

Tales

Number 4

from the general store



Teachers and students remember the days of
the one-room schoolhouse

Page 10

PASTIME

Remembering tales from the general store

Story by Steve Slack
Photographs by Bill Hagen

BELLAIR — For the moment, it was all there again. The heavy smell of sweetened sawdust on the old wood plank floor. The squat, red-and-white soda cooler with Coca-Colas up to their necks in icy water. That's

didn't sell." Including Baby Ruths. "I always bought a Baby Ruth. It was the biggest candy bar they made." Ray Elliott hasn't been 7 years old in 34 years. And the Bellair General Store hasn't sold a Baby Ruth or a fresh egg since it closed.

Illinois adviser winner starts 'Foxfire' publication

Maureen Foertsch "Tales from a General Store," a cultural-historical publication, has been a dream of its founder, Ray Elliott, for years. In August 1981, Elliott saw his dream in print, as a supplement to the Robinson and Lawrenceville newspaper. Elliott, my high school journalism instructor at Oak Lawn Community High School, became interested in the cultural-historical side of journalism after seeing Elliott Wiggington and a group of his high school students from Labun Gap, Ga., create the "Foxfire" series of magazines and highlighting the

build his that base He succ In studen and th farland pground bean from mile fro the aban mother ha W cam

WE'VE GOT YOUR ATTENTION

NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP

Tales from the general store, inc.
R.R. #2
Oblong, IL 62449

Do What You Can Today

Young writers may spin a few

It's about 200 miles from Oak Lawn to Oblong, Ill., but Ray Elliott leaps from one place to another with little difficulty. Elliott advises the school newspaper at Oak Lawn High School but he's this year to get a master's degree at the University of Illinois. He also is pu a strange unique

Tales' We

Rediscovering the good old days

On April 16 and 17 the Tales Spring Fair was held at Bellair General Store, located four miles east and one north of Yale.

Fairs mean many things to many people. Some fun and games while others think of good food and sausage, pancakes and homemade butter were served throughout the day.

Many relived the past while watching quilts being made, churning butter, rug braiding and collections of antiques, including a collection of guns. A common expression often heard

BY PAMELA J. HUEY
BELLAIR, Ill. (UPI) — One hundred and thirty-nine years ago, a pioneer on the vast Illinois prairie paid \$55 for 40 acres of land about 16 miles from the Wabash River. On that land, the little hamlet of Bellair grew — typically American and part of the town was later to thrive and grow bigger when oil was discovered in the area in 1905. Perhaps 50 people live in the area in 1981. But Ray Elliott, a 42-year-old high school English teacher, has brought some of the days of old back to life. He believes the community and the area still have a lot to offer a youngster from Chicago suburbs — one who has never been south of the end of Expressway.

Teacher helps others

Elliott, who has brought his own students down from Oak Lawn Community High School, stressed the workshops are not only for the young. "I'm not just interested in staying in high schools," said Elliott, a man with a neatly trimmed salt-and-pepper beard. "It doesn't make any difference. We've got an article in the latest issue by a 92-year-old man." Cultural journalism is a relatively new method of teaching English in rural areas. Elliott called Foxfire

joe aaron

Morning Assignment

BELLAIR, Ill. — There was a once-upon-a-time in this fair land, though it is a great deal removed from the present, when things were much different from what they have become.

Many who were there — though not all of them — say it was a gentler time, and more leisurely, a time less scarred by the frets and cares that mark our daily life in this latter part of the 20th century.

It was a time before the automobile had become the universal machine of today, and before the laser and the man-made satellites in the sky.

It was a time when women churned their own butter and baked their own bread and hung their laundry on the line and absorbed the sunshine, and the kerosene lamps were trimmed and filled in the evening.

It was a time, in the brisk days of waning autumn, when winter time could be smelled in the air, when farmers heated great, steaming cauldrons of scalding water at butchering time and the bloody chunks of meat were salted down for January dining, and thrashing crews with enormous appetites went from farm to farm.

AND THE MELODIOUS JINGLE of harness was a sound still heard in the twilight, as the sweaty horses were driven in the fields on winter nights.

apples wrapped in old newspaper. It was the time of the excursions for wild berries, and healthy were words that were nobody back then.

And nobody back then "thermonuclear" was a word a man with a good team of horses to make his own way.

But it all happened, as today, and there are many demands of the world, who And that is the era that this nondescript hamlet of preserve, before the wonders of tomorrow for

HE IS TRYING TO

And that's th

MAGAZINE OF MEMORIES

Illinois tales along

story and photos
By Pamela A. Nolan

It's easy to see what Ray Elliott has something in mind for everybody. It begins, basically, with teachers in the local schools; expanding their lessons beyond the four walls of their community from which the students come. picks up then with those pupils, whose homework assignments are new perspective as the opportunity for publication of the And the easily overlooked older generation benefits from these parts fall together and bring Elliott's idea full circle. He's out to

'42 skidoo' when

We sat at a rickety card table near the building that once had housed the unseasonable chill of early autumn. A gusty and a fretful wind gusted in the eaves, and cast was for frost sufficient to kill the more

bits were not on the weather, or on anything face. I'd been here for a far more serious business, been looking forward to it for many months.

GATHERED HERE, on the afternoon in late play "42," and the dominoes, much used and at directly across from the table before us. Elliott, who kept insisting she didn't know the first "42" and was there only because her husband at to my right.

my left, holding his dominoes face down on the expose the incalculable secrets of his game. Clyde re a sly look and a crafty little grin, the precise which it was impossible to decipher. "brother!" I muttered to myself. Or maybe I just I've forgotten which.

knew, don't you see — or rather, at that point I sensed, but it soon became a knowledge as absolute as

two plus two would be a good the practice laughed — trumped the slin

DON'T KNOW J WHAT! the news very early that I'd better In looking back on it, I think I have been playing "42" practical in eastern New Mexico where cutting teeth and eating pinto impression that I was mighty good possible to get until the perfect

In Recognition

in the

used to be wh from the surro just about anyt on the latest ne

Table of Contents



Cover photo of Cottonwood Schoolhouse, located northeast of Bellair, courtesy of Florence Adkisson, who taught there in the early years of her teaching career. Class pictures that appear on the cover, left to right, are Mulberry School, east of Bellair, 1885 and 1917 (photos courtesy of Dorothy Eirhart), and Bellair School, 1946 (photo courtesy of Leona Race).

Cooking and canning with Grandma 6

by Lorene Newberry

A grandmother tells about teaching her granddaughter how to cook and can foods with old-fashioned goodness. The experience provides a taste of what it was like in country kitchens years ago. It also creates a closer bond between grandmother and granddaughter.

A letter from Aunt Annie 8

Aunt Annie writes about the 'Tales' doing this past summer: a community barn raisin' project, and an ice cream social brought people together from all around to work on 'Tales' buildings, to listen to live music, eat ice cream and have a grand time.

Old-time politicians still know a thing or two 9

by Jim Elliott

George Gettinger, Sullivan, Indiana, and Vic Smith, Robinson, have a lot of know-how when it comes to politics. These two veteran politicians, one a Democrat, the other a Republican, talk about their experiences, influences and views of today's political system.

School Days 10

One-room schoolhouses were once an important part of each small community. Teachers drilled the students in the three Rs for eight years, then most formal education stopped. The following stories are about and by old-time, one-room schoolhouse teachers and students.

One-room schoolhouse teachers got respect

by Maureen Foertsch

Attending country schools

by William G. Little

An education was important to her

by Barbie Giesler

A student had ups and downs

by Becky Elliott

Hanging on to a 'country store' 13

by Ray Elliott

Hugh and Lucille White, Sumner, have been in the general store business most of their adult lives. Both are approaching seventy years of age and have no plans to quit until they have been in the business at least fifty years.

'There was nothin' like that Chautauqua'

14

by Vanessa Faurie

The annual Chautauqua festivals that were held in Merom, Indiana, years ago brought cultural enrichment, as well as entertainment, to the rural community. People such as William Jennings Bryan, Billy Sunday and Carrie Nation spoke about politics, religion and prohibition.

Powerhouses—dying sounds of the countryside 16

by Beverly Russell

The engine sounds of the old powerhouse echoed through the night in the early days of the oilfield. Richard Wesley, Flat Rock, played and worked on a lease while he was growing up. Now he lives near one of the last of the early ways of pumping oil still in use in eastern Illinois.

He likes to 'fool a fish' 18

by Chris Adcock

Long-time fisherman Tom Feltmeyer, Pickneyville, likes to talk about fishing almost as much as he likes to fish. Once you get him started, he'll talk about his favorite pastime for hours.

Gathering wood 19

by Cassie Pinkston

Heating the home with wood can be economical and practical if you have the inclination and the necessary equipment. But there is more to it than flipping a switch.

Departments

Letters 4

'Tales' readers respond to articles from past issues and remember stories they've heard.

Did you know ... 7

Interesting historical tidbits of information about the Wabash Valley area.

Recipes and Remedies 6

Examples of each, reflecting the time, the food and the preservation of health collected by 'Tales' staff members. A section of helpful household hints is included in this issue.



Ray Elliott

Goin' to school was all right

That morning I'd gotten up earlier than usual, pulled a pair of bib overalls over my underwear and fastened the galluses over a blue chambray shirt. Then I'd gone to the kitchen for a bowl of Wheaties with sliced bananas, a dash of sugar sprinkled over each slice, and thick fresh cream.

It was my first day of school. I'd wanted to start the year before but wasn't old enough. Now I was having mixed feelings about the whole thing. One minute I couldn't wait for school to start; the next I'd try to think of how to put it off.

For days I'd been asking my mother, my father, the lady next door, the girl across the street—anybody who'd listen—to tell me what it was like to go to school. Somehow I thought they could tell me enough so I'd know.

But the day had arrived for me to find out for myself. I shoveled the Wheaties down like a starving pig, occasionally chewing a slice of banana before swallowing it. At the kitchen sink, I slowed down long enough to pump some water into a wash pan and splash a little on my face to erase the milk mustache with one hand and slick down a cowlick with the other one.

Then I ran out the door as the girl across the street walked out of her front door. She was three or four years older than me and in the fifth grade.

"What'll I have to do today, Shirley?" I asked as we walked down the dusty road toward the one-room schoolhouse.

I don't remember her being specific about anything right then, but I'm sure she must have been. And I'm sure she gave me all the right answers. She might as well have told me that Miss (Leona) Race carried a blacksnake whip like Lash LaRue and would pop one of your eyes out if you ever crossed her, though. I was too frightened for it to have made any difference.

"But what'll I do today?" I asked again, looking at the school with one eye and watching Shirley's face with the other one.

She answered again. I asked if the teacher would whip anyone. "Of course she will," Shirley said. "She's the teacher. But you don't have to worry about it. All you have to do is mind what she says an' do your work. She only whips you if you're bad."

"What if I have to go to the toilet?" I asked as we walked onto the schoolyard, feeling much more like going to the toilet than going to school.

She smiled, held up one finger and said, "Hold up one finger if you have to do number one an' two fingers if you have to do number two."

She smiled, held up one finger and said, "Hold up one finger if you have to do number one..."

It all seemed so simple. "Is school hard?" I asked, firing another question as the schoolhouse threatened to swallow us before I could learn the answer. "I don't know how to write."

Shirley, bless her heart, sighed and took a long breath before she patiently explained that that was why I was going to school.

"You won't have to do anything but play with your crayons," she said. "You'll get some books, an' you'll color in your colorin' books. Maybe read a little. Nothing hard. First grade is easy."

"Heck, I can't read," I said.

"That's why you're goin' to school, I just told you," she said. "Don't worry about it."

I did worry about it, though, and my knees knocked together as we made the final assault and started through the schoolhouse door. Miss Race looked up and said hello to several kids at the same time. School started promptly at eight o'clock. From there on I don't remember a thing about that day and not much about the year.

Oh, I remember learning to read and reading about Dick and Jane and Sally and Spot all running and playing and having a good time. And I remember reading to my mother at home and having trouble remembering the word run. Mother told me so many times that every time I'd hesitate, my sister would say, "Run."

Other than that, school pretty much went by without any problems. Shirley was right. School wasn't difficult. Miss Race was quite a nice lady, too, particularly considering the fact that she taught all eight grades in a one-room schoolhouse.

Most of the time I liked school. Later there were times that I remember sitting in the classroom, bored and dejected, wondering if I'd ever grow up and get out of grade school. The only world I knew was just outside the window. And I wanted to see what was going on beyond where I could see.

So I'd daydream. Then I'd look at a geography book or a world map and think of the places I wanted to see when I left the school.

Not much different than thousands of other kids' experiences in school. It's an experience that people everywhere share, whether they went to a one-room county school or a grammar school in the heart of the city.

People remember different things about their experiences. When I'm reminded of mine, I stare out the window and smile as I recall walking to school with Shirley that first morning.

Letters, Letters

A two-story backhouse?!

I note in the backhouse article (Spring 1982) that you stated that there is a two-story one in Martinsville. I would like to have the name of the people where it is located so I could write to them for a picture of the building. I am wondering what the extra story was used for.

MRS. A. L. LAYTON
Hutsonville, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: So are we. Many people have asked us the purpose of the second story and its location. We must confess, however, that we don't know the purpose nor the location.

And so far the "staid grandmother" has not responded to our query about the location. We only know that she wrote "is reported to be located in Martinsville as of today." Anyone knowing the purpose of the second story or the location, please let us hear from you. We might run a picture or at least offer an explanation.

Until then, see the following letter.

In your last issue of "Tales," you wrote about hearing of the two-story outhouse. I have meant to send you some pictures of the one at Gays, Illinois, but couldn't find them.

I ran across this article (which follows) I've had for a long time, and it is the same picture that I have actually taken (see below). I couldn't believe it until I saw it. Like the writer says, it is right up in town (what town there is) behind a big brick building that used to be a grocery store, I believe.

You mentioned in your last issue that you were writing about the one-room schoolhouses. My children went to a one-room school—Liberty, west of St. Francisville—and they are very much interested in them.

Keep up the good work in bringing back memories.

MRS. DONALD RAMSEY
St. Francisville, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mrs. Ramsey sent the picture and the following newspaper article written by Grover Brinkman several years ago.

In the small community of Gays on Illinois Highway 16, midway between Windsor and Mattoon, is an oddity that would put Robert Ripley in stitches were he alive. In the days of modern, indoor facilities, it is inconceivable!

When this reporter was told about it, his first reaction was one of disbelief. Someone was doing some very clever leg-pulling! But my informant insisted it was fact. Today I am ready to apologize for my skepticism. I've seen it, I've photographed it. It isn't an optical illusion.

The first man approached at Gays was a young fellow busy with some agricultural ammonia. His smile grew wider.

"No, it isn't a myth," he assured. "It's right there for everyone to see."

He turned off a valve, his smile broadening. "We've been trying to do some research," he continued. "We think it's the only one in the world."

"I wouldn't be surprised—"

He interrupted, pointed.

"Cross the railroad tracks and you'll see an old brick store building to the right, with apartments on the second floor."

It was still so ridiculous it seemed pure fantasy.

"You're the fifth person who's stopped to ask about it," he assured. "None believed. But you'll see."

He was right. The tracks were crossed. There was the two-story building. And something else, resplendent in white paint, unbelievable. An outside toilet, two stories in height! One compartment (upper) was used by the second-story residents; the bottom by the ground-floor occupants. Steps lead to both entrances. A two-family outhouse.

This reporter has run down some dillies, checking oddities in the news.

But this wins the rural grammy of some kind.

A two-story outside toilet!
Here's a photo to prove it.



Teachers interested in 'Tales'

As a "Foxfire" fan, a former Casey resident and a frequent visitor in Flat Rock and the Heathsville store years ago, I have enjoyed "Tales" #1, 2 and 3 and look forward to future issues and wish you continued success.

I will share your work with my colleagues at Naperville Central High School in Naperville. I have already relished telling my suburban friends that Claudia Cassidy was from Stoy!

Though I certainly am not prescribing the use of the few extra dollars I am including for my subscription, I hope you are sending copies of "Tales" to James Moffett (Berkeley, A "Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13," who is, I am told, requesting examples of writing based upon his premises) and to representatives of the Illinois Writing Project (one part of the National Writing Project promoted by the Bay Area Writing Project). I'll send copies to these people if you want me to; just send me copies to disseminate.

RUSSELL W. JONES, JR.
Montgomery, Illinois

I'm still enjoying "Tales," although I'm late in telling you. I've often thought of the times in the classroom when some creativity was still alive and I couldn't understand why everyone in the world didn't like to write—or put pictures to words, music, etc.

I have the greatest admiration for those of you who do not let the pressures of practicality squeeze out the juices of im-

agination.

It's not impossible to be a "creative administrator," but being one is not half the fun—the extra money is always gone for little shirts with alligators, foxes, tigers, opossums, etc., on the left breast.

Keep up the good work and I hope the Foundation lives as long as you wish it to.

DAVE JOHNSON
Principal
Carmi Community Unit District #5
Carmi, Illinois

Mother's quilt had special memories

I have a quilt my mother pieced when I was six or seven years old. I sat on her lap when she pieced on it of a night. She wove carpets in the day time.

The quilt has two hundred eight stars in it, made out of real small pieces. I told her it was my quilt and when I got married, she quilted it and gave it to me.

EFFIE BARKER
West Union, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: A picture of the quilt is on page 18.

Gathering wood

It's time again to gather the annual wood supply, and it made me think of another expository paper I had written for English.

I am in the Nursing Program at Lincoln Trail College and sometimes complain about the general courses that are required, but have come to realize that skills learned in one class may be put to use in another.

We have two wood stoves. My husband made one, which works very well. We usually burn about seventeen pick-up loads each winter, according to the severity of the weather. We count each load and have fourteen thus far.

We have been married thirty years and burned coal, then oil, gas and now back to wood. My article (see page 19) was written from experience.

CASSIE PINKSTON
West Union, Illinois

Tips for 'Tales'

I have read and thoroughly enjoyed the first two issues of "Tales." I am very much interested in working on the project, but I run into one snag—about seventy miles as the crow flies.

I found that I am too far removed from the area that it is covering to be much use. But I still wanted to be involved in what I feel is a very worthwhile organization and a terrific experience.

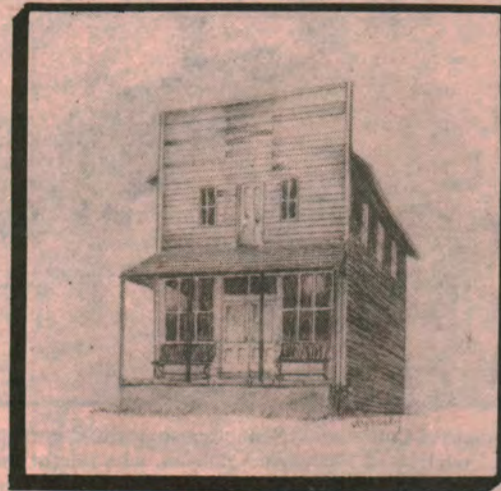
Illinois is a very rich state as far as history and culture are concerned. When that is combined with Indiana . . . watch out! What I am getting around to saying is that the entire region of Illinois and Indiana need a magazine like "Tales." The Wabash River Valley is just a tiny bit of this huge area.

More people could get involved and the project could be spread throughout the area if smaller branches of "Tales" were organized in the two states, either with their own magazines or by publishing in yours.

That way each issue of

Tales

from the general store



'The difficult is easy;
the impossible takes a little longer.'

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Tales from the general store, inc., is a nonprofit foundation established as an educational and charitable organization to preserve the history and culture of the Wabash Valley region of Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana from the days of the general store era. The foundation will conduct a two-week summer workshop and three 3-day seasonal workshops in cultural journalism for area residents, both students and non-students, who are interested in journalism and history.

Throughout the school year, grade school, high school and college students will also be given the opportunity to learn about their history and culture by talking with people who have experienced them. These students may also have the opportunity to participate in or observe such activities as hunting, trapping, fishing, butchering, furniture making, soap making and other customs from the past.

From these experiences, the workshop participants and students will record oral history, write stories, take pictures and collect tales, recipes and remedies that portray the rural life of long ago and a bit of what remains today. "Tales from the general store," printed and distributed as an insert to the Robinson "Daily News," the Lawrenceville "Daily Record" and the Casey "Daily Reporter," will contain these stories. The program will be experiential and community related, in the tradition of educator John Dewey, where students learn by doing.

Workshops for the publication will be held at the Tales from the general store, inc., headquarters in Bellair where the foundation is engaged in the restoration of that village which dates back to 1844. Initial funding for the program will come from tax-deductible donations. Future funding will include donations, grants subscriptions, syndication, book sales and other sources from services or merchandise provided by Tales from the general store, inc.

The entire contents of "Tales from the general store" are Copyright © 1983 by Tales from the general store, inc., and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or part, without written permission from the publishers. Contents of the magazine is offered to other newspapers and magazines through syndication and may be published in book form as the material becomes available.

Anyone may submit articles, photographs or drawings for publication in "Tales from the general store." If published, all material becomes the property of Tales from the general store, inc. No responsibility for returning unused submissions can be assumed; however, every effort will be made to return all submissions.

Subscribers to the Robinson "Daily News," the Lawrenceville "Daily Record" and the Casey "Daily Reporter" will receive the magazine as part of their subscriptions as long as the Robinson "Daily News" prints and distributes it. Non-subscribers to the three newspapers may purchase individual copies for \$1 each.

Address all correspondence to: Tales from the general store, inc., Rural Route 2, Oblong, Illinois 62449 or phone 618-569-5171.

... and more Letters

"Tales" could have a story from different areas. Each state could be divided into geographical areas with contributing editors or "cultural correspondents" who would write articles about their particular region. Each of these people would have to be responsible for finding his own material.

"Tales" could also sponsor workshops or publish a manual so that other projects could be started. I fully believe that organizations like "Tales" and "Foxfire" should be spread all over this great country in order to preserve just a little bit of our culture. While perhaps having little immediate value, these little bits of information need to be handed down as a living history. This is so much more exciting than reading a textbook.

As you can tell by now, I am very enthused about this project. I am positive that I will have no problem finding support for something like this here in Champaign-Urbana (with the University and the Park District) if you should decide to take me seriously.

But whatever occurs, I am always willing to help in anyway I can. Please keep me informed about further workshops and activities. There may be a remote chance that I can attend a couple of them.

DUANE BIDWELL
Urbana, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: You've got the concept and our goals down pat, Duane. All we need to make the project successful is a few students with your interest, a few teachers in area schools to guide the students and a little money.

Everything is coming together—slowly. In the meantime, find someone to interview (preferably with a tape recorder) or research a historical event, write it up (include the sights, sounds and smells) and send it to us. We'll try to find a place for it.

Students enjoy both workshop and 'Tales'

Thanks for making the time I had at the Eastern Illinois High School Press Association camp at Charleston really enjoyable. I learned a lot of things about newspapers, and I hope I can put it to good use this school year.

JACKI ULRICH
Eureka, Illinois

I look forward to receiving future copies of "Tales." It is an excellent publication. Keep up the good work.

TROY A. ARSENEAU
Beaverville, Illinois

I really enjoyed my first issue of "Tales," especially the Burl Ives story. The ending had a great impact. But I like the whole paper and am looking forward to getting my next issue.

ANEGLA DUFFIELD
Glasford, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above students attended a high school journalism workshop at Eastern Illinois University last summer when cultural journalism and the Tales project were offered as part of the curriculum.

Reader looks for blacksmith story

I'm trying to find out who I can write to get an article that was in the paper about the 'Ruddell's Blacksmith Shop.' My husband used to work there.

If you can help me, please do.

MRS. ARTHUR RUDDELL, JR.
Prophetstown, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: No article about Ruddell's Blacksmith Shop appeared in "Tales." Perhaps some reader remembers the article and will contact Mrs. Ruddell.

Memories of home

I am the grandson of Jacob and Hattie Hart. I lived east of the Dugan Church on my grandmother's farm for about six or seven years and went to Willow Prairie School.

One of my teachers was a man by the name of Watts. And there was Frank and Norma Wyman. The time was about 1931-36 or '37. After that, we moved back to Sidell, where I have spent fifty-two years.

I can remember at that time that the roads were mud-dirt in good weather. We all walked to school. I remember that in the winter, the older children would lock the teacher out of the school. The teacher would then go home. And so would we.

One time in particular that I remember was when one teacher took the door off the hinges and we all had to stay at school. I have several old school pictures, but do not know all of the children's names as I was very young at the time.

Some of our neighbors back in those early days were the Stephens, Frank Dawson, his mother and the Bert Richards family. Mr. and Mrs. Don Chapman and family were also neighbors. My two brothers and I played with the children almost all the time. When the time came that we were to move north, it was very sad to leave our friends. I saw one of those friends, Harold Miller, a couple of years ago. It was the first time in forty-five years.

I remember going to Bellair and Annapolis to shop back then. Some of the stores in Annapolis were Wolf's, Stanfield's and Barrett's. I can also remember Dr. Bartmess.

I am retired now, so I get to the Moonshine and Bellair communities quite often as I have several relatives in that area, as does my wife, the former Merna Neilbarger whose father was Glen Neilbarger. My father is the late Charles H. Tomaw who was also raised in this area by his Grandmother Spaug.

We attend and enjoy almost every Tales function at Bellair because it is close to my mother's (Cora Hart) and grandmother's homes.

PAUL TOMAW
Sidell, Illinois

'I just love that old history'

My brother, Elmer Trout, sent me "Tales" #2 and #3, and I thoroughly enjoyed them. Please send me issue #1 and the

next five.

In 1933 and 1934 I lived on the George Kidwell farm near Bellair, but we always went into Annapolis to shop at the Wolfe Store on Saturday afternoon. We moved to Martinsville in March of 1935, and Mable Newberry Elliott was my neighbor to the south. Many an afternoon was spent in girl talk.

I take my hometown newspaper, "The Martinsville Planet," and keep up on all the local news. We go out there every summer, except this year, as my husband had a serious operation. Next summer I will prowl around Bellair.

Annapolis is surely a ghost town, too. It makes me sad to see it. That (part of the country) is really my old stompin' grounds. I have the big book on the history of Clark and Crawford Counties. I just love all that old history.

AVONELLE TROUT DUELL
Fort Edward, New York

Kickapoo relative

Just like to say I was glad to hear about the Kickapoo Indians as my mother's great grandmother was a Kickapoo Indian. My mother went to a school called "Kickapoo School."

Also my niece owned a house in Russellville on the Wabash River. On the old deeds was the name of William Clark, brother of George R. Clark. The house had been used as a stagecoach stop.

Enjoyed your paper very much.

MARIE MARTIN
Lawrenceville, Illinois

Moonshine memories

My sister recently sent me a copy of the Spring Issue of your paper. I found it very interesting, especially the item about the Moonshine Store.

The Wm. St. Martz who was mentioned as a previous owner was my grandfather on my mother's side. I don't know the exact dates that he owned it, but my mother was born in 1871. She spent a good portion of her childhood in the store.

She told me some very interesting stories about the times then. What I thought interesting was that my grandfather canceled the postage stamps with a pen and ink.

My mother also told of going down the road to play at Uncle Bill Blankenbakers. He was my father's uncle. I remember being at Uncle Bill's place and seeing the switchboard which was mentioned in the article. That was interesting to me, too.

RUSSELL D. BLANKENBEKER
Alden, Michigan

Hey, where's 'Tales'?

I received "Tales" #1, #2 and #3, but have not received another issue. If you published a paper for Autumn of 1982, or any paper since the Spring 1982 issue, please send me my copy.

MRS. R. O. BURNS
Punta Gorda, Florida

I have enjoyed "Tales" very much. I did not receive the summer issue. I passed them on to

my son and he, too, enjoyed them.

R. EVELYN JONES
Casey, Illinois

I ordered a subscription to "Tales" in the summer. I understood a new issue was due in the fall. I did not get a copy. I wanted my subscription to start with that issue. I don't want to miss any.

MRS. WARREN BROWN
Genoa, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our apologies. The first three issues of "Tales" came out pretty much on schedule. Then we quit teaching school and have limited access to students. Our efforts this year are being directed towards a master's degree in journalism at the University of Illinois, with special emphasis on developing the Tales project into a viable educational program for students and residents of the greater Wabash Valley.

So please bear with us. Issue #5 and subsequent issues will be published more on schedule. By the end of Summer '83, we plan to have "Tales" on a regular publication schedule with more area residents involved and free of outside conflicts.

Encouraging notes

I have seen copies of "Tales," and they are really good.

We hope everything is going well with you, and wish you the best for the holidays. We really do hope to get back to see you in the spring or in the early summer.

WAYNE BAKER
Collinsville, Illinois

Sometime I should introduce you to members of our Historical Society here in Lemont. They're real zealots who have all kinds of small-town stories to tell.

Continued success with "Tales." Let me know if I can help somehow.

TOM REITER
Superintendent
Lemont School District
Lemont, Illinois

I have just finished reading my copy of "Tales" and enjoyed it very much.

MARY GRAHAM
Annapolis, Illinois

I enjoyed "Tales" #3. Keep up the good work!

JANE CLEMENTS
Mt. Carmel, Illinois

Since many of my descendants lived in and around Bellair, Moonshine and surrounding areas, we really enjoyed the news and history in "Tales."

MRS. JUDY SIMMS
West Salem, Illinois

"Tales" is wonderful!

CHARLES KURALT
CBS News
New York, New York

Intrigued with the third copy of "Tales" included with last week's Casey "Daily Reporter" and wish to order copies of the first two issues. "Tales" is a remarkable experiment.

LENA I. HEIM
Casey, Illinois

We've enjoyed your paper. I've even taken it to work and gotten very positive reactions there. As you can see I'm sending our own subscription plus three others.

MR. & MRS. FROSTY CRAVENS
Mesquite, Texas

I received my first edition of your magazine as a supplement in the Lawrenceville Daily Record, to which I recently subscribed. We like "Tales" very much.

FRANKLIN E. AKERS
Sumner, Illinois

I enjoyed Tales #3 and gave my copy to a friend who has many fond memories of football days, Burl Ives and the Casey area.

The picture of the old outhouse (Tales #3) still standing on the Ralph Newlin homestead is very special for me. Ralph and Luella Newlin were my dear grandparents. The memories of family gatherings in their home are most meaningful for me.

The stories I have told my children about the years of my childhood in Bellair have become very real to them after reading about the old General Store.

Thank you for the movement to restore that precious old building.

LAVERNE FARLEY WHITT
Johnston City, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: Carpenters and other workers are needed to work on Tales' buildings in Bellair. There's much work to be done. But there's little money to pay labor cost or to buy building and restoration materials.

The Tales from the general store foundation pays no salaries, gets by with volunteer help and exists on donations, fund raisers and grants. A heck of a way to run a business. But we're stuck with it right now. With continued support and encouragement from our increasing number of readers, we won't be stuck with it much longer.

Do what you can today.

Unrehearsed ending

Back in 1929, I taught my first school at Pence, Indiana, just a few miles across the state line from Danville, Illinois. The building had two rooms and I taught the first four grades.

Like most beginning teachers, I was bent on perfection. For days, I had practiced telling a story to the members of my household. During my practices, I had tried to use the mechanics of the art as I had learned them at college.

The day came when I felt sure of my presentation. As I proceeded, the room became still and the children seemed to be totally swept away.

Just as I was reaching the climax and was all thrilled at my accomplishment, one of my brightest pupils, a little freckled-faced boy with sandy hair and big brown eyes, poked his feet out in the aisle and hollered, "Hey, teacher, see my new shoes!"

Your magazine is wonderful. Please keep up the good work.

HAZEL G. TOMEY
Bicknell, Indiana

Recipes and Remedies

Send your favorite old recipe or remedy for publication in a future issue of "Tales" to Tales from the general store, inc., Rural Route 2, Oblong, IL 62449.

Recipes

Pheasant

Cut pheasant in pieces, salt and pepper, flour pieces and fry to a golden brown in Crisco in a dutch oven.

Drain off excess Crisco and add ½ cup water; ½ cup sherry wine; 3 or 4 chicken bullion cubes dissolved in ½ cup hot water and a pinch of garlic powder.

Use 2 tablespoons corn starch dissolved in first ½ cup water.

Add a small can of mushrooms if desired. Pour over browned pheasant and bake at 350 degrees for 1½ hours.

Serve gravy over wild rice.

—Theora Russell

Northern Pike

½ cup lemon
1 tablespoon vinegar
bay leaves
celery salt
onion salt

½ pan water to boil pike in

Mix above until done. Cut in small pieces and serve with shrimp cocktail sauce.

—Theora Russell

Venison Chops or Steak

Marinate venison overnight in:

½ cup melted butter
1 tablespoon minced onion
2 tablespoons dry mustard
½ cup lemon juice
1 tablespoon minced parsley
barbeque sauce

Cook on charcoal until medium done. Baste with barbeque sauce.

—Theora Russell

Pickled Bacon

Make brine to hold up an egg. Boil brine, then let cool completely. Slice fresh side meat and put in quart jars loosely. Add cold brine to cover and seal with rubber jar ring and zinc lids.

To use—soak overnight in clear water. Drain well, turn in flour and fry until crispy.

—(Mrs. Hugh) Lucille White

Rhubarb Crisp

1 cup flour
1 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¾ cup uncooked oatmeal
½ cup melted shortening

Mix altogether until crumbly. Press ½ crumb mixture into baking dish. Cover with 4 cups diced rhubarb.

Combine 1 cup sugar, 1 cup water and 2 tablespoons cornstarch and cook slowly till thick and clear.

Pour over top of rhubarb, then sprinkle remaining crumb mixture over all. Bake at 350 degrees for about an hour.

—(Mrs. Hugh) Lucille White

Cooking and canning with Grandma

by Lorene Newberry

"Grammaaa, what do you want me to do now?"

That's what I heard from my fifteen-year-old granddaughter every little whipstitch last summer when she stayed with me, helping with the cooking and canning. Since she had to help, she said she wanted to learn what she could.

We were cooking for our family and anybody else who happened to be around when there was work to be done. We were canning whenever things got ready.

Anyway, my granddaughter always served the pie and cake, extra drinks or whatever there was to do. One day I noticed she was serving rather small pieces of pie.

"How are you cuttin' that pie?" I asked.

"The only way I know, Grammaaa," she said, looking up.

She was cutting the pie into eight pieces, so I showed her how to cut it into six. When her mother came by later that day, my granddaughter said, "Mom, I learned how to cut a pie today. Now I want to learn how to make a pie crust."

She had to wait awhile to do that, though. She'd made zucchini cake and had been helping with the other regular cooking. And she'd been breaking, washing and preparing green beans for canning.

She didn't pick any of the green beans; her grandfather picked them all. Guess he thought picking beans was too hard for her.

"Put a teaspoon of salt for each quart and fill the can with boiling water," I'd tell her as we filled the quart cans with freshly picked and broken beans. "Scald the lids and be sure the cans are washed clean and are dry on top. Now put the lids on and seal them as tight as you can."

We pressure canned some of the beans and then cooked some in the oven. I like the pressure canner best, although it has to be watched, because cooking the beans in the oven takes four hours.

Our dill pickles we made by putting dill, garlic and red pepper in the bottom of each can, then filling it with pickles.

"Now heat to boiling two quarts water, one quart vinegar and one cup salt," I'd tell my granddaughter whether she asked me what to do next or whether she didn't. "Pour it over the pickles and seal when it's boiling."

To make sweet pickles, we put the pickles in salt water that would hold up an egg, dissolving the salt into the water until the egg came to the top.

When I showed my granddaughter that the egg rises to the top when there is enough salt

in the water, she said, "I don't believe it."

Later that evening she told her mother, "Grandma made an egg float today."

We left the pickles soaking in the salt water for four days. Then we drained them and poured boiling water over them and let them set for twenty-four hours. We drained them again and put alum the size of a walnut to a bucket of hot water and soaked them for another twenty-four hours.

"Drain and chunk, split or stick them with a fork," I told my granddaughter the next morning. "Make a solution of two quarts vinegar and eight cups sugar, celery seed and mustard seed. Bring this to a boil. Then you'll heat it and pour it over the pickles for the next four mornings."

On the last morning, we put the pickles in cans and poured the hot vinegar solution over them and sealed them. And while we were pouring the vinegar...

"Grammaaa, I can't stand the smell of vinegar cooking," my granddaughter said.

But she had to—the pickles kept coming. We finally started taking the large cucumbers, slicing them thin, dipping them in Fry Krisp and frying them in butter. We tried eggplant the same way.

My granddaughter was learning to can and cook out of the garden. We made eggplant parmesan, baked green peppers stuffed with sausage, cracker crumbs, eggs and milk, baked green peppers stuffed with hamburger and rice and smothered in tomato sauce and cabbage rolls.

We cooked cabbage and kohlrabi, made slaw, and canned beets. Canning the beets brought out the drawn-out "Grammaaa" from my granddaughter again.

"Now you wash the beets and clean them good," I told her as we started canning the few I put up each summer. "Leave about two inches of the tops on to cook them so they won't bleed."

When the beets are tender, you can rub the skins off them. And the water the beets are cooked in can be saved to make jelly by adding some flavor of Jello, Sur-Jel and sugar.

"Grammaaa, when are we going to make jelly?" my granddaughter asked when I mentioned the jelly.

We weren't ready to make it yet, but when I told her we would use the beet juice when we did, she asked, "Grammaaa, I've never eaten any of it, have I?"

"Yes, you have."

"Why didn't you tell me what it was, Grammaaa?"

I told her I guess what you don't know won't hurt you. And we started heating the beets and combining equal parts of vinegar, sugar and pickling

spices, filling the cans with beets, pouring the hot vinegar solution over them and sealing the cans.

"Grammaaa, what do we do now?"

Well, there was corn for freezing. Her grandfather gathered, shucked and silked it all except several ears we put in plastic bags for the freezer.

The rest we cut off the cob, took a gallon of corn, a quart of water or milk (milk is best), a cup of sugar, four teaspoons of salt, mixed it all together and boiled it for ten minutes. After the corn cooled, we put it in freezer boxes and put them in the freezer.

And there were tomatoes.

"Now, Grammaaa, when are we goin' to can these tomatoes?" my granddaughter asked one morning as the bushel baskets on the back porch began filling up with tomatoes.

Her grandfather kept bringing more, so we started coring and pulling the skin off.

"That way you don't waste any of the tomato," I said, showing her how to core and peel the skin. "I can remember when my grandma poured boiling water over the tomatoes to loosen the skin."

We cooked the tomatoes and put them in scalded cans, then added a teaspoon of salt in each one. We put the scalded lids on and sealed them. After all the canning we had done so far, my granddaughter knew that if lids popped, the cans were sealed right. Most of them were.

That was the end of the canning. And she finally got to make pie crust. I think her brother thought the first pie she made was good because he ate all but one piece.

When I was teaching her to make a pie, I told her to put pie crust on the outside of the pan to bake it. Then I had her try one with the crust on the inside only. I like it on the outside better because that's the way I learned, but it can be made either way.

Finally, I told her to stick the pie crust all over with a fork before she baked it.

My granddaughter looked at me and asked her regular question, "Why, Grammaaa?"

"To prevent bubbles," I said.

Sometimes the questions about wore me out, but my granddaughter was a big help to me last summer. Besides the cooking and canning, she helped with the other housework like the dishwashing and washing. I don't know how much she learned that she will put to use.

But whether she is a farmer's wife or on her own, she will still have to eat. I hope she has learned as much as I've enjoyed having her help all summer long.

Even if she didn't, I'll never forget her "Grammaaa, what am I goin' to do now?" That was worth something.

Corn Relish

24 large ears of corn, cut off
6 large onions, cut fine
4 small heads of cabbage, chopped
6 large green mangoes
2 red mangoes, chopped
2 quarts vinegar
4 pints sugar
½ cup salt

1 tablespoon celery seed
2 tablespoons mustard seed
2 tablespoons ground mustard
2 tablespoons tumeric
1 tablespoon pepper

Mix altogether and boil 30 minutes. Mix ½ cup cornstarch with a little water and add to mixture and cook 10 minutes longer. Put in pint jars and seal.

—(Mrs. Hugh) Lucille White

Favorite Pancakes

1 egg
¼ cup buttermilk
2 tablespoons soft shortening
¼ cup sifted flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt

Heat griddle while mixing. Beat egg well then beat in remaining ingredients. Bake until puffed and full of bubbles. Turn and brown on other side.

Serve hot with butter and maple syrup.

—(Mrs. Hugh) Lucille White

Mother's Soft Molasses Cake

1 cup sorghum molasses
½ cup white sugar
½ cup butter
1 egg
pinch salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 teaspoons soda
2 cups flour

Mix altogether well. Then add 1 cup boiling water. Stir well. Bake in 9 x 13 inch pan at 350 degrees until it tests done. Do not try to take out of the pan.

—(Mrs. Hugh) Lucille White

Remedies

Preserving a husband

Be careful in your selection. Do not choose too young and take only such as have been reared in a good moral atmosphere.

Some insist on keeping them in a pickle, while others keep them in hot water. This only makes them sour, hard and sometimes bitter.

Even poor varieties may be made sweet, tender and good by garnishing them with patience, well-sweetened with smiles, kisses and flavored to taste; then wrap them in a mantle of charity. Keep warm with a steady fire of domestic devotion and serve with preacher and cream.

When thus prepared they will keep for years.

—Twentieth Century Cookbook of the First Methodist Church Casey, Illinois-1907



A Sunday morning gathering at the Bellair General Store during World War II. Scenes like this were common at the general stores around the country. (Photo courtesy of Art Farley.)

Did you know...

How Little Egypt got its name

For 145 years, that portion of Illinois that lies south of the old Vincennes-St. Louis Trace has been known affectionately as Egypt. The old road is no more.

Travel today rolls along on U.S. 50 or the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, both of which practically follow the old trace. Twenty-eight counties make up Egypt, being those counties which lie south of the line of demarkation or are cut by it.

In all the old history books considerable space is given to the "winter of the deep snow." That was the winter of 1830-31. Snow fell almost continuously in the central and northern portions of Illinois for more than a month, covering the ground to a minimum of three feet, and in some places to a depth of sixteen feet.

It was impossible to harvest the corn that remained in the fields. Corn that had been laid aside as seed had to be used as food for man and his beasts. The result was a shortage or rather a scarcity of corn when the winter ended. A late spring followed. On September 10, 1831, a killing frost ruined the immature corn.

No corn in these prairie frontier lands meant famine and disaster. Corn must be obtained. It was not long until upstate Illinois learned that southern Illinois had a plentiful supply of corn. In the northern frontier counties corn was selling at three to four dollars per bushel. In the lower counties it could be bought for from twenty-five to fifty cents per bushel. As a result, caravans filled the roads to southern Illinois, going there to buy the precious grain at a reasonable price.

Many, many years before the corn famine in upper Illinois, there had been a famine in the land of Canaan. In Genesis 41:57, we read, "And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands." In Genesis 42:2, we find further, "And he said, 'Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that

we may live, and not die."

The pioneers of Illinois were struck with the similitude. As the caravans rolled southward, it became an almost standard reply to questioning, "We are going to Egypt to buy corn."

The name caught the fancy of both the residents of southern Il-

linois and those who were journeying thither to buy precious food. From that time on, southern Illinois lovingly has been called Egypt.

Prophetically, the statement is made in Genesis 45:18, "Come unto me; and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye

shall eat the fat of the land."

—submitted by
LaVerne Farley Whitt

Cold Summer of 1816

Freaks in the weather have always been a subject of interest. Recently, information

has come to light that the year 1816 really was a year without a summer.

January and February were warm and spring-like. March was cold and stormy. Vegetation had gotten well underway in April when real cold weather set in. Snow and sleet fell on seventeen different days in May. In June there was either frost or snow every day but three. July was cold and frosty. August was worse, for ice formed nearly an inch thick and killed every green thing in the United States.

In the spring of 1817, corn which had been kept over from 1815 sold for \$10 a bushel for seed only.

The "Sunshine Magazine" of Litchfield, Illinois, gave this phenomenon: January was so mild that most people allowed their fires to go out.

February was not cold. March was windy, April came in warm but as the days grew longer the air became colder.

By the first of May the temperature was like winter. Young buds froze stiff, and ice formed a half an inch thick on the ponds and rivers.

Corn was killed and corn fields were planted again and again. By the last of May everything had been killed. June was the coldest month ever experienced in this latitude. All fruit was destroyed. Snow fell ten inches deep in Vermont.

And on July 4, ice was one-fourth of an inch thick throughout New England. August proved to be the worst month of all. There was great privation and thousands of people would have perished in this country had it not been for an abundance of game.

Once Robert Ripley published a "Believe It or Not" cartoon entitled "The Shaker":

"The eruption of Mr. Temboro, East India, blew 50 cubic miles of dust into the air, killing 66,000 people and clouding the skies all over the earth. Crops refused to ripen, trees bore no fruit and cattle froze to death in the fields. As a result, 1816 is known as the year without a summer."

—from the papers of
Marvin Harrison

Tales receives grant, awards

Incentive grant

Tales from the general store, inc., received a \$100 incentive grant and a National Recognition Award from the America the Beautiful Fund for "helping to protect the beauty of our nation." Tales founder, Ray Elliott, also received an Outstanding Good Citizenship Award for his work with the cultural journalism and building restoration project.

Paul Bruce Dowling, director and founder of the Washington, D.C., based Fund presented the grants and awards at a Sailor Springs town hall gathering October 10 as a part of a cross-country marathon tour to celebrate creative good citizenship and civic good works. Signatures of people participating in the event were collected on a scroll, first signed in Sacramento, California, at the beginning of the tour, to be taken to the White House as testimony "to the spirit of creative public service in America."

In presenting the grant and award to Tales, Dowling said they were "to encourage continued work in the restoration project" and "for saving a precious part of our country's heritage by getting young and old alike involved in writing stories, collecting tales, recipes and remedies of the rural life of long ago and experiencing what it was like to butcher hogs, churn butter, make quilts, cane chairs and have barn raisings.

"It is this kind of hands-on activity," Dowling said, "that makes history come alive and gives people the inspiration to

build for the future. America was built street by street, town by town. And that's the way we need to rebuild America.

The America the Beautiful Fund gives one hundred National Recognition Awards and numerous grants annually to local community projects. Only two national awards were given in Illinois in 1982. Sailor Springs residents received a \$100 incentive grant, a national award and several good citizenship awards for their efforts in the restoration of the town.

Since its inception in 1965 at the time of the White House Conference on Natural Beauty, the Fund has helped more than five thousand small towns "rescue their heritage and preserve their past."

Special recognition

Ray Elliott, "Tales" editor and founder, was selected for the second consecutive year as one of the Special Recognition Advisers in the 1982 High School Journalism Teacher of the Year competition held annually by The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund.

The Fund's assistant director, Sherry Haklik, presented Elliott a certificate "for outstanding contributions to Journalism Education in the school, the state and the nation in 1982" at the Journalism Education Association's Fall Convention Awards Ceremony on November 21 at the Chicago Marriott Hotel. One Teacher of the Year and four Distinguished Advisers were selected, in addition to

twelve who were cited for special recognition by the New Jersey-based Fund.

Thomas E. Engleman, executive director of The Fund, a nonprofit foundation which encourages careers in journalism, said Elliott's "tremendous efforts toward improving journalism education has been realized in the high caliber journalism students in his midst."

"Tales" students attended the three-day convention and participated in a panel discussion Elliott moderated about the importance of cultural and community journalism. Representatives from "New Expressions," Chicago Youth Communication Center, and "DuPage Specials," Glenbard East High School, Lombard, joined the discussion to share common concerns and consider future potential to this approach.

After spending eight years at Oak Lawn Community High School where he taught journalism, advised the student newsmagazine and had been named Best Newspaper Adviser of 1982 by the Eastern Illinois High School Press Association, Elliott resigned after the 1981-82 school year to begin course work for a master's degree in journalism at the University of Illinois.

Next year he plans to work full time with area students and residents on the Tales project, publishing "Tales," establishing headquarters and conducting workshops like the hog butchering/trapping exhibition which was held at the Bellair General Store on Saturday, November 27.

A letter from Aunt Annie



Dear Folks,

Just wanted to drop you all a line and let you know what a wonderful time I had one night last summer. Went up to Bellair, to the general store again, to an ice cream social this time. Why, they even had homemade ice cream while it lasted and some of the best lookin' cakes you ever saw to go with it. All that homemade ice cream and cake was donated by the good neighbors in the community.

And when the homemade ice cream ran out, John Gallo from Robinson gave 'em a good deal on some store bought. They even had candy bars donated by Heath's and sodas donated by Pepsi for all the kids to enjoy.

Had tables and chairs set up inside the store sos you could sit down and enjoy the eatin' and visit with old friends. Saw lots of friends that I haven't seen in many a year. Why, they was even people from Vincennes, West Terre Haute and Hammond, Indiana.

And I met some of the nicest folks from as far away as Florida, Wisconsin, Arizona and California. Guess they come from far an' wide to see Bellair jumpin' like it was that night.

Lan' sakes, them Tales folks sure had been workin'. They'd put all the windows back in the front of the store sos you could look out and see all the people comin' in. Heard they got 'em a good deal on all that glass at Heyden's in Robinson. It sure was good to see the fellers settin' and visitin' on the porch benches. Brought back memories of the good ol' days.

The bank building even had a new look about it. Don Murphy and his crew come up from Robinson to fix it. Put the front back on it and cleaned it up real good. Old Don looked all over to find a mold to make the swirls on those blocks like the old ones, but he just couldn't find one anywhere. But they done a fine job.

They tell me that's the building that Tales is a goin' to use for their headquarters. Goin' to make it look like the old bank and then store their files, tapes 'n stuff in there. Even goin' to put in a darkroom to develop pictures, some paste-up tables for puttin' that paper together and some kind of typesettin' machine for settin' type, whatever that is.

Now, by golly, they even got 'em an outhouse. Never saw one quite like it, though. Had toilet seats an' some kind o' aluminum covering on the top an' down the front sos you wouldn't get splinters in your legs. Painted it up real purtty, too. Now that's the old days for sure.

Guess that's what they're tryin' to raise money for, to fix up the old buildings sos they can have lots of these get-togethers. I sure would like to see some entertainment for the folks 'round Bellair, like they used to have. People need to get together and visit more; makes you feel real good to see old friends and have a good time together.

Well, the eatin' and visitin' was just part of the evening. Outside the store there was benches and bales of straw for us to sit on and listen to some pickin' and singin'. Even the skeeters weren't bad thanks to Harmon's in Oblong for their bug spray.

Yessirree, Ennis 'n' the Outlaws from Robinson played. That Doc Elliott is the cutest thing you ever did see, even if his whiskers is gettin' gray. Heard some ladies say that they jus' came to see him.

And that wasn't the only band, either. The Country Cousins from Oblong played while Ennis an' his bunch rested an' had some ice cream. Big bald-headed feller, Mick Cravens I think his name was, was apickin' and asingin' some good ol' country music.

I sure did enjoy that country music, too. Sakes alive, everybody did. They all sure seemed to be havin' a good time. Why, they was close to 400 signed the register book they had in the store, and I saw more people outside that hadn't come in the store.

There were cars and trucks parked all over Bellair. Some probably had to walk a good ways when the band quit aplayin'. But they couldn't have asked for a more beautiful moon to walk under. Yellow-orange, quarter moon was ashinin' in the west, hangin' over the store.

And, of course, since everybody was atryin' to leave at once there was almost a traffic jam. Bellair probably hasn't seen one of them in ages.

Mercy, I sure had a good time, and I hope them Tales folks can raise all that money they need, cause I'll sure be there to enjoy the next doin's they have.

Best to you and yours,
Your Aunt Annie



Tales staff member Tony Williams, upper left, applies a coat of paint to the outhouse. While volunteer workers put new windows in the store, Don Murphy replaced the front to the bank building Tales hopes to eventually restore as its head quarters.





After a lifetime in politics, Democrat George Gettinger, Sullivan, Indiana, said "a politician's got to do something basically right or he's got selfish motivation."



Republican Vic Smith, Robinson, learned early that "if you want to get into politics, you need to have some sort of office."

Old-time politicians

still know a thing or two

by Jim Elliott

If you wanted to know anything about politics first hand and you were in the Wabash Valley, time was there were two men you'd go see. And they can still tell you a thing or two.

If you were a Democrat, you'd go see George Gettinger, a Sullivan, Indiana, resident, ex-county commissioner, ex-county chairman, Wabash Valley Association member and one-time Secretary of the Treasury of the Federal Land Banks Association.

If you were a Republican, you'd go see Vic Smith, Robinson, publisher of the "Robinson Argus," ex-precinct committeeman, ex-county chairman, ex-state central committeeman, ex-state chairman, ex-National Committee Senior chairman and six-year member of the U.S.-Canada International Commission.

The two semi-retired politicians, both in their mid-seventies, met recently at Gettinger's country estate and reminisced about their careers and today's politics.

"I think I've always had some interests in the political system," the thin, white-haired Smith said. "And I learned that if you wanted to get into politics that you needed to have some sort of office. So the first thing I did was run for precinct committeeman an' got elected.

After the election, it was a progression of "being in the right or wrong place at the right or wrong time," and having various "serious-minded politicians" suggesting that Smith run for this office and appointing him to that office.

"The time finally came when my wife put her foot down," he said and he retired from politics to stay home and help with the "Argus," a weekly newspaper.

Gettinger's career followed a similar pattern. He entered politics in 1928 with the Frank Meyer Campaign.

"A friend of mind, who was gettin' along in years, needed somebody to campaign on the local level who had youth,

energy and the time," Gettinger said, reclining in a lawn chair on the back porch of his home. "Well, my friend, he was a part of the ol' Tom Tiger organization in this state (Indiana). Because of my interest an' concern, I more or less inherited his part."

Then in the mid-Thirties, Arthur Greenwood, a congressman at the time and a friend of the Gettingers, needed somebody to ride over the district an' collect money from the postmasters around the Seventh District, so Gettinger got the job. He also ran for congress twice.

"The first time I ran for congress (in 1948) I wasn't doing anything at the time," the thin, balding man said, looking through black horn-rimmed glasses. "Three fellas come here one Sunday morning, and I was kind of at the crossroads—I'd sold the elevator, lost a son overseas and we were farming, which was minus people.

"People have always been an ingredient to me," Gettinger said. "I've always been around them, an' I missed them. I was happy with my role at that time, I'd say, but this gave me an opportunity to get back into politics and be around people."

But there are other reasons for running for office.

"I guess if a fella tells you the absolute truth about it," Smith said, "there's an element of some satisfaction out of being selected to become an official. My family was all Republicans, an' I've always had some interests in the political system."

"We've all got our egos," Gettinger said, "and they have to be watered. This is really the driving force, if you just really called the spade a spade. Honestly, even though we hate to admit it, we've got that much ego."

Gettinger said a person has to have some kind of interest or some kind of a fascination about the political system if he wants to be involved in it.

Gettinger remembered one time when he was Secretary of the Treasury of the Federal Land Banks Association in his home county and had to go to Louisville, Kentucky, in the

morning. That evening, though, Jim Farley (then Postmaster General) was going to be in Franklin, Indiana, dedicating a post office and Gettinger wanted to be there to meet him. Farley was known for being able to remember names of people all over the country.

"I knew Jim Farley was going to be at the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner in Indianapolis five weeks later (and so was I)," Gettinger said. "So I wanted to shake his hand because I knew I was going to try myself and see if he'd remember me.

"Now in reality, that's why I did that," he said. "I was fascinated because it was just unbelievable to me that a man could do that."

So Gettinger hurried back from Louisville, hoping to be in time to meet Farley. Gettinger said he probably broke the speed limit fifty times that day. But he did get to shake hands with Farley.

"Then I went to the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, an' I came down the row and Farley said, 'Well, George, how are you?' Not even George Gettinger but, 'Well, George, how are you? Your name is George Gettinger and you live in Sullivan, Indiana.' Just one-two-three.

"I've never seen anybody able to do that," he continued. "Now you've got to have some of that, call it anything you want, to be involved in politics."

But while having a certain appeal, Smith and Gettinger believe a good politician has to conform to be successful. Being too outspoken can be the wrong thing to do.

"That has been my biggest problem," Gettinger said. "I've always said kind o' what I felt an' that isn't good. If you want to be elected to public office, the first thing I'd do would be to get the rebel-raising part of me out.

"Most of the time," he said, "you wait an' see how the cards are thrown, you might say. And instead of leading, you trail if you want to get along."

He looked over at Smith who nodded in agreement.

"Once you get into the political situation, you just can't be associated with fellows and not

respect their opinions," Smith said. "And when they want you to do something, it's like you have to do it if it's not offensive to you.

"I turned down a lot of things that I didn't think were right that were good for the party or good for me. But in general, well, you go along with the people you associate with."

Whether Smith and Gettinger have conformed or not, they have both been leaders and are highly respected in the political picture of the Wabash Valley. And both are still fairly active. It's been said by many in this part that if you wanted to run for an office in the Wabash Valley, Smith and Gettinger are the first men to see.

"People come to see George an' I," Smith said. "We give them any advice we can think of or think would be useful to them."

Along with giving advice, Gettinger remains active in the Wabash Valley Association—"the spark-plug of the WVA," according to Smith—an organization dedicated to water management in the Wabash Valley.

"I did something the other day that I had worked on since 1959," Gettinger said. "That's twenty-three years ago that we asked the Corps of Engineers to take those trees an' brush out of the Patoka River. We had a tour yesterday, just seven of us. We started at the mouth o' the river, one hundred nineteen miles up to the dam site, an' we saw the water free-flowing.

"I had the experience of seein' that accomplished. The river had been drownin' out farmers for the last seventy-five years, an' it needed to be done so damn bad. It was a wonderful feeling of accomplishment. I didn't do it, but I was a part of gettin' it done."

Gettinger and Smith have been involved in getting many things done during their long careers. And throughout those careers, they've had something to say on just about everything, including present-day politics.

"One difference in the people who have followed my footsteps would be that their longevity

didn't compare with mine," Smith said about his nearly twenty years as Illinois State Republican chairman. "I think it's good to have a change. I think the people feel that way, too. You'll find out after so long that they'll change it for you."

According to Gettinger, you can't have everyone love you, especially if you speak out for something, because there are people who will be against it. If you win, he said, it makes those people wrong in the public's eyes.

"I don't think people honestly, in either party today, have the sense of carin' an' do things because they're just basically good for an area," Gettinger said. "I don't see anybody out sellin' soil conservation just because it's good. I don't see anybody working at a job of water management because we need to do it. And this is a very valuable thing if a person is going to have a political career that will live.

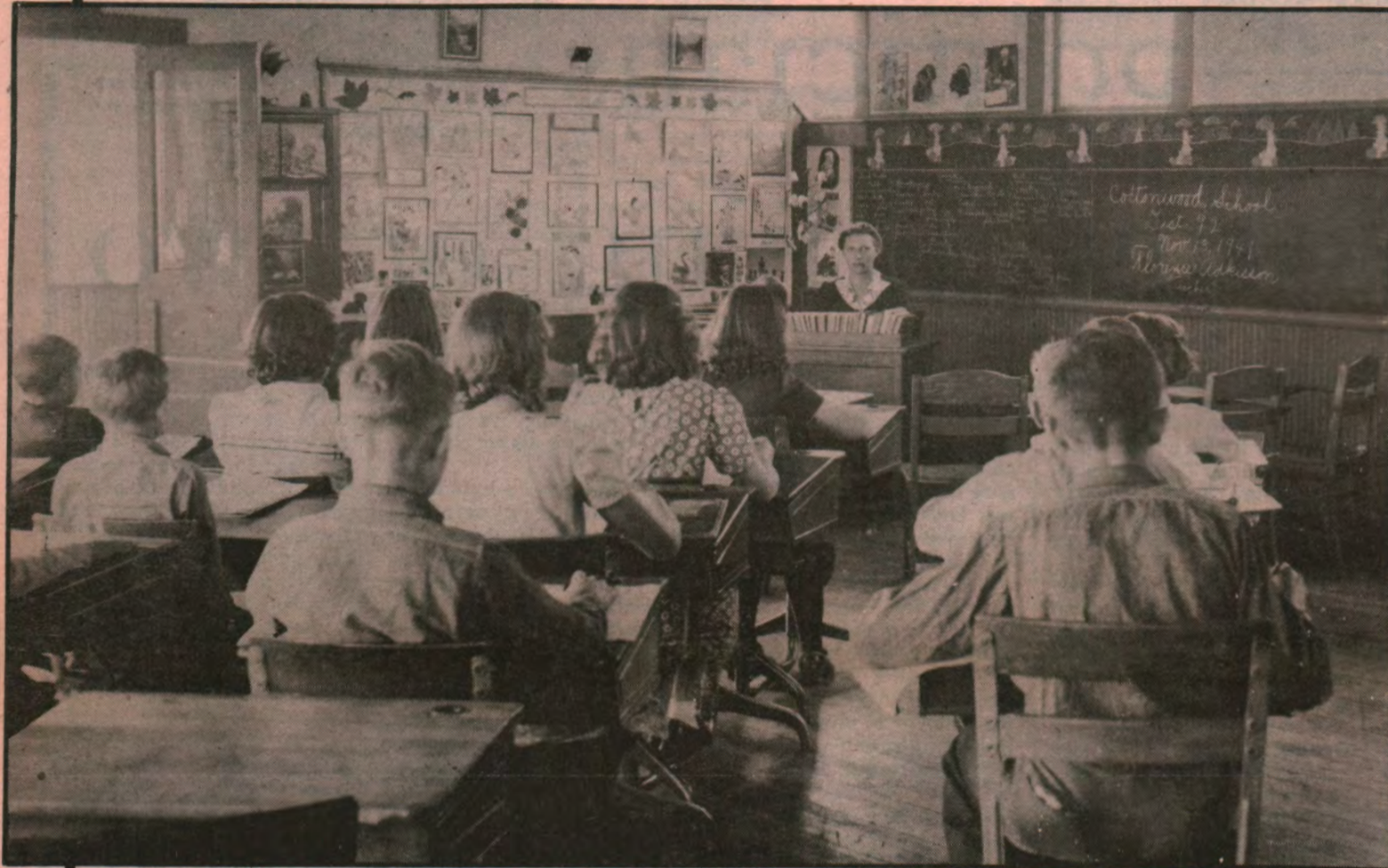
"He's got to do something that's basically right or damn it he's got selfish motivation," he continued as his voice became louder, "which will ruin him, cause him to take money, cause him to do those damnable things that are wrong with American politics. It'll cause him to lie, an' his word is no longer good. You've got so many people out here in this world tellin' you what you want to hear. I think that's what's wrong with this country."

Both men claimed that they didn't plan their political careers. And as they looked back, they said they didn't have any regrets and wouldn't have changed anything they've done.

"I've thought about that a lot," Gettinger said. "If I had the intelligence to change at the time I had the opportunity to do so, I probably wouldn't have done it. But I can't say that if I'd do it over again that I'd be a damn bit smarter, can you?"

Neither man may have been any smarter if he had his political life to live over. They seemed to have been pretty smart the first time around. And people still go to them for political advice and wisdom.

SCHOOL DAYS



Students study at Cottonwood School, northwest of Martinsville, in November 1941. Florence Adkisson, Bellair, said school was fun because "the parents of my students were my friends an' neighbors." Adkisson taught school from 1929 to 1967. (Photo courtesy of Florence Adkisson.)

One-room schoolhouse teachers got respect

by Maureen Foertsch

They walked as far as two miles a day. They swept floors and did other janitorial work. They kept a fire burning during the cold winter months. And they taught children. They were one-room schoolhouse teachers.

Florence Crandall Adkisson remembered her first teaching days at the Butternut School in Clark County, beginning in 1929 at the age of nineteen.

"The Butternut School was located a mile north of where I lived," Adkisson said. "I walked every day, jus' like I did when I went to school there—over fields an' through creeks an' snowdrifts."

Adkisson walked that mile through fields that first year to teach her thirteen students, first through eighth graders. Later, when she taught at the Bellair School, she had twenty-nine

pupils.

She said there wasn't time for a great deal of individualism, not with eight different grades to teach and lesson plans to prepare for each class every day. But Adkisson did have ways of making sure each student had a good education.

"If one child was in the third grade, I would combine him with the fourth grade," Adkisson said, "lettin' him have the math and science he needed, and reading an' writing with the others. I had a county superintendent tell me, 'Country children are so bright because they've heard the eighth grade eight times before they ever reach it.'"

Although the rural children may have been bright, Adkisson, who was educated at the University of Illinois, Indiana State University and Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, didn't want to continue

her teaching career in the one-room schoolhouses.

"I was ambitious, and teaching at my home school was not an advancement," she said. "I taught about fifty third an' fourth grade pupils for four years at the Martinsville City School. But I was married at 25 an' had to go back to the Bellair School with my husband. It was a difficult thing to do to go back to the smaller school."

Fortunately, though, Adkisson had some help from her older girls. They worked with the younger students as tutors.

The classes also required little discipline. Once in a while, Adkisson had to paddle a student, she said, but not often. And usually it was because children were fighting.

"One time I paddled a boy who pushed down a little girl," she said. "He was just a big bully. But country children walked as far as two miles, an' you don't

have a lot o' fightin' left in you after you walk a mile to school on a winter day.

"School was fun, though. The parents of my students were my friends an' neighbors. I don't think it ever occurred to the children not to like me. An' they didn't have to cut wood at school."

But school wasn't always fun for the teacher. With a beginning salary of one hundred dollars a month, Adkisson had to do her own janitorial work, sweep and keep the stove burning. She found the winters especially difficult.

One event she remembered was while she taught at the Butternut School and a snowstorm was approaching. A man came to get his son because he had heard over the radio that it was a big storm. Adkisson asked him what he thought she should do.

"He said, 'I don't know what to tell you, but I'm afraid we're

goin' to have a storm,' " Adkisson said. "Well, he hadn't been gone more than twenty minutes when the snow began. I sent the little children home an' had the older boys go with 'em."

"The thing I forgot to do, which goes to show how young an' inexperienced I was," she continued, "was that I forgot to tell the children not to come to school the next day if the snow was as bad as we thought it was goin' to be."

When Adkisson awoke the next morning before daylight, the drifts were as high as the fences. The children who lived farthest away didn't have telephones, so she went to school in case any of them went to school.

"It took me about two hours to get there that morning," Adkisson said. "When I got over the hills an' saw no one was waitin' for me, I was relieved. I debated about turning around and going right back home."

But it was Friday and Adkisson thought, I'm tired and I've got a sack lunch, so I believe I'll stay. Which she did.

"I had the fire going an' looked out, an' here came a boy," she said. "When he got to the school, I saw he had fallen into a drift an' one o' his boots was filled with water. The temperature was well below zero, so we spent the rest of the day drying out that boot before I sent him home."

"That's the one thing I've always been grateful for—that I was there when he came. Had I not been there he would've walked back home an' he would've had a frozen foot before he got there."

Although she didn't have the authority to dismiss school that day, Adkisson said the school directors, who were friends and neighbors, agreed she had done the right thing.

Despite problems like those caused by the snowstorm, Adkisson enjoyed her thirty-eight years of teaching. After retirement from full-time teaching, she found substitute teaching to be anticlimatic.

Like many one-room school teachers, Florence Adkisson loved her profession. Teachers back then didn't have the luxury of the tenure system, either. The criteria for job security was based on a different system.

Orrell Farley, who began her teaching career in 1928 in the one-room Advance School at eighty dollars a month, said, "If our eighth graders didn't pass, we didn't have a job the next year. We drilled our eighth graders cause we wanted a job."

"But teachers were always looked up to an' respected," she said. "The students knew if they got a whippin' at school, they'd get one at home, too."

Farley said she didn't find it necessary to spank students often, though. To see her on her riding lawn mower today, dressed in blue jeans, sitting straight and tall on the seat, you have no reason to believe that she'd have any trouble with the most unruly group of students now.

But she doesn't believe she was responsible for her students' good behavior and believes the students of today are not as easily controlled as those she taught years ago. Last year when she substituted, she noticed a difference in the behavior and attitude of the students.

By knowing the background and family life of each student as she was able to do when she taught in the one-room school, Farley could see what to expect and what to overlook from each

student. She didn't rely on a set of rules all the time, either, but rather her knowledge acquired from first-hand experience.

"You learn more the first year you teach than you ever got in college," Farley said, who attended Eastern Illinois State Teachers College for two years. "After my first year (of teaching), I had a kind of program already worked out. For the higher grades, I split the history book an' taught one part



Leona Race, Oblong, in one of the many classrooms she taught in during her 38-year career. She began teaching in 1924 because it was "the only thing to do to make a living."

one year an' the rest the next."

Queen Adams Stephens, another student of Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, taught her first class in 1914 at the Willow Prairie School when she was nineteen. She had also taught at Elbow, North Union and Cottonwood Schools, among others.

"I never had trouble teaching," she said. "I just wanted to watch them (her students) grow. When they started out, some students didn't know how to hold a pencil. At the end of the year it felt good to see their accomplishments.

Along with her teaching duties that first year at Willow Prairie, Stephens had to do her own janitorial work. That spring, she hired her cousin as a janitor and paid him two dollars from her thirty-seven-and-a-half dollars per month salary. Stephens said her pay was "about ordinary salary for a teacher then."

The financial aspect of teaching didn't concern Stephens, though. Even though her days in the schoolroom were the happiest of her life, she had other worries about her job.

"I had students when I first started teaching who were a couple months older than I was," she said. "I don't know what I would've done if the parents didn't cooperate with me.

"Parents were friends an' always liked havin' the teacher for a meal or a visit."

Another custom from the days of the one-room schoolhouse was to lock the teacher out at Christmas time. But Stephens was prepared for the annual lock-out. It meant a Christmas party and the kind of "disturbance" that Stephens didn't mind.

Sometimes there were disturbances that she did mind, though.

"I never aimed to beat a child, but I believed in keeping order," Stephens said. "An' if it meant a little switchin', then that's what they got. I switched a little boy at Willow Prairie, an' years later when I met him at a reunion, he said, 'Remember when you gave me a whippin'?"

Stephens has also met with former students who remember her for reasons other than her disciplinary actions. While she was with her grandson, one of those students told her she was the best teacher he'd ever had.

"That was a good thing to hear in front of my grandson," Stephens said.

Eva Sloan, recently deceased, also enjoyed the rewards of speaking with former students. Her teaching career spanned from 1919 to 1965 at such schools as Oblong, Central Union, Sundown and Kibbie.

In an interview before her death, Sloan said one student with good intentions bothered her a bit when he told her she was "the goodest teacher" he ever had. While they were still in her class, Sloan said she was better able to correct the students' habits which she found undesirable.

"Once when I went to grade papers I couldn't find one boy's paper," she said. "He told me he didn't write it. An' when I asked why, he said he didn't want to. So I told him to have it on Thursday, an' he wrote it. I didn't have to bat him around."

Leona Race, 82, who began teaching in 1924, said grading papers for her one-room school students often took until ten or eleven p.m. during a school week that lasted from eight-thirty a.m. to three p.m. every day.

"Now teachers have teaching aides for grading papers," Race said, laughing.

She became a teacher because it was "the only thing to do to make a living." But no matter what her reasons for choosing her career, Race said she always loved the children and they seemed to like her, too.



Orrell Farley, Yale, at a Christmas program at Bellair School in 1958. She said she didn't rely on a set of rules to teach her students, but from the knowledge of first-hand experience.

"My boys would always come to see me after school," she said, explaining that she wanted to be in school every day she was supposed to be with her students. "I taught school for thirty-eight years an' never took a day off for illness."

During those years, Race taught at such schools as Monarch, Bellair, Stoy and Oblong. When she ended her career in Oblong in 1962, it wasn't because she was tired of the students and the hours of paper grading.

"I got stuck in the snow on my way to school an' wrote out my resignation," she said.

So Race left her classroom. Her days of the one-room school and the respect of students who were friends and neighbors were long gone.

"There was nothin' like the country life—you were your own boss, not like in city schools," Race said.

As the one-room schoolhouse became history, the teachers no longer swept floors and built fires. Nor did they face the challenge of teaching eight different grades at one time. But the respect for teachers and the chance to educate the children of friends and neighbors became history, too.

A memory

Attending country schools

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article about going to and teaching in rural schools was written by Robinson resident William G. Little who taught twenty-five years in rural schools before retiring, working for Marathon Oil Company and then going back for another teaching stint or two.

by William G. Little

Many people of Crawford County and across the country have fond memories of their years in some rural school. It is quite possible that some remember when the paddle was applied. Does that fit you?

Yes, it applies to me.

The deed for Wheeler School, District #7, where ten little children, including me, attended school, is recorded in our county records thusly: "Beginning south line twenty rods from the south-west corner of the south-east ¼ of the south-west ¼, Township # 6, Range 11 west; thence south 13 rods to place of beginning."

This deed was perpetrated by James M. Logan and Eliza Jane Logan October 9, 1848. Here, under the tutelage of Ida Ransom, I was launched on an eight-year happy, sad, frolicsome, studious, playful, exciting and dull voyage.

The teachers there to guide, shove, push, pull, persuade, conjure and encourage me in those formative years I can well remember: Clyde Dollahan, Frank Shaw, Henry Mayhue, Nellie Wheller, Jim Taylor, Victor Adams and Mildred Seaney.

I assume that each of them did add a bit or bits to the sum total I gathered during those years. Some of the nostalgia from my reminiscences of school days often brings, as yours must in you, a smile, a frown or even a lump to my throat.

When I recall family names of the boys and girls with whom I studied, played, threw paper wads, argued and buddied, it seems as if a panoramic screen is flashing it all before my eyes. As I recall family names who attended Wheeler School when I did, I'm sure your mind will do

some recalling also.

At Wheeler there were the Burketts, the Allens, the Brownings, the Truitts, the Kincaids, the Nortons, the Fullers, the Parkers, the Simons, the Corrells, the Cooks, the Espys, the Fortes, the Adamases, the McClafflins, the Wheelers, the Mad-doxes and the Magills.

With each name recalled, some memory comes to mind. Most are pleasant, but there's one or two that I'd just as soon forget as not.

Our study list from those days would not wholly coincide with today's curriculum. Some of the vernacular of today would have put us at a loss, too.

However, I'm convinced that if by the time one had gone through eight grades back then and couldn't gauge a wagon bed, work square root, or even cube root, say all the multiplication tables fluently through the twelves, name all the continents of the world in order of size, name the states and their capitals, name all the oceans and name all the presidents, plus much more, you weren't ready to leave the eighth grade.

You had to be able to define and write declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences. Then you had to be able to diagram any picked sentence, putting in their proper places the subject, predicate and all the modifiers whether words, phrases or clauses.

At times we would be given some prefix or suffix and use same for ten or fifteen words. Then we would use each formed word in a good sentence.

In orthography, some twenty prefixes and suffixes and the meanings of many root words were taught and learned.

In history, a background of early American settlements, pertinent facts of the Revolutionary War, beginning and growth of the United States under each president and congress was indelibly impressed on eighth graders.

To the student of today this might seem too much. In my time, if one were not well versed in all I have mentioned and

much more, the teacher (and often the parents) felt the student was not ready to leave grade school.

Some modern critics would probably say much of the above mentioned was bosh. Be that as it may, I can recall school mates who became proficient in their chosen fields and were highly respected and influential in their communities.

But back to my fond recollections. I really believe I enjoyed the recesses and noon periods as much as anyone.

Can you remember playing ante-over, black man, jump or down, or post as some called it? Or a ball game, a favorite in seasonable weather? I recall two or three girls who were as good or better ball players than some of the boys.

Foxes and hounds was another good game many liked. Two good runners were chosen as foxes and took off into a big woods after a hasty lunch. In five or ten minutes, a bunch of hounds (other pupils) took off after them. I have known the foxes to be caught.

However, I remember two or three boys who were as tricky as a real fox and extra good runners, too, and were not caught. I also recollect one time two of them were so far away when the first bell rang that they got in late.

Then there were the Friday afternoons when the teacher said, "How about a ciphering and spelling contest?"

Usually two of the better students chose sides. But all students took part. The four fundamentals in arithmetic were used for the lower grades. Mixed fractions, square root and harder problems were what the older ones chose.

By the time the last pupil on each side was left, the excitement had mounted. At the last win, handclapping turned loose. I even remember three or four letting out a shrill whistle as they were so excited.

After a short recess, the spelling contest began. For a while, head marks were worked for. Later, with the teacher's eye on

(continued on page 19)



Four students study the three Rs at Cottonwood School in April 1942. Sometimes grades were combined when there was only one student in one of the grades. (Photo courtesy of Florence Adkisson.)

An education was important to her

by Barbie Gieseler

The young girl got to school just before eight a.m., hung her coat and scarf in the cloak room and took her seat with the rest of the children. The big pot-bellied stove was surrounded by others who had just arrived and were warming their hands. The schoolroom included first through eighth graders from the age of five through the twenties. As the students began their lessons, the teacher slowly walked up and down the aisles looking over the work and helping a student here and there.

That's the picture I got of what it was like to go to a one-room schoolhouse after talking with Dorothy Eirhart, 80, Bellair. Her favorite subjects in school were history, math, geography and spelling. One subject that she "didn't care too much for" was physiology.

"But if you want to make anythin' of yourself, you've got to get an education," Eirhart said. "You may not think much of it now; you may not put it to use. But I jus' sit out by the hour and figure an' do things to keep up. I don't want to lose my education."

Going to school was fun for Eirhart. She said everyone enjoyed it because there weren't any televisions or radios, and there was nothing else to do except work.

Eirhart was the only child in her family and she worked around the farm, helping her father cut wood and then bringing it in the house and storing it in a closet that was under the stairs. School was an opportunity for her to learn and be around other kids while she worked.

"Those teachers wouldn't let us loaf," Eirhart said. "No sir. We worked."

The school day began with reading, history and math, then an hour at noon for lunch. Afternoon classes included grammar, physiology, geogfaphy, spelling and writing. Classes continued until school was out at four p.m.

There were also fifteen-minute recess breaks in the morning and afternoon. When it came time to begin class again, the teacher rang a hand-held

bell. The children stopped whatever they were doing and rushed back to the school.

"History was jus' learnin' the names an' the history of everybody an' everything like that," Eirhart said, "But geography, my land, we made maps. We'd take an' make a paste stuff an' draw our maps. An' we wasn't allowed to trace. We had to draw 'em jus' by lookin' at 'em. Then we'd build that up on our maps and put colors on for the different places we was amarkin'."

On Fridays, the students had spelling bees that would last as late as four-thirty or five p.m. A row of students lined up on each side of the room as sides were chosen. When a word was misspelled, the student had to sit out. Eirhart said she and her classmates looked forward to the bee and studied all week in the hopes of being the only one left standing when it ended.

"In those days, we competed for grades," Eirhart said. "But almost everybody got good grades cause weren't nothin' else to do. Back then, you could go to school as long as you wanted to. Didn't have to go, either. I went back an' took the seventh grade and some extra with it. Then the next year I took the eighth grade again an' a bookkeeping course. I liked goin' to school. I enjoyed it."

It wasn't as enjoyable in the winter, though. The dirt roads were muddy, and Eirhart walked to school "from one hill to another." Sometimes her father threw a blanket on a horse and took her to school to keep her from being knee-deep in mud. One of Eirhart's classmates pulled his brother on a sled because he was weak.

But school only lasted six months then. Report cards were made once a month, using only grades A, B and C. Eirhart lowered her head slightly and smiled when she said she always got A's. She attributed her high grades to studying and writing essays almost every night. She'd sit at the table with a coal-oil lamp until she went to bed at around nine p.m.

There were times when the teacher even lived in the Eirhart

home. It wasn't uncommon for teachers to be boarders in students' homes. Eirhart said when a teacher boarded with her family she had her boyfriend and other friends come over.

"We'd sit an' visit with 'em," Eirhart said. "Then we'd turn the house over to 'em, an' they just had a big time."

"Teachers were respected, an' the parents stood behind them," she said. "At school, we waited on the teachers. The teachers didn't wait on us. When a teacher rode his carriage to school, the boys would take care o' the horses an' feed 'em. You bet y'ur boots teachers were respected."

Eirhart remembered a time when a teacher wasn't sup-

ported by the parents and schoolboard. It was Christmas and the students had cut a tree, brought it into the schoolroom and decorated it with handmade ornaments and a string of popcorn.

They also exchanged gifts and performed plays, songs and recitations for their parents in a Christmas program. But it just wouldn't have been Christmas without the fun of locking the teacher out of the schoolhouse.

"It was when Ray Wiman taught," Eirhart said. "Well, we shut the teacher out. But we had those hard-wire screens (on the windows and doors) an' us kids couldn't get out."

"We never kept him out very long," she said. "We didn't hear

nothin', so we waited awhile. Some of us said, 'Ray isn't out there.' I said, 'Oh yes he is.' But we couldn't get out. We tried the door, but it was locked from the outside. We was really locked in."

There was a transom over the door, so the sudents tied all their coats together at the sleeves and threw it out the opening. Then Eirhart said they "poked one o' the little ones" through it as the boys held him until he could get a hold of the coats and slide down to freedom.

"He went to my house to get my dad, who was director," Eirhart said. "He hitched up the buggy an' said to Ray, 'Now, Ray, you're needed back at the schoolhouse.' Ray said, 'I am?'"

"Yep," my dad said. "You got them kids locked up an' there ain't no way in the world they can get out. They got nothin' in there to burst the door, an' they don't want to tear it up anyhow. You're goin' back an' unlock that door. What if the schoolhouse gits afire? What would you do about them kids?" Ray said, 'Oh, I never thought about that.'

"He come back with Dad an' (continued on page 19)

A student had ups and downs

by Becky Elliott

Before he talked much about his school days, retired Annapolis pharmacist Delno Stanfield, 93, went downstairs to get a scrapbook of old pictures. His movements were slow, but he got around well. Extremely well for a man his age, I thought.

A few minutes later he was back, seated in a rocking chair across the room from his wife, Edith, with the scrapbook open before him. His eyes twinkled as he talked, and he'd chuckle almost to himself when he'd start to tell a story.

"School days were actually very busy days when I went to school," Stanfield said, pointing to a picture of a one-room school on the west edge of Annapolis where he first attended in 1897.

"There were fifty some of us in one room. The ol' fellow that taught the school would hear our class first, then he'd put us outside to straighten the woodpile. He'd have us clean up the schoolyard to get us out of the way while the rest of 'em was havin' school."

Havin' school back then meant all eight grades reciting with the teacher every day, seven months out of the year, five months in winter and two in summer, from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon.

"While one class was recitin', the rest of us were supposed to be studyin'," Stanfield said. "But a lot of the time was spent shootin' paperwads."

That's the kind of story he "can tell you about all afternoon." One of the stories he told was about a Halloween prank and how he was punished for his part.

"One Halloween night the boys filled this square up here," Stanfield said, pointing toward the center of Annapolis, "just full of ol' boxes, junk and somebody's ol' wagon. The next day at noon, a bunch of us goin'



When Delno Stanfield, pictured here in the yard of his Annapolis home, started to school nearly eighty-six years ago, there were "fifty some (students)... in one room."

back to school got ahold of that wagon an' took it down there an' run around the schoolhouse. Whoever had ahold of the tongue turned it a little too close an' tore off a board on the school."

"When school took back up, the teacher said, 'Anyone that had anything to do with that board or that wagon, I want you to stand up.' There was only about four of us that got up, an' I think everybody in the school was in on it."

As he continued the story, the twinkle disappeared from his eyes and his smile turned downward.

"Well, we got up there and she took us out in the hall where you hang your coats, you know. She got over those hooks an' got ahold of a hook on each corner an' got right up there an' cried big alligator tears like raindrops."

The twinkle came back to his eyes as his face broke into a wide grin.

"I'll tell you now," he said, "it

hurt her to have her boys do a thing like that. I'd a darn site rather she'd given me a lickin' an' gotten it over with. I haven't forgotten that yet."

That's just one thing Stanfield hasn't forgotten. But punishment wasn't always like that. He said whippings were given to students for serious things like lying and stealing. For less serious offenses, there were other measures.

"I never got a lickin'," Stanfield said. "But I stood on the floor or at the blackboard more hours than anybody over at the school, I reckon. They'd make a chalk mark as high as you could reach an' draw a ring in front of your nose. Then you'd have to stand with your fingers up there at those marks an' your nose in that ring."

Mostly, he said, he was on the floor or at the blackboard for "just devilment." How long he had to stand there or what other punishment he got depended on

(continued on page 19)



Dorothy Eirhart, shown here in her Bellair home, attended school at Mulberry School east of where she now lives. In the days before radio and television, going to school was an alternative to working.

Hanging on to a country store

by Ray Elliott

Six miles south of Sumner on the blacktop road headed toward Mt. Carmel, there's a little dot on the map called Helena. It used to have a post office, a general store with twenty-one mailboxes for the people served by the post office and a few houses. Now only a house or two and White's Grocery Store remain.

Hugh and Lucille White, both 69, run the store, opening it at six-thirty in the morning and closing it at six o'clock in the evening, six days a week. And they've been at it for as long as most people around that part of the country can remember. Hugh went to work for E.R. Robinson in 1934, started running the store for Robinson in 1937 and bought it from him in 1945. Lucille started working in the store regularly after they bought it.

Being around a store wasn't anything new to her, though. She married Hugh in November 1934 after he'd gone to work at the store in March. And her parents, William and Emma Loos, had also been storekeepers.

"I'd never known anything besides a store, really," Lucille said, smiling and glancing over at Hugh when her smile was widest. "My dad an' mother went into the grocery business when I was five years old. So Hugh married me an' brought me here. This is where my folks used to live at one time. They ran the store at Harmony Corner for five years, but then they came back here an' ran this one until Dad got sick in '28.

Hugh White sort of backed into the store business when he was 19 years old. He didn't have anything in particular in mind that he wanted to do. He worked on the family farm and helped out his father, a carpenter, when there was no farming to do.

"But that carpenter business never appealed to me," he said, rolling an unlit cigar around in the corner of his mouth. White rarely smoked the cigar, but rather chewed on it or waved it around in his hand as he talked. "Got two brothers carpenters. An' our boy's a carpenter. But it just never stuck with me. When I started workin' here with Robinsn, well, one thing led to another."

As he told how one thing led to another, an occasional customer came through the door for a sandwich, a bottle of pop or a loaf of bread. The Whites stood behind a small counter just inside and to the left of the door.

The customers passed the counter and wandered back through the aisles of the small store, pausing among the canned goods, bread racks and meat or dairy cases much as they would in any supermarket in the country.

It wasn't always like that. Before the Whites converted the store to self service in 1955 to offer the same kind of service their customers were finding in the supermarkets in nearby

towns, White's Grocery Store had counters along each side of the store that Lucille pointed out as the "place where the floor dips" and "where we stood behind waitin' on 'em." The meat case sat in the back corner of the store, perpendicular to the counters, where it still sets.

Much has changed in the forty-eight years that the Whites have been married and that Hugh has spent in the store. The patch of thick hair that pokes its way out of his blue work shirt and stops abruptly where he begins shaving has turned gray. And the whole nature of the grocery business has changed from the small community, family-owned store that White started working in.

"Well, the way it all started," Hugh said, taking the cigar out of his mouth and pushing his glasses back up on his nose, "this E.R. Robinson run this store and his son-in-law worked fer him. His son-in-law went to bed one night an' the next mornin' he had the measles. I was born an' raised just a mile north of here, so this Robinson called up, awantin' some help.

"So I come down. An' I guess I worked here fer about three weeks 'til he got all over the measles. Well, then this Robinson an' a feller that lived across the road here went to Chicago with a load of eggs an' chickens. The guy was back from the measles, but he wasn't too good yet. So I was still helpin' 'em out. I was more 'r less on the truck, an' he was still helpin' out in the store.

"Well, anyway, acomin' back from Chicago, up at Paris, Illinois, they had a wreck. Put both of 'em in the hospital. I kept workin'. An' I kept aworkin' after he got out of the hospital. Then he brought a store over south of St. Francisville. An' sent his son-in-law over there. So that's the way I got started—with a case of the measles."

When Robinson bought a store south of Lawrenceville in 1935, he asked Hugh if he wanted to run the Helena store for him. He did and Robinson told him "to run it like it was your own" until he wanted to quit or buy it.

"Well, I run it like it was my own." White said, peering through his bifocals and running his hand back through his iron-gray flat-top-cut hair. "In other words, he never bothered me in any way, shape or form. We kinda got in the notion of buyin' it, then World War II kept aknockin' on the door, you know. So we didn't buy it 'til '45."

During those days around the time of World War II, it wasn't unusual for the store to stay open long past its present six o'clock closing time. People didn't go to town often. When they did, they stayed awhile, loafing and visiting with each other.

"That's one of the changes between now an' it used to be," Hugh said. "Back then you had

people come on Saturday, an' you never seen 'em any more 'til the next Saturday. People come to the store so much more often now. We get a kick out of this, too."

Lucille nodded in agreement and said people have much better transportation now and much more opportunity than they used to have.

"Back durin' World War II, they'd be lots of nights that clock would be settin' on twelve o'clock before you'd get out of here," Hugh said. "All right, they wasn't very many women that could drive back at that time, you see. An' a man, especially in farmin' time, he didn't go by the clock, he went by the sun. They come to the store of a night."

Pointing back through the shelves of canned goods toward the middle of the store, Hugh indicated where the loafers sat on benches lining the counters in an area now covered by the self-service shelves. The loafers began thinning out in the early fifties as farming changed from the small general farmer to the large grain farmers and people moved off the farms.

"Like it used to be," White said, "everybody had a few chickens, maybe a couple hundred; four or five milk cows. Or six. An' farmed some. All right, now, you take right over there," he raised his arm and pointed it out the window, "there's a man right there, 'cept he's takin' the place of twelve little farmers."

"Then, too, different generations. You take people our age, they buy the prunes. . ."

"Dry beans," Lucille said quickly, laughing.

"Dry beans and stuff like that," Hugh said, then pointed to a teen-age boy in the store. "Now his age, it's pizzas."

"Tacos," Lucille said.

Despite the changing times and the long hours, the Whites have no regrets about the way they've spent their lives. For Lucille, running the store has been enjoyable because "I like visitin' with people."

"Then, too," she said, "we do a lot o' swappin' recipes an' the like. I have a niece that comes in here, an' I'll ask her for some recipes; I always like to try new recipes, anyway. An' she'll say, 'Now Aunt Lucille gives us recipes. Now we have to turn around an' buy the stuff to fix it.'"

For Hugh, running the store meant doing what he wanted and being responsible only to himself. But he also liked to be around his customers, even if it meant closing at midnight.

Remembering one of those late nights sitting around the stove, visiting and passing the time, he laughed a little and said, "It was a pretty bad night. Cold. We had five or six here, so we were always doin' something."

"Well, one feller said, 'I guess this tobacco is the strongest tobacco you got.' That



Lucille and Hugh White stand outside their general store south of Sumner. They've spent most of their adult life working in the store.

was Wild Up. It was a natural leaf tobacco, nothin' added and nothin' taken out. It was a flat sheet of tobacco, not pressed. So the feller said, 'The man who spits it out first has to buy the drinks.'

"We all got us a chaw. You could spit, but you couldn't spit out the tobacco. We had one feller in here, course that was just like candy to him. He could chew it all night. Well, we got to chewin' a little. One young feller, he got sick. He wouldn't give up. He'd take it right in his hand, go out an' throw up, an' he'd put her back.

"It just went on, you know. So I spit it out finally an' set up the drinks. Next mornin' I hadn't been opened up fer very long when the feller that lived across the street came in. He was in on it. Now he chewed Beechnut, which is a sweet tobacco. He said, 'I'm goin' to pay fer that pop back there last night.' An' I said, 'How's that?' An' he said, 'I seen I was goin' to get sick, so I slipped around an' spit mine out an' put in Beechnut.' An' he didn't tell anybody."

So the times and the people have meant something to the Whites. Being together has meant quite a bit, too.

"That's the nice part about it," Lucille said softly, smoothing an imaginary wrinkle in her dress with the palm of her hand and explaining that if she isn't in the store she's never farther away than the nearby house which is equipped with a buzzer if she's needed at the store. "Being together."

But there are disadvantages to running a store.

"Book work," Hugh said, his eyes gleaming. "That's my pet peeve. Book work."

"It bothers him if I try to help him," Lucille said. "So I go to the house."

"Reminds me of a man who ran a little store, you know," Hugh said, rolling the cigar around in his mouth and pushing his glasses up on his nose as he thought about the story he was

going to tell. "His boy graduated as a public accountant. Well, the next morning after graduation, why, they eat breakfast. And the old gentleman, he went over to the store and opened up his business.

"After awhile his boy come over and his boy said, 'Dad, with your bookkeeping system, how do you know whether you make any money or not?' 'Well,' he said, 'Son, it's thisaway: This cee-gar box on this side of the cash register is where I keep the invoices before they're paid. It's empty. This cee-gar box over here is where they go after they're paid. It's full.

"Now," he said, "I put your brother through dental school. And we put you through public accountant's. Me an' Mom's got our home, an' we got this little business here. When I came to this country, all I had was a pair of pants. 'Now,' he said, 'add all that together an' subtract the pants an' you've got the profit.'

"I've often thought our book-keepin' is about like that old feller said about his: Add it all together an' subtract the pants. I do it to satisfy the government. But it's still my pet peeve."

Add all the pluses to their years in the store and subtract the bookeeping, though, and you've got about how much they've enjoyed the years. Listen to them talk and you can get a pretty good idea that they've enjoyed them quite a bit.

"It's interestin'," Hugh said, "because since we've been here, kids, includin' our boy and girl, have been born, married."

"We're kinda just like grandma an' grandpa to a lot of 'em," Lucille said and smiled at Hugh. He nodded and smiled back.

They don't test cream, buy eggs, sell horse collars and stay open until midnight any more. They don't do a lot of things they used to do. But Hugh and Lucille White still run a country store and have no plans to quit until Hugh has been at it at least fifty years.



'There was nothin' like that Chautauqua'

by Vanessa Faurie

Merom is a little southwest Indiana town that overlooks the Wabash River. And to many people, it is just another one of those towns that they pass through on their way to somewhere else. But most people in Merom take a certain pride in their home town and its tree-covered bluffs that border the river.

Olan Vickery, 73, is one of those people. Several years ago while traveling through Texas, the last thing he expected to find was someone who had visited Merom years before and remembered it as a warm and pleasant little town.

"I had some friends that lived in a little town there, so we went to a hotel and rented a room for a week," Olan said, sitting in the living room of his Merom home as a cool summer breeze came in from the open windows and passed through the room. "We'd jus' go round to various places. One mornin' we had just had breakfast an' parked the car an' got a paper. We started back to the car. I walked across the street an' I saw this fella comin'. I just felt he was headed right toward us. An' sure 'nough he did."

Then Olan recalled his meeting with the stranger:

"You're from Indiana," he said to me.

"Yeah," I said. "You from Indiana?"

"No. But I been there. Where you from?"

"I said Terre Haute cause I knew he wouldn't know where Merom was.

"Well, while I don't remember the place," he said, "I'll never forget it. It was the prettiest little ol' town you'd ever saw. An' the nicest people. It was wonderful. Now, why I can't remember the name, I don't know."

"So I said, 'Well, may I ask you a personal question? Were you visiting? Passing through?'"

"I was with a troupe an' we played a chautauqua there," he told me.

"I know where it was," I said. "Merom."

"Possibly your're right. I don't remember."

"Well," I said, "that's where I live. An' I know that the talent that came there either had come from or went to Wabash, Indiana, where they had a

chautauqua 'bout the same time we did."

Olan discovered that the man had performed at the chautauquas with a Russian band. And Olan remembered it because the members wore white suits and plumes as they marched around the festival site.

"I just thought that was a strange thing to happen," Olan said. "Way down there in Texas."

Back in those days that Olan and the stranger talked about, Merom didn't seem like such a little town. At least not all the time. Thousands of people went to the chautauquas, the biggest event of the year from the time of the first one in 1905.

But don't expect to find those same kind of chautauqua festivals in Merom today. Those times are gone for good, except for the photographs and memories of the people who were there to enjoy them, like Olan.

Chautauquas were festivals that provided people with cultural enrichment as well as entertainment. The tradition stated in Chautauqua, New York in 1874. And because it was so popular, circuits travelled all over the country.

Chautauqua was jus' the time between the planting an' the harvesting of the crops when the locals in an' around the area an' farmers had time on their hands," Olan said, remembering his childhood and the times he spent at chautauquas.

"I liked it all," he said, laughing. "If you've ever lived in a little town, there isn't too much goin' on. An' it was somethin' different which we all enjoyed. It was a time to look forward to because, well, we got to do things we didn't normally get to do. We got to see things we didn't normally see."

And the Merom Chautauqua Company tried to make it as easy as possible for people to have a chance to see those things during the ten-day festival in the last days of August. For a small admission fee, the company sold season and daily tickets.

Prices varied over the years. But in 1917, after the chautauquas were in full swing, an adult season ticket was two dollars and a child's was a dollar. Daily tickets were thirty-five cents for

adults, twenty-five cents for kids. The daily tickets had three coupons good for one morning, afternoon and evening session.

Those who lived outside of Merom came to the festival by train, boat or their own horse and buggy, which was the most used method.

"We used to go in the horse and buggy," 73-year-old Marguerite Coyner said about her family who lived a mile and a half east of Merom. "Tie it up there against the back street. The schoolground was jus' covered with wagons an' horses tied up. We've been to the chautauquas ever since we were little bitty youngsters. It was a big time of our lives for the year."

Bill Coyner, Marguerite's husband of fifty-three years, has always lived in Merom. As the couple sat to reminisce about their experiences at the chautauquas, Bill figured that those times were about the only chances they got to go anywhere as kids.

"I went to 'em from the time I was able to walk up there an' sit," Bill said. "When you could walk, you walked. And when you didn't walk, your parents carried you."

Bill and Marguerite remembered their favorite times at the chautauquas, but those times weren't spent together at first.

"I went to school with him," Marguerite said, then laughed. "An' I walked across the street to keep from speakin' to him."

"She does yet," Bill said, adding the one-liner as he often did during the conversation.

His best friends tried to fix up a date with us," Marguerite said and continued with little more than a glance at Bill. "An' we jus' didn't like one another at all. But finally we got together."

Then she looked over at Bill and smiled.

While Bill and Marguerite didn't have to go far to attend the chautauquas, other people travelled long distances and needed places to stay. The Chautauqua Company rented tents to families so they could camp out on the bluff.

The Chautauqua program for 1917 listed the rental fees for tents and equipment: fourteen by twenty-four foot tent—fifteen dollars; twelve by twenty tent—twelve dollars; ten by twenty tent—ten dollars; twelve by fourteen tent—eight dollars; ten by twelve, tent—seven dollars; cot—one dollar; and camp chair—twenty-five cents.

But staying in a tent for ten days didn't appeal to everyone,

so there were other alternatives. Many people in Merom opened their homes to visitors by renting out rooms. Drue Pinkston, 85, remembered her family gave up part of their house during the chautauquas.

"One year they had a group of Hawaiian people, and they had to have places to stay," Drue said, sitting among a pile of old photographs and memorabilia from past chautauquas that were spread out on her sofa. "So we just about lived in two or three rooms ourselves an' rented our upstairs out. Course it wasn't modern around here then. We didn't have water or anything, but we did the best that we could."

Some of her memories from those times made her laugh.

"I remember we had an ol' goose at that time in the back," Drue said. "An' one o' the women—I can just remember her—she was afraid to go out back cause o' that ol' goose. It'd get after her."

For the more popular performers and those who didn't want to stay in someone else's house, there was the Chautauqua House. The company made the large house available for lodging and meals.

"When they started usin' this house up here, there was a family there," Drue said, referring to the Chautauqua House. "It was a mother an' three daughters, an' they began serving meals all the time. I worked there two summers."

"One summer I washed dishes. They had a tent up at the door an' we carried dishes out there. Back then, they didn't even have paper plates. They had to use china. They'd carry them out an' we'd wash 'em and get 'em back in for supper."

"But the next year I waited on tables," she said. "One time there was some dignitary there for dinner. An' it wasn't my fault, but he dumped the whole saltcellar on his dinner. I didn't have that table, but everybody remembered it. An' o'course we had to get him another plate."

The dignitary probably never forgot the Chautauqua House, although he may have wished he could. But Drue doesn't want to forget those kinds of things. And if her memory ever needs a little jogging, she can always look in the daily diary she has kept since 1932.

"Somebody wrote me the other day," Drue said, "an' wanted to know about the Chautauqua House. She said her mother brought her down here to the Chautauqua when she was a little girl. I asked her what she

remembered an' she said that Chautauqua House."

Arriving performers and visitors used the livery barn's services to get from the trains to where they stayed. Olan Vickery's father had one.

"My dad had a contract to transport the talent here," Olan said. "Not every year. But when they put out contracts, why, Dad was fortunate in obtaining it."

Olan always looked forward to picking up the performers, especially when he was old enough that his father let him drive. Sometimes it took three cars to haul all the passengers.

"Having been in the livery business, we did have a better chance to get acquainted with some of the talent than other people," Olan said. "I remember one time there was a magician an' all Dad had was a little pickup truck, you know. An' this magician had so many props that Dad borrowed a larger truck to make it quicker gettin' to an' from the grounds."

While performers were just arriving, people in Merom had spent all summer preparing for the Chautauqua. From adults making arrangements for out-of-town relatives to stay over at their homes to kids saving enough money to get their tickets, they anxiously waited.

Marguerite Coyner knew what that was like. "You worked all summer long to save up your money," she said. "I was allowed ten cents in the afternoon and ten cents at night. I had to work an' make two dollars so I'd have enough for the full ten days."

"Now I'd go an' pick blackberries an' sell 'em fer about ten cents a gallon to get my money to go," Bill said.

Marguerite remembered that she spent her twenty cents each day on ice cream cones, Cracker Jack and other things kids like to eat. She couldn't remember, though, if there were foods available like sandwiches.

"Well, they had 'em," Bill said. "But we had 'em at home. We jus' didn't have Cracker Jack."

But as kids were out gathering berries and earning money, a lot of women were inside making new clothes for the occasion.

"They'd have to make new dresses an' get everything washed up an' cleaned a' ready to go so they wouldn't have to work those ten days," Drue said. "My mother didn't make our dresses very much, but I had an aunt that sewed. An' she made dresses for all of us."

When the dresses were finished and the berries were picked and sold, the only thing left to do

was enjoy the Chautauqua. The performers were already decided upon by early spring.

"A lot more or less of this is guesswork," Olan said, trying to recall how the talent was chosen. "I was never involved. But the man that sold the talent was from this area. He was successful each year in sellin' the talent. He worked for the circuit an' would set up a meeting among the directors or whatever. An' he had his list of programs that he had to sell. Then they would decide on the programs."

The schoolyard was soon filled with wagons and buggies. And the two long feed racks were lined with horses. The tents were up and kids played hide 'n' seek around them. Other kids tried to sneak in by crawling under the eight- to ten-foot high fence that surrounded the festival site.

"They'd have the seats set up for lectures, 'cept they weren't painted," Drue said. "We'd all walk up there carryin' our cushions to sit on."

"Every mornin' they would have a minister preach," she said. "Part of the time, the minister was what they called the platform manager. He would announce everything."

The programs started around nine a.m. After the sermon, there were band concerts and lectures and shows that continued until about nine p.m.

"I'd sit with my parents," Marguerite said. "But if there was a lecture that I didn't particularly like, they'd let me go out an' play an' mix with the younger kids."

Some of the programs that Marguerite and many other kids liked were the band concerts. Local musicians also got together to perform.

"We used to have the Merom Chautauqua Band made up of persons around here who played," Olan said. "Now they didn't just play for that, but that's what they called themselves. Another fella over in Palestine had a band that came over, too."

Some Merom residents also played in the band from Palestine. Drue enjoyed listening to it so much that "whenever we'd hear them from the house, well, it was time to go up there."

When it came time for the main attraction of the day, thousands of people filled the clearing on the bluff where the lecture platform stood. Among the big-name performers were William Jennings Bryan, Presidents William Taft and Warren Harding, Billy Sunday and Roy Smith who, according to Olan, "was about as popular as Billy Sunday was in his own right."

"Carrie Nation was here, too,



This monoplane flew from the bluffs August 22-31, 1913.

when she was tryin' to get rid of saloons every place," Drue said, then laughed. "I really remember her. Course we knew of her before she came, an' she brought her hatchet. Then she had little hatchets just about a foot long that she sold. I got one an' I had it a long time, but I don't know what happened to it."

Marguerite was too small to remember Carrie Nation, but she has a photograph of her sister posing with Nation and a group of women in yellow cheese cloth dresses. They all displayed pendants in front of them supporting prohibition.

Another woman who wasn't quite as popular, at least to Bill, was opera singer Elsie Baker.

"I didn't like her too well," Bill said. "She came to town here. It wasn't New York. We knew it. But the first thing she wanted when she got here was a grand piano. Well, there's no place around here you can even buy one. So she had to put up with an exceptionally good piano. An' she didn't like that one bit. She wanted her baby grand."

"But it seemed like they always had somethin' for everybody to see," Bill said.

"Well, I think you left the tent when Elsie Baker was there, if I remember," Marguerite told him.

"No," Bill said. "I stayed until she started. I jus' didn't care too much for Elsie Baker."

The largest crowds turned out to see William Jennings Bryan and William Taft. Over ten thousand people were on the bluff to hear these well-known spokesmen lecture about economics and world relations.

There was also a variety of lighter entertainment for kids and anyone who wanted a little relief from the lectures. And at the time, airplanes weren't as common to see as they are today. So when a man said he would fly a plane across the river and over to Illinois at the 1913 Chautauqua, it drew quite a crowd.

"Course everybody said he couldn't make it," Bill said. "I had my doubts about it myself. It was a crude-lookin' affair. He

didn't know if he was goin' to come back. An' he offered a good sizeable piece o' money if anybody would go in for a trip. Nobody'd go.

"When it came time to go, he went. He started back at the south gate up to the break o' the hill. He'd get out there an' it'd drop just a little when the air would catch it just right. He'd jus' take off an' land right over in Illinois."

"From then on he went every day," Bill said. "He knew it could be done. They had a team o' horses bring it up the bluff. An' I think he charged ten or fifteen cents at the time. That was the first time I'd ever seen one in my life. An' I thought, well if that thing can fly, why can't I?"

But there were still plenty of things to see on the ground—from singers to plays to musicians.

"There were people that put on plays, an' they'd also get local people to be in 'em," Drue said. "I was in one of 'em. An' I can remember bein' on that stage. I think it was even before I was in high school."

Although many people might be too shy to perform in a play, the chautauquas offered an easy opportunity to meet new people. And according to Drue, there was virtually no violence or crime. People felt safe to walk around.

"You know, in that period of time, you get acquainted with some of the people or ones that come down regularly," Olan said. "I remember one couple in particular who'd come down from Chicago every year."

For Marguerite, the Chautauqua was a time to meet boys. At least that's what Bill said. But then Marguerite laughed and agreed with him.

"I know that's when we always found new dates," she said. "An' we'd wear our best dresses on Sunday. We looked forward to it all year long."

But after a while, the chautauquas began to die out. Not nearly as many people attended the festival in later years. By 1940, the old-time chautauquas were gone. There were revivals afterwards, but none to equal the originals.

"People got so's they had other places to go," Drue said, "an' cars begin to come."

Televisions and radios began to take the place of the old chautauquas for providing entertainment, culture and an awareness of what was happen-

ing in the world. But the people who were there to know what the chautauquas were really like would probably say that televisions didn't replace the fun.

"It was a big affair," Marguerite said. "There was nothin' like that Chautauqua."

Old memories live

by Vanessa Faurie

I've heard that every person has a few stories to tell—times in his life he thought to be special. But all too many times, when someone dies, his stories die with him. The chance to see something from that person's unique perspective is gone.

I never knew Marvin Harrison. He was 87 years old when he died in February 1982. Harrison did something, though, that gave me the opportunity to meet him after all.

Not long before his death, he wrote an essay and tape recorded his memories of Merom, Indiana, and the years he spent at Union Christian College, which is located in the little town, after he got a letter from the Merom Institute asking for information about the school's history.

"I am not writing this narrative for fame," Harrison wrote, "but for recording my experiences so that others who have similar experiences... can compare with mine."

After reading that opening paragraph, I had a feeling I was going to be glad I had the chance to get to know him a little and share his experiences. By the time I listened to the tape he made of his memories of Merom, I knew I was. He brought to life similar experiences that Merom residents had told me about earlier.

Harrison's first trip to Merom was in 1909 when he visited his brother, Marley, who was then a student at the college. Harrison was fifteen years old at the time, and his family lived four miles west of Oblong. He remembered the trip as the "thrill" of his life.

One of the thrills for Harrison was seeing the chautauqua grounds and looking out across the Wabash River into Illinois from Merom's bluffs. Three years later, Harrison was a student at Union Christian. And that next summer, he went to the Chautauqua Festival.

"At the time I attended," he said in the recording, "all they had was a tent an' a platform an' a large number o' sheets."

Harrison remembered hearing lectures by people such as William Jennings Bryan, who ran for president on the Democratic ticket three times, and preacher Billy Sunday.

"I came to hear him (Bryan) speak," Harrison said. "He was known as the World's Greatest Orator, an' I'll agree with that. I've heard many people speak, an' he uttered every word, every syllable, as distinctly as can be. An' he didn't repeat, an' he didn't hesitate. He spoke for over an hour. He came under the contract that he'd take the gate receipts, whatever they happened to be. The gate receipts were over five hundred dollars."

Harrison said that after William Jennings Bryan came to the Chautauqua, the program committee tried to get Teddy Roosevelt to speak the next year. After telling him that

Bryan only got the gate receipts but they totaled over five hundred dollars, Roosevelt wrote back saying he would speak for free and pay his own expenses if they would open the gates on the day he would appear.

"They didn't accept it, so Roosevelt never came," Harrison said. "But there were others. That Billy Sunday was a jumpin' jack. He didn't stand like Bryan did—cautiously. He jus' jumped an' jumped an' jumped up on the chair and the speaker's desk an' clapped his hands."

"I remember one thing he said. IWW, which is known as the Independent Workers of the World, was the first beginnin' of labor organization. An' o' course, anything new, the first reaction is to be opposed to it. The general reaction o' the country was opposed to the idea of the IWW. Now I heard this Billy Sunday say that he 'would rather be a maggot warblin' in the carcass of a skunk than to be associated with the IWW.'"

The Chautauqua included more than lectures about politics and morals. One attraction was an airplane that took off from the bluff, flew one hundred fifty feet above the river and landed in Illinois.

"It was the first airplane I ever saw here," Harrison said. "It was surrounded by canvas, an' you had to pay an admission to get in. I paid a dime. Then in the afternoon it'd make a flight. It was the old two-wing, one above the other, an' a small engine in front, an' a man sittin' in the seat. Boy, it made a lot o' noise."

As Harrison recorded the stories he remembered about the Chautauqua and other experiences he had in Merom, he walked around to the different points in town with the tape recorder and his grand-nephew, Brian Harrison, Robinson. Looking at the land and the buildings helped Marvin think of stories he might not have remembered otherwise.

"We're now returned from the Chautauqua grounds an' come back to what could be my final look at the dear ol' buildings (of the college)," Harrison said. "A person 86 years old doesn't have an assurance of any definite return to a scene in later years, so I am viewing it as what might be my final look."

As it turned out, it was Marvin Harrison's final look. But that final look saved some of his memories for us. I think we're fortunate to have the stories he's left behind.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In addition to the tape Marvin Harrison made about his memories of Merom, Indiana, he made several recordings of subjects ranging from hobo folklore to stories from his boyhood. His grand-nephew, Brian Harrison, now owns the tapes and has allowed "Tales" to use material from them. Material from other tapes will be used in future issues.



These tents were rented by the company for out-of-town visitors for the annual Chautauqua festival in Merom, Indiana.

Powerhouses - dying sounds of the countryside

by Beverly Russell

Turning into a well-oiled lane north of Flat Rock, familiar sounds from childhood came back to me as I heard and saw an old pump jack. Those sounds had been soothing, lulling me to sleep many nights.

"That's an underpull National pump jack," said Richard Wesley, rural Flat Rock, pointing out the car window to what I'd always known as just a pump.

We were on our way back to an old powerhouse, one of two still left operating in Illinois. Keith Towhill and his brother-in-law, Richard Rinsch, own and operate them both.

"That thing's probably been there, oh, I'd say since 1914, long in there some place, catch that 'bout right," Wesley said, explaining the history of the old pump jack. "That's the second model over there. It has a channel iron beam instead of the old wood."

Around a bend in the lane, the long-ago sounds of the old powerhouse greeted us. The engine pulling the rod lines that pumped the wells was making the old chug-uh-chug-uh-chug sound.

"Sound familiar?" Wesley asked, grinning widely, a bright sparkle in his eyes. "That's the way it used to be when I was a kid around home all the time. That's what you listened to. You could tell your direction anywhere you were by which powers were where."

I followed Wesley up to the powerhouse. We walked right up to the engine, the sound becoming louder with each step until



This underpull National pump jack, setting on a well on the old Judge Outcalt lease east of Flat Rock, is one of the few still operating in eastern Illinois.

we had to shout to hear each other. The heat from the engine was almost unbearable.

"See that old wheel?" Wesley asked, nodding to the enormous wheels turning the engine. "Thirty-five horse. But that's a new style head on it."

Over the constant chug-uh-chug-ug of the engine, Wesley explained that the plate on the front of the engine used to be smaller and had "Superior" stamped on it. The newer and larger plates had been put on because it was easier to clean the lime out of the water jacket through the larger opening.

"That's the old National band wheel back there," Wesley said and moved back into the darkness of the next room. I'd never seen a wheel that large.

"That's how big most of 'em are," Wesley said. "They're all about that size. This is one of the old steel spokes. You don't see as many of these as you do the old wooden Mascott kind."

"Actually, these are a little better than the old wooden ones because you can adjust 'em like a bicycle wheel. They got turn buckles on the spokes to keep 'em adjusted up."

Wesley stopped and watched

the big wheel that turned and pulled the rod lines I'd seen outside. One of the lines was larger than the others.

"That's what used to run the ol' shippin' pump," he said, pointing to the larger line. "The oil was pumped directly into the pipe line years ago. They don't do that now, though. They use trucks to come and get it. Cut that ol' pipe line off."

As we stood there, Wesley shook his head and shrugged his shoulders while he explained the changes that had been made over the years.

"I suppose the old pipeline

was gettin' pretty bad and instead of replacing it they just cut it off," he said. "But that was the easiest way to do it they was, especially this oil over here. This oil has a real low gravity on it, 'bout like a grease gun in the winter time—thick and heavy and hard to pump."

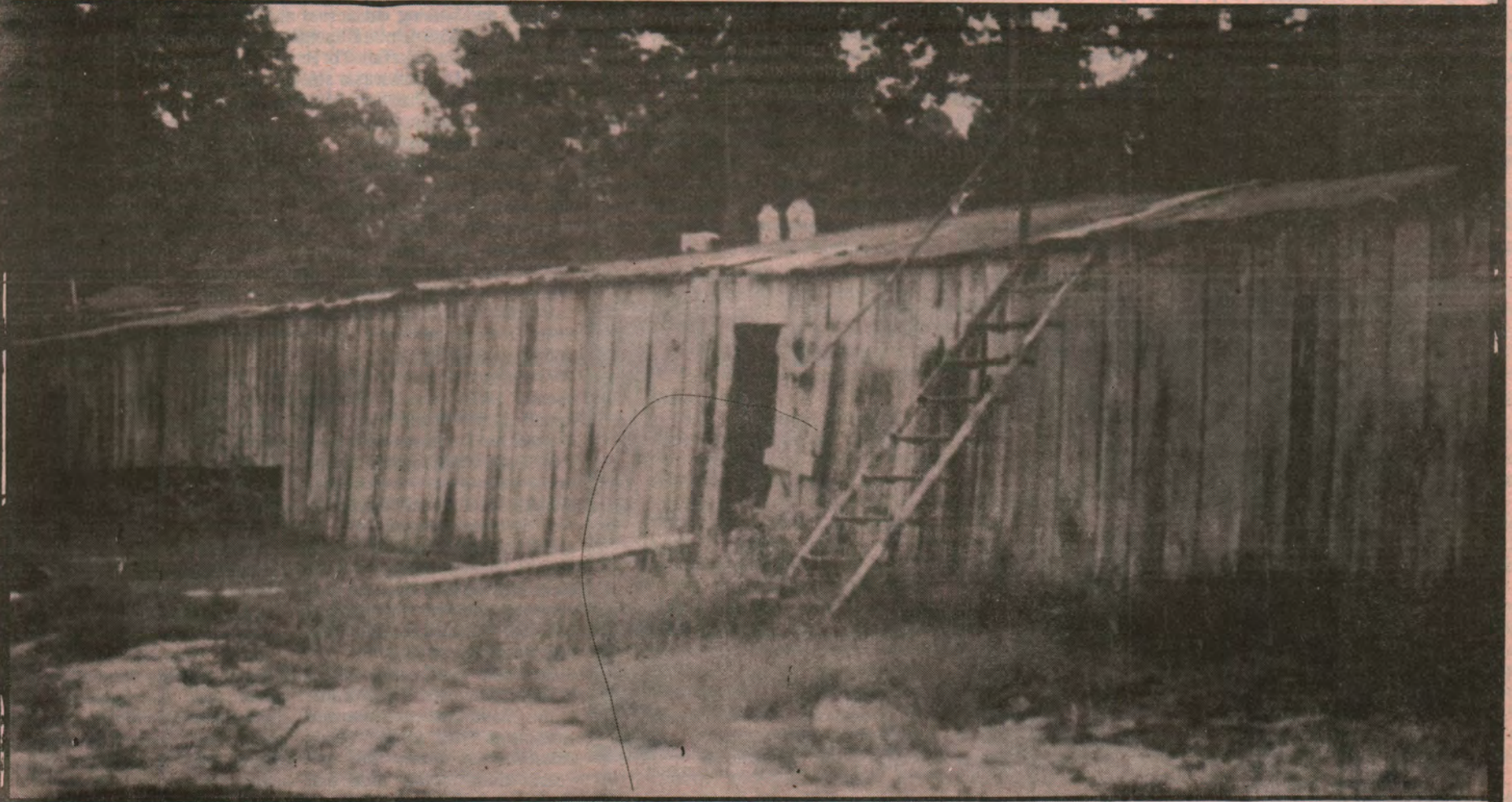
"An' these guys come over here with these pump trucks and try to haul this oil, and they can't do a thing with it. That ol' shippin' pump, it'd make 'er go, boy, it'd pull it."

With the band wheel turning and pulling the rod lines in and out and the engine roaring, Wesley explained that the power had been running most of the time since 1905 or '06, although that engine wasn't the original one.

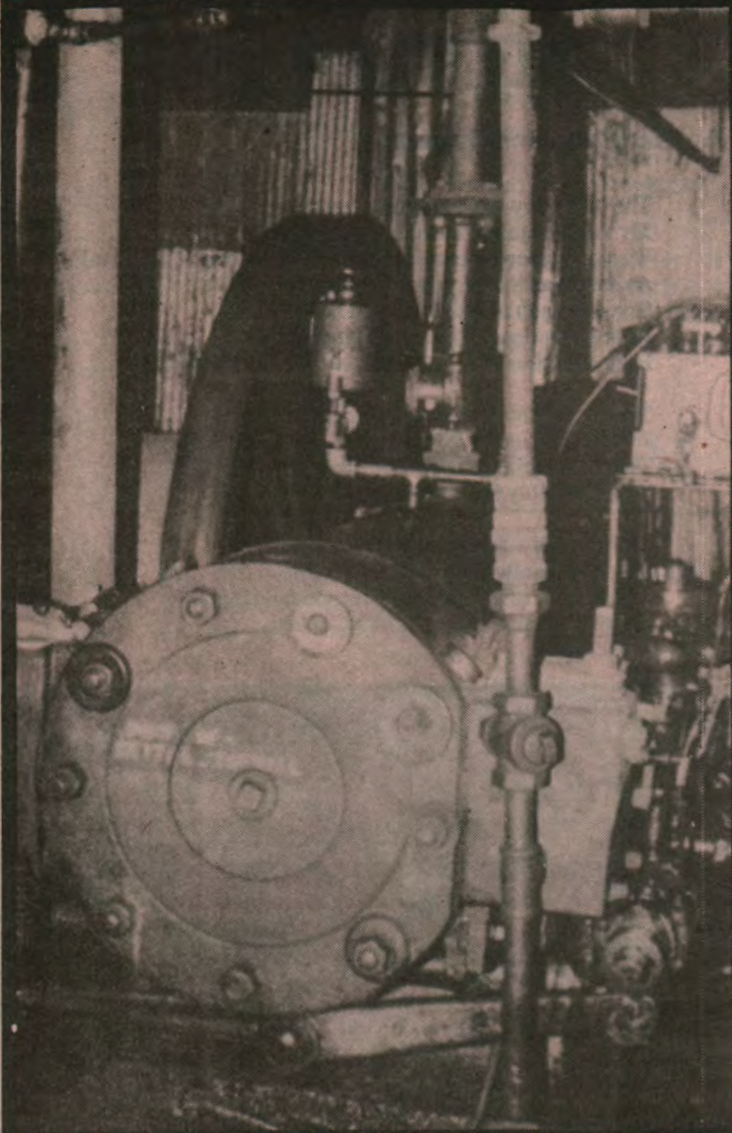
"Ol' Judge Outcalt used to run this lease and he had two or three engines run off with him," Wesley said and laughed as he remembered. "He had an old Olin engine one time and the governor jumped off. The ol' engine wound up tight cause them engines weren't made to run very fast."

"Yeah, that ol' engine come apart, fly wheel come off an' came back through this building," Wesley said and pointed to the back wall of the powerhouse, thirty or forty yards from the engine. "Went right out through the woods and landed in a tree."

A belt about one hundred twenty feet long ran from the engine to the band wheel and was twisted in the middle around a smaller wheel, the idler pulley. Wesley said the rubberized canvas belts were supposed to last about thirty years, costing about two dollars and fifty cents a foot now.



A wooden tank house that covers four cypress wood oil tanks, lumber for the tanks was shipped from Louisiana. The tank house is necessary to keep the tanks from drying out and leaking oil.



It takes only this thirty-five horsepower engine to pull rod lines, pumping the oil to storage tanks.

"Once in a while in the winter time when it gets to snowin' and blowin', snow will blow in underneath the building and it'll slip the belt off," Wesley said. He laughed and shook his head, then adjusted his railroad-type cap on his head. The belt, he said, was bolted together with claps and was difficult to put back on.

"You get a lot of people together and you holler 'n' swear and cuss it back on. Now that's the way it's really done," he said and chuckled as he remembered how to put one back on. "One guy has to stand back here and get it started on the bank wheel; one guy has to go up there stand by the clutch 'n' slip that clutch until he gets it started back on. Usually takes two or three guys."

Back in the engine room, Wesley looked into a built-in closet and found the "usual junk you find around old powerhouses," a magnito, known as a WICO (Williams Electric Company) in the oil field, tools, pieces of old belts and a wasp's nest.

He pointed out the big clutch on the engine and explained that Towhill was probably running seventeen strokes a minute on his wells, which was pretty fast.

The long belt moved continuously around the shinny smaller clutch plate. Wesley said the engine needed a big clutch because the wells had to pump fast to keep ahead of the water. But the constant wear and tear on the parts and not the oil makes the clutch wheel shinny.

"Oil makes it black and crappy like that," Wesley said, pointing to the black greasy part of the engine. "Now back when these ol' powers were operated by the Ohio Oil Company, these floors were painted gray, the engines were painted black and orange and you could eat off the floors. They were clean. But due to the limited help Towhill's got, he's overworked and just doesn't have enough time to do everything he needs to do.

"See, back when the major oil companies were still usin' these, they had a whole crew out here all the time. Had a bunch of roustabouts, boys on the pullin' machines, an' they had pumpers. The pumper had plenty of time after he did his wells an' all that he was supposed to do. He'd come back an' polish around on th ol' power. Keep 'er cleaned up, too. Paint 'er an' keep the yard mowed. But it's rough to make a livin' anymore an' you don't have time for all that sort of thing."

Outside again, Wesley walked to a big wooden tank and climbed the ladder on the side of the tank.

"Just a big ol' water tank," he said. "Holds the water that circulates through the engine. Coolin' water. In the winter, when I was a kid, we used to strip off and jump in that nice warm water and swim around. But some of the pumpers would throw a half a bucket of crude oil on the top of the water when he found out we were swimmin' in 'em."

Back on the ground, Wesley stepped over the rod lines that seemed to run just about everywhere and started walking down a rod line that led into the woods.

"These ol' rod lines, now you have to walk each one of 'em every day an' grease 'em," he said. "If you don't grease 'em, the ol' engine gets to pullin' so hard it'll throw the belt."

Mentioning again that Towhill didn't have the time to spend on the lease and pointing to the various boards and limbs under the rod lines, Wesley said, "When the rod line supports wear out, he just cuts off a tree limb. Store bought ones were an ol' square block with a notch in it. An' since they don't make those anymore, Towhill just uses forked tree limbs."

Retracing our steps back along the rod lines, Wesley led the way to another tin building. It was the tank house and contained four wooden tanks to hold the oil pumped from the sur-

rounding wells.

"The reason these old tanks have always got a shed built over them like this is to keep the hot sun from dryin' 'em out and makin' 'em leak," Wesley said, patting the side of the closest oil-covered tank with the palm of his hand. "The tanks're made out of cypress, hauled up here from Louisiana. They been here since the power was—back in '05 or '06."

He squatted down, fingered a six-inch strip of metal that was clamped around the valve of a pipe near the bottom of the tank and explained how oil was watched over until it was sold out of the tank.

"You don't break that seal 'til you sell a tank of oil," he said. "The oil company that buys the oil has a gauger come down, gauge the oil an' then put a seal on it. Every oil company has a gauger and whenever they buy oil there's a gauger to gauge the tanks."

The old tanks still seemed to leak in spite of the shed built around them. Troughs around each tank were almost filled with oil. It wasn't wasted, though, Wesley said. It drained into a sump or underground cistern and was pumped back into the tank.

"But a real good tank doesn't leak much," he said. "An' these ol' tanks are still real good ones. Take a steel tank like that out there (pointing at one), the average life for one of them is ten or twelve years. And sometimes not that long. Salt water gets to 'em and just eats that steel up. The old wooden tanks, they'll last indefinitely."

They'd already been there for about seventy-five years. It would cost, Wesley supposed, three to four thousand dollars a tank to buy steel tanks.

"This is an outmoded way of doing things," he said. "But if you've got the right people here

to operate it, it's a whole lot cheaper to run it this way than by any modern standards.

"There's nobody around now that would even know how to go back, though," he said, motioning to the big cypress-wood tank. "And there's a lot of gaugers don't even know how to gauge one of these tanks. These are tapered and you have to gauge them different. They call it strappin' a tank. Now I don't know what that means, but that's the term they use."

Around at the back end of the tank house, Wesley motioned toward a pond he said was a salt water pond. Some of the salt water on many oil leases goes back into the ground formation through injection wells.

"Salt water is the abomination of the oil field," Wesley said, explaining that Towhill didn't use water flooding and had to contend with the salt water. "It's what will eat you up. You've got to get rid of it an' you can't run it out on the ground like they did years ago."

"Whenever it come a rain, you'd cut 'er loose out of your pit and run 'er down the crick. But they don't do that anymore on account of the EPA will burn you alive.

Towhill couldn't "run a flood," use some of the salt water, Wesley said, because he wouldn't be able to use the powerhouse. The engine is run from the gas that's produced as a by product of pumping the oil, and water flooding would choke off the gas.

"See, he's not out a dime for fuel here because he's aburnin' natural gas," Wesley said, smoothing one of his cheek-length red sideburns with one hand. "But he has to keep the wells arollin' all the time to keep the gas comin'."

"If you shut down, your gas disappears, and it'll suck an ol' propane bottle dry in a little bit.

When it gets down real cold some of this gas will freeze off at the casing head and some propane has to be cut in to keep 'er goin'."

While it is inexpensive to operate an oil lease with gas, the gas doesn't last forever. And propane gas is too expensive. So Wesley doesn't think the old powerhouse will be around much longer.

"He just barely has enough gas to run it now," Wesley said. "He might run it five years; he might run it a year. When the gas is gone, he's in trouble.

"If you put just one of these wells on an electric motor, it would cost you at least two to three thousand dollars a month electric. I'm just guessin', you know, but roughly around there somewhere."

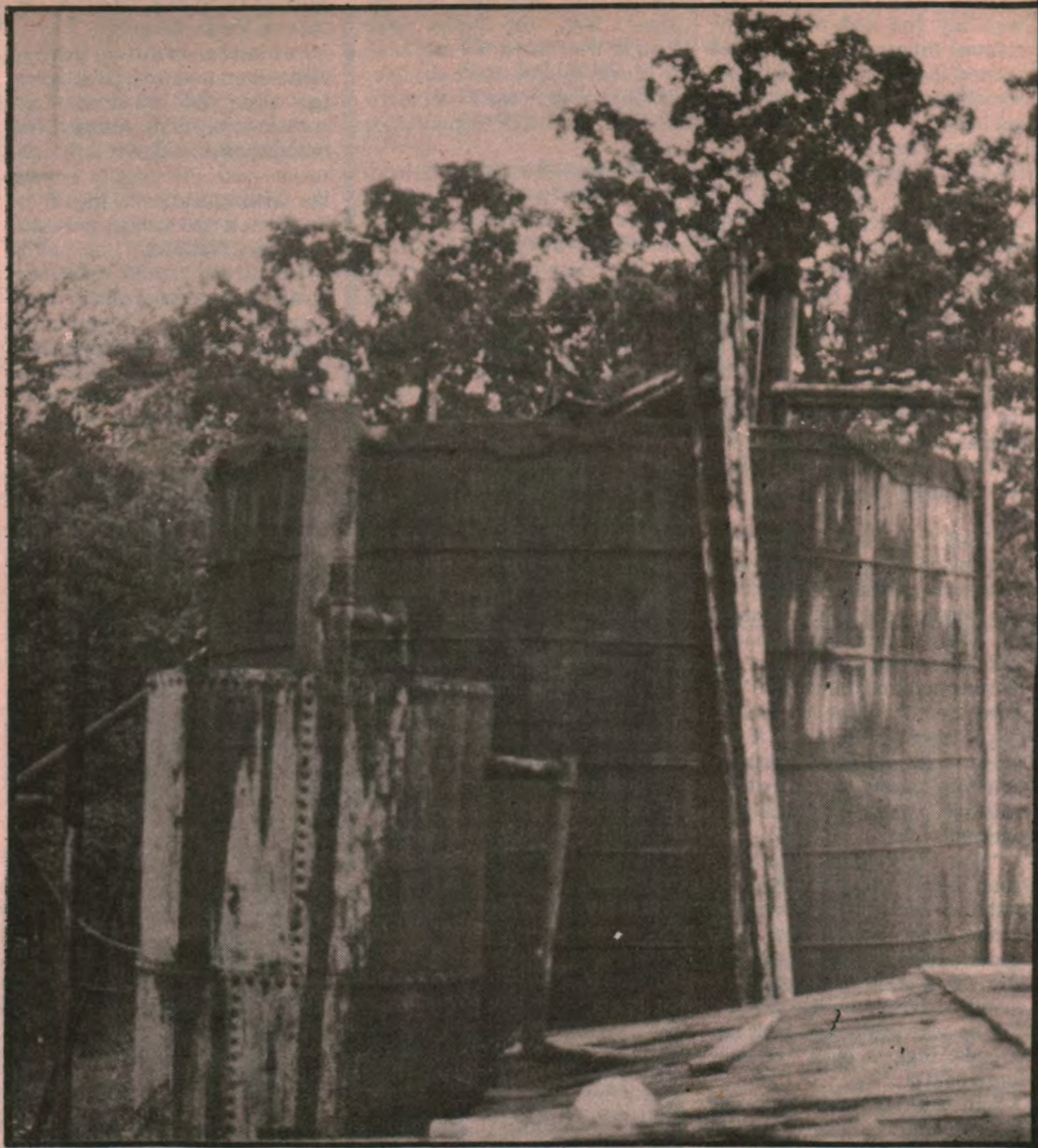
Electricity costs on other leases Wesley knew of ranged as high as two thousand dollars a month. Even at today's oil prices you have to pump a lot of oil just to pay the electric bill.

"That's why these old powers are the only thing he's makin' much money on right now," Wesley said. "Don't have to put out all that money on 'em. This is an ol' outmoded, junky way of doin' it, but it's cheap—just about pays for itself."

Richard Wesley hopes it keeps paying for itself for a while longer, too. He hates to see the old powers that have been a part of the sounds of the oilfield countryside he and so many of us grew up with silenced and gone forever.

"Losing one of these powers is like losing an old friend, you know," he said. "I've always liked to be around 'em. But if you had to make your livin' with 'em, you might have a different opinion."

Maybe. The sounds of those old powers chugging away throughout the night was soothing, though.



Wooden oil tanks like this one are "made out of cypress hauled up here from Louisiana. They been here since the power was—back in '05 er '06."

He likes to 'fool a fish'

by Chris Adcock

Get a bunch of veteran fishermen together and you're bound to hear some pretty fair fish stories. Find a guy like Tom Feltmeyer, 69, Pickneyville, who claims to have sixty years of fishing experience, sit down with him for a while, and you're bound to hear a fish story or two.

Feltmeyer isn't difficult to spot if you know where to look for him. He's got a full head of thick, snow-white hair and a rugged, weathered face. You'll find him most mornings at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Pickneyville, talking to his buddies.

That's where I found him.

My dad had told me that if I wanted to talk to a fisherman, Tom Feltmeyer was the guy to talk to. Although he's rather quiet at first and wouldn't say it, Feltmeyer probably wouldn't disagree.

His fishing equipment is no more sophisticated than a rod and reel, a boat, a trout line and a few milk jugs. Fishing for catfish and bass at the same time is one of his favorites.

"Yeah," he said, "I'll go out and take maybe twenty or twenty-five jugs; then I'll take my rod and reel. And I'll put my jugs out. Watch them while I fish with my rod and reel. If the channel cat aren't bitin', I'll fool around there and bass fish. But sometimes I'll catch bass and cat both."

There aren't too many freshwater fish that Feltmeyer won't fish for; in fact, he said crappie was the only fish he didn't try to catch.

"I don't hardly know how to fish for crappie," he said. "I'll be honest with you, I just don't know how."

According to his friends, Feltmeyer is honest, even about his fish stories. But you might wonder about that when he tells you a friend of his and he caught one hundred thirty fish in one day.

"Well," he said, listing the fish they'd caught, "we caught sixteen bass—that's the limit for two people—and thirty channel cat. Then we got enough blue gill and big-mouth perch that we had one hundred thirty fish."

Another story that could cause you to have a little doubt if you didn't know Feltmeyer's reputation for honesty is the one he tells about the fish he hooked at a friend's lake.

"Now I hooked one," he said, "and I was using a six-pound test line—had him on so long my hands went numb. He went under a limb and then came up. Once in a while he'd show his mouth and from the size of it, I'd say he was probably about ten pounds. Biggest bass I've ever had a hold of."

Sometimes his modesty seems to overcome his honesty a little at times. He says he knows no fish stories. Then he talks about one he particularly likes, a wide,

one of them limbs and started yankin' an' jerkin' my head back and forth. He was growlin' and cussin' at the limb. I yelled, 'Jerry, you ain't on no limb.' He looked back and I had blood all down the side of my neck."

That reminded Feltmeyer of a story of his own.

"I fished with two guys in a boat, and one of them hooked the other one," he said. "Right in the jaw with an imitation minnow; got the tail hook hooked in. Okay, now that's when Doc Moore was down there right across from the Moose."

"We come in here—and I never did mention those guys names cause they asked me not to—and I took a pair of pliers and screwed that hook out of the minnows tail. All he had was the hook hangin' there."

"Doc Moore was eatin' supper when we got there, and I said, 'Doc, I got one of your patients out in the car. He's got a fish hook in his jaw.' 'I'll be right down,' Doc said. 'Just take him to the back door.' When he opened the door a few minutes later, he took one look at the guy and just died laughin'."

"The hook wasn't all the way through, but it was through the meat. Doc cut the hook off and pushed the barb on through. There's no way to push it back out—it'll tear the hell out of a guy's jaw."

By this time, Feltmeyer needs no prodding to continue with stories about fishing. It's fun for him.

"And you know what's a lot of fun in bass fishing for me?" he asked. "You go working your way down the lake three or four hundred feet. You'll see one working, and so you'll work your way on down there. And you just pretty well know if you're goin' to catch him or not."

"Boy, I just love to do that. You know he's gonna hit when you put your plug out there. To me that's about as big a thrill as there is in bass fishin'."

For those thrills in fishing, Feltmeyer uses artificial lures for bass and small fish or shrimp for catfish. Although he occasionally fishes with someone else, he usually enjoys the thrills alone as he has since he first started fishing when he was nine years old.

"Oh, I don't know," he said about why he enjoys fishing as much as he does. "Tryin' to be smarter than the fish, I guess. You know, everyone can't fool a fish."

Or tell a good story about it whenever he does.

smile pulling at his whole face.

"I'll tell you what's a whole lot of fun for me," Feltmeyer said. "That's when I'm bass fishing and the moon is just coming up over the straw piles. They try to get out of the moonlight, so you know they're in those dark banks."

At night or in the early morning and late evening is the best time for bass fishing, Feltmeyer thinks. Catfish are different though.

"I'll tell you the hotter it gets, the better it is for channel cat," he said. "I don't know why it is, but it is. In the daytime, we fish fairly deep for them, maybe twenty or thirty feet. But at nighttime when they start feeding, you'll catch them at three or four feet."

Blue gill, Feltmeyer said, can be caught at any time of the day and no matter how hot it gets. Trout-line fishing is only a matter of "putting a weight in the middle and gettin' it where I want it. Then I don't put any weight on my drop line."

After Feltmeyer tells a few stories, someone around him usually picks up a lull between stories and tells one of his own. A fisherman, younger than Feltmeyer, told about fishing with his uncle.

"Me and ol' Jerry were fishin' out behind United Electric one time," the younger man said, "between one pot hole and another in a little channel, you know. Well, the limbs were hangin' over there so you'd have to duck to get through 'em. Jerry was up in the front, and I was in the back runnin' the motor."

"Right where you get through that channel, it opens up into another one. That's a real good spot right there; we'd always catch a mess of fish there. And Jerry wanted to be the first one to throw his plug in out there."

"Well, we'd just got out from underneath them limbs, and well, he rared way back to sling the plug and he hooked me right on the ear. He thought he was on



Tom Feltmeyer, Pickneyville, relaxes in the local Knights of Columbus Hall and tells a fish story now and then.

My Club Quilt

by Mary Olmsted Graham

The other day while quilting on my club quilt, My mind began to wander, to the friends Who had pieced this quilt from scraps of bright material; As bright as the personalities that lend One day each month to go and be together, Exchange ideas, hopes and future plans; Help with the work provided and yet have time to play.

This quilt I think of as a picture album With each friend represented there for me, That I may cherish now and when I'm older When possibly the club no longer meets.

This quilt is made of only cotton Stitched together with stitches made of thread— And may our friendships grow and hold together To cover years, as this quilt will a bed.



Effie Barker, 82, West Union, holds a quilt her mother pieced (cutting out the blocks of the quilt and sewing them together) when Effie "was six or seven years old." The quilt has two hundred eight stars in it.

The Barefoot Nation

by Hazel Godwin Tomey

This is a little story about Barefoot Nation, Where people, more than anything, loved relaxation. Easygoing, they cared little 'bout their homes and dress, Yet, they were all good neighbors in sickness and distress. Of course, they went barefoot, as comfortable as could be; Their children went to a one-room school, most irreg'larly.

Each fam'ly had chickens, cows, and hogs for winter's meat. They had gardens, too, enough to pickle, can, and eat. On the hills and in the hollows, patches of corn grew, Enough for winter feeding; a few roasting ears, too... Now, Clem, 16, took his Saturday bath, as did all the rest, Donned blue shirt and overalls; walked down the clay road, west

To court Lou, whose long bare feet dangled from the swing. With honeysuckle in bloom, Clem's heart began to sing. They talked about the crops since a week ago they'd met; How the chickens were laying and of the sick cow, Pet. Time went by, quickly, as they giggled, laughed, and spooned, And hardly before they knew it, riding high was the moon.

Clem gave Lou a peck on the cheek, as he rushed away. He took the path through the pasture for it was closer that way. At the creek, he stubbed his big toe on a rock, by a tree. He saw a million stars; felt the blood run, copiously! He soaked his foot in the ditch 'til he got his senses. Then, he limped toward home, climbing over two log fences.

In so much pain and toment, Clem didn't sleep all night. He told his pa, the next morning, of his awful fright. "I believe," he said, "I'll go down and try to find that rock." So, 'way he hobbled down the path, his foot in a sock. "Well, did you find that rock?" asked Pa, later, picking up some pails. "Yeah, I sure did, Pa," drawled Clem, "and a half a cup of toenails!"

And so it went with the Barefooters, many years ago, Who cared not for fame or fortune; just a horse, plow and hoe. They were content to let the rest of the world go by 'Til Fate overtook them, and they went to live on high. Now, today, hardly a trace remains of their habitation, Where once those carefree souls lived so simply, out in Barefoot Nation.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Shortly after the turn of the century, a rural neighborhood existed between Bicknell and Bruceville, Indiana, and was known as the Barefoot Nation. Today the area is somewhat bisected by Indiana State Road 67. Very few landmarks remain.

Gathering wood

by Cassie Pinkston

The price of both natural and propane gas has climbed to a place where many people cannot afford the luxury of just turning up the thermostat. On the other hand, wood is still fairly plentiful and with a little time and work, can save money. So heating the home with wood is more economical and practical after having obtained the necessary equipment and wood supply.

Twenty-five years ago most homes in the United States were heated with wood or similar materials. As gas stoves and furnaces became more popular, most people changed heating systems. There is a difference in the warmth of gas and wood heat.

With wood, there is a more even, constant heat. When the blower on a gas furnace shuts off, there may be a draft on the floor where children usually are playing. The cost of wood is minimal compared to gas and oil. Also, when there is a power outage during an ice storm, the home still has heat. This saves money, since pipes do not freeze and burst.

The top of a wood stove may be used for cooking purposes in an emergency or for general use for slow cooking. If a fireplace is used for the wood-burning, it will throw light out into the room, thus another practical aspect.

In the last few years the trend in home heating has again turned to wood. New homes are built with this kind of heat in mind.

The equipment needed to heat with wood should include a power saw, extra chains, file, etc. A pick-up truck is useful or work with friends who will share a truck. An axe or splitter is necessary for small splitting jobs. If a large amount of wood is to be split and in less time, a hydraulic splitter can take care of a truck load much faster. These do cost more than the average family might want to spend, but four or five families can go together and collect the parts to have a splitter made.

A good sound flu is necessary for safety. It should be checked every year before heating season to make sure there is no build up of creosote. There are different styles of stoves from which to choose. These stoves are not like the older ones and have dampers and fans which blow automatically when the heat in the stove reaches a certain degree. They hold fire well, so it isn't necessary to put wood in during the night except in extremely cold weather.

Wood is not hard to find in most areas. Some land owners want wooded areas cleared from their property. This helps both sides. Sometimes older people have trees they would like taken down. The wood is then given to the woodcutters.

Families often cooperate, taking trucks and saws to the woods at the same time. They unload at a different home until they all have enough wood piled up to last all winter. Sawmills sell slab wood to the public at a modest price per truck load.

The children in the family learn responsibility as they help get the weekly wood supply into

the garage or porch. So heating the home with wood really is more economical and practical after getting the equipment needed, and an adequate wood supply.

NOTE: It is realized, of course, that for older people and those away from home most of the time, automatic heat is the safer and better choice.

Memory

(continued from page 11)

the clock, one took his seat when missing a word.

Soon only one speller on each side was left. Now the teacher put to task such words as honisoitquimalypense, omphalus, interferential and more as hard that were quickly and confidentially disposed of. Then a contestant would miss a much simpler word by putting i before e or vice versa.

Did you have a Christmas program and a Christmas tree? My, how the homemade decorations, the songs, poems and plays and the teacher's treat added to our joys. We had a name exchange earlier.

Do you remember swapping names? I do once. There was a sweet girl whose name I wanted very much. It might have been a first case of Puppy Love.

Now, dear readers, here's a resume of my teaching. My first school was a Richwoods District #1 in 1918 and 1919. Before retiring (the first time) I taught twenty-four more terms. I recall pupils from Mills, Cannon, Canaan, Higgins, Palestine, Midkiff, McKeen, Stoy, Montgomery and Castle Schools.

Some of the pupils I had have become neighbors and life friends.

Education

(continued from page 12)

unlocked the door," she said. "That just purt near put a stop to lockin' the teachers out. That's the only time we ever got in trouble."

Eirhart smiled because discipline was always enforced by the teachers, but she kept out of trouble for the most part.

"Nope, I never got a whippin'," she said. "But I stood in the corner a few times."

Eirhart doesn't have to worry about "gettin' a whippin'" or being sent to the corner anymore. Now she needs a cane to get around because of arthritis. But she still does some yard work. After looking back on her school days, Eirhart is convinced that they were the best of times.

"Them was the good ol' days," she said. "An' don't believe they wasn't cause they was."

Ups and downs

(continued from page 12)

what the devilment was.

"There was one year I didn't hardly get a last recess," he said. "I wouldn't get grammar—we called it grammar in them days. I'd rather miss that fifteen minutes of play than get a grammar lesson anytime.



Lightning once struck the belfry and damaged this one-room schoolhouse where Delno Stanfield went to school in the 1890s and early 1900s. (Photo courtesy of Delno Stanfield.)

"I'd just set there and stay in of an evening after school until they turned me loose. I'd go home and the next day, the same thing over cause I didn't like it. I just didn't like it."

What he did like was baseball. In a way, it determined his future.

At lunchtime, Stanfield would run more than a quarter of a mile home for his dinner and back again in time to play ball with his friends. A pet crow belonging to one of the boys joined in on the games.

"That crow set in the transom while we was havin' school," he said. "Then when we got out, he was out there playin' ball with us. He'd set out there in the diamond with the pitcher. You could hear him say 'foul' just as plain as anythin'. He'd fly around an' land in the diamond, an' if the ball was knocked out in his direction he'd just fly up, let it go by an' then fly back down.

"All the kids used t' run around an' the crow would light on you. He was just as friendly as he could be. Well, there was this one boy an' he swore that if the crow ever lit on him, he'd kill him.

"He lit on him one day, an' that boy picked up a club an' killed him," Stanfield said, then chuckled. "Boy, that night the boys about beat the life out o' him."

Stanfield's interest in baseball continued after he graduated from grade school and led him to his life's work. When his eighth grade teacher said he was going to Valparaiso College in Indiana, he asked if anyone was interested in going to school there. Stanfield and another boy decided to skip high school, because "you had to pay room an' board some place," and go along.

"When we got to the college, we found out that they didn't play other schools in athletics," he said. "They did have four baseball teams that played against each other. They had a pharmacy team, a lawyer team, an engineering team and an education team.

"Well, I got on the pharmacy team, an' you had to register in the pharmacy course to get to play ball. When the six months was up an' it was fall again, the boys said, 'Come on an' go with us in the pharmacy class. You're registered now and got by with it. They won't know the difference.'"

So Stanfield stayed with the team and ended up working as a pharmacist for fifty years.

"I didn't have a high school education, an' they didn't know it, an' they still don't," he said,

grinning widely. "An' you can't tell 'em, cause they're all dead." I couldn't argue with him. I

couldn't see that not doing his grammar lessons had hurt him much, either.

A reaction to the Hutson Massacre Pageant

by Mary Olmsted Graham

Last eve it was my privilege
To journey back thru time.
I attended the Hutson Massacre Pageant,
The evening was so fine!

I appreciated all the preparation
This pageant had entailed;
The writing of this story,
Down to the finest detail.

The community spirit was wonderful,
Thanks be for folks like these.
The chorus as they sang the good old songs
Just filled my heart with glee!

The people acting out the story
Were just friends, neighbors and kin,
But each with a purpose to act his part
That we might glimpse how life had been.

A home from the wilderness they had made,
And happily dwelt therein,
When their privacy was invaded,
And their good times were to end.

I sat and watched this all unfold
With four of my grandchildren near,
And gave Thanks for a community like this
In which they can be reared.

There were songs of faith like our forefathers sang,
And songs that marked history, too
All this in a setting of times of yore,
Laid out for us to view.

And now that I've written this all down,
'Tis the spirit of His love,
That makes people give of themselves this way,
All because they feel this love.

Chicago Daily Tribune

The Way

THOMAS MORROW

Free Was a Long Time Ago

"Well, no, there is one Indian around there known as 'found a Pet.' He is very friar has found a place in history and has come to be known as "The Hutsonville massacre." In fact, if you say to Kent Lewis, publisher of the Robinson Daily News, who has some ambition toward running for lieutenant governor of the Democratic ticket, you ken the Hutsonville sh. "O, yes, Hutsonville never got a

HOLY COW!!!

DON'T MISS THE INTERVIEW WITH

HARRY CARAY

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF

Tales

from the general store

When Harry Caray started broadcasting baseball games for the St. Louis Cardinals, the game was already well established as the national pastime. Baseball had been played in city streets and country fields since Abner Doubleday invented it some seventy years earlier. Caray's enthusiasm for the game and his nearly forty years in the broadcasting booth have become legendary. You're either one of his best fans or one of his worst critics. In this interview with Caray, "Tales" editor Ray Elliott includes his own recollections of growing up listening to Caray broadcast the Cardinal games.



Veteran baseball broadcaster Harry Caray sits in the announcer's booth at Wrigley Field in Chicago where he now gives play-by-play reports for the Chicago Cubs.

PLUS

- Other stories about baseball in the Wabash Valley years ago
- A conversation with an old-time blacksmith
- Learn about skinning a coon & setting traps
- How to make apple cider
- A look at the history behind Sailor Springs, IL
- Another tale by 92-year-old Thornton Stephens

Send your story ideas, recipes and remedies to:

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