EARLY IOWA BOYHOOD

by

Harry B. Blackmar
(1865-1952)

Edited by
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PREFACE

Harry B. Blackmar was born in Rochester, Iowa, in a bend of the Cedar River not far from Iowa City, in June, 1865. He was the son of Elijah C. Blackmar, married to Lophemia (Kidder) Blackmar from Maine, who left a prosperous carriage-building business in Wilkesbarre, Pa., a dozen years earlier to buy land and take up farming. Harry Blackmar lived the simple, almost primitive village life here described and went on to become a well-known educator in Iowa, pioneer in milk-and-hot-lunch programs for poorly nourished children, and "ungraded rooms" for retarded students where with skilled and sympathetic teachers they could learn at their own pace. He was the father of Beatrice Blackmar Gould, formerly Editor, with her husband, of Ladies' Home Journal.

(Ed.)

EARLY IOWA BOYHOOD

My father was an early riser; he got up at five o'clock and called everyone else. After getting them up he sat in his rocking chair and waited for breakfast. My mother, with the help of my sister Emma, prepared a huge breakfast for the family and for any visitors or boarders. We three boys, my brothers Wallie and John and I, milked the cows, fed, watered, and curried the horses, and then went in for breakfast. For at least eight months of the year we had buckwheat pancakes, home-cured bacon, butter, and sorghum. The sorghum cane, raised by Father, had been taken to one of the numerous local mills where it was ground and boiled down for 25~ a gallon or for half the finished molasses. Molasses was

used on the table and for sweetening in plum butter and other fruit preserves; we usually had fifty gallons in the cellar. The buckwheat was also raised at home and ground in the local mill.

After breakfast in summer the cows betook themselves to pasture where they ran at large in the woods along the Cedar River. In the late afternoons we would go on horseback to bring them back. Then we milked and had supper.

We boys had to walk to the farm, half a mile from the village, for the farm work. Crops were corn, wheat, buckwheat, oats and sorghum cane. Harvesters could be used for wheat, but corn was cut and shocked by hand. The corn fodder was used for cattle feed. Husking and shelling of corn could be left until the long, cold, fall evenings when the crops were in and most of the outside work was done. Haying was done in June, the busiest time of year.

Some evenings after supper we would go to the country store and listen to the argument and gossip that went on there among the old-timer- -talk full of rustic wit and caustic comment. One old man told about coming through Chicago on his trek west. He said he could have traded his ox team for the whole swamp that afterwards became Chicago. He was pretty sad about it. One wry fellow answered, 'Well, Si, if such a fellow as you had bought the whole business, I reckon she'd have been a swamp yit."

Berry picking was one of our regular occupations in season. Orchards were not developed and people depended on wild fruits, crab-apples, plums, grapes, blackberries, strawberries, and gooseberries. The long tramps through the woods for berries were the hardest. For some reason the old Grimes farm was abandoned and all grew up to blackberry bushes. Farmers came in blackberry time with the whole family, usually on Friday evening. They came in their farm wagons, with pails, pans, or wash-tubs, and picked by the bushel. Blackberries were then for a while a regular subject of conversation among the village wives. They compared notes on how many crocks they had put up, sealed with sealing wax. Some jams and jellies would be made, but only for the sick, because they took too much sugar. Sugar was scarce and high compared with farm produce--maybe lO~ a pound, or two dozen eggs, or a pound of butter, in exchange.

The plums were in thickets, crab apples all over. A day's tramp might yield three or four gallons of fruit. Mother would put up hers in stone jars, with sealing wax. She made "butter" from plums and crabs sweetened with sorghum. Strawberries were eaten fresh.

In the fall after the first frost we would go to the woods and get nuts--walnut, hickory and hazel. We would fill the box of the farm wagon, getting from twenty to twentyfive bushels of walnuts in an hour with three boys picking up as fast as they could move. The walnuts were spread out on the ground to be hulled. Hulling was done by laying the nut on a block and hitting it with a hammer so the hull would pull off. Then we would pile the nuts in a big box in the woodhouse, covered from rats. Our hands would be stained yellow for days after this activity. Hazel nuts were picked from the bushes in clusters and put on a roof to dry, then hulled out. Hickory nuts when dry could be shaken out easily.

We had lovely timber, walnut, hickory, oak, maple, elm, mulberry, ash, birch, and sycamore. Sam Schwab made ax handles from nice straight hickory butts "for half". Work was always exchanged and payments were made in goods. Very little cash money passed. John Finefield kept a shop where most repairs on wagons, wheels, and tools were made. He was a rough worker, illiterate and unable to keep accounts. Father could do fine work, and made for Finefield most of the neighborhood coffins out of fine walnut planks sawed at a nearby mill. Every once in a while Father and Finefield would "jump accounts", that is call it square and start over. Oak lumber was also made in a local mill and used for floors in barns and sheds. Some buildings were made entirely of oak. Father could mend fence with hickory withes; he would take a branch three-quarters of an inch in diameter, bend it so as to separate the fibers a little, put his foot on it and just twist it as you would a rope. This would limber it up. Then he could wrap it around the rail and post, once above and once below, and twist the ends under so it would hold fast. No other wood could be used in this way.

Fishing and Other Sports

About Easter we would begin to fish for suckers and red horses. We used lines about 50 feet long with two or three hooks and a weight near the end, the line tied to a stake on the bank. We would throw the weight out into the stream, from time to time drawing it in to rebait and rethrow. Along in June we would catch bass, perch and catfish. Perch were scarce. One morning I found a fine white perch, four or five pounds, on my overnight line. I brought it home and put it in a tub of water, and went in the house for breakfast. When I came out again, Mr. Glasscock, our boarder, and the fish were gone. He had taken it to Tipton to show off. He said to Mother, "I'll get Harry some fishlines and make it all right with him." But he did not get me any fishlines, nor make it right in any way, and my parents said no more to him about it. Boys were not pampered in those days.

Catfish bite best at night. Sometimes we went catfishing until midnight. We set lines and then lay by a campfire, getting up about every hour to inspect lines. My biggest catch weighed 20 pounds, but Ed Cooley caught one weighing 65. He was a chunky boy, about 14, and he came staggering up the bank from the river holding his big fish in both hands like a huge baby.

One day Dan Niles and I were picking wild gooseberries on the river bank and decided to go in swimming. The water was "riley". I reached in to see how cool it was and something bit me, leaving teeth marks across my hand. Dan laughed at me, reached in and got bitten himself. I always had a fishhook stuck in my clothes in those days. Dan had a piece of twine. We tied the hook to the string and put a little frog on it. I wrapped the line around my finger and threw the hook and a bass took it. I pulled him out. He weighed five pounds.

The river was about two blocks from our house, that is, the ferry was. The swimming place was about a quarter mile from the ferry at a place called Strawtown, because straw covered huts were said to have been there in early days. The swimming hole had a nice sandy bottom and was shallow near the shore, and about eight to ten feet deep in the channel. There was a perpendicular bank near by, about ten feet high. The favorite practice was to run along this bank, dive off, and swim across. At the time of the spring freshet in June, the river was about a mile wide here. Little boys were taught to swim by being thrown into the water, then being rescued just before they drowned. The current was very swift. It was a real feat to swim the river at that high water stage. Boys were always carried down stream by the swift current. Then they would walk up a suitable distance, and swim back. We often took a boat, rowed up the river a piece, and played with it, floating, diving under it, and throwing out little boys until they learned to swim.

In winter we had wooden skates with iron runners curved up in front and tipped with brass knobs. The wooden base had a long screw which screwed into the heel of the boot and a strap in front that strapped over the toe. On Walter's hill we always coasted on our homemade sleds.

Sunday

On Sunday we all went to church. Our church, The Free Will Baptist, was five miles from home. Father and Mother rode in the seat of the spring wagon with the boys sitting on the floor behind. Church at 10 o'clock meant an early start. In those days no preacher thought he could do justice to his subject in less than an hour and a half. Sunday School followed preaching. The whole service lasted until

nearly 1 o' clock. Sometimes we went to dinner afterwards with church friends, but usually drove home, sometimes taking the preacher along. Dinner would be pretty late- - chicken, vegetables in season, blackberry pie, maybe, not many cakes; sugar was too high. If the preacher had his family along, as often happened, it meant a full table, with two or three hungry boys waiting with hollow stomachs for a second table. One of our preachers weighed 240 pounds. He was not accustomed to eating hasty dinners.

Preachers and Their Ways

Elder Davis was a stone mason by trade. He had little education, but a good stock of common sense, a big voice and a powerful body weighing 240 pounds. He was instrumental in building two country churches, doing all the stonework and plastering work himself, soliciting voluntary work and money for other parts of the construction. He lived on a little farm where he produced some food for his family. He preached twice each Sunday and at odd times during the week. His sermons were never less than an hour long and seemed very much longer to small boys. One evening he was preaching in a school house which had a hallway in front. A group of rowdies gathered there and made considerable disturbance. Davis left the pulpit and went into the hall where he seized a disturber in each hand, knocked their two heads together violently, threw them aside, then repeated the operation with two more. The hall-way was immediately cleared. Davis returned to the pulpit and continued his sermon without any comment on the interlude.

Most of our preachers, though illiterate, were sincere and hardworking, but there were some who sponged on the "brethren", going from one church community to another and staying a week on more with some member of the flock. One in particular would take his wife and a disagreeable little boy and a team of horses with him, and expect to be waited on by the women of the house-hold. The team had to be carefully cared for by the boys of the host. I remember him at the table, holding up the cream pitcher he had just emptied and saying peremptorily, "More cream, Sister Blackmar, more cream." Cream was always needed for butter but Mother calmly refilled the pitcher.

In those frontier days, with churches loosely organized and more or less independent, a man, if he was so minded, could announce himself to be a minister, and thereafter live well off the community. One fellow with no family, borrowed a very good horse from a member of his alleged flock to ride about and make his calls **,** But it was soon learned that he was racing the horse and betting on it. His pastoral career was short-lived.

Old Belt, as he was called by the outspoken, was a Methodist, a gruff oddity. He had a regular pastorate, but would come as a volunteer to help in "protracted meeting". After supper he would go to the sitting room, where young folks, relatives, young ladies and boys would be sitting in conversation, and prepare to light his pipe. This pipe curved down almost to his waist and had a bowl like a teacup. "Does anyone here object to my smoking?" he would ask. It was well known that one lady present was averse to smoke, but after a short wait Old Belt would say, "Well, if you object you had better get out, for I am going to smoke." Old Belt always insisted on sleeping on cold nights with one of the boys, much to the boy's distaste. The boy was usually I. One cold night when he was at our house I went to spend the night with a friend. When the preacher was ready to go to bed he looked around and asked, "Where is that boy?" Told that "that boy" had gone for the night to the home of a friend, he grumbled angrily, "I thought he would have the bed warmed", and left at once to seek cozier quarters. One hot summer night he was preaching. He stopped in the middle of his sermon, exclaiming, "My God, I'H die if I don't have a drink of water". "That boy" rushed out and procured a pitcher of cold water to avert a tragedy that he could have observed without great pain.

One very hard working preacher had three country charges, one of which was twenty miles from his parsonage. His salary was $350. 00 a year. In winter he held "protracted meetings" of about three weeks' duration at each appointment, preaching every night. From the twenty-mile- distant church he frequently drove home after meeting, a three hour drive over rough road in freezing weather, to return the next day. He was a strong temperance worker. When his membership learned that he had voted the Prohibition ticket instead of the Republican--the one approved by leading members--they refused to pay any more of his salary. He then got a job with a creamery company, driving a cream route. He had a good team so he earned his living and filled all his appointments for the remainder of the year, as usual.

Going to Tipton

Tipton was the county seat, the nearest railway, the scene of great events, eight miles away. With the poor roads it took most of the day to go and return with a farm team. We boys looked forward for many days to going to Tipton to the circus. It was planned that we should ride the horses to James', our brother-in-law's, house, five miles on the road, and then have him take us the rest of the way. A hard rain the night before the great event made the road so muddy that Father said it was too slippery to take the horses out. He said he would go to see Willard Smith and ask if he was going. If so we could ride with him. As soon as he had left the house, John, Avie Edgington and I started out on foot. We got to the Beltz saw-mill. Rain had raised the stream to a torrent; there was no bridge. A man came along in a wagon and we asked him if we could ride. No answer. So we hung on the back of the wagon and were dragged safely through the stream. By the time we got to James' house, two miles further on, we were dry again. James hitched up his team at once and took us on to Tipton, and to the show grounds. We had just money enough for tickets and a little dinner. We got our tickets and went into a tent, but to our disgust found we were in a sideshow. What could we do? We went out onto the street. A man asked if any of us could climb a tree. I volunteered, climbed a tree and untangled a telephone wire for him. He gave me a quarter. We borrowed another quarter from Avie, who usually had a little extra money, so we finally got into the main show. Only a one-ring affair, it was dazzling to farm boys. After the show we cheerfully walked the long way home.

I think the man who gave me the quarter had one of the first telephones in Tipton, though it seems too early for that. The first demonstration I ever saw of a telephone was at a Fourth of July picnic at Bair's grove. Mechanisms were attached to two trees perhaps 150 feet apart. For ten cents two people were allowed to talk to each other between the trees.

Transportation

When Father first went to Rochester steamboats were operating on the Cedar River from the Mississippi clear up to Cedar Rapids. They were small boats, shaped something like a New York ferry boat. Broad, flat bottomed, they moved by steam operating a rear paddle wheel. They burned wood, which was engaged by the captains from farmers or dealers who lived along the River. Boats plied up the river from Cedar Rapids to the quarries and back with loads of stone. The Des Moines River was also navigated. There was much shipping, of course, on the Mississippi.

Once I had a ride. The owner of the "Elias Doty" invited a group of us boys to go down the river about three miles to get a supply of wood. The river at this time was heavily wooded all along.

Woodsmen would cut logs in cordwood length and pile them near the shore, so the boat hands could easily bring aboard all the logs the boat would carry. The ride on the water and watching the loading gave us a memorable thrill.

At Muscatine one could see steamers going up and down the Mississippi, and see the log rafts floating by, day and night, on the way to the saw mills at Burlington, Keokuk, and Davenport. You could sit for hours on the bank watching them. Fortunes were made in lumber, logging and sawmilling at Muscatine and other river towns. The river steamers burned quantities of wood; most had their regular woodlots along the shores. Before the country was really settled the crews would go ashore when necessary and cut themselves a supply of fuel. Later, people along the river contracted with captains to cut and pile a stated amount to be ready at agreed times.

Big three-deckers with tall stacks and big paddle-wheels, carrying passengers as well as freight, steamed down the Ohio from the East going as far as New Orleans. In 1837 a steamboat went up the Des Moines River almost to Ottumwa. One tiny boat once made its way almost to Emmetsburg and stuck finally in the mud. In 1841 another steamed up the Iowa River as far as Iowa City. The rivers were larger and deeper then. One day later on the Burlington Railroad, as I was coming home from Des Moines, I heard two old men talking in the seat behind me. One of them pointed out to the other the exact spot, about ten miles from Des Moines, where, as a pioneer, he had landed with his family from a river boat.

Traffic in lumber built the city of Muscatine. There was a large cooperage plant. Barrels were made by hand with staves of ash or oak and bound with hickory hoops. The hoop pole business was quite active when I was a small boy. We had to watch our timber closely. Sneak thieves would come in our woodlots, cut the hickory saplings, collect a load, and carry it off to Muscatine to the cooperage factory if we weren't watchful.

Good white pine lumber could be bought at the Muscatine mills for $7.00 a thousand. "Rattlings, **"** or slab, brought $1.00 a load, all you could haul on your wagon. Hauling wood 20 miles on those rough roads made lumber dear.

Muscatine, an exciting place, offered glimpses of an outside world. Father once met a man there, fine appearing, a slick dresser, who claimed to be a traveling salesman. Much later he saw him again on one of the Cedar River boats, and asked him how his business was going. The man replied, "I am a gambler by profession, and I don't care a damn who knows it."

We would haul grain twenty miles down to Muscatine, and bring back lumber or some other necessity. With a farm team and the kind of roads we had, it would take, depending on *the* load, seven to eight hours to make the trip, so it was quite an event for us boys to go to Muscatine. We would start about three or four o'clock in the morning. If we made the trip in one day we were lucky to get home by midnight. Sometimes we stayed overnight. Once we went with rye, sold it, loaded our lumber, staying at a farm near the river, and filling the wagon up with apples before starting home. Fruit was not so be-pested then. Apples picked up from the ground would keep all winter in a cool place. One of the vivid memories of my life is waking up at that farmhouse early in the morning and lying in bed listening to the deep, hoarse roar of the steamboat whistles on the Mississippi.

Raising watermelons was an industry developed on Muscatine Island, a flat surrounded by high water. Sam Scull, about the time he was married to Cousin Sadie, would go down to the Island, get all the melons he could pile on a wagon for $1. 00, then start out and sell them along the road and through the country at 10'~ or 15~ apiece for the best and largest fruit. I went with him on one trip. We slept that night in a cemetery, his usual lodging place after his long hard day's work, because he knew he would not be disturbed.

Mills, Horses, Vehicles, Blacksmith Shops

Shearer and Gray owned and operated the mill on Rock Creek up Mount Zion way, about five miles from us. Known as the Stone Mill, it was a regular grist mill. Farmers brought their grain, and they could pay in cash for the grinding, or the miller would "toll" it, that is, take out a certain proportion of the wheat, corn, or buckwheat for his pay. I often took grain there as we always had our own cornmeal, buckwheat, and wheat flour. When the roads were poor I carried the grain in a sack slung across thq horse's saddle. Gray spent most of his time on the road with his wagon and a big team of white mules, delivering flour to the stores within a radius of fifteen or twenty miles. The mules were very large and strong for the millers were prosperous. I was much impressed by the miller's wealth. When the Rochester bridge was built, $3000 of the building cost of $25, 000 had to be raised by local subscription. The millers, as a firm, subscribed the sum, munificent in those days, of $100, demonstrating their prosperity.

The Sugar Creek mill was about four miles away; another, name forgotten, about three miles away. On the way to Tipton, on Rock Creek, was the big Beltz saw mill. Beltz bought logs and sawed them, but he would saw for farmers who brought their own logs for shares. When Father first went to Rochester there was a woolen mill on what was afterward our farm. There was also a distillery at that early day.

Horses of course played a large part in everyone's life and business. In my boyhood, Iowa, and especially our neighborhood, made a big business of raising horses for the eastern market. West Liberty, twelve miles from us, was one prominent shipping point, and many carloads were sent from there to eastern cities for carriage and farm use. All heavy city transport work of course was then done by horses. Heavy, strong teams drew buses, moving vans, brewery wagons, ice and coal delivery wagons. Fire companies prided themselves on fancy matched teams, as did brewers and moving companies. Horse cars were still running in Chicago as late as the Columbian Exposition, in 1893. Parmelee~ fine animals were still pulling their big buses for twenty years after that; they were almost the last of the distinguished horses to be sent out to green pastures in their declining years. There was practically no limit on the price an eastern millionaire would pay for fancy carriage horses and for track and riding stock. Iowa raised all kinds, draft and plow, driving and racing, common plugs and aristocratic trotters.

Our farm raised some horses, too. I must have had thirty or forty at different times that I either raised or owned while I was still at home. Some of them stand out in my memory for horses differ in personality and habit as much as people. There was Bet, a white Grey, Eagle, very powerful and fast, not very large, but of a very bad disposition. She would kick anyone out of her stall whenever she took a notion. I guess we were all kicked out at least once. I ran in one day to get her out in a hurry to chase a cow that had got loose, and I landed in the back of the barn. Not hurt much, as I was too close to get the full force of her heels, I got up and put a bridle on her and we had a race after the cow. Bet could jump any farm fence like a deer. She was a strong feminist too; wouldn't take a mate unless securely tied. She had one mare colt that was just as docile as a horse could be--a small nice buggy horse. Then she had a son, Prince, who had all his mother's meanness and some of his own. We never could get Prince really broken. I rode him, drove him, and worked him, but if he took a notion to run away, run he would. No one could hold him. We sold him to a shipper.

I had another horse that had a queer habit, different from any other I ever knew. After being harnessed she would start off with a leap, jerking the buggy off the ground, so she had to be held or tied until I got the lines in my hands, and all was clear ahead. I tried hitching her with a steady horse and even got a very severe bit. But when we put that in her mouth she would just throw herself down on the ground and break the shafts or anything in her way. I couldn't break her of it.

We used to cross Rock Creek just above the bridge, and sometimes I let the horses stop and

drink in midstream. I had one horse that would always lie down in the water. I couldn't take her in harnessed. I could ride her in, but if I let her lead loose, down she would go. This spot in the creek was a fine place to wash our buggies the easy way.

I had a nice driving mare named Bird, a fine personality, gentle and fast. She was Bashaw and Morgan. Dun in color, she was not as pretty as her colts, who inherited the style of their Hambletonian sire, a fiery bay.

One of her colts was Robert E. Lee--Lee for short. Lee became my driving horse after I was married. He was so perfect in build and gait, so faultless in disposition and habit, that he would probably have sold in his prime for $500.00. But I kept him, and he took the family driving every Sunday for many years, always attracting attention for his grace and beauty. High-lifed as could be, he never made a misstep when he was in harness. Once when he was young we drove him through Eldora. A group of men gathered in the livery stable where I put him up. Excited, they looked him over from nose to tail, lifting up his feet, feeling his legs, smiling at him and asking me questions. One of them exclaimed, "That is a perfect horse." I thought so too and never considered selling.

Bird had two other colts by the same sire. They were dun in color like her, perfectly matched and very stylish. They sold as a team for $1000.00 in Chicago. When I went to teaching in town I sold Bird and her young colt and her colt to come, to the man who owned the sire in West Liberty, for a good price.

All boys in early Iowa, as soon as they grew up, needed a driving horse and buggy. It was practically their only way to court a girl. Some boys were fortunate enough to have fathers who could and would provide them with these necessary courting tools. Others had to raise, break or acquire a horse by their own exertions. A good buggy could be had for from $50.00 to $100.00. A fair ordinary driving horse was worth $100.00. A blooded horse, like Lee for example, would bring from $400.00 to $600.00, depending on the customer's taste and trading instinct. An ordinary draft horse was worth $200.00. A big, fancy, perfectly matched team, like those the brewers looked for, would bring almost any price.

The vehicle most familiar and useful in moderately well-to- do circles was the "spring wagon". We had one in which the family always rode to church. Father made it by using the wheels and running gears of a buggy, adding a long light rectangular bed with one permanent seat in front. These wagons were of various fashions, styles and weights. They were from six to eight feel long, lighter or heavier according to the intended use. Some had several removable seats to clamp in place when needed for family reunions, funerals or weddings. The small fry sat on stools in the box, or on a cushion of hay or straw. There were no tops on any of them, ordinarily.

In winter every farmer needed a bobsled, a long heavy box mounted on two sleds linked together. A cheaper winter conveyance was a smaller box on a single set of runners.

Carts were much used for run-abouts, a single pair of wheels with a very light crate-like body and one seat that would hold two people sitting close. When I got to raising colts I always used one to drive to my country schools and to drive Dick Davis to boxing matches and other sporting events. They were of course much cheaper than buggies, and quite popular with young fellows before they reached the marriageable age. Breaking carts with long shafts were used for breaking and training colts. I had my first buggy when I was about twenty, a plain buggy with a black top. Soon after that I began to take an occasional girl out driving.

Some liked to drive with the top down, but it was more secluded with the top up. When a fellow really got to courting he usually drove with one hand and kept the other around the girl's middle, if she didn't protest too vigorously.

All the boys had coasting sleds, coasting on Walters' hill. Father was a good workman and made ours, the runners put on at the blacksmith shop. Sometimes he made the runners, too, of seasoned

oak. They soon became as hard and sleek as an iron shoe; the longer the sled ran the finer and more polished it would be.

Most of us young boys had boats, or at least a boat to use, on the Cedar River. Much of our fishing, such as trot-line setting, required the use of a boat. A trot-line is one that is stretched clear across the stream and tied at both ends. With short lines hung down into the water at intervals, sometimes as many as twenty or thirty hooks could be set at once using trot-lines. We never saw a canoe, but had skiffs and flat-boats. A skiff is a rowboat much the shape of a canoe, but of solid wood, with two oars. Flatboats, not being tippy, were safer for fishing, rowing, or swimming. We had no sail boats.

In speaking of vehicles it may not be out of place to mention my infant perambulator. It was built just like a small sized buggy, with four wooden wheels. A top of dark leather let back on an iron joint just like a buggy top. A short stiff tongue in front was used to pull it instead of a push bar in the back such as the later models used.

Blacksmith shops were an important feature of a horse-raising, tool-using neighborhood. According to my early recollections, there were three smithies in Rochester. Everybody had horses to shoe and buggies to re-tire. John Finefield's wagon-shop had a blacksmith shop in connection. Bill Comstock, a Civil War soldier, had a smithy on the river bank run by different blacksmiths. As Rochester went down and business faded away, the Hardman and Comstock shops closed. Coin-stock built himself a little shack in the woods and lived on his pension. The Hardinan shop fell into the river. The bank kept caving and caving; finally the shop just disappeared down the river. Finefield kept on with his wagon shop, setting tires and working iron. When Finefield died his son Fred came back and carried on the work.

About this time Bill Riddle came to town and opened a shop by the bridge. He married a widow, born Sally Coinstock. They bought the old ferry house and lived there. Charley Ammerman, a junk dealer, married Sally's sister. The safe in Bair's drug store had been robbed. The deed was generally laid to Avie Edgington. Friendly to Bair, Avie knew the combination of the safe. No one seemed to remember it at the time, but Bair had once got Riddle, who was an expert mechanic, to repair the lock on the safe. Riddle was also a fine marksman, owning a variety of guns. The Riddles and the Ammermans made up a family party and went to Muscatine to a Fourth of July celebration. Riddle was to compete in a shooting match, so had a gun with him. They were riding in Ammerman's spring wagon. On the way home both the men were drunk. They quarreled and Ammerman ordered Riddle out of the wagon. This was near the cemetery, about a mile from Rochester. Riddle got out and started to walk ahead. As they passed him Ammerman called,

"When we get to Rochester I am going to tell the people it was you, and not Avie Edgington, that robbed Bair's safe."

"You'll never get to Rochester, " answered Riddle.

He raised his gun and shot, killing his man instantly. The women drove the team into Rochester. Riddle walked on into town. My brother Wally, a constable, arrested him and took him, with the aid of a deputy, to Tipton jail. Tried, convicted, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Sally lived on in the old ferry house.

About this time Dick Davis came to Rochester, and took over the Riddle shop. He was a medium sized man, dark, with a black moustache and powerful arms and shoulders--a pleasant, easy-looking man. He went to board with Sally and made his home with her. By this time I was teaching country school and owned a driving horse. Dick and I went together to sporting events in Tipton--wrestling matches, prize fights and election celebrations. I furnished the transportation; Dick paid the expenses. He was a companionable fellow, though never an intimate friend, since he had no schooling to speak of, but read a great deal and kept very neat books. Once Dick and I went up to Tipton to a wrestling match between "Farmer Burns" and an English champion named Green. Dick Davis and Curt Finefield always took the Police Gazette and kept track of all the sports events. They were greatly interested in a

rising boxer named Bernie Baruch.

Riddle, in the meanwhile, a good prisoner, a skilled and superior mechanic made himself very useful in jail, so soon won his parole, and came home to Rochester. Taking over his shop, his tools, his house and his wife, he and Sal began again where they had left off, with no hard feelings, it seemed, on either side. Dick Davis went on to Moline, pleasant as ever. Soon after, he married a sister of Jeff Anderson's second wife, we heard.

Social Life and Customs in Rochester

We had dancing parties at Burr's and Lishy Niles' homes. The Burrs were a kind of low-down family that lived down by the river. Burr was a fiddler. We would go down to Burr's sometimes and have square dances. Niles was a fiddler, too, and would invite us to his house and play for us.

The Bowery Dance was a regular Fourth of July affair. The boweries were dancing floors. With uprights around the outside, and crossbeams over the top, they were roofed over with green branches against the heat of the day. The floors, built by staking heavy planks upright on the ground and laying planed flooring across them, were usually good. And when the dance was over, the lumber could be returned to the yard at Tipton. Around the edge of the dance floor a plank bench rested the dancers between the acts. Dancing went on all day and most of the night, whenever music was on hand. At 10¢ a couple, old and young, rich and poor, mingled with no embarrassment and in any kind of costume that suited them. Some of the older people, "from out in the timber" went barefooted. Many of the men, with a coat over their everyday overalls, felt dressed up. Several local fiddlers provided the music. Martin Buzier from "out in the timber" was good. But Jim Duncan was the best. He could sit and fiddle when he was so drunk he would sag over to one side until I thought he would surely fall off his chair. He never lost a beat.

Jim was a horse trader and lived in a one room shack on the road between Rochester and Tipton. He had a wife and several children and they were said to have no bedstead, only pads of straw on the floor covered with blankets. His sister, married to a well-to-do farmer with a nicely furnished house, begged Jim to come and get some of her discarded household goods.

"What would I want with furniture, I'm satisfied?" he said.

Once when Father and I were going to Tipton we saw a man lying beside the road. Jim Duncan, coming along with his old team and wagon, stopped, looked at the man and said,

"That's a brother of mine. Hers just had a little too much tea." Putting him in his wagon, he went on into town. When Father and I were driving home we again passed their wagon coming back on the road. The brother was now driving the team. Jim was stretched out in the wagon box.

When I was small I went with Mother to prayer meetings held at the homes of neighbors. Ten to fourteen people would gather, sing hymns, pray and "testify". Mother was raised an Episcopalian, but took part in whatever meetings were customary. The only time I distinctly remember what was said in the meeting was the night at Mrs. Bates. That was the night the Younger brothers were reported captured in Minnesota. The people sort of forgot the prayers and talked about the Youngers, almost as famous as the James boys.

Funerals were held at homes with the family in attendance. A long procession to the cemetery was about the only mark of distinction. The largest turnout I remember was for Cord Hardman, a well-

known Mason.

Mother made no distinctions in her treatment of the neighbors. She was equally polite and considerate with all. Her large crepe mourning veil was usually on loan to someone preparing for a funeral. A weeping woman would have appeared at the door saying, "Oh, Mrs. Blackmar, may I borrow the veil?" Mother also loaned her best black silk dress quite often--it gave a sort of comfort, I think, to many a sad occasion. She had the dress before I was born and she was buried in it. In those days, silk was silk.

Night after night Mother would go out to sit up with sick people. Professional or trained nurses were not heard of there. Mother, strong and gentle, had a "way" in trouble. She was called on often and went to any one who needed her. Brother John and I also went out to help sick neighbors.

One year we had a diphtheria epidemic. Dr. Atkins, our only doctor, was a cripple who could not do much alone. When John Kester and his wife were both hopelessly ill, both in the same room, Dr. Atkins thought John was going first. He wanted to get him out of the room, away from his wife, so he sent for Mother and me to come. Taking John up in my arms, I carried him out to the sitting room and fixed him up in an easy chair. The next night he died, and my brother John helped to lay him out. The following night Ella, the wife, died and John and Dan Niles helped to lay her out. The children didn't take the disease.

I sat up with Avie Edgington when he had scarlet fever. We didn't know much about germs so they didn't frighten us as they would today.

Charivaris (Shivarees)

When a couple married the neighborhood boys would gather with whistles, bells, tin pans, rattles, any kind of noisemakers, and surround the house. Usually the crowd and the victims were jovial, and the new husband would come out and treat according to community custom, by passing cigars to the men and candy to the boys. If he felt unusually generous he might dispense cake. Liquor was rarely offered. After being treated the crowd would immediately disperse, leaving the bridal pair to a peaceful night.

But on one occasion the crowd demanded something special. Old Walcott, a prosperous farmer, had sold his farm to run a village saloon. He lived in rooms over the saloon, reached only by an outside stairway. After he had been there a few months his wife died. About a week later he married the widow who had been his wife's nurse. These circumstances made it appear to the community that he should treat substantially. He was a timid man and yielded quite promptly to the crowd's demand for beer, cigars, and candy. The demand was renewed a second and a third time. He gave in each time. The roughs around town saw that he was a cowardly fellow and after that they would often gather in the saloon and begin to scuffle and make a disturbance. Old Walcott would get Bill Comstock, an ex-soldier, to take charge while he slipped upstairs. Then Bill would help himself and treat the crowd. In a few months Walcott disposed of the saloon and started a grocery store.

One "shivaree" I remember did not follow the ordinary course--that of Kate Anderson and Clate Edwards. Clate, a kind of foreigner, was younger brother of Plummer Edwards, our Quaker school teacher. Kate, a large, mature girl for her age, was fourteen, Clate twenty-eight. They went out to the old brick house on the Anderson farm to live. They got ready for their rowdy visitors by taking the rope off the big dinner bell, and bringing in everything that was loose about the place. John Scull, younger brother of James, was the ringleader of the shivaree that night, and Price and Lee Anderson joined in. They attached a clothes-line to the bell so that it clanged all evening, in addition to all the noises made by the

other instruments the gang had brought along. After about two hours, when Clate showed no signs of appearing, the Anderson boys propped a ladder up to the bridal chamber window and John preached a sermon to the bridal pair through the window from the ladder as pulpit. The visitors worked until midnight but never got a rise out of peaceful Clate. It was the only shivaree failure I ever knew.,

Rough sport was common among some of the younger fellows. Two or three were always fighting or bantering. When they were feeling particularly cocky they would come out with red handkerchiefs tied around their necks. That was a challenge. It meant they were feeling their oats and looking for a scrap.

No elite and no underworld was recognizable in our village, at least in the manners and speech of the inhabitants. Of course, when one of the citizens went to the penitentiary, as now and then one did, a certain distinction was made, necessarily, but never emphasized. Everyone (except my Father and two or three others) were known by first names or nicknames. The women were Sal, Lil, Nan, Liz, Phemy and Phoeb. The men were Bill, Dan, Stow, Mal, Mel, Ad, Cord, Noey, and Lishy. Old Raffenberger was always called Raff. An outlander who came to keep the store was always referred to as The Swede. Very few people knew his real name.

Family secrets and personal oddities were common property, but treated with fine neutrality by all the neighbors. Once in a while a person would sink so low as to be harshly spoken of. Hen Comstock, for instance, an ordinary thief, stole chickens and hoop poles that he hauled to Muscatine and sold to the cooperage factory. Dogs were an inconvenience to him in his chicken stealing, so every once in a while a number of dogs would suddenly die of poisoning. He was never arrested for this offense. But once he did go too far. Hen and George went to the house of old Phoebe Edwards, who lived alone, and assaulted her. They were sentenced to ten years. While in prison Hen learned the stonecutter's trade and came out a fine workman. In the monument business in Tipton he became quite prosperous and respectable.

Horace Wright kept the grocery store when I was a small boy. Becoming paralyzed, he had to give up his work, got discouraged and tried to commit suicide by taking strychnine. At first he seemed to be dying, but the strychnine seemed to help his paralysis, and soon after that he could walk a little and keep the store again.

One of the nicest people in the village was Thomas Wakeham, an Englishman who owned a brick store building. He became my grandmother's second husband when I was a very small boy. I spent many pleasant hours at his house.

One of our most prominent citizens was Man Weaver, the saloon keeper. A big tall man, married to Nan Hilton, a member of a lofty family, he looked queer going in and out of their little one-story house that seemed beneath him. Man always had money. At Christmas he had more presents on his tree than most of the rest of us put together.

Rochester attracted many settlers from the eastern states, like my father and mother. But many came from Virginia and Kentucky, like the Andersons and Jenny Crogin over at Snaggy Ridge. Jenny was a queer little widow, living alone in a queer little shack. One day, when we went over to have dinner with her, I couldn't help noticing that she had a hen setting by the cooking stove. Those southerners were chiefly distinguished for their drinking, horse raising and racing, and using tobacco very freely. All the women smoked; Granny Anderson and Jenny Crogin smoked pipes. Sally Bair's mother smoked a pipe with either tobacco or opium, mostly opium.

The Andersons

Granny was quite wealthy. Although she owned a big farm and plenty of timber, she always picked up sticks as she walked along. She would go home with an apron full. She always wore boots, and skirts much shorter than the other women's. The Andersons raised fine riding and driving horses, all from the same black sire. One team were named Fancy and Beauty. Jack, Granny's son, and Nancy had four children, named Jefferson Beauregard, Robert F. Lee, Stephen Price, and Kate, called Jeff, Lee, Price, and Kate. All the boys had fierce, black moustaches. They were all fighters. One day Jeff and Price got into a fight. Price, who was younger and smaller, stabbed Jeff just over the heart with his jackknife. Jeff lay for quite awhile not expected to live. I remember the excitement. All the fast horses in town raced after the doctor, as Jeff lay still. Andersons were violent, hightempered folks, but they became very good friends of mine.

Lee was the worst, always in a fight. He rambled about, never could settle down, and was finally killed in a row. One night he escorted the daughter of a spiritualist doctor to a dance. When he brought her home very late, her father would not let her in. So they went to a justice of the peace and got married, much to the girl's sorrow afterwards. They had several sons. Finally Lee left his wife, or she drove him off. The boys all stayed with their mother. Lee still hung around for several years, off and on, being a nuisance. One day he said to me, "I'll have to leave town or one of my boys will kill me, or I'll kill him."

Jeff and Price were decent, reliable fellows. They drank some, but so did most every one. Jeff fell in love with Winnie Edgington. She was a prize beauty, a delicate, elegant woman. They were as different as could be, Jeff black and rough, violent and high-tempered but sort of handsome and powerful looking. They went to live in a little house on part of the Anderson farm. They had one son, and stayed together for two or three years. Then they separated and she went away; she couldn't stand his ways. But Jeff never changed in his feeling for her. Winnie's picture stood on the mantel after Jeff had a second wife and a second family of five or six boys. Jenny, the second wife, got along with him all right. She was patient and good. After some years Jeff bought a fine old brick house near the river and they went there to live. Winnie's picture went with them and stood on the parlor mantel. When Winnie was away across the state, and dying, she finally sent for Jeff and he went to her.

"Doctor" Edgington, the Mysterious Stranger

Winnie was the daughter of Edgington. He just appeared from nowhere, when I was about eight years old, armed with a masonic membership and an honorable discharge from the Union Army. The discharge gave the name of J. M. Edgington. He had a suave, pleasant voice and smooth manner which inspired confidence and friendship. Of medium height, well-formed, good looking, with a small beard, he was an excellent, convincing talker. After he had been around a while he got the contract to teach the Rochester school. He was my teacher, a good one. One of the first things he did was to have a plain pine table made. He placed it in front of his desk and spent most of his time doing fancy writing. He could stroke off a bird, a lion, a horse, without lifting his pen from the paper. He made a drawing for each of his pupils, very good. While he was writing he chewed tobacco and spit on the floor, but was a strict disciplinarian and kept excellent order. He would call up the classes and designate one of the older pupils to conduct them, while he went on with his writing. I was often called to be the teacher, my earliest experience in teaching. Perhaps it influenced me in my choice of a life work. After school, very often, Edgington went from the schoolhouse to the saloon, got drunk, and later came staggering out on the street. He taught the winter term, four months, and the spring term, three months. During the spring term it was customary for the boys at noon to go in swimming. He forbade it. One day when school started in

the afternoon, he sent some boys out to the bushes back of the schoolhouse to get a bundle of switches. At this time he had about forty pupils. He called all the boys who had been in swimming that noon to come up front. Practically all marched forward. He had them line up all across the front of the schoolroom, then he went down, back of the line and laid on to the extent of his switches. No one rebelled. Lickin' and larning' went together and he was a powerful man.

He sent for his family and rented the Sally Bair house, up the road apiece from our house. He had a wife and two children, Winnie, very pretty and about fifteen when he went there, and Avie, about my age. Avie and I became good friends. He was a good scholar and we did much of our studying together. Winnie was very beautiful and a fine girl.

Edgington bought on credit and got into debt. So, after school was out in the spring, he suddenly and without warning disappeared. The family, left destitute, moved into a poor little house and got along anyway they could. Nothing was heard of Edgington for about three years. Then late one Saturday afternoon he came straggling in without hat or coat, dirty and ragged. While he had been gone, he had borrowed from Masonic lodges here and there, and the bills had been coming in to the Rochester lodge. The officers were going to arrest him but deferred it, as he told them cheerfully that he had come back to stay permanently, and everything would be made right. He had come from Moscow, Iowa, getting a ride part way and walking the rest. Sunday morning, before daylight, he disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. I never knew why he came back. He never was seen again. So far as I know, his family never again saw or heard from him.

Various rumors went about. He had claimed, on first coming, that he was a doctor. As in those days a doctor didn't have a certificate, he just set up practice and got what patients he could. Reports trickled back that he was travelling on a Mississippi steamboat, gambling and doctoring. Mrs. Edgington, left destitute, became the mistress of a scalawag druggist named Bair, whose wife had separated from him. Word came later, from somewhere, that Edgington was dead.

Avie then applied for a pension for his mother, (born a Cuppy, a bad lot) and swore to the facts about his father as he knew them. Government investigation revealed that the real J. M. Edgington lived in Eldora. He was drawing a pension, about which he had had some trouble because his discharge papers had been stolen. I was at this time 17, and in school at Rhodes. Soon after this, Avie was arrested and taken to Council Bluffs to be tried for attempting to defraud the government. He gave the names of witnesses from Rochester, as to his character and circumstances. Father, Wally, and several others were subpoenaed. They witnessed to Avie's innocence and to the fact that he never knew any other name than Edgington for his father. Neither did Mrs. Edgington. Avie was never to know what his name ought to be. He became a prosperous physician and surgeon in Omaha. He had been a good boy, attractive like his father, and, like his father, in some ways queer. He married, for instance, a woman much older than himself, and blind, with two questionable daughters. Her husband, or ex-husband, came to Avie's house occasionally to visit with all of them- -without anyone seeming to mind.

The Bair Family

Adam Bair, always known as Ad, owned considerable property, including a farm with a large brick house on the edge of the village, and a business building in which he kept the post-office and a drug store. His family consisted of a wife, a daughter, Sally, and two sons, Frank and John. Husband and wife became so estranged that Bair separated himself from the family and took up his abode in a room over the drugstore, but took his meals at the family house. When he came for meals he found them ready for him on a table. He ate alone or with the younger son, who kept himself neutral. Taking no part in the

connubial quarrel, he acted as go-between. The rest of the family secluded themselves in another part of the house while the father ate. Mrs. Fair did his washing and mending, too. Son John did the buying for the family on his father's account; son Frank ran the farm. Fair never spoke to his wife, nor to Sally, nor Frank. Any necessary communication was made solely through John. A good driving team was used by the whole family.

After Edgington ran away, Mrs. Edgington moved into part of the Bair farm house with her two children. After that, Bair took his meals with her and she made his shirts. Later on, he moved her into another house he owned. After Mrs. Bair died, Frank and Sally moved into another of their father's houses and John lived with them until he married. Then Mrs. Edgington moved away.

Bair contacted another woman by advertising or correspondence, in Indiana, went there and married her. They came back to Rochester, and visited some supposed friends. That evening the hostess had a talk with the bride. She outlined the groom's history. The next day the bride returned to Indiana.

Bair, a man of medium size, with dark hair and black moustache, was vigorous and active. Neat and dapper, he was always sprucely dressed. Once a group of us boys were jumping from the top of his store porch. Bair, then about sixty years of age, made fun of the way we jumped. One of the boys "sassed back",

"Just the way with you old fellows. You were always champions when you were young.

"Well," said Bair, "I can outjump any of you young fellows yet. But I won't jump but once. You practice up and do the best you can, and then I'll come and beat you.

After we had all done our best, Bair walked up to the edge of the porch, gave one jump and went past all our marks.

Bair, usually pleasant and polite, once had a fight with pitchforks with Dan Bagg. Dan had been working his horses; they had some words, and went to fighting. Their faces were all jabbed up.

Bair got into some disreputable legal complications, too, and deeded his property over to friends to protect it. They "protected" it so well that he never got much of it back. Soon after this loss he went to the Pacific coast. When he was ninety years old he returned to Rochester and went to the home of Frank and Sally, to whom he had not spoken for thirty years. They gave him a home and treated him with kindness. Up to that time Frank had been able to take care of their small needs, but with the father there he could do so no longer. They were then supported by the County.

Doctor Atkins

The first I knew or remember about Doctor Atkins is that he carried the mail from Wilton, a railway point twelve miles away, about three times a week, and operated a small farm. He preached occasionally in the schoolhouse. Acquiring some proficiency in the use of herbs and simple medicines, he, also, became the only doctor in the village. Though he had a large family, none of them amounted to anything. There were three boys, Eli, Otis, and Ed. They and their father were all about the same size. The first one up in the morning, especially on Sunday, put on the best suit of clothes and sallied forth. Otis, the second boy, married Addie Blank. He never made a living. Addie had two sons. Ed Cary is supposed to have supported them and her. Eli worked around for my Father so Mother gave him our old clock. Two girls, one about my age, died young. Dr. Atkins married three times. All his offspring were alike. Ida married a farmer up near Clarence who played the fife. They separated. Then she married a man old enough to be her father and stayed with him until he died. Then she married Will Dreps, who was her nephew and almost young enough to be her son.

The Weltys

Charley and Peggy Forman were prosperous farmers who had no children of their own, but raised two orphan boys. Some years after Charley's death, Peggy became the third wife of Henry Welty. They both had considerable property, and they set up housekeeping in Peggy's house in the village. They agreed to share all expenses equally. Welty paid half expenses for Peggy's house and she paid half for all supplies. Peggy always gave exact instructions to their servant as to how the meals were to be prepared. For example, "One egg for me and two for Welty". When they went out to a meal or an entertainment Welty paid his own shot and Peggy paid hers. Their marriage contract provided that neither one should have any control of the other's property; neither should will any property to the other. This plan was carried out so strictly that at her death Peggy left not even a keepsake to Welty. He seemed a little surprised that she had not broken the agreement. She left her farm to Billy Smith, one of her adopted boys; the house in town to the other boy that she had raised. After she was gone Welty went back to his home on the prairie north of Tipton. He had children to whom he left his property.

The McClarens

The McClarens lived across the road from us in a little brick house. Mrs. McClaren came there a widow, named Sarah Haines, to be the teacher of the school. She boarded at Father's hotel, with her three children, Belle, Tom, and Dan. At the hotel too was Duncan McClaren, always called Duncan, a bachelor and a hard drinker. Father said he used to take straight whiskey and put cayenne pepper in it to make it strong enough, but he had quit that before I knew him. How Sarah ever taught school is a mystery. My sister was her pupil. She had a board hung on a string which said IN on one side and OUT on the other. Children were supposed to "leave the room" only one at a time. This board was intended for their guide. But the out-going boy would turn the board clear around, then another and another. When it dawned on Sarah that nearly all the children were outside on the playground, she would go out to them and say, "Why, children, you know you oughtn't to do that".

After she and Duncan were married they had a fierce time, always quarreling. He hadn't much more sense than Sarah. He used to go down the street with a potato in each hand, biting first one and then the other. Once he sawed off the limb he was sitting on and came tumbling down out of the tree. Sarah was a queer, long, gangling woman. She had a sister who tried to start the reform fashion of short skirts and pantalets, something like the Bloomer example. The McClaren children were about as queer as their parents- -not as stupid as their mother, but with odd streaks. The boys went to school to me. Will was always called Bissel because, as a child, he was short and chunky like Judge Bissel of Tipton. He was spasmodic, and absent minded. George was at first quite promising. Jay Hammill, a prosperous farmer over near Peedee took a liking to him and helped him take a law course. He became deputy clerk of the court, and later succeeded to the office of clerk. But his early promise was not fulfilled. When he got through with his term he left, built himself a little shack across the river and lived there alone.

The Yarringtons

Just across the street from the McClarens lived the Yarringtons, a large shiftless family always borrowing from their neighbors. They never begged. One of the children would appear in our kitchen almost every morning and pipe,

"Maw wants to know if we can borrow a little skim milk this morning".

Besides food, they "borrowed" kitchen utensils, tools, everything. And yet they were not very poor. The father, a tall, rangy fellow with a long white beard, had been a soldier in the Mexican war and drew a pension. In the winter he always wore his long blue army coat. He was a lime burner, and should have made something from that. They were just poor managers. The oldest son, Webb, went west and was a cowboy for a while. Then he came home and soon afterward became partially paralyzed. Buying an old horse and buggy, he became a pedlar, earning part of a living that way- -but the County had to help him.

Quaker Neighbors

Near Rochester was the village of West Branch, where, one term, I taught when I got old enough. A Quaker settlement, it was all Republicans, strong for education. Springdale, also near, with a population of 300, but no railroad, maintained a Seminary fully accredited for college entrance. The Springdale boys went through the country school, then through the Seminary, and then to the State University of Iowa. Almost every family would have a boy in the State University. It was a fine prosperous community of wealthy farmers. The older men wore broad black hats and long black coats. There were two congregations, the conservatives, called the Hickory Quakers, and the New Style, who had preachers and organs. In both meeting houses the men and women were separated, sitting on opposite sides of the room. West Branch was Herbert Hoover's birthplace.

Near these two villages John Brown, before the Civil War, gathered some of his men. My father saw quite a good deal of them around his hotel. This was before my time. But as a boy I heard stories of those exciting days. This neighborhood, and Southeastern Iowa, played an important part in the story of John Brown. There he established stations on the Underground Railroad. Many Quakers housed escaping slaves, helping them on their way across the Mississippi and into Canada. One farmer with slaves hidden in his wagon was stopped and asked what he was carrying. He replied, "Meat and wool", and was allowed to go on his way.

In Springdale, Brown drilled his fighting men at the farm of William Maxon, himself a Quaker. Two Springdale brothers by the name of Coppoc enlisted. One, Edwin, was hanged. Barclay Coppoc, the younger brother, escaped and lived to come home. John Brown was invincible in his faith. His men shared his confidence and showed it by boasting about what they were going to do. We boys spent many a long winter evening around the hotel listening to the older men tell of those times, keeping alive memories of the events leading to the Civil War.

A very strict code of ethics prevailed in that Quaker neighborhood. One day, years after John Brown's day, I was coming through Spring-dale and wanted to smoke. I went to two stores and couldn't buy a cigar. Then someone told me of a little shop where they thought I might find something. Sure enough, from behind a calendar on a shelf, the storekeeper found one box and doled out one cigar. It was not worth searching for.

My Sister's Husband

Marriages in my boyhood were often rather hastily entered into. There was no church or other public place to hold the ceremony, so most of them were solemnized at home. A young man, James Scull, came out from Pennsylvania to Tipton and went to work at anything he could find to do. When he was about twenty-one he drifted into our neighborhood, worked for Father, cutting cordwood, and preaching in our school-house. Before long he was teaching the Rochester school and boarding at Mrs. Bates' boarding house, about the only place then where teachers could board. Mrs. Bates was a big, fat woman with three daughters, Mary, Maggie, Kit, and a son, Hugh. Kit Bates was a friend of my sister Emma. It may have been through Kit that social contact was established between James and Emma. James, a tall, raw-boned, blue-eyed young man, with a full reddish beard and moustache, was powerfully built, weighing over two hundred pounds. Emma was small with dark eyes and hair. I have no recollection of any courtship. Some courting must have been done, though James had no buggy, and our sitting room was small and usually fully occupied. Anyway, they were married at our house. To the end of her days, Emma always called James Mr. Scull. He called her Little Emma, even after she became immensely fat.

James bought the Bates house and moved it to a piece of land of about fifteen acres just outside the village, where he raised melons and cucumbers in the intervals of teaching and preaching. He used to haul cucumbers to the Heinz pickle works in Muscatine by the wagonload. Farming was the natural way of life in those days. Preachers, doctors, and lawyers worked farms in their spare time. Leisure was frowned upon. There were few ways, indeed, to spend leisure. Unemployment, except for the ill or the feeble-minded, was almost unknown on the frontier.

James was an effective teacher and a vigorous disciplinarian. I was seven years old when I went to school to him. His great muscular power gave him educational prestige. In the winter he had about seventy pupils in one room, ranging in age from five to twenty-one years. One day, as the pupils were filing out for recess, Gwen Hardman, one of the biggest boys, rolled up his broad-brimmed felt hat, and swatted the boy next in front of him. James stepped in front of him and Owen grappled with him. James threw him down, sat on him, and sent a little boy for a switch. Every teacher kept a bundle of switches in plain sight over the blackboard. James laid on good and hard with the switch, though Owen was about as big as James was but there was no more trouble from that quarter.

Several years after he taught our school, while he was preaching and working his land, the Sandy Hook folks sent for James to come and finish their school. The regularly appointed teacher had been "run out" by the pupils. James went over, preached for them and taught their school. While there he had a funny experience. He went to the house of Nick Ridenour, one of his parishioners, for dinner. When he went back to the schoolhouse he found the door locked with all the children inside. In the yard he picked up a heavy fence post, put it on his shoulder and walked around the building so that all could see him through the windows. When he got around to the door he tapped on it rather vigorously with his post. Then he walked around again, post on shoulder, and when he came to the door again he butted it a good deal harder. Then the third time when he got around to the door it was open. He threw down the post, went in, called school, and proceeded as if nothing had happened.

James and Emma lived in Rochester for about ten years, then moved to Rhodes where James had three preaching appointments, Rhodes, Melbourne and St. Anthony.

Rhodes was a small, beautiful village, surrounded by woods and rich farm lands. It had a grist mill, a general store, a shoe shop, and two blacksmith shops. Its first name, Edenville, had been changed to Rhodes in honor of its founder, C. B. Rhodes. Both Rochester and Rhodes had been surveyed for Tithe railroad", but both were bypassed by the main lines so they shrank in size and importance. Later highways bypassed them, too, so that now they are not even named in the tour books.

At the time James and Emma moved to Rhodes I was seventeen and ready for education not available in Rochester. So I went with them, riding in the freight car with their household goods, their

buggy and sleigh, their two horses, their colt and cow. James rode in the caboose. Starting from Tipton very early, we arrived at Rhodes late in the afternoon. Because I did not want to be seen getting out of a freight car when we arrived, I left the train at Melbourne and bought a ticket for Rhodes. The conductor neglected to take it up, and I kept that ticket all my life as a souvenir of my first train ride.

James trusted fully to Providence. We arrived with our horses and cow to be fed, the freight to be paid, and with no money. I don't remember whether we had anything to eat that night or not. In the early morning James went to the station agent and explained who he was and how he was situated financially. The agent took all responsibility for James' debt and let him unload his goods and cattle. Emma did not come for two or three weeks. James and I kept house. The cow was a good one so we had plenty of milk, cream, and butter, which I made, my skill at it acquired from watching Mother. The only other food we had was potatoes we had brought with us, and two large bags of beans, not cleaned. One of the first jobs I had was to pick over some of the beans and take them to the store to trade for groceries. James started out the morning after we arrived to solicit money for the church which had been started and then abandoned because of discouraging conditions. When James got out among the farmers he received many presents of vegetables and produce and then we fared pretty well. But I was a lonely, homesick boy, knowing no one, and with James away all day for three weeks until Emma came.

Living in Rhodes proved very different from Rochester. School life was pleasant, or would have been if I had been fixed like other boys in my class. They were the sons of prosperous farmers, and were well dressed. I had not a decent suit of clothes. But I owned a calf that Father had given me and after a little while I wrote and asked him to sell the calf and send me the money so I could buy some new clothes. Instead of doing it, he got me a suit of clothes at the Rochester store and paid for it in cord wood. It did not fit me. It was old style, with braid edging the coat. It had probably been there since the store opened. With Emma's help I ripped off the braid, but the suit still did not suit. I never had a decent suit of clothes until I started working at the Rhodes printing office and earned some money of my own.

Very early in my school life I had begun to speak pieces. I always took part when we had a program. I frequently spoke at a temperance society which had weekly meetings. One of the teachers, Ella C. Coney, organized a debating society in Rochester where the older people discussed politics and questions of the day, and the young fry "recited'. John Kline and Ella were the two chief debaters, always on opposite sides, as they continued to be, even after they were married. My first public speaking appearance was at the age of two, when I stood on a chair and recited, "On Linden when the sun was low, All bloodless lay the untrodden snow to the guests at Father's hotel. My picture, taken at that age, and a sample of the red figured wool dress I wore still exists.

At school in Rhodes I took part in plays, but my first real experience in debating was not until I began my teaching in country schools.

In Rhodes when I started school that fall, the schoolhouse had two rooms, the principal's and the primary, in two small, adjoining wooden buildings. The principal, E. D. Omans, was a man of about 35 years. Unmarried, smooth and well-dressed, attractive to the big girls, he was a musician and a good, but not fancy, penman. He held voluntary singing and penmanship classes in the evening for all who wished to come. After one of these sessions he often saw one of the older girls home, usually choosing one who was supposed to have a "steady" among the big boys. He wished, I suppose, to keep clear of serious attractions, but the custom cut short his teaching career in Rhodes.

All the seats in our classroom were double. When the principal assigned our places he sat me with one of the big girls, Eliza Kendall, already engaged to a young lawyer whom she later married. Her father was my Sunday School teacher. Her younger sister, Hattie, might have been called my first girl. Kendall was a wealthy farmer with a nice, big house on the edge of town. I was out there quite often.

Mr. Omans was a remarkable disciplinarian. He had a knack of putting pupils on their honor, trusting them in such a way that they never violated his trust. He often visited the primary room or went

out to get the mail, leaving no one in charge of his room, but there was no disorder during his absence. Classes took place at scheduled time; one of the pupils would conduct the recitation. No high school work was given in this school. In fact, Iowa had few high schools at this time; only common branches were taught. Here I qualified for my first teaching certificate, which required only passing an examination in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, American history and language.

We young people had parties sometimes, but our principal social life was in the singing and writing schools and an occasional hotly contested spelling bee. Mr. Omans lived just across the street from me so I often spent an evening with him. I did considerable outside studying too. Almost the first day of school I formed a friendship with Irvin Good, son of a well-to-do farmer near the village. That friendship lasted without a break for life. Irv was always nicely dressed and I felt my poor clothes a handicap. The second year, after Omans was dismissed, a much older man got the position. The first week of school the pupils began to throw things at him so the board had to discharge him at the end of the month.

They then hired a young man, C. A. Woody. Capable and well educated, a graduate of an Indiana normal school he was entirely different from Omans, who had been religious. Woody was a skeptic.

He had nothing to do with the school girls, confining his attention to a maiden lady perhaps fifteen years his senior. He strongly advised me to get into teaching, and to keep clear of the school girls. “Always choose some old maid of the community,” he would say.

There were more parties that second year. We would go to parties in the country in a big bobsled, keeping comfortable as possible in deep hay under plenty of blankets. The boys took turns driving. One bitterly cold night, after arriving at our destination and depositing the girls in the house, we boys went to the barn to put up the team and to relieve ourselves. When we got the team put up and ourselves taken care of, there was only one boy whose hands were not too cold to button up his pants. We played old-fashioned games at the country homes or pulled taffy. A fine supper was always served, usually at a big table. Sometimes on the way home the sled overturned in a snow bank but no one was ever hurt. Part of the entertainment on the way home was to encircle the waist of the girl next you under the shelter of the blanket.

The summer vacation after the first school year at Rhodes I looked around for a job and engaged to work for a farmer. James took me out to the place. The house was filthy. I knew I couldn’t stand it. James had to take me home. Shortly after that I went one evening to the roller skating rink. My skate turned and threw me to the floor. My wrist was sprained so badly that I was disabled for a while. I was soft and not able to do much until after the Fourth of July. Then I went to work at Kendall’s and boarded there about six weeks, making hay. I began on July fifth, pitching hay all day. My hands were solid blisters and I was so badly sunburned that I was in torture and could hardly sleep, but I kept working right along. Mrs. Kendall, supposedly a very religious woman, never went to church. A terrific talker, even about family affairs, she told freely of making the girl’s clothes from things that were sent them by wealthy relatives, although they were well off.

After finishing work at Kendall’s I went to Flotow’s. Stingy people, they served only water at the table, even that not always good.

One day when the water was more riley” than usual, we were served milk to drink. Flotow complained, “This is pretty hard on the calves.” But he was careful to be fair to his help about their time. One day we had a haystack partly completed when there were signs of rain. Just Flotow and I were working. He said, “I don’t like to leave that stack open, but it is quitting time.” I said, “We will go ahead and finish the stack regardless of time.” We did finish it, getting it covered just as the rain began.

Once in our second school year, Woody got a team and wagon and took some of the older pupils who looked forward to teaching to visit the school at State Center. It was a very cold day. I said I

wished I had brought my overcoat. Hattie Kendall said, "I didn't suppose you had an overcoat . That stung and I answered, "I have one, and it isn't made from my grandmother's old one, either." The overcoat was one that Father had bought from Avie Edgington when he outgrew it. Now I had outgrown it too. This exchange ended my incipient affair with Hattie Kendall. My first real sweetheart came later, after I had started teaching.

James and the Mormons

Rhodes was a well established Mormon community. The prominent people, the keeper of the one hotel, the owner of the biggest store, were Mormons. They built a new school house superseding the two small wooden buildings that had made up the first school I attended, using the larger of the two old ones for their church meetings. Elder I. N. White was their outstanding member. He was the head of the largest mercantile firm in town, incidentally, with a wooden leg. The manager of the newspaper was a Methodist, but his wife was a Mormon. Elder McDowell was not a resident, but headquartered at the hotel a good deal of the time. In addition to public meetings in the old school house, secret meetings were held every Sunday afternoon, Elder Mc Dowell usually in charge. Only members were admitted. No outsider was supposed to know what went on. The Editor couldn't stand it. He packed up and took his wife to Dakota, out of the reach of the church, which called itself The Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ. The members were very decent citizens. They claimed they had no connection with the parent organization at Salt Lake City. But one day a traveling man found on the desk in the hotel an unfinished letter, with a detailed report of the Saints, written and signed by Elder McDowell to the church at Salt Lake City. Elder McDowell was of a higher rank than the local elders, who were fairly common. He belonged to the Seventy, next below the Twelve Apostles, who were supreme in the organization of the Mormon church. Elder White was the local dignitary. He did most of the preaching for the regular services. I heard him a number of times.

Presiding Elder Bowman, a Methodist preacher, came to Rhodes to give a lecture on Mormonism in brother James' church. Most of the Mormons attended. Elder White and his brother sat near me taking notes, and at one point I. N. said to his brother, "My, that's rough; it grinds the lead right off my pencil." After the lecture, the Mormons challenged Bowman to a debate, which he declined. They then challenged James, as the lecture had been held in his church. James accepted. The two sides agreed to hold the debate in the so called Opera House, a fairly large hall. It was to continue for eight nights, each speaker to have an hour of time. A moderator would see that time, order, and the rules of debate were observed. James' congregation urged him not to "tangle" with the Mormons. They were the wealthy, influential citizens. When he stood firm, they stayed away from the meetings. James even had trouble getting a moderator, but finally secured the support of a preacher from a neighboring town.

The Mormons attended the debates in full strength, and Elder White twitted James, saying, "Your own people aren't here. They are ashamed of you". It was a very rough debate. The night they took up the subject of miracles. Elder White quoted freely from the Bible to prove that if people had faith they could perform the miracles that Christ performed--they had the power to perform them. Other churches, he said, lacked the faith; therefore lacked the power. James, in his answering argument, asked the Elder to prove his faith and power by opening the eyes of his blind brother, so he could do more efficient work for the church, and "straighten the back of that sister whom he had proselyted from the Methodist church on the promise that they would cure her," and "growing a new leg on the prophet."

"Until you do that," he thundered, "we will consider the Mormons the most proficient and crafty liars on earth".

Even before the debate James had locked horns with Elder White on the touchy issue of miracles. I had heard White preach a sermon in which he told this story:

"I was in a Missouri town when the landlord of the hotel came to me and said he had a very sick man in his house whom the doctors had given up. 'I know', said he, 'you are a Mormon Elder. Do you think you could do anything for that man?' I assured him that I could, and was taken to his bedside. I laid hands on him, prayed over him, and commanded the devil to come out of him. The devil came out, took the form of a calf, and ran out of the room. The man recovered."

I told this story to James. He met White on the street the next morning and they greeted each other pleasantly, "Good morning, Brother White. Good morning, Brother Scull".

"Brother White", said James, "why don't you start a stock farm?"

"Why do you ask, Brother Scull?"

"Well, Brother White, I think you could find enough stock in your own church to set up in business." The two ministers laughed agreeably, but they were not so friendly after that.

Three or four years after the Debates I went back to Rhodes to visit. All the Mormons had sold out and gone away. They seemed to lose influence after The Big Debate. Speakers and lecturers whom they brought to preach in the park and in the church were hooted at and things were even thrown at them by their listeners.

When James was living at Rhodes he went to one of his three appointments, Melbourne, to hold "protracted meeting". A prominent man of the community gave parties almost every evening to attract the young people away from the revival. The next summer he died. The family asked James to conduct the funeral services at their home, setting the same hour as that on which he regularly preached. He refused to change his appointed schedule, but he told them if they wished to bring the funeral party and the coffin to his church, at the regular hour of service, he would pronounce the obsequies. This was done. James varied the regular service to the extent of reading a prepared obituary, his denomination having no ritual for burial. The least vindictive of men, he could do no more for the man who, in his eyes, had insulted his Lord by trying to prevent the preaching of his word.

Newspaper Experience

Before I got my first certificate to teach, I was led into taking a partnership in the local newspaper at Rhodes, paying for my interest in work on the paper. The Editor was a young man named Crockard with a Mormon wife; the name of the paper the Edenville Gazette--Edenville being the original name of the town before it was changed to Rhodes.

Our Gazette was small, eight pages, four patent, but it had more local news and more original editorials than most small town papers nowadays. Crockard was out around town most of the time, soliciting advertising and collecting news items. I set type and did most of the job printing. One of the most important print jobs would be the hand bills put out by the owners of fancy stallions--a long narrow sheet, at the top a cut of the majestic sire, below, his pedigree, and under that the schedule of his standings and his fee. Wedding stories took up a lot of space in the paper; we always printed the list of presents in full. The donor of three pounds of butter or a setting of eggs got just as long a line as the friend who came across with a set of china or a fine feather tick. We always ran out of capital Ms before we were through; then it was John Doe and wife--until the list was completed. It was a great bore to name over the quilts, comforts, tools, articles of food, etc., but it paid to publish as many names as possible--no one relished being overlooked.

The work would average $10 or $12 a week for me, and with this income I bought my first really good suit of clothes. I had made a little something at my summer farm work, enough to buy books and pay running expenses, but I had never before had enough over for a complete suit.

I wore my new suit to visit one Sunday evening. It rained hard and was very dark. Of course there were no street lights, and, groping about for the path, I got into a barb wire fence and tore a jagged hole in the coat sleeve. James and Emma were away, but Presiding Elder Bolton's wife mended it for me very skilfully. It was a nice suit, fine black corded cloth coat, with grey striped trousers. It was a sad blow to have it torn but I had to keep on wearing it.

When Crockard moved away to separate his wife from her Mormon ties, the paper ceased to exist. The Editor at State Center offered me a salary of $5. 00 a week but I turned that down. Instead, I engaged a country school and prepared to take the examination for my teaching certificate. I got the job through a country teacher who, I learned later, made a practice of engaging a number of schools and then when the season grew late, of disposing of them for a considerable bonus to unprovided teachers. I bought an opening from him for $10.00. He represented that he himself had expected to teach the school but had decided to go west. For a fee, "expense money **,** he would turn over the opportunity to me.

He took me to see the Director on Thursday. Early on Friday morning I went to Nevada, the county seat, to take the teacher's examination. The County Superintendent was Ole 0. Roe, afterward a well-known figure in the educational world of Iowa. One other young man was present on the same errand. Roe passed out the questions, one subject at a time. We wrote and wrote before handing in our papers. In the afternoon Roe had to leave to attend a funeral, so he gave us the afternoon's supply of questions and said, "Now boys, if you get stuck, there are plenty of books here". But we didn't use them. We wrote all that afternoon, and until eleven o'clock Saturday, when I had to leave to get home. Roe told me to write as long as I could. My time was up before I had finished my last subject, so I handed in my paper, and went after my bag. As I passed the Courthouse on my way to the train Roe met me with my certificate all made out and gave it to me. I kept that certificate all my life.

I began my school teaching career at Willow Creek, Story County. I had thirty-five pupils ranging in age from five to eighteen years. The schoolhouse was eight miles from Rhodes by road, six by the railroad track, which passed near by our house. The salary was $30.00 for a three months term. Most country schools held for seven months, three in the spring term, four in the winter. I arranged to board with the Director. I was supposed to have a private room. But when I retired for the first evening, I found myself in possession of a little hallway at the head of the stairs which the family had to traverse on their way to bed. The wife's brother was there for a visit and shared my bed. I spoke about it, but could do nothing, as my host was also my Director. I endured this for two months, then finding that the visitor ws likely to be permanent, I left an angry, disappointed Director and went to board with my sister at Rhodes, walking six miles back and forth daily on the railroad track. The Director, being offended, tried to find occasion to trip me up. One day I saw his face at the window, peeping in to see how I was conducting myself and the school. Theoretically he was a very religious man. A long blessing, committed to memory, was repeated at every meal. Every Sunday he visited his father, whose three grown sons at home were treated like little boys. Not a bit of work was permitted on the Sabbath. All mangers must be filled with hay, and all boots blacked and standing ready on Saturday at sundown. Only cold food was served on Sunday. I was not sorry when my first term was over.

That summer I received some announcements from the Norton Normal and Scientific Academy at Wilton, formerly a Baptist institution, offering a six weeks sumner term. Bert Darling and I attended.

That fall I engaged the school at Peedee, two miles from Rochester. There I had a lot of big boys who only went to school in the winters when farm work was slack. A local man named Potter had taught there for several years, and the big boys told me he had allowed them to chew tobacco and bring tin cans to school to spit in. I refused to allow it. Just a few days later the man I boarded with told me the boys were organizing to put me out. The winter supply of wood was corded up in the anteroom of the

schoolhouse, ranked up pretty high on either side of the entrance door, leaving an aisle to pass through. Next morning, as soon as I reached the school, before the pupils, I cut some good stout effective switches and laid them up on top of the wood, out of sight. School started off quietly as usual. About the middle of the forenoon I saw a big boy chewing a wad of gum with conspicuous motions aimed to attract the attention of all. I said, "Ves, you may throw that gum out the window". It was a mild day and the windows were open.

"I won't do it, **"** said Ves.

I went to the entry and got a substantial switch. Going back to his seat I took out my watch and said, "Ves, I'll give you half a minute to throw that gum out the window." Before the time was up the gum was out. This was the signal to gang me but no one moved. I returned to my desk, laid down the switch and went on with classes. Soon Ves began to pack up his books on top of his desk. Asked what he was doing, he said he was going home.

"You'll not go out of this room until school is dismissed, and then you may do as you like", I told him. That afternoon he left and never came back. There was no more trouble, but Stotler, my landlord, said there were rumors that the boys would catch me some night. Nothing ever came of it, and I finished that winter term and taught the spring term. Then I went on to a district where I got a little better salary.

When I applied for my next school the Director suggested that I didn't look old enough or big enough to handle the big boys. I agreed to teach a month and quit without pay if I had not managed the school satisfactorily. The reason for the Director's caution was that the last young man teacher had been picked up bodily by the pupils, carried outside, and told not to come back. He was a big fellow, too, and I was small.

This school had about fifty pupils in a room 20 x 30, with three rows of double desks, a big school. Around the wall ran a low bench on which the younger pupils sat. A box stove in the center of the room burned long sticks of wood. Water had to be carried from a neighbor's well; to bring it in was looked upon as a great privilege. In warm weather a big tin dipper was passed all around the room and emptied by each young thirster in turn. Some of the children walked more than three miles to school over very poor roads. Here were two privies, male and female; in my boyhood school and in many others there was only one for all.

Classes in this school ranged from primary to eighth grade, with maybe twenty recitations a day. Two of the eighth grade boys were older than I was. Some of the children were Irish, some German, so there was a good deal of friction. One day a German boy, hit in the face by a snowball, pounded the Irish boy who threw it. Before I could separate them, the Irish boy took a good trouncing. I stopped the fight, called school, and did nothing more about it. The Irish boy's father came over to talk about the affair.

"Why didn't you lick 'em?" he asked.

"Your boy started the fight," I said, "and I thought he got enough punishment. If you think he didn't you can give him some more at home".

I taught there two winters and one spring for $45.00 in the winter and $35.00 in the spring, paying $2.00 a week for my board.

The Mattison school was in the Quaker neighborhood three miles from Springdale and West Branch. The Springdale Seminary had been an old Quaker preparatory school. My special recollection of this district, where I taught one term, was that almost every boy in school had a brother either in the Seminary or at the University of Iowa, at Iowa City.

At Upper Union, four miles from Tipton I taught a medium sized school one winter and one spring. We had a literary society in which two or three nearby teachers took part. The schoolhouse was

always full on meeting nights when we had a variety program--a paper on some interesting topic, some recitations, and occasionally violin music. At Lower Union we formed a debating society which met at Prairie Belle. Sam Scull was teaching at Prairie Belle and Charlie Michener at Sandy Hook. We three teachers always took part, as well as some residents of the community.

At Upper Union the Director belonged to a nice family and had a son teaching at a nearby school. I had authorized the son to engage me a boarding place, and never saw it until I went to start the term. To my disgust, I found I was expected to board in a little cabin in the woods, with a lean-to for my bedroom. The poor old couple who lived there cooked, ate, and slept in the main room. I paid $3. 00 a week for board, with nothing to spread on my bread but pumpkin butter. The old couple needed the board money, so I stayed, surviving the winter by going one evening a week to the Director, staying for supper, overnight, and breakfast, and having a lunch packed there.

In this school I scolded the pupils for spitting on the floor, but was not able to stop them. The neighborhood was mixed, some of the people were fine and some were toughs. My rubber boots were stolen. I heard that one of the rowdies said he had to have those boots to spit in, because Blackmar would not let him spit on the floor. In the spring term I changed my boarding place, and the old man never spoke to me again. It was at the Director's in this district that we played euchre with dominoes; his wife considered it sinful to play with cards.

My next position and the last of my country schools was at Rochester, my own home village. I received $40.00 a month and boarded at home. I had engaged the Doty school for the next year, when I suddenly decided to go to the State Normal School at Cedar Falls.

My Director said that anyone who would give up as good a job as I then held ought to treat--he wanted a gallon of whiskey. I asked him what a gallon of whiskey would cost and he said good whiskey cost two dollars a gallon, so I gave him two dollars to get released from my contract.

My father was quite disappointed, thinking me very foolish. One of my old Directors was township assessor and when I met him he said, "But why on earth do you want to go to school any more? You have a first class certificate already." But I was ready to start for Cedar Falls, my country school experiences behind me.

Cedar Falls

The State Normal School as it was called then had been founded only about ten years before I enrolled. It had four buildings. Two were originally built for a Soldiers' Orphans Home and transferred to the school by the State. Redesigned for college use, with two new buildings added, a President's Cottage and South Hall, which was well equipped with classrooms, laboratories, and a library, the school was ready to teach teachers.

Under the guidance of a boyhood acquaintance I joined the Mare Boarding Club, where the students paid the landlady 50 cents a week for room, equipment, service and cooking. The food was purchased by the students in turn. One boy and one girl each week were selected by the club to do the buying, keep the accounts, pay the bills, and assign to each member his share of the cost on Saturday night at suppertime, when all bills were squared. Twenty members netted the hostess $10.00 per week for her work; her family was tacitly allowed their groceries out of the supplies brought in. This plan had its defects. The frequent change of stewards prevented the buying of supplies in quantity, and also led to some unskilled buying.

So the second year I became the permanent steward, without compensation. This resulted in a very low living cost, averaging less than $2.00 per week per student. Of course all prices were low at that time. Three pounds of good steak could be had for a quarter. At a little creamery near town butter could be bought for about 7 cents a pound.

The club led to some pleasant social relations. Sometimes there was music in the sitting room after supper. But, as a rule, we were all too busy for much gaiety, so the club did not lead to any matrimonial alliances.

It was in the Library that I met Kitty Fluke, the Librarians lively assistant, a girl with bright blue eyes and a perfect complexion. I liked her at first sight. She must have liked me, too, because she promptly accepted an invitation from me to go to a concert, with visiting artists, to be held in the town of Cedar Falls.

The night of the concert arrived. It was a frigid, blustery night with snow ankle deep. I could not afford to hire a rig. My horse, Lee, was at Rochester. So I walked a mile to Kitty's rooming house and together we walked two miles into town. After the concert I saw Kitty home and then trudged the mile back to my room, where I still had my class preparations for the next day ahead of me. But it was all worth while. That chilly first date seemed to do no harm to our budding friendship. In January two years later Kitty became my wife.

At the State Normal School two courses were provided, one for high school graduates and one for other students. Graduates from an approved high school could finish in two years, while all others must take the three year's course. An advanced course, called the Fourth Year, qualified its graduates to enter without examination the State University with junior standing. I was not a high school graduate, but my teaching experience enabled me, by taking special examinations in some of the first year studies, to finish the three year program in two years. Completion of this program made me eligible at that time for the office of County Superintendent of schools in my home county, which then was the height of my ambition. The office was at my disposal; the incumbent, a friend, was ready to retire, after two terms, in my favor. I was receiving letters from home urging me to take the nomination which was tantamount to election. But I decided, partly on the recommendation of President Seerley, to take the Fourth Year and prepare for a teaching career. The office of County Superintendent was at this time utilized often as a stepping stone to the study of law and an opening into politics. It paid $1200 00 a year, which would have been munificent to me, and was conveniently near the University law school. I had leanings towards law, but, under the urgency of Mr. Seerley, combined with some other motives, I took the first step toward a final choice of the teaching profession. My plan was to teach long enough to get money ahead, and enter the State University, graduation from which would prepare me for any public school position, and some college professor-ships in the State.

During my senior year I was a member of the debating team, which met and defeated a team from the State College of Agriculture at Ames. This was the first intercollegiate contest of any kind participated in by the Normal, so it was a great event. We were discouraged beforehand by the members of our faculty, who told us that we were outclassed, since a member of our opponents' team had completed a course in law. We were scared stiff, and in the end were much surprised to find ourselves the victors by a verdict of 3-2. During this year I was president of the senior class and taught one of the regular courses in Government.

In 1894 I got my degree from the Iowa State Normal School and began my career as teacher and administrator in the public schools of Iowa. Up to this time I had received but one offer of a position. This was a high school principalship at a salary of only $50.00 a month--very discouraging, as this was what I had contracted for before I ever started to the Normal School. Then a friend told me there was an opening in the principalship of his home town, Riceville, Iowa.

That night I took the train for Riceville, and the next day visited all the members of the school board. In Iowa, at that time, school boards, elected by the people, included five or seven men, served without pay, and had a secretary who had a salary, but no vote. The Riceville board were to meet that evening to elect a Principal. I spent part of the evening visiting board members with my two competitors. One of them told me he was sure of three votes and thought he had four. The other man was sure of two votes. I had no assurance of any. But, finally, one of the members of the board came out of the secretary's office to ask me one question: "Will you take the position at $70. 00 a month?" I assented. He invited me into the meeting, where I was elected by a unanimous vote.

Riceville, in northern Iowa, was a village of 600 people. It had three churches, a bank, a railway station, a "racket store", two grain elevators, two meat markets, two doctors, a dentist who made weekly visits, two "general stores **,** a hardware store, a furniture store, a drug store, a hotel and a weekly newspaper. It was neat, thrifty, moral, ambitious and churchgoing. On Sunday morning everyone dressed up and went to church, the men in their Prince Albert suits or tail coats, derby hats and gloves, the women in their "afternoon dresses" and formal toques or bonnets. A few top hats persisted, but were usually worn only on special occasions. The preacher always wore a Prince Albert. In our day he was a plain, earnest, homely young man who said he would rather dig in the ground than get up and preach.

In those days no school man could hold his job if he smoked, because of the example to his pupils. But the members of the school board and the secretary puffed vigorously throughout their meetings.

Social lines were strictly drawn. The banker, the doctors, the leading merchants, the Editor of the paper, and the district representative in the legislature belonged to the elite, and entertained a good deal. The school people were eligible for this group if personally acceptable, and my attractive young wife and I were fortunate enough to pass muster.

The schools in such villages were supported entirely by a local tax. No such thing as Federal or State aid was known in Iowa at that time. Riceville had two 2-room brick buildings, accommodating from 50 to 75 pupils per room. But a new 4-room building was almost completed when I went there, and was put into use at the middle of the year.

Altogether, we had about 250 students, quite a few coming in from the country. Teachers were paid $30.00 a month. The course of study provided two years of high school work. The Principal had charge of the high school and also of the eighth grade. I taught twelve classes a day, and rang the bell at 8:30 and 9:00 A. M. and at noon and at 1:00 P. M. when the noon recess was over. The high school subjects were algebra, English, history, physics, physical geography and civics.

When the new building was completed, the course was extended to three years and included Latin and geometry and two teachers were added to the staff. At first I boarded at the hotel, paying about 75 cents a day. Later I moved to the private home of the Coles family. Here I paid $2. 00 a week. A dollar was real money in 1894.

On January 1, 1895 I married Kitty, my Normal School sweetheart. My wife, who had prepared for teaching, too, took charge of the eighth grade room. We then exchanged some classes. I heard some of her eighth grade recitations, and she taught high school English and Latin. We continued to live with the Coles family, taking possession of an extra room, which we fitted up as a sitting room-study.

Mrs. Coles, a character, really enjoyed poor health and had cupboards, shelves, and drawers full of patent medicine bottles, but she was a meticulous housekeeper. On her dining room floor was a rug. Over the rug was a drugget and over the drugget oilcloth tacked down and heavily painted. If she is still alive that rug is still in good condition.

Our first school year together closed in a manner satisfactory to both the schoolboard and myself. We graduated a class of 13 pupils on Friday the 13th of June, 1895. Each member of the class

took some part in the Commencement program. One of the girls asked if she might be the thirteenth speaker and I applauded her courage. After the exercises we rented a house to occupy the next fall.

We went to my old home for the summer, and I worked on the farm. In September we drove back to Riceville in a new top buggy, behind the newly broken, fine, Hambletonian driving horse that I had raised on the farm. On the trip of about 200 miles we enjoyed the comments at livery stables on the beauty of the build, the gait, and the style of the horse, Robert E. Lee.

On reaching Riceville we began to collect the necessary furniture and to settle into our 5-room house for which we paid a monthly rental of $7.00. The senior class had already come forward with a wedding gift, a large, comfortable rocking chair, upholstered in green brocade. We also had our first cat, the forerunner of a long line. A smiling little girl had appeared with him in her hands, a velvety black fellow with a white shirt front and moustache, which gave him an air of pomp and elegance. He had the unusual habit of growling and swelling his tail whenever a visitor knocked on the door.

The Riceville people took enormous pride in their new brick high school building and the "racket store" took advantage of the situation by sending to Austria for a large order of white china teapot tiles, decorated with a picture of the new edifice, and stamped on the bottom in gold letters, "Made in Austria for the High School, Riceville, Iowa

The new building had central heat, the coal burning furnace being installed in a small room in the basement. This heating plant was ruled over by the janitor, Mr. Humphrey, an ex-jockey, who was also the caretaker of the two driving teams of one of the busy doctors. One day I complimented Mr. Humphrey on the neatness of his furnace room. "Yes, sir," he answered. "I think a school house ought to be kep' up neat, just like a hoss barn". He took great pride in his own premises. One morning he told me enthsiastically that he had the bluest house in town. "Yes," he said, "the Woman is not well. She hasn't got long to live, and I want to make it as cheerful for her as I can.

Though our new school building had central heating, it had no inside toilets. Sanitation had not as yet become common in the United States, or at least the idea of it had not entered village minds. The wife of the president of our school board had a splendid seal skin coat, but her house boasted no bathroom, and indeed no running water, except what came from a pump in the kitchen sink.

At the close of the first school year I got an increase of $10.00 a month in salary and so did my wife, so we felt we were now on easy street as far as household expenses were concerned. With rent at $7.00 a month and an average grocery bill of $12.00 we could save. A pound of steak at 10 cents made us a good meal. Liver was often thrown in for the cat, in fact, it was so freely given, we hesitated to ask for it too often. Lee lived in a neat barn. His feed was cheap, oats at 15 cents a bushel and prairie hay, delivered at the barn, $3.00 a ton.

During the spring vacation of this year I taught in the Teachers Institute at Osage, Iowa. At these County Institutes, which would now be called "refresher courses" attendance was voluntary. The County Superintendent was in charge, and at the close of the week he held examinations for applicants for teacher's certificates. The fee for the week's work was $20.00.

It was in this year also that I made my first visit to the annual convention of the Iowa State Teachers' Association. This was held in Des Moines in such buildings as could accommodate a large meeting-the Opera House, the larger churches, the Y. M. C. A., college or school auditoriums. What I saw there was new and interesting--the subjects of discussion, new friends, the stirring debates on theory and practice of teaching. Lecturers were usually eminent professors from great universities. They pointed out all the mistakes that had been made heretofore in education, and assured us that from now on, when the new theories were put into practice, schools would really progress. The college men present felt superior to public school teachers and administrators; though most of them had had no experience with public schools they gave freely of their advice and counsel. One University professor proposed that if the expense were paid, his University would be willing to send a man out to any public school to give advice

for its management and improvement. In response to this suggestion, one elderly School Superintendent proposed that if the University would pay the expense, the Teachers' Association would be glad to send a man to the University to learn whether it was a suitable place to send high school graduates. The Universities complained that entering students were not properly prepared in English. A Superintendent responded, "Well, we take your graduates to teach our students. If they fail to teach English effectively, what more can we do?" So the debates between theorists and practitioners went on. The public school men looked down on the college men as visionaries who would not be able to earn a living if required to handle a country school. My visits to this annual forum continued uninterruptedly for thirty-two years. Many were the theories that rose and fell during that time.

At the end of our second year in Riceville my wife quit teaching. Local politics influenced the board to appoint a high school assistant who was entirely unqualified for the position. So I began to look for a new situation. A few days after the close of school, June of 1897, I learned that the Superintendency at Emmetsburg was vacant, and I decided to make a personal application for the position.

We drove 30 miles and spent the night at a hotel in Charles City, leaving a call for 5:00 a. m. The clerk neglected to call, so I missed the train I intended to take. Driving on, we went west to Mason City, and there just missed another train, so we stayed there over night. The next morning I finally managed to take a train, leaving Lee at a livery barn, and my wife, Kitty, at Clear Lake to spend the day.

On arriving at Emmetsburg, I learned that the president of the school board was in his lumberyard, just across from the station, and I called on him. He told me that he had been instructed to call a meeting of the board as soon as he received notice that a majority of the board had decided on one of the many candidates who had applied. He had just received that notice, and had called the meeting for that evening, so he considered the matter closed. The whole day was before me. I had nothing better to do so I decided to practice on the board members. First I called on the secretary for information. Then I visited all the men except one who was out of town. Then I walked to different parts of the town to see the school buildings. As the time neared for the train going back to Clear Lake, I stopped to say goodbye to the secretary, who had been very friendly, although I had a feeling that I had made no favorable impression. He told me at once that some of the members were interested in my application, and he advised me to stay over for the meeting that evening. But I explained my situation, saying that I had promised to return to Clear Lake to meet my wife, and was rather willing to lose the school than to risk losing my wife. I told him he could reach me at Eldora, and asked him to write me there about the result of the board meeting. So we spent the night at Mason City and early the next morning drove on south. At the Eldora post office I found a letter from the secretary, saying that I had been elected unanimously on the first ballot. My wife exclaimed, "What shall we do? ". I replied, "We will go to Emmetsburg." I immediately sent an acceptance to Emmetsburg and a resignation to the president of the board in Riceville.

Again we spent the summer at the Rochester farm. In late August I returned to Riceville to load and ship our goods to Emmetsburg. When I arrived I found the members of the schoolboard quite concerned because they had not received my resignation and had learned only accidentally of my election at Emmetsburg. Inquiry revealed that the board president had received my letter and had suppressed it in revenge because I had differed with him about the election of an assistant. He was one of the few really ignorant and wrong-headed persons I ever had to work with on a school board.

I went to the station agent and chartered a box car for my horse, buggy and furniture. My horse whispered in my ear that being young, ignorant and nervous, he would not like to ride on a freight alone, so I arranged to ride in the car with him. In loading the furniture I planned for a place to lie down. During the trip I was aroused from a short nap by a noise at the end of the car. Looking up, I met the eyes of a tramp who had entered through the little door at the end of the car. I asked him where he was going. He said to Mason City. I said, "We have passed Mason City, and since your destination doesn't seem to matter much to you, you had better change cars right now." He hesitated but I persuaded him. My train

reached Emmetsburg at 3:00 a.m. but I remained on board until morning, as I knew there were a number of tramps on the train. In the morning I found my wife and my mother, who had come by passenger train, at the hotel, and we spent a busy day hunting for a house and getting settled.

Our new 7-room house cost us $12.00 a month. A barn was built for Lee.

After we were settled the County Superintendent told me that one of the Summer Institute teachers had resigned, and asked me to take his place. This I was very glad to do. In planning the program, we discovered that music had been the principal subject of the teacher who had resigned. Consequently there was no music teacher, unless it should be I, who was by no means a musician. The faculty discussed a substitute subject and I suggested drawing. They proposed that I should teach it. I had taken the required course in drawing at the Normal School, but my artistic taste and ability were limited. As the others knew even less than I did, I finally agreed to undertake it. Thus by accident I became one of the first teachers of drawing in the public school system of Iowa. I believe that I never taught a subject that gave me more satisfaction. The response from the teachers was so enthusiastic that I decided to introduce the subject at Emmetsburg, which I did the following year.

One day the president of the school board, a prominent physician, spoke rather slightingly of the course, not sure that he approved of such a frill. After a few minutes he began to speak about some improvements on a farm in which we both had been interested. As men often do in such cases, he took a pencil and tried to illustrate his plans on paper. Amused by his attempt, I said "Doctor, come up to school and visit our drawing class and that will help you to illustrate your designs for improvements." He did visit the class and approved the course.

I was fortunate in my effort to get the two high school teachers I had been asked to find, A. M. Bean, a graduate of Grinnell College, and Florence Marshall, from the State Normal School. These two young people seemed glad to come and board with us, occupying our two extra bedrooms. When our baby girl was born, soon after school began in September, we named her Florence. And when, some years later, our two teachers became Mr. and Mrs. Bean, we felt that we had accomplished something more than just staffing the high school.

One of my first new duties was to revise our course of study, and, this done, we were able to offer a full 4-year high school course, fully accredited by the State University at Iowa City, and by the various colleges of the state. The two new teachers and I made up the faculty. Each of us taught six classes a day. There were two coeducational literary societies, the Franklin and the Lincoln, which developed quite a healthy rivalry. Each developed some of the most able high school speakers I have ever known. The neighboring school at Spencer, which was a trifle larger, had a Principal who tried to lure away one of my teachers with the argument that she would gain prestige by working in a superior school. Nettled, I challenged them to a literary society contest, the programs to consist of a debate, an oration, a reading, and a musical number. The programs were to be given first at Spencer with three outside judges, and second at Emmetsburg with three different judges. The decisions of the three judges at Spencer were to be kept secret until after the Emmetsburg meeting. The result was that, when all the decisions were in, Emmetsburg had won unanimously on every number at both programs. The Principal at Spencer stormed at the judges and said they "didn't know enough to pound sand in a rat hole." But he didn't get my teacher.

The high school was in an old frame building heated by stoves, with toilet facilities in the back yard, and drinking water supplied by a hand pump. Already there had been some agitation for a new building. We had an intelligent and progressive school board; two members were Catholics who loyally sent their children to the parochial school, and who, just as loyally, as good Americans, gave active support to the public schools. I have never known more public spirited officials, or men more devoted to the prosperity of the public schools. A peculiar, not altogether happy situation arose between the two doctors on the board, who had once been partners, but who had become such bitter enemies that they never spoke to each other. Neither would ever second a motion made by the other, but this personal

antagonism was never permitted to interfere with their devotion to the interests of the school. When the time came to submit to the voters the proposition for the bond issue to finance the new building, one of the Catholic members, a leading business man, was most liberal in his estimate as to needs and costs. The bond issue was easily passed; the new building soon begun. When completed, it had ample room, laboratories and library for the high school, also four elementary rooms. There was an indirect central heating system, a coal burning furnace with hot air pipes leading to every room. A large fan, powered by a gasoline engine drove the heat from the hot air room to all parts of the building. The only drawback of the system was the operation of the gasoline engine. The only other one in use in Emmetsburg was in one of the newspaper plants. During the first year of the operation of our plant, I went to the building on a below-zero morning, and found no heat in the rooms, because the primitive engine wouldn't work. We sent for the operator of the newspaper office and he exercised all his skill and knowledge on the engine without result for a long time, but he kept on experimenting. I stood by, saying, "If there is no heat by 8:30 we will call off school." Still no heat. I went to my office and called the home of every pupil that had a telephone--they were very few--and asked them to spread the word that no school would be held that day in the new building. About 10:00 a. m. came news from the furnace room that the engine was going. The men had tried everything they knew and couldn't tell which try had been effective. Many of the early automobiles acted up in the same way.

Our janitor here was a Scotsman, a deep-dyed Presbyterian. He employed one of the boys, a devout Irish Catholic, to assist him and had him to board in his home. Almost every morning James Brennan and Adamson, the janitor, reported the religious discussion which had taken place the evening before while the cleaning work was going on. The arguments between the Presbyterian and the Catholic were emphatic rather than scholarly. Example: "I told Mr. Adamson last night that Martin Luther was toasting his shins tonight in hell, all right." Adamson kept a good suit of clothes in a closet in the basement, and after the morning work was done, he changed and seated himself in my office, where he would stay usually until I told him that I would need to use the office for a while, when he would reluctantly retire. He raised, on the side, large Plymouth Rock chickens, and we often bought one, finely dressed, for 25 cents, for our Sunday dinner. We now owned a cow, for the good of our young family, and Adamson milked her for us and took his pay in milk.

The janitor's assistant, James Brennan, and his cousin, John Sherlock, both 19, had come to my office from their country farm homes to explain that they wished to enter high school. In talking with them I soon saw that they were not advanced beyond the 6th grade. But both were so serious in their desire for an education that I permitted them to enroll. By taking extra work and receiving tutoring they both graduated in two years. Both were active members of the literary society and keen debaters. I supervised both the societies and criticized all work. One day James came to me with a speech on the signing of the Constitution. He had written, "just as Phoebus was painting the sky in golden glory. . .

I said "Jim, was that sunset or sunrise?"

"Well, I don't know about that, but I just thought it sounded nice". he replied.

Jim's instinct for saying things that "sounded nice" led to his conspicuous career as an orator and lawyer in San Francisco. For, after graduating from our high school, he worked his way through Stanford University in Liberal Arts and Law courses, and then opened an office in San Francisco with an ex-congressman as junior partner. In 1915, while attending the Exposition, I had lunch with him. Then a busy lawyer, district attorney, married, he was building a house in a fine section of the city. A San Francisco man later said to me, "If you leave without hearing Jim make a speech you will miss one of the most interesting things in our town."