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The Little Balkans Review, Spring 1984

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Author, Educator

Margaret E. Haughawout

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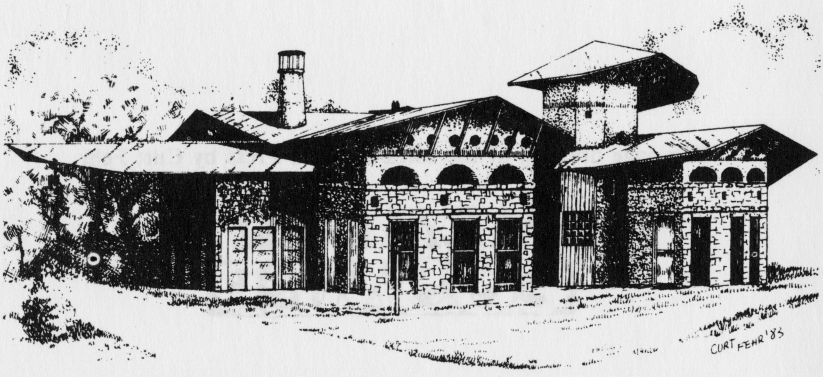

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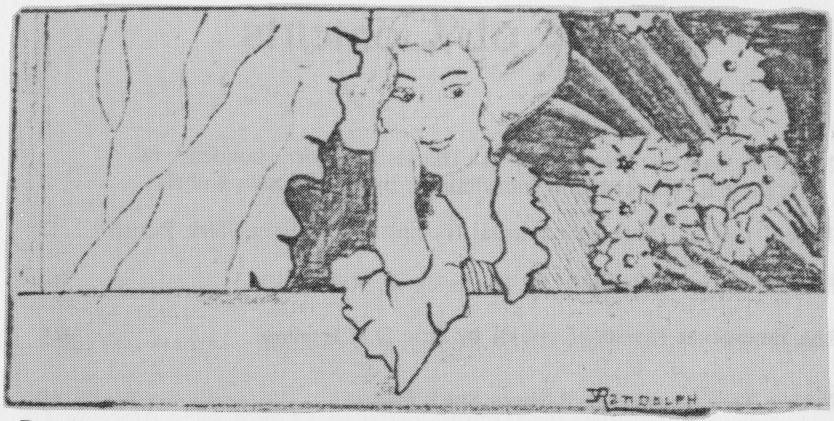

Drawing by Vance Randolph, 1908.

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And with special thanks to Cathi Wirsching!

Margaret E. Haughawout, 1921.
Courtesy of the Haughawout Collection, Leonard H. Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS. Gift of Rhetta Hart.

Preface

Sometimes you have to change horses in midstream. Because of his new duties as an instructor, in addition to his work on a Masters of Fine Arts degree, Steve Robbins has taken a leave-of-absence from the post of fiction editor—a spot now filled by former nonfiction editor Shelby Horn. Nonfiction editor Kenneth Melaragno makes his debut with this issue. Further, an increasing volume of business has caused Ted Watts to suspend his activities as art editor of the LBR (although he will continue to do cover and author drawings from time to time). His executive duties have been assumed by Rod Dutton, who states that the editorial board of the LBR is the first "group" he has ever joined in his life. (Janis DeChicchio and Gene DeGruson continue in their old positions.)

You will also notice a new look in the type. Under the supervision of Robert J. Roberts of the Printing Department of Pittsburg State University, the type is now set on new computing equipment which accomplishes its task virtually as quickly as the keys are struck. Drying the paper takes longer than printing. As usual, David Butler of the Printing Department has volunteered his services in the various technical aspects of that art known as printing. We hope you like the new look; we hope we have preserved enough of the old that it doesn't seem like a different publication.

That metaphor about horses in the beginning, you're asking? It's pretty apt, really. We all have regular jobs. This magazine is a Friday night affair, with many odd minutes squeezed in as press time nears. DeChicchio is a music teacher at Girard High School; Dutton is art director of Words and Pictures, Inc., of Pittsburg; Horn is staff attorney for Consolidated Oil Well Services, Inc., Chanute; Melaragno is a teacher at St. Mary's High School, as well as a Roman Catholic priest with degrees in history; DeGruson is special collections librarian at Pittsburg State University. No one is salaried. Every penny taken in from subscriptions and grants is spent on production and postage. Which reminds us—we do now need a bookkeeper. Any volunteers? (We warn you, no salary—or expenses—but you will be rewarded as we are, with a warm response from our readership.)

The Editors

No Prissy Saint . . . No Vamp:

The Diaries and Correspondence of Margaret E. Haughawout

By Patty Farris Kuhel

Maybe once in a student's career (if he or she is fortunate), a teacher of the caliber of Miss Margaret E. Haughawout appears in the classroom, transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, making the acquisition of knowledge a stimulating experience. Many of her students—if they liked hard work—after finishing a course with her would scan the schedule each semester to find another of her offerings to take.

Although she was an English teacher, many of her students were not English majors, for word spread quickly about this innovative instructor who could make literature come alive, who encouraged her students to write and publish original work. Miss Haughawout, or MEH as she was called, did not limit her interest in her students to the

classroom, but held, on Monday nights at her home, informal gatherings of aspiring authors.* In order to gain admittance, each person had to bring an original piece of writing to present to the group. MEH did not believe she should entertain her guests. She summed up her attitude in an article published anonymously in the *Independent Woman:* "If people come to my house and find things stale, it is time for them to go home. It is not my business to cut crepe paper into bits to entertain them. If we have nothing in common, nothing to say to each other, then why, in heaven's name, should they come? and why, in the name of anything else, should they stay, or come again?"[1]

There was, however, no question as to whether people wanted to visit MEH again; people were so persistent that she had to be blunt in order to have time for her own pursuits. Once, when a woman called, MEH told her:

> "Now it's this way. I have all I possibly can do this weekend. But I have to shell nuts for the Monday night sandwiches. Why couldn't you drop in for three quarters of an hour while I do that?" And that person comes. I put the clock where she can see it and ask her to please watch the time, for I'll forget about it myself, and I must have the rest of the day. You'd think they wouldn't come again. But you remember what Emerson said about coming to a finer understanding with people had we the courage to tell them the absolute truth.[2]

Most people were not offended by MEH's truthfulness and returned time and again. They did not realize her great need of privacy for writing poetry and fiction, nor did they know that, long before educational psychologists had arrived at the term, Haughawout was experiencing "teacher burnout." In her diaries, she confided:

> How could it be? For three weeks or a month I had a nervous reaction to two of my classes. It came to a place where it affected me day and night. It was setting up bars between me and them. At nights I would awaken remembering the gloves they had given me or had not given me. Remember with a chill distaste. It grew to where I would some nights sleep out in the sitting room by the books and the light so that I might forget its haunting power in reading. I cannot see how, after those years of successful teaching, this could happen, but it

*For an earlier account of the Monday Nighters, see Ray Heady, "The Athlete and the English Teacher," *LBR,* 1.2 (Winter 1981-82), 54-63. Mr. Heady, long Outdoors Editor of the Kansas City *Star,* was one of the original Monday Nighters.

Margaret E. Haughawout teaches Sixth Form English at Mrs. Louise Phillips Houghton's Knox School for Girls, Tarrytown, New York, 1918. Reproduced courtesy of Pittsburg State University, gift of Emma H. Smith.

> did. I went to bed for a weekend and slept right—long, fine sleep. And yet when I returned I returned also to that horror. I had it Monday. Monday night I had my Monday nighters. It was not in every way a success. H.D. & H.K. read their satire—which was misunderstood and didn't go over. Then before that they were so full of their private jokes that I got terribly hurt and tried, of course, not to let it be known. It's terrible always to sit there and be laughed at. But they stayed late—after eleven. And I went to bed and slept and awakened about 5:00. I stretched out in bed and knew it was gone. The fear of teaching, the horror of the situation that I had had for a month. I went to college and met my classes and *they* knew it was gone. They saw it in my eyes, I suppose. But how could it be? How could I awaken and just find it suddenly *gone* with no reason at all?[3]

The journals and manuscripts of MEH are invaluable documents not only for their record of her day-to-day history, but also for their literary quality. Through her attention to detail, her distinctive style coupled with a sharp sense of humor and an objectivity which allows her to explore her innermost motivations in a variety of circumstances, MEH records with vigor a distinctive individualist faced

with often difficult choices in a conservative environment. Her journals also put into focus some of the folklore which surrounded the colorful teacher. In 1960, for example, she was asked by Kenneth Ober, a professor of Russian at Pittsburg State, if she had ever published a novel. "Oh, yes," she responded, "nine of them." When asked if he might read one, MEH pointed to the fireplace, stating that they had gone to their rest long ago. Since she published under pseudonyms for the most part, a standard bibliographic search turned up no novels by Haughawout. Her journals, however, record the many rejections and final acceptance of such manuscripts.

Margaret Elisabeth Haughawout was born in Fairmont, Nebraska, on 21 September 1874. She earned her B.A. from Hastings College in 1900 and an M.A. from the University of Nebraska in 1903. After receiving her master's degree, she taught at Hastings College until 1906, when she left to teach at Alma College in Michigan.‡ In 1911 she moved to Tarrytown, New York, to become dean of women at Knox School for Girls. In 1919, she was "called home by the illness of a member of her family."[4] She ran for the office of county superintendent of schools for Filmore County and was elected. Years later, Miss Haughawout wrote of these years to a former student and friend, Mary Jugg Molek: "I think moving is a handful. And I should know, for my father and I moved—I think it was eleven times while he was living. We scooted from house to house in Geneva where I was Co. Supt. for 4 years, for as soon as we'd move in, the house would be sold and we'd look for another. Then he bought a house, modernized it, and I was licked [in the elections], and we came here [Pittsburg, Kansas]. Oh, I'm glad those days are over, tho they didn't seem so bad while I was going through them."[5]

Almost from the beginning, MEH's seemingly novel attitudes on many subjects caused raised eyebrows among some of her colleagues and the administration of the college. She says of her ideas, "I was brought up in a home that disapproved of cards. I have been ashamed to admit that, for my own ideas on what used to be 'questionable amusements' are so free as to periodically endanger my tenure of office. But I have found that many whose ideas are labeled radical have been reared as water-drinkers, and I am now shameless."[6]

Haughawout's views on the behavior of women, for example, were often frowned on by the administration, but she was never slow to

‡Diary entry for 16 June 1932 reads: "I told [Marcia Mendenhall] of the $100 I left Alma with. Just $100. And went to N.Y. and the nerve I had in my ignorance. And how well it came out. And as she talked—told of what she had read of how pioneer spirit is gone, makes no demands now and we may suffer in lack of growth—she made me feel like getting up next morning to a new day of energy, desire, accomplishment."

voice her opinion. In a speech before the Y.W.C.A. in 1925, MEH told the membership that they should "try to cultivate frank, open friendships with men."[7] In one of her diaries she comments on Ghandi: "One idea in his philosophy is perfect equality of man and woman. Says women should not dress the body for man's enjoyment."[8] Accordingly, in 1930, she bought a man's suit, altered it to fit, and wore it to classes and social events. Again, this action did not endear her to those who felt that "ladies" should be conventional. Another bone of contention between MEH and the administration (some of whom belonged to the Ku Klux Klan) lay in her more than tolerant treatment of Blacks. MEH became a member of an interracial group. In a letter to John Reinecke, another former student with whom she kept in touch for years, MEH wrote: "I had the nicest party here last night I have ever had. Only it wasn't my party. It was the Interracial group. Fifty about and of them there were twelve or thirteen colored. Dr. Richardson,* colored speaker, was with us. He was so charming and interesting I thought."[9]

It was not, however, Haughawout's attire or her attitudes which caused the biggest furor, but rather her classroom activities. One of her classes was modern literature, in which she would lecture on such works as James Joyce's *Ulysses* and D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow,* works now required reading in most universities and even in some high schools. But at the time these and other books which she discussed were banned from the mails and their importation from Europe was forbidden.

She succinctly summed up her attitude toward literary censorship, academic freedom, and personal growth in her diary on 3 January 1928: "I want to shun all prejudices that are too strong to let me grow. And ah! keep me open minded to see new ideas. I want to be more *real* and *sincere.* . . . I want to find the real and genuine in each writer and teach it. To put on paper only the real in life."[10] She was becoming not at all the "inconspicuous college professor," she had described in "I've Said Good Bye to All That."[11]

In addition to being an excellent teacher, MEH frequently published scholarly articles, short stories, poems, and essays—in her own name, as well as anonymously. The need for pseudonyms arose from MEH's thinly veiled biographies of Pittsburg personalities in her fiction and essays. Dr. and Mrs. William Black, for example, became the

*Clement Richardson, simultaneously president of Western College (Quindaro, Kansas) and Lincoln University (Jefferson City, Missouri), as well as principal of the Kansas Vocational School at Topeka. He received his M.A. from the University of Kansas in 1923, was president of the Missouri State Teachers' Association in 1922 and the founder of the Citizens Social Services League of Jefferson City.

Schwartz family; her dear friends, the Mendenhalls, became the Mindens. Although none of her writings was malicious or unkind, it was frank, and she undoubtedly wished to spare her models possible embarrassment. Her pseudonyms still veil her writings for Little Blue Book publisher E. Haldeman-Julius, to whom she was introduced by Vance Randolph. The feminist essays by Elizabeth Hamilton may be from her pen (a suspicion strongly enforced by the fact that these works are in volumes edited by Randolph under the pseudonym of Anton S. Booker). She records she did not know of the national reputation of Haldeman-Julius until she read Louis Adamic's article, "Voltaire from Kansas," in the *Outlook and Independent* of 25 June 1930. "It was easy to know when you were being dismissed by H-J," she remembered late in life. "He always gave you a book—a sign that it was time to *go.*"

In 1929 her volume of poetry, *Sheep's Clothing,* was well received.† The works of her students she published in an anthology entitled *Pittsburg College Verse, 1924-1930,* supplemented with a teacher's manual. Many found her verse as autobiographical as her prose, although she vehemently denied that conclusion. Typical are the following lines from "Femina ad Finitum":

> If you must know, my path has been box-hedged,
> Flag-bordered, square-cornered, trimmed close.
> Men never tempted me outside. They've edged
> From me with level eyes. Their stormy woes
> Have filled my ears, my shoulder ever damp
> With grief that other women caused—Marie
> Or Sue or Kate. . . . A prissy saint. No vamp.
> My tame, gray goodness anyone could see.
> But life is queer. At times some catty dame
> Suspects my virgin past. Were it but known
> I've lived too gay. Some dark red sin, she'll claim
> Has been lived down, and wild oats, wildly I have sown.
> And for this blot upon my white, you think I'm wearing rue?
> My dear, I have a secret hope that they may think it true.[12]

†Adele Mehl Burnett in the Kansas City *Star,* 5 April 1930, wrote, "Margaret E. Haughawout's first book of verse impels one to read and read again. In subtle lines, she has caught the joy, the pain, the weakness, the nobility of the human heart." The Wichita *Beacon* in an undated June 1930 clipping stated, "The mysterious striving of human spirit and the emotions which stalk in deceptive outer garments are at their best in her theme poem." A June 1930 clipping from the *Nebraska Signal* commented, "Woman, she finds, is kaleideoscopic. In'Femina ad Finitum' she invents a prissy saint with a pseudo halo of darkened sin."

In 1933, MEH was due for a sabbatical. Her journals recount that period most vividly:

> My sabbatical leave was drawing near. I could have a year off on half salary. I could go to school or travel. And I should. If I were the president of a college I would never give sabbatical leave without demanding something. But this year the college like everyone else must strain every cent. No one else on the faculty wanted to take leave. Everyone wanted the dollar. The full salary instead of the half. They were glad to have me ask for my leave. For one thing the depression was four years old. My salary had been fixed before that. During those four years of changing values many new ones had been added at a much lower scale. That meant that my salary now polled up higher than the average. Attendance was decreasing. It would be a good thing to drop many courses. My courses were specialized and could be dropped. They could get someone for my half salary if necessary, or they could drop my courses and save my half salary. This latter plan made my room worth more than my company. That is why when I asked if it made any difference whether I went away or stayed at my house, they replied cheerily "Not a bit! Not a bit! You can do just as you please!" And so I stayed at home and did just as I pleased.[13]
>
> First reactions. Mrs. [Otto] Hankammer's call. "For my part I'd just as soon you *were* in Europe!"
>
> Marjorie [Jackson]. "I'm glad in these times that I have a job," with the implication, "When you get tired of this, there won't be any job for you." *Years later: how true.*
>
> Then the news had got about I was writing. Said Mrs. [William] Parks, "I hear you are writing a book. I thought 'I'll just have to hunt up Miss H.'"
>
> Dean Wasky. "I hear you're writing a book. I'm coming to see you!"
>
> Evelyn Butler. "Isn't it too bad about Miss H?"
>
> "What? I haven't heard."
>
> "She's a little off! She's gone queer. She doesn't answer her door when people knock. She has let her hedge grow tall and stays in behind it! Isn't that too bad? I always liked her." And I was sure I could hear Gordon Angwin whose charm could easily while away a

Saturday afternoon tell the sympathetic ladylike humor-lacking Evelyn of my defrocked condition and enjoy the fact that she lacked humor but would tell it sympathetically. He had been at my door when I was busy and the knock remained unanswered. More than once.[14]

But sometimes I went too far. The librarian [Odella Nation] was my friend. One day she told me Mrs. Parks had wondered if I had enough to eat.

"I suppose I told it myself," I said.

"I thought you had been talking," she said.

"Yes, I told the cashier at the bank I was on relief and perhaps I've said it to others too. He said, 'Oh, you're not teaching now?' and I said 'No, I'm on relief. It's a hard life,' and I didn't smile.

"I *thought* you'd talked," she said.[15]

Dr. James Conant was coming to town. Would I, if invited, come? No. I was accepting no invitations. I was honored, as appeared when the dinner table conversation was reported. "Do you know what I've heard? About an English teacher at at the College? She's quit teaching. She hooks her screen and doesn't answer the door! Absolutely stays in there and doesn't come out." What a trivial matter, I thought, to take up time when there were so many things to be talked about with the great Dr. Conant there to be drawn upon.[16]

September 11 [1933]: Sold Starbeam to Kansas City Star: $2.00. Sept. 11: Chrysler stock dividend: $3.75. Oct. 15: A.T.&T. dividend: $1.00. Oct. 16: Sold poem to K.C. Star: $1.00. Oct. 16: Royalties: $25.52. Nov. 17: Sold poem to K.C. Star: 50c. Jan. 1 [1934]: Nebraska Power and Light dividend: $3.75. Feb. 20: College Inn for Sheep's Clothing: $20.75. Put $20 in Postal Order. On settling with College Inn, they owed me $34.50, $10.90 commission. $43.60 I took in merchandise. Feb. 20: Interest on Postal Savings: $1.00. Really, this seems like a strange way of perpetuating one's destiny.[17]

At the end of her sabbatical year, MEH, now sixty, found that indeed her teaching position had been "abolished." She was now without a job. She explored the future in an essay, "An Independent Woman Looks at the Depression":

It's my opportunity. While the rest work and worry and save all they can for fear of poverty in old age, I'll stop work. I'll be the lady of leisure I have always wanted to be.

It looked the most illogical thing possible. But it was quite in line with a complex that has always pursued me. I have always on Sunday morning when I should take time to be holy had the best inspiration of the week for work. I could always think of more things to do, do more things per hour, on Sunday when everyone in the family supposed it was a day of rest. (Maybe it was an inferiority complex.)

Another argument against it was that banks were breaking on every side. What little we had was going into default. Besides old age was nearer now than it had been 20 yrs. ago when I began to lay aside for it.

Of my own savings not too much was left. The bank closed which contained my checking acct. I had a little more than usual on hand behind its doors. I had foolishly started to invest in a mortgage bond co., buying a larger bond than one of my finances would begin to consider after 1929. Something was tied up in that and it was going on the rocks. A building and loan association I had almost paid out a policy in went on the rocks too. But thank God another in which I had completed a policy had stood the weather and sent me a semi-annual small check. And a natural utility in which I had put a good deal was still sending dividends.

Besides I owned a little house on a small lot. Not that I ever wanted such a thing. I never wanted to be tied anywhere. But after putting its worth into an estate left for me to settle, all that was left was for me to take the house and sign the papers. . . .[18]

During this enforced retirement, MEH had time to write. Many of her short stories took a definite feminist point of view. In "And It Came to Pass," for example, she explores the thoughts and feelings of two women, both professors at a university, both heads of departments. Phroney confides to her friend, "I hate to have the men's departments better than mine. It looks as if the women couldn't, you know."[19] Phroney is also an author who finds she cannot write unless she has a "room of her own." She, as the viewpoint character, states, "From my corner, where the paino had stood, I had a door cut, and a small room built against the half-hill. . . . It was a rough little room.

But it was a symbol of a round higher on the ladder, and it filled me with a glow of satisfaction."[20] The conflict arrives when Phroney must choose between her career and marriage. In the end, Phroney opts for her career and happily goes off to accept a position at Princeton, leaving behind a young widower who wants her to give up the stress of a profession and settle down as his wife and the step-mother of his young daughter.

In this story and others, Haughawout explores the thoughts, dreams, needs of women, and the roles into which society tries to mold them.

There are indications that some of her short story manuscripts may form now-lost novels: they have the same small town setting, the same characters, and, at times, one will find a story told from two or three entirely different viewpoints. (These are not simply rewritings of the same story, but in-depth explorations of another character's viewpoint of the same event.)

During this period, MEH continued a steady stream of correspondence with former students and especially with the Monday Nighters. It was one of her former Monday Nighters, Robertson Strawn, who was instrumental in returning her to the classroom at K.S.T.C. in 1945. Strawn, now a Ph.D., recently discharged from the Navy, was chairman of the newly formed Language and Literature Department. Because of a teacher shortage, Strawn was able to hire Haughawout to influence yet another generation of students with her innovative teaching. At the age of seventy-five, in 1951, she retired from the Pittsburg faculty for the second time.

Retirement did not mean an abandonment of learning, however. From January 1951 to February 1959, her letters to Mary Molek tell of the books she had been reading. These included Proust's *Remembrances of Things Past,* the complete works of Katherine Anne Porter, Grahame Greene, Elizabeth Bowen, Hemingway, Faulkner, Isherwood, Fitzgerald, Henry James (the second time through), Ellen Glasgow, Dostoevsky,Turgenev, E.M. Forster, Mark Twain, Virginia Woolf, Flaubert, and Samuel Beckett. She also read with evident delight *Dr. Zhivago* and *Lolita.* Some of the French writers she read in the original for the first time. In 1954, at the age of eighty, she had begun to teach herself French. She informed Mary Molek: "Did I tell you I never had French and am learning it? No, I'm not learning it. I just got a dictionary, look up the words and read it. It's lots of fun. Has me quite fascinated. The library takes two French magazines and I read them. Of course, I can't pronounce and could put nothing at all into French. But it's quite a satifaction to read the French phrases in a novel or article and know what is being said."[22]

Margaret E. Haughawout, circa 1957.

Because of a broken hip in 1955, MEH was in the hospital for eight weeks and confined to a wheelchair for some time. By April 1956 she was up and about, thinking about going on vacation. In her younger days she had made yearly visits to Manitou, Colorado, interspersed with trips to the Ozarks to visit her good friend, Vance Randolph, and his wife. Mary Molek invited her to her Chicago home for her vacation. Haughawout's reply shows her sense of humor and independence: "I have a feeling that families have their own plans and arrangements and that it's up to all old maids to look out for themselves."[22] (This was not the first reference to herself as an "old maid." In her diary of 12 February 1928 she wrote of the world's opinion of a woman who chooses to remain unwed: "One should not be an old maid and defend it. One should repine. One would get along better and be understood.")[23]

On 28 December 1964 Margaret E. Haughawout died. She was mourned by generations of students and many friends. In a 1929 review of Katherine Mansfield's *Letters*, she had quoted what she could have written about herself: "Do you too feel an indefinite delight and value in detail—not for the sake of detail but for the life in it? I can't help living it all—down to the very dampness of the salt at supper that night and the way it came out on your plate the exact shape of the salt spoon."[24]

Such sharp attention to detail make the memory of Margaret E. Haughawout indelible in the minds of many, but for others who did not know her so well, it is the legend of her independence that lives on.

Her last journal entry is recorded in a Metropolitan Museum of Art calendar for 1959, under the date of Sunday, November 8: "Irene [Haughawout of Carthage, Missouri] wrote. They have answered 'no' to my invitation to Thanksgiving dinner. I really wanted them & really wanted to *go through* with it. But have deep feeling of relief that I don't have to! Nice Sun. morning. As usual no one up in neighborhood but myself."

NOTES

1. [Margaret E. Haughawout], "I've Said Good Bye to All That," by a Woman Who Knows, *Independent Woman,* 11 (June 1932), 208-09, 240. Reprinted in the *Porter Library Bulletin,* 7 (Summer 1973).
2. Ibid., p. 16.
3. Diary I, undated entry of 1928, pp. 100-01.
4. Undated clipping of 1929, Lincoln [Nebraska] *State Journal.*
5. Letter to Mary Jugg Molek, 28 Oct. 1952. Correspondence, manuscripts, diaries, and the private library of MEH have been deposited in Special Collections of Pittsburg State University Library by Emma Haughawout Smith and her family.
6. "I've Said Good Bye to All That," p. 14.
7. *The Collegio* [of Kansas State Teachers College, now Pittsburg State University], 13 March 1925, p. 1, col. 4.
8. Diary I, p. 360.
9. Letter to John E. Reinecke, 23 Feb. 1928.
10. Diary II, p. 3.
11. "I've Said Good Bye to All That," p. 14.
12. Margaret E. Haughawout, *Sheep's Clothing* (Pittsburg, Kan.: [The Author], 1929), p. 18.
13. Diary II, pp. 75-77.
14. Ibid., pp. 85-86.
15. Ibid., p. 87.
16. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
17. Diary I, p. 340.
18. Diary II, pp. 73-77.
19. Margaret E. Haughawout, "And It Came to Pass," unpublished manuscript, p. 5.
20. Ibid., p. 6.
21. Letter to Mary Molek, 10 Aug. 1954.
22. Ibid., 5 April 1956.
23. Diary I, p. 7.
24. Margaret E. Haughawout, Review of Katherine Mansfield's *Letters, Bulletin of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English* (1929), p. 10.

"The Yellow Dog Fund was kept up by a lot of yellow financiers to buy yellow legislators—and both buyers and sellers had a dirty yellow streak in them."—*Appeal to Reason,* 30 April 1905.

Taken from a Daughter's Journal

APRIL 20, 1883:
We spoke until the words
came much too easy—
even our farewells—
the future seemed a past
to be forgotten.
JUNE 3, 1886
Across the prairie
our replies ride slow—may stall—
should a letter go unanswered,
that answers all.
FEBRUARY 17, 1888:
Another blizzard coming—
when it melts,
the mail will follow.
AUGUST 22, 1894:
Cottonwoods shake shade
but they grow hollow . . .
DECEMBER 9, 1897:
I wrest a letter
from your annotations—in the Bible
and the Prayer Book which you gave me.
My thinking glorifies our final visit:
in West Virginia sunlight when small talk casts long shadows.

Barbara Shirk Parish

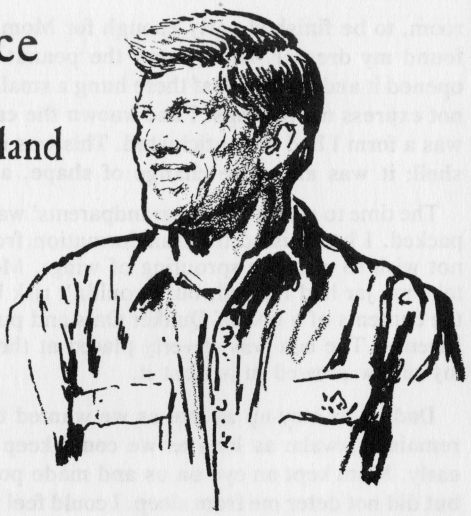
Fresh-Cut Timber

These logs scatter-stacked
about a modest mountain,
when notched and routed,
become our cabin in the sky.
We choose the meadow where
we'll front the porch, and
there's a loping pelt,
once bagged, to hinge the door.
That hummock vomits stones
enough to draft the hearth.
We'll build a cavendish there
where guests may smoke and wile.
That great white peak just west
of that loblolly pine breathes
clouds on us, a winter's chill.
Inside the first log square
we'll set an extra bellied stove.
Our hands begin to ache and crust
from drilling holes and opting
for that next great log to lay.
Three logs splined together
outline the rising wall.
Alas,
comes supper call and TV trays
deny the Lincoln logs their further
rise until another day,when there'll
be time to play we're mountain men.

Frederick A. Raborg, Jr.

The Emergence

By Eric D. Cleveland



The day was warm, considering there was still a month—virtually forever—left in school. The walk home was only five blocks, but I was usually able to take at least an hour for that daily trip. Climbing an oak tree, I stood on one of the few branches not sturdy enough to support me. It broke. The bush below was soft, for the most part. The branches were young and flexible, and as I looked up through the broad leaves of the bush to the splintered branch a considerable distance away, I fancied that my bones must have been flexible, too.

There was no reason to hurry in getting up, for I had saved considerable time in my descent. I glanced around me, never having been inside a bush before. There, crawling on one of the same branches I now occupied, was a large, fuzzy caterpillar. This was certainly not the first I'd seen; many had come and gone in my futile attempts to fish. This one was, however, the first I'd seen since my science class earlier in the day. I grabbed it up and we went home.

The scratches on my elbow and the now-dried blood around my ear did elicit some concern from my mother, but not the caterpillar. "Can I keep it?" was not a new question to her, but her quick, positive response was a pleasant surprise.

Baby food and peanut butter jars had been saved for the challenge of organizing Dad's nails, nuts, and bolts. He helped to find an unoccupied Jif jar and punched holes in the lid. Branches, leaves, and blades of grass were placed in the jar, and the caterpillar had a new home. I checked the jar on my dresser daily and changed the grass every once in a while. I watched and waited, but there was no change, and so the jar was moved to the back of the dresser behind the aquarium as on came summer.

The family trip to my grandparents' was fast approaching and each member was appointed several duties. I was given the unfair burden of cleaning my

room, to be finished early enough for Mom to do an extra load of clothes. I found my dresser. On top was the peanut butter jar, but no caterpillar. I opened it and under a leaf there hung a small package of life. Amazement did not express my feelings. I had known the caterpillar would change, but this was a form I had not anticipated. This was more than simply forming a hard shell; it was an entire change of shape, a new creature.

The time to set off for my grandparents' was nearing, and the car was almost packed. I had missed the transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis; I did not wish to miss the sprouting of wings. Mom would probably have let me take my jar had I asked, but I couldn't risk being turned down. I poured out the contents of a box of Quaker Oats and put my jar in, packing it tight with Kleenex. The box was cleverly placed at the bottom of my pillow case with my pillow pressed in against it.

Dad let us stay up as late as we wanted the night before the trip, and we remained awake as long as we could keep our eyes open. He went to bed early. Mom kept an eye on us and made popcorn. The late show was scary, but did not deter me from sleep. I could feel the warmth, safety, security, and love as Mom picked me up and carried me to bed, there to tuck me into sheets that she had cleaned and dried just for me. I was experiencing the first things to be missed with the coming of age.

She lowered the window three-quarters of the way down. How could she know how far to close it when I was across the room and under a sheet, too sleepy to tell her that that amount of breeze was just right? She was my mom; she just knew.

I woke to the smell of station wagon and the sounds of Mom and Dad talking softly in the front seat. Babe was lying on the floor board and saw that I had awakened. Her tail began to wag and beat against the back of Dad's seat. I grabbed it and whispered for her to be quiet. She climbed up into the seat, forcing Kathy and Connie to one side. The commotion got Mom's attention and she looked directly at me, but said not a word. Seconds passed uncomfortably as she watched me and I sat very still. Mom held up the peanut butter jar and my heart stopped. I had attempted to deceive her and had been caught. My mind raced, remembering all the lessons I had been taught about honesty and openness. It was obvious that honesty would have been the best policy, but it was too late for those lessons. I could feel a new one coming on.

Just as the clouds moved in and rain drops began to well up in my eyes, she smiled. What had I done with all the oatmeal was her only question. I could see Dad's ears rise, pushed up by a smile as I explained that I had saved it all in my bottom dresser drawer. Mom didn't seem immediately amused, but I don't think she was really upset either. It was so exciting now to explain my discovery and go over again all the details I had been told in school. Was this small pouch to become a moth or a butterfly? I think that I should have known, but I did not remember. A cocoon would produce one type and a chrysalis would produce another. I couldn't remember which did which; I wasn't even sure what I had.

The trip continued on and on. I got to sit in the front seat part of the time. You don't know what being important is all about until you get to sit in front with Dad. Half of Dad was filled with ideas and the other half with answers. I had an awful lot of questions. I never felt dumb to ask Dad questions, partly because I always acquired answers and partly because he once told me it was good that I knew enough to ask something. When he explained things to me, my stomach would feel funny and I would get shivers. For him to know something so well that he could explain it to me made it hard to breathe, and I shook inside with the excitement of knowing.

He told me that when he was a kid he tried to grow a caterpillar but it had died; he was glad that mine had not so we could watch the change together. I didn't remember his being a kid, but it must have been long ago. Now he was a larger man than I felt I would ever be. To sit on his shoulders was to be as tall as the sky; I nearly touched a cloud once while perched on the broad, stable seat. He was tall enough to see the top of the refrigerator and even reach the highest kitchen cabinet without a chair. Now I was doing something he had done; I was truly growing up. My eyes were tired, but I must not sleep. I would miss too much; after all, I was in the front seat. I slept. When I woke, it was to the back seat I would go.

Cows were counted, states were recorded from license plates, songs were sung, and naps were taken. Miles passed and day turned to night. The car was as quiet as it had ever been; even Babe slept. I watched out the window and saw that though we passed telephone poles and mileage signs, we did not pass stars. I looked up for a very long time and they kept up with us. Mom saw me staring out the window and asked if I knew where we were. I had hoped it was a place to go to the bathroom. It was better. We were almost at Grandma's house. I woke everyone else and we all leaned over the front seat to be the first to see the house. The garage light was on and, when we pulled into the driveway, the porch light came on and the front door opened. I wasn't the first to see the house, but I was the first to see Grandpa at the door. Connie said she was, but she didn't know.

They greeted us as we got out and there was much hugging, squeezing, and kissing. I watched as Dad and Grandpa shook hands. There was more love, respect, and pride there than in any hug I'd felt, and I'd just gotten some of the best. Questions were asked and stories were told. Six months of existence were recapped in an hour or so until someone noticed the time. I had noticed it, but kept it to myself. Things were unpacked and beds were assigned. Pat and I would sleep together; we always did. At home we had bunk beds, but sometimes he would climb up and snuggle with me. At Grandma's he didn't have to climb, and I didn't have to hope he would.

Grandma and Grandpa had a basement and a really big yard. In two days I had gone up and down those stairs hundreds of times, most of them without tripping. I had crawled under every bush and climbed up every tree in the yard. The evenings were filled with lightning bugs which we chased while feeding the mosquitoes.

It happened the third day after breakfast. At home, breakfast was a bowl of cereal; here it was six different decisions on what to have and none could be a bad choice. I had run downstairs to get a hammer. Grandpa was going to pound in stakes to wire up an apple tree he didn't think was sturdy. It was strong enough to hold me, I told him. He wasn't real pleased with that news, so I went for the hammer. My jar was on the worktable where I had left it after my half-hour explanation of butterflies that Grandma was so kind to listen to. Now there was a change. I noticed as I went by that there was violent thrashing in the leaves. I ran back up from the basement and got Dad and Pat. We watched as the creature struggled to escape from its old home. It pressed and pulled and turned back and forth. I wanted to help it, but Dad said that this was the work that had to be done to grow up and that I had done everything I could for it; now it had to struggle on its own. Then he hugged me. Pat wasn't impressed and went upstairs to do something fun. He didn't understand that I was watching life.

Eventually Grandpa came down to get that hammer. He watched with us. Finally the creation slid out of its case and hung by a leg. I'd never seen anything like this before. Its body was fat and its wings were brown and wrinkled. It pumped them again and again and they unfolded and were beautiful. All this was done while hanging upside down and in what was now rather cramped quarters. It climbed up on the leaf and Grandpa said it was a moth. What a moth! Its wings were as large as my hands and one wing looked exactly like the other. Exactly. This had been a caterpillar; its body was without memorable characteristics. I didn't even remember noticing how many legs it had. Now it had wings, exactly identical wings, formed while stuffed in that cocoon. We carried the jar upstairs and received all the oohs and ahs appropriate for such an occasion. What a beautiful creature this was.

Grandma thought it looked cramped and she was right. What was I to do with it now? Connie said I should let it go; Kathy didn't care as long as that bug was out of sight. Except for Connie, everyone agreed that it was my decision to make.

My teacher had shown me his collection of insects and, although he did not have this one, those he did have were beautiful, and he had them to keep and look at any time he wanted. It would have to be killed if I were to keep it. I'd like to have it to show to my friends. I had cared for it and watched it as it became what it was. I was responsible for its existence. How could I destroy it? A decision was to be made after lunch.

Grandma came in and sat with me while I thought. She told me how she had raised Dad from when he was a baby until he had grown up. She said that she was as proud of him as she could be and that she loved for him to be with her. Once he had grown, though, she let him go so he could be free to have a family and raise his own children. God had allowed her to take care of him so that they could love each other, but that all of God's creatures would be free if they were loved. It was an interesting story, but I had a moth to think about. She smiled and left.

Lunch came and went and a decision had to be made. Connie was already mad and I hadn't even told her what I had decided. She had no faith. I asked

Mom what to do and she told me to do what felt right. No help. Grandpa said that if I wanted to know what to do with a moth, think like a moth. I put myself in that jar and I wanted out. My wings were for flying. Grandma had been talking about the moth all along. The decision was made and Connie smiled.

We went out into the backyard while my youngest sister Jenny and Pat were taking naps. Everyone stopped in the yard as I took a few extra steps forward. I opened the lid and held up the jar. The moth climbed up the stick and out onto my hand. It slowly moved its wings up and down, but went nowhere. For a moment I thought perhaps it wanted to stay. A light breeze came up and it was off. Its flight seemed awkward as it rose into the air.

I don't know where it came from, and I don't suppose its matters, but suddenly there was a bird. It flew by fast and straight and, as it did, it grabbed my moth in its mouth. It flew to the top of a telephone pole and perched there.

Connie turned away immediately and walked inside. She has always been painfully sensitive, and given the chance would have turned into a horse and run off to a green flowery meadow to escape the harshness of reality.

I could not turn away and watched as the bird ate my moth, allowing its tattered wings to float, one at a time, to the ground. It was only after Mom touched my shoulder that I began to cry. I looked down at my feet, I felt very weak. I heard Grandma start to cry but didn't look up to see her walk to the house with Grandpa. The tears became contagious and Dad sent Kathy inside to look after Connie.

Mom knelt beside me, but I felt that I should be angry and did not wish to be held. I stood with my arms at my side and my head down. My feet were joined by Dad's as he stood in front of me. I did not look up.

"How do you feel?" he asked. I shrugged. Tears burst forth and I threw my arms around Mom's neck and she held me. Many tears fell before Dad picked me up. I put my arms around him and buried my face into his shoulder. He walked down the street. We did not talk. We just walked.

Prairie Tree

This tree
will bear all summer:
its fruit
is shade
falling
in abundance
from the branch above
the doorstone.

Barbara Shirk Parish

School

By Zula Bennington Greene

The first thing I remember about school is sitting under the mulberry at the front gate waiting for Julia to come home and tell me what happened during the day. Julia was small and quick and bright and when she talked the words tumbled over each other and sounded like the water running over the rocks in the branch in our pasture. She was quick to make up her mind, quick to act. In later years I thought of her as beautiful. Her hair was dark blonde, her eyes blue, but it was her golden skin that gave her a special glow, skin that was pale gold and transparent and very much alive. I think of her now as goodness. We all loved her.

Also, I wanted to see if anything was left in her dinner bucket. A biscuit that had been to school was more desirable than one fresh from the kitchen. When the lid was pried off, a strange smell leaped out, of biscuits and fried meat, cookies and apples that had been shut up together all day in a half gallon syrup bucket.

Union school was half a mile from our house. The road skirted the woods, curved around the hog pen, crossed the little branch between our house and Uncle George Bird's, eased up a sloping hill, turned sharply north and there was the schoolhouse, a weather-worn, one-room wooden building. The weedy playground was unfenced—there was nothing that needed to be kept out—and the only equipment was the two little houses out back, a curbed well with a tin bucket, and a neatly stacked rick of wood.

The door was in the east end and just inside was a shelf for dinner buckets and nails for coats. Behind the teacher's desk at the west end was the blackboard and each side of the room had three windows. Pupils sat at double seats graduated in size from front to back and well marked with contemporary carving. Girls sat on the north, boys on the south, and either in the middle row, which was broken by the stove in the center of the room, the long pipe making a right-angled turn before it entered the flue.

The school term was six months and began the first Monday in August, by which time the farm work had slacked and there would be

a few months before the older boys were needed to help with corn cutting. By the end of January school had closed, in time for the spring work. Young men and women, up to and around age twenty, often attended school for a part of the term when there wasn't much else they could do.

Each district ran its own school with little help or hindrance from outside. As the opening day approached, mothers went to the schoolhouse to wash windows and clean up the accumulated dust of six months. Then the teacher took over. She was in charge and if she couldn't run the school she did as a prime minister does—she resigned.

On the first day she announced the rules—no whispering, only one person to be out of the room at the same time, and no one to leave the playground without permission. An experienced teacher knew she would be tested on two counts, and how she passed them was more important than the kind of certificate she held. The tests were in discipline and knowledge.

The big boys began provoking her with small, then larger misbehavings to see how much she would put up with and whether she had the nerve to whip them. Kids would go home and tell their parents that a certain boy got a whipping and that he just stood there and laughed at the teacher.

One year the boys in another district had run two teachers out of school before Christmas. Then a third came—everybody said they ought to have hired a man—a spunky little woman who oozed authority. Without laying on a hand—any of the rowdies could have tossed her over the schoolhouse—she brought order to the school.

It was the news of the year. Men in wagons met in the road, stopped to talk, offered each other a chew of tobacco and shook their heads in admiration—"Don't know how she done it, little bitty thing like her."

The other test was trying to stall a new teacher in arithmetic. A favorite was the last of 180 problems in Milne's *Arithmetic,* about A, B, and C buying a grindstone together. How much, it was asked, would each, given the dimensions of the stone, need to grind off to use his third.

It made no sense in a place where every farmer had his own grindstone and it lasted a lifetime or longer. My father's grindstone is now a rock in our patio. By the time A had ground off his share, B and C would be in more need of a headstone than a grindstone.

Teachers had standing in the community. There was little wealth or class. About everybody felt equal to about everybody else, with the teacher and the preacher at the top and a few slothful families on the outer fringe.

We grew up thinking that school was the most important thing in a child's life, and we tried never to miss a word in spelling or fail to have our lessons. Papa helped us at night, encouraged us to excel, and we were never kept at home to help with the work. He had been a teacher himself.

My first teacher was Miss Minty, Minty Crump, and when I cried on the first day she gave me a tiny Piso almanac. Miss Minty had a smooth dark pompadour and a long black skirt that swung out at the bottom like a bell. She wore white waists with high collars and long sleeves and a watch on a gold chain around her neck.

I sat and watched the chain describe loops and parabolas from its diamond-shaped clasp as she bent to help a child with a problem or to put a stick of wood in the stove. I observed every motion of her skirt, every tuck and fold of her blouse, the way she sat with both feet at the side of her chair, like riding sidesaddle, her hand touching the bell on her desk. She was beauty and grace and goodness and wisdom and I would have loved her even without the Piso almanac.

Teachers boarded in the district and during the term were invited to spend a night in the homes of pupils, sometimes to sleep with one of the children, for houses were small. These visits were important occasions. It made you feel good to sit and listen to your parents talking to your teacher and none of them mentioning any of your faults or failures. If popcorn balls and molasses candy were made during the visit, the peak was crowned. The dark molasses was pulled till it turned to pale amber, but usually it wasn't cooked long enough and was sticky. But nothing could mar the glory.

It carried over into the next day when the teacher's dinner was packed in the same bucket as yours and you sat beside her at her desk to eat. Your mother always fried ham and made a pie. You wondered if you ought to take something and hand it to her or ask her to help herself, the polite thing to do when there was company at home. She took hold of the situation and a sandwich at the same time, broke the latter and handed half to you and if you had been struck dead at that moment your life would have been full to bursting.

When I went to school George was left at home to play by himself. The next year, when he was five,he went for a day to visit, as young children often did. He decided that school was for him—he was not one to cry on the first day—and made such a fuss to be allowed to go that he went regularly.

We were very proud of him at school, a handsome, lively child with curly blonde hair and natural and free with everybody. I can see just how he looked, in knee pants and "swag waist." The latter was a shirt

that bloused at the waist, with a drawstring, and buttoned down the front. At each side of the front closing and around the collar was ruffled embroidery. The drawstrings were always coming out of George's waists and having to be run in again with a darning needle worked backwards.

When he came home the first day he said, "They laughed at me and Miss Grace told them to hursh." The teacher that year was Grace Feaster. George was always free and easy and outgoing, never timid or embarrassed, a delightful child.

I was both bashful and stubborn and still cannot understand an incident in which the two added up to an unbelievable defiance of authority. Being stood on the floor near the teacher's desk was a punishment for small offenses. One day I was shocked to hear Miss Grace say, "Zula, you may bring your book and come to the floor." I might have been whispering. I do not remember my misdeed.

"May" was too polite a word. I had never stood on the floor or been punished in any way and the thought of exhibiting myself, like a witch in the pillory, publicly disgraced, was unbearable. This feeling was stronger than my training in obedience. I sat sullen and silent.

Miss Grace advanced toward me to enforce her order and I slid to the other side of the double seat and held on tight, determined not to be taken. She walked sedately around the row of seats to the other side and I slid back again, making far more of a spectacle of myself than if I had gone quietly to the floor instead of being dragged there.

For Miss Grace gave up the little game of dodge, reached across the seat, pulled me up and marched me to the pillory, where I faced the wall and felt my shame visible to the tittering children.

An even more painful incident came a few years later. Herbert Keller had been telling around that I was his girl, and I declared I was no such thing. My best friend and seatmate, Jessie Harper, and I, in what might be called privy council, composed this verse:

The apple is yeller
I throwed it in the cellar
To get it good and meller
For Herbert Keller.

After school took up we read it to ourselves, giggled and whispered, so pleased with our composition that we did not see the teacher as she bore down on us and took the piece of paper. She read it aloud to all the school and our humiliation was so great that we were not heartened by the shrieks of laughter that greeted the verse. Herbert was pleased to have a poem written about him.

Jessie and I were stood on the floor, a sad reward for creative effort. A child who wasted his time drawing pictures or writing poems

was liable to be punished. No foolishness could be tolerated. School was for book learning.

It was also for playing. We loved recess, and noon was even better. Dinner was eaten quickly and we ran out to play with the last bites in our mouths. We played work-up and dare base and shinny and Andy-over and, when it snowed, fox and geese. There were other games, drop the handkerchief, crack the whip, London bridge—how could a person choose between peach and apple, silk and satin or gold and silver—and the singing and partner games, such as miller boy and skip to my Lou.

We played with a concentrated passion that engaged mind and muscle, heart and nerve. Every thought and feeling, wish and hope were focused with burning intensity on getting to the base safely, on having the handkerchief dropped behind us, on catching the ball, a powerful flowing energy that fuses into a singleness of purpose in instances of great pleasure or great danger. The sound of the bell went through us like a physical pain.

Almost as much fun as playing were spelling and ciphering, which we did Friday afternoons after the last recess. Two pupils named to "choose up sides" guessed at the page of a book the teacher held open and the one nearest right had the first choice. The two sides faced each other and spelled words alternately—anyone who missed a word sat down—until only one was left standing.

When we ciphered, a child from each side, beginning with the smallest, went to the blackboard and the teacher gave a problem. Each pupil coming to the board could choose the kind of problem he wanted, provided the other had covered that portion of the arithmetic. The one who got the correct answer first took on the next person on the opposing team. Chalk dots were made fast and furious as columns were added.

The last Friday of the month was a day when one or more directors came to the school with the teacher's warrant. My father was a member of the board and when he came the children looked at me and grinned. I grinned back, pleased at the distinction.

He had taught Union school before he was married, when as many as sixty pupils jammed into the room and he added algebra classes for the older ones. Teachers always asked the directors if they had anything to say. They seldom did, but one Friday when we were ciphering, Papa responded to the invitation by going to the blackboard and showing the pupils how to add without making dots.

A child likes to have his parents around, but he wants them to blend into the scenery, to act like everybody else's parents, and here was my father standing at the blackboard acting like a teacher. Yet even in my

embarrassment I felt proud of him. The children went on making dots when they added. Putting numbers together in their heads was too much work.

Spelling was a community entertainment, as athletic contests are now. Crowds gathered when two schools had a spelling match. The pupil who could spell everybody down, and it was usually a girl, was the equivalent of the homecoming queen. I was proud to bursting when Julia, not near as big or as old as most of the others, stood up and spelled the house down.

School was the scene of many kinds of pleasures and none was greater than wearing new shoes, new shoes that squeaked. Children came to school barefooted until the weather turned nippy, then they were taken to town and fitted with shoes. A child with squeaky new shoes made many trips to the teacher's desk and to the water bucket and to sit in front of the fire. And of course it was expected that every child would try to spit on them, for not to have your new shoes spit on was as humiliating as for a newly married couple not to be given a charivari.

Two things a girl yearned toward as she grew up were a separate skirt and a corset. Girls wore skirts before they had a waist to hold them up, the blouse half in and half out. Mamma made my first corset, cut shaped sections from the unbleached muslin called "domestic," using stays, hooks, and eyes from an old corset of hers. I had about as much figure as a fence post and an equal amount of feminine allure, but, encased in my corset, I felt as curvaceous as Lillian Russell. I minced up to the teacher's desk, certain that everybody in the room must know I was laced and stayed.

Because I was practically straight up and down and because it was not anchored to my stockings with supporters, the corset gradually worked up till it poked me under the arms, and but for them it would undoubtedly have come off over my head. Women's corsets of that time did not have supporters. Stockings were held up with elastic garters or, in an emergency, with strings.

Children learned things at school not in the books. Mothers, having been told nothing themselves, told their daughters nothing. Sex is not a topic on which parents are fluent. I learned about the "monthlies" from older girls at school and the knowledge was a secret burden for many weeks. One of them said, and it seemed a slight compensation for what must surely be an intolerable cross, that it "made a girl lots prettier."

Ellen was about thirteen, a few years older than I. She had big dark eyes, a clear white skin, and black braids crossed over her head. She

was large for her age, with round breasts and a figure. When the boys caught her in blackman they held her a little longer than was necessary and she had to wiggle loose. She lived with her mother and stepfather and several younger brothers and sisters. She was like any of the other girls at school, running and playing, when she suddenly became the center of a mystery.

She stopped coming to school, but the usual inquiries were not made of whether she was sick or her mother was sick and I sensed something different about her absence. One day two women came to our house and talked with my mother in lowered tones that gave off sparks of anger. One of them, a cousin of Ellen's mother, mentioned the stepfather's name and said bitterly, "He ought to be run out of the country."

That was a clue. Had Ellen's stepfather given her a hard whipping? If he had it would have been talked about. If a child was whipped severely there was angry talk around the neighborhood about "welts on that boy as big as a buggy whip." Whipping was an accepted form of punishment. Parents would threaten a child, not meaning a word of it, "I'll whip you till the blood runs down to your feet." Papa seldom punished us and when he did, he spanked. Mamma's frail peach switch left little impression, physically or psychically. All my life the sight of physical violence, whipping more than any other, has been very disturbing.

I was sure Ellen's stepfather had not whipped her. I thought about it, puzzled over it within the farthest range of my knowledge, and could find no answer. But I did not ask. I sensed it was something children were not supposed to know.

School lasted through the hottest and coldest days of the year. Two or three times in the drowsiness of a hot day a boy would hold up his hand and ask if he could "pass the water around." He brought a bucketful from the well and carried it from seat to seat, each child drinking from the dipper. Among the many things we had never heard of were germs.

We walked to school in cold that penetrated several layers of underwear, home-knitted wool stockings, fascinators, caps, and coats. There was a morning when I became so cold on the sloping hill that I sat down and cried. Julia made me get up and go on again.

When a heavy rain sent the little branch swirling across the road, walking to school was an adventure. If it was really high, Papa took us to school on old Fred, one child sitting in front of him and one or two behind. If a heavy rain fell during the day he came to school after us.

It was expected that every year a teacher would have a pie supper or box supper to get money for maps or a dictionary or new library

books. The library consisted of twenty to thirty books piled on a triangular shelf in a corner, the corner where children were stood for misbehaving. I read them all and repeated most of them. It was there that I first learned of a man named Shakespeare through a man named Lamb. There was a translation of Virgil's *Aeneid,* poems of Matthew Arnold, Longfellow, and Tennyson and a story about Koonah, an Eskimo boy. I wept over the fate of Evangeline and Gabriel and the tragedy of Sohrab and Rustum and was charmed by the fantasy of a strange girl who walked on the bottom of the ocean. I read the old fairy tales and learned that everything always comes out right in the end, the good rewarded, the evil punished. I cannot remember when I learned to read. It was before I went to school. Julia may have taught me.

A program of recitations, songs, and "dialogs" was given before the pies or boxes were sold. I loved to speak pieces and always chose a tale of heroic tragedy. Julia was very good one year in "Annie's and Willie's Prayer" and I was proud of George when he recited four lines rapidly and with spirit and brought the house down. He was an adorable little boy, though I never heard anybody use that word to describe him.

Pupils learned pieces, then learned to say them "with gestures." A child would report to the teacher, "I know my piece and I'm ready for the gestures." In one dialog Julia was supposed to faint and be carried to a couch, but, embarrassed at the idea of being carried, she arose and walked to the couch, then lay down and permitted herself to be revived.

In the years since I was in Union school I have seen some of the world's best actors on the stage, but I cannot bring myself to be critical of those pie supper entertainments, bound round as they are with the tender grace of nostalgic memory.

Sheets were brought from home and strung on a wire across the end of the room to curtain a stage. Parents carried coal oil lamps to the schoolhouse for the evening and it was strange to see the familiar room by lamplight, shadows held back by soft yellow ovals of light. No actress on opening night could be more fidgety and feverish than pupils were while they darted back and forth under the ends of the curtains while waiting for the program to begin.

Then came the main event of selling the boxes. Girls sewed them in fancy shapes of hearts, diamonds, and circles and flossied them up with crepe paper ruffles. A girl always let her "regular feller" know what kind of box she brought and it was good sport to "run the box up" on him and make him pay a high price. A young man considered it a compliment to have his girl's box bid up, but at one box supper a

young man with a practical turn of mind dropped out of the bidding and let the runner-up eat with his girl. The buyer was not prepared for such a turn and had to borrow money to pay for the box.

Bidders generally bought a box and took their chances. Sometimes it turned out to be a married woman's. Sometimes a man, if the bidding was slow, bought two boxes and ate with two girls, who did not always consider it a cozy arrangement. One young man was a little less than gracious when he discovered that the box he bought belonged to a little girl so bashful she had to eat sitting on her mother's lap.

I was not that girl. I was too bashful to take a box until I was much too old to sit on my mother's lap. The one I took to the last box supper I attended at Union school was bought by Frank Tuck, who had asked Julia to signal him when it was sold.

Frank and I stood behind the middle row of desks at the front of the room and ate, consuming the fried chicken as daintily as possible and biting from the pointed tips of the pieces of apple pie. Around us were the hum of voices, the smell of coal oil lamps, and the yellow glow of light. We ate in self-conscious silence, the warmth of Frank close beside me. After we had finished he said, low and hurried, "May I see you home tonight?"

Frank was the nicest boy in school, tall and good-looking, and I liked him better than any other boy, but it was the first time a boy had asked to see me home. In a panic of shyness, I mumbled, "Not tonight," gathered up the box and moved away.

I walked home with my family, thinking new thoughts. A boy had asked to see me home and given me a glimpse into another world and I knew with a sure certainty that it would have a shine more glowing than playhouses and doll dresses, blackman or shinny.

My father carried a lantern and I watched the long shadow cast by his legs as the light swung with his steps, a metronome keyed to the sound made by the stiff legs of his trousers as they brushed against each other at every step. This was my own safe world, but as I walked home along the old familiar road I was thinking of a new one.

That was the year I was fifteen. We moved to Colorado and I left Union school. Nobody ever was graduated. Pupils dropped out as they become older, to go away and look for a job or get married. Girls who wanted to teach went on to high school or to a summer institute.

The school term closed in a burst of good will. The Last Day of School was a holiday that rated capitals and ranked close to Christmas. Parents came bringing food for a basket dinner which was spread on planks on the middle-row desks between the stove and the door. I begged Mamma to let me wear my hair hanging down on the

last day of school, unbraided and falling from a ribbon tied around my head, wavy from being done up on rags the night before.

Children were crowded into the front seats to make room for parents, who sat and listened to classes. Pupils read with self-conscious pride and tried not to stumble over any word. It is to the credit of the teachers that they did not ask only the better readers, but gave all a chance to be heard by their parents.

Reunion at the Union School, Hickory and Benton Counties, MO.

At noon the room was bustling with women setting out food, murmuring apologies for a fallen cake, with children running in and out, excited and laughing, with men around the perimeter talking as they rested one foot on the seats, and with the teacher mingling as a kind of high priestess of the occasion. Neither she nor the children had brought dinner baskets that day.

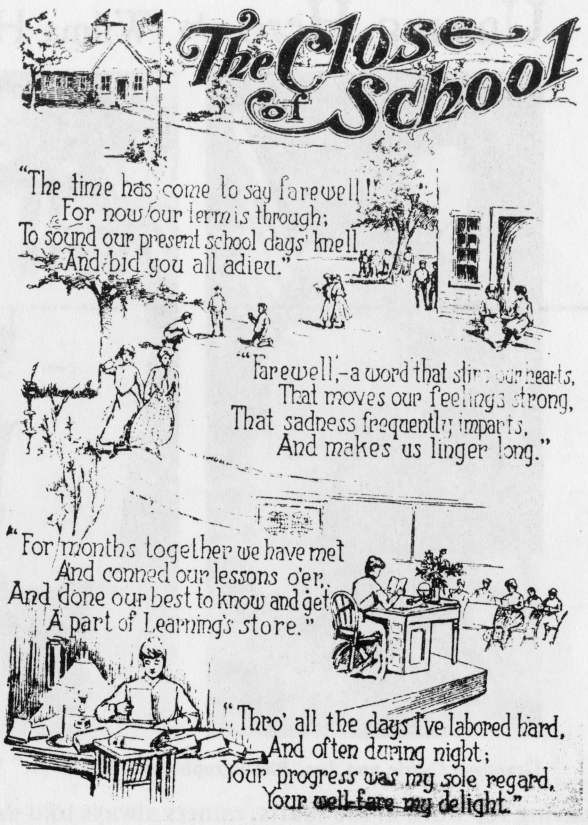
In the afternoon the teacher gave a little talk saying how much she had enjoyed the term and that she would miss the children. A director usually responded with an appreciation of her work. The day came to an end with a mingling of joy and sadness. A few children always cried to be parted from a teacher they loved. She cheered them with, "You'll have a good time this summer and we will see each other again in the fall," or if she was not coming back, "You'll like your new teacher."

The only man teacher we had at Union was Jim Boring, who held a kind of awe for us. His family was involved in a feud with another

Mr. Boring's Gift Book.

branch of the Boring family. A man on each side of the family had been shot and killed. Julia had a kind of crush on Mr. Boring, as girls often do for men teachers. I ought to know. I married one of my teachers, but that was some years in the future.

Mr. Boring gave the pupils a little book at the end of the school year with his picture and all our names in it, along with a poem that began—I still have my book, but I remember the poem from years ago:

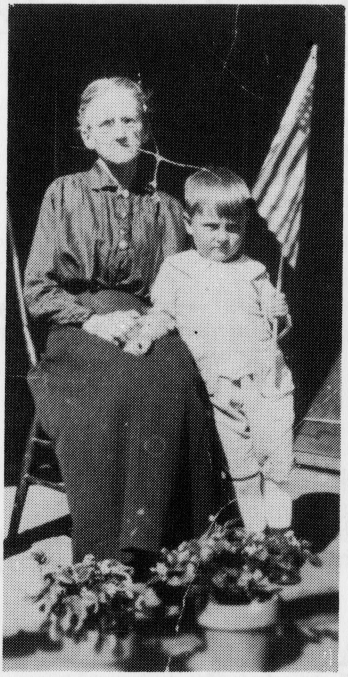


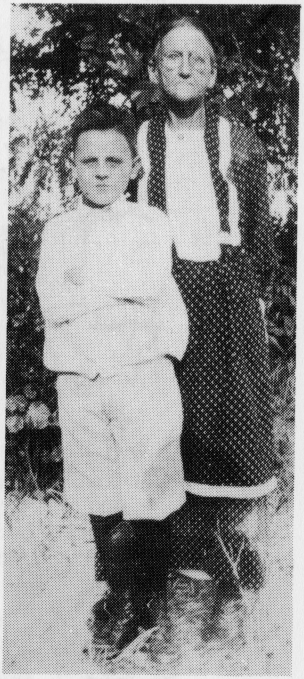
We lingered long that day, saying goodbye to each other and gathering up our books and slates and tablets. If any paper was left it was saved for another year—a five-cent tablet was something to take care of. A pad of blank paper still gives me pleasure. Special papers were kept between double slates. Children loved double slates, but thrifty parents cut them apart for the use of two children.

Mothers were given these things to look after while children played a last game of tag. My last game of tag. My Last Day of School was a sadness near unbearable, for I could not look ahead to seeing my friends the next year, perhaps never again, for we were moving to Colorado, which seemed a very long distance away.

The school population in Union dwindled from the sixty when my father taught there to only a very few in 1940, when the district was consolidated with others. The old building still stands, a crumbling home for the small tenants that take over whatever man abandons.

Unsung Hero by Wilma Hosman





Grandma Carrie and Joe. Photographs by "The Boys," Girard, KS.

When leaving for work in the shafts, miners always told their wives goodbye, for they never knew for sure that they would be back.

So in the early hours of December 8, 1911, when Moses Evan Kennedy bade his wife Carrie goodbye, she had no idea that her life would never be the same again. It was 5:45 a.m. Moses had to be at the mine by seven, a three and a half hour walk. It was bitter cold that year, and no doubt Gramps was glad to join the other men in the cage descending many feet below where they worked the coal vein six days a week.

One and a half hours later, they struck white damp. When the air became bad, Gramps and the twelve others working the room made a rush to escape into a larger passageway. Out safely, Gramps learned his son Joe was still back in the room, unconscious. He grabbed a car, called for volunteers to help, and went into the room, now filled with the poisonous air.

Peter Mattioda went with him, helped place Joe on the car, which they pushed out to good air. As Gramps emerged, he fell. After the three were taken to the top, Mattioda was hospitalized. Uncle Joe recovered consciousness unharmed. But Gramps was dead.

Joe walked slowly home to tell his mother.

The aftermath of Gramps' death was not pleasant. The Wear Coal Company gave Carrie a settlement in the form of a small farm near Dunkirk (also known as 17 Central Mining Camp). She tried farming for a few years, but finally moved to a small home at 2309 N. Walnut in Pittsburg, where she lived until her late eighties.

Note: *A vigorous Pennsylvania Dutch lady, Carrie now had to make her own living. She did menial tasks for other women, raised a few chickens, and put out a small garden. Then, at the age of fifty-six, when her daughter died, she was faced with the task of rearing a small grandson. She did a few more menial tasks for others and added piecing and quilting to her money-making projects. Then the child developed a hot appendix. Grandmother was without insurance or money. A kind doctor, W.V. Hartman, told her if she could pay the hospital, he would do the surgery free. Somehow this story got out in the neighborhood, and the residents of the old North End pooled enough to pay the hospital bill. The grandson, Joseph Miller Kennedy II, named for his uncle, now lives in St. Louis, with his wife and two sons and their families.*

Carrie Kennedy died in 1947 and is buried in Mt. Olive Cemetery beside her husband. Joseph Kennedy, who had given up the mines after losing his father and became a painter and carpenter, died in 1969. A second son, my father, William W. Kennedy, a coal mine operator and miner, was killed in a non-mine related accident in 1926. He left a widow, Ida Lewey Kennedy, and three children under nine, as well as some older children. The oldest boy, Clyde Lewey Kennedy, helped support his family until 1928, when he left to be married. The next in line, eighteen-year-old Pete Joseph Kennedy, supported his mother and family for ten long years.

The above story was recorded from Carrie Pugh Klein by a grandchild of Moses Kennedy while taking a folklore class at Pittsburg State University under Dr. Juanita Laing. She sent it, with supporting documentation, to U.S. Senator Robert Dole, who directed it to the U.S. Department of the Interior. On May 1, 1982, Gramps' grandchildren were presented in his name the Mine Safety and Health Administration's Award of Honor. Assistant Secretary Ford B. Ford commented, "It is my privilege to commend and extend special recognition in memory of Moses Evan Kennedy, considering the severe physical stress endured and the conditions under which he saved the life of his son, Joseph Kennedy."

Gramps is no longer an unsung hero.

The Lie

By Mari Tonn

I recall that particular November Saturday often. Like a dream that wanders in and out, hazy, unfixed. Sometimes the memory clicks clearly for a moment, triggered by a smell, focused by a sound. The frigid morning air had formed an icy brown skin on the puddles in the road. Jersey cows, wandering lazily away from the milk barn, nuzzled at the hard, sticky hedge apples scattered haphazardly along the fence row.

I was waiting by the iron gate for Melvin. Cold, metal spindles reminding me of another time. *Touch it with your tongue,* he said. Stinging, the salty taste of blood on my teeth as the frozen metal tore the tender skin from my lips. He always laughed when he had fooled me. Laughed hard and for a long time.

Waiting, I stamped against the hard, damp ground, the prickly numbness of the cold heavy in my feet. An easy breeze rattled the gate against its latch as I stood, balancing the handles of three empty tar buckets stuffed with musty gunny sacks. Two in my right hand, my favored one. Walnut picking time. As always, Melvin magically appeared once the gear was ready. I knew his game. Anticipated it, waited for it. The price of being younger, last born. Around the old cement chicken house that squatted heavily in the pasture, he sauntered, fists shoved deeply into grimy Levi pockets. Between foggy breaths, he spit murky streams of pilfered tobacco juice between his teeth into the dead grass.

"Race you, sucker!"

Already a good fifteen yards behind, I started. Running and tripping with the empty buckets swinging awkwardly, banging hollow

against my legs. Laughing and choking on the frosty air that stabbed like needles at my lungs. Ahead of me Melvin's lean, dark figure grew smaller in the distance. The staccato of his pumping legs a fraction of a second out of sync. When I finally reached the grove, breathless and spent, Melvin had already begun: a small, neat stack, like miniature green and black cannonballs ready for firing.

Watching Melvin that morning I realized that I rarely thought of his limp. Only a few vivid images allowed me to resurrect memories of him without it, before the accident four summers earlier. Relay races after Bible school, Melvin always winning. Crossing the hurriedly drawn line in the dirt long before the rest of us. A Fourth of July gathering with the neighbors, Melvin waving a sparkler in each hand, running and laughing wildly in the twilight. Bright, misshapen circles of fire in the darkness echoing dim trails of light like afterthoughts.

Distinct, also, is the image of his face the day it happened. Ashen, the pasty look of pain. His lips dry and slightly parted with tiny pools of spittle in the corners of his mouth. A neighbor had stopped to visit with Papa before he left for the north eighty to disc. The man, a retired farmer named Birdie O'Toole, lost his footing as he and Melvin were hooking the disc behind the old blue Ferguson tractor. A blade, sharpened to lay open the hardened crust of soil, cut into Melvin's leg as it fell, slicing into the bone just above his knee.

Papa said it wasn't natural for a boy so young not to cry out. A lot of strong grown men wouldn't have fared so well, he said. Melvin, gone for days to the hospital in Joplin—weeks longer at home hobbling in a hard plaster cast that grew dingy with time. Tripping us with his crutch when we were within reach. *They chopped the bone off with an axe,* he said. Laughing at my frightened eyes. Always laughing.

The cast came off in late July. A sultry, sticky day which pleaded for rain. Melvin, climbing awkwardly out of the Chevy, moving slowly with the aid of a glossy black cane. He went to his room without speaking except to say that he didn't want his supper.

Standing in his doorway, I saw him sitting on his bed in only his shorts. Facing the wall and slowly fingering the angry stitching scars. Reading their swollen imperfection over and over again. The withered skin, a bluish white like thin milk. Without turning he spoke to me quietly.

"Close the door."

For an instant, I paused, listening to the sound of the electric fan as it rotated, rustling at the curtains and papers on the dresser. Humming, steady. Not unlike the noise of the June bugs on the screen. He spoke again, so softly I am still unsure he spoke at all.

"Please, Sis."

I set the sugary lemon tea Mama had sent with me on the nightstand and left, closing the door behind me. Listening for its latch. Hours later I fell asleep, lulled by the sound of the gentle rain, so long it seemed in coming, and to Melvin's quiet sobbing in the other room.

Melvin had always seemed to know things. He was a curious enigma—a man-child with a fearlessness well beyond his years. A fascinating toughness that often frightened and sometimes made me sad. He had been in a knife fight once and sported a jagged scar just above the coarse dark hairs of his left eyebrow. Playing mumblety-peg for money on the way home from school one Monday. Will Synder had one blue eye and one green and was mean. Will Synder hated losing. Especially nickels. Especially to Melvin. The knife made an odd sound when it landed much like when Grandpa Murdock cuts ripe melons. Melvin pulled it out himself and threw it in the dirt without wiping it. It was a small knife with only one blade, but it was still a knife. Mama cried when she saw it. Something about sin and wickedness and a bad lot in life. A miracle it didn't put his eye out, she said. Mama cried about Melvin a lot.

The early banter of that morning in the walnut grove is lost to me now. Was lost even then—the casual conversation remembered only momentarily and gone like smoke rings that lose their shape as they slowly drift into nothingness.

I had found it days before in the timber behind Charlie's old shack. Right next to the double-forked tree that was split apart by lightning the summer before during an August thunderstorm. The kind of storm that boils up in minutes and then is gone. Charlie was the only colored man I knew. He had settled in the county years ago, drifting in from nowhere. Talk was that he had worked a carnival once, helping somehow with the freak show and the pickled two-headed pigs. Melvin rarely went with me to visit Charlie. The distrust between them was electric. "That boy's got meanness in 'im. The devil keeping time in 'is soul," he said. Numberless Sunday afternoons alone with Charlie while Melvin and the others fished and hunted arrowheads and built secret hideaways. Old Charlie had large, sad eyes that stood out slightly from his face making him appear always startled. Huge, dark centers surrounded by a sea of white that wasn't white at all. Yellowed, the color of tobacco stain. "'Bes' be gittin' now, chil'," he would say.

Charlie had been gone some time the day I found it. But the empty shack with his familiar belongings still fascinated. Seemed welcoming, comforting. The chipped, bird-egg blue dishes. A fly-specked calendar

still turned to January. His Prince Albert cans heavy with years of collecting bolts, nails, coins. Melvin said that Charlie hung himself from the middle rafter of his cabin. The law, he said, had caught up with him after forty years for killing a man in Alabama. He just saved them the trouble of lynching him, he said. Papa said that wasn't so. Charlie was ready, he said. Charlie was old.

The grainy dust from the burlap filled my nostrils as I unwrapped it, revealing where I had hidden it hours before in the bottom of the tar bucket. Methodically, I opened the tiny, worn matchbox, slowly unfolding the newsprint that surrounded it like a cocoon. Layer after layer.

Melvin stared blankly, unblinking, into the tiny box. For a heartbeat, maybe two, I thought I might have won. His face was unreadable, motionless, except for the muscle working like a stiffened spring in his jaw. His jaw that was so like Papa's. Solid, stern, and rather square. The only recognizable feature that made Melvin seem like ours. He had always looked different from the rest of us, his face belonging to another time, perhaps another generation. Linked to some mysterious ancestor long dead, forgotten except in the stiffened poses of family photographs or weathered headstones on Decoration Day visits to the scruffy family plot in Monmouth. Occasionally, a gesture, a fleeting look seemed familiar. The eyes, flecked with greens and grays, were not the true brown of the Murdocks. Grandma Graver called them dangerous. Much like those of a distant uncle on my mother's side, a legendary miscreant named Leonard. A womanizer or bootlegger, I forget which. And worse yet, a Catholic.

A walnut, ready from months of ripening, rustled through the limbs and lifeless leaves. That sound only broke the silence of the wait.

Then he told me. He told me with a long, frightened face in a voice that sounded far away. Like from the bottom of a well.

"You didn't touch that thing, did you?"

For a moment my mind disconnected from my brain. Untethered, floating, elusive. My face heated, challenging the chill of the early air and my nose watered. A tiny, salty rivulet stopped, suspended on my lip. A choking sourness rose in my throat, and my chest felt tight. I answered quickly. Flatly.

"No, of course not."

Melvin knew. I could tell by the way his eyes peered at me from the corners of their sockets that he knew. He turned to face me squarely, running his flat, thick fingers through the thatches of his unruly hair. Small patches of sunlight filtered through the branches spotting his jacket and hair. In the distance, the dark storm clouds were gathering,

forming a long, gray bank in the west. Nervously, Melvin fingered the cowlick that made a dark semicircle on his forehead. His habit. The single aspect of his life he didn't care to control. He reached behind him into his pocket for his handkerchief. A wadded square of faded indigo that smelled of him, of sweat and dirt and tobacco. A strand of hair fell across one eye as he bent slightly to wipe my nose. Gently, with a tenderness that frightened. His face was wooden. His speech deliberately slow and toneless.

"It's a good thing for you is all that I can say. That thing is poison. Poison, mind you. And we both know what that means. You'da been visiting your nigger friend, Charlie, sooner than you planned."

Wrapping the tiny box in the empty gunny sack, he tossed it to the ground, crushing it with the heel of his work boot. Grinding it to pieces and working the fibery mess into the damp soil.

"I'll come back later and burn that thing," he said.

Neither of us spoke on the walk back to the house. This time Melvin carried his share and more. Dragging the heavy, lumpy sacks of walnuts without my asking. He stopped once by the stock tank to wash his hands. Rinsing them over and over and over again in the icy water before wiping them finally on his jeans.

The next few hours seemed heavy, my thoughts and movements slow, suspended in a vacuum of worry and wondering. Visions of gladiolas. Of Aunt Virginia's funeral and Charlie's. Remembering Melvin's ashen look of pain. Wondering if it would come quickly, silently, stealthily as Melvin often did in the night when he would try to scare me. Grabbing at my ankles while I slept. Covering my face with a feather pillow, smelling of mildew, until I could not breathe. Scratching ominously at the window screens in the blackness of the early morning hours. And laughing. Always laughing.

"You look a little peaked," Mama said. "Hope you're not coming down with something."

Melvin, catching my eye, knowing, taunting me. All afternoon long, that great omnipotent eye reminding me, taunting me, wordlessly calling me names. Outside, the slow, steady drizzle that had started before lunch finally turned to sleet. Pinging softly, almost rhythmically against the steamy windows.

"You didn't eat enough today to keep a bird alive," she said.

A log, shifting in the stove, sent sparks out on the rug. Burning briefly in the air and then turning into small white flakes of ash.

"Go lay down and rest awhile," she said.

Hours later Mama found me. Crouched in a darkened corner of my closet, trembling. Reciting the Twenty-Third Psalm, the one I knew best, over and over and over again.

Melvin had lied. For no purpose. Only sport. Less meaningful even than shooting the rats and sparrows that foraged for food in the old tin granary.

He saw me coming fifty yards away. He was standing near the side of the barn where he had tacked fresh hides that afternoon. The single bare light bulb of the pole light cast shadows around him, illuminating the whiteness of his skin. The wet of the sleet making his face glisten. A glazed, ceramic-like mask. He watched me silently without moving, until I was close enough to touch him. Turning his head only slightly, he spit aimlessly into the darkness. I opened my mouth to blame him, to tell him that I knew. Instead, I said nothing, watching him, meeting his blank stare. At the house, the noises of living. A radio playing softly. Mama talking. "Look how short those pants are getting," she said. The clatter of setting supper dishes.

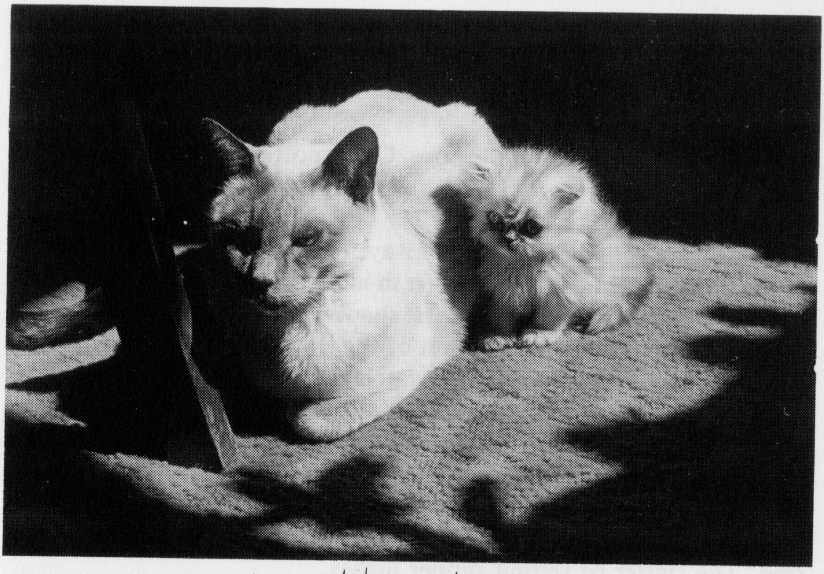
Then I struck at him. Hard, angry blows, again and again. Sobbing I buried my face in his chest as I hit him. He stood rigidly, stiffly, his filthy denim coat caked with the mud of countless chores, dirtying my face.

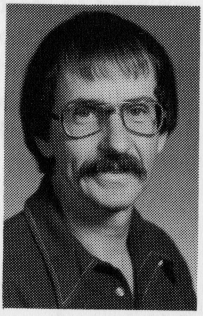
Then a touch in my hair. So light. Delicate as a breath, as haunting and light as the breeze off moth wings. Startling in its subtlety. I raised my head to meet his gaze. His eyes, hooded by the shadows, showed nothing. Emotionless, dull, void of all expression. Watching him, I waited for a word, a movement that did not come. Then I turned and started for the house.

Walking slowly I listened for it. In the unfamiliar silence, the sleet crunched loudly beneath my boots. The lights of the kitchen glowed warmly through the muslin curtains, slicing through the darkness like a knife. Wisps of smoke from the chimney gyrated, turning and twisting liquidly like the souls of vapory dancers before disappearing into the night. Mama was singing. Some words, but mostly humming. I had nearly reached the porch steps where the hound lay huddled underneath, curled against the cold. She raised her head only once to acknowledge my coming. And then I heard it.

Behind me in the distance, I could hear him laughing.

"It has become more important for artists to be good at whatever mode they work in, than to strain for eccentric individuality, whether their mode is traditional or radical, abstract or realistic."—John Canaday, former art critic for the *New York Times* and a native of Fort Scott, Kansas.

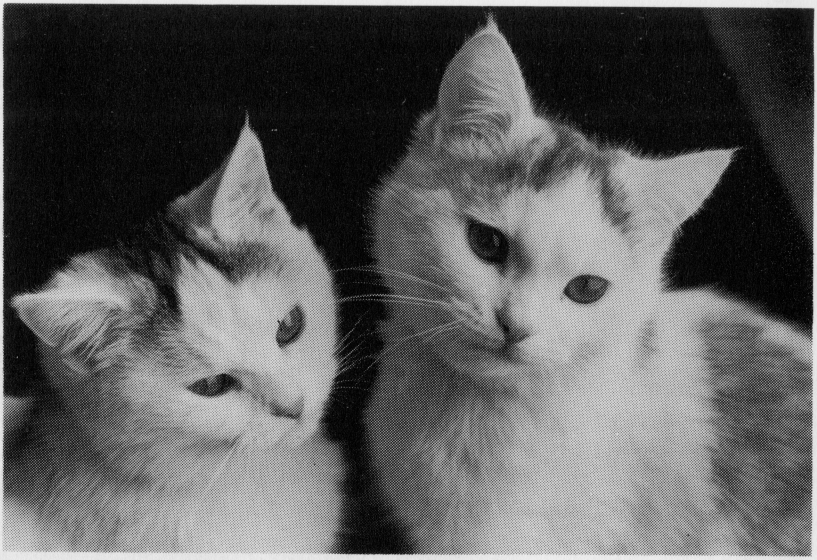




Cats

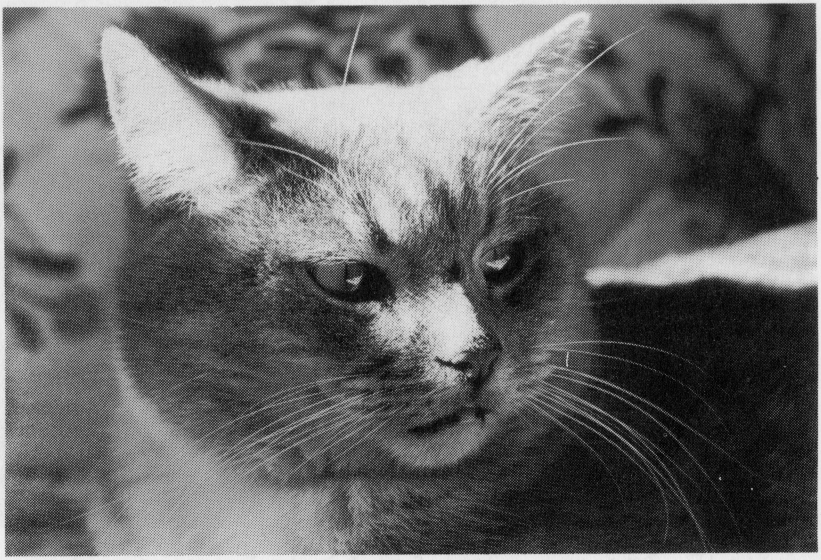
By Larry Long

Photography has been an important part of my life since I acquired my first camera in 1951. I guess I have always been visually oriented. Prior to my "exposure" to photography I studied painting and drawing. Going further back, as a child I drew incessantly, although I received little encouragement in visual development through elementary and secondary school. Therefore, to "see" the world around me, to react to it, and to want to communicate that reaction are very natural and important to me.



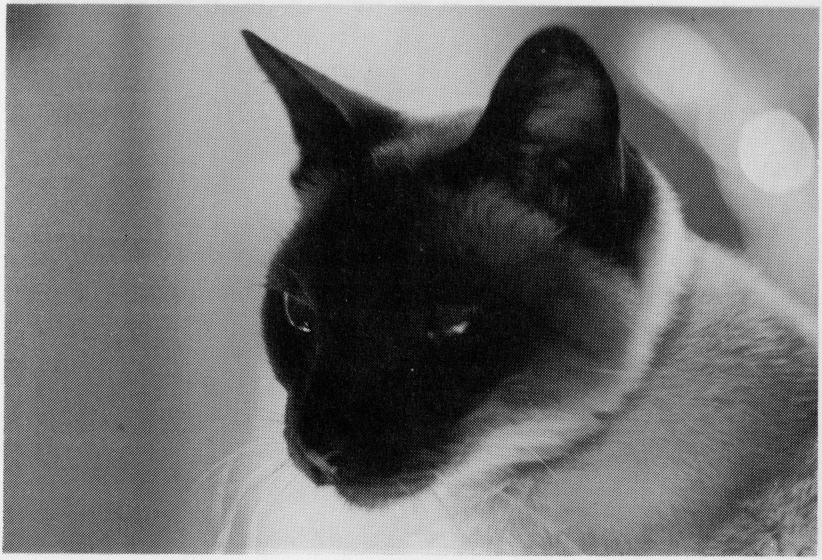
Except for my "poor art student" years when I was living in furnished rooms I've always had cats around. Right now I have five cats. I also have two dogs but somehow cats are special. One "keeps dogs for pets" but one "has cats around" or "lives with cats."

As a professional photographer, I find myself approaching photography on two levels. There is the day-to-day routine with some interesting and visually inspiring, but often visually boring and unphotogenic material.



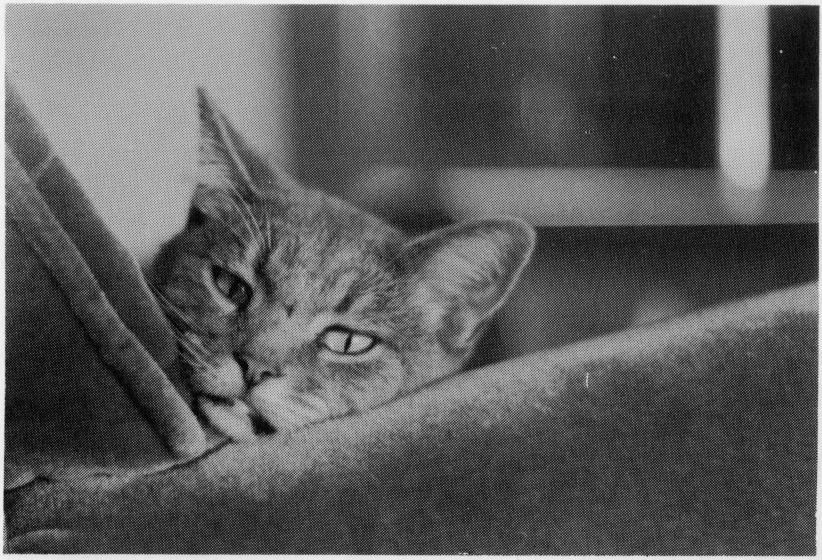
I dont know why I like cats. They exhibit none of the traits that our culture finds admirable. They are not steadfast, loyal, kind or truthful. Cats would make terrible Boy Scouts.

Another level is my personal vision, my "fine arts" approach to photography. I try not to let the two get too greatly separated.



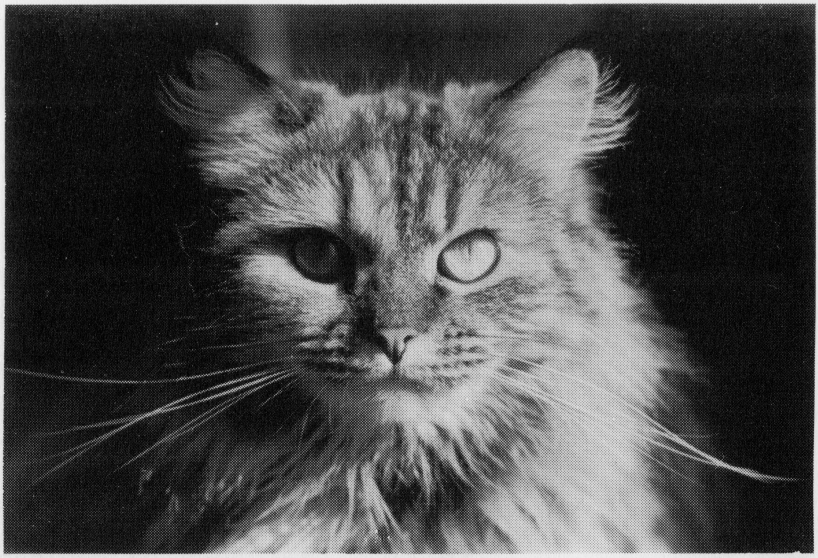
In fact, cats are devious, untrustworthy, cruel, and lazy to name just a few of their attributes. They can also be independent, intelligent, and affectionate.

I don't believe in a purely "art for art's sake" approach. I try to apply my personal vision to even the most mundane jobs. On the other hand, I try to be "practical" about my personal work. It has been in the practical application of photography on a day-to-day basis during my years as a professional photographer that I have learned my craft.



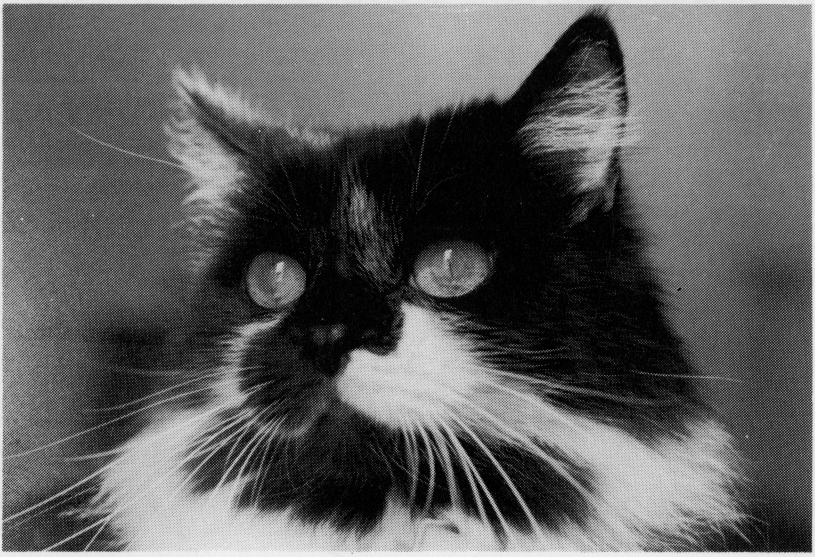
They can also amaze
you with their grace and agility, amuse
you with their clowning and infuriate
you with their perversity.

I think the aim of my personal vision is simply to "see" the world more clearly. I studied only briefly with Berenice Abbott, but she influenced me greatly. She taught me the importance of seeing photographically. I don't think she taught me to see because I'm still learning that, but she started me on the right path. To see the world—to really look at it!



Every cat is
an individual and every cat is beautiful.

For so many of us, our eyes simply get us through the day—we do our appointed tasks and try not to run into things. Only occasionally do we really look at the world. "Wow, did you see that beautiful sunset last night?" There's so much more than that, and our lives would be so much richer if we used our eyes (and our other senses) to the fullest.



I like cats. I don't know why.

Larry

I'm not a propagandist or reformer. I make my photographs first of all for my own sensual pleasure. But if I could, through my photographs, awaken others to the visual world around them so that they could really see it, I would be very happy. I would feel that my function as a "visual communicator" was fulfilled.

Larry Long

I'll Remember April in Kansas

or, East of the Sun and West of the Moon

By Elizabeth Sargent

About Kansas, you want me to tell you what I know?

Charlie Parker came from there, not that you probably care, he'll be too lyrical for you, O yeh, I remember April in Kansas allright, I was hitchhiking through, there, about fourteen years ago, the year was 1970. James Brown and Jacqueline Bisset made their movie The Grasshopper that year, stars had fallen on Alabama seven years before, and I, Ray Dunbar Jr. also known as Roy, or Ray Dunbar, was on the road in Kansas, having passed through Missouri and other states borderlining the South, on my way to California from Nassau County New York, for a change. As I have said, the year was 1970, I was fourteen years younger, young and dumb, and a man picked me up and after I was in the car said My wife's out cold in the back seat, get in there and wake her up.

Big and black as I am I said O No Sir, just let me out HERE and so I got out the car and stood there, thumbs down, bothering nobody for nothin, not even a ride, on that dark stretch. It was in my mind to let the highway go, until morning, when a bunch drove up partyin and maybe out *huntin* anyway what they did, they filled up bottles with piss and threw the bottles in my direction an then tried to run me down with their car. Strange. And they were noisy, too. Well by then the police turned up and they were very polite, not like the police in Nassau County, asked me if I wanted to lodge a complaint I said O NO but they took me to the station anyway AND the bunch in the car, well one of those fellas started to be troublesome, to pitch a bitch, and the po-lice says to him You Just Keep That Up And I'll Blow You Away, hand on his gun and all, O Lord he meant it.

Then, they, the po-lice, buy me a dinner, ask me if I want hamburger or steak I say hamburger, and they bring me an enormous hamburger everything on it, onions and pickle and relish and corn relish and maybe even a pinch of hash in the cookery, too much for me to eat but, I ate it, to be polite. Now, they said, tell us where you want to go.

So I said take me to the nearest exit if its not too much trouble and they did that, took me all the way to the highway, very nice and considerate, asked me one more time if I want to press a charge, acted very strange for police in fact the whole thing was strange, Kansas, since you ask me, is strange. But then again, I was only hitchhiking through there.

Where?

It was someplace outside Wichita, that's all I know. That police with the gun up, he meant what he said to the bottle-happy white joyrider,

though!

II

Go
on?
I don't
think you want to hear any more of this. Kansas is a state of extremes. Nearly brought out extremes in *me.* You really want me to go on? Well, I could use some cold water to go with this vodka, Princess. And take a drink yourself for a change it wont hurt you.

You really want to hear all this?

Allright. What happened after the gigantic hamburger, and the po-lice taken me to exit 14 a faggot picked me up and drove for a while and then stopped and told me to show him something, Boy, he aint never seen nobody black as me before. By this time I begin to feel used, I feel like a regular landlocked Moby Dick, Moby is baby-talk in French for baad—mauvais to you—Well it's true I am big and black and at times bad, the man was wearing a big hat and talking Texas or Boston or somesuch, and I was tempted. Yeh. Crush his facebones and his collarbones. Pull out his eyes. Not to mention I had my huntin knife. His voice got on my nerves and I was, tempted. Call me Boy one more time, is all I need, to be a Sinner for sure. Don't look like that, Lady, reason prevailed. Anyway I was already on probation back in Nassau County where I was born. For what? Why, for defending a lady from arrest. I told you, you didn't want to hear this. Oh?

Well back at the ranch, as y'all would say, I control myself an while the man's hands are busy lighting up a cigar, I breaks from the car an runs. So then he gets out his gun and shoots six mf rounds at me, can't catch me though, it's a dark night and I zig-zag. At last I gets behind a bush and falls down.

Yeh, I can run. I can fight too, maybe shoulda cut his throat, callin me Boy and maybe Nigger too, but how can you do a thing like that in a place where the police is so decent and polite? Also I had other things on my mind, like the probation. So there I am behind this bush and the man is fuming and cussin down by the road. Big Hat seems to be a car person, he aint gettin out his car, and I'm on sand now, where his car can't go. So he cusses and hollers, and lets go with another six, even starts to sing, which is maybe the worst, and it's that old song old whitey tramps used to sing, about a big rock candy mountain and a cigarette tree—hand me my cigarettes while you're up, Miss Lady—Yeh, Ole Bighat really must thought I was a boy, plus he thinks he can sing. Lord.

Thanks.

Anyway just as I resign myself to his nervewracking tenor goin on forever, he drives off, and I'm alone in the desert outside Wichita. No, it aint Arizona or Nebraska or Okla, it's Kansas. Don't ask me where they drum up a desert in Kansas, maybe an old mine site or a new Defense, they got a pinch of everything out there, did I tell you Kansas is strange?

Now comes something else. Something really weird. I am chilling out behind this bush, just breathing easier, when the bush moves, and up appears, a little man, where the bush has been. You heard me.

Yeh.

A Little Man about yea high, three or three and a half foot tall, Makes his Appearance. Jumps right up in my face and says in this weird voice Do You Know Who I Am?

III

Carlos Castenada says, Once You've Seen It, It's Time To Leave. Problem is, where am I going to go? Huntin knife no help whatsoever, with this one either. I am persecuted, how come everybody after ME? and nonplussed, can say what, to this one, better just answer the question.

No, I say, I don't know who you are, I don't even know your color, I have lost my glasses in this desert running away from the all kind people they got here.

I am sorry to hear that, says he. We are of a brown color, with green hair.

WE? This last is not fair. It is not fair at all.

Little Man say, So you are blind now, without your glasses?

Practically speaking Yes, until morning anyhow.

Well, he says, very soft, as you can't see much you will now begin to *hear.* Do you hear me?

I hear you.

Then he says, there is nothing else to say. And with that there sounds a dry, rustling noise, and he makes his disappearance.

WEIRD?

Anyway he is gone, with whatever he rode in on, at least for now. But there is still that rustling noise, sounds like snake, I know from working in the lettuce fields and the celery fields in California, on an earlier trip. God help me. Black, layin

up in the dark with snakes or else Hearing Things—and I worked in enough mental hospitals to know that that one means—kinds people after me, Little Men with green hair, shot at twelve times—girl, you have no idea what it's like to be shot at! It is depressing. Like who got the harpoon out for me next? In the book of Moby Dick and in the movie, the whale was white, must have been an albino, because sperm whales are normally black, or else the producers were ignorant.

But this is not Philosophy time it is Springtime, and I lays my head in a hollow in the ground. There is nobody in this godforsaken neighborhood to know if I shed a tear, I think, it is all in my imagination. I am wrong. There is *talkin* goin on, nearby—sound, unfortunately, like snake talk:

A big fuzzy something blocking our back door, Mr. Snake say to Mrs. S.

Mongoose? she say with a hiss.

You crazy, woman, this aint India and we aint cobra family, we be *rattlesnake.*

And he rattles, to make his point. Rattler good enough for our oldfolks, good enough for *you,* Paleface immigrants even made a flag with Rattler say Dont Tread On Me, aint good enough for you-all ladies though, always puffin up foreign and fancy!

He is evil, he want to be out tippin and creepin in the spring night, sheddin his skin, not hemmed in at home!

Sheddin his skin! Why can't I shed mine? I have intruded on a family discussion, maybe argument. I moves away gently and tactfully, about fifty yards.

What I hate about them, is, they is so *sudden,* say Mrs. S., her voice louder, You just never know, when you will run up on one!

She sounds mad too, and I moves away faster, yea fast, an comes to rest about half mile west of their corner. A man should be able to sit down somewhere on this planet and meditate or as some li'l faggot Whitey said back in the Reconstruction, Invite His Soul. Yeh. I sit down and prepare to stretch out, maybe someday *my* thoughts will be famous too, like Old Walt the Tenor or Moby the Whale hung up on God

Knows What. I forget I am black for a minute and my soul is in a different place, *Miss Legs,* but only for a minute. I have sat down, one more time, in the wrong spot. There is instantly a shrieking and a hollering and a skreeking like you never heard or dreamed of,

Murderer! Vandal! *Clumsy!* Hundreds of enraged high voices, all at the top of their pitch.

Villain! MyLai-Monster! Disturber! You be killin our chillun!

Yeh. I have disturbed a anthill, not those little brown ants but those big black ones decorated with red O Lord. No use tellin them I aint been to MyLai aint even been to Montgomery, they heard about Atrocities and they think everybody got the habit. Not to change the subject, Miss Lady, tell me where'd you get that, ah, curly hair? That hair of yours is *curly,* might even be called kinky in some circles. Wild. My little fuzz-head! We don't know what went on, way back, who dipped into what, must be some reason you and me keep meeting this way. Nearly seven years now. I'll be forty this year.

Well, next thing I know, a grasshopper starts talkin, first to himself and then to me, and it's about Survival. And it's heavy. Sad, even. Got his own rhythm. After a while, another one. Then another. Then a whole bunch, they not together, really, not fired up, just sad, like something afterwards. After what? Late, grasshopper sing, Too Late. Sad, he sing, and *triste,* which is Spanish for sad, and makes a buzzing. Grasshoppers buzz by rubbing their legs together. Sing what? Where Is My Dead Lover, Where Is My Dead Love, some sing and some others, Late, Too Late, an down in the bass, *triste, triste.*

Lemme have a drink. Yeh. Survival. I got to survive, out there. That comes first, Miss, Lady. Professors teach it now, Africans got a elegant mind, that's the part Whitey's really afraid of, well I better start thinking for real. I'll be forty in April, better start asking questions like old Grasshopper, did you know I am called The Grasshopper in some circles, not from buzzin or pushin, but because I cut so much grass in my time, on estates, on golf courses, at the track, at the jail, at the mental unit. You name it, nothing to get lyrical about so dont worry, I know you prefer B.B. King and all, what you think is Soul, and you may be right Who am I to say? You say when you really wanted me I was never there. So what do you see in me anyway, black and ugly as I am? Blacks don't live as long as whites, two-thirds of my life gone already, actually I'll be lucky

to make forty, Jimmy Witherspoon great blues man died a lot younger than forty. Come to think, he was from Kansas too, like Charlie Parker but died a lot younger, I'm already older than Jimmy Witherspoon, and Johnny Hartman, and Billy Little and Leslie Scott and more, and I aint done that much with my life.

Well, that was the grasshoppers with their long-winded song, and now comes the answer, of the crew workin underground, the worms. Slow an bluesy, they're in no hurry. Time is on their side. And the tones. So blue. Sometimes you say I come on at the *wrong* time, that's the blues, too, Lady, other kind of blues.

Worms, though, they go on munchin an crunchin and munchin in their obscene way, no matter what. Girl, I aint even goin to try to tell you, their obscene talk! It is obscene. You say you always had a good time, with your husband when he was alive, but that white husband of yours hit you, didn't he, Can't have it every which way, babe, try to change the program you end up dead your ownself. End up dead anyway say Worms & Company, their tones so low and slow and all over, and the grasshopper tickin away like a time-bomb and the stinging antpeoples and the rattlers and the all-kind humanfolks, the tones come together so high an so low and so all kinds all-at-once God I got a headache.

You know I went to Catholic school (my mother was almost a Catholic), like the brown brother, from some island in Moby Dick said, WE ARE ALL GOING TO DIE. Yes girl, we are *normally black* not white, that whale had to be albino, what I hate most is a *liar lies;* you think, because a fire burns in you, the world changes? Not me, I'm a scorpio, water sign, I got to *survive.* B.B. King? Hey, he's even older in style than my father's time. O my head! Did I ever tell you Moms broke all Pops' 78's his whole collection about ten years ago? She was mad at him for drinking. Worth thousands of dollars now, would be. Early Ellingtons, B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Blind Willie Loman. You name it Pops had it, even flip side of the Ellington Mooche on Bluebird, The Mystery Song. Lord. Where was I?

What was that noise? Who's in the room with us?

O. Just radiator, goin off. Your New York City radiators can be deadly.

Dark now before dawn, I guess, we're still in Kansas waitin for the sun to rise I know a man aint supposed to cry but now I cry, and add my bit to the controversial tones all around, that the earth is hungry, and sorrowful and loud, and lonely and strung out, huntin an eatin an rattlin an stingin away, like there's no tomorrow, make a man feel like a boiled out peyote button, like a burnt out barbeque briquet, try to stand up fall back flat. Lord, thank you Lord for what we are about to Receive, my old man's grace, and then my Grandma's grace (Maybe I'm having a seizure, alone, in the desert!) Father we give thanks to you that we rise to greet one more day alive and clothed and in our right minds we thank you for the blue sky and the sunshine and the *AHHHH!* That last message, from the worms, just too much. Can't stand up, can't pray, can't think. Yeh, I have seizures from time to time ever since the police back in Nassau County hit me, most on the head, good thing my head is hard.

Not that I don't love you, Princess, I just cant answer no hard questions, at this time, Look, I even brought you a present, all wrapped, don't you want to open it?

Allright, we'll finish up on Kansas and then play a little music and unwrap and soforth, one day no different from any other day, any day a good day to get down, they say, and they got the last word. Really. Of course I got no use for a woman, when she's funkeh. I have a *dream.*

Say what? You have a dream too? Listen, *John Coltrane came from North Carolina like my old man, greatest horn player ever lived.* Cool is the way, to play it.

IV

Just as I am dreaming, of whatever it is a man dreams when he dreams his last dream, sun an moon an planets an all the rest—last time I had a seizure it lasted fourteen hours and I woke up in the hospital with my mother standing over me and saying We Thought We'd Lost You, Yeh I got a right to be afraid. It was the last time you left and I missed you, I didn't want you to leave?

Well just as I am dreaming, in the deepest dark, a little bitty light appears, like a beam from a mini-flashlight, and grows, a little larger, it is the morning star, and with it a little breezy breath, of wind, and a sweet smell of rain coming, later on.

And I see a Lady approaching, I am lying flat on my back you understand so what I see first is her Legs, not young and not old but strong, and walking along very barefoot and free, I see all the way up to her little white T shirt that just almost covers, as she steps by me. You'd be surprised what a man notices, when you think he's not looking, how it stays in the mind. She stops, like she want to talk or something. From my point of view all I can see is those big juicy legs and the little short shirt, Lord! Those legs look strong and there's a melody goes with it. Don't ask me what. Somethin new, not same-old and mournful like the rest.

Now is that a weird one, just before daybreak?

V

No, I did not get up and follow her. Strong and pretty as she is, I stayed where I was. (Father we give thanks) I stayed where I was. She was strong, and not cold, but she was just a woman (I am getting tired of the taste of this vodka, I need a beer) and I stayed where I was. Afraid? Maybe. I could have a seizure, or get into some trouble with her people, out there. Also, it aint in me to pleasure no honkey white.

Yeh, she paused, then brushed by me like a fire, can't tell you now if she was black or white or green or yellow. When I opened my eyes she was gone, walking north over the continent, walking with her strange melody, over the green leagues, the secret fields.

Yeh. She. More a harmony than a melody, but the tones all new, and flowing together easy, without effort, like breezes of a wind, or waters of a clear lake. Very lovely. And I wanted to join her, and be a part of that song. But it was too late.

So when she is gone, when it's too late, when I have really missed her, I am sorry.

From being a poor nigger, pardon the French, with an alcohol habit and no tomorrow to speak of, she might have made me a Prince. For an instant, because of seeing even part of her, I am a Prince, The Prince of Kansas.

VI

So I stand up, and stare into the darkness. And pretty soon the sun also rises.

Tell me, what do you see in me anyway, black and burnt-out and ugly as I am?

VII

—I'm a coal-miner's daughter.

—*What is that supposed to mean.* You trying to be ironic or something?

—No. When the mine caves in, everybody's black. That's an old saying.

—Worse and worse. Well, we have a saying, Mess with white too long, your blood turns green. I ought to whip your behind! No, I won't do that, open up your present, it's a drawing I made after you left last time, and I missed you. *Miss Legs.*

—What a beautiful drawing! But just legs? No arms or shoulders or head, just legs and torso?

—Well, an artist sees things differently. I missed you and thought of your legs, and that little white T shirt you run around in . . .

—I suppose an artist sees what he wants to see, like anybody else. Hears what he wants to hear. I'm a musician, too, you know.

—I know.

Afterwards

—What made you ask me about Kansas?

—There are some people out there, interested in the arts. They seem willing to take . . . different sides of a thing. Maybe it's because I'm from the Middle West myself but they seem interested, somehow, in the truth, not just facts and fantasies. And they have heart. Maybe something will happen there, maybe Kansas will be the next Place, like Paris was a hundred years ago, maybe—

—Anything's possible, it's weird enough. Sometimes after all these years I wonder, where does all that weirdness come from? Of course I have noticed that in a place where there aren't that *many* blacks, the attitude is more curious, not so—

—What happened next, after the sun came up, did you find your glasses?

—Not really. But an old Mexican came along in a pick-up, gave me a drink of pulque and part of a joint, we travelled a way together. He spoke Spanish, told me his name, I was tired and dropping off, something like Cicada, *Senor Cicada,* reminded me of the Little Bush Man, I was so tired I could care less, come to think of it I am tired right now.

—Maybe the people of Kansas, the center of the Country, will come to be an unexpected Arts Center and artists from all over the world will go there. In the book Amerika by Franz Kafka, his only hopeful book, he speaks of such a place, calls it the Great Nature Theater, with men and women of all colors working and playing together, and animals and plants and spirits—maybe the people out there will make it come true! Janis DeChicchio, Gene DeGruson, Rod Dutton, Shelby Horn, Ken Melaragno, Sharon Neet, Steve Robbins, Ted Watts: they're beginning. I wrote this story for them. Ray! are you asleep. If the time comes, maybe we'll be included.

—Not me. They tried to kill me out there, run me down, with a car. *What story?*

The Strike of 1934

An Interview with Frank Caput by Gene DeGruson;

A Newstory by Howard Jenkins, with Photographs from his collection

Harold O. Taylor and Howard Jenkins, 1934.

Before the Strike

"We worked in pairs; called ourselves brothers," recalled Frank Caput, who wished we could get the Western Coal and Mining Company books to prove his story of #23 Western at Minden. "There was me," he said, "and Mike Chiolino, the Harrigans of Girard, John and Louis Paffy of Franklin, a couple of guys from Frontenac, and two Austrians—one of them, John the Bachelor, weighed three hundred pounds and lived at Edison. Mike and me got out to work early and Jim McQueen, the boss, said 'Ain't you boys in the race?'

"'What race?' we asked. 'The one to see who'll do the most work today.' He explained it to us and we got to it. John the Bachelor, in the straight entry, picked up a car with his bare hands and put it on the track.

"'God damn! We've got no chance,' said Mike. 'Let's give it a try,' I said. And believe it or not, Mike and I won. Jim McQueen measured the entry four different times to make sure. But we had ninety-six foot of bushing, thirty-six foot of cross cut, 351,000 of coal (about 150 tons), and sixty cars of rock we wheeled. I'd go in, Mike would take care of the empty cars and bushing. I'd drill an eight-foot hole, shoot it, and get eleven foot out of it. 108 feet in all. No prize. But we *won*."

Photograph by George Caughen, Kansas City Journal-Post, **May 1934.**

The March on Cherokee

Sheriff Jim Hyman met us at the community store in Franklin—we were marching with Howat on the Simion mine in Cherokee—and he told us to avoid Pittsburg and Girard, to go by South Radley. There were fifty or sixty cars of us, five or six men in each car, the lead car flying an American flag. The first scab to come out of the air shaft was the superintendent—the first of forty-two men to get whipped that day. Secretary Harry Burg sang out, "Don't touch the boys!" They were underage, you see, doing what their dads had told them to

do. So each time a kid come out, Harry would yell, "Open ranks!" and the boys were allowed through. But, boy oh boy, the other ones!—*Frank Caput.*

MARCHERS CLOSE MINES AGAIN IN PITTSBURG FIELD

Workers Across Line in Missouri Walk Out With Others.

By HOWARD JENKINS.
Special Correspondent of the Journal-Post.

PITTSBURG, KAS., May 29.—Trouble flared again Tuesday in the Kansas coal mining district.

Protesting deep shaft miners, bent on closing surface coal pits, were on parade. Before noon they had closed three mines.

Miners at Minden Mines, Mo., quit work after voting to join in the new protest strike.

The latest protest procession was undertaken, the miners said, to force the operators to pay the NRA code wage scale of $4.60 for a 7-hour day. The surface miners had gone back to work Monday morning on advice from Washington that they return to work on the basis of $4.35 a day pending arbitration of the wage dispute.

Action Taken at Meeting.

At a meeting Monday afternoon the surface and deep shaft miners voted to instruct delegates to report back to their local unions with a request that they cease work Tuesday.

The request was that activities in the mines cease until a definite agreement is reached concerning the coal code wage scale.

Preparations for Tuesday's procession through Cherokee and Crawford counties were completed at a meeting at Franklin Monday night.

Tuesday morning the miners met at Franklin, proceeded to Arma, where they were joined by additional groups. Riding in motor cars and trucks, the miners went to the Pioneer Coal company mine, west of Gross, where forty-five men were working.

Threaten to Use Force.

"Come along with us or we'll take you along," the protesting miners ordered. The miners joined them.

The same procedure was followed at the Super Cherokee mine, two miles north of Gross, where twenty men joined the protestors. Forty men were called out at the Kelly-Carter mine at Englevale.

At the Kelly-Carter mine, County Attorney Robert S. Lemon, Sheriff Pearl N. Robinson and Undersheriff Vernon Robinson met the marchers.

Lemon warned the strikers that they had no right to trespass on mining property in their endeavors to call out pit workers. The protesting group agreed to send committees into the pits to call on the working miners at the other mines they contemplated visiting during the day.

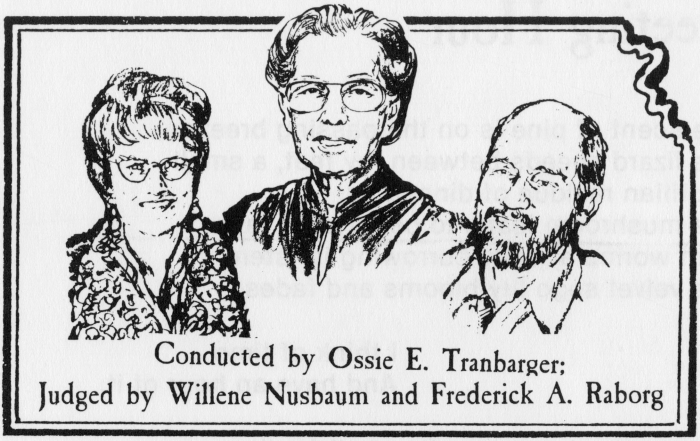
Shot at and missed.
Shit at and hit.
—Miners' lament

Photograph by George Caughen, Kansas City Journal-Post, **May 1934.**

After the Strike: Frank Caput Remembers Alex Howat

John L. Lewis crucified Alex Howat with the Yellow Dog. Us that went along with Alex lost our jobs, our entries, even our tools. They took *everything*. So we left for Colorado in the thirties when Alex went into Illinois and they passed the Yellow Dog again that forced you to give up your right to strike. Either sign it or get goin, they said. We wouldn't sign, Mike and John Chiolino and me, but after only a year I got hurt and the Colorado mines dried up. McQueen gave me my job back. Howat was out, John L. Lewis was in. The big money won, you see. Everything was hunky-dory then. We got what the little boy shot at.

The Thirteenth Annual Kansas Poetry Contest



Conducted by Ossie E. Tranbarger;
Judged by Willene Nusbaum and Frederick A. Raborg

"Flu so curtailed my activities," Ossie Tranbarger wrote in December, "that I thought I would never get this contest finished." However, she did get checks out to the winners before Christmas, as well as copy to the editors for this issue of the LBR. The prize-winning poems on the following pages were judged by Willene Nusbaum (haiku) and Frederick A. Raborg, Jr. There were 189 entries in the haiku contest; 256 entries in the other. Poems were submitted from thirty-seven states, as well as from Washington, D.C., Italy, Saudi Arabia, and New Zealand (Nell Trail winning from this latter country).

Since March 15 Mrs. Tranbarger has been receiving entries for the Fourteenth Annual Kansas Poetry Contest, which closes on October 15, 1984. Entries, with a fee of one dollar per poem, may be sent to Ossie E. Tranbarger at 619 W. Main, Independence, KS 67301.

Category One is optional in regard to form and subject matter. Poems must be at least eight lines in length, but not more than thirty.

Category Two is limited to haiku. Entries may be typed on half-sheets of regular typing paper.

Please send two copies of each poem submitted (which must be previously unpublished), only one copy giving your name and address. No manuscripts will be accepted with postage due, nor will Mrs. Tranbarger accept responsibility for poems lost in the mail. A self-addressed, stamped envelope will secure you a list of the winners. Nonwinning manuscripts will be destroyed after judging. First prize in each category is $50; second, $25; third, $15; honorable mention, $5.

From the editors of the LBR, good luck to all!

First Prize

Fleeting Hour

The scent of pine is on the passing breeze.
The lizard speeds between my feet, a small
Reptilian residue of dinosaurs.
The mushroom leaps to being after rain
With worms already burrowing its stem.
The velvet sego lily blooms and fades.

I think of time
And have an hour of it.

This wash was once a tiny trail for deer
Till raindrops, overflowing cloven prints
Became a rivulet, a creek, a gorge
Whose banks are overhead, now steep and wide
And snarled by dangling roots of vetch and sage,
And some not born may find a canyon here.

I think of time
And span my life with it.

The dune is rolled across the valley floor
With furling sails of sand, propelled by wind.
The sand-blast carves the cliffs and pocks terrain.
The mountain moves with Mesozoic pace.
The seas are heaved to surface, summits burst
As all things move and change and are no more.

I think of time
And have eternity.

Alice Morrey Bailey

Second Prize

Of Change and Swift Glimpses

Where is the sweet boy
who for a few years spoke to me somberly, unprepared?
A stranger moves in his stead,
chilly, remote, alone in the niche
that adolescence brings
(as though this is who he is).

Sometimes his eyes
look beyond their new austerity
and, finding mine, reveal he whom I loved
has gone away only a little while.

(Nothing lasts)

One great day in a wood,
without companions, unsubstantiated,
something wide and tall
moved rapidly ahead of me.
Perhaps within Space
or Himalayas or Scotland,
thousands of miles away, moorings slipped from natural law,
and through the screening trees
I glimpsed the Yeti's hairy back
or scaly Nessie from the Loch
or pressure-suited Alien.

Whatever mystery it was I saw,
I truly saw and never shall forget,
as one of my grandmothers, born with a caul,
grasped protoplasmic ghosts she sometimes met.

Margaret Stavely

Third Prize

Chansonettes and Violettes

In early years I lived my jumbled days
By chasing rainbows, searching for the gold;
I dreamed of monsters, ghosts and bats in caves
Or lived a fantasy with princes bold,
Their metal shields a polished silver crest
Of royal lines, their stallions swift and white;
My fantasies were of the very best
Those days I lived as native Sybarite.
Then dreams became reality, you came,
Not on a horse or bringing gold and myrrh,
But bringing me the offer of your name;
No need for you to plead, I would concur.
The church was large, it had a minaret,
I carried baby's breath and mignonette.

Today I climbed the hill where once we walked
To carve initials in the sycamore,
I listened as the courting songbirds talked
My memories flooding back in soft encore.
We saw our spring and summer without end,
Our plans were all for many years away;
That time is *now* we did not comprehend
While sharing dreams through days of dapple gray.
You left before we had a chance to see
Those far-off lands we toured within our minds;
The plastic spray allowed each month will be
My outward gesture to our love that binds.
Then listening to the songbirds'chansonettes
I'll climb the hill and pick some violettes.

Ida Crane Walker

First Honorable Mention

The Last Hippie of Camp Fifty, Kansas

The mulberry set right plunk
above your clothes line is no problem.
One day you'll crank up the yellow McCullouch
and drop back the limbs
one by one until the sun falls through
flat and warm as a flannel cake.

A late freeze hints in the sunset,
your wife works late to cover the tomatoes
with plastic jugs from Oldham's Dairy.
You consider painting a sign that reads
"Spare Volkswagon Parts," but smoke
White Owl Miniatures, instead,
watching the last sun capture another jug
and stroking your untrimmed beard
into the shape of an arrowhead.

Al Ortolani

Second Honorable Mention

Waumbek Woods in April

At woods' edge the walls begin
Which now are sundered gap on gap
By frost, by heat, by seasonal spin
Of Earth, by roots swelled taut with sap.

Looking close I see that years
Of ochre leaves hide scattered stones.
A flashing, raucous blue jay jeers
And sets off crows in somber tones.

Oak and beech and birch are theirs
As larch and crowding tamerack
Plus ice-rimmed pool where granite stairs
Climb steeply to a mountain crack

From which the chill-voiced brook begins.
I followed once up its rough course
To highest air honed bright and thin,
To spring-sun with warm, urging force.

—Within the woods there are no walls—
At least not of the sort that man
Lays rock on rock. My deep footfalls
Are hushed here, yet they gently fan

Long-settled leaves of aging trees
That each year cast their foliage down
While small winds play in minor keys
Where yester-gold has turned to brown.

The gold now gone—save where one beam
Sends muted shafts to lighten here
A drift of snowdrops' tender cream;
A daffodil's upthrusting spear.

Esther M. Leiper

Third Honorable Mention

Percept

When the pebble
is cast into the still pool,
is the cool
serenity of the green-gold deep
set murmuring forever,
movement upon movement, never
stilled, eternally
unresolved?

Or do we find,
as the fever swirls
and the eddy curls
in ever widening arcs
and back upon itself,
that some smooth,
fostering, gentling truth
breathes a return
to stillness?

Nell Trail

Fourth Honorable Mention

The Pioneer Man

The secrets of the flat land ride the wind,
are whispered in the tall, thin grass, are caught
in clouds of dust that swirl across southwest,
intrigue and captivate the pioneer.
It is a land without shadows. Shade
is cast by man and horse. They ride alone.
The sun, the wind, the open land are meant
to turn a man to deeper, inner thought.
The circling far horizon drawn from where
he stands. It gives to him a sense of rare,
strong confidence and bigness, easy strength,
for he becomes the center of his world.
He makes the country. As he does, he grows.
The prairie does not make his character,
it ripens traits implanted at his birth
by many generations—pioneers.
A man may be in awe, or reverent, hushed
by lofty vault of sky encircling him,
the lushness of the grass and rich dark soil,
the sun that beats so hard on him alone.
He takes control of life, his hopes and dreams.
He feels in charge of destiny, no fear.
He is not liked to be humbled—beat.
He owns the whole of what he sees. It's his!

Betty Jane Simpson

Haiku

First Prize

Sunset:
two eagles gliding together
in silence.

Charles Ross West

Second Prize

The old country road—
sliding back and forth on it:
two dead butterflies

Lenard D. Moore

Third Prize

In hot desert wind,
Red earth crumbles to reveal
A lump of turquoise.

Jeanne Esch

First Honorable Mention

shutter closed
to save the moment
of the swallows' flight

Sister Mary Thomas Eulberg, OSF

Second Honorable Mention

Some bird—unseen;
the grape hyacinths again . . .
year after year

Louise Somers Winder

Third Honorable Mention

Summer wind—
in the eyes of the scarecrow
evening fades away.

Charles Ross West

Fourth Honorable Mention

Yard Sale:
against the flowering dogwood—
a pair of old crutches

Louise Somers Winder

Fifth Honorable Mention

. . . and from the summit,
soft as wind in the rye grass,
whisper of Indians

Rita Z. Mazur

It's only a shanty in Old Shanty Town.
The roof is so slanty
It touches the ground.
But my tumbled down shack
By an old railroad track
Is more than a mansion. . . .
It's my everything.

Memories of Elizabeth Pyle

Illustrated with photographs from her family album

I love music and everything in my life is a song, some sad, some glad. (And I can't carry a tune in a bushel basket!)

We lived in Los Angeles about five years. When the war with Japan started and California started having blackouts, we came back to Kansas—in 1942. Joe, my husband, earned only twenty dollars a week at first at the L.A. Pie Co. but had worked up to twenty-nine dollars as head fruit cook, so we hadn't made our fortune in California. But we saved $200 and our trip back to Scammon, Kansas.

We bought this old house on the road south and west of Scammon on the rural route for $175, and Joe got a job in the coal mines again. We bought antique furniture ("old junk" it was called in those days). I cooked on a kerosene stove that smoked up the house. Now when anyone mentions how great the new kerosene stoves are, I remember that old one of mine. I don't want any!

That first spring we planted one hundred pounds of potatoes. We had the ground plowed up, even under the trees. 'Course, nothing *grew* under the trees, but an elderly man who was *very* religious and a little childish opened his Bible and prayed for our garden. And his praying did some good—we had so many potatoes, a screened-in porch full! We planted peas in the sleet, I remember. I bet people thought we were cuckoo. But oh! to be young and cuckoo again. . . .

Alex, our oldest son, was in the first grade. He used to walk to school in the cold and I'd watch him walking backward toward the north. After California, my, it was cold.

It was still cold in the spring. We bought one hundred baby chickens and raised or rather started them in the back room of the house. One day we came home, and the chicks were eating each other up. *Cannibalism* they call it. So we gave them a bone and they quit.

Joe and I were young once.

We had a cow named Honeybun and a couple of pigs. That sow had five little pigs and when they were weaned we sold them. Two men came and bought two of them, including one that held his head to the side. We called him "Crazy." Those pigs were pets. We'd go to the fence, and they'd all want petted. Well, those two men bought the crazy pig and another. I asked, in all innocence, "Do you have milk to feed them?" "Oh, yeah!" they answered. Later I found out they had bought our pigs for the Hotel Besse, and I had nightmares of them roasted with apples in their mouths. I cried—ruined my Thanksgiving Day. See, I said we were young and crazy.

We had one acre of land and thought we were farmers. In 1943, one of the coldest months, Louis was born. After Christmas. Louis was named by his Grandmother Julia. He was such a pretty baby, and in that old house sometimes we'd all sleep in the same bed. Johnnie was

about three years old (somewhere along the way he got the name of D.D.). The Waltons had nothing on us. We would say goodnight to each other, and D.D.—instead of John Boy—would say, "Good nite, Tisy." (My children all called me *Tisy*. That is, they did until a teacher told Alex he shouldn't call his mother by her first name. So then Alex started to call me "Mother" and he'd scold D.D.: "That's your *Mother,* not Tisy!").

I baked lots of bread. We didn't have a toaster, so I toasted bread on top of the burners of the coal oil stove. Just like three little pigs the children thrived, trying to outdo each other. "More—more—more!" when they finished breakfast. I would be pooped. Their favorite breakfast was toast, hot cocoa, peanut butter, and cheese. Sounds icky, but it had all the protein to make them healthy.

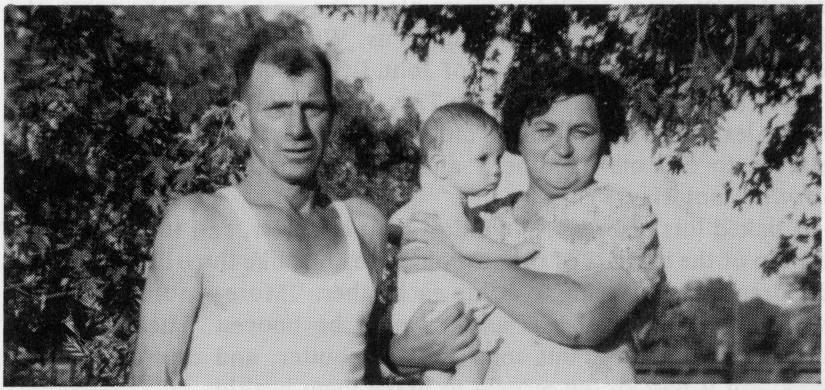
Joe was such a good Dad. He worked six days a week, and then when he wasn't fixing the old house he would take the kids fishing or swimming.

We had a set routine. We visited Joe's folks Tuesday and Friday evenings, went to the show at Weir on Saturday and Sunday evenings, and on Sunday afternoons his folks would come to our house to visit. It was a *lot* of togetherness. His folks were good to me and liked me and treated me like the daughter they never had. Especially Granpa. Oops, they didn't like to be called *Granpa* or *Granma.* They said they weren't our grandparents. (But I never could call anyone else Mamma. I only had one. I tried never to push myself on my daughters-in-law. They probably think I don't care, but I do.) My in-laws, Granpa and Granma, as we called them anyway, even Joe, thought I was stubborn, and they called me *Mulea* for *mule.* I guess I was.

I was also anemic. A little old neighbor lady, Mother Reynolds, told me hard work would make me strong, so I would work in the garden and hoe a row and lay down on the ground at the end of the row. And, oh, I got strong!

Louis was such a good baby, and Alex was so proud of him. He would bring people going up the road in to see "his" baby. D.D. didn't have all that much pride in him. *He* wasn't the baby any more. Alex and D.D. fought about which side of the bed and which side of the table, and Alex protected his baby brother. Now I know this is all sibling rivalry; then it was just frustrating.

I never knew who was to blame, so I'd spank both of them. Louis would do something to D.D. and he would come running for me and grab my skirts and he thought he was safe. Alex would yell before he was touched, D.D. only after he was spanked, but you couldn't get Louie to cry at all, so he probably got hit the hardest. Granpa thought I should do all the correcting and he would say, "If your Mammie



Granpa Alex and Granma Julia holding her beloved baby, Louie.

would give you a spanking. . . ." That's when I would turn *mulea* and not spank. Joe only spanked each one of them once, and *that's* the only spanking they remember now.

The Lenny Reynolds family moved next door with four children. Larry was D.D.'s age and Richard was next, and Tommy was my favorite, 'cause he'd always come to me when his nose would bleed. He'd come into the house yelling "Lizzy!" (they all called me that and still do), and I'd know to get a piece of ice in a washcloth and put it over his nose or behind his neck. And then there was Carolyn. She was a tomboy, and why shouldn't she be—the only girl? They would either be at each other's house or at the creek or on the tracks between us. They sure were good buddies. I still consider them my kids, too.

We raised a big garden and we learned that nothing grew under the trees. We picked blackberries and the kids sold theirs for firecrackers—a gallon for fifty cents. (Now they give five dollars a gallon! But they probably got just as many firecrackers,'cause they're out of sight now.) I'd make blackberry jelly for their peanut butter sandwiches.

Joe picked up the groceries every evening at Coman's Grocery and then at Owen Pryor's. I'd make out an order and Joe would leave it on his way to work at the brickyard. (By now the mine had petered out. The brickyard was in Weir, Kansas.) Then he'd pick up the groceries on his way home. We ran a bill, and on payday we'd pay it and get a big order, and we'd have a big meal. By the end of two weeks, we'd be scraping the bottom of the barrel. Joe never made over seventy-five dollars a week, starting at seventy-five cents an hour. Hamburger was twenty-five cents a pound, milk ten cents a quart, bread a dime a loaf, and gasoline ten cents a gallon. Cigarettes were about a dime a package. I've noticed they have stayed equal. Now they're all a dollar or more each.

I had a budget, so read *Family Circle,* which was free—and now it's sixty-nine cents. We raised strawberries—started out with a little row and ended up with half the garden full. We picked them to sell, and I raised sweet williams and sold them for Decoration Day.

I made all the kids work. Early in the morning we'd all get up and spade the garden a few rows at a time. Alex was always in a hurry—and still is. He'd spade his share, but D.D. would stay right with me, and Louis also. All my Reynolds kids would help, too. (One day a guy from the brickyard went by that worked with Joe and he asked, "Joe, I didn't know you had seven kids.") Then in about an hour, they'd be off to play. I tried to teach them to work, and D.D. thanks me for it. They're all workaholics.

We burned coal and that old house was warm enough in the day, but we'd bank the fire at night, so we'd wear more clothes to bed than we did outside.That was Joe's joke. We'd fill up all the coal buckets night and morning, and I'd take out the ashes in the morning. We had electricity, though, and a radio. We liked Joe Penner and his duck, *One Man's Family,* Fred Allen, and Jack Benny. Alex was our radio operator. He knew where every program came on and at what time. D.D. was and still is the tinkerer. He tried to make shortwave radios. He had their bedroom all wound with wires out to the barn. Louis was just our happy little kid, and still is. Sometimes Alex would put the radio on the table and we'd listen to *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy, Superman,* and some oriental show with our meals.

Joe would stop at the store and bring the kids home orange crates. They were free. The kids would build things with them and they all turned out to be builders and carpenters. One time Richard Reynolds ran home and said to his mother, "I wish Joe was my daddy, and I'd get some boxes." Rose, their mother, got in the car and went and got each one of the Reynolds kids a box, Carolyn included.

They all went to Scammon Grade School. When Alex graduated from grade school, there were only two boys and two girls in his class. People just didn't have many children in the Depression. Then when D.D. came, there were more in his class. Then when Louie came, it was 1943. War years. It was the baby boom.

They all went to Mineral High School, and they all played football. Alex was muscular and fast, so he got most of the glory—a good halfback. John and Louie were larger and good, too, but they were the guards, the workhorses. I really didn't like football. I only went to one game, and Alex got his collarbone broken. But that didn't slow him down much. He practiced basketball with one arm, and then he'd go trapping and I would hold the animals while he skinned them.

"A white sports coat and a pink carnation": Johnny all dressed up for his senior prom.

Alex graduated in blue suede shoes. Elvis was their idol. *Hound Dog* was No.1. John and Boots Fascino and Nancy Roberts were all in the same grade, and I never hear Marty Robbins sing "A White Sports Coat and a Pink Carnation" that I don't think of John and Boots. Louie says they grew up in a happy time, so I guess they never realized we didn't have much money. None of them ever disappointed me.

Al went to work for a construction company, and after twenty-eight years he's still with them. D.D. builds houses, only we call him John now. He asked me once, "Why don't anyone call me D.D. any more?" He had just outgrown it. Louie is a good carpenter, but he never did go off from home. He's still here to look out for me, and he has.

Al wanted to join the Marines, and I fought him not to. He said, "Mother can I borrow the car to go join the Marines?" I said "Go ahead. Walk, but you can't borrow the car." He never mentioned the Marines again.

D.D. went to the Army first. We all went with him to bid him goodbye at the train. He said goodbye to everyone, but passed me and Louie by. That is still a trait he has; he never looks back when he says goodbye.

They all served in the Army. I went through boot training with them. Waiting for mail and worrying and praying, and, oh my, God has been so good to me. None of them ever had to go overseas. And there were wars, too, Korea and Vietnam. God answered my prayers many times.

Alex married Nancy Roberts. John married the only girl he ever had, his high school sweetheart, Iva "Boots" Fascino. It about breaks

your heart to see them get married, but I gained two daughters I never had. So to occupy my mind, I got a job at the Census in Parsons and I learned to be a key punch operator. I had never gone out to work before. (Later, I went to school to become an aide at the Maude Norton Memorial Hospital.) I saved every cent I could. I started studying house plans in the *Family Circle.* I sent for blueprints from the ads, and my carpenter boys and I started to build a house—my dream house.

We bought a lot uptown, us kids, and literally and physically built a house. Alex was the leader; John would come home and help; I would order supplies. Louie and I would finish all the loose ends all week long, and we all would work weekends.

All the Reynolds but Carolyn helped us, too. I finished all the plasterboard seams. I was sanding them one day when the lumberyard man, a Mr. Barrett, knocked on the door. I came to the door and he just busted out laughing at me. I was all powder. He gave me a good tip: use a damp cloth on the seams and *then* sand. It keeps down the dust.

I varnished all the woodwork and floors and painted inside and out. I was up on a ladder doing the very highest peak, when it started to go backwards. I said, "God, don't let me fall." I didn't, but the neighbors around said they couldn't look; it was so scarey. We finished that house in nine months. But the old house—that was mine and Joe's happiest times.

Richard Reynolds and Judy Grant got married and moved a house in right across the street from us. Richard gave us the best compliment we ever had. He said,"I've always lived by Joe and Lizzie." What better recommendation can anyone ever have?

Larry Reynolds has become a minister and I hope he will preach my funeral. I bet he'll say something nice about Lizzie, too. I don't mean to be morbid, but I mean it, too.

And I must mention little Freddie Reynolds. He came along after the gang had moved on. He used to come over and play with me. He's grown up, too, a big man. He came to my door once and said,"Hello, Lizzie." I didn't know him.

Louie got married to Connie Roark. And now I have six grandboys and one grandgirl, just like in the first days, and I love them all, and I've played games with them all. I guess I never grew up myself. Maybe that's the way it is with the baby of the family. Please, God, I never want to grow up, 'cause the growing up with our sons and grandchildren was the best.

The Bender Hills Mystery

Bender Murder Site, photographed by Julius Ploetz, Independence, KS, 9 May 1873. Reproduced courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

By Leroy Dick, as told to Jean McEwen

Chapter 7

Billy Toll's thin face had paled to a greenish gray. "Hell, Doc, d' you s'pose that gosh-danged outfit killed somebody and dumped him down cellar through the hole?"

"It is quite probable," the doctor agreed.

"And scrubbed the blood down the cracks around the slab," I added, proving I hadn't been mistaken about that smell. Since that phase of the mystery was solved to our satisfaction, I urged further action. "Now that we're sure there is a corpse, our next job it to find his grave. Come on, men. We'll plow up every acre of these two claims if necessary. We're going to unearth this tragedy."

News of the flight of the Benders, of the discovery of their abandoned team and wagon at Thayer, and of our investigation under way around the premises of the "Port of Missing Men" had spread like a prairie fire across the entire region. From a neighborhood gathering of

forty men at dawn, the crowd had steadily increased during the morning. It was estimated by good authority that by midafternoon close to a thousand spectators had congregated to await whatever disclosures were forthcoming.

I had been so busy I'd hardly noticed the crowd. I didn't realize it had swelled to such unexpected proportions till we were making ready to plow the garden plot. I had brought my organized helpers to the southeast corner of the plot. "We'll begin plowing next to the house," I said, "and keep right on till we strike something."

Just then Jim McMain pointed up the road toward Brockman's. "Somebody's driving like the Old Scratch was after him," he remarked. "Wonder who it is."

I looked in the direction he indicated. Then for the first time I saw that the highway was lined with people. They were coming on foot, on horseback, in ox carts, buckboards, and wagons. I turned to look in other directions. There, too, I saw long straggling lines of settlers coming . . . coming. Each highway and trail was emptying its stream into the sea of humanity that milled around the yard and overflowed across the green sod of the prairie. The news had indeed traveled far.

My feelings can be more easily imagined than explained. I was stunned with amazement. In fact, I was near tears. I felt certain that one of the most tremendous mysteries in our early history was about to be uncloaked. My helpers and I were the impromptu actors in this dramatic frontier tragedy. This realization possessed me so suddenly and overwhelmingly that for a moment I was almost unmanned.

Jim McMain's voice brought me back to facts. "He's sure laying the whip to those horses." Looking up the Brockman road, I recognized Ed York as the driver of the team which, passing all slower vehicles, soon came dashing into the yard. Ed and Henry Beers sprang out of the buggy and hurried over to where I was standing. Ed handed me a note from Colonel York stating that, on account of court duties, he was unable to aid in our investigation. But should the body of Dr. Will York be found, Ed and Henry Beers were duly qualified to identify it.

"I'm glad you came, Ed," I told him. "I'm going to probe this whole plot. The men with shovels will follow me—and dig if necessary. We're starting here by the house," I explained, pointing.

He followed the direction with his eyes, then walked forward a few steps—and stopped. The crowd had quieted. They stood watching in a sort of fascination. Ed was just standing there, looking down at something. I looked, too. A cold shiver crept down my spine. At his

very feet I saw a crack in the ground. Just a faint crack—with another running parallel to it not more than two feet away.

"Bring your probe here, Mr. Dick," Ed spoke quietly. But he had gone white as a ghost. His lips trembled. He was fighting for self-control.

The crowd lunged forward, curious to see.

"Stay where you are, folks," I called out. "We can't have this ground trampled." I thrust my rod down just within the first crack. It sank easily through soft dirt to the hilt. "Come on with your spades," I ordered my men, "and dig fast."

The dirt yielded rapidly to the delving spades. The men worked vigorously. . . . So the gash in the earth lengthened, and broadened, and deepened. Three feet down—four, five feet. And from the hole gushed up a familiar stench—that of human decomposition. The men climbed out, sickened. I took their place. Presently my spade, probing deep, sank under some heavy, lifeless weight. I lifted. The loose clods parted, revealing a human head and face.

A murmur of horror ran through the crowd as they pressed closer. Ed York gazed down on that pallid face with stricken eyes. "My God!" he muttered hoarsely. "It is my Brother Will."

"Yes, Ed," Henry Beers agreed sympathetically, "it is Dr. York, all right."

A suppressed exclamation of grief and indignation rose from the inner circle of onlookers, to be rolled back, wave on wave, through that densely packed throng, as word of our tragic discovery was circulated among them.

"The brutal cowards!" a sobbing woman cried out. "Dumping him into that hole without even a sheet or blanket around him!" She was a neighbor of the doctor's on Pond Creek.

Her words galvanized the crowd into sudden fury. Imprecations and maledictions were heaped upon the heads of the absent Benders. . . . to subside into listening silence as Dr. Keebles, the physician in charge, began speaking to me.

"I had some acquaintance with Dr. York. I am convinced this is his body. But we must make sure. Keep the face from exposure to the upper air, so as not to alter it. We must preserve our evidence, whomever it turns out to be." He reflected for a moment. "I have a plan," he presently announced, "provided anyone here has the stomach to carry it out. . . . And that is to sever the head from the body, wash the face, and make it as presentable as possible, then show it plainly to Ed and Mr. Beers for identification. This will do away with having to lift the whole body, which must be in a bad state of decomposition. What do you say, men? Have you got the nerve to help me with the job?"

"I think I can go through with it," I said grimly. "Provided Ed agrees to the plan."

"It is all right with me," Ed consented. "It—it won't hurt Brother Will—now. And we have to be sure."

I began preparations for the gruesome task at once. I asked that a tea kettle of water be heated on the kitchen stove. In casting about for an instrument suitable for my purpose, I remembered the combination meat saw and knife blade which I had observed on the kitchen shelf. Procuring it, I returned to the grave to perform the revolting post-mortem operation.

It was a tragic moment. I shall never forget the awful expressions on the faces around me. Tears were streaming down hundreds of cheeks. That this horrible crime had been committed in our own pleasant community seemed unthinkable. We had tolerated these people, had even tried to be friendly and neighborly with them. Now we were facing this shocking, brutal thing they had done. And they had escaped. . . . Women sobbed, men cursed. Indignation again gave way to rage. Emotion flared into a riot of abuse. Maledictions were so violent as to be almost hoodlum. Had the Benders been within reach of justice at that high tide of feeling, I am sure that a terrible scene of retribution would have been enacted.

Chapter 8

"What makes me so mad," Billy Toll stormed, "is that Si and I just sat around and gave 'em plenty of time to get away. We oughta known there was some cussedness afoot when their hungry stock kept pesterin' us."

"I wish we had 'em here for just three minutes!" another angry voice spoke up. "We'd lock the damned bunch of 'em in the shack and touch a match to it—and hoot when they hollered for mercy."

"That'd be too quick a finish for 'em," somebody else cut in. "I'd rather see 'em tarred and feathered and set afire—and kept roasting slow."

"I'd like to help flay 'em alive—and then start runnin' 'em west," another declared.

It was a long time before that mob spirit subsided. What would have happened to the criminals would have been too horrible to relate, I guess. I'll admit that at the moment I agreed with the sentiments expressed. I was terribly unnerved. Tears kept streaming from my eyes. . . . It was such an awful thing I was called upon to do down there in

Dr. York's Grave, 1873. Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

that grave. I've always had a stomach like a saw mill and the determination to do whatever needed doing. But that was a frightful ordeal. It took all my fortitude to saw that head off. I was almost overcome more than once before I got finished. Yet I am glad that I didn't fail in my part that day, nor in the next few days of revolting discovery. Because, as the curtain rolled slowly back from one of the most atrocious crimes in all the annals of our blood-drenched frontier, there I was, doing my bit, helping to make pioneer history on the side of law and order. . . .

Well, the job was finished at last. I then washed the dead man's face carefully and brushed and parted the hair. When all was done, I placed the head upright on the edge of the grave, and Ed York and Henry Beers were summoned.

"That is Brother Will beyond the shadow of doubt," Ed declared.

"I would swear it on a stack of Bibles," Beers corroborated.

Others in the crowd who had known Dr. York were equally positive it was he. Thus the first found victim was absolutely identified, and the guilt of the killers established beyond question. That innocent-appearing garden plot, the very dooryard of the murderous fiends who had been so safely sheltered in our unsuspecting community, voiceless, yielding up no secrets save an occasional gust of polluted air, hiding under its swaying apple sprouts this intangible mystery of three sad years, the plot which Ben Ferguson that day christened

"Hell's Half-Acre," was in every truth the unappointed rendezvous of missing men.

Ed York and Henry Beers left at once for Independence to make funeral arrangements. Further exploration of the premises was halted, pending a coroner's verdict. But the nearest coroner lived thirty miles distant. It began to look as if a long delay were inevitable. Then Tom Mortimer came forward with a suggestion. "Say, Lee, haven't the constable and justice of the peace authority to act in that capacity?" And upon inquiry, this was found to be the case.

While they were summoning Ed Newman and George Majors, both of whom were in the crowd, I examined the fractures in Dr. York's skull. There were three of these—one at the base of the head and one on either temple. I measured them. The little claw hammer I had noticed under the kitchen stove on Monday fitted precisely into the low indentation. The others on the temples had been dealt with the shoe hammer.

With such indisputable evidence at hand, Mr. Newman and Mr. Majors had no difficulty in rendering a verdict. So when Colonel York and Ed arrived around midnight with a coffin in which to bear the body of their brother home for burial, there were no restrictions against such removal.

One more illuminating incident occurred that afternoon after we got Dr. York's body up ready to be moved. It was too late to do any more digging that day. I was arranging with my men to meet me early the next morning to continue the search when a big, fine-looking man came up to me and introduced himself. His name was Radford, if I'm not mistaken. I noticed that he seemed a bit shaken.

"Do you know what happened to me at this place one day last summer?" he began—then broke off. "After all I've seen here today, it just about gives me the ague to think about it."

"What was that?" I asked him.

"Well, I had a chance to make a good trade that day with a man I knew. It involved my paying him twenty-five dollars in cash. Though it happened I had no cash smaller than a hundred dollar bill. I asked him to hold the trade for me till I got it changed. But he had another offer; besides, he needed the money right away. I said I'd ride over to the Brockmans and get the bill changed. He agreed to wait at my place that long. I jumped on a fine riding horse I own and hurried away. Brockman couldn't accommodate me. I didn't know what to do. All the towns were too far away. I was considerably put out.

"'I don't suppose there's another store in this neighborhood?' I asked Brockman.

"'Well, there's Benders',' he said.'Not much of a store, but they might have some cash.'

"I rode down here at a gallop. The old woman was in the store. I told her what I wanted.

"'Yes,' she said,'I think I can change your bill.'

"She went behind the counter and dug out an old pocketbook. She put her foot up on a keg, laid the open purse on her knee, and began fumbling through some bills, squinting close, as if she was near-sighted. I grew impatient.

"'Can't you make it?' I asked her.

"She mumbled something I did not understand and kept on fingering the money. I got nervous. I knew my man wouldn't wait long. I stood waiting, my back to the rear room. All at once I seemed to feel a presence behind me. It was like an inner warning of danger. I wheeled. I hadn't consciously heard a sound—yet right there behind me stood the old man, a wicked looking hammer gripped in both of his big hands. He paused when I turned, still gripping the hammer.

"'Where do you live?' he asked gruffly.

"'Down on Cherry Creek.'

"'How far?'

"'About four miles and a half.'

"'Hm-m.' He eased the hammer down. That looked a lot better to me.'You want some change?'

"'Yes, but I guess your wife can't make it.'

"'I can change your bill.' He pulled out a wallet and counted out the right amount. I walked out the front door feeling mighty queer, yet I couldn't quite believe he'd meant to finish me. But I believe it now. My God!" he suddenly broke off, "What I escaped that day! Otherwise I'd be lying beside Dr. York's empty grave right now."

"Exactly," I agreed. "Your living so near is probably all that saved you. They didn't dare take the risk. But the old woman was just stalling for time while old John slipped up on you."

"I'm certain of it now," Radford exclaimed. "Just talking about it gives me the creeps . . . though like a fool I went along that day and forgot all about it."

(To be continued)

Beginning classes in the Slovene language will be taught in Pittsburg during the fall 1984 if twenty-five or more enroll. Sponsored by the University of Kansas, Lawrence, the course will be taught by a visiting Fullbright instructor from Slovenia. The fee for the three-hour course offered each Thursday evening of the semester is $96. For more information, please contact Mary Giles, c/o Slavic Department, University, Lawrence, KS 66045. Phone number: 864-3313.

Voice from the Valley

By Donald H. Burr

I would like to share with you some of the hardships experienced by the first settlers in Quaker Valley and some of the folklore which grew from them. My great-grandfather on my grandmother's side brought his little brood amongst the first settlers in the Valley. They built as good a cabin as they could to protect them from the hard winters, but time was of the essence that first growing season, so erecting buildings and fitting them to shut out the cold had to be sandwiched in with growing food to sustain them during both the summer and the coming cold weather. It is self-evident that there was little else done other than work. Their efforts at raising corn were plagued by racoons and deer. Even their gardens were under constant threat, since fences were nonexistent. Thus, with all the other work to do, rail fences had to be constructed.

As is so often the case in this part of Kansas, the elements added to the hardships which had to be borne. The one thing which sent chills of fear through them all was the prairie fire. Lightning was the most apt to set the prairies aflame, but sparks struck from two rocks coming sharply in contact by the hoofs of deer or cattle could start fires too. When they were sighted, all the neighbors joined in to fight the blaze in order to keep it away from their homes and crops. My great-grandfather, while fighting one such blaze, inhaled too much heat and smoke, took pneumonia, and died at an untimely age. His family was left to fend for themselves. Before he made the crossing, he called my grandmother to his bedside and asked her to promise to keep the family together and to take over the raising of food for them and their animals. She was a girl of fourteen, and try as hard as she could, with the help of all, she was unable to cope with the harshness of the land and the predators which ravaged their garden and corn fields.

One night there was a great windstorm with hail and rain. The next morning three men rode to the cabin. They were a neighbor and his two sons, who had come to see how the widow woman and her brood had been treated by the storm. The neighbor's roof had been damaged, and he feared the worst for great grandmother's cabin. His wife had died shortly before, leaving him with several children whom he felt helpless to try to rear by himself. A short time later he married my

great-grandmother. It was not necessarily a love match, but rather a marriage of convenience.

The pioneer spirit must have been very strong in my great-grandmother and her second husband, for in a short time they, with as many of their two families as wanted or needed to, set out for Western Kansas for more homesteading. My grandmother did not go along, but went back to Indiana to live with relatives and prepare herself for teaching.

Sicknesses were many and known by different names from those they bear today. Some of them I can only guess at, but typhoid fever was one which still bears the same name. It was gotten principally from drinking water. Without the proper medications to treat it, it ran rampant through entire families, wiping them out in many cases. "Summer complaint," an intestinal disorder, was a great killer of the very young. Malaria was another common disease because of the community's proximity to Spring River. Then there was "brain fever"—from which so many of all ages died. I have always wondered if this disease might not have been encephalitis, as it produced a comatose state which resembled death some time before death actually occurred. I believe that it was nearly always fatal; thus the families of those with this dreaded disease could be forgiven if they anticipated death's arrival.

My mother's aunt, the family story teller, related one such case in which a young girl of twelve or fifteen had this disease. She apparently succumbed to it, and as there were no means of keeping a dead body for any length of time, the funeral was held usually the day of death, or soon thereafter. The girl had been a coin collector of sorts and had kept her collection in a fruit jar, which they buried with her. After the funeral, her mother became concerned lest the girl wasn't dead when they buried her. It became an obsession with her. Finally her family exhumed the body to see whether the mother's fears were well founded. When the coffin was opened, the jar of coins was in a different position. . . . The mother was now certain that her daughter had been buried too soon and lost her mind as a result of the agonies which she imagined her daughter had endured.

The reality of human mortality was common in Quaker Valley. Besides her father, my grandmother had lost a twin brother and sister while they were quite young. A younger sister died of typhoid fever after she was old enough to be teaching school. (My grandfather went to the community in which she taught and brought her home in a lumber wagon. She died soon after they arrived home.)

The settlers learned to cope with everything, and what couldn't be cured had to be endured. One method they learned was to give

quinine, a drug used for many forms of illnesses, but especially for malaria. Since they had no capsules, they would roll the quinine in a gob of gel from the cambium layer of the bark of the slippery elm tree. A narrow piece of bark was cut off deep enough to leave the cambium layer and put in water for a short time. When the gel could be raked off, it was placed in a spoon and quinine poured into the center of the gel. With a toothpick, the gel was pushed from the sides of the spoon to cover the quinine completely; it was then ready to take. It was tasteless, as I recall, and much more pleasant than the raw quinine, which is extremely bitter. I can still hear my grandmother saying as she inserted the spoon into our mouths, "Up a holler! Down a swaller!"

Ida Lewey and William Kennedy. Courtesy of Wilma Hosman.

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