas where you might be having difficulty in locating your family.

With these basic methods, you will know what questions to ask and how local societies can best serve you as you get more involved in your research and want to know more. There are also many books about genealogy subjects. Out-of-state societies also accept memberships to which you can send queries for further information.

Soon you'll become a genealogical addict and your curiosity will never be satisfied as long as there's one more line to trace, one more date to find. You'll always want to know the rest of the story.

No matter how extensive you plan to go into your own search, remember to have fun with it. And no matter how many generations you hope to find, I wish you great success.

Jane Parker Brown is a family genealogist and lives in Genoa, IL.

BOYS?



GIRLS?

The Last Word

The rural wasteland for urban America

By Steve Cloud

John and Kona Morrill have been married for 32 years. That's also how long they have been living in the white frame house which, if the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety (IDNS) has its way, will soon have a new neighbor on the prairie. Six hundred feet away will sit one of several concrete vaults housing radioactive waste.

The nuclear waste dump would be operated by Chem-Nuclear Systems, whose parent company, Oak Brook-based Waste Management, Inc., reportedly has been banned from doing business with the city of Chicago because of bribery convictions. The vaults would be designed to contain "low-level" radioactive waste—the bulk of which is produced by Commonwealth Edison's nuclear power plants, all located in the northern third of Illinois.

"All they're doing is bailing out the power generators," John said. "The power companies are turning liability over to the state. This is just another subsidy for the nuclear industry."

"We're getting to the point these days that the farm ground's going to be gone in this country," Kona added. "If this dump is as safe as the IDNS says it's going to be, why don't they keep the waste up there near Chicago where the people who benefit from the power live? It just doesn't make sense to truck it all the way down I-57 to Martinsville or any other farm community."

In the siting process for this dump, John believes there is a matter of fundamental equity that is being ignored by the state and the commercial generators of radioactive waste. He considers living in rural downstate Clark County a trade-off.

"You give up a standard of living in the suburbs in return for a more relaxed, less stressful life," he said.

He mentioned two neighbors who used to earn their living in Chicago until circumstances permitted them to come back home. They bought homes near the North Fork of the Embarras River, north of Martinsville (pop. 1,300). They looked forward to living out their lives in the country. Now they face the prospect of a nuclear waste dump outside their picture windows.

Low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) includes everything in a nuclear power plant except the rods of uranium pellets which fuel the generating process. Highly radioactive components such as control rods and sludgy cooling water filtering resins will end up in low-level dumps. When a plant's 30- to 40-year life ends, the stainless steel and concrete surrounding the core may also have to be dismantled and shipped to these dumps. If the old plants aren't dismantled, they will sit like hot potatoes where they are. In either case, any low-level dump will contain dangerously high levels of radioactivity for at least 300 years after it closes.

Any LLRW will attempt to contain this nuclear waste. In U.S. history, there have been only six LLRW dumps for commercially generated waste. Three dumps (in Illinois, Kentucky and New York) soon leaked large quantities of radionuclides into water tables and streams, so they were shut down. Burial trenches at Barnwell, S.C., began leaking in the late 1970s. The other two commercial dumps (in Beatty, NV, and Richland, WA) were sited in areas receiving less than 11 inches of annual rainfall. Nevertheless, the governors of those two states have served notice that their LLRW dumps will be shut down.

Despite the fact that a leading consultant to a national utilities consortium has stated that the United States needs only one commercial LLRW dump, our congressional leaders persist in following what Michael E. Burns, author of *Low-level Radioactive Waste Regulation*, called "the easy way out, even though the necessity for a new national policy on radwaste disposal has been evident for years.

"Instead of developing a rational approach to the problem," he wrote, "they adopted a quick and dirty, politically acceptable solution by arbitrarily segregating LLRW (from "high-level" spent fuel rods), and then dumping responsibility for its disposal into the laps of the states."

Rather than face up to the politically difficult task of siting one LLRW dump in an arid region or forcing privately owned utilities to accept responsibility and liability for the nuclear wastes they generate along with their profits, our congressional representatives

have shirked their duty. What all of this means for the people of Clark County is that the buck was passed down the political line until it arrived at the storefront City Hall of Martinsville.

In a series of shenanigans too torturous to explain in this space, seven small-town aldermen are deciding where to dispose of Illinois' radioactive waste. None of Illinois' 102 county boards wanted the LLRW dump. Two-thirds of Martinsville's neighbors in Clark County have voted against it. But nearly \$2 million of Commonwealth Edison and Illinois Power Co. money, with an IDNS promise of at least \$1.4 million annually in the future, have persuaded the Martinsville City Council to take a dump no one else in the country wants.

"Martinsville's always had its hand out," Kona said. "They've never been willing to give first in order to get something later. They have never been able to look ahead and risk extending water lines or paving roads without a guarantee. So when business did move into the county, they lost out to Marshall and Casey."

John's opinion is that the city had nothing to sell, so it decided to put the residents who live within one and a half miles of the city limits "up for sale." Illinois law permits municipalities to annex land within one and a half miles of their current boundaries. The IDNS eventually settled on a piece of farm ground north of town where some of the vaults would sit about a half mile from the floodplain of the North Fork.

"Isn't it a coincidence," John said, "that the prime spot within one and a half miles of Martinsville just happens to be right on I-70 with an exit in a county isolated on the Indiana border?"

Other residents also pointed out that it's also quite a coincidence that the 175 acres where the vaults would sit are deeded to the late Riley M. Sharp, father of Indiana's U.S. Congressman Phillip Sharp, an influential member of the House Energy Commission.

Both coincidences have loomed larger in some residents' minds since last October when the IDNS was caught altering an official hydrology report on the site by deleting the word "aquifer" more than 100 times and otherwise minimizing problems posed by the

water on, around and under the site. IDNS Director Terry Lash denied there were aquifers beneath the site before the Illinois Senate last June. The falsified report was pulled, and the state Senate will conduct hearings in early April to investigate IDNS misconduct at Martinsville. During a preliminary hearing last October, President of the Senate Philip Rock told Lash that he was "mad as hell" about Lash's deception and suggested that he resign. Lash has so far declined that suggestion, and work continues at the Martinsville site.

Dump opponents have been called "stupid and hillbillyish" by the mayor of Martinsville, even though every member of the physics department of nearby Eastern Illinois University (EIU) has signed a petition objecting to the methods used by IDNS to force the dump on an unwilling county. The seven-member city council ordered seven bullet-proof vests in February.

In an atmosphere where dump opponents have been threatened with the loss of their jobs, received anonymous phone calls and had their mailboxes shot up, John and Kona Morrill stand out for their courage in speaking publicly against the treatment of landowners on and near the proposed site. But other landowners also have ignored IDNS hints that their land would not be purchased if they spoke out, leaving them with unsellable property on the fringes of the dump area. It was the collective courage of these landowners that led to the appointment of Joe Cribelar to the Martinsville Citizens Advisory Council. As the landowners' representative, he has been the only anti-dump member of the group.

"This whole thing is a bailout for Commonwealth Edison," Cribelar said, "and that irritates me to no end. The argument that the dump can't go up north because of geology and so forth is bullshit. If they can put a nuke plant up there, they can site a

dump."

Martinsville officials have said they would be doing a disservice to their constituents if they turned down the dump money. John Morrill compared the argument to the rationalization for clear-cutting timber.

"In 20 years the money is gone and there's no timber," he said. "People will get by without it. It's the same way with the Martinsville money. Martinsville would survive somehow, scratching and struggling just like they are now."

Both the Morrills and Cribelar blame the Clark County Economic Development Corporation (a private company) for bringing the IDNS into the county. They believe the corporation was unable to attract good businesses to Clark County, so now it is promoting a radioactive waste dump as the economic boost the area needs.

There are African countries that can more than double their GNP by accepting toxic wastes from industrial nations. With the dumps and "resource recovery centers" being considered for Martinsville, Newman, Villa Grove, Terre Haute, Canton and Center Point, this area may, as one EIU professor put it, be joining the Third World, becoming a dumping ground for wastes produced by people and businesses who make and spend more money but who are unwilling to dispose of their own wastes in their own communities.

It's beginning to look like rural people, few in number, also have few rights in the United States today. Martinsville will quite possibly end up with this nuclear dump, even though the site leaks like a sieve and 99.5 percent of the radioactivity in the waste is produced by Commonwealth Edison and Illinois Power.

Steve Cloud teaches at Hutsonville Grade School and is a member of Concerned Citizens of Clark County Against a Radioactive Dump.



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