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Tales from the general store

Number 6

Printer Moran Keller
and author/radio personality Studs Terkel
bring quality and pride to their work
Beginning pages 9 and 10

With your help this old building...

The old restaurant building, 1983

This building hasn't functioned as a restaurant or anything except a reminder of the past for nearly 50 years. Tales from the general store, inc. plans to change that this spring.

Oh, it'll still be a reminder of the past. That's the whole idea. With your help, the building will be rebuilt and restored to look as it did in the picture shown here, circa 1908.

Volunteer carpenters will rebuild and restore the building with donated funds. More than $2000, including $1000 from Bradford Supply and $500 from L.S. Heath and Sons, has been raised for the project. Much more is needed.

When the building is completed, it will be open to the public as a restaurant and loafing place. A bronze plaque, listing the major contributors and a history of the building, will be placed near the entrance.

Whatever you can contribute—money, material, fixtures—will help restore an architectural landmark of the rural Midwest that is rapidly disappearing from the countryside. Send your contribution today.

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

Jake's Restaurant, circa 1908

...can look like this again

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Hard times — not just the Depression kind

Ray Elliott

Mention hard times and right away most people think of the Great Depression. Old timers tell stories about how scarce money was and how difficult it was to eke out a living all around the country. Soup lines were set up to feed the hungry.

Studs Terkel, whom I interviewed for an article in this issue of "Tales," put together a book based on interviews with people about the Depression. He called it "Hard Times." The title came from a 14-year-old Appalachian boy, living in Chicago in the late 1960s, who said, "See, I never heard that word 'depression' before. They (his relatives) would all say 'hard times' to me."

I only caught the tail end of those days. And most of what I know about them came from the stories I've heard from old timers, Terkel's book and John Steinbeck's novel, "The Grapes of Wrath." So mention hard times to me and the Great Depression doesn't immediately come to mind.

No, I think of hard times as the years I spent growing up in and around Bellair during and just after World War II. It wouldn't have mattered had I grown up on a block in Chicago or in a villa in the South of France any old time, though. When I was growing up, days crawled by like fies crawl across the ceiling in late fall.

Not that there weren't a lot of good times. I remember spending hundreds of happy days, roaming the countryside on my bicycle or walking barefooted on country roads with dust puffing up between my toes, swimming in the gravel pit, ponds or creeks, playing baseball or basketball and coming home to a good home-cooked supper and visiting with family and neighbors at night.

But there were so many times I wanted to see over the hill just out of reach that most of my waking hours were spent daydreaming about what it would be like when I could. Sometimes I'd take off over the hill, knowing that it wouldn't be for long.

The first time I can remember taking off was when I was about five years old. I walked into Bellair from our small farm a mile or so northwest of town so I could play with the town kids. I'll never forget the spanking I got that day.

My urge to go never left me, though. For years, I longed to be able to come and go at will. Shortly after I was graduated from high school, I joined the service so I could see over a lot of hills.

For a moment, he was quiet. The crackling sound of burning wood and the soothing voice of Willie Nelson softly singing "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys" over the stereo a few feet away echoed throughout the store.

I was reminded of my earlier days the other night when Dale Purcell and Tony Williams stopped by the Bellair Store to pass some time with me. Both of them have spent many of their growing-up years in Bellair.

Dale left school as soon as he could and went to work at the shoe factory in Casey. Tony is a senior at Oblong High school and will be graduated in May.

We sat around the wood stove in the store, sharing the evening and the warmth of the stove as we all had with other people at other times on a thousand other evenings in Bellair. That was what we had in common.

"What're you goin' to do when you graduate?" I asked Tony. We had talked about it before. He'd thought about joining the army, attending a school in Indianapolis and doing a number of other things—all of which would take him away from Bellair. Lately, he'd seemed more interested in just finding a job.

That night Tony told me about a job in another part of Illinois that he thought he might be able to get after graduation. Other than that, he wasn't sure. As he spoke quietly, he gazed out of his blue eyes into the coal bucket in front of the stove.

For a moment, he was quiet. The crackling sound of burning wood and the soothing voice of Willie Nelson softly singing "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys" over the stereo a few feet away echoed throughout the store.

Then Tony turned to me and said, "I want to get out of here." His eyes sparkled. He grinned and laughed, his freckled face reddening slightly. I grinned back at him and laughed. Dale grinned and laughed.

"I know what you mean, Tony," I said. "I could hardly wait to get out of here."

Tony and Dale laughed and nodded their heads. Their eyes danced in the dim light of a single bulb, suspended from the ceiling by a thin, twisted cord.

"It felt good to get out," I said. "But I've always come back. I love this part of the country. It's okay after you can get out. That's the difference."

They nodded again. Tony laughed. I told him I hoped he could find a job and be able to get away from Bellair and the hard times of growing up.

"So do I," he said. "I'm ready."

I'm sure he is ready. Growing up may not be the hard times people think of when they hear the words. But when you're growing up and can't wait to get away, hard times describe it as well as any other words you can find.

Letters

What's going on?

I haven't received any "Tales" since September and was wondering why. I have the first five copies. But it seems like I should have gotten at least one since September, maybe two. Could you please explain?

CHRISTINE SARTOR
Evansville, Indiana

EDITOR'S NOTE: We would like nothing better than to supply our readers with "Tales" on a more regular basis. Unfortunately, lack of money has more to do with it than we would like to admit. Lack of personnel also contributes to our tardiness. But we don't die easy. We'll keep churning out issues as often as we can and hope people will come to join us and make the project a real success.

More specifically, the delay of this issue was due to our problems with the U.S. Post Office. Casey Postmaster James Totten questioned whether the magazine could be inserted into the Casey "Daily Reporter" and sent to its subscribers under the paper's second-rate postage permit. In September 1983, the St. Louis Mail Classification Center ruled "Tales" to be in violation of Section 425.4 of the Domestic Mail Manual because it was "not germane to the issue of the 'Daily Reporter.'"

The Tales foundation filed an appeal and postponed further publication of the magazine until the situation was resolved. Harvey Altergott, general manager of the Domestic Mail Classification Division in Washington, D.C. notified Tales of the favorable turnaround in early March.

Tales receives donation for Jake's

We wish to extend to you our best wishes and support.

W.J. CHAMBLIN
President
Bradford Supply Co.
Robinson, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tales received a $1000 donation from Bradford Supply Co. to be used for the restoration of Jake's Restaurant in Bellair, which began in early April. We greatly appreciate the help, and urge others to give donations and/or volunteer their time to help rebuild the restaurant this summer.

Reader now 'addicted' to 'Tales'

When I saw "Tales" in the mail, it brought a lift to my day—as cliched as that sounds. As is always the case, there is a good balance of articles. I defy anyone to pick up the issue and not find something that appeals. There's just too much there!

More specifically, I think a nice tone was maintained in the "Open Letter." It had an effectively delivered combination of trouble and optimism. Since I am a firm believer in the "stick a buck or two in. . ." philosophy and since I often advocate it myself in diffrent worthy situations, enclosed please find "a buck or two" which I hope will help in some way.

I read with particular interest the article on Harry Caray, since I, too, have long admired him. It was not as good as the Burl Ives piece in the past, but it surely did reveal something of the fascinating character of Caray.

One final word on this issue: Vanessa Faurie continues to be able to manipulate my emotions through the pieces she writes. That woman has talent.

Continued good luck with the project, and keep those "Tales" coming. I'm addicted to them now.

TOM REITER
Lemont, Illinois

Millinery shop once in Bellair

Enjoy all the "Tales." Brings back many memories.

I'm sure many would remember that Bellair, at one time, had a very nice millinery shop owned by Imo Bline and Clara Tyhurst. In those days, we all had to have a new hat for Spring and Fall.

Wishing you continued success in your restoration of the old store.

RAY AND ADA PURCELL
Gaylord, Michigan

Family memories in Jasper County

I just got through reading your magazine and enjoyed it very much. I was born just south of the White Oak Church and raised across southwest of "Sams Branche Creke" in Jasper County.

Burl Ives' folks lived in the field behind us when we built our place. Then they moved south of the Jackville School—the same school we Pearl Boyd children went to. The Ives went to Bethany Church south of Jackville about two and a half miles, while we went to White Oak Church.

We went in big wagons, buggies or sleighs—whatever the weather was. We had muddy roads in spring and frozen, rough roads in winter. Also lots of snow. Our roads were all dirt roads at that time. Lots of times in spring the creeks were up and flowing all over everywhere, and we couldn't get to church.

Dad (Pearl) was janitor, cared for the cemetery and yard, and also taught Sunday school for years at White Oak. We girls sang in the choir, and of course in all the programs. My brother Junior came along nine years after me, so I got to be the baby for a long time.

The Ives family moved to Hunt City. We visited them quite often for we went to Hunt City to buy groceries. While we had cream tested at the cream station, Mother (Celia Curtis Boyd) and I would do our other shopping at Morans; then we would go see Della Ives.

There were Soldiers and Sailors Reunions in a grove just across the road from Hunt City in a little patch of trees—sort of like a park. They had a ferris wheel, merry-go-round, several stands of sandwiches, pop, ice cream cones and chewing gum.

They used concrete blocks and wooden boards to make a stage, and men would get on stage electioneering for some office. Then the youngsters would get up and sing several songs while playing guitars, banjos and horns. It was just a place to go to visit neighbors and friends.

Yale, a small town north of Hunt City, had fourth of July celebrations with fireworks. We aways got home before dark for there were chores to do like milk cows and feed chickens and hogs.

My father- and mother-in-law's family (Frank and Hannah Blair) lived on the Hutsonville and Palestine Road in four or five different homes. He had no place of his own—just worked for other farmers most of the time. He did a little farming of his own wherever he lived.

We used to fish around Harness Landing and along the Wabash River from Hutsonville to Merom River Crossing. We've crossed on the ferry at Darvin York and Merom lots of times. My husband and I were so glad when they built the bridge at Hutsonville. When they had the opening of the bridge, there was a celebration with fireworks.

I saw my first airplane at Merom, and I took my first car ride to go see it. I also went to Palestine and saw my first moving picture in a theater there. I was too young to read the words, but I saw what all went on. That's been 65 or 66 years ago. I'm 71 years old now.

I learned a lot about Palestine that I didn't know from the magazine. I lived in Robinson for 15 years back in 1926-41. My husband died 11 years ago. I've lived in Decatur for the past 16 years close to my two children and seven grandchildren.

I wrote a book about my life on the farm in the 1920s. Had it published by a guy here in town. He left it as I had typed it, and I didn't have any lessons to show me how to do it—just did it on my own. I wrote it six or seven years ago, but it didn't get published until November 1980.

MYRTIE BOYD BLAIR
Decatur, Illinois

Sailor Springs—'hottest place for miles around'

I just finished reading the story on Sailor Springs, and it set me to thinking when and by whom I had heard the name Sailor Springs. Then it all came back to me.

It's been so long ago. I was 14 years old and wanted to go to a school party, but my parents forbid it because there would be dancing. Whenever I had hurt feelings I'd go to my beloved grandmother for her advice and wisdom.

I said to her, "Why can't I learn to dance or go to school parties like the other girls do? Didn't my father and mother ever dance, and why are they so strict on me?"

Grandma said, "It's because you're such a pretty child they want to protect you and see that you keep your mind on getting a proper education, which will benefit you more in the future. Still, I think you should know how to dance, and I will teach you."

Although she was past 70 years old at the time, she got up from the quilting frame and showed me how it was done. But I never learned and still can't!

She told me about Sailor Springs. It was the hottest place for miles around. Young and not-so-young went there in droves by horseback, buggy or wagon. She

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.

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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 corespondence to: Tales from the general store, inc., Rural Route 2, Oblong, Illinois 62449 or phone (618) 569-5171.

... and more letters

said, "Your dad was a handsome man and a great dancer. I have spent many hours washing and ironing his pleated-front shirts (even ruffles on the sleeves) and getting him dressed up for Sailor Springs before he met and married your mother."

She even showed me a fancy shirt she had saved of his and a pair of socks. Ha. Those socks had fancy embroidery on them., believe it or not. What fashions were worn in those bygone days were truly beautiful—the romantic age.

She also told me there were other attractions at Sailor Springs—mineral water, baths, shows, games, etc. We hear it said that history repeats itself. Perhaps in the future, Sailor Springs will once again be as popular as it once was in the good ol' days.

I truly enjoy your "Tales from the general store."

P.S.—My age is 80. I'm not as active anymore, but I try to keep thinking young and having a clear, open mind!

MRS. VIOLET COWGER
Greenup, Illinois

Reader answers letter about Moonshine

I have just read the last issue of "Tales" and believe I can tell Thornton Stephens what he wanted to know (Letters, "Tales" #5). My grandfather, William St. Clair Martz, owned the old Moonshine Store about the time he mentioned. My uncle, Jake Martz, was a mail carrier on Route One out of Martinsville. My mother was Hattie Martz, and she married Everett Blankenbecker, who later was also a mail carrier.

Grandpa Martz moved to Casey where he lived the rest of his life. Uncle Jake lived in Martinsville until his death a good many years ago. I am in the Casey Nursing Home and find it a pleasant place to live if you can't be in your own home.

I enjoy "Tales" very much. Effie Barker of York is my roommate, and our grandfathers were brothers—that was Bill and Ben Blankenbecker. Bill was her grandfather and also ran the store at Moonshine.

MRS. MABEL LOWRY
Casey, Illinois

Encouraging notes

I have enjoyed "Tales" very much. It's always nice to read about the place you grew up and many of the people you knew. Keep up the good work.

MRS. MARILYN BLAIR
Newman, Illinois

I enjoy the paper very much.

HILDA ELLIOTT PRINCE
Livonia, Michigan

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your celebration. Seventy people signed out Poison Comparison presentation the day of the Ennis & the Outlaws Fun Day in Bellair.

MARLA RICHARDS
DOGWOOD DEPUTIES
4-H Club
Oblong, Illinois

We enjoy the many subjects you cover in the paper. Keep up the good work. We think you are doing a splendid job.

PAUL G. BROWN
Tacoma, Washington

My mom and I both read "Tales" from front to back. She (and I) loved it and wants to go down and see the town. Best of success in all.

CAMILLE KRECIOCH
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Visited relatives in Robinson a while back. Got to read issue #5. Really enjoyed it. Sort of took me back a few years. Thank you.

BURL O. LAMB
Ashtabula, Ohio

Just finished reading the story you did. I really enjoyed it. As a matter of fact, your entire paper. Thanks for your fine account of your day at Wrigley Field. Best regards.

HARRY CARAY
Chicago, Illinois

It's always a deight to read "Tales."

RAMONA HEARD
Houston, Texas

I was in Illinois last week. I was given several issues and have enjoyed them so much. I knew several people, and Berl (my husband) told me stories concerning so many others. I feel I know them.

ALICE TURNIPSEED
Pawcatuck, Connecticut

One-room school memories

I'm thankful to be of the "older ones" who attended one-room schools. Many who have attended Jackville School in my day have gone on.

I have told the smaller children near us that Burl Ives attended the same school. When they see Mr. Ives (as they call him) they say, "You knew him."

I'm thankful for the teachers in the one-room school and for the times when the teacher went home with us to spend the night. But we did not expect her to do the dishes. We kids were taught to work, and I still like to work—even at my age. I'm a firm believer that we would not have as many problems if the young folk had to do the chores as we older ones were expected to do.

Hoping for continued success for "Tales."

ELLA MCKNIGHT SHEETS
St. Petersburg, Florida

History buff finds plenty in Greenup

I love "Tales." It is great reading for we lovers of history. I have recognized names of people I am acquainted with in your "Letters" section and am a subscriber to the Casey "Daily Reporter."

I have also noticed that you have printed articles about towns farther away from Oblong than Greenup. We are approximately 30 miles from Oblong. There are only two towns named Greenup in the USA—the other one is Greenup, Kentucky.

Are you aware that the family of Greenup selected our town to have a reunion from all corners of the USA and Canada? This Fall marked their fourth visit to work on geneology and to try to find how they were related to each other and our founder.

I am extremely interested in my village and started the ball rolling with our local Chamber of Commerce and various civic organizations toward having a Sesquicentennial Celebration for our 150th birthday.

There is some good history here because of the old Cumberland Road, a famous mineral well, a stage coach inn (turned hotel) that ran for 144 years and where Lincoln lodged and helped build a well, and we still have the old over-hanging porches on our Main Street.

MRS. CHARLES GOODMAN
Greenup, Illinois

Teacher plans trip to Bellair

I will be teaching a course on Illinois folklore in three forms this coming year: a three-week intersession (three hours a day!), a Fall 1984 conventional semester course and an evening course for non-credit that will run for several weeks.

Your paper and your journalism work inspired me to think of various ways to make use of your expertise. Some possibilities: to use a copy of "Tales from the general store" as class reading; to make a field trip to Bellair during the last week of intersession (the last few weeks in May) to see the operation; to have a Tales member visit campus here and do a presentation.

I will be formulating plans for the intersession (and learning more about Illinois folklore) in the next couple months. I hope all is going well for you.

DR. LARRY DANIELSON
Department of English
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign, Illinois

Who is this woman?

Can anyone identify this picture (at right)? It appears to be taken at a store building. Edith Williamson, former Crawford County resident, found it in her Aunt Glenn Clement's effects, and no one in the family could identify it.

SCARLET WILLIAMSON
Hutsonville, Illinois

How to order back issues

No. 1:
General stores; hermit Walter Whitaker; the Augustus C. French Maplewood estate; storyteller Thornton Stephens; frog gigging; subsistence farming.

No. 2:
Hog butchering; curing meat; churning butter; dressing chickens; Homer Adkisson's homemade car; tall tale of an Irish folk hero; benefit concert in Bellair; country living; an old-time country doctor and his horse; Marvin Harrison's haunted clock.

No. 3:
Burl Ives; Spring Fair; furniture refinishing; rug braiding; quilting; the first signs of Spring and childhood memories; 'An Ode to the Backhouse'; Professor Whistledick and his cure-all elixir; the history of Palestine.

No. 4:
One-room schoolhouses and the teachers and students who attended them; cooking and canning with Grandma; summer barnraising and ice cream social; White's country store; Merom chautauquas; powerhouses; fishing; gathering wood.

No. 5:
Harry Caray; early schools in Crawford County; blacksmith Jim Tingley; George Gullett's baseball memories; trapping; making fuel out of garbage; memories of a old man; "Cyrus Peck" by Thornton Stephens; pet squirrel; train trips; superstitions.

Single Copies: $2 each, postpaid
All 4 Back Issues: Only $6

HOW TO ORDER: Send payment with order, specifying the issue numbers and number of copies desired, to: Tales from the general store, inc., R.R. #2, Oblong, Illinois 62449. Our supply is limited, so order today!

Recipes and remedies

Anytime Cookies

2½ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
1½ cups solid white shortening
3½ cups quick cooking oats
1 cup raisins
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate pieces

Sift together flour, soda and salt. Stir in sugars. Cut in shortening until blended. Stir in oats. Makes about 10 cups.

Divide the mixture in half, and put in plastic storage bags or other container. Add ½ cup raisins, ½ cup chocolate pieces to each batch. Close containers tightly.

Containers may be stored at room temperature for several weeks.

To bake: mix together thoroughly 1 egg, ⅓ cup milk and ½ teaspoon vanilla. Empty one batch of mix into a bowl, and make a hole in the center of the dry mixture. Pour in the egg mixture and blend together well. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto the cookie sheets (ungreased). Bake at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes. One batch makes about four and one half dozen cookies.

—Darline Morgan

Fruit Cobbler

1 stick oleo (melted)
2 cups fruit
¾ to 1 cup sugar (depends on the fruit used)

Mix and let stand.

In a seperate bowl stir together quickly:
1 cup flour
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup milk

Grease a 9 x 9 inch baking pan. Pour flour batter into it, and pour fruit over the batter. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes.

Note: blackberries or cherries are especially good.

—Darline Morgan

Sugar Cookies

1 cup sugar
½ cup shortening
2 eggs
2 cups flour
½ teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons milk

Mix well and drop by teaspoon of batter onto greased baking sheet. Bake 10-15 minutes at 375 degrees.

—Jessie Cox

Potato Refrigerator Rolls

1½ cups warm water
1 pkg. active dry yeast
⅔ cup sugar
1½ teaspoons salt
7-7½ cups sifted flour
⅔ cup shortening
2 eggs
1 cup lukewarm mashed potatoes

In mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in water. Stir in sugar, salt, shortening, eggs and potatoes. Mix in flour by hand until dough is easy to handle. Knead on lightly-floured board until smooth and elastic. Place greased side up in greased bowl and cover it with a damp cloth. Place in refrigerator. Punch down occasionally as it rises. Shape dough into two-inch balls. Place each in well-greased muffin cup. With scissors, cut each ball in half, then in quarters. Cover and let rise until double (1½-2 hours). Heat over to 400 degrees and bake 12-15 minutes. Makes about four dozen.

Biscuits

2 cups self-rising flour
5 tablespoons mayonaise
1 cup milk

Mix ingredients together well, and drop batter into muffin tins. Measure flour and mayonaise exactly for best results. Bake at 400 degrees until done.

—Darline Morgan

Aristocrat Pickles

2 dozen medium-sized cucumber, sliced thin

Put in cold brine that holds up an egg. Let stand one week, stirring each day. On the seventh day, drain and add a piece of alum the size of an egg and boiling water. Cover and boil for ten minutes. Drain and add 2 tablespoons of ginger and hot water. Cover and boil again for 10 minutes. Then drain.

Syrup:
1 quart vinegar
3 pounds sugar
1 stick cinnamon and alspice

Boil 30 minutes or until clear, then seal.

—Lenna Straker

Rhubarb Salad

4 cups rhubarb, finely diced
1 cup water
1½ cups sugar
2-3 oz. package cherry Jello
1 16 oz. can crushed pineapple
½ cup chopped nuts (more if desired)

Cook rhubarb in water and sugar until done. Add jello and stir well. Cool and add pineapple and nuts. Refrigerate until set.

—Darline Morgan

Mush

Add salt to taste to 3 quarts of boiling water. Stir in sufficient corn meal gradually until quite thick. Boil slowly for one hour, stirring often. Eat with cream, milk, butter or syrup. To fry when cold, cut in thin slices and fry in lard until lightly browned.

—Lorene Newberry

Three Month Muffins

1 cup quick oats
1 cup crumbled shredded wheat (use large biscuits)
1 cup All Bran

Mix grains together. Pour 1 cup boiling water over grains, stir and let sit.

In a separate bowl, mix together thoroughly:
½ cup oil
1⅓ cup brown sugar (packed)
2 cups buttermilk
2 eggs
2½ teaspoons baking soda
1½ teaspoons salt
2½ cups flour

Add grains to batter and stir well. Store in a tight container in the refrigerator for up to three months When you want to use the batter, fill paper-lined muffin tins three-quarters full and bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Makes three to four dozen.

—Darline Morgan

Recipe for a happy day

Take a little dash of cold water,
A little leaven of prayer,
A bit of sunshine gold
Dissolved in morning air.
Add to your meal some merriment.
Add thought for kith and kin.
And then as a prime ingredient,
A plenty of work thrown in.
Flavor it with essence of love
and a dash of play.
Let the dear Old Book
And a glance above
Complete the well spent day.

—from the Ladies Aid Society
20th Century Cookbook
First ME Church, Casey, Illinois
1907

Recipe for quarreling

Take a root of sassafras, and steep in a pint of water. Put it in a bottle. When your husband comes in to quarrel, fill your mouth with it and hold until he goes away. It's a sure cure.

—Lorene Newberry

Edible Indian gifts

Many of our now unique and taken-for-granted edibles were first introduced to the white settlers through the few, slim threads of cultural exchange which existed between the two groups.

Included in this list are sassafras and ginseng tea, succotash, pecans, sweet potatoes, man of the earth (Indian potato plant of the morning glory family), tomatoes, melons, corn pudding, peppers, tobacco, chocolate, clambakes, peanuts and popcorn, buckeyes, acorns, waterlily tubers and seeds, purple milkweed shoots, gluey black moss, slugs, grasshoppers, eelskins, raw buffalo blubber, brains, liver and lungs, bone marrow, boiled dog, and warm blood.

—from Bobbie Goodman
Greenup, Illinois

Acid indigestion

Folk healers recommend the eating of raw potatos, turnips and/or alfalfa sprouts for acidic stomach relief. All the vegetables are high alkaline foods and aid in neutralizing stomach acid.

Miracles with garlic

Garlic is an old and tested remedy for the control of blood pressure and was believed by many to have been a fine preventative for the effects of old age. Use it as a flavor and heart enhancer in soup, salads, casseroles or eat it raw. You can mask the strong flavor of the garlic by chewing it together with sprigs of parsley (parsley is a natural breath freshener). Because of its breath freshening properties, parsley is frequently given as a garnish for entrees served in restaurants.

Garlic smoke is used by Iranians for the cure of hemorrhoids. Raw garlic is dropped onto an extremly hot brick placed in the bottom of a hot kettle. Smoke vapors are produced as the garlic begins to burn. The patient must breathe these vapors for 30 minutes, once a day in a three-day period.

A well ground clove of garlic boiled with a glass of milk is used in the East to insure a relaxed night's sleep.

For acne problems, boil several cloves of garlic in a very small amount of water. Mash the garlic and mix a small amount of honey to the moist and mashed garlic. Apply the paste to the affected area, and cover with gauze when retiring for the night. Wash with tincture of green soap upon waking in the morning. Repeat as often as is necessary.

Insomnia

Make a tea composed of one teaspoon Valerian root to eight ounces of water. Boil this mixture for a few minutes and let it steep for 15 minutes. Flavor the tea with lemon juice or honey and sip slowly 30 minutes before retiring.

Kidney keepers

Obtain a tea of one tablespoon flaxseeds to eight ounces of water, boiling together for 10 minutes. Allow the tea to cool and drink one-half cup of tea every three hours. Use only freshly squeezed lemon juice for flavor.

Or try boiling the peelings from apples until the liquid resembles syrup. Sip the tea throughout the day.

Arthritis stress relief

Pine needle baths have been common to both Europeans and Asians since distant times for the relief of arthritis pain. Such fragrant baths refresh and thereby ease the stress of the pain.

If bathing does not suit your fancy, do as Northern Europeans have done. Fill a canvas bag with birch or oak leaves, or pine needles. Put your arm or leg into the bag, leaving no openings and rest comfortably with it for at least 60 minutes. Body heat will build up causing the pores to open. Leaf vapors tend to sooth and relax aching areas.

Asthma

Grate eight ounces of fresh horseradish. Mix with the juice from three lemons. Store in a cold place until it becomes a thick paste. Recommended dosage is one half teaspoon in the morning and one half teaspoon in the afternoon.

Bladder troubles

Several teas are recommended for bolstering weak bladders. Boil the dried silks from one ear of corn in two cups of water. Strain tea before drinking.

Or combine the benefits of St. John's wort and centaury herbs with water and boil gently. Strain and flavor the tea with lemon juice or honey.

Dental tips

Rub the teeth and gums with slices of fresh strawberries to remove unwanted tarter. Be sure not to defeat your purpose by making sure you use unsugared berries.

To temporarily relieve the pain of toothaches, apply the juice of the aloe vera plant or rub the oil of cloves on the gums or suck on whole cloves to benefit from their healing juices.

Liver lovers

When enjoying the fresh strawberries soon to be available in the coming season, remember that these tasty treats are considered to be very beneficial for the liver.

Nerve soothers

Music has been utilized as an effective cure for nervous tension ever since man has been cabable of producing it. But only soft and gentle music is recommended. Modern rock music is not a cure.

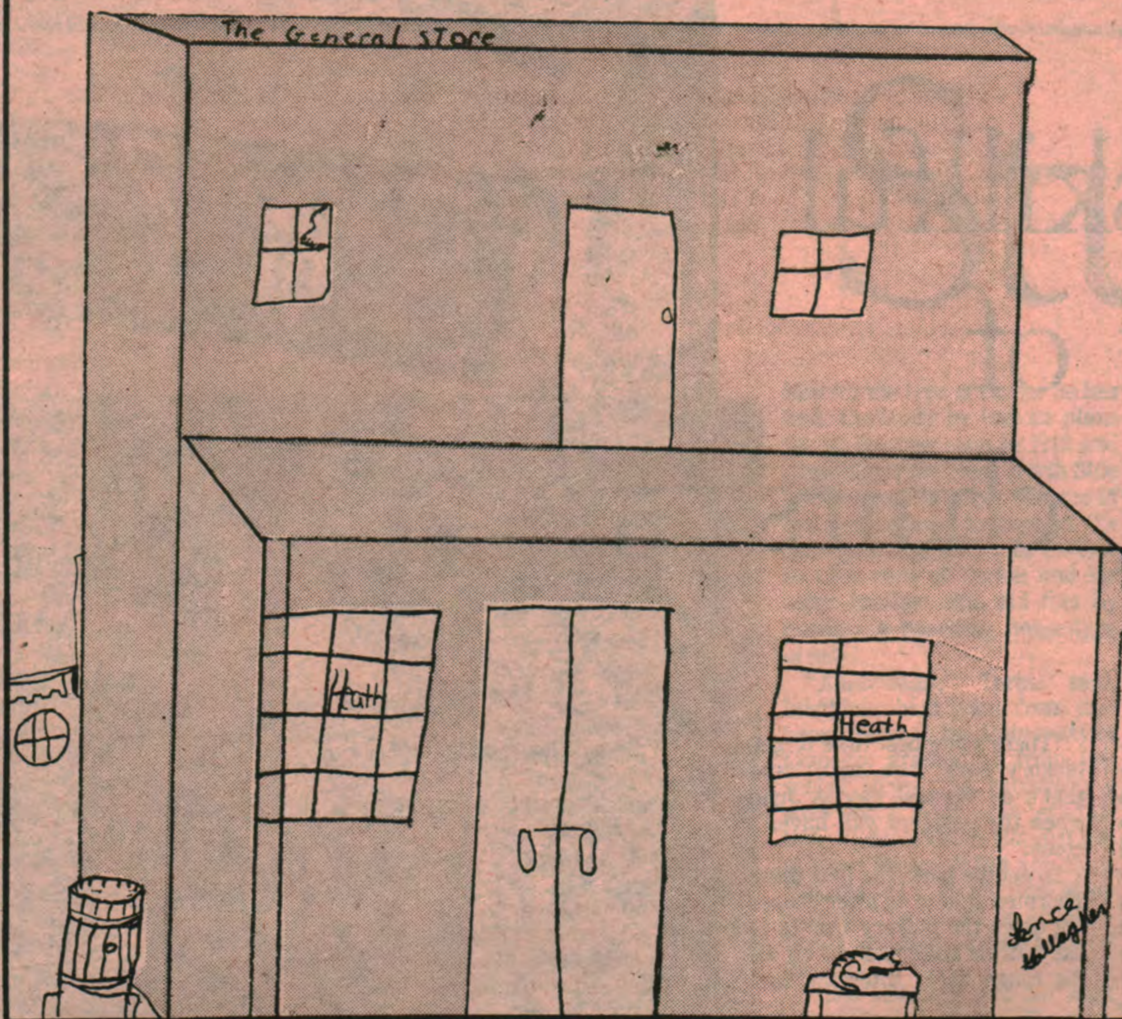
Nervous tension is, in part, caused by a lack of calcium in the body. This explains why drinking a glass of milk can help to relax a person. Turnips can also be a good source of this necessary mineral.

Poison ivy and oak

The miracle of golden seal herb is widely used to sooth the irritations of poison ivy and poison oak. Make a tea from one quarter teaspoon golden seal and one cup of boiling water. Cool and flavor with lemon juice or honey. Drink for internal peace.

Also make a body rub of one teaspoon golden seal to two cups of boiled water. Cool the liquid and rub it over the affected areas. Allow it to dry and do not wash off until absolutely necessary. Repeat as often as needed.

—referenced from
The Pocket Encyclopedia of
Natural Folk Remedies, 1979
Globe Communications Corp.



Twelve-year-old Lance Gallagher, Hinsdale, drew a picture of the Bellair General Store two years ago when he spent the summer with Tales staff members. Being in a small town was a big change for Lance, and he wanted to put his impressions on paper.

Did you know ...

Greenup is 150 years old this year

Greenup takes its name from William C. Greenup, who first came to Illinois in 1811 and settled in Kaskaskia. He was extremely active in state government. From 1812—1818 he served in the House of Representatives, the first State Constitutional Convention, and the Senate.

In 1819 he surveyed the site of the first Illinois State Capitol in Vandalia (so named by Greenup, with "van" signifying "vanguard", the leader of a unit, and "dalia" standing for "dale").

Greenup (employed by the United States Government) became chief officer and superintendent for the building of the National Road through Illinois in 1830.

The Barbour Inn was constructed near the Embarrass River Bridge in 1831 as a direct result of the building of the highway. In 1832 Greenup proved to be a "partner" in the building and operation of a mill located near the Inn. Consequently, Greenup spent much of his time by this vital river crossing.

In 1834 Greenup purchased 20 arces of undivided public land and together with his "partner" and friend, Captain Barbour, donated this land to be platted for what is now known as the town of Greenup.

When the National Road opened in 1837, Greenup became a thriving town and the center of trade for surrounding areas within a 30-mile radius.

Greenup, once a part of Coles County, seperated from this county and became the County Seat of Cumberland County for one year in 1843.

In these early days of growth, Greenup boasted of having a zoo (which provided the necessary background to lead four of the zoo's youthful assistants into careers related to the care and study of animals and nature) and festive agricultural fairs (where, in 1926, Ford automobiles were given away free to fair goers).

Greenup is 150 years old this year and will be celebrating its birthday on May 26-27 beginning at 9 a.m. in the business district.

Events will include a Souvenir Search, Sesqui Sprint, flea market, historical demonstrations, petting zoo, a 1909 "re—opening" of the Ewart Opera House with many more hours of good entertainment being provided along with lots of good food being served, and souvenirs, arts and crafts for sale.

A parade through town will be featured on Saturday at 2 p.m. All interested individuals, clubs, organizations and businesses are invited to particapate.

For parade information, contact Marilyn Barkley: Box 381, Greenup, Illinois 62428. Phone (217) 923-3086. For additional Sesquicentiennial information, contact Bobbie Goodman: P.O. Box 396, Greenup, Illinois 62428. Phone (217) 923-3255. Or contact Bev Kun: P.O. Box 715, Greenup, Illinois 62428. Phone (217) 923—3606.

—from Bobbie Goodman
Sesquicentennial Coordinator
Greenup, Illinois

James Brothers in Crawford County

A daguerreotype picture found among the papers collected by the Girl Scouts of Palestine and brought to the Robinson "Daily News" office in Palestine was tentatively identified as that of Frank James and his wife. (Date uncertain.)

Various newspaper articles attest to the fact the James Brothers were in Crawford County. One account tells of the gang being holed up in a house on Quaker Lane, then going to the notorious Lindsay Island in the Wabash River where stolen goods brought in by boat were received and distributed.

Jackson James was one of the earliest settlers in Licking Township. The house on Quaker Lane, used by the James gang, was located near the present Hickory Holler camping ground.

The Lindsay of Lindsay Island had married a James. People remembered seeing Frank James at the old Robinson racetrack where he was the starter of the horse races. Relatives are buried in Crawford County, and descendants still live here.

Although it is thought that Jesse James was murdered by Bob Ford, a member of his own gang, a booklet put out by The James Museum at Stanton, Missouri, purports the murder as a hoax. It contends the murdered man, who resembled Jesse, was a spy for the Pinkerton detectives.

According to this account, Bob Ford was pardoned by the governor of Missouri who was a party to the hoax. The booklet claims Jesse and Frank James were first cousins to the Ford boys, Mrs. Serelda Dalton James was a sister of the mother of Bob and Charley Ford, and that if Bob Ford had killed his cousin there would have been a family feud.

This booklet further states Jesse James took the name of J. Frank Dalton after his supposed murder and lived to be 104 years old.

—researched by
Mrs. Elva Tennis
Flat Rock, Illinois

Highway history

A 1961 Chicago "Daily Tribune" article quoted Illinois historian Clarence Phillips as having reached the conclusion "that buffalo were a little smarter than the engineers who laid out highways where people kill each other with automobiles. Route No. 1 through Illinois is about the same as the road laid out by buffalo way back before Adlai Stevenson began to run for President. The engineers didn't think of it until long after the buffalo did."

—from July 26, 1961,
Chicago "Daily Tribune"

Route No. 1 from Gordon to Trimble was reported to have been built in record time. The following comes from a clipping dated July 22, 1936: "Road building 110 degrees in the shade and no shade for the workers."

The story tells of the completion of the road from Gordon to Trimble. People came to watch New York State Indian, Jim Brown, and his partner, Forrest Duzan, of Marshall lay brick. Jim Brown was laying 7½-pound bricks at the rate of 5,250 per hour for an eight-hour day. Brown claimed a record of 63,000 bricks laid in one eight-hour day.

The two men laid the bricks while a team of 12 carriers were kept busy bringing up more bricks. The carriers were hard pushed to get the bricks to the bricklayers, who found time to stand up, smoke and get a drink. The 12 brick carriers were relieved at noon and a new shift put on while Brown and Duzan kept working.

"The Lost Slab Road" located in Honey Creek Township some two miles east of Martin Township line and three miles north of the Lawrence County line, was built by the State of Illinois beginning in 1915. It was built, section by section, to form a square corner of pavement out in the middle of nowhere. And that is how the road aquired its name.

According to one elderly citizen, "It started from nowhere and ended just as abruptly." The state's engineers must have missed the trusty buffalo trace at this point, never to reconnect with it again.

—researched by
Mrs. Elva Tennis
Flat Rock, Illinois

Teachers' rules 1872

1.) Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.
2.) Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3.) Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
4.) Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5.) After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6.) Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7.) Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8.) Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.
9.) The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty—five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.

1915

1.) You will not marry during the term of your contract.
2.) You are not to keep company with men.
3.) You must be home between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. unless attending a school function.
4.) You may not loiter downtown in ice cream stores.
5.) You may not travel beyond the city limits unless you have the permission of the chairman of the board.
6.) You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother.
7.) You may not smoke cigarettes.
8.) You may not dress in bright colors.
9.) You may under no circumstances dye your hair.
10) You must wear at least two petticoats.
11) Your dresses must not be any shorter than two inches above the ankle.
12) To keep the school room neat and clean, you must: sweep the floor at least once daily, scrub the floor at least once a week with hot, soapy water, clean the blackboards at least once a day, and start the fire a 7 a.m. so the room will be warm by 8 a.m.

—from Chicago Sun-Times
School Services Dept.
NIE Focus, January 1982

The skillful art of caning chairs

by Jim Elliott

The first layer of the hickory bark is wrapped around the chair bottom's frame. Thornton uses a clamp to hold down the last strip of the bark. Later, when the bark has dried, the clamps won't be needed.

Thornton Stephens is a 93-year-old Crawford County resident who has done many things in his long life. He has raised a family, farmed, written and told stories, built chairs, made canes—to name a few. And at a time when many people choose to slow down, Stephens is keeping up his pace.

"I'm near 93 now," he said to the people who had gathered to watch him demonstrate how to cane a chair at the Tales Art Show last fall.

"To see, I have to wear spectacles; to hear, I have to wear a hearin' aid; to walk, I use a cane, to keep, my heart a beatin' I have to wear a pacemaker; and to eat, I have to wear these teeth," Stephens said, sticking out his false teeth for everyone to see. "But the Almighty has kept me around because he wanted people to see me so as not to pattern themselves after me."

While people around him began to chuckle, a grin spread across Thornton's face. He gave a "har—har" and went back to his work.

The tree bark Stephens used to make the chair bottom was from a hickory tree. It was in long strands about an inch wide, rolled up like a roll of tape and tied together with a piece of string.

"There's one best time to get hickory bark," he said, "and that's on the last day in June when the chiggers still haven't come."

To get the bark, the first thing Thornton said to do after chopping down the hickory tree is to use a draw knife and cut off all the rough bark. After the surface has been smoothed down, chalk lines are drawn down the bark to have a pattern to cut on. Then, using a sharp knife, a cut is made along the chalk lines. This is a "hard job." Stephens said he doesn't do it anymore.

"...a man offered me $400 for one of my chairs once, but I turned him down. That's the day when two fools met."

"I get my hickory bark by keepin' what's left over from what people give me when they want me to do a chair fer them," Stephens said, grinning and laughing.

Once the bark is off the tree though, the next step is to let it soak in warm soapy water until it feels and handles like thick leather. Soaking makes the bark more flexible and allows it to bend while weaving the chair bottom.

When the bark is malleable enough, you can start weaving the chair bottom. This was the process Stephens demonstrated at the art show. He brought a chair, several rolls of bark, a hammer, knife, string and assorted other tools that were necessary to make the chair bottom.

During the demonstration, Thornton told a few stories and talked to the people who had stopped by to watch. He has built 19 chairs himself and put bottoms on about 40 others.

"There was one time when a man offered me $400 fer one of my chairs, but I turned him down," he said, laughing as he worked at weaving the bark together. "Yep, that's the day when two fools met."

To make the seat, Stephens wove the long strips of hickory bark around the chair bottom's frame. He tied one end of the bark to the back leg of the chair with a piece of string. Then he wrapped the bark around the bottom's frame until he had gone from the left side to the right side of it. With the bottom covered with bark, going from front to back, he began to weave the bark between the first strips, from side to side.

Thornton continued weaving until the strip of hickory bark ran out, which it did on a few occasions. He took out another roll of bark and tied its end to the end of the bark wrapped around the chair bottom. He did this until the bottom was filled with strips of hickory bark, going from side to side as well as from front to back.

"What I'll do next," Stephens said, "is to take this home and put some wet rags on it and let it set overnight. That way I can push more bark in there and make the seat better."

The more bark there is in the seat, the sturdier it will be. When the hickory bark is woven together as tightly as possible, Thornton said he let the seat dry out and shrink. As the hickory bark drys out, it produces a strong good-looking seat.

Someone asked how long one of his seats would last.

"Well," Stephens said, "that depends on what you do with it. If you get up on it to check and see if the clock is right, then it won't last very long. But if you just sit your backend on it, and nothing else, why then it will last longer than you will."

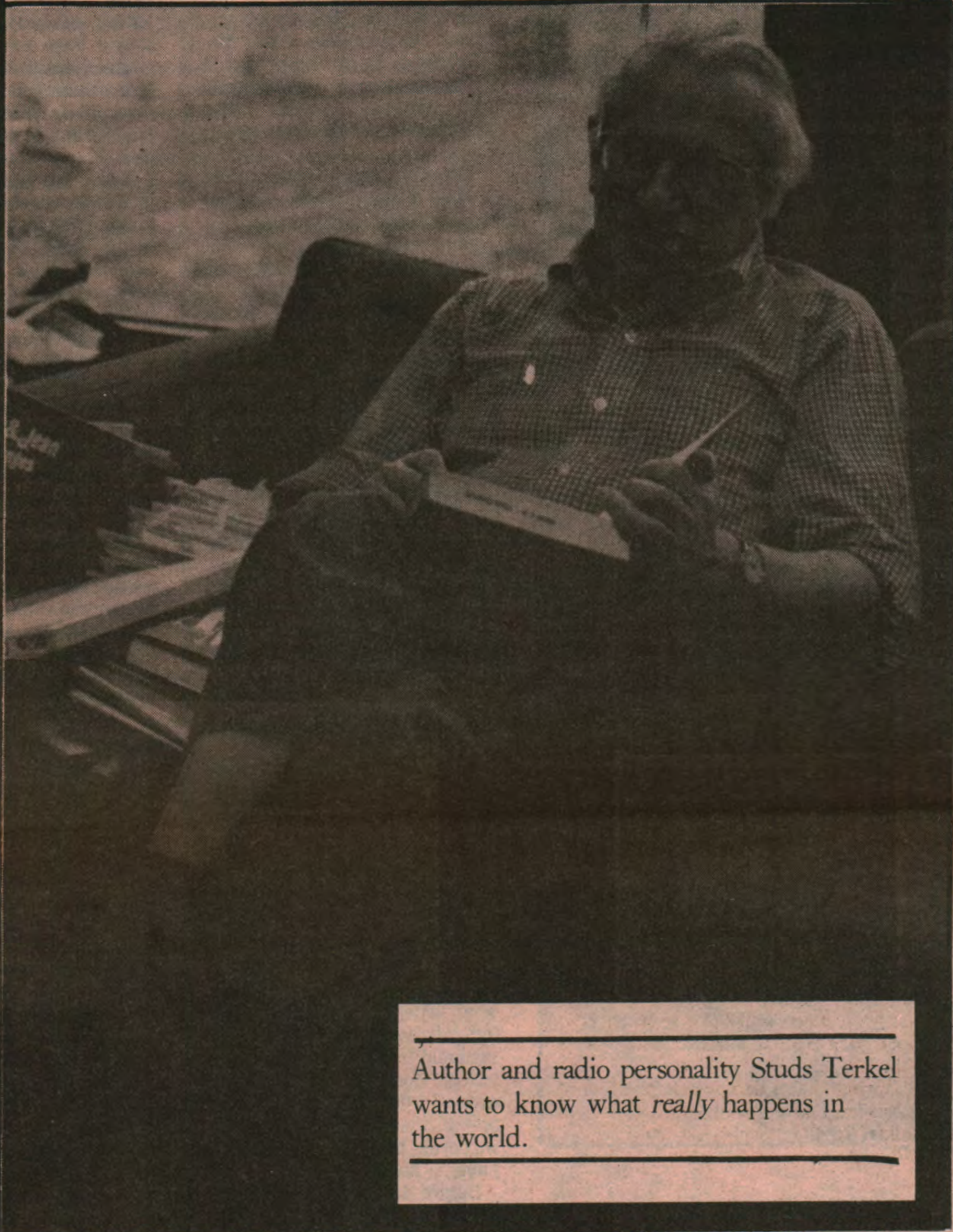
Thornton said he learned how to make chairs, and their bottoms, from his uncle who had worked in a chair factory near Hoguetown. But Thornton said he did it for fun, not for money.

"I like to do this in the summer time when I can get out onto the grass," he said. "I reckon that this (the work he did) is worth 'bout $40, but I don't suspect that anyone would give that fer it anymore."

For Thornton Stephens that makes little difference. There is more than money involved in much of what he does.

Thornton weaves the second layer of bark on the chair bottom, from left to right, between the strips of bark running from front to back. He uses a knife to push the bark closer together to make the seat sturdier.

Studs on Studs



Author and radio personality Studs Terkel wants to know what *really* happens in the world.

by Ray Elliott

If Chicago radio broadcaster and author Studs Terkel had lived during the time of Christ, he would have wanted to have a tape recorder with him. The 71-year-old Terkel has carved an international reputation by recording in their own words what it was like for ordinary people who lived through the Great Depression and who work and dream in America today.

"In their own words you capture what was it like. What was it like," Terkel said, biting each word as he sat in his eighth floor office overlooking Lake Michigan, talking about his work in oral history, "for ordinary people? Even now I ask the question: What was it like?

"What was it like at the foot of Calvary that day Christ walked up the hill and was crucified? Who was down there? Who were these people? We know there was a subversive group called the Christians, an underground group the Roman Empire thought was a sect.

"And so there they were," he said, his voice dropping to a whisper, "some were hysterical, some were heroic, some helped him carry the cross. Others informed. There was the young Roman soldier. Who was he, this—he was a kid, you know. What was it like down there? It would be good if I had a tape recorder."

That's the approach Terkel has used since the early 60s as he crisscrossed the United States, interviewing people and writing books like "Working, People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do," "Hard Times, An Oral History of the Great Depression," "Division Street: America" and "American Dreams, Lost and Found."

"Well, here," he said, waving his ever-present cigar in the air as he talked, "I suppose I use this as my credo: Histories down through the centuries have been written about big people, quote unquote, kings and generals and presidents and bankers and dictators. Famous names, powerful names. But what about those anonymous multimillions through the years who are not known, who are the life-light for those powerful people?

"There's a (Bertolt) Brecht poem I use, part of it, to open 'Working': 'Who built the seven towers of Thebes?' When the Chinese Wall was built, where did the masons go for lunch? You know? When Caesar conquered Gaul, was there not even a cook in the army?

"And we've all read about the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Sir Francis Drake conquered it, and England ruled the seas. We read when the Armada sank that King Phillip wept. Phillip of Spain. Were there no other tears?

"When Caesar conquered Gaul, was there not even a cook in the army?"

"Or 1066. William the Conqueror conquered the Saxons. Right? The Normans conquered the Saxons. What did that mean to the Saxon peasants? What was it like in that little hut up there? Did they start speaking French or what?"

Nothing in Terkel's background seemingly prepared him for the type of career he has had. Certainly he had no plans for it. He was born in 1912 and grew up on the Near North Side of Chicago. His father became ill and was unable to support the family. It was left to his mother to take care of Terkel and his older brother. She did this by running a boarding house-type of hotel.

"Aaahhaaaa," Terkel said, laughing about going from that background to the University of Chicago, graduating from law school there and becoming a soap opera actor after graduation. "I don't know. It's just one of those things. When you think of it, my life is an attrition of accidents. The result of an attrition of accidents. I didn't plan it this way.

"Law school, I just did what was expected of me. Clarence Darrow and all that. I went to law school, and I didn't like it. I had a corporation law, then I had contracts. They drove me crazy. And there was a depression. Not that I was interested in practicing. I passed the bar, though."

Although he passed the bar examination, Terkel explained that it took him two tries. The first exam was yes-and-no-type questions. Simple sounding perhaps. But he hadn't taken the cram courses in preparation and was in the minority of those who flunked. A few months later, he took a second exam, made up of essay questions, and passed.

"Yes, but-on-the-other-hand questions," he said, lighting his cigar again and tossing the match into an ashtray sitting on a chair a few feet in front of him. "Well, I'm good at that. Not knowing the answer, I could fake it."

Terkel took a civil service job in Washington for a while. He didn't like it because "you just count things." So he came back to Chicago and started doing gangster roles in soap operas.

"That happened because I joined a theater group," he said. "I didn't mean to be an actor, either. I liked going to the theater. And one of the guys in the project with me—it was a New Deal project called FERA, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and we did statistics—was directing this theater group, a labor theater group called the Chicago Repertoire Group.

"I came to watch it. He said, 'Get on stage. We need a guy to do a small role.' I did and he said, 'Hey, you're pretty good.' And then I did a bigger role. That's how I became an actor. Later the guy said, 'Why don't you try out for some of those soap operas?' I auditioned and won the part—eight weeks.

"One thing led to another. The guy liked me. He was a fan of the labor theater group and liked the way I talk. I like jazz and folk music. He asked me to do one of these disc jockey—the word disc jockey wasn't used then—things. And so I did it."

One thing led to another in Terkel's life until he got involved in another New Deal project, the WPA (Works Project Administration) Federal Writer's Project. That played an important role in his future. In fact, it changed his life.

"I mean I wrote," Terkel said, crossing his legs and exposing socks with a large diamond-shaped design on the front side of each one which covered his legs to mid-calf. "I never wrote before. Most guys were working on the state guide. Our particular division did radio scripts. We did some great stuff. So did the theater project. Orson Welles and John Houseman were in that project. And others. Artists. You find some of the work they did in the post office."

The phone rang once. Twice.

"But the Writer's—I'll tell you about it in a minute," Terkel said as he picked up the phone receiver. "Hello. Unhuh. Yeah, Peter. Unhuh. I don't know if I can go. When is it? Ooohh, I'll be working at something. I'm working. I won't be able to come to it, but I wish you luck on it.

"He said, 'Get on stage. We need a guy to do a small role.'"

"Naaa, naaa. Where you having it? Oh, no kidding? Well, if I can. See, I'm working—would you believe it? I'm working on a movie with Jane Fonda. Haaa. It's a bit role; it's a cab driver. See, the director of the film was the director of a show I did years ago called 'Stud's Place,' a TV show. Dan Petrie, his name is.

"They're doing it in Chicago. It's called 'The Dollmaker,' the story of—a very good novel, came out of the 40s—the migration of an Appalachian family to Detroit, and she's playing this woman. And so there's this scene, you see—he opens with this, oh, philosophical cab driver. He said, 'You do it.' And I said, 'Okay.' It's just a day. That's April 11. I know that. But I have no idea how long it'll go, you know. All right. Good luck. How's the performance?"

While the person on the other end of the line answered, Terkel held his hand over the mouthpiece of the phone and said, "See, they're doing a play, these young people, 'Bury the Dead.' That's the anti-war play I'm talking about, and that's one of the plays our group did years ago, the Chicago Repertoire Group. That's why he—

"Did you find that piece of music? Does it fit? Was I right? There's kind of a refrain there, you follow? It's—is it? It's the one that if I heard it, I'd know. It's when the guys get up, when the dead rise. It's going pretty good, huh? Great. Great. Will you do scenes from it at the benefit, is that it? Oh, that's terrific. Oh, if I can, I'd love to. Send me the invitation, the release. Good luck, Peter. Okay. You bet. So long."

The telephone conversation seems to be typical of Terkel's interest in young people and their theater productions. Terri Hallowell, Palos Hills, met Terkel when she was a student at College of DuPage, Glen

Continued on page 17

Hard work, professional pride

Moran Keller's printing career spans hand-set type to computers

by Vanessa Faurie

Times were beginning to get hard when 11-year-old Moran Keller was looking for a way to make a few dollars in 1929. Unlike so many other people in the country at the time, he was able to find one. He got a job carrying newspapers for the "Robinson Daily News" at 3 cents a customer or a little over two dollars a week. The newspaper cost 15 cents a week then.

Fifty-five years later, Keller is head of the pressroom at the "Daily News" and owner of a commercial print shop. His strong belief in pride and hard work hasn't lost its momentum.

"You got to realize that things have really changed," Keller said as he sat in the living room of his home just south of Robinson on a cool summer evening. One of his large, weathered hands clasped the edge of the couch arm; the other rested at his side. Small tufts of dark- and gray-colored hair set on each side of his head. And the lines in his face are convincing enough that he's worked hard in his life.

He doesn't mince words. And he doesn't pretend to be modest. Some people could mistake his pride for orneriness.

An apprenticeship then for a journeyman printer lasted years, he said—sometimes as many as 10 or 12.

"I averaged 60 to 65 hours a week when I first worked for 'em," he said. "I helped with the men and took papers to the post office, done errands, helped around the press, cleaned up—all that sort o' crap. An' it was crap, too. Even cleaned the johns, y' know."

Before Robinson had as many houses and people as it has today, Keller carried papers north on Cross Street, to the high school and then over west. He had 72 or 73 customers.

Sometimes people couldn't pay because of the hard times. Keller had to pay 12 cents a week for the papers whether or not his customers paid him.

He often had to work in all kinds of bad weather with very few clothes to keep him warm and dry. "It's a wonder I didn't die," he said.

By 1933, Keller was an "amateur" printer. He learned to use hand-set type (one letter at a time) and the Linotype machine (one line at a time), which was used for advertising and headlines.

"They were printing the paper on an old flatbed press that could only print two pages, one side at a time," he said. "I had one out here in the barn until late last summer that I picked up from the 'Hutsonville Herald.' That was the last letterpress-printed paper that I know of in this part of Illinois."

That old two-page Meihle press was removed about 1930, and a Cox-o-type eight-page single action press was installed.

Fifty years ago, an apprenticeship for a journeyman printer lasted years, he said—sometimes as many as 10 or 12.

"You didn't get taken under their wings," Keller said. "They really didn't want you around 'cause everybody was afraid they'd lose their job. But o' course I was just a kid. They call 'em printer's devils when they start out. I would say by '35 I had learned how to set type fairly decent."

Keller left the "Daily News" in 1942 for a job in LaPorte, Indiana. Then he spent three years in the army—most of the time overseas. When he got back, he returned to his Indiana job. But he said his wife never liked it, so they moved back to Robinson.

"After the war, y' know, things started changin'," Keller said. "I come back. I'm really dug into that job an' learning fast. I don't know. It seemed to me like everything just really went together good.

"Kent (Lewis, owner of the "Daily News" then) come back from the service," he said. "He wanted to know when I was coming back to work. I said, 'I don't know that I am. I had a good job where I was an' paid a lot more.' He said, 'Well, we want y' to come back.'

"Things were lookin' up for the paper," Keller said. "War time, you know. People got interested in reading an' all. We come back from the service, and everything's aboomin' an' jumpin'. GIs all home an' wantin' a job, housing, and all that sort o' thing. So I went back to work, and we started putting in better equipment."

It wasn't long after Keller returned to the "Daily News" as a printer that he was being consulted about new printing equipment. A used Duplex Model E press was installed that was supposed to print 5500-5700 papers in an hour.

By 1948, two years later, the "Daily News" moved across the street to a new building (its present location at 302 S. Cross Street).

"I always worked on everything that ever come along," Keller said. "I think Kent an' I always had a pretty good understanding. He must've seen something in me that he needed. That sounds boastful,

"I've been trying for years an' I still can't type," he said. "But I can still set type. That was true printing."

but I don't think it is. The equipment that we've bought, the way it's been maintained, our not missing an issue—it just bears out that somebody has to know what they're doing."

To be a good printer, Keller said a person had to know about setting type, punctuation, spelling and reading as well as the mechanical aspects. He also had to be pretty strong. Some of the metal plates containing all the letters and symbols could weigh over 100 pounds.

Keller: "I always worked on everything that ever come along..."

"In the old days, most of the printers weren't exactly what you'd call sober," Keller added and smiled. "Sorry, I don't drink. I used to smoke. I don't anymore. However, most of 'em were pretty dedicated to their work.

"But it was always kind of one of those things that they said a printer, well, he just had to drink or you couldn't live around 'im," he said. "Ornery lot, as far as that goes, but most of 'em were pretty dedicated.

"The equipment that we've bought, the way it's been maintained, our not missing an issue—it just bears out that somebody has to know what they're doing."

When Keller took over the pressroom in 1953, he said he stopped the drinking in the shop. "They'd go off the job an' go sit over in the taverns for 30 to 40 minutes while people were waiting for type off of the Linotype or somethin'." He gathered them together and told them they'd have to start settling for coffee or Pepsi during their breaks.

Keller thought about why anyone would ever want to be a printer with all the troubles that can occur. "It is beyond me," he said and laughed. "I don't know why anyone would want to do this.

"The only thing I can think of is meager compensation and pride in my work," Keller said. "But I always liked it. Crazy 'bout it. To be 65 and still at it since I was 11—that's a long time."

Over the years Keller has accumulated and worked on dozens of printing machines. The shop next to his home is so filled with equipment that walking space is very limited. Presses dating back to 1900 are still being used.

The old Linotype sounds like a blowtorch as the 500-degree-plus casting metal is molded into each line of type. And the pieces rattle and smack together as they form words. The rollers saturated with black ink on the flatbed press coat the type. Then the paper is pressed to the type. It sounds like someone breathing in and out through an amplifier.

"The speed of the old Coxotype was supposed to be around 2500 papers an hour," Keller said. "But it wouldn't do it. An' it had a jillion web breaks (the paper breaks in two).

"When that paper breaks," he said, "naturally it winds up around those inking rollers and on the press. Then you pick it off a little bit at a time—if it ain't clear up to your armpits and goin' in your eyes an' pretty near everything else. Then o' course the younger fellas always got that job, you know."

Keller said there were usually five people working in the "Daily News" print shop in the early days. Two men ran the Linotype, two men worked "on the floor" (setting type, putting pages together and running them off the press) and one printer's devil did whatever else had to be done.

The pressmen rolled proof sheets of the Linotype and took it to the front office for proofreading. The paper was usually six pages then; sometimes it was four or eight. Keller said the old Buffalo Bill comic strip was printed at that time.

In 1964, the "Daily News" was first printed on a faster offset press, which is very different from the old letterpress. It's called offset because the paper never touches the plate. The ink from the plate transfers onto a rubber blanket, which then transfers the image to the paper.

As equipment changed and improved, the overall look of the newspaper also changed. Printers now use several colors and typestyles. Word processing computers type 50 lines per minute, while Linotypes ran only 13-14 lines each minute.

"I don't think there are many printers left," Keller said. "Not in a sense. It really isn't printing; it's a duplication process. And really, our computerized typesetting isn't setting type. If you can run a typewriter, you might be able to run the computer.

"I've been trying for years an' I still can't type," he said. "But I can still set type. That was true printing."

Keller's connections and years of experience have come in handy when there's a problem with a press. If one of them breaks down, the paper doesn't get out. So they have to be fairly dependable machines.

"There's been a few times when we've had to kind of pull some strings to get somebody to help us," Keller said. "We bent a roller one time, and Marathon straightened it for us."

Keller called a friend he went to school with who worked at Marathon. The press was fixed with only a 30-minute delay. But no matter how much time was needed, more than likely Keller would've been right there to see the problem through. He feels a personal responsibility to print a good product.

"I don't think there are many printers left," Keller said.

"If I didn't I wouldn't be there," he said. "Attitude is really important. I was always pretty proud of our paper. I was proud, too, of the fact that we could keep things goin'. We could put out a paper every day, and it was a nice lookin' paper. It was on time; people could depend on it."

With all of the changes and innovations Keller has seen in the newspaper business, he has often thought about what will happen in the next 55 years.

"I think the newspapers as such are going to change," Keller said. "I don't know about areas like ours. We are kind of backwoodsy really. We just as well be honest. And glad of it, aren't we? But I think we may see a time, an' it's already here, that they can place a newspaper page on a television screen. This would be a thing for the cities more than an area like ours. I think we die a little bit hard."

Keller expects to work for a long time to come. In the old days, he had to have a job to get started in the trade. Now it's more of a choice.

"I always wanted to do the best I could with what I did," he said. "In fact, I wanted to be better. So I'll go ahead workin' for as long as I'm able or until I'm knocked dead, whichever comes first."

Apprentice printers weren't taken under the old printer's wing, according to Moran Keller. But through hard work, determination and pride, Keller was soon able to move up to professional status—a position of excellence he likes to maintain.

A letter from Aunt Annie

Dear folks,

How you folks been doin'? 'Course I've been real busy with spring cleaning and getting ready for gardening, you know. Things have been real busy around Bellair lately, too.

Them Tales folks butchered again and this time I decided I'd really watch them shoot the hog, bleed it, scald it, scrape it and gut it. I never had the stomach for it before.

What I really noticed was the young farmers learning from older farmers, all the youngsters playing together and even a politician helping with the butchering. Now inside the store, ladies from the community visited together while they was cooking and serving good home-cooked food to all.

These Tales doings are always a lot of good ole hard work. Work that isn't always noticed, especially if you'd never seen the Bellair Store.

Why, I remember when them Tales folks bought them old buildings. They sure was a mess. The old store building had plaster and paint falling off the walls and ceiling, the floor boards was warped and rotten, the windows was patched and broken and the steep ole roof leaked.

But by golly, the last couple of times I been out there, the old store had a new look about it. Pictures cover the walls and velvet cloth covers the tables and counters. With flowers in the windows, it's a warm, friendly place to pass away a day.

I expect they could do a whole lot more if they had more money. Folks seem to help out when they can. So do I. You might think about helping them out a bit, if you haven't yet.

My goodness, all that good food they put out at the butchering—sausage sandwiches and hot coffee for breakfast, with all the trimmings at noontime. There was some busy folks at the general store that day.

And my goodness, I didn't tell you about the art show they had, did I? Guess I forgot. Well, back before Thanksgiving they had it and, boy, was I surprised. The old store really looked like an art gallery.

There were pen and ink drawings, oil paintings, some paintings of general stores on pieces of wood, calligraphy work, a restored antique doll, wood carvings and wood burnings, too. I don't know who all had things there, but there was a bunch of them.

Now you probably don't remember, but there are some mighty fine artists around these parts. Even some people I never knew had exhibits. There was Helen Graham, Linda Bailey, Ruby Cronk, Jane Dart, Denise Shumaker, Jackie Jordan, Dorthea Barnbrook and several others. They had works you could buy and some just to admire.

And then back around the last part of September, Indian summer time, Tales had that 'Ennis and the Outlaws' bunch for a concert. That Ennis is a real cute feller. But Ennis wasn't the only band there. They had two gospel groups and another country band. They even played some of that rock music for the younger folks.

Had quite a crowd, too. I know Tales folks were sure busy. Why, I bet that Neal Cravens cooked more than 500 hamburgers on a big ole grill that afternoon. And, of course, they had them good homemade pies and cakes I like so well. Even had some ice cream nutty bars like they have at the county fair.

You know, it was just like a fair, Ole Happy Jack Knowles who used to have a kids' show on television back in the 1950s had some games for the kids. And, boy, was they really having some fun tossing eggs to each other, eating watermelon, seeing who could blow the biggest bubbles, running potato sack races and what have you.

Yes, you know, I always have some fun and some good visits with all the neighbors when Tales has a doings, but you know what I admire most is that everyone works together for these doings and then everyone shares the fun, enjoyment and work.

Just can't beat the good ole country ways for having a good time. You let me know what you're up to now. I'll try to write sooner next time.

Love,
Your Aunt Annie

With other entrants in Happy Jack Knowles' Bubble-blowing Contest looking on, one girl practices her technique.

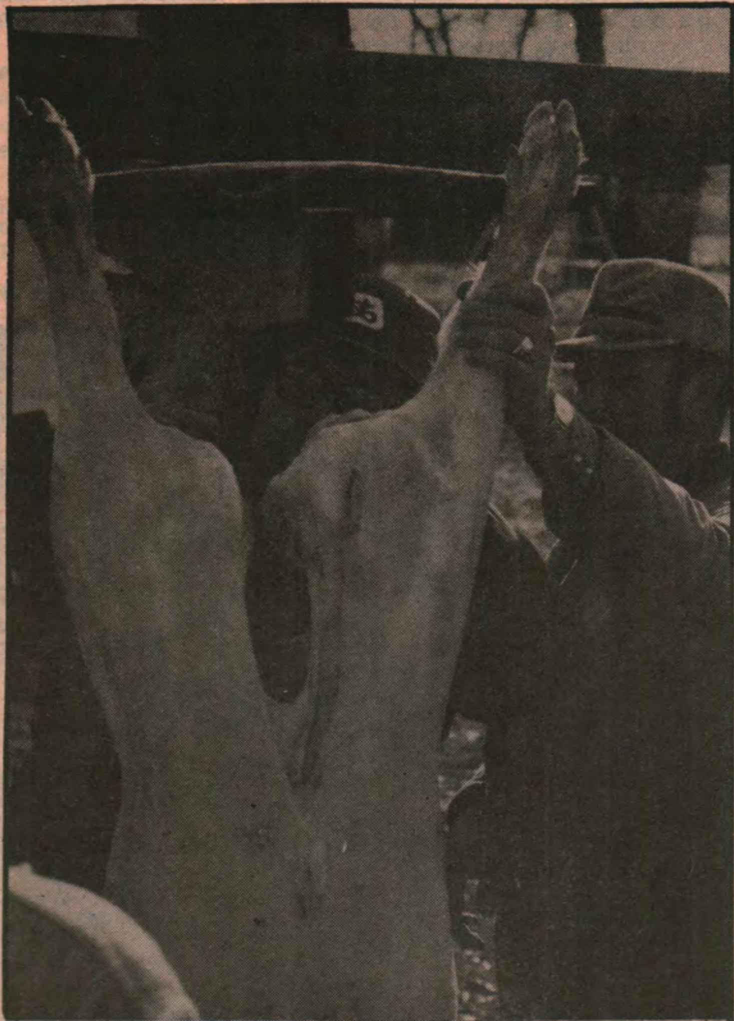
The Ennis and the Outlaws Annual Fan Club Fun Day drew hundreds of people to Bellair last fall. Ennis and the band open the entertainment, which included another country and western group and two gospel groups.

Visitors at the old Bellair General Store during Tales' Art Show last fall read front-page stories from old newspapers that line the store walls.

Volunteers scrape the hair from a hog at the Annual Hog Butchering in Bellair this past winter.

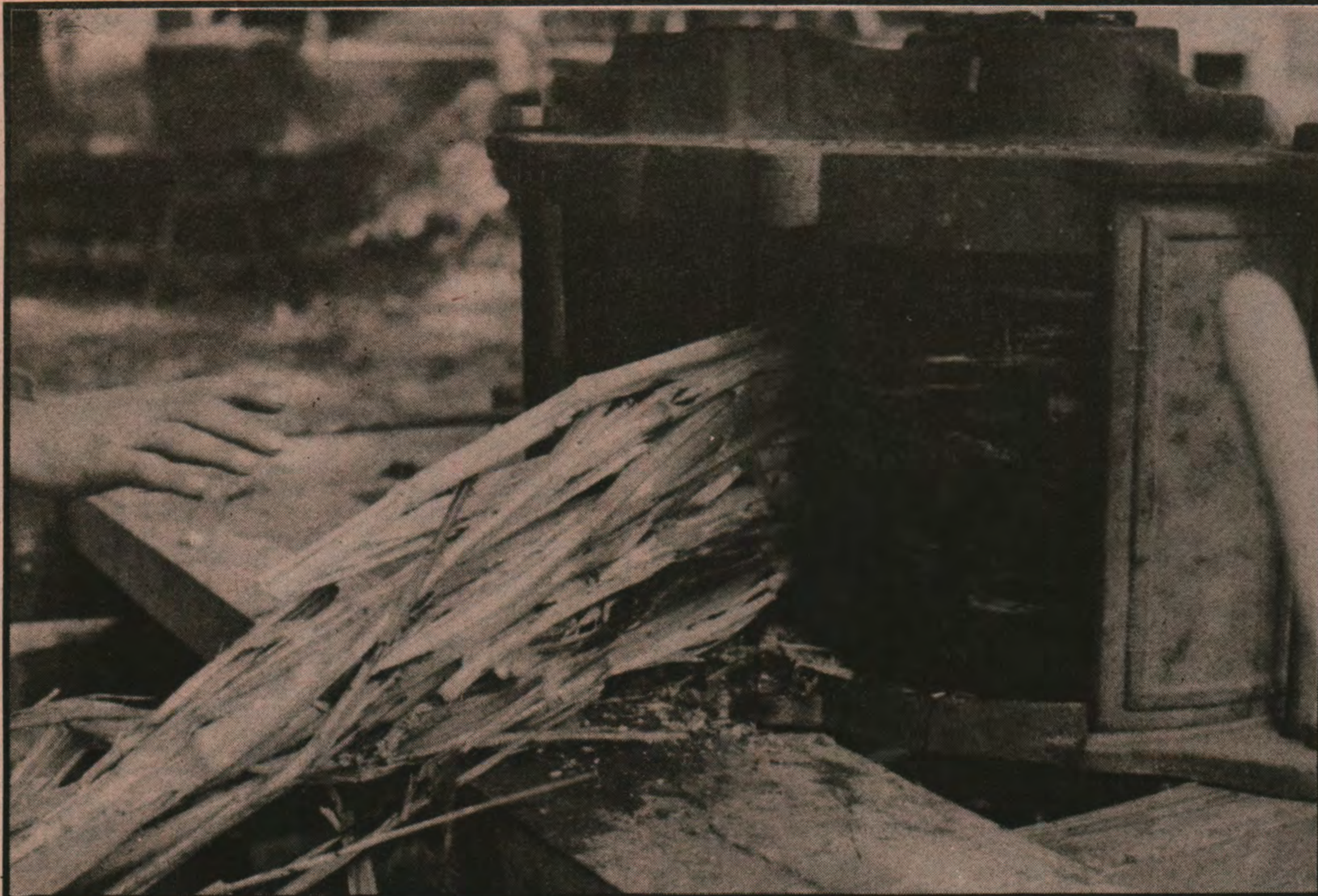
A Dogwood Deputy 4-H Club member explains the Poison Comparison Test to onlookers at the Ennis and the Outlaws Fun Day.

photo spread by Laurie Goering



Gutting a hog is a technique old timers had to learn to survive. Some of these old timers are always on hand at Tales' butcherings to demonstrate the procedure.

Sack races were hotly-contested events during Happy Jack Knowles' activities. Two of the older kids who participated race neck and neck for the finish line 20 yards away.



Grover Christy restored the old sorghum press back into working order. While cleaning and repairing it, he found an inscription dating the press to 1877. After stripping the leaves from the cane and removing the dark brown seeds, it is fed into the press.

Molasses making still a day-long process

by Hazel Fritchie

The long awaited Saturday morning finally arrived. The birds were beginning to stir and the long fingers of dawn were probing the darkness to bring forth a welcome sunrise.

The small southern Illinois countryside lay quiet except for the Christy homestead, located about seven miles south of Lawrenceville on State Route One, then one-half mile east. A feeling akin to an "old settler's day" permeated the air.

Dot and Grover Christy were preparing for a sorghum-making party—the first ever to be held in their neighborhood and the first attempt at molasses making for the Christys.

It had all started several months before when Grover heard of an old abandoned sorghum press in the hills of Kentucky. The Christys found the exact locatión and headed for the hills.

The owner was congenial and showed them the press. It was in poor repair. To most people, it would have been a pile of junk, a museum piece at best.

But the Christys were intrigued with it and felt that with Grover's talent for fixing things, the press could be restored to working order. They made the purchase and bought some spare parts from another old mill in even worse condition.

Restoration began after the Christys got the press home. Friends and relatives became interested in the project and helped to thoroughly clean and repair the press.

During the restoration process, Grover found the inscription, "No. 3 Ky., Cane Mill, Brennan & Co., Louisville, Ky. Patented June 19, 1877." A museum piece indeed, but destined to make molasses one more time.

Dot's nephew had married a girl from Kentucky who had helped her parents make sorghum molasses each autumn. The Christys headed south again, this time to the little town of Philpot, Kentucky, where Clint and Gladys Merritt lived.

These old-time molasses makers were happy to be of help. Clint advised the Christys on planting and cultivation and gave the needed information on getting the press set up. They discussed what would have to be done to lead up to the cooking-off day.

By this time, both men had developed "Sorghum Fever." Clint got some sorghum seed and the Christys headed home after making arrangements for the Merritts to be their guests during molasses making.

In mid-May, sorghum seeds were planted on one and one-half acres of land on the Christy farm. Little green plants were soon thriving in the southern Illinois soil and climate.

By mid-August, a beautiful stand of cane was ready to be stripped. This job was given to Dot and some female friends. Each woman took a lath or strudy stick and started down the rows, whacking (stripping) the leaves from the cane—a job rapidly learned but the work was hot, dirty and tiring.

Meanwhile, Grover and some friends were getting the press ready. They cut wood and stacked it by the fire pit. The fire pit was lined with mud in order to hold the heat better.

A "skimmin' pit" was dug near the evaporator. The size of the pit was approximately three feet long, eighteen inches wide and about a foot deep.

By late September, both the press and cane were ready. About one-third of the cane had been cut a few days early to allow it to dry.

After a hearty 4 a.m. breakfast, the women were busy breaking off the dark brown seeds and checking for stray or clinging leaves. Then it was piled near the press where it would be fed through.

Don and Lucille Osmon and their daughter, Sharon, St. Francisville, brought their two small horses to furnish the power to turn the press. The horses had never done this kind of work before but by taking turns, they did the job.

The fire was built, the oven heated and by 9 a.m., the first white juice began to pour from the press. About 45 minutes later, Clint Merritt was checking the evaporator for leaks and to see that it was level. The syrup had to be perfectly level while cooking, he said.

Folks began driving in and soon it was hard to tell the visitors from the work crew. Those wishing to help were permitted to take part, making it more interesting for all. The friendliness and the keen interest of the crowd made the work seem less tiring for the crew.

Although there were no concession stands, visitors had brought their lunches and enjoyed their noon meal in the spacious tree-shaded sorghum yard. The crew could not stop to eat at noon.

A nursing home from Lawrenceville brought a bus load of residents out for the afternoon. These elderly people enjoyed stirring the syrup.

When the juice starts cooking, it turns green and foam rises to the top where it is skimmed off

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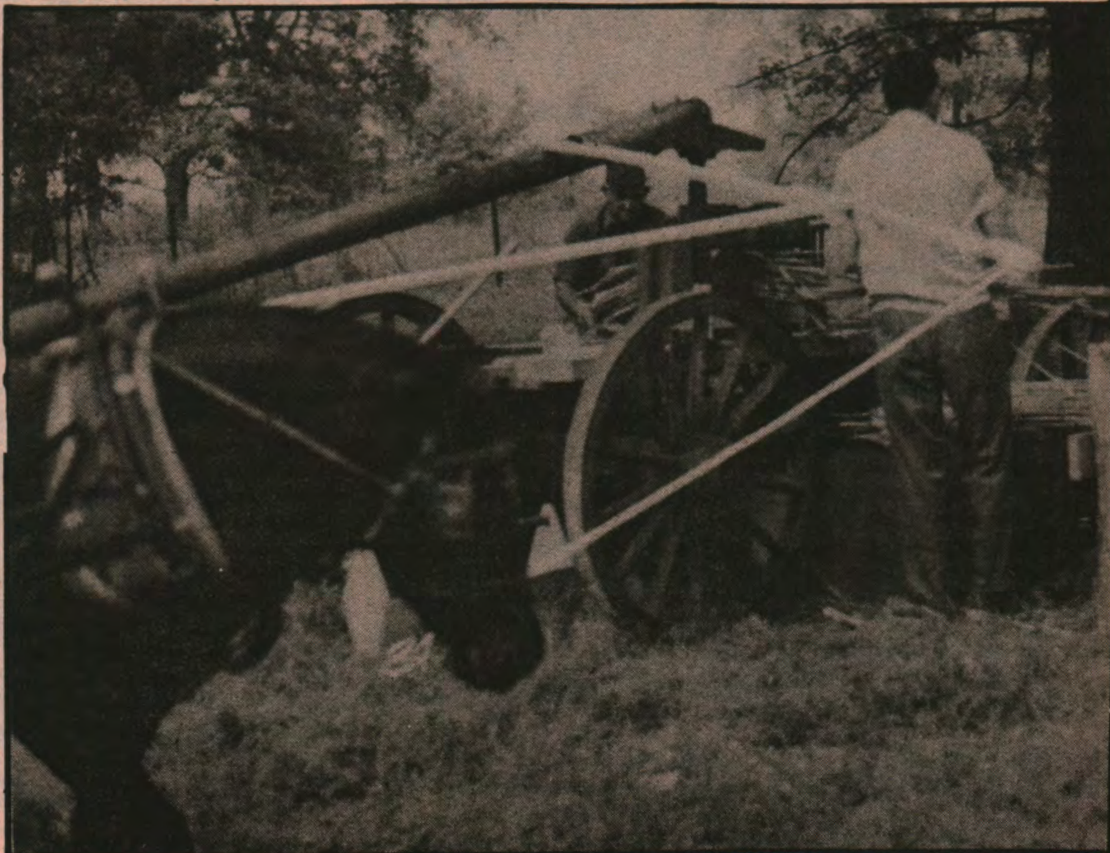

Two small horses were furnished by neighbors to power the press. As the juice begins to pour from the press, it goes into the evaporator where it is cooked.

Snakes alive, Charlie!

Threshing days were hard, but fun. Jim Apple (left) and Louis Burner (right) prepare for their work on the Apple farm north of Palestine in 1936. (Photo courtesy of Mariellen Mehler)

by Mariellen Mehler

Some 40 years before the advent of the combine, my dad (Louis Burner) and his elder brother (E. R. Burner) owned and operated a threshing rig. It was powered by a Runley Oil Pull Tractor—a mammouth machine, slow and ponderous in forward motion.

This same big tractor powered the brothers' saw mill, located on the Old Latson Mill Lot, in the south part of Oblong. (Steam machines were employed for these two operations before my era.)

When the threshing season rolled around, the Oil Pull was driven from the mill lot to the machine shed/blacksmith shop north of Kibbie. Sometimes Dad let me ride with him as he drove the big tractor.

We always stopped at Bernard "Butch" Marshall's home on the way to get water for the tractor. I'd have a drink, too. We then moved on at a fast mile-eating clip--five miles an hour(!)--to our destination.

For 20 years, the brothers threshed the Palestine Prairie, driving some 30 miles, from the machine shed, over back country roads. I could almost walk faster than the Oil Pull drove. It chugged and puffed along, smoke rinsing from the stack, pulling the thrasing machine at a snail's pace to Palestine. Finally, we would arrive.

The farms were divided and grouped. The group to the north of Palestine was called "The Sour Mash Ring." I cannot remember the name for the group below Palestine (the south ring).

Sometimes Dad let me drive with him as he drove the big tractor.

As I remember these rings, I'm reminded of names such as K.C. Hardesty and Mary, Nolan and Berdina; Jim Apple and his son Glen (who was often employed by the Burner brothers on their road and bridge building projects); J. J. Winger and his daughter Ellen; Martin Winger and his daughters Norma and Naoma; the Walkers and the Stoners.

There were more people from the North Ring, but those names stand out clearly. I wasn't well aquainted in the South Ring, but I do remember Harry and Maud Hughes; Earl and Mildred Westner and their son Darrel; and the George Dickersons. (Well, it's been a long time.)

As I was a girl, I was of no great use on a threshing circuit. My brother, Harmon, ten years older than myself, worked the circuits with Dad. It was miserable, hot, sweaty, chaff itching work. (My brother had all the fun.)

Sometimes Dad would take pity on his girlchild, and I was allowed to join them for a few days on the ciruit when they were in the North Ring. Looking back, I find it hard to discribe the way I felt when I could finally join in. My esteemed job was being the waterboy.

Now, in the days of "women's lib," I would be titled waterperson. But then, I didn't care what they called me. I just wanted to be there.

Although the water wagon was pulled by a time-worn old horse, I felt very important as I plied up and down, carrying water to the various crews as they toiled in the hot July sun.

The farmers' wives came together at each repective farm and cooked the noon meal. Long trestle tables were lined under shade trees in the yard each morning and were filled with food. These meals were never to be forgotten and where nothing short of culinary delights. My mouth waters as I remember the golden mounds of fried chicken, fresh baked breads, beef and noodles, bread dressings, gravies and souces, salads, vegetables, biscuits, and cakes and pies of every kind. All this was served with gallons of hot coffee, lemonade and iced tea. It can be described simply as food fit for royalty.

I always ate too much, trying to have some of everything on the table. It was an effort trying to force my overstuffed self back to the water wagon and an even greater effort to climb to the high seat. (Years since, I have learned the folly of my gluttonous habits.)

I remember one of the men that worked the bundle wagons. I'm going to call him Charlie, for his name has become lost to me over the years. He was tall and spare, with a shock of unruly red hair. His bib overalls were high waders. He was usually barefoot, able to walk the stubble fields without so much as a pained grimace. I marveled at that. I liked going barefoot, but my feet were tender.

Suddenly he flipped his hand up, and a snake flew across the table and landed on Dad's plate. I screamed and jumped to my feet, flailing my lemonade onto my neighbor's plate.

I had sensed that he wasn't one of my dad's favorite people. Although Dad avoided him, he'd never say anything about the man to me. I'll never forget the day I found out why Dad didn't like him.

The crews were all in for dinner. The men had washed at the pump, splashing water on their hot faces. They'd comb their wet hair while looking into a mirror nailed to a tree. They filed around the table to fill their plates and then sat down.

I was seated to Dad's right. Charlie was seated across the table from us. I noticed that he sat with his right hand in the top of his bib overalls, smiling stangely.

Suddenly, he flipped his hand up, and a snake flew across the table and landed on Dad's plate. I screamed and jumped to my feet, flailing my lemonade onto my neighbor's plate.

In one sweeping motion, Dad's plate hit the ground, spilling the wiggling snake, and scattering food. His chair fell backward on top of the mess. Dad leaned acrosss the table, twisting a fist full of Charlie's shirt.

Dad was a big man, weighing in at 240 pounds. But he moved with agility. While Charlie gasped for breath, Dad told him through gritted teeth, "If I ever find you jokin' around with a snake again, I'm goin' to make you eat it."

My lemonade victim said, "Well, amen to that."

Charlie spluttered something about how it was only a joke and Dad couldn't take a little harmless fun.

Dad and my neighbor filled their plates again and were able to finish their dinners heartily. However, my zest for eating was considerably dimmed. My eyes filled with tears and I just couldn't swallow.

"If I ever find you jokin' around with a snake again, I'm goin' to make you eat it."

The men were on their way back to the field while I slowly pumped up cold water to fill my jugs, preparing to follow them. K. C. Hardesty, the farmer for whom we were threshing that day, stopped to console me over the snake incident. He and his wife were high on my list of favorites in the North Ring. He told me that it hadn't been Charlie's first offense, and everyone was pretty tired of Charlie's "pets."

He advised me to just steer clear of Charlie. That advice was good but not really needed. In my imagination, I saw Charlie stretched in the field, dying in the sun for lack of sustenance from my water jug.

As the afternoon wore on, I recovered from the snake scare and found a growing hunger in my stomach. Pulling close to the thresher, I yelled up to Dad that I was going in for a while. Nodding his head, he waved me on.

Urging the old horse out of the dusty field, I hurried back to the house. And there, under the solicitous eyes of those wonderful cooks, I feasted royally on threshing dinner leftovers.

The old Sears & Roebuck catalog

Only 'the man in the clothes' not for sale

by Brian D. Cannon

"The only thing you couldn't order from Sears-Roebuck was the man that was in the clothes," my grandmother said in her Fithian home, reminiscing about the Sears, Roebuck & Company catalog.

"And you still can't do that, either," my cousin Susan said from Grandma's kitchen next door.

"They didn't have models in those days," Grandma said. "They had artists to draw (illustrations for the catalogs)."

Grandma, 82-year-old Gladys Driskell-Baird, remembered her parents ordering from Sears, Roebuck & Company when she was a child.

"I can commence to remember when I was about six," she said, "an' clear up through my school years, the orders always went to Sears-Roebuck.

"It was fun to get that catalog. I tell you, we waited for that catalog to come. They sent it out twice a year, just like they do now. Only they sent it to you, you didn't have to go in an' pick it up. There were several of us at home—six children—and we would take turns lookin' at the catalog."

"Did you fight over it when it came?" my mother asked.

"Oh, yes," Grandma said, chuckling as she did. "That was half the fun. It was great, I'm tellin' you. You looked forward to that catalog."

I said I'd heard that it used to be called a "wish book."

"Yes, the wish book," Grandma said. "That's what they called it, the wish book. Yeah, we would set an' wish, an' wish an' wish. I could wish. It didn't cost me anything to wish. I could wish I had this an' wish I had that—like little kids still do."

She smiled and continued, "Then when I got older an' had a little money, I could order my own. That was great."

The Sears & Roebuck catalog played an important part in Grandma's life as a child.

But that was later in her life. The Sears & Roebuck catalog played another important part in Grandma's life as a child. Her parents ordered groceries from the catalog.

"I think those groceries were the biggest thing that I always looked forward to," she said. "Of course, we kids at home were always hungry. There was six of us an' my dad an' mother. I could just not hardly wait till that order of groceries came from Sears."

Grandma's family lived in rural central Illinois—"ten miles north of Penfield"—and the groceries were ordered from Chicago.

"My folks would make out a big order," she said. "The groceries had to be shipped in by train. They came to Penfield, to the depot there, an' they would let us know we could pick it up there.

"I remember how nice it was when that order came. We couldn't hardly wait. They would order these fancy boxes of cookies once in a while. They weren't expensive, but in those days they were something special. An' they would order crackers and fish, salted down, tubs full of fish, an' big chunks of dried beef. It was in chunks; it wasn't sliced.

"An' of course, they had all sorts of clothing. You could get anything. Most everybody ordered from a catalog in them days. That was the way they got their stuff. Most of it was delivered by mail out to your mail box.

"I can remember my folks ordering things there that I don't think you could get in the stores nowadays. The dresses were all long. My mother wore them down to her ankles. I can remember when the first sheepskin coats came out, an' that was something. People could get something to keep them warm.

"You could order your young chickens, your little chicks. Or we had incubators we ordered from up there. My mother hatched a lot of our chickens an' so did I. You could also order geese and ducks. I suppose turkeys, but I don't know about that, really."

Grandma paused and laughed before she continued.

"But I do know what they did with the old catalogs, after they were through with them," she said, still laughing and looking at me. "An' you do,too. They went out to the little shack behind the house."

"I don't know if you remember," my mother said to me, "but there used to be all those old soft pages. Then they changed the catalog, an' they had the shiny color pages."

"Back in them days," Grandma said, explaining why the catalog went to the privy, "the paper was very thin an' very flexible, an' that's where they went. People would sit out there an' look at the catalog while they were were there."

"It was the best read book the farmers had," Mom said.

"There wasn't anything you couldn't get—I guess—at that time from Sears-Roebuck," Grandma said. "It was just a great place. You had to wait a week or so—or maybe two weeks."

I asked her if that wasn't part of it, waiting for the order to arrive.

"Yes," she said. "Anxious, oh my goodness, you couldn't hardly wait. It was a great thing at that time to have that store. They were always reasonably priced, an' they did a big business.

"I can remember my folks ordering things there that I don't think you could get in the stores nowadays."

"You could get all kinds of dress material—calico, percale, anything. Back in them days, that's what most of the school clothes, dresses were made of. Little girls had to wear dresses; they didn't wear blue jeans. They didn't have blue jeans."

"I think my greatest anticipation, waiting on the school clothes order," Mom said, "was new boots, new rubber boots."

"Oh, yes," Grandma said. "They were rubber, too. They weren't lined and fancy like now. They were just pure rubber with buckles, an' they would come up over your shoes."

"They were the kind you put your shoe in," Mom said.

"An', oh my goodness, you had some time getting them off," Grandma said. "It wasn't so hard getting them on, but it was so hard to get them off again."

Wallpaper, linoleum, carpets, heating and cooking stoves, early model washing machines, and washboards were among the things Grandma could remember from the Sears, Roebuck catalog—a general store in a book.

"They got coffee in buckets," Grandma said, going back things her parents ordered. "I can remember what they looked like. They were red, an' then, they had the lettering on what kind of coffee. That was good coffee in them days.

"They would get a big bucket of coffee, an' I remember one time—I didn't know it was coming, but there was a big bucket of candy, too. That was along about Christmas time, an', boy, was that a suprise. An' what a wonderful suprise, too.

"Oh, kids, it was great," Grandma said, sighing. "I don't know how far back that was, but they were ordering long before I came onto the scene. So Sears is an old company. It really is."

Tales supporters sit along the east side of the Bellair General Store as they enjoy a warm day of music, food and fun at the Ennis and the Outlaws Fun Day. Children competed in games throughout the day including sack races and watermelon eating contests. Two gospel groups, as well as Ennis and the band, performed to a crowd of several hundred.

Terkel often gets phone calls from people asking his advice. His vast experience and casual nature are encouraging to interested artists.

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Ellyn, and played the part of the waitress in a school production of Terkel's book, "Working."

"We called him and asked him to come and see the play," Hallowell said. "He came and then went out to a pub with the cast and bought us a drink afterwards. It really made us feel good."

After he hung up the telephone, Terkel explained that the people doing the play had originally called him because they knew he had done the play in the 30s and wanted to know how it went then. In the play, written by Irwin Shaw, the time is World War I. When the dead soldiers rise, everybody tries to stop them and wants them to go back to their graves. They won't and walk toward the authorities as the music Terkel mentioned plays.

"Now where were we?" Terkel said. "Oh, the Writer's Project. It never occurred to me if I had a flair for writing or not. I wanted to get on the project with friends of mine. I wrote something and submitted it. They said okay. And I started to write.

"Col. McCormick hated the New Deal. He especially hated the Writer's Project."

"Our radio scripts were in conjunction with the Art Institute. We talked to the curator and wrote incidents in the life of the American Thomas Aikens or Winslow Homer. I remember one on Van Gough. Well, that was performed by professional actors on WGN. That's the Col. McCormick station.

"Col. McCormick hated the New Deal. He especially hated the Writer's Project. Every day he'd rap it. It was boondoggling bums, commies, but, it was done on his station. And he apparently aired a couple of the programs, and he loved them. He must have fallen asleep during each program, because at the end, it would say my name or whoever wrote it of the Federal Writer's Project, Work Project Administration, Harry Hopkins, administrator. That was a friend of Roosevelt's, his sidekick. He was the one McCormick most hated."

From that point on, Terkel's career moved ahead until he got his own network TV show called "Stud's Place." The show was set in a small restaurant and did quite well until Terkel got blacklisted during the McCarthy era.

He heard a Woody Guthrie record on the station and called to see if he could go to work.

"The show was dropped pretty much because of me," Terkel said. "I signed and spoke on things and wouldn't say I was duped. All I had to say was that I was a fool or some of these commies duped me or something. The hell with that. I signed this particular petition, which said, 'Jim Crow gotta go,' because I believed it and wouldn't retract it. So I was blacklisted."

The irony of the blacklist, however, is that Terkel wouldn't have moved to WFMT where he has worked for 30 years and wouldn't have written the books he has had it not been for the blacklist. He heard a Woody Guthrie record on the station and called to see if he could go to work.

It was almost ten years later when he was first introduced to the tape recorder and began doing interviews around the country and the world. Someone finally suggested that he make a book of his interviews. Now he is working on another book. This one is about World War II.

"Had I not been blacklisted because I had the big mouth, there wouldn't have been any books," he said. "I'm sure I was followed by the FBI back then. I know I was in the army, I know. I may use that in the WWII book, in the introduction somewhere. See, I didn't realize I was being spied on in the army. But my letters from my wife were being opened. I got my freedom of information file, and there were some copies of letters. Would you believe it?"

The book on the war is an oral approach to WWII. He is still collecting material, and Cathy Zmuda, who has transcribed

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'Talking to Myself'

'What it was like' for Studs Terkel

by Ray Elliott

After years of lugging a tape recorder around the country and interviewing hundreds of people about their lives and dreams, Studs Terkel sat down with the tape recorder and literally talked to himself about his own life and dreams. The result was a highly readable and revealing "oral memoir," appropriately titled "Talking to Myself."

Terkel, who was born in 1912 and grew up in Chicago, has acted in radio soap operas, been a disc jockey, a sports commentator, a TV master of ceremonies and has done interviews all over the world. He now does a radio show on WFMT Chicago as he has for the past 30 years. The syndicated program is carried on stations throughout the country.

When he decided to write the book, Terkel wanted to put himself "in that time. I like to create a moment," he says. "And so, recreating it, I thought present tense might be good."

To illustrate his point, Terkel refers to one of the incidents in the book and says, "I'm riding along the Indian Ocean, jackaranda trees to the left and the ocean to the right, on the way to Durban, on the way to the suburb of Durban, to Stanger, to see this guy Chief Albert John Luthuli and Alan Paton.

"And it was an exotic moment; it was a traumatic moment; it was an exciting moment. How do you create it? And I'm sitting there. . .or me and my brother when I was a kid. . .that's why I did it mostly, gettin' the feel of it. To go back in that time."

To go back into that time and capture the feeling, Terkel has not used any chronological order. He jumps around to whatever comes to his mind. The chapter, "Meeting the Chief," mentioned above begins basically as he describes it. But after a page and a half, he begins talking about Dante's "Inferno" and an incident with Mahalia Jackson talking about saving him.

And that's pretty much the structure of the book. Terkel explains this lack of chronology and jumping backwards and forwards in time when he feels like it as trying to capture his voice as he "has captured the voice of others."

Terkel has been successful at capturing the voice of others in "Hard Times," "Working," "American Dreams" and "Division Street: America" as is evident by the fact that all have received international acclaim and were all on best seller lists in the United States. Further, they have all been translated into every major Western language and Hungarian and Japanese.

"Talking to Myself" is no less successful at capturing the voice of Studs Terkel. The book reads smoothly and undoubtedly reveals more of Terkel in 316 pages of a kind of stream-of-consciousness narration than would a more traditional approach. You get glimpses of him that you would not otherwise get.

What you don't get much of is a picture of Terkel's family. You learn bits and pieces about their life in a boarding hotel on Chicago's West Side during the 20s. Even then, though, he talks more about the boarders and what went on there than about his family.

Nowhere in the book does Terkel mention his father. His mother is referred to only as though she were an off-stage presence. Only his brother comes to life in one of Terkel's recreated moments.

This lack of reference to his family causes him no more concern than does the lack of chronological order. He says, "Words have sprung to tongue as thoughts have come to mind."

That may be. But still you wonder about his family and why he hasn't mentioned them except in passing. His family is evidently a part of that "private domain on which I'll not trespass, nor does it, I feel, matter very much to others."

Perhaps he is right. It's refreshing to see someone reticent to talk or write publically about his private life in a day when everybody and his dog writes an expose about private family matters.

"I'm sure stuff has filtered through," Terkel says about his private life and how accurately he has captured his life and dreams, "stuff that may have been 'don't come in.' Or maybe something happened that I may have been exacerbating in the remembrance. But basically, that's so.

"I do remember being a poll watcher. I remember Artie Quinn, the big precinct captain, coming in. I remember the old boys, you know, getting a little booze at the fire station goin' down. And I remember the trial, of course—my being called upon and deliberately not remembering. I didn't want to condemn these old boys to go to jail, even though they may have let Artie mark a ballot or two."

Studs Terkel probably doesn't want to condemn a lot of old boys, so to speak. Not the ones who aren't the powerful and the mighty. He does, I think, want to give an accurate picture of the average man's life, including his own. And he does.

So if you don't mind reading an autobiography that doesn't tell all the gory details of man's struggle to survive in a hostile environment, yet shows you pretty much what the life was like, you'll enjoy Studs Terkel talking to himself.

A mass of papers and books is a typical sight in Terkel's office at WFMT radio in Chicago. His books require a lot of research and paper work.

Terkel

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almost all of his interviews, is transcribing these interviews. Terkel said she knows how he thinks. The scope of the book is far reaching.

"I'm talking to some niece in the interment camps," he said. "Conscientious objectors, uh, middle-aged guys, of course, who went on D-Day. What happened to the Hawaiian guy who was in Honolulu, Pearl Harbor that day? The wildness of it all. Naturally guys who were Bataan prisoners of war. But not just them.

"The woman at home, you know. Or even more significant, Victory Girls. Middle-aged women. Victory Girls for these kids. Girls about 14, 15, 16 years old. They'd be going along—they'd be with sailors and soldiers. But this was innocent because these were country boys. Coming home.

"But it influenced her in such a way that she just loved uniforms. And couldn't be with one or the other of them. So her grown-up life was all twisted, involving several marriages. Adultery. Well, you see, that's also affected by the war. Or the widow at home. Or an army wife on the trains.

"And I'm doing stuff now on the interrogation of the Nazis. You read about Klaus Barbie. Well, you see, there's a guy who has been to trial. He's agreed to see me. He's a teacher at Wayne State. We'll see what happens."

So at 71 years of age, when most Americans have been retired at least five years, Louis Studs Terkel has other projects that will keep him working for years to come. He keeps so busy that he rarely takes a vacation, despite his wife's insistence.

"She's always trying to get me to take a vacation," he said. "But I usually find something else to do. Maybe I'll get around to it some of these days."

Posing for one of last photograph, Terkel smoothed a wrinkle in his traditional red-checkered shirt and said to the photographer, "I'll give you a sort of a Spencer Tracy. That's what a TV critic named John Crosby of the 'New York Herald-Tribune' called me when I was doing 'Stud's Place' back in the early days. Now remember this was 1950. He spoke of me in his book as a 'young Spencer Tracy.'"

There is a resemblance there, I told him.

"Keep talking, kid. I like your style."

Molasses

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and dropped into the skimming pit. It takes about an hour for the juice to make its way from the pouring barrel into the evaporator and through the 18-bar maze of boiling syrup to eventually emerge out the other end as a delicious amber-colored molasses. This allowed enough time for the old-timers to start an "I remember" session as they stirred.

A shriek or a burst of laughter could be heard occasionaly. Someone fell into the skimming pit. What an indescribable, sticky mess. Old and young alike would have said, "Generation gap? What's that?"

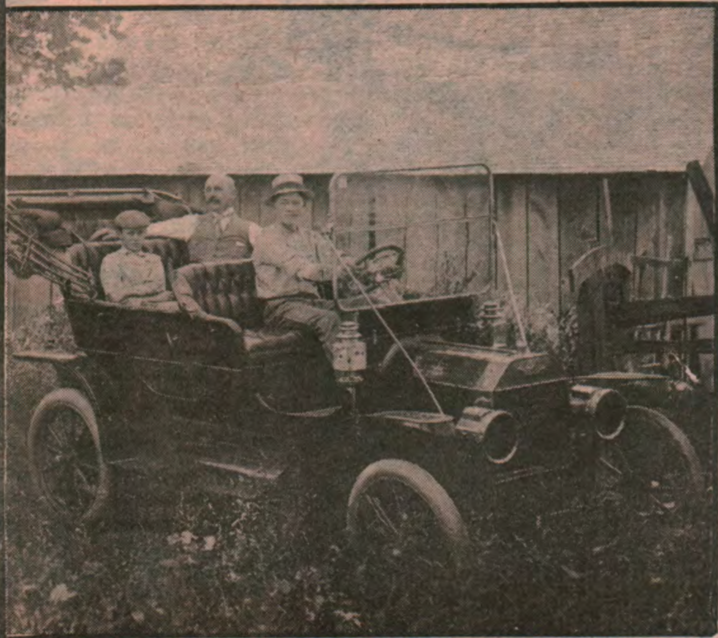
As the older people grew tired and were preparing to leave, the Christys gave each one a small jar of fresh, warm syrup as a souvenir.

Dusk was approaching, the visitors were leaving and some of the crew had gone home but there was much work yet to be done. The molasses had to be bottled and the press had to be thoroughly cleaned for the next molasses-making day.

For the hearty souls who had stayed to help, time was taken for a delicious turkey supper, which Dot had managed to prepare while being a part of the work crew and hostess for the day. It was 2:30 a.m. when Dot and Grover Christy fell into bed, exhausted but happy. They had met old friends and made new ones.

There would be two more parties to finish the remaining cane. The last one scheduled for late October or early November. Those driving in suggested the Christys make an annual "Sorghum Festival Day."

The southern Illinois soil had proven ideal for the crop. The day had been a huge success. But with Grover working a 40-hour week and Dot driving a school bus route, they felt the work load would be too heavy. The press served its purpose and is now in storage. But who knows, they might decide to try it again some day.



From left to right, Allen Kisner, Dr. Charles Kisner and Glen Payne sit in a 1909 Ford Model T just south of Bellair. (Photo courtesy of Homer Adkisson)

Motherhood

by Mary Olmsted Graham

Motherhood a privilege?
Ah yes, I think it so
And now to prove a point
Or two I'll gladly let you know.

We have come a long way with so many things,
Modes of travel, homes and dress,
But the mark of a good mother
Is her brand of tenderness.

Nights spent by a sick child's bed,
To see the little ones through
And then when day break comes again
And finds so much to do.

The rest of the family
Must arise and be about their day,
And 'tis a mother's loving duty
To set them on their way.

Hope springs eternal in her heart
As each one makes his mark,
For she has given courage
To help him to embark.

Each word of praise so helpful
And at times a reprimand,
For she is molding lives you know
And must be in command.

These tiny lives God gives her
To raise from babyhood,
Are real and living blessings
The reward of Motherhood.

If Grandpa could see us now

by John Freeland

Some of us have lived through one of the most progressive periods of history, from the horse and buggy days to space exploration. But we must not forget the beginning that set the stage for what is happening today.

In the last issue of "Tales" I told about my grandfather, George Freeland, digging a large space in a hill and living there all winter with seven children—until the next year, 1847, when he could build a new house over the cave. This short distance from the village of Bellair was the end of the rainbow for him. Here he would live until the age of 94. This year was 1892.

Freeland dreamed of anything more reliable than the horse and buggy. But already in Europe they were experiencing a contraption that would run on its own by feeding into it a little foul-smelling fluid that became known as gasoline.

Grandpa didn't know that horses would be used mostly for racing and circuses and shows. He didn't know that the gas buggy was just the beginning, that men would find and solve mysteries out there in the skies called space, or that in the weightlessness of the heavens, man would compound elements that couldn't be made on earth and that would cure some of the dreadful diseases of Mankind.

Grandpa probably had been contented to sit in his latter years under a tree and dream of his big success in life, of raising ten children on his 400 acres of $1.25 an acre land. He didn't know that science would revolutionize the method of farming when cultivation and the application of fertilizer would improve the soil of his depleted land until it was worth $2,500 an acre, or that my father William McCoy Freeland would sell it in 1912 for $100 an acre. The land around Bellair has become a garden spot in respect to raising crops — that is, if the weather is right.

Wouldn't Grandpa be surprised to see coming down the road past his farm one of those stinking gas buggies that scared the chickens until they refused to lay eggs and frightened the horses until they reared up on their hind legs and then ran like banshees to get away from this demon?

He would have been puzzled at the sight of the first one with its high wheels and the chain drive and the rod that served as the steering wheel...

Could he have withstood the first ride that I took one summer day when one of those contraptions came bucking up our lane?

I can't describe how I felt the first time. I'd been used to riding in a wagon that bounced your guts out as it traveled over the country roads.

The gas buggy was a sensation, though it complained every foot it took and emitted a cloud of poisonous gas and smoke. I felt as though I was riding on a balloon, so buoyant was the rhythm of the movement of the contraption.

How, after all these years, I wish Grandpa were here and could see what has happened to change me and the environment in which we live.

Politics, Money and PAC men

by John Gwinn

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Gwinn, Champaign attorney and two-time Democratic Congressional candidate, has long advocated campaign-finance reform. The following piece first appeared in the April 1983 issue of the magazine, "Champaign Life." In a future issue of "Tales," we will take a look at politics and political campaigns in rural America before the days of political action committee contributions and the selling of the candidates through television.

In a circular chase that is dominating national congressional politics, the candidates are courting the PACs and the PAC men are courting the candidates.

These PAC men are not those in the video games—which are played for fun—but the political action committeemen (PAC men), who do not play for fun. The role that money currently plays in American politics is different both in scope and in nature from anything we have seen before.

In the wake of Watergate, it was revealed that large illegal corporate contributions had gone toward the election of Richard Nixon in 1972 and that individuals had contributed enormous sums—the champion being W. Clement Stone, who contributed more than $2 million.

Thus in 1974, Congress tried to limit the role of wealthy contributors and to end secretive payoffs by corporations, unions and associations.

The new law formalized the role of the political action committee. PACs were supposed to provide a well-regulated channel for individuals to get together and support candidates.

When the law was created there were just over 200 such committees. A committee was limited to giving a maximum of $10,000 to a candidate for both primary and the general elections. But they have exploded in number and have been pouring money into campaigns beyond the wildest expectations or intentions of the writers of the legislation.

There are now some 3,371 political action committees. In the 1982 congressional campaigns, 1,497 corporation PACs distributed approximately $30 million; 350 union PACs distributed approximately $20 miliion; 613 association PACs distributed approximately $22 million.

The association PACs include the two largest PACs, the National Association of Realtors and the American Medical Association. In 1982, the political action committees provided more than one dollar in every three dollars raised by House winners. Only 2,251 PACs existed in 1980, an increase of 25 percent in two years.

In 1983, a staggering $240 million was dispensed from PAC's funds for PAC advertising and to campaigns, congressional and local.

The largest single recipient of PAC funds in 1982 was Robert H. Michel, the House minority leader from Peoria who

What amount of money will be spent on congressional races in 1984?

received $469,561 or 68 percent of his campaign money from more than 400 PACs.

In the 1982 election there was what many in Washington called a "fever" about money raising. Inevitably, talk on Capitol Hill seemed to ultimately turn to money—how much the member or challenger had raised, where he had gotten it and where he could get more.

Every candidate is now literally forced to go to Washington, D.C., the headquarters for PACs, to hold fund raisers. On any given night during a campaign season, there are likely to be scheduled 10 to 25 fund-raising receptions. The major concern at each reception is how many PAC directors attended and who they were.

In a recent article on the subject, columnist Elizabeth Drew said, "It is often said that what is driving the chase for money is the ever—increasing cost of campaigns, but that gets it backward.

"What is driving the chase for money is its own momentum. It is the domestic equivalent of the arms race. A candidate feels compelled to spend so much or might spend so much, or groups intent on his defeat might spend so much. And unless he is independently wealthy, he has to raise that money or be vulnerable to defeat.

"It is not accidental that the number of independently wealthy people entering politics is rising. And the quest for money has distended and distorted the political system to the point where it bears little resemblance to what it is supposed to be."

The question that the public should address is—what does the chasing of money do to the candidates' present and the victors' subsequent behavior?

There have always been "interests" in this country which have sought to influence public policy. There always will be and always should be.

James Madison wrote in the "Federalist Papers" that to remove the causes of "the mischiefs of factions" would be to destroy liberty. Madison stated that the alternative was to control their effects.

In the last three years, as PAC money has esclated, the effects of the influx of money have been most blatant. One of the most spectacular examples of PAC money influence was the success in 1982 of the used-car dealers to influence Congress to kill an FTC regulation requiring that buyers be informed of known defects in used cars.

The automobile dealers spent $675,000 in the 1980 campaign—up from just $14,000 in 1974. Of the 286 House members who voted against the FTC regulation, 242 had received money from the auto dealers.

As Congressman Tom Downey recently said on this subject, "The used car dealers bought their way to happiness. The people with money always have influence and are capable of tipping the scale."

Perhaps the most glaring and best-known example of the PAC-man influence was seen at the time of passage of the 1982 tax-increase bill. The TV cameras show-

In the 1982 election there was what many in Washington called a "fever" about money raising.

ed the overflow crowd of lobbyists at the conference between members of the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees.

As a result of this maneuvering, the famous three-martini lunch, scheduled to be cut, was restored. Meanwhile, the unorganized waitresses will suffer withholding of tax on tips imputed to be eight percent of restaurant sales, even though they may not have received that much.

As a result of the special interest impact on the 1981 and 1982 tax bills, the Clean Air Act, the Defense Department budget and many other pieces of legislation, many Congressmen are troubled about PAC money. Many have sensed what Representative Gephardt (D-MO) has called a money "fever" in Washington today.

Speaker Tip O'Neill, who was surprisingly low in percent of PAC funds, being 12th from the top, said recently, "The more they are curbed, the better off the country will be."

Senator Robert Dole has said, "There are not any Poor PACs or Food Stamp PACs or Nutrition PACs or Medicare PACs."

Senator Dale Bumpers has said, "You can't have a sensible debate about how much is enough for defense when those PACs are contributing so much."

The $80 million spent on House races in 1982 was 45 percent higher than 1980. What amount of money will be spent on congressional races in 1984?

The discussion about what can be done to deal with these concerns has already begun between both Democrats and Republicans in Congress. The idea reform package for congressional campaigns would incorporate elements of the following:

1) Setting a reasonable limit on the total amount a candidate can get from all PACs, certainly no more than $75,000. Also there should not be an increase of the $5,000 maximum limit from each PAC for each of the primary and general elections, as some Congrssmen propose.

2) Increasing the individual contribution limit of $1,000, which was set in 1974, to $2,500.

3) Partial federal funding, by a voluntary check-off on personal tax returns. Currently Presidental primary candidates receive money from federal matching funds. The general Presidental election is fully financed by federal money.

This system, if applied to Congressional campaigns, would cost almost $80 million per two-year cycle, based on recent campaign expenses. Another dollar a year voluntary check-off could pay this proposal.

4) Increasing the amount individuals can contribute to political parties from the current $20,000 ceiling. The party's role, which has been diminishing with the esclating role of special interests, would be strengthened.

5) Increasing the individual income-tax credit for personal contributions from $100 to $250.

Although the elements and the amounts of new legislation may vary, the difficulty is not so much in finding solutions. The difficulty is in persuading Congressmen who get PAC money to change.

The public is now paying the price. Campaign-financing reform is absolutely necessary to prevent the basic idea of our democratic process—representative government—from slipping away.

from the general store

in which Editor Ray Elliott takes a look at the Salt Project, a cultural journalism program in Cape Porpoise, Maine, which started in a nearby high school. A semester-in-residence program has since been developed where college students spend a semester in Maine for credit. Students sharpen their interpretative, writing, photography and design skills as they study the Maine culture and produce a magazine called "Salt."

Plus

—The 1845 hanging of Crawford County resident, Elizabeth Reed, giving her the distinction of being the only woman legally hanged in Illinois history

—Seth Walker spins a tale about a ranger at Lincoln Log Cabin near Charleston

—John Freeland looks back at the early days around Bellair during the years 1846-47

—Lola Armstrong writes about an early Crawford County settlement, Morea, that is now only three roads which come together at an intersection

—Thornton Stephens returns with one of his short stories.

and many other stories

that haven't been told yet!