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# Tales

Number 9

from the general store



# Tales

from the general store, inc.



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 1, 1985

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Ray Elliott

### LTC/TALES AGREEMENT TAKES TALES PROJECT TO THE CLASSROOM

Lincoln Trail College (LTC) President Richard L. Behrendt and Tales from the general store, inc. President Ray Elliott today announced that the two organizations had reached an agreement that would take the Tales project to the classroom.

"We're pleased to be able to enter into a unique kind of arrangement with Tales from the general store," Behrendt said, "that will provide the opportunity for free (to the college) instruction in a quality laboratory for our students while they get hands-on experience at the same time."

According to the agreement, Elliott will teach a course in cultural journalism that is structured to revolve around publishing the magazine each quarter and includes units on interviewing techniques, field research, feature and magazine article writing, photography, graphic design, computer typesetting, paste-up production, circulation and business administration.

"This is exactly the kind of arrangement we have been looking for," Elliott said. "Other things begin to fall in place in projects like this when you have students using them as learning environments."

Tales National Advisory Board member Norman Sims, a Mattoon native who is also on the academic board of Salt (a cultural journalism project in Maine) and teaches journalism at the University of Massachusetts, supports the ideas behind the project and the LTC affiliation.

"Nothing builds your confidence like putting out a publication," Sims said. "And nothing builds your confidence as a writer better than seeing your work in print. This has worked well at Salt, and a great deal of the recent success is owed to the affiliation with the University of Maine."

Students interested in registering for the course fall quarter or wanting to learn more about the course may contact Jack Wakefield, associate dean of Student Services at LTC.

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The tombstone of Alonzo W. Parsons is in the Bellair Cemetery east of town. (Photo by Vanessa Faurie)

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Tales doesn't have as permanent a place as Alonzo W. Parsons, but we're working on finding one that will keep the a project around for a long time. Tales editor Ray Elliott's column takes a look at how that may be possible.

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by Ray Elliott

Through a dream, a chance finding of some old photographs and a conversation with his grandmother, a young country boy learns about his heritage and comes to a better understanding of himself.

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by Vanessa Faurie

The arguments can go either way regarding the validity of the madstone (an object thought to cure rabies). The concrete evidence suggests it is merely a myth, but the power of believing may have had an effect.

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by John Freeland

When oil was first discovered in Crawford County, families around Bellair and elsewhere were hopeful of finding oil on their land as pumps sprang up around them. Some were lucky and established the family fortune; others simply held onto their dreams.

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by Rosalie Bohn

The memory of a pet holds a special place in children's hearts that remains years later. Through the experience of having an unusual pet groundhog, the realities of life slowly become apparent to a young girl.

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by Jennifer Dumbris

When a woman moved to St. Francisville, she wanted to learn about its history and heritage. What she found increased her appreciation and pride in her new home.

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A down-home collection of faces and places in southern Illinois shows the rich history of the area that is slowly fading.

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Ray Elliott

## Tales still kickin' despite appearances

That old tombstone on the cover of this magazine sets out in the Bellair Cemetery, east of Bellair on the angling gravel road. It marks the burial site of a man named Alonzo W. Parsons. He died on February 8, 1897, at the age of "57 y. 4 m. 27 d." That's all I can tell you about Alonzo. I never knew him and never knew anyone who did. Not that talked about him, anyway.

His tombstone is on the cover because it's the type I think about using there from time to time to lay the Tales from the general store project to rest. Right now I'm not in that frame of mind, though.

Only problem is that this issue of "Tales" has been pretty well planned for a long time and has been lying around, waiting for other things to come together before publication. And everything came together. Except the cover, that is. It hasn't come together like everything else. Question was, what to do for the cover? Oh, I know it could have been a pretty spring picture. Or an old building. Or an old school, or family picture. Or any number of other possibilities, provided you had the time to ask around. I didn't.

I kind of liked old Alonzo's tombstone, anyway. The idea of using it on the cover had been lurking in the back of my mind, I'm sure. It looked so handsome, sitting there among the flowers and bushes. So there it is. That's the cover. May Alonzo W. Parsons rest in peace.

As for the Tales project, the prognosis for continued life is quite good. We've just entered into an agreement with Lincoln Trail College (LTC) in Robinson to offer a course in cultural journalism to its students beginning next fall. The course will give students the opportunity to publish a magazine and help run a non-profit corporation.

This enables us to offer an alternative to the regular LTC curriculum, at no cost to the college (it will be funded by grants and contributions), that gives students hands-on experience while they learn essential skills for employment in a number of fields and record their own history and culture at the same time.

Not having had students on a regular basis has hindered the Tales project since its inception and has threatened to shut it down before it got off the ground. But before we used old Alonzo's tombstone for real, we met with Ray Murray of the W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation in Chicago for consultation about operating and funding a non-profit corporation like Tales from the general store, inc.

## We're very pleased with the people around the country who have agreed to serve on the boards and lend their support.

One of the outcomes of that meeting was the formation of the National and Community Advisory Boards to gain support and credibility for the project. We're very pleased with the people around the country who have agreed to serve on the boards and lend their support.

The name of each board member and the name of his or her profession and affiliation is listed on the letterhead on the facing page. They are nationally known educators and writers, respected community and industry leaders, all. They're the kind of people who care about the quality of life we live and are willing to do something about it. We look forward to having them and other people like them in our corner for years to come.

Looking on to other things, the next magazine will be put out by LTC students taking the Tales course fall quarter. No magazine this summer. With the LTC affiliation, there now seems to be a sound basis for financial grants from private foundations and public corporations where there wasn't without it.

So the summer will be spent writing applications for administrative grants for staff, equipment and supplies and general grants for restoration work on Tales buildings in Bellair. Writing grants is a full-time job, folks say. And there are beaucoup other things to do.

Besides students and money, then, like the Marines, "we're looking for a few good men" (and women) to run the project as it teaches marketable skills to local students, preserves a piece of the past through the magazine, restores some of the general store era buildings in Bellair for our headquarters and provides a living museum for public browsing and educational workshops, while creating a few jobs in an area of relatively high unemployment.

Now if we had a couple of million bucks in the bank to do all the hiring and restoring that needs to be done, I have no doubt that there would be more job applications than we could handle. As it is, there ain't much money and there ain't no flood of job applications.

That's the reason we're looking for those few good folks right now. To get the job done, we need people who are committed to the project, people who can work to create their own job and find ways to fund it after it's created, people who are willing to make a few sacrifices along the way. If that sounds like something you can handle, get in touch. Soon.

Despite those occasional urges to lay the project to rest, then, and although Alonzo's tombstone is on the cover, we're still in business and plan to stay that way for a long time. With a gung ho staff, an outstanding and supportive group of board members, a receptive and cooperative community in which to work and an affiliation with LTC, it's difficult to see how an idea like the Tales project could be laid to rest.

I still like Alonzo's tombstone, though. Plain, to the point, nothing fancy.

# Letters

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Carol S. Ives of Chicago, Illinois, is researching her family history, particularly the following: the Wiman family descendants of Adam, Henry, John Ransom, William Johnson Wiman; Abraham, Henry, Ella Burner, George, Levi, Marion Silas, Carl Henry, Mortimer, Alonzo Parsons, Catherine Dennis and Almeda Beam.

If you can help, please pass on your information to Carol Ives, 6927 N. Osceola Avenue, Chicago, IL 60631.

## Lost & Found Dept.

We enjoyed our day very much at the butchering (November 1984). Keep up the good work you are doing with Tales.

**CORAL STANLEY**  
Newton, Illinois

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Mrs. Stanley lost a small, flat, black camera the day of the Tales' Hog Butchering last November. If anyone found it, please send it to Tales, R.R. #2, Oblong, IL 62449, and we will return the camera to Mrs. Stanley.

## Readers' last chance to help on Parker history collection

Just had to tell you how much I enjoy "Tales." I grew up in Crawford County near Canaan School and Church.

I'm doing research on the Parkers and writing my family history on all who are or were related to James and Anna Doty Parker, who came to Crawford County in 1816. They had five sons, Jonathan (my line), Samuel, George, William and James.

Maybe there are some who are still not aware that I plan to publish a book by the end of 1985. If they want to be included in the book, I am always appreciative of their interest.

Keep up the good work. We hope to see Bellair one day next spring. We enjoy reading cousin Paul Parker's poetry and all the others.

Happy searching.

**JANE PARKER BROWN**  
Genoa, Illinois

## Author writes sequel to 'North Fork Days'

I am a native of Oblong, Illinois, having been born on an 80-acre farm west of Oblong. My first book, "North Fork Days," tells of the first 17 years of my life on this farm that borders North Fork Creek.

My second book, "I Hear School Bells, Oil Wells and Children's Laughter," just off the press in September 1984, is a sequel to "North Fork Days." The first few chapters tell of my experiences in teaching my first term of school at Whitaker School (no. 6) in Jasper County, Illinois. This book covers events of the 1920s to the 1980s. The

book may be purchased from me for \$4.50 ppd.

**GRACE NEWBOLD CLEMENTS**  
Greenville, Michigan

## Never turn down a slice of Americana

"Tales" was a little skinny last time. I hope that doesn't portend any dissolving of the project because it's definitely needed. The older I grow, the more I appreciate the need for what you're trying to do. The people and places and events and mores "Tales" deals with are authentic, as opposed to the superficial role playing we get so accustomed to seeing these days. Walter Whittaker, for example, was sure of what really mattered. I'm not sure I am, and I know I'm not alone in that.

As I read the last issue, I was again impressed with its contents, particularly the Whittaker tribute. Another piece I found significant was the letter from Professor Larry Danielson of the University of Illinois. More power to him! Without even knowing him, I like him and respect him. I wonder whether all those who are exposed to "Tales" really know what they have and appreciate the opportunity to ingest so simply a slice of Americana that is in all of us. Anyone who turns down that opportunity is crazy!

Keep up your important work.

**TOM REITER**  
Superintendent  
Lemont Schools  
Lemont, Illinois

## Artist has interest in this part of country

I enjoy "Tales from the general store." For the past 36 years, I have spent much time in your area. Being an artist, the places you tell about are of special interest to me. You are doing a good job.

**PHILLIP J. OSCHMANN**  
Burbank, Illinois

## There's nothing new about these 'tales'

My husband and I live in Oklahoma now, but we are both from Hutsonville. We enjoy reading about familiar names and places from home. We are both too young to remember firsthand many of the people and events written about in "Tales," but through parents, aunts and uncles, we have heard these "tales" all our lives.

**MARCIA GRAY**  
Pryor, Oklahoma

## Encouraging notes

Please keep my "Tales" coming.

**DON SCHERRINSKY**  
Eureka, Illinois

I have enjoyed my subscriptions (to "Tales") so very much. Our ancestors lived in Robinson, Palestine, Oblong and Hutsonville from 1850 through now. Keep up the good work.

**MARY A. FREELS**  
Albany, Georgia

I do enjoy reading a paper from "home," but I would like to see more articles about people and places in Jasper and Crawford Counties.

Keep up the good work.

**MARILYN BLAIR (WIMAN)**  
Newman, Illinois

We are using the "Tales" Burl Ives issue (#3) as a dividend for membership. Maybe we'll both be better off for the fact.

**BILL FURRY**  
Auburn School of Folk Arts  
Auburn, Illinois

Most of the people (in "Tales") I know or have heard of, so it's like a visit "back home."

**SYLVIA TURNIPSEED BOYD**  
McAllen, Texas

Mrs. Little and I really enjoy the unusual and interesting articles you publish.

**WILLIAM G. LITTLE**  
Robinson, Illinois

Wouldn't want to miss an issue. Still enjoying "Tales;" you guys do nice work. Come to Carmi. You can surely find a story: oil fields, coal mine, historical society, rich men and poor men, politics. . . it's all here in White County.

Further good luck in your project. Without a past, it's tough to live in the present.

**DAVE JOHNSON**  
Principal  
Carmi Middle School  
Carmi, Illinois

## Names & stories wanted of aunt's teaching days

Just a note to say how much I enjoy your paper. I look forward to each one. I was born in 1931 in Bellair, the daughter of Ed and Hattie Fritz. My twin, Jean Fritz, lives in Bridgeport and was a long-time Marathon employee. My aunt, Mrs. J.R. Burner, now deceased, was a teacher during the 1920s at Bellair. I would like all the folks who were her students to send in their name or a story they remember about her school. She often recalled her working days and students.

**JOAN FRITZ RUSSELL**  
Oblong, Illinois

## Newly retired couple getting back to roots

Since (my) retirement, we have decided to come back to our "roots." Hope we can attend one of the butchering—that is, if you have another one later in the winter.

**BILL TYHURST**  
Mt. Vernon, Illinois

# 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 non-profit 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 in the days of the general store era. The foundation will conduct workshops in cultural journalism for area residents, students and non-students, who are interested in journalism and history.

Students will also be given the opportunity to learn about their history and culture by talking with people who have experienced it. These students may also have the opportunity to participate in or observe such activities as hunting, fishing, butchering, furniture making, soap making, quilting and others customs from the past.

From these experiences, the workshop participants will record oral history, write stories, take photographs 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," the Casey "Reporter" and the Marshall "Independent," 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 project 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 project comes from tax-deductible contributions. 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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Anyone may submit articles, photographs or drawings for publication in "Tales from the general store." If published, all material becomes the property of Tales from the general store, inc. No responsibility for returning unused submissions can be assumed; however, every effort will be made to return all submissions.

Subscribers to the Robinson "Daily News," the Lawrenceville "Daily Record," the Casey "Reporter" and the Marshall "Independent" will receive the magazine as part of their subscriptions as long as the Robinson "Daily News" prints and distributes it. Non-subscribers to the four newspapers may purchase individual copies for \$1; back issues are \$2 each.

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

# ... and more letters

## Sand Ridge vs. Bellair in school softball games

Since I grew up a few miles southwest of Bellair, I really enjoy your paper. I attended Sand Ridge School, and we used to play softball against Bellair School. My parents were O.P. and Della Turnipseed.

RUTH WATKINS  
Hart, Michigan

## Edgar County was part of her family history

I recently read a copy of your publication at my mother-in-law's home in Martinsville, Illinois. I've enclosed some recipes your readers may enjoy. (Ed.—See page 6.)

My great-grandfather, an early 1825 pioneer of Edgar County, and his father used the Palestine, Illinois, Land Office for his grant to land in Edgar County. His ancestors

settled in Edenton, North Carolina, prior to the year 1663. Joseph Perisho, my lineal forbear, operated a grist mill in Chowin County, Albermanle Sound, Edenton, North Carolina, his entire lifetime after having come from France as a teenager.

I'm a member of the Edgar County Historical Society and live in a large, country home built in 1873 where my grandfather and father lived. My father was born in this house in 1895, and I was born in 1919.

The article about Bellair, Illinois, was quite interesting.  
Good luck.

W.E. PERISHO  
Paris, Illinois

## Husband sold Luckys around Bellair vicinity

("Tales" is) such an interesting magazine. Although I wasn't born in Illinois, I've lived in Lawrence Coun-

ty all my married life. My late husband, Tom Cochran, was a "traveling salesman" in the summer of 1925 or '26—sold Lucky Strikes, loose tobacco and chewing tobacco, which was a big seller. He called on the stores up in that territory, and I'm almost sure he visited the (Bellair) General Store. He had a Ford Roadster. When he came home, that car would be covered with yellow dust from the roads.

EMMA LEE COCHRAN  
Lawrenceville, Illinois

## Reader's ancestors may be a part of Elizabeth Reed story

I have just read "Tales" #7, which has been passed on to me. I thoroughly enjoyed every bit of it. And since I am involved in tracing my family history of many pioneer Crawford and Lawrence County ancestors, I feel your publication

will help me in knowing more about the times in which they lived.

Also, I would like to ask a question of Mark Weber regarding his story, "The hanging of Elizabeth Reed" ("Tales" #7). He wrote of a Mr. McCarter calling at the Reed home to collect money owed him by Leonard Reed. I am interested in knowing his source for this particular bit of information and if the given name of this Mr. McCarter can be determined since I have a McCarter lineage.

I have noted that "Combined History of Edwards, Lawrence and Wabash Counties of Illinois" list among the Crawford County grand jurors of the Elizabeth Reed trial as S. McCarter and L.G. McCarter. I am sure the S. McCarter refers to Samuel McCarter, 1800-1878, who was a great-great-uncle of mine. But in my research, I have never come across L.G. McCarter. Samuel's brother, J.G. (Jesse Glass) McCarter is my great-great-grandfather, and I have often wondered if an error had been made in interpreting the handwriting of that day (an L for a J).

Peter Hamilton, also a grand juror of the trial, fits into my lineage, too—another great-great-grandfather. And yet another association of the event: the young boy of 11 who was hoisted to the shoulders of his grandfather to witness the hanging of Elizabeth was Alexander Hamilton McCarter, a great-uncle to me and a brother to my grandfather, William Shields McCarter.

It's great news to learn that such a publication as yours exists. I wish you all much success and look forward to receiving the first six issues (of "Tales") as well as future ones.

MARGRET MCCARTER CRAVEY  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The sources consulted in Mark Weber's article about Elizabeth Reed were from the Lawrenceville Courthouse, the Recorder's Office for birth and death records, the Circuit Clerks' Office for trial transcripts, local cemeteries and old newspaper accounts.

# Reader Survey

\_\_\_\_\_ male  
\_\_\_\_\_ female  
\_\_\_\_\_ age

occupation

education

birthplace

Do you get Tales by subscription or as a newspaper insert?

\_\_\_\_\_ subscription  
\_\_\_\_\_ newspaper insert  
(specify)

How many people read your issue of Tales?

\_\_\_\_\_ just me  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 - 2 others  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2 - 4 others  
\_\_\_\_\_ more than 4

How much of Tales do you read?

\_\_\_\_\_ cover to cover  
\_\_\_\_\_ about half  
\_\_\_\_\_ a story or two  
\_\_\_\_\_ just skim it

Which section do you like most?

\_\_\_\_\_ cover story  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ray Elliott column  
\_\_\_\_\_ Letters  
\_\_\_\_\_ Did you know...  
\_\_\_\_\_ Recipes and remedies  
\_\_\_\_\_ other

Which section do you like least?

Are the stories accurate?

\_\_\_\_\_ always  
\_\_\_\_\_ usually  
\_\_\_\_\_ rarely

What subject(s) would you like to read more about in Tales?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think of the look and design of Tales?

\_\_\_\_\_ I like it  
\_\_\_\_\_ OK  
\_\_\_\_\_ I do not like it

Why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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# Recipes and remedies

## Scripture cake

Add 2 cups of what is found in Jeremiah VI:20 and ½ cup of what is found in Judges V:25 (last clause) and ½ cup of what is found in Judges IV:19, 6 cups of what is found in Jeremiah XVII:11, 4 and ½ cups of what is found in 1st Kings IV:22, a pinch of what is found in Leviticus II:13, 2 cups of what is found in 1st Daniel XXX:12, 2 cups of what is found in Nahum III:12 and 1 cup of what is found in 1st Samuel XIV:25. Season to taste with what is found in II Chronicles IX:9. At last, add two tablespoonfuls Royal baking powder. Bake in a moderate hot oven.

—Mrs. Hattie Carey, Sr.  
Methodist Cook Book  
Robinson, Illinois, issued by Ladies' Aid Society in the early 1900s

## Minnehaha cake

1 and ½ cups granulated sugar  
½ cup butter stirred to a cream  
whites of 6 eggs or 3 whole eggs  
2 teaspoons cream tartar stirred in 2 heaping cups of sifted flour  
1 teaspoon soda in ½ cup sweet milk  
Bake in three layers.  
Filling: Take a teacup sugar and a little water, boil together until it is brittle when dropped in cold water. Remove from stove and stir quickly into the well beaten white of an egg. Add a cup of stoned raisins chopped fine or a cup of chopped hickory nut meats. Place between layers and over top.

—M.L. Carman  
Methodist Cook Book

## Indian pudding

½ teacup corn meal  
1 quart milk  
Scald the meal in the milk.  
When cool, beat 2 eggs. Sweeten to taste with part sugar and part molasses.  
raisins or dried cherries  
butter the size of a walnut  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
Bake a long time. Eat with whipped cream.

—Mrs. Jennie Marbry  
Methodist Cook Book

## Cream chicken soup

3 or 4 pounds of fowl  
3 quarts cold water  
1 tablespoon salt  
6 pepper corns  
1 tablespoon chopped onion  
2 tablespoons chopped celery  
Strain. When cool, remove the fat.

For 1 quart stock, allow 1 pint cream or milk. Boil the stock.

Add:  
1 tablespoon butter and 1 tablespoon cornstarch cooked together  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 saltspoon white pepper  
Have 2 eggs beaten in a tureen and strain soup over them. Serve at once.

—Mrs. Emma Walker  
Methodist Cook Book

## Zucchini relish

Chop in blender and drain:  
10 cups zucchini  
4 large onions  
2 large green peppers  
1 red pepper  
Add 4 tablespoons salt and let set overnight in enamel or glass container. Next morning, drain well. Heat to a boil 2½ cups vinegar and 4 cups sugar.  
Add 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon dry mustard  
1 teaspoon tumeric  
1 teaspoon pepper  
Add vinegar and spices to well-drained vegetables and bring to a full boil. Pour into sterile or scalded jars and seal. Makes about five pints.

—W.E. Perisho

## Pear jam

Combine:  
½ gallon sliced (Keiffer) pears  
½ gallon sugar (or a little less)  
Let stand a few hours or overnight  
Add:  
3 oranges ground and cooked until tender  
1 large or 3 small cans of crushed pineapple  
Cook slow until thick and jam-like.

## Marmalade

3 cans pineapple (crushed or sliced)  
5-6 oranges  
2 medium-sized lemons  
3½ pounds sugar  
Cut oranges and lemons, and squeeze juice out. Save rind and grind. Put in pressure cooker for one hour on medium heat or less. When done, put in a colander and run cold water over it. Drain well. Add juice, pineapple and sugar. (Just cook orange and lemon rind, then add sugar, juice and pineapple.) Cook until thick.

—Frances Fox

## German noodles

1 egg  
1 cup flour  
1 teaspoon Royal baking powder and sweet milk to make a thin batter  
Beat egg. Add flour with Royal baking powder and a little of the milk until flour is perfectly smooth, then the rest of the milk. Salt to taste. Have batter thin enough to run all over the griddle. When poured in the center, turn the griddle sidewise to make it run all round. Then brown on both sides. Pile on a plate. When all are baked, cut fine with a sharp knife. Put in disk and pour stewed chicken gravy all over it.

—Martha Bennett  
Methodist Cook Book

## Roast o'possum

Skin so as to remove most of the fat. Place in Dutch oven with 2 pounds of breakfast bacon seasoned to taste. Roast over hot coals. When nearly done, place a few sweet potatoes around possum. When potatoes are done, serve warm.

—Robinson Gun Club  
Otey & Bennett  
Methodist Cook Book

## Mock duck

Procure a round steak. Make a dressing as for chicken or turkey. Roll in the steak and bake, basting with the following sauce.  
Suace for basting:  
3 tablespoons butter  
3 tablespoons flour  
a little pepper  
4 cups water  
Salt to taste and cook.

—Ada Petry  
Methodist Cook Book

## Cracker Jack

½ cup sugar  
½ cup sorghum molasses  
butter size of walnut  
2 gallons popped corn  
Boil sugar, molasses and butter with ½ cup water until it makes a ball. When tried in cold water, pour over corn, stirring all the time to mix thoroughly. 1 cup of nuts is a great addition. Serve any way preferred.

—Coke Lowe  
Methodist Cook Book

## Oyster soup

To 1 quart oysters, take ½ gallon rich sweet milk, ½ cup butter, salt to taste, 1 pint water. Cook in double

boiler. Let milk get hot, then add oysters, etc. As soon as the oysters curl, they are done.

—Emma Cooper  
Methodist Cook Book

## Vinegar Tips

- 1) For fluffy meringue, add ¼ teaspoon of vinegar to 3 egg whites.
- 2) If you are scaling fish, first rub vinegar all over the fish. This will make for easier handling and cuts down the fishy odor on your hands, too.
- 3) ½ cup vinegar added to 1 gallon of rinse water will eliminate dull soap film from glassware and will make it shine
- 4) Vinegar is also great for beer glasses. Always wash them separately and rinse in vinegar water.
- 5) A little vinegar rubbed on your fingers before and after slicing onions will remove the onion odor.
- 6) To remove fruit stains from hands, rub them with a little vinegar and wipe with a cloth.
- 7) To get the last bit of mayonaise or salad dressing out of the jar, just dribble a little vinegar into the jar. Put the top on lightly and shake.

—Mable Elliott

## Lye soap

Dissolve 1 can lye in 3 quarts soft cold water. Add 1 10-cent box Oxydol and stir. Pour in very slowly 4½ pounds of melted lukewarm grease, being sure to stir one way all the time. If you want the soap to be

white, add 2 tablespoons ammonia and ½ cup borax dissolved in water. Add while stirring. Stir 30 minutes.

—Mable Elliott

## Helpful hints

- 1) Badly discolored aluminum pans may be brightened by boiling apple parings in them for a short time.
- 2) In damp weather when salt is difficult to use in a shaker, add a teaspoon of cornstarch to each cupful of salt and mix thoroughly.
- 3) To keep cake from sticking, sprinkle the pans with equal parts of flour and fine sugar.
- 4) When bread is baking, a small dish of water in the oven will keep the crust from getting too hard.
- 5) A good rub with salad oil will remove squeaks from your egg beaters.
- 6) To clean artificial flower arrangements, spray with liquid window cleaner containing ammonia. Let stand a few minutes and rinse off with warm water.
- 7) When washing plastic tablecloths or shower curtains, add a drop of mineral oil to the final rinse water. Your things will be soft and supple.

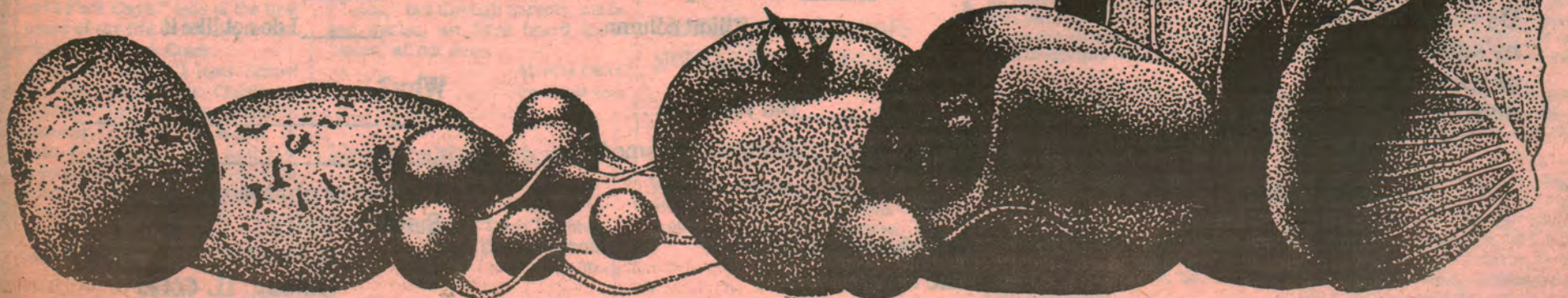
## Lotion

2 ounces bay rum  
2 ounces rose water  
2 ounces glycerine  
10 drops carbolic acid  
3 grains corrosive sublimate  
juice of 1 lemon  
Mix and strain through a thin muslin cloth. Keep in a well-corked bottle.  
—Mrs. L.P. Beckett  
Methodist Cook Book

## Send us your remedies

Share your old home remedies with other "Tales" readers

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





James Cox, seated at right, Dick Laymon, seated at left, and Link Goodman, standing behind them, pose with Winfield Harrison and his son Carter, far left, in front of the old Hazel Dell depot, circa early 1900s. (Photo courtesy of Dorothy Taggart)

## Did you know ...

### Handy collection donated to Sangamon

SPRINGFIELD—A major literary collection, including original manuscripts of author James Jones, was recently donated to the Norris L. Bookens Library at Sangamon State University.

The "Handy Colony Collection" consists of the collected manuscripts, photographs, correspondence, diaries, minutes and financial records of the Writer's Colony. Established by Lowney Turner Handy, Harry Handy and James Jones, the Colony operated from the early Fifties until 1964 in Marshall.

The collection was the gift of Margaret Turner, sister-in-law of Lowney Handy. Turner had maintained the Colony records in her home since Handy's death in 1964.

The collection came to the attention of SSU professors J. Michael Lennon and Jeffrey Van Davis during the taping of interviews for a video documentary on the life of James Jones, author of "From Here to Eternity," "Some Came Running" and "The Thin Red Line."

The "Handy Colony Collection" contains tens of thousands of pages of written material and is one of the largest collections ever donated to the university. It includes manuscript copies of "From Here to Eternity" and "Some Came Running," as well as Jones unpublished first novel, "They Shall Inherit the Laughter." Until the discovery of the collection, the first novel was considered to be lost or destroyed.

Other manuscripts in the collection include published and unpublished works by Gerald Tschappat, Charles Wright, Charles Robb, Rex Bollin, Tom Chamales, Jere Peacock and Lowney Turner Handy.

The letters in the collection predate the existence of the Colony by 20 years and end with Handy's death, detailing 34 years of extensive correspondence with writers, agents, movie personalities, prisoners, soldiers, and her family and friends. The letters between Jones and Handy chronicle their friendship from 1943 to 1957 and provide a perspective on the writing of "From Here to Eternity." The collection also contains copies of correspondence between Jones and Maxwell Perkins (the editor of Hemingway, Wolfe and Fitzgerald) and Scribner's editors Burroughs Mitchell and John Hall Wheelock regarding the early drafts and publication of "From Here to Eternity."

Professors Lennon and Davis, who are co-curators, drew on materials in the collection in the production of their documentary, "James Jones: Reveille to Taps." The 60-minute program was recently shown on several public television stations nationwide.

Initial plans for the collection include sorting and analysis of the various materials. Future plans call for the publishing of a detailed catalog of the collection, to be used by scholars of American literature.

—Sangamon State University news release

### Historic tavern preserved safely

MULKEYTOWN, Ill.—After a fire on Thanksgiving 1983, the 156-year-old Silkwood Tavern in Mulkeytown, Illinois, was destined to be destroyed, according to an Associated Press story by Dave DeWitte in September 1984.

Owner John Crowe, DeWitte reported, "wanted to build a new house on the site and was tired of the stream of visitors who were attracted to the old structure.

"But Crowe, who took an active part in the move, has now agreed to keep the building on his property. Its new resting place is only 150 feet north of the old site.

"Crowe and two other men with no house-moving experience completed the job in late August. For their efforts, they received \$500 each from The Citizens Committee to Save Silkwood Tavern....

"The legend involving the old tavern, a half-way stopover for travelers between Shawneetown and St. Louis, did not seem to excite many people when Crowe bought the land it occupies in 1973.

"They told me there was some history to it," he said. "But that didn't mean anything to me."

"Crowe began to take interest in the building when some area women, including neighbor Ruby Henderson, started working on ways to preserve it.

"The new site will be close enough for him to keep a watch against vandalism but distant enough that

visitors will not become an annoyance, he said....

"Topsoil from the old site was saved, Crowe said, in order to preserve any relics it might yield. The old site has already yielded bone buttons, old bottles and arrowheads.

"Michael J. McNerny of the tavern preservation committee said the building is 'out of immediate danger,' but its long-range outlook remains uncertain.

—Dave DeWitte  
Associated Press

### Grandpa pays the price in old newspaper story

Grandfather is a very dignified, retired minister. But still, with all his dignity, he regularly takes his four-year-old granddaughter to Sunday school because he thinks that she should have this religious training while she is yet young.

The other Sunday, it was Mary Ellen's fourth birthday and she, after the custom of the school carried with her four pennies to place in the birthday basket. Everything went nicely and the tot went to the front, her little face happy above her Sunday finery. Still smiling, she stood in row with the other birthday children and waited while the basket was passed.

When it was taken to the others and she saw them put their pennies into the basket, Mary Ellen became distinctly uneasy. She seemed about to flee, then to reconsider and

stayed. But when it reached her, instead of dropping her pennies into it as the others had done, she held them very tightly and said: "No. I'm going to keep them myself. If you want any oders you tan tall my grandpa up. He had a whole handful this mornin'."

And grandfather, in order to keep his reputation free from having any taints of a piker, had to rise from his seat and come forward with four pennies. Then was the amusement of the congregation not only seen, but heard as well.

—Indianapolis News  
as reprinted in the  
Robinson Argus Jan. 14, 1920

### Couple restores photos of just about anything

Alice and Leslie Street restore old photographs so they look like new. In a July 9, 1981, article in the "Daily Suburban Trib," reporter Grace Carolyn Dahlberg wrote that these expert photo restorers work out of Al-Les Studio, 1006 Eddy Ct., Wheaton, Illinois.

Leslie Street makes a copy negative, work print and new print of the photograph to be restored. Then Alice begins her work with an air brush, oil paint or other materials.

—Grace Carolyn Dahlberg  
Daily Suburban Trib

# Enoch's comin'

— a short story —

by Ray Elliott

It seemed purty danged real to me, and I knowed something real bad was going to happen, even before I woke up. And then when I woke up, I was shaking and cold with goosebumps running all up and down my back. I was scared something awful, bad as I hated to admit it. It wasn't one of them scary old dreams where you're falling and falling, thinking you're going to hit the ground and splatter all over the place and then wake up just before you hit the ground and feel your heart pounding out through your chest like it was going to pop right out, either.

No, sir, this old dream was one of them kind where you sort of float around like you're on air or something. You kind of drift into it, and next thing you know, you're right smack in the middle of something you don't understand no matter how hard you want to. I recognized the land right off, even though there wasn't no place like that on that land. Never had been. It was off in south of town on a bluff overlooking the river just off the road that goes over to Princeton. That was all natural, the land was.

What wasn't natural, but looked as real as anything I ever laid eyes on, was everything else. Right at the top of the bluff was this great big sprawling old house looking out over the whole bottom. It was fancier by a whole lot than any other place I ever seen around this part of the country. Ever window, upstairs and down had shutters on 'em, the porch was more like a shed than a porch, with the roof stretching nearly the length of the house and sticking out fifteen or twenty feet and another porch on top of the first one where folks could come out from upstairs and set if they was of a mind to, and a big rail fence run clear around the biggest yard I ever seen in all my life.

Must 'a' been purt near a hundred people setting and standing around that yard, here, there and yonder, talking and visiting. I couldn't figure out what was going on, except that maybe it was a family reunion or something like that. I seen all kinds of people I knowed from all around the country that come into the store to do their trading and loafing. And I seen a heap of other folks that I ain't never laid eyes on. From where I was standing close to the road on the north side of the place, I could look back of me and see a bunch of horses and buggies tied up at the fence and some old Model Ts parked on a high spot further back. Then I could look off to my right and see the bottoms stretching off to the river and off to my left and see the house and an open field stretching far off to the south until it looked like the field finally turned into trees.

I wasn't talking to nobody or doing nothing but looking and listening, trying to figger out what was going on. Nobody paid

no mind. Other than just standing there like that, the only thing I can remember the whole time was hearing this voice coming out of the south, across that big open field like it was being carried by the wind, calling out, singing almost, "Enoch's comin', Enoch's comin'." It started far off, real faint, and kept getting stronger until I finally heard it plain, even though I probably'd been hearing it for quite a spell.

Just about the time I started hearing the voice real good and before I had much time to wonder who Enoch was, I seen this old nigger man walking slow across that open field, heading toward the house but veering off so he would go behind the house and away from the people. But they could 'a' seen him if they'd looked. He was wearing an old straw hat that was setting over on the side of his head to keep the afternoon sun out of his eyes, I reckon, a faded blue work shirt and an old pair of bib overalls. I couldn't tell if he was wearing any shoes or not because of the tall grass, but it kind of looked like he had his overalls rolled up like he was going barefoot.

I felt drawed to him like I'd never been drawed to anything, not even to them old hills down by the old mill a bit up the river. And my legs started carrying me toward that old nigger like I didn't have nothing to say about it. Then I felt hands grab me and hold me back. It didn't take much to stop me, seemed like. I looked around and seen Amanda Wilson like she must 'a' looked when she got to be a growed-up woman. She was just plain purty, I guess you'd say, and had soft brown skin and a way of looking at you with her eyes that made you feel like you was something special to her. She spread her skirt out in the grass and just kind of settled down close to where I was being held by somebody else. We was setting or half-laying on the hill right by some wooden steps that run down to the bottom of the hill in front of the house. Folks was all scattered around in front of us.

All the time this voice kept on singing, "Enoch's comin', Enoch's comin'," and this old nigger man kept on walking real slow across the field, moving his head just a little bit ever once in a while like he was looking right at me. I still felt drawed to him, but I was held there in the lap of the person who stopped me from going in the first place. I looked up and seen it was Amanda's mother, Annie Wilson. She looked like she'd looked to me all her life, kind of purty, light skinned, dark headed and brown flashing eyes that looked like she was having the time of her life all the time.

My eyes followed the old nigger across the field and Miz Wilson held my head in her lap, rubbing my forehead with one hand and stroking my arm and chest with the other. It soothed me a little, kind of like it would my dog when I rubbed behind his ears, but I still wanted to go to that old nigger man. He kept

on walking, the sun went behind the clouds all of a sudden and it sure looked like it was coming up a bad storm. And there I was, torn between going and staying. Not being able to go on my own, yet wanting to go and being afraid to go even if I could, I started trembling and shaking.

Just about then I reckon I woke up and was shaking just as much. And I was so scared I didn't know what to do. Nothing really made any sense about why I as scared, but I sure was. It was a long time before I could go back t' sleep, too. Part of me wanted to go back and find out what that old nigger man was all about, and the other part of me was just plain scared. I just knowed that I could find out more about that old nigger if I could go back to sleep. Course I didn't find out no more when I did finally get back to sleep right before daylight. The old nigger man never did come back to me in my dreams, either. But he was in my mind ever day.

Day followed day the rest of the summer. Me 'n' my brother, Willie, rode our bikes all over the country with some of the other kids in town. Sometimes we'd ride down to the river crossing, walk the beams of the big iron bridge for a while and then ride up the narrow sand and dirt river road to the place we called Bare-Assed Beach and shuck our clothes and swim in the muddy water. A small beach of white sand stuck out in the river enough so we had a place out of the horseweeds and slick black muck that stuck to everything after the river had been up earlier in the summer.

No matter what we'd been doing, though, sooner or later we'd end up at the store. Somebody'd usually be there to tell us a story or two. And if we had a nickel we'd drink a bottle of pop while we listened. Jettters Davis was there a lot. He never worked steady at one job, but worked here and there when he could and when he wanted to. He'd seen us heading up the river to go swimming when he come back across the bottoms from Princeton that afternoon.

"You boys be careful swimming in that old river," Jettters said. "They's holes and undertows that'll get you 'fore you know it. I 'member when we was boys old Lem Daniels got caught in one o' them undertows an' drug under. Didn't find him until two days later, clear down by the sawmill."

Jettters took out a can of Prince Albert and commenced to roll him a cigarette, talking all the time. I watched him fashion the cigarette, fold the paper down in behind the tobacco and then roll it real quick between both fingers like he was snapping his fingers, then lick it with a flick of the tongue and stick it in his mouth. He knowed I was watching him.

All the time this voice kept on singing, 'Enoch's comin', Enoch's comin', and this old nigger man kept on walking real slow across the field, moving his head just a little bit ever once in a while like he was looking right at me.

"Can I try that, Jettters?" I asked.

"Your mother would have my hide if I let you," he said.

"She wouldn't have t' know."

"She better not," he said, handing the can and papers.

I tried to roll a cigarette just like I'd seen him. Somehow I ended up with a big hump in the middle and hardly nothing on either end. Jettters 'lowed it would smoke and give me a light. Willie or none of the other boys'd ever smoked on the porch in broad daylight. They didn't know what to say. I grinned at them and blew a cloud of blue smoke their way.

"What'd this place used to be like, Jettters?" I asked.

"A damn sight different 'n it is now," he said. "This was a boomin' place, I'll tell y'. Saterdy night they'd be people everywhere. Hotel there'd be full o' drummers over from Princeton. Them an' the oil johnnies'd be gamblin' an' drinkin' way into the night."

"I 'member one Sunday mornin' they was still at it, pitchin' silver dollars at cracks in the sidewalks over there in front o' Sam's old place. They wouldn't move t' let the people from church through. Made 'em walk out in the road in the mud. Oh, they was a bunch o' toughs."

"Was they ever any Indians around here, Jettters?" Willie asked.

"I wouldn't know about that, boys, I 'spect they was. But that was long before my time."

"Didn't you never hear no stories 'bout 'em when you was a kid?" Jacky Thompson asked.

"Oh, old Bones Allison, Ford's dad, used to tell about his dad tellin' him how he catched an Indian down here in the woods south o' town an' shot an' killed him on the spot. Buried him there, too, Bones said. But now I don't know if they's a thing t' that or not. Bones was right smart windy sometimes."

"Was they ever any niggers 'round here?" I asked.

"Some," he said. "Some."

"They was niggers 'round here?" Willie asked. "I ain't never seen one."

"I heard tell they was one up to Baldwin," Jacky said. "Nigger Lil. She went 'round carin' fer people when they was sick."

"Yeah," Jettters said. "That's right. They's darkies scattered 'cross the country. Old Ben Harrison down by the bend in the river come here when he was just a boy. He was a darkie."

Jettters didn't say much more and took off down the sidewalk to his house right after that. Us boys went in the store and eyed a sack of Bull Durham. None of us had a nickel and Jacky had to go home, so me and Willie hopped on our bikes and rode off.

We stopped by Grandma's for a glass of lemonade, but she wasn't there. The pump was out back, and after we got a drink we headed for the barn. It wasn't used for a barn anymore. Grandma didn't even have a cow anymore. She just kept a lot of junk there that she said she "didn't have the heart to throw away." We'd never been told not to play in it right out, but we knowed that we wasn't supposed to from the way she acted when we did.

Grandma used to run an old store till she got so she couldn't get around too good anymore. She'd just shut the doors one day and moved the stuff she hadn't sold or given away to the barn. It was packed with odds

and ends from ever part of the store. Where we got in, there was an old buggy and an old Buick car, setting there on flat, rotten tires. I rubbed through a place on the hood where it had bird poop and thick dust all over it and seen the word Buick. It didn't look like no Buick I ever seen.

"Look at this stuff, Bucky," Willie said, like he did ever time we went to the barn. "Ain't it somethin'?"

"That's what you say ever time, Willie," I said, climbing up in the hayloft and letting my eyes adjust to the dim light before looking around. "Don't you know nothin' else to



say? Sure, it's somethin'. A bunch o' old papers an' stuff that we like to dig around in. Ain't nothin' here worth nothin'."

That's what I told Willie. That's what I always told him, but I always hoped we'd find something that was something hid up there in the loft with everything else. It was so full we never knowed where to start digging. I saw the three old glass counters setting along the center of the loft and headed in that direction. We always looked in them but had never opened all the boxes and boxes and boxes crammed in them.

I slid the door to the first one open, giving us half the counter fer us t' look through. We

tures come from?"

"I don't know," I said, my hands a-trembling a little as I held the pictures. "Let's get out of here."

We hadn't no more than got back in the yard when Grandma come out the back door. She had a bucket to go gather the eggs.

"What you boys up to?" she said. "T' no good, I 'spect. Come tell me what you're up to while I get the eggs. Won't take long."

"We ain't up t' nothin', Grandma," Willie said.

"Just playin'," I said. "Ain't much t' do 'round here."

"Lawsy sakes. They's plenty t' do. You

"In th' barn," I said, looking at Willie hanging his head. "I know we ain't supposed t' be in there, but we was, an' we found them pictures. We didn't mean no harm. Honest. I just want t' know who they are."

"I don't know what in th' world is th' matter with you boys," she said, still looking down at the pictures. "We've told you time an' again 'bout stayin' out of that ol' barn. Wonder to me you didn't break a leg. Then what'd you do?"

I hadn't expected her to be quite so mad, and I was scared again. Willie hadn't said a word. I knowed he was scared, too.

"We seen the names on the back o' the picture," I said. "It's the same as that name on the tombstone down by the hill by the skatin' pond over at Uncle Will's place."

Uncle Will was Grandma's brother and lived over 'cross the river till he died about the time I was born. We didn't never go over there much now, just when somebody died that Grandma or one of my folks knowed. Then us kids didn't go to the funerals. We just stayed around Uncle Will's place with Aunt Molly.

Anyway, Grandma didn't stay mad too long. She wasn't turned that way. And it wasn't long before she just set there, looking at them pictures. Me an' Willie never said nothing. Once I seen Grandma raise her hand and wipe her eye. I did the same thing with the back of my dirty hand.

"You boys want more milk?" she asked after a long time of silence.

"Yes," Willie said, his first word since we come into the kitchen.

"Sure, Grandma," I said.

She poured us another glass full of the cold milk and scooted the glasses back in front of us. She never said nothing and set there on the other side of the table not saying a word for the longest time, just looking at us and taking a deep breath now and then like she was fixing to say something. I et another cookie, never taking my eyes off Grandma.

"Boys, boys," she said, pressing her hands together like she did when she talked about something she didn't want to talk about. "I always been proud o' who I am. Folks don't always like to go back an' tell where they come from, though. Your

was, but I 'lowed she was in her seventies. Her skin always looked like she had a dark tan, even when she was all powered up. But she didn't look like a nigger. Like an Indian maybe, but not like a nigger. Not like a nigger, unless she used to be a nigger and got over it.

"Well, I always passed," Grandma said, going ahead talking. "But your Uncle Will was dark skinned. Pop passed away about the time Will was getting growed up. He felt out of place, I reckon. He never talked much about it. None o' us never did. It was just somethin' that happened in them days. So Will, he took a job on the railroad and moved around a right smart. We heered from him ever month or so by letter."

The letters in the desk, I thought. Sure. I seen them. A whole stack of them tied with a piece of string. It just don't seem possible, though.

"The older folks, some of 'em kin t' my mother, all knew my father. They loved an' respected him—color didn't make them no never mind—an' they didn't treat us no different than anybody else. Oh, they all knowed, but they didn't hardly ever say nothin'.

"When they hit oil over here on this side o' the river, I come over here t' work. Wasn't long till I met your grandfather an' got married. Things was good fer us while we was raisin' our family. My folks died one winter. Will, he come back, an' him an' Molly lived there till he died. He just never come here much, said he didn't want to cause us no trouble. We'd visit him an' Molly over there.

"T' make a long story short, I'm half Negro. Your daddy is a fourth. Now that'd make you an' Willie an eighth, 'cept that your mom is a fourth, I reckon. Maybe more. She don't know fer shore. They's some Indian blood in her family, too. She originally come from up around London where Annie Wilson come from. Her people is part Negro, too."

That made me remember my dream about Enoch. I let out a little cry and felt my face get hot.

Grandma stopped talking a minute and there was tears in her eyes. She wiped them away before she went on. Willie's eyes was full of tears, and I could feel mine rolling

## ...Grandma's fresh baked cookies was always a treat to us. She could make the simplest things taste good. I'd heard folks say she wasn't no fancy cook, just a plain old good cook.

pulled out old ties, baby shoes, socks and all different kinds of things. Seemed like ever box had something different in it. The more boxes we opened, the muster smelling the hayloft got. It was like we'd opened up another part of the world and stirred up air that hadn't been breathed in years.

They was a pair of scales with a big tin can setting on the middle counter. I finally got the lid off and found it full of hard candy. We et a piece, but it tasted kind of flat and was awful sticky.

can. Willie piled a bunch of boxes over in the corner and uncovered the old rolltop desk. We went through the drawers, turning things upside down. They was old letters, receipts, thick lead pencils and purt near anything you could think of. It looked like the desk had been used yesterday, 'cept fer the dust and the dates on the letters and things was dated anywheres from ten to thirty years ago. One whole drawer was full of bills that was marked "not paid."

We'd nearly got through the drawers when I come to an old Farmer's Almanac. I leafed through it and come to some pictures pressed between the pages. They was old pictures, faded and tore some. But ever one of them had niggers in 'em. Wasn't no niggers around no more. Jeters had just told us that, so I figured to ask somebody. Willie had lost interest in digging around and had gone downstairs to look at the buggy. I kept the three best pictures and stuck the rest of them back in the Farmer's Almanac and shoved it back in the drawer. One of the pictures I kept was of this nigger helping a woman in a buggy with another young man just standing there. I started to put it away when I remembered the buggy downstairs and looked again. It looked just like the one down there.

That was sure funny, I thought. I shoved everything back and shut the drawer. Right away while I was climbing down the ladder to the floor I seen that the fringe around the top of both buggies was just the same. And they both had a broken spoke on the right wheel. I turned the pictures over. Real faint in pencil I could make out Thomas Jefferson Freeman, William Henry Freeman and Mary Estelle Freeman. Grandma Stell, I thought. Naw, couldn't be. She dodn't know no niggers. Never heard her say nothing about none no ways.

"We better get out o' here, Willie, before Grandma catches us, an' we get in a heap o' trouble," I said. "Look what I found. This maybe ain't nothin', but it's somethin' we never found before. Wonder who they are?"

"Thomas Jefferson," Willie said. "Hey, that's the name on that old tombstone over t' Uncle Will's, ain't it? You know, down on the hill by th' skatin' pond. Where'd them pic-

boys don't have no work t' do what's the matter. 'Spect that don't bother yur appetite none, though. I jest finished bakin' some cookies. Don't reckon you'd want t' see if they're any good, would you?"

We smiled and nodded. Getting some of Grandma's fresh baked cookies was always a treat to us. She could make the simplest things taste good. I'd heard folks say she wasn't no fancy cook, just a plain old good cook. Her oatmeal cookies liked to melt in my mouth sometimes.

She shooed two old hens off their nests and had me and Willie get the eggs. They was warm where the hens had been setting on them. Grandma found two more, and we headed fer the house, following her into the kitchen through the back door.

Her kitchen was such a comfortable place, all big and roomy. Wasn't much of nothing in it, just an old wooden table and chairs, two cupboards where she kept her dishes, glasses and silverware. Right next to them was a wood cook stove. She washed her dishes in a dishpan on an old cabinet top. Between the stove and the outside door was the door to the pantry where she kept the cookies me and Willie swiped all the time when we got the chance. We thought she didn't know we swiped them. We never give it no thought about why she never said a word to us and always kept the cookie jar full.

Ever time I went into her kitchen I always noticed the smell of it right off. It was a different smell than ours. It was something like the barn, in a way. The kitchen smelled old and musty, but not strong like the barn. Maybe it was because Grandma lived there by herself, and nobody breathed the air but her. I never could figger it out.

She set the cookie bowl in front of us and went out to the well to get us a cold glass of milk. While she was gone, I thought about asking her about that nigger. If I did, I knowed she'd know we'd been in the barn. That might cause us more trouble than it'd be worth. It wasn't that I minded getting in trouble so much, but I sure hated to cause Grandma any grief. Everybody I knowed said she was about the best person they knowed of. But my curiosity was about to get the best of me, and I thought to heck with it this once.

"Grandma," I said, pulling out the pictures, "who's that nigger in these pictures?"

She jerked them pictures from my hands like they was eight-page bibles. "Where'd you get these?" Grandma asked as she looked at the pictures.

I couldn't get more than a squeak out of my throat.

"Where'd you get these?" she asked again.

## The letters in the desk, I thought. Sure. I seen them. A whole stack of them, tied with a piece of string. It just didn't seem possible, though.

daddy was like that, I reckon. He said after we done come as fur as we come, we just ought to forget where we come from.

"I always done like he asked me to by you boys. Didn't like it none, but I done it. Maybe he wouldn't have liked it none; maybe it was his place to tell you. But he's gone now. And I'm goin' t' tell you: that there nigger, as you call him, in that picture was my daddy."

I took a deep breath then. I was more scared than ever now. Willie just sat there and looked like he was dummy Charlie McCarthy. I knowed that if Grandma was telling it right, we was niggers. Niggers. I couldn't believe that.

"My daddy was born a slave," Grandma said. "He come north durin' the war 'tween the states 'r right after. He wasn't sure hisself. He wasn't no more'n a boy when he come starvin' in here. Folks took care o' him. raised him. He growed up an' married with a Jackson girl over in Riverton where your Uncle Will's place is. That's the home place. Me 'n' Will was born to 'em."

But Grandma looks white, I thought. She was a big woman with dark hair with gray running through it. I didn't know how old she

down my cheeks.

"I should 'a' known that you boys'd find out," Grandma said. "But that's the way your daddy wanted it. I shouldn't 'av' let him talk me into it. My daddy was a fine a man as ever lived, an' I loved him. I oughtn't t' 'av' denied him to you fer as long as I have."

"Be proud of who you are, boys. God forgive me if I done wrong, but it ain't right denyin' who you are. An' it's in your heart what makes you good or bad, not in your skin 'r your blood. You can't change it no way. We're what we are. It ain't never hurt you up to now, an' I don't reckon it will."

She stood up and held out her arms to us. We ran to her and stayed in her arms for a long time, long enough for us to quit trembling and shaking and awhile after that. I could hear the evening wind, soft and low, blowing out of the south.

# MADSTONE

## as folk belief

by Vanessa Faurie

After a continuing controversy about the truth behind the madstone, which spanned several issues of "Tales," we thought it was time to do a little research of our own.

A madstone is a hard growth, believed to come from the intestine of certain deer, that many people believe has the ability to cure rabies and other illnesses when the victim is treated with it. Folk beliefs about the madstone are apparently unfounded, however.

The term "folk belief" can be defined in several ways, depending upon the source. Superstition is often used as a synonym, but that word has too many negative connotations in today's society. For our purposes, folk belief will be defined as a form of individual or collective thought, rather than indicative of a culture often associated with a peasant society.

Folk medicine, therefore, can be defined as folklorist and author Richard Dorson cited his colleagues, Oswald Erich and Richard Beitzl: "The first question should not be, 'What did the people receive from above in the course of history,' but rather, 'What viewpoints about sickness and health do they possess on the ground of their own thinking?' The answer to this question shows us that folk medicine has grown organically out of the whole of folk belief and custom, thought, life and speech. Medicine is older than doctors. Hence the definition: folk medicine is the substance of all the traditional viewpoints on sickness and the healing methods applied against disease which exist among people."

Folk medicine can be broken down into two general categories—natural folk medicine (also called rational or herbal folk medicine) and magico-religious folk medicine (also called occult folk medicine).

Natural folk medicine entails man's earliest reaction to the environment around him. Animal, vegetable and mineral substances found in nature were the basic sources to cure sickness. Magico-religious folk medicine included charms, amulets and holy words and actions to bring about a cure.

The madstone involves qualities from both realms of folk medicine. It is a general consensus that the stone is from the inner organs of a deer, much like the gall or kidney stone. Being part of an animal substance, the madstone can be considered part of natural folk medicine.

And while there are no religious practices observed in the treatment process for a madstone, a common characteristic of magico-religious folk medicine is ridding a person of disease through either a direct or indirect transference of the disease. The indirect transference is by way of an intermediary person or thing, into another person, animal or thing. The madstone would be an example of direct transference because it extracts the poison from the wound and into the stone.

**So they tested the stone by getting a prisoner who was already sentenced to die to volunteer for the experiment. The man was a cook who had stolen two silver plates from his master.**

The madstone is an example of "touch medicine." Its forefather is called the bezoar stone. According to W.W. Bauer, B.S., M.D., L.L.D., a

bezoar is "a mass of varying composition, sometimes soft and sometimes stony hard, which forms in the intestines of domestic animals. Some bezoars are the familiar hairballs known to every pet owner, which occur in the stomach of cats. These stones were in common use for the cure of various diseases by touch, especially rabies. This latter gave them the common name of 'madstone.'"

Bezoar stones have been traced back to India and the Middle East where medical properties were often attributed to unusual stones and gems. When the bezoars were carried into Europe, they were like status symbols. Those who could afford them, carried them on their person as a kind of all-purpose antidote against illness.

King Charles IX of France reportedly had one and believed in its power, despite his own advisers telling him there was no such thing as a universal antidote. So they tested the stone by getting a prisoner who was already sentenced to die to volunteer for the experiment. The man was a cook who had stolen two silver plates from his master. The prisoner was poisoned with bichloride of mercury and then immediately ingested the bezoar stone. The king's adviser wrote that the man's eyes and face were red, his tongue hung out of his mouth, he vomited, broke out in a cold sweat and felt a burning inside his stomach. Blood came out of his ears, nose and mouth, and he died after about seven hours. So, of course, the king had the stone burned, thinking it was worthless.

Another incident involving the bezoar was in England during the reign of King James I. Legal action was taken against a goldsmith who was accused of selling 100 pounds of counterfeit bezoar stones.

Eventually, the bezoar stone travelled across the Atlantic Ocean

and made its way across the American frontier. It is at this time when there is first evidence that the stone was used in ways other than by touch. In "Doctors of the American Frontier," author Richard Dunlop includes one brief mention of the stone: "All along the frontier people carried mad stones as protection."

**But because survival was so difficult on the American frontier, many people tried whatever they could to spare them and their families of illness. Not only the lack of technology, but the lack of doctors made these people dependent on themselves and their neighbors for the treatment of ailments.**

In Delaware, the Algonkian Indians had a medicine stone that was comparable to the bezoar. Although it is possible to get one of these stones from different animals, the ones from the blacktail deer were supposed to be the strongest kind. The medicine stone was a sacred object to the Indians. Because it could be used to treat a wound from a snake or mad dog, it was often called a "mad stone." In this instance, the stone could be used as an overall source of protection. But for fatal injuries, the scrapings from the stone were made into a hot tea and given to the victim. And if it was not possible to use tea, the stone was rubbed over the infected area.

In Texas, the madstone (or whitestone) from an albino deer was used in treatment of rabies in Bell County. In Brazos County, however, the madstone was obtained from a creek.

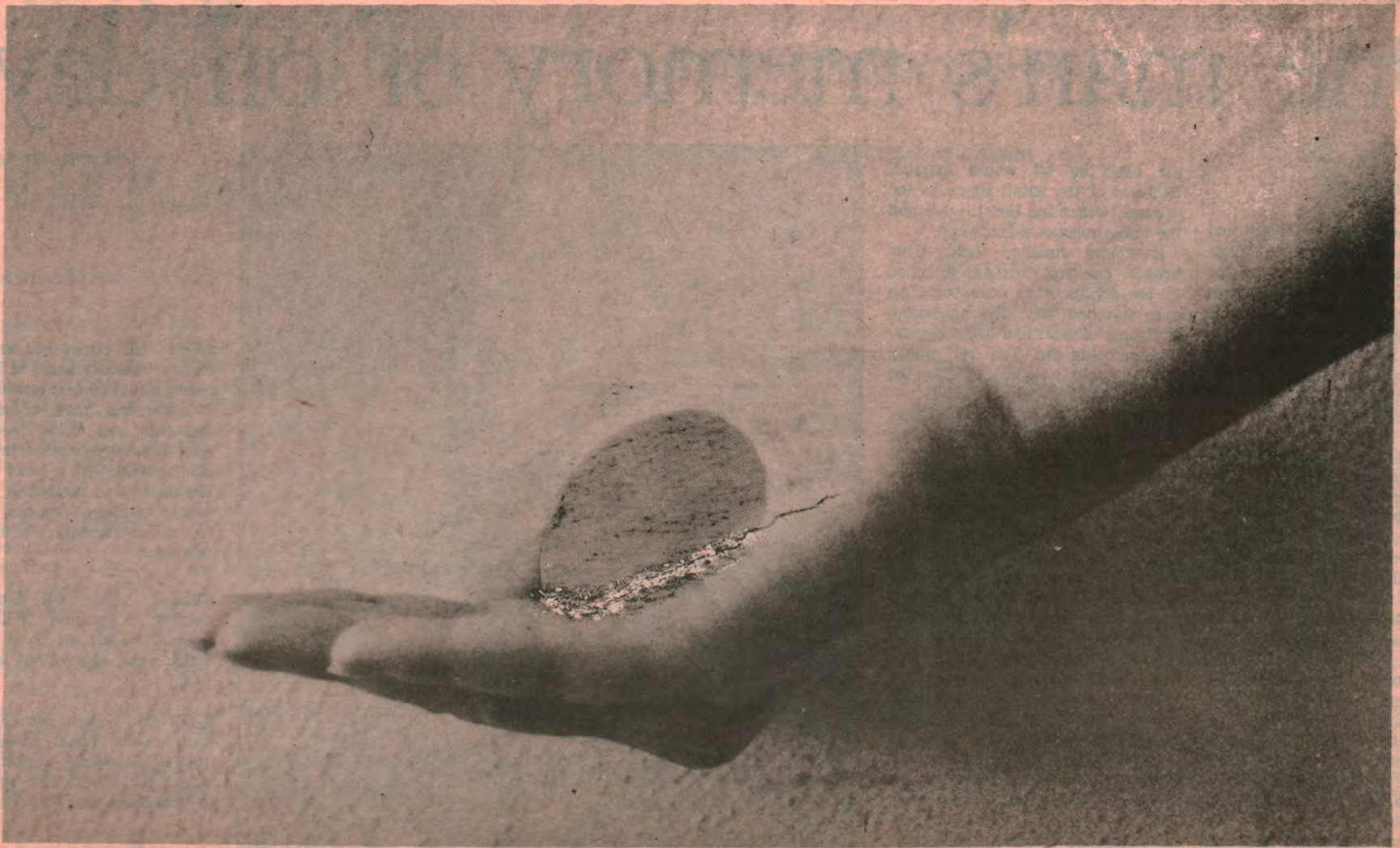
It is often questioned today, after scientific medical practices have advanced as far as they have, why people of the past used such odd methods and objects to cure illness. And why did they believe it cured illness?

One suggestion is offered by W.W. Bauer: "All folklore, including that pertaining to medicine, shows certain underlying influences or philosophies. These are the instinctive reactions against dangers which menace life and health, plus the impulse to be helpful to the sick and injured, and to prevent misfortune of any kind."

But because life was so difficult on the American frontier, many people tried whatever they could to spare them and their families of illness. Not only the lack of technology, but the lack of doctors made these people dependent on themselves and their neighbors for the treatment of ailments. In southern Illinois, there are several reports about the usage of the madstone through personal reminiscences and stories handed down from relatives.

In a past issue of "Tales from the general store," a former Bellair resident recalled a time when the madstone was used. "We had a dog named Nero that went 'mad,'" wrote John Freeland. "They went out with shotguns to kill him because nothing could cure that disease. Before they got ol' Nero, he'd bitten a sow with a litter of pigs and a young man. The pigs were separated from the sow before she went mad and had to be killed. But before that, the sow dripped saliva from its mouth onto my father's hand and also bit the young man.

"Father and the young man went



to a practitioner of the use of the madstone. As there was no broken skin on my father's hand, there was no spot where the poison got in, and the madstone did not stick. But in the case of the young man, the madstone stuck and stayed there, absorbing the poison until it had soaked it all from the wound."

While Freeland remained skeptical of the cure, Carmi resident Eva Price, born and raised in Bellair, said her grandmother used to treat many people with the madstone and stayed up many nights to do it. Although Price is not sure whether the madstone works, she said her grandmother helped comfort several people who had been bitten by supposedly mad dogs.

From what her grandparents told her, Price described the madstone as a hard stone from a deer's stomach that was dark gray "like Lava soap used to be." It was three inches long, one and one-half inches wide and one-eighth inch thick in the middle. The stone was oval in shape and had a hole in each end "like about the size of a lead pencil."

The treatment process followed by Price's grandmother was described by Duayne Ragon, a former resident of Robinson, in a letter dated December 12, 1981, to the Robinson "Daily News."

"During the summer of 1921, my father, Lowal Ragon, was bitten by a dog that was rabid. My father and mother, Beulah Crandall, had just been married that spring and were living with my mother's parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Ott Crandall.

"One summer day that year my grandfather was putting up hay (near Hunt City in Jasper County). My father and several other men were helping when a medium-sized dog came into the area and attacked my father and an 18-year-old Chapman boy.

"My grandfather had heard of Mr. and Mrs. George Haddock living in

Bellair, Crawford County, having a Mad Stone used for the treatment of rabies. He sent my father to the Haddocks for treatment. They packed clothing to last several days and made the trip by horse and buggy.

"Mother said that when they arrived, Mrs. Haddock placed the stone directly on the wound. The stone looked like a bar of Lava soap that was about three-quarters used. The stone stuck to the wound and slowly turned green. After a while, the stone fell off. It was then boiled in fresh cow's milk.

"When the stone was boiled, the green substance would come out of the stone and into the milk. Mr. Haddock had dug a deep post hole and after the stone was boiled, he would pour the milk into the hole.

"The treatment was repeated until the stone would not adhere to the wound. Mother said the treatment took several days and that the stone stuck to the wound 12 or 13 times.

"The Chapman boy was not treated and died about 30 days after being attacked.

"The cost of the treatment was \$15. Mrs. Haddock said the stone was a growth from the stomach of a deer, but is not found in all deer."

Price said after her grandmother completed a treatment, she would scratch herself with a needle and apply the madstone to herself to make sure the stone would still work. Price did not know if the madstone would eventually wear out and lose its ability to absorb the poison.

"Grandmother was the only one (in the family) who ever fooled with it," Price said. "Grandfather wouldn't have anything to do with it. During some summers there wouldn't be any people, and sometimes I remember seeing two there at once. It got around by word of mouth."

Arlene Watt, Oblong, also grew up and lived in this area of southern Illinois. Now in her early seventies,

Watt remembers the stories her grandmother used to tell her about life in the 1800s. Her grandmother was born in 1835. Watt described the madstone as slightly larger than a walnut, and it was smooth and shiny and black-ash in color. But Watt said the stone was carried on the person; she never heard of it being placed directly on the wound.

She remembers a time when a dog with the rabies symptoms of foaming at the mouth and not drinking water bit a man. He carried the madstone with him all the time and never contracted the rabies. He lived to be an old man.

**'My dad thought it was because of the rabies. But then he stopped, and I can just remember the look on his face like it was yesterday. He said, "Thought I was goin' crazy, didn't you?" An' my dad said yes.'**

"He was a real nice man," Watt said. "I remember he came into the store one time. My dad had a restaurant/drug store in the '40s. And my dad had the hiccups real bad. He didn't believe anything about the madstone. Well, (the man) all of a sudden started screamin' and cursin' my dad. We were frightened. My dad thought it was because of the rabies. But then he stopped, and I can just remember the look on his face like it was yesterday. He said, 'Thought I was goin' crazy, didn't you?' An' my dad said yes. But he asked him if he had the hiccups anymore. An' he didn't. He was just gettin' rid of his hiccups.

"I keep an open mind on things like that," Watt said. "But back then they didn't test dogs for rabies, so you couldn't prove a dog was rabid. But this one did have symptoms."

When rabies is contracted in a human, the wound(s) can usually heal, if treated. There is an itching sensation around the affected area and pain extends to other areas and toward the throat. Sometimes the affected area is surrounded by red streaks, and there is pain in the head, neck, joints, breast, belly and along the backbone. The victim becomes drowsy, forgetful, irritable, the mind seems disordered, eyes water and the face is pale and contracted. Nausea and vomiting often accompany these symptoms.

In the second stage of the illness, there is a fever, an aversion to light, a difficulty in swallowing and a reaction to water so severe that the larynx can swell externally if the sufferer comes in contact with water.

In the final stages, all of these symptoms are heightened and the mouth foams, the pulse throbs and the person usually dies shortly thereafter with a series of spasms.

According to Dr. James Thacher in 1812, remedies for the cure of rabies were divided into two categories. One was preventing the disease from occurring after a person has been bitten by a rabid animal; the other category was to counteract the effects of the disease after it has already developed. The madstone obviously belongs under the former.

But Thacher was extremely skeptical of the madstone, or what he called a "snake stone." He said, "There prevails a fanciful opinion among a certain class of people, that a celebrated substance, known by the name of snake stone, possesses, intrinsically, the power of extracting the poison of a snake or a mad dog from the human body; that when applied, the stone will adhere like a

leech to the bitten part, not lose its hold until its numerous pores are literally glutted with the liquid poison."

He described a reported case in which a boy was bitten by a dog believed to be rabid. The snake stone was used, and the boy survived without any illness. Thacher corroborated the practice that the stone, when full of the poison, is washed with milk, but adds that lime was also diluted in the milk. Several other stones were known to have been in Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania and Virginia. After a colleague's investigation, however, the dog which bit the boy was not rabid after all. Thacher's colleague, a Dr. Mease, therefore discounted the madstone's ability to extract poison for several reasons.

"The deception with respect to the supposed efficacy of these stones," Thacher wrote, "and of all other preventive remedies, arises, he (Dr. Mease) says, 'from the following causes; first, from the snake giving the bite not being venomous; second, from the dog not being mad; third, from the wound, whether from snake or dog, being made through the clothes or leather; fourth, from the known and established fact, that not one in 20 persons who are bitten by dogs actually mad are ever attacked by the disease. Any remedy applied under such circumstances would obtain the credit of prevention, though not in the least entitled thereto.'"

Perhaps it is the desire to cure that makes people believe a cure. But the madstone is a folk belief that may have lasted so long because of circumstantial evidence. Since scientific medicine developed so rapidly in the 1900s, the need for and belief in the madstone faded. But for many people in a time when doctors and cures were scarce, the madstone was good enough for them.

# One man's memory of oil days

by John Freeland

The advent of the gas buggy and the discovery of oil in America made the 20th century a more productive time in history. My parents had been using every resource they had to live a normal life. Then the news spread that oil had been found. Some folks around Bellair would benefit from the find. But who would it be? Would my father's 80 acres produce any oil?

We all had hopes that finally one of the new wells drilled on our land would produce oil. But one after the other failed to live up to our expectations. One on the hill to the south of the old house and to the east of the barn had nothing but gas in it. And it was plugged up and a pipe put in the top of the plug. It stayed lit for a long time, and one can imagine the waste of fuel that went up into the sky. Flames of burning gas could be seen in various spots over the oil field after it got started.

It was quite an adventure for me as a young boy and my brothers and sisters to have this experience happen to us in a very uneventful part of the land. The advent of strangers from another world, it seemed, aroused our curiosity, like when a visitor, Mr. Briggs, ate breakfast with us and put salt in his coffee instead of sugar.

We'd hear about a Mr. Neilly, an influential oil man who was sort of a kingpin in the oil operations around Bellair. The Daniel Blin Hotel must have done a brisk business in rooming requirements for the newcomers.

It was quite a show to watch the oil men drill with their strange equipment. The boiler that produced the steam to run the machinery for the operation of the "walking beam." The walking beam went up and down and made the drill respond in like manner, thus drilling a round hole in the ground.

At this time, my brother Walter, ever anxious to find a job that he liked to do, took up the oil business. He learned it from A to Z. He started from the ground up and later owned his own rig. He had enough knowledge of the science that a book could have been written about the subject.

But I didn't know anything about the fundamentals of producing oil. Down in me was the hope that father would have a little bit of the oil that seemed plentiful everywhere but on his land that he could call his own. I wanted to see my parents have an easier life from what it had been up until then and what grandfather and grandmother had had.

Then there came the time one day when a well was being drilled on the southeast corner of the south forty. The pans of dirt from the well gave the sign that this one was going to be a bonanza. This was it. This was going to make up for all the failures before.

And then quite a crowd gathered to see the shooting of this well. If the oil spurted high into the sky, it meant there was plenty of the black stuff down in the bottom of the pool.

The whole community came out. Everyone stayed back away from the well. When the tubes of nitroglycerin were dropped into the bottom of the well and exploded, the

air and the oil would expand. Because of the small space in the ground, something had to give and the whole mess would come up.

Everyone must've held their breath. The explosion was lessened by the depths of its occurrence. All eyes watched, but little happened. The pans of sand had lied, or some human being did. The well was a dud. It would in no way produce the 200 barrels that were predicted.

Resigned to the fact, we must have known that our family was to continue to till the dirt and follow the walking plow across the weary miles.

During the oil boom in Bellair, there were many an acre that was ruined for years in regard to using it for farming. But those who got money from their wells suffered little from the pollution.

I've passed along roads near a number of oil wells where waste material escaped into the lower regions, and I smelled the gaseous stench that filled the air.

In the old days, a little creek crossed my father's farm. Somewhere at its head, oil seeped in from wells drilled in that area and darkened the once clear water with a thick scum. Salt water from the wells found their way into the stream, too. Fish died and cows wouldn't drink the water.

The stream got so bad, it was eventually called Borax.

I've seen it when it was a raging stream of fire, coming down southward like a forest fire. Someone on purpose, or by chance, dropped a match or something into the stream and off it went. The flames and black smoke rose into the air and formed dark clouds.

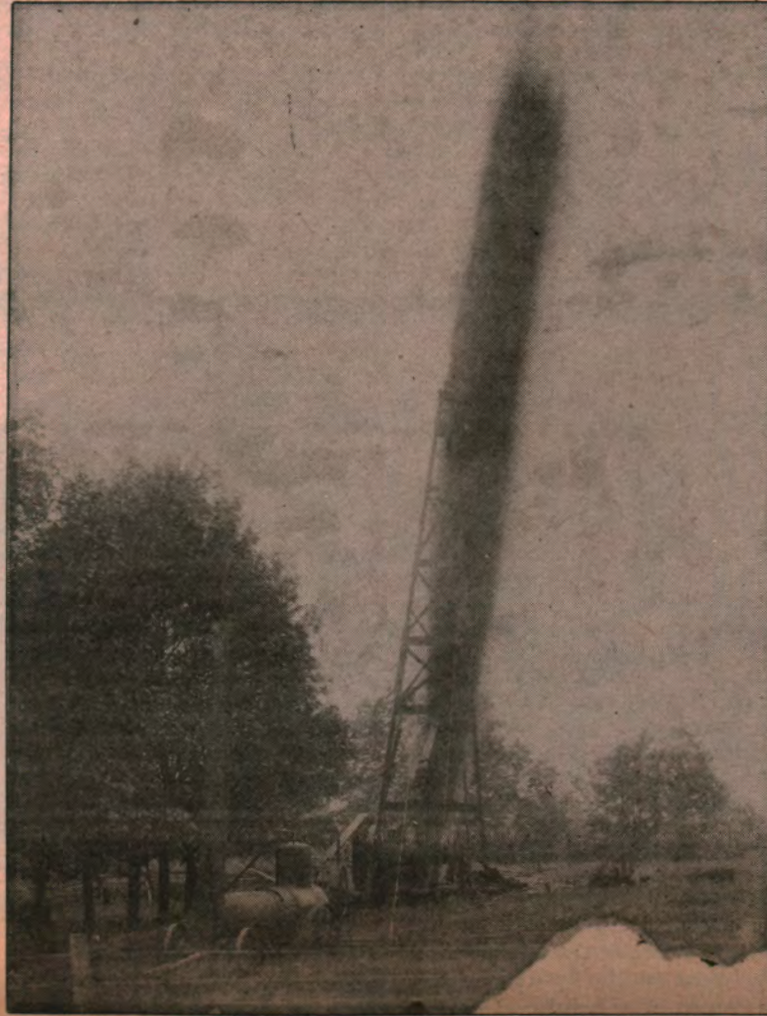
But many people prospered by the finding of oil around Bellair. It made their lives a little more easy. It put a little more money into the pockets of many good farmers.

I've often wondered how the discovery of oil on my father's land would have influenced my life. Would we have used it properly? Would all of us boys and girls received an education and reached the place where we wanted to go? How hard it was to get a dollar.

But it seemed to be that father had to depend on the good earth to survive. Mother came in to play a part. The two of them schemed ways to make and save a little money. Both my parents were at the age when they should have been slowing down, but they had more work to do than ever. The older boys and girls in my family were reaching the point where they were thinking of going out on their own. Two sisters got married in 1903 and 1905, respectively. Two brothers weren't home much anymore. There really were five of us that needed to be fed and clothed.

Besides vegetables and grain from the garden and fields, there was fruit from the orchard. The woods had plenty of walnuts and hickory nuts. There were persimmons, honey and cane for molasses, hogs, cattle and chickens. But it still wasn't enough; money had to be made elsewhere. Raising turkeys became an interesting way to earn some extra money, and my brothers and I were called on to do our part.

Through the combined efforts of my mother and father, each boy and girl, we kept our heads above water.

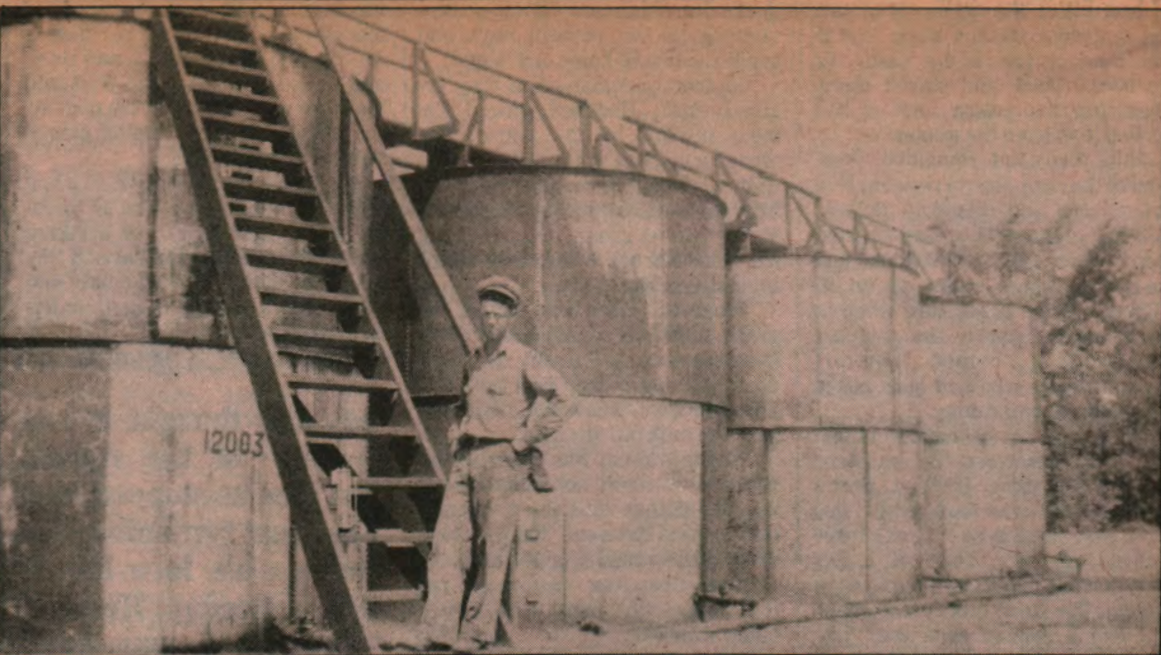


LEFT: Oil discovered on John Payn's land northeast of Bellair shoots about 50 feet into the air. Nitroglycerin tanks six inches in diameter and three feet long were carefully lowered into surface casings with a hand winch. The depth was measured with a counter until the container reached a desired footage. Then it was detonated.

BELOW: Ohio Oil Company worker Raymond Williams, Bellair, stands in front of oil tanks near Hoguetown around 1934.

BOTTOM: Taken sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s, these Ohio Oil Company workers pose before the blacksmith shop for the tool house near Hoguetown

Photos courtesy of John Adkisson and Raymond Williams



# Child's pet remembered

by Rosalie Bohn

I suppose we all look back and think of our childhood. I'll never forget mine. It was great. My dad provided my sister and me with ponies to ride, and we had a good time growing up.

This Groundhog Day brought back memories of what happened when I was around 10 or 11. I was full of life, always wanting to do something. One Sunday I was bugging the folks to go some place.

Guess Dad got tired of it and he said, "Ma, let's take the girls up to see the flying gray squirrels."

We jumped in the old Ford and away we went. It didn't take us long to get there, about a mile north of the house. Dad stopped the car beside the road, and we walked a short distance to the wooded grove where the squirrels stayed.

There were quite a few of them. When they saw us, they went wild. They'd fly from limb to limb, from tree to tree. They put on a real show.

When they got to where they could hide and peer out at us, Dad was ready to go home. On our way to the car, we looked up the small hill and saw a big groundhog hole in the middle of it. A mother and quite a few of her little "hawgs" were sunning themselves on the hill.

We stopped and they all scurried to their hole. A few of the little ones were too far away to get back, so they flattened themselves out in the tall weeds and thought they were hid.

"Dutch," Dad said to me, "why don't you get you a pet?"

"Oh, for goodness sakes," Mom growled. "What did you tell her that for?"

To get out of it, Dad said, "She can't catch it."

But dear ol' Dad was wrong. I unbuckled my belt (I was afraid he would bite), skinned off my dress and I was off.

I pounced down so hard on the little fellow I knew I'd hurt him as he was small. I picked him up and with my dress still off, we went back home.

In the next few days, I learned I had one cute pet. "He" was a female and tamed down gentle as a house cat. You'd pick her up and she'd flatten out against you, her front feet around your neck and her head lying under your chin and neck. You could rub and pet her all day.

She loved to eat. I can't remember exactly what she ate anymore, but I do remember she loved cooked oatmeal and fresh strawberries. She'd hog down the oatmeal. A strawberry would lodge in the roof of her mouth. She'd take her claws, get that berry, sit on her haunches, gobble it up and want more. We had many good laughs at her.

While she was small, she sort of walked with a slight limp, reminding me of how I had pounced on her when she became my pet. But little things have a way of growing fast. She grew like a weed. She still loved us to pick her up and if you didn't, she'd pounce on the back of your legs

to remind you.

One day Mother was busy ironing out on the screened porch. Every once in a while she'd hear a thud on the wall in the kitchen. She'd iron something and hang it up there to finish drying. She took one of her ironed garments to the kitchen to find all of her clothes were gone.

She went back on the porch again, and she heard the same thud on the wall. She looked and the hawg was swinging back and forth on a dress, got it down and quickly took it under the safe. Mom quickly grabbed the dress back. The hawg was coming out, too.

She grabbed her by the scuff of the neck, took her through the kitchen and porch, dropping her rather hard on the concrete slab outside, but not without saying, "I ought to wring your neck." And she should have.

Mom got down on her hands and knees and started to pull each piece that was tightly wedged under the safe. The air was blue. She had to rewash everything.

The hawg didn't get into much after that. Summer flew by and fall came. We noticed she wasn't around too often then, much to Mother's delight. But we'd walk into the barn or in the yard, and she would pounce on the back of our legs. She was big now, and it hurt. But she still expected us to pick her up to love her. She was so big, her hair was so stiff, it wasn't fun anymore.

In early November, she left and didn't come back. I kept wondering about her and why she never showed up. Dad would tell me she probably found a mate and liked living in the ground. I left it at that, but I still missed her.

One night we had friends come in. While Archie and Dad were visiting, my young ears listened in on them.

"Toehead (my dad's nickname)," Archie said, "I had the durnest thing happen the other morning. Dave and I and both the dogs were walkin' across the field to my folk's place. Just walkin' along and I was about knocked down from the back.

"I looked down an' there's the biggest groundhog. It was lookin' up an' walkin' behind me. By that time the dogs saw him. They made mince meat of that groundhog."

I was stunned. I thought then, and I've always thought he hollered for the dogs.

"Dutch, did you hear that?" Dad hollered.

I had all right, but I said, "What?" "Your hawg won't come home anymore," Dad said.

Archie apologized for killing my pet, but I didn't care as much as I thought I would. Mother said it was the "best thing that could happen." That didn't set too well.

My hawg met her fate by still being friendly and unafraid. A year or so later, we were up there again to see the squirrels and there in the weeds lay my belt, all shrunk and faded. I glanced up the hill and looked again where the groundhogs were. I knew then, and I can still look back after all these years and know that that hawg was the nicest pet a 10-year-old girl ever had.

## What is That in Your Hand

by Mary Olmsted Graham

A book? Oh no, a Bible  
You're dusting it perhaps  
A treasured family keepsake  
Or your own road of life map

One, you use daily  
To guide your way  
One, that instructs you  
To read and to pray

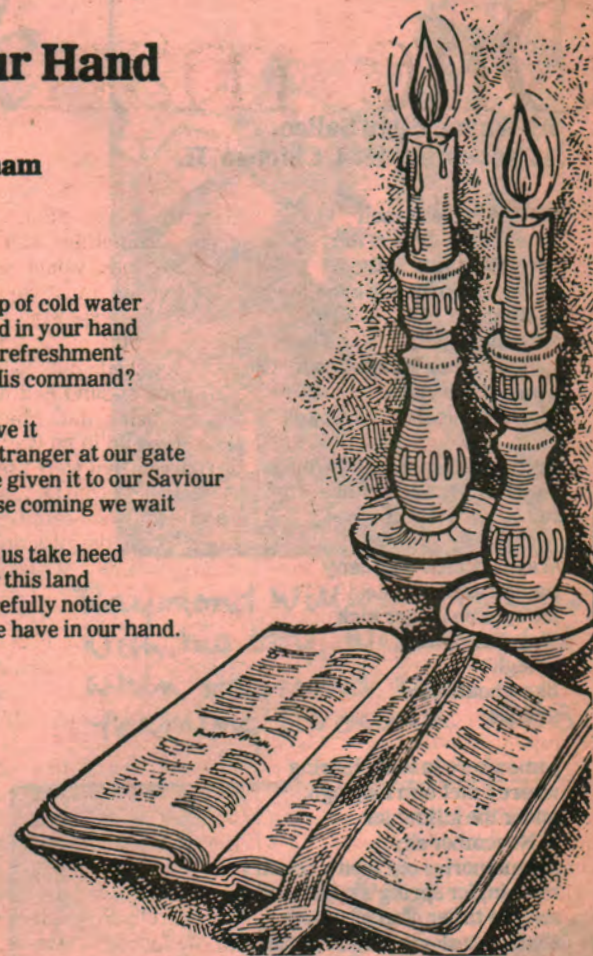
For how else with God  
Can you communicate?  
His promise tells us  
Of heaven so great

He bids us to witness  
And labor each day  
With those lost souls  
We meet on our way

That cup of cold water  
You hold in your hand  
Is it for refreshment  
Or for His command?

If we give it  
To the stranger at our gate  
we have given it to our Saviour  
On whose coming we wait

Now let us take heed  
All over this land  
And carefully notice  
What we have in our hand.



## St. Francisville interest leads woman to history

by Jennifer Dumbris

We moved to St. Francisville nearly three years ago. As with most people, the history of the town made no difference to us. It was a place to live close to my husband's job.

As my acquaintances grew, so did the little tidbits of information. Each new story brought me closer to digging around and discovering, much to my surprise, the multitude of history in this small town on the Wabash River just off Route One 10 miles south of Lawrenceville, setting in a grove of trees on a sandstone bluff.

Riding down the river in a boat today gives you a sense of freedom and an idea of the dense forest of trees seen by Joseph Tougas as he prepared to settle in what is now St. Francisville among the local Indians who lived from hunting the land. One can only imagine how he felt as he set foot on the land he would eventually settle and build on. Indians, the flooding river and the work of clearing the land was a challenge for him.

No one knows the types of contests and games Tougas went through to defeat the Indian braves, but he eventually gained their respect and admiration. He gained the right to clear much of the land that is now St. Francisville and call it home, one of the oldest French settlements in southeastern Illinois.

In 1805-06, a ferry began running across the Wabash River, connecting what would later become Il-

linois and Indiana, just south of where George Rogers Clark and his army crossed the flooded Wabash to Fort Sackville in Vincennes and established a foothold in the northwest on February 21, 1779.

Although the settlers and Indians were living peacefully, an uneasiness developed among them in 1812. The settlers built a stockade fort 12 to 14 feet high around the town, naming it Fort Tougas after Joseph. Log buildings were built inside the walls to shelter families seeking protection.

Trade depended heavily on the Wabash River as travelers from Quebec and Montreal, Canada, traveled down the river by canoe, trading pelts, corn, hay, flour and other items.

It's said that traders hid their furs and wines in a cave hollowed out of sandstone under the bluff a short distance from the trading post. Some people in St. Francisville still assume a tunnel was dug from the river to the town for the settlers to escape Indian attack, but it hasn't been discovered.

Many stories have been passed around about how the town was named. Many think Joseph's wife, Francis Valle Tougas, named it after St. Francis, the patron saint of the diocese. Others believe the Jesuits named it after their patron saint, St. Francis Xavier.

It could have been named after Francis Valle herself by changing the "a" in Valle to "i." That's my idea. But no one will probably ever

know for sure.

It's funny, in school I never liked reading history, but sitting here now I feel as though I can relive a part of yesterday. For most of us it's hard to realize the hardships of building a town from nothing, making everything you need and not running to the nearest store. We all seem to believe we could survive. But could we?

The Women's Club of St. Francisville is bringing back part of its past by reconstructing a log cabin, known to be one of the oldest dwellings standing in St. Francisville. It was built by Jules Granclair around 1876.

I wonder if someday a traveler passing through will see the cabin and realize there's more to the town than meets the eye.

I wonder what the town was like in its prosperous years.

I wonder... Many have passed this way and left their mark, opening up the town and leaving a piece of history for all to enjoy. Now I live in St. Francisville and in a hundred years I'll be a part of the past.

I wonder what they'll think as they look back to the way we lived.

There are many stories to tell: the Wabash Cannonball Bridge, showboats stopping, businesses that prospered then moved on, the first telephone and many more. Someday I'll sit down and write it all for my children, so they, too, will know where they lived at one time in that "Little Town on the Wabash."

## In Cleon's Country

by Wayne Allen Sallee  
12 November 1984, Chicago, IL

tonight I find myself  
again at my typewriter,  
forgetting to breathe  
long enough for my eyes  
to throb  
with my pulse,  
and my thoughts eat  
away at my brain  
like his cancer

during that quick,  
cold blast of air  
the eternities will come  
to call 1984  
Wayne 'Cleon' Matheny  
passed away,  
his eyes no longer kick  
like a randy colt,  
or sigh  
like wheatfields  
at dusk

somewhere in that clearing  
where I met him long ago,  
under the killing jar  
of November sky,  
the memories of Cleon's country  
remain, for spring's resurrection,  
and the times of mourning  
shall pass slowly into something  
more noble and beautiful, also



## The Locust Trees Upon the Hill

by John Freeland

Outside of Bellair a little ways,  
Grew locust trees that used to bloom,  
And in the sunny month of May,  
they filled the air with their perfume

It seemed that May was the locust month,  
When blossoms whitened the locust trees,  
And then upon the ancient hill,  
they sweetened the balmy breeze

So I had cause in those carefree days,  
From some tedious toil to often stray,  
And seek the locust trees upon the hill—  
That bloomed their best in sunny May

And later on, I had no regret—  
That I had loved their scent so well  
That I would while my boyhood away,  
Upon the hill to enjoy that smell

For no longer in the month of May,  
Could I breathe their sweet perfume;  
Since they were gone, and the hill—  
And the sweet fragrance of their bloom

But I shall always see those trees  
And probe their blossoms like a bee  
That seeks their nectar to fill its hive  
I'll be back next year, in memory.

Years ago, boys from Bellair would bring their sleds in winter time and slide down the hill after a big snow. The gas from a non-productive oil well was lit, and its glow would transform the darkness of the hill. The actual hill where the locust trees bloomed was leveled years later.

—J.F.

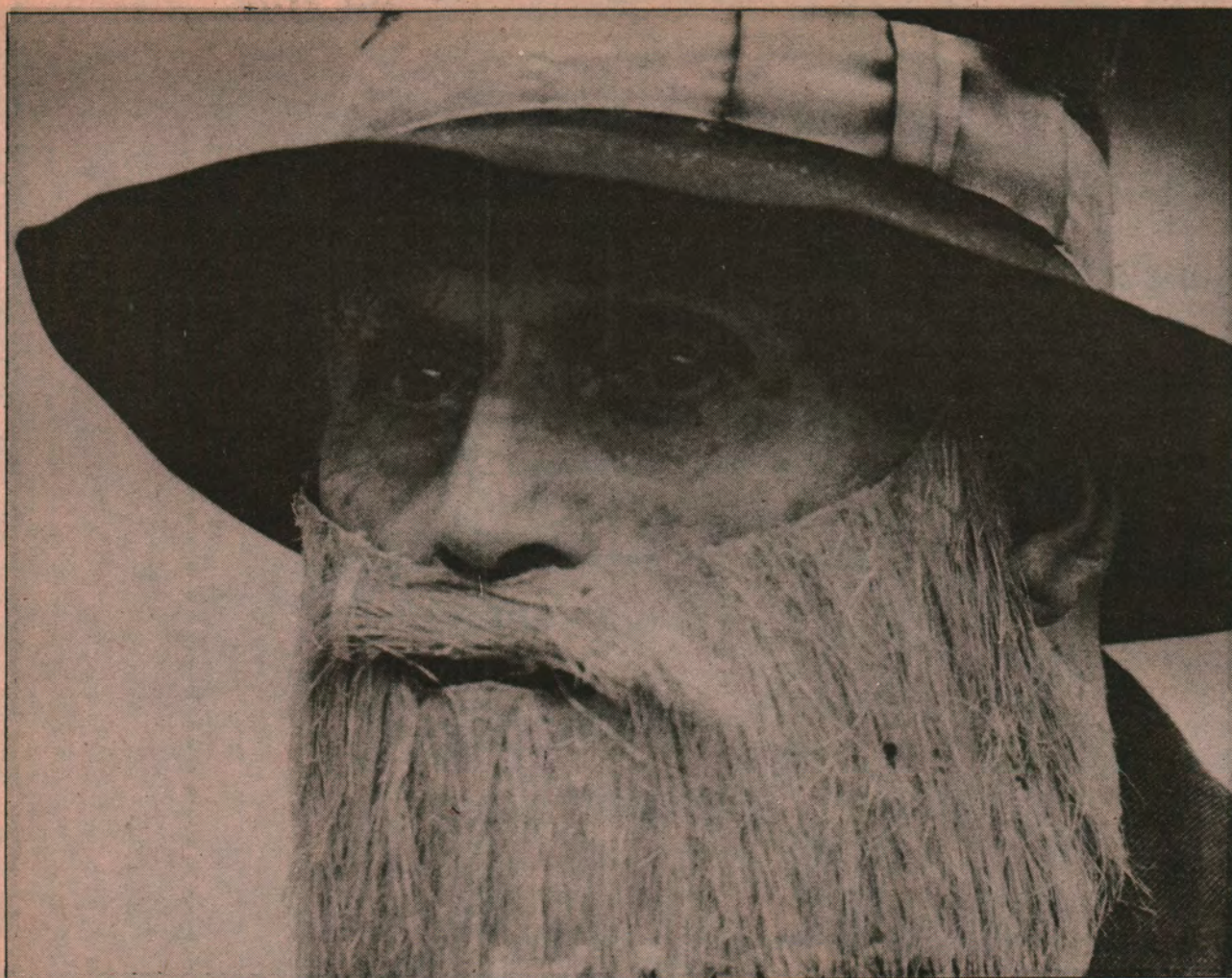
# Country scrapbook



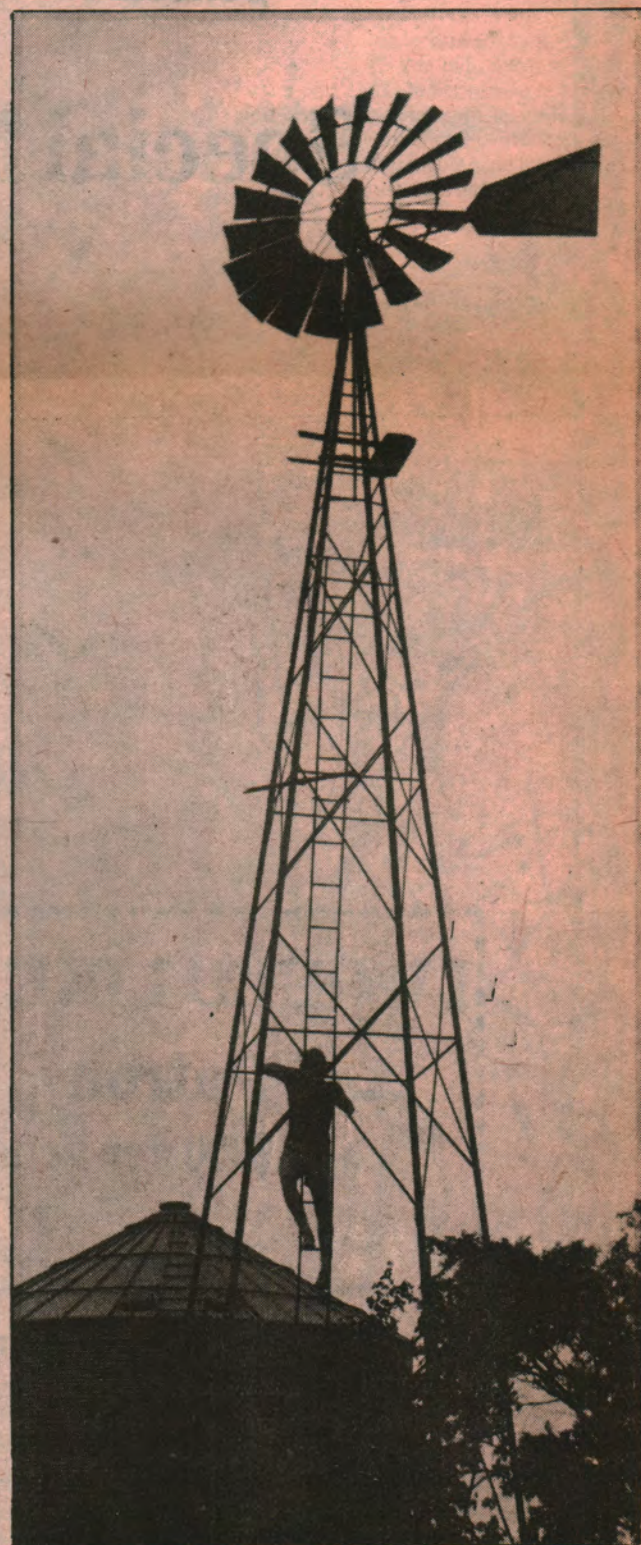
Norm Miller, Robinson, dropped a copy of this off one day. Ralph Byers is 'settin' on the porch of Logan's ol' feed store in Bellair some time before 1912.



Raymond Williams, Bellair, with his boy, Wilbur, back when Raymond was teaming around 1933.



You can always count on Thornton Stephens bein' full of surprises when he comes over from north of Annapolis.



Don't see many of these ol' windmills anymore.

# Tales

from the general store

R.R. #2

Oblong, IL

62449

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