Historical Account of the Alfred Matthew and Ruth Esau Runion Family
by Alfred Matthew Runion

Foreword

Earlier, I had intended writing a book length story based on Runion Lore, using fictional names rather than those of family personalities. The transitional period from horse and buggy to things mechanical period would seem to present an interesting picture. On the other hand this idea has been used many times, and might be uninteresting to those outside "the fold." So this effort is just for family consumption, so to speak; hope you all who read it will gain an understanding of some heretofore unfathomable why's and wherefor's Runion.

The first part of this history, I am afraid, will be sort of autobiographical, maybe because I happened to have been born some time before the other half of the union. Please just bear along with me. I'll do my best; hope this will not turn out worse. And, while on this thought, I'm sure that you will agree with the writer that this "for better or worse" venture turned out reasonably on the better side.

At this point what a help a diary would be; sorry, I never kept one for longer than two or three consecutive days. This author right now is quite envious of an old friend in the 87th year of his life, who keeps such a journal right up to date. You might conclude that I recommend a diary. I do. Taking into account the abovementioned omission, you will have to make some allowances for sequences being out of order occasionally.

So, here we go; I am about to fire away.
Tranquility

I was born¹ August 6ᵗʰ 1897, in the small town of Tranquility, New Jersey. Of the house I remember little, other than it was a small, white, frame structure. It is quite likely that my father being a builder, built the home; no one ever told me this, however. Well has the event of my birth date been established - to the satisfaction of the National Social Security Administration. It seems that in that period of antiquity the old family doctor did not consider Christian names of much importance. My birth certificate simply read: Runion -- -- male, August 6, 1897, Township Green, New Jersey. Thanks to the 1900 U.S. census it became apparently sure that I was named Alfred Matthew Runion. The census bureau oblidgingly, for a nominal fee, filled in blank spaces, to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Tranquility, aptly named, enfolded a few homes, general store, Pop’s wheelright shop, the blacksmith shop, a grist and sawmill. Those last three establishments were located on the banks of the Pequest River, or locally “the creek.” Of course it would be unthinkable not to mention our lovely Methodist church, and on the opposite side of the road the one room school, standing alone on a knoll a short distance out of town beyond the graveyard. The graveyard shaded by tall evergreens, when visited a few years ago, was still a beautiful, quiet spot, just as I remember it as a child. Our link with the outside world was the Lehigh & Hudson railroad which maintained a flag stop for our village. In passing [I] might mention that at the turn of the century railroads were a veritable life line bringing, food, clothing, mail, everything from the outside, while furnishing outgoing transportation. This gives you
rather an overall picture of the town.

Of my father\(^2\), I know that he came to Tranquility from Bushkill Falls, Pennsylvania. What impelled him to come to the Pequest Valley neighborhood in New Jersey I cannot say. He was by trade a carpenter and wheelright. A wheelright, by the way as the term implies, did work on wagon wheels, also doing all other wood work on wagons much as a shoemaker works with leather on shoes.

Pop must have lived in Tranquility quite a while before his first wife died\(^3\), and he married my mother, for I have no recollection of my half brother William, or half sisters Mattie, Daisy, or Linnie being at home. From bits of conversations I gather that some times one or other of these girls were at home some of the time while I was quite young. The youngest of Pop's daughters, Jessie\(^4\), who is ten years older than I, lived at home most of the time until her marriage.

My mother, Louisa, also had been married and widowed. Mom had three boys by her first marriage: John the youngest, like Jessie also ten years my senior; Harry, and Thomas. John lived with us in Tranquility; the other two spent much of their time with their grandparents in New York. Mom's boys retained their father's name of Maguire, although I recall that at times while John lived at home\(^5\), and to his dislike, neighbors sometimes referred to him as Johnnie Runion. My mother thus far had always lived in, or about, New York and it always seemed that she just could not adjust herself to the rigors of country life as it was, near the turn of the century.

As near as I can piece the picture together, the "match" of my father and mother was accomplished by a near relative of Pop's who had met Mom
professionally. My mother, after her first husband’s death, attended a school to learn
the profession of hairdressing, now known as beauty culture. (I was given a vague
account, so am passing vague information along to you my readers.) Well, anyway it
was rumored⁶ that [a] third party got the impression that Mom’s family were well-to-
do and that a marriage of “John and Louisa” [was] a good idea - financially if maybe
lacking in romance. True, my maternal grandparents were by the standards of that
time quite well heeled about that time.

Well, as I have done, you can draw your own conclusions; this narrative now
stands at the beginning of the union of John and Louisa Runion.

Hail, the birth of Alfred Matthew Runion! On with the tale.

The Runion home, the aforementioned house: a barn, the second floor which
was fitted out as a carpenter shop; a chicken house, and I believe a small smoke house
were most of the buildings. The lot was about a quarter acre in size which allowed
for a fair sized garden. Whoa, it would be a great omission not to mention that little
essential edifice known by various names as privy, outhouse, and some
unmentionable terms. No household could be complete without one, fitted with one
or two standard size hole[s], always a small one so the little folks would not fall in.
Whatever one can say regarding these houses of necessity, one never could say they
were not uncomfortable. Cold in winter, sometimes young - and old too - put off the
trip too long with disastrous results. In summer they were smelly to the point of
stinking, [a] rendezvous for flies; who knows the multitude of diseases that were
spread from these “offal” below?
Just across the road from us was the Hull farm where we got our milk for five cents for the two quart can full. It was great fun for a little boy to visit this cow barn at milking time. There were the cows in stanchions, calves in pens, horses in the far end by themselves, not to mention the dog, cats and kittens. Of course, the smell was great, and animal perfume went along home with me, to Mom’s great discomfort.

Pappy Hull sported a long gray beard, streaked brown with tobacco juice, which jerked up and down as he coaxed the milk from “bossy cow.” For his own, and my amusement he’d sometimes squirt milk from a cow’s teat at a big black cat which would obligingly open his mouth for a warm drink.

Returning with our milk Mom would take charge, straining it through a fresh cloth several times until she was satisfied all of the collection of particles was separated from the white fluid. Meanwhile Mom would be shaking her head, and asking, “Did he clean the cow’s teats? was he chewing tobacco? did he have clean boots?” The answers usually were all not to her satisfaction; she had long ago made up her mind that sanitation was very much lacking in the Hull dairy. Pop used to laugh, and say, “You’ve got to eat a peck of dirt before you die.” Mom, exercising her woman’s perogative, would have the last word while departing cellarward with culprit milk - “No excuse for being dirty.”

Needless to say, being the baby of the family, early in life [I] remember being classed as a spoiled kid; guess I sure was Mom’s boy.

To say that my mother was a pretty woman, would be an understatement. Fair complexioned, brown hair and eyes, of medium height and slim, she made a fine
picture. I might say that Mom and I shared a lot of love. But, she never seemed to get used to the solitary ways of country life. Often wild creatures voices would frighten her; cattle in the pasture near our house were apt to upset her peace of mind. One thing that bothered her greatly was the shrieking of a flock of guineas perched on the rail fence right near Mom’s kitchen door. There they would sit, calling out that shrill “buckwheat, buckwheat, buckwheat”; out Mom would rush waving her apron, shouting “shoo, shoo,” which only served to increase the intensity of their chorus.

Before abandoning the Hull farm lets get acquainted with Bertha Hull, the daughter of that farm family. For some unexplained reason Bertha was, to me, something special, and I loved to sit on her lap visiting. As I remember she was a passably good looking farm girl. The point I wish to bring out is that Bertha later married a distant cousin of ours - a Drake - who later formed a very successful baking company, and originally baked Drake’s Pound Cake. In passing it is interesting to note that the Runion Family Tree reaches back to Sir Francis Drake.

The Kennedy house is most outstanding in my memories; in reality it was just a real big white house with a real large bay window where Mrs. Kennedy, who lived there alone, kept fine flowers year around. Kennedys must have played an important role in that part of the county; one heard the town more often referred to as Kennedytown than it’s official name. It is amazing how many excuses we found to visit Mrs. Kennedy. There one could admire that wonderful tree growing in a big wooden tub right in her living room, with real lemons hanging from it’s branches. Sometimes Mrs. Kennedy would let us roll pages from old periodicals or catalogues
into "sprills" which she stored in a vase, later to be used to carry a flame from one of the fires in room stoves to light kerosene lamps [or] candles. Those lamps were of various sizes, shapes, and were quite primitive being just a reservoir for oil, a wick, and glass "chimney"; most of them had a base so they could be stood where needed, some hung from the ceiling and were rather ornate, all of them had one thing in common, or a combination of two things: they did not give much light, and they smelled of kerosene.

Jessie and I liked to visit Mrs. Kennedy; she would tell us to come over whenever we got lonesome, and we never needed a second invitation. We were allowed to wander about admiring knick knacks - like, on the mantel, a big milk glass butter dish with a very lifelike chicken sitting on its cover. Oh, we went over at the slightest excuse: to share secrets; eat popcorn balls, apples, cookies, or maybe some fudge our "hostess" had made, or poke into the cookie jar.

On a fine day Mom would be likely to say, "How would you like to go to the store for Mamma, Alfred? I need vanilla to bake a cake, and while you're there see if the rice came in; sometimes I think your father is related to a Chinaman, the way he likes rice pudding."

"Sure Mom, sure, jimminy crickets! Don't see why John has to run off fishing with Eli Sidner just soon's the weather gets nice; I liked to've gone along."

Mom would explain, "Well, young man, you see they are about the same age, they don't want a little brother along to rock the boat. Now you run along; you should be proud to be big enough to go to the store all by yourself. Look out for the
rigs on the road; some people run their horses like mad, so keep off to the side of the road.” So, giving Mom a quick hug and a smack on her cheek, away I would run past Mrs. Kennedy’s and four or five other dwellings that I considered of little importance compared to the Kennedy Place.

In no time at all I’d bound up the two steps onto the porch of our wonderful store where piled all manner of outdoor utensils: shovels, forks, garden tools, plows and harrows. Inside, one met with the aroma [of] freshly ground coffee, the spice bin, cracker and molasses barrels, pickled fish; not to mention leather smells of new shoes and harness. Ever notice a bunny’s nose “palpitate” when he’s excited? That’s the way the store affected me! What’s new, what do I smell so good, what will a penny buy? Most all food stuffs we now buy packaged were then received and often displayed barrels, kegs, boxes, burlap bags. One of the few exceptions was a little cardboard barrel of ginger snaps; the outside had a picture of a red rose and the name “American Beauty.”

“Frank, Frank¹², where are you, Mom wants a bottle of vanilla - did the rice get in yet Frank?”

Suddenly, a voice from some mysterious corner: “You want something friend; where are you boy; get out of that cracker barrel?”

“Aw Frank you’re just foolin’ with me, you’re hiding too, you are.” Suddenly, like a jack in the box, would appear my hero, Frank. We sure were good friends, Frank and I. To my way of thinking Frank LeBar¹³ was a perfect store keeper; he was good looking in a slim way, nice face decorated with a well trimmed
mustache, curly black hair, and people liked him to boot. (Mom used to say Frank looked “real Citified”; Pop allowed a man didn’t have to be a city dude to keep store.)

“Thought you came to do some trading,” remarked Frank. (One rarely heard the expression shopping those days. Money being, as a simile of the day implied, “scarce as hen’s teeth,” country people brought in produce such as eggs, potatoes, berries, other fruits to trade with the storekeeper for his wares. Hence the expression of the day: “going to town to do our trading.” Often our table fared good, or sparse, depending how well our hens were laying eggs.) Frank would continue in his teasing voice, “Got your eye on the candy case; candy’s not on your list far’s I can see.”

Mom hadn’t given me a penny for candy, still my attention was riveted on the contents of that glass case, and particularly on what we referred to as blackfingers. This delectable chocolate covered cream, about the size and shape of a black key on Mrs. Kennedy’s cabinet organ, could be had for a penny! After what seemed ages Frank would casually remark that if I’d oblige with a song maybe he’d think of parting with just one of my favorite candy bars. No sooner said than I’d launch into something like “Old Black Joe,” “Shall we gather at the River,” or maybe “Jesus Loves Me,” with such gusto that Frank could hardly back down on his suggestion.

So, grasping candy out of Frank’s hand before he could change his mind, catching up my purchases, Mom’s boy would start off for home. Soon candy, and trace of chocolate fingers, disappeared. Not, you understand, that I wanted to deceive Mom; my eating candy before dinner could upset Mom’s nerves terribly. She was, as she often reminded us, a “nervous person,” and it upset everyone when Mom “got
nerves” and couldn't eat with us. Not that she didn’t have good reason to be concerned about me for I totally lacked good sense when it came to sweets. Candy, chocolate cake, the sugar bowl, even sweet dough were devoured if left unguarded to my mercy. The result of this bad habit was a frequent case of upset stomach.

Looking back, I wonder how I ever stood the remedies - mostly castor oil and epsom salts - for those attacks. To this day I believe a good beating easier to take than castor oil. The beating is soon over, but, as for castor oil I’d smell it first, gag it down, burp it up for a day or two. Epsom salts didn’t go down so badly, but they left one feeling like his insides had been sandpapered. My recollection of this period is that I wasn’t a very healthy looking specimen. (Not that I didn’t derive a certain amount of satisfaction at such solicitous remarks as “the poor child isn’t very strong,” etc.) Well, you can see for yourself that I survived.

Mealtime meant all gathering at the kitchen table weekdays; Sunday, or when company came, we ate dinner in the dining room. Those were the days, as Mom often remarked, when a housewife was expected to “make something out of nothing.” A “good provider” was the wife who was a first rate baker of everything from bread and biscuits to cake, cookies; and pie. My mother often said that she had to learn things all over when she came to live in the country. For some strange and obscure reason the possession of a cook book those days was sufficient cause for a whispering offensive by neighborhood sorority. It is this writer’s opinion that this burden of thought stemmed from beliefs of the time that “her mother should have taught her ‘them’ things.” Soooooo, to the native girls’ satisfaction, the “ignorant bride” must
needs visit neighbor - ahem - ladies and wheedle from them their cookery secrets.
Mother’s lack of culinary know how, also to a point, may have been caused by the
fact that her first husband operated a restraunt - on the then fashionable Bleeker Street
in New York - and, as was the custom, then the Maguire family lived above the
restaurant and meals were brought up to the family. So you see it was not necessary
for her to do much in the way of cooking. Needless to say Mom did learn; she never
had cause to take a back seat for her ability to cook and bake for her family.

Continuing on food, another task was to try keeping such staples as potatoes
in supply until a new crop came along. Potatoes were stored in the cellar; meat went
in the pickle barrel, and some of it smoked; vegetables and fruit were canned or
“preserved.” Then there was a bakery wagon from Newton - the county seat, by the
way - which showed up about once a week. The driver would stop his team (the
steeds meanwhile usually took this standing opportunity to relieve themselves). Mom
would come out to inspect his offerings which, as I remember, quite often smelled of
horses, and otherwise were not too tempting. Occasionally a farmer would, in cool
weather butcher an unproductive cow or bull, and peddle it out to his neighbors. This
meat often was a bloody, repellant mess, but for fresh meat Mom classed it better
than shoe leather.

Looking back to those days one realizes the truth of a remark then heard so
often that “a woman’s work is never done.” In a way I suppose that the busy life was
a good thing considering that most of the pastimes we now enjoy did not exist, and
life could be real dull. Consider, no radio, no T.V., no movies, no phonographs, and a
days radius of travel with a team of horses was about a dozen miles to a point and return. In the early days pianos had not gotten far out of cities; we did have the reed organ\textsuperscript{16} in church and some of the more affluent homes and they "made lovely music" under skillful hands.

Social life was mostly centered in the church; we "visited" quite a lot. Visiting meant dropping into a neighbor's house for small talk, which like today often degenerated into gossiping; the youngsters starting up some games, and getting some hoped for refreshments such as pop corn balls.

Sunday meant putting on your best clothes and starting down the road "on foot" for Sunday School and then maybe church. On that walk we hope that a horse and wagon would not pass us on the road setting up a cloud of dust, and dirtying us and our clothes. Arriving at the church Jessie would whip out a cloth brought along for the purpose, and whisk the dust from our shoes; meanwhile we'd pat the accumulation from our clothes. Of church my memory is slightly hazy; sermons were long, and monotonous for a kid. Two episodes of my church days come to mind: Pennies and candy to me always were closely associated and at an early age, entrusted with a penny for the collection plate they tell me I loudly demanded my stick of candy. Then, the time the minister had "said a naughty word" - the account of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on an ass\textsuperscript{17}!

Then there were those hour long - or longer - sermons, which to a kid, seemed to go on forever. One sat in anticipation of something about to happen. Sometimes, happily, the minister\textsuperscript{18} decides, so it would seem to the young fry, to put on a show:
starts roaring exhortations; pounds the pulpit; struts back and forth, extending his arms towards heaven in a pleading gesture. Those were the days of oratory in the pulpit! Drowsy adults, mostly males, revive briefly until the pastoral harangue quiets down, then back to dozing. Another favorite pastime was watching the organist pumping away on the reed organ, the ostrich plume perched on her outlandish hat bobbing to and fro, like a shep dog wagging his tail. Oh for something to do, something to do. What a relief when the minister solemnly pronounces the benediction, and you can start thinking about Sunday dinner.

While on matters Sunday, let us interpose some thoughts about keeping the Day of Rest. It would be an understatement to say that my mother was a strict observer of the Sabbath. She was in the true sense a practicing Christian; a believer in answered prayer, and evidently tried in every way to live by the Golden Rule. An early friend of Mother’s, a Miss Diehlie, a Salvation Army lassie, really did a bang up job imparting the way of the Gospel to her. So, being acquainted with Mom’s religious convictions, you can understand the restricted activities on our Sundays. We could read an approved book, visit by permission, take a walk; no playing games. Sunday papers, which found their way up from New York a week or two late, were frowned upon because the printer “must have had to work Sundays.” Comics – “The Katzenjammer Kids,” “Happy Hooligan,” “Gloomy Gus,” etc.¹⁹, gained maternal reading permission after much coaxing. Well, Sunday, despite the tiring restrictions, still holds fond memories of a loving way of life in those days.

Occasionally on a Sunday Pop would get a horse and surrey²⁰, from some
farmer - maybe in exchange for work Pop’d done for him in the shop - and take us.
over to Uncle Doc’s and Aunt Kate’s for dinner and an hour or so’s visiting. Uncle Lewis Runion was most often called Uncle Doc, probably because of his habit of carrying a bag of pills and nostrums with him whenever he journeyed away from home. These relatives lived on a farm not too far away - I should say about an hour’s drive on a cool day, when the roads were good - in an area called Great Meadows. This aunt “set a good table” as I remember: fine home cured meats, light fresh bread; she made excellent preserves. I ‘specially liked her squash pie which she cleverly spiced; you could taste the nutmeg flavor. After dinner the men folks - I in tow - would walk around the buildings and fields inspecting stock and discussing crops. A vivid memory is the pig sty or hog pen - whichever name you choose for the dirty place. It was common practice those days to have a “swill barrel” by this pig abode into which was cast all manner of left over table scraps, potato peels, and - hold your nose - greasy dishwater. Gus, the hired man found another use for this barrel; he would toss a snapping turtle therein to let Mr. turtle fatten up on the mess for turtle soup. Gus would amuse us by teasing the snapper with a stick which was angrily snapped onto, the turtle holding fast whilst he was pulled around with the stick. In passing, I would like to make note that pigs are not naturally dirty animals as people used to believe; they really show quite clean habits when given proper quarters. More about piggies later in this journal; for now, that’s all.

Often recounted during my youth is the story of one of my first accidents, which occurred at Uncle Doc’s place; I must have been a little toddler at the time.
Someone was “pumping” hard on a high rope swing in the dooryard, and, as the story goes, I wandered into the path of the swinger’s sway just in time to get my little snorkle squashed by some part of a shoe. Some one hitched a horse to the buggy and they hurried me to nearby Hackettstown to the doctor. According to my best memory, while Mr. Md. worked over me with some straightening instruments, I shook a minature fist at him, repeating in angry fashion “Dewey, Dewey, Dewey.”

(At the time, Admiral Dewey was the hero of Manila Bay, and I suspect his name was very often mentioned.)

About once every year Mom managed a trip to New York for a visit with her family. Pop never cared for the city and in my memory only went there for a visit one time.

To me those first trips on the train rated in importance with a jet trip to Hawaii right now. The train ride seemed never to end - it actually took about three hours, stopping often to load milk cans, express, mail; these trains that stopped at Tranquility were known as “combinations” because they carried both passengers and commodities. The railroad terminated on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, where one boarded a ferry for the city. Yesterday, as now, that first sight of New York’s skyline must be breathtaking. By the way, I should mention that railroad cars of freight destined for New York were also ferried over, on car ferries.

Early memories are of the horse car trip across Chambers Street. Horse cars were rather primitive affairs; on the small side, four flanged wheels running over steel rails. About the only mechanical device on these contraptions was a brass crank with
which the driver wound up a brake chain. In all fairness we should mention that this brake did have a ratchet which kept the brake tight until the driver decided to proceed. A team of horses was hitched to the car; the driver stood outside on a platform, whip and lines in hand. Passengers got aboard, mister conductor jerked bell cord twice, whereupon sir driver tried, at one time, to release brakes and urge on his steeds forward, their hardest job being to get the heavy vehicle under motion. The last Horse Car trip I remember was on a cold winter day. Our driver was decked out in a big ulster, and cap pulled down over his ears; icicles hung from his Handlebar mustache; he often wiped dripping nose on the back of mittened hand. On that trip we shivered despite the conductor’s efforts with the coal stove towards the back of the car, while the wretched horses struggled over slippery cobble stones. Good riddance to that antiquated vehicle, I say. After the crosstown trip behind horses Mom and I struggled up the stairs with our not too imposing baggage to the elevated (railway) platform. What a thrill, standing there watching the approach of the little steam locomotive pulling its string of cars.

Probably I have gotten somewhat ahead of myself: At the top of the stairs leading to the trains one buys a five cent ticket for grownups; in that long past time I rode for free. After the ticket buying you took the ticket a few steps to where another man stood who was called the ticket chopper, and dropping the ticket into his “box” you were again on your way. Soon you are again aboard a train, the “L” it is called, whisking along uptown way above the street. There are many signs advertising all manner of goods and services to both sides of the street; some of the buildings are
apartment houses, and it was fun to see people in their homes while you rolled by. One old "loft building" always interested me; I imagine it was some thrifty Italian who had some goats right in New York City on the second or third floor of that building!

In no time at all we were at the 14th Street station where we got off, and walked a short distance to my grandparent’s home. They lived on a lovely quiet block of three story brown stone houses; the houses were built attached; one’s house was individualized by a short flight of stone steps to a flagstone landing and front door. So up the stairs grasping polished stair rail, pull hard on the brass knocker, and we’ve arrived.

Grandpa Frank was a retired butcher, having kept his own shop for years and accumulated a modest fortune sufficient for a comfortable life. Germans migrating to the United States very often were butchers by trade and followed that calling in their new home, often doing very well for themselves. For instance, Uncle Jacob (Leicht), married to Mom’s sister Anna, operated a good sized meat market way up town at 79th Street and Amsterdam Avenue.

Getting back to 14th Street, these houses were mostly of the same pattern. Basements generally were finished off comfortably to allow for a dining room for the family up front; kitchen and furnace also on that level. Second floor was living room facing street, and more formal dining room to rear; sleeping rooms and rooms used for sewing, etc. were on the upper floors; all floors were carpeted except basement which was scrubbed masonry.
The contrast between Tranquility frugality and New York's abundance of things at first usually about overwhelmed me to bashful speechlessness. I loved New York; to me it still is The City.

These grandparents usually talked between themselves in their native German, but after the years of business in New York they did real well with the English language. It was great fun to hear them conversing in English and, in a moment of excitement, suddenly revert to German.

Besides my grandparents the family also were: Taunta Peppler, Grandma's widowed sister, and a superb cook and baker; Aunt Amelia, who, one gathered from bits of family talk, should be thinking of marriage; and Uncles Alfred and Harry.

German living spelled lots of heavy foods such as big roasts of beef, also beef as "sauer fleisch und kartoffle claas\textsuperscript{27}"; legs of lamb; or other meat dishes fixed with home made noodles or "spetzel\textsuperscript{28}." Dinner always lead off with a big dish of soup; next to noodle soup my favorite was marrow ball, and ended with those delicious "keuchen" either "caffee, apfel, or peach\textsuperscript{29}." Vegetables never could be trusted to their own flavors and had to be reinforced by sauces of "speck" - a crisp fried bacon - or butter. No wonder my grandparents and their household were enclined to plumpness.

Breakfast was my delight, starting with some cooked fruit, usually prunes, and oatmeal cereal - cooked several hours. But my "piece de resistance" was those hard crusted water rolls that appeared before breakfast time, still warm in a paper bag from a neighborhood bakery. These you broke open, applied butter which melted on contact, wolfed them down with the assistance of coffee brewed from freshly ground
coffee. (They didn’t grind coffee at the store unless you requested, housewives liked to grind their own just before using.) So much for food; of course no expatriot of Germany would think of existing without a case of beer in the house. I don’t recall ever tasting it at Gram’s, so for me beer was just a curiosuty. Her Port wine was another story: she often gave me a little glass of it “to make me strong”; to say I disliked it certainly would be a big fib.

Grams Port rated just behind ice cream; one glass of it was the limit - a small wine glass. Of ice cream it seems I never could - or never can - to this day get my fill.

I suppose you of this generation think of pre-motorized New York as a slow, quiet place; this idea could not be farther wrong. It was just plain fast moving bedlam. Everything moved on iron or steel: within earshot the clop, clop of maybe 75 horses’ hoof beats on cobbled streets; three or four dozen iron-tired wagons or other vehicles. Outside of bicycles, rubber treads were not in use at all. Did I dislike the noise; did it frighten me? I should say not, I loved every minute of it, even the screeching wheels of elevated trains as they hugged the rails going around curves. Sometimes a track worker would come along with a pail of heavy grease and smear it along the inside of the rails on curves. This stopped the screeching for a while.

After a few days downtown at my grandparents we went up to Mom’s sister’s home - Aunt Anna, and Uncle Jack Leicht - at 79th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. The business - a model meat market, also “game in season” and fresh fish market - occupied the ground floor; upstairs were spacious living quarters.
The butchers kept themselves very clean and presentable in white shirts, stiffly starched collars with neat ties, and shined shoes. They often - for some reason unknown to me - wore stiff brimmed “Kelly” straw hats while at work behind the counters, also straw “wristlets” to protect shirt sleeves from blood stains. Uncle Jack (we Americanized his name Jacob to Jack) greeted affluent and good old customers; he was the picture of a well dressed, prosperous, man of business. On warm days the family often remarked upon his habit of changing shirts and other linen at midday.

The butchers, countermen, delivery boys, and cashier all were fed in relays at the big family table; they rated socially with the family, and everyone joked, talked shop, just as though all lived together. Mary Cox, a sour dispositioned Irish girl, sort of ruled the house. She was a good cook. Another daughter of Erin, a Mrs. Harrigan, helped out with the housekeeping. Aunt Anna usually was in the cashier’s “cage” with Miss Diehl.

If one boasted living like a prince at Grandma’s, one’s fare became kingly at Aunt Anna’s. Cousin Marjorie’s age was about the same as mine; we played, and were often given our meals together. How I liked those French lamb chops, all the fat & grizzley stuff trimmed away, looking for all like big quarter notes in the music books; little, tender steaks, and, for dessert, from the French bakery those luscious “charlotte russe.”

The business was called The Amidon Market and it’s customers were mostly “well-to-do” folk, living along the then fashionable Riverside Drive section.

Usually once or twice during a visit I was allowed to go along with one of the
delivery wagons taking out orders. The vehicle was always neat, brightly painted, and in good repair. One sat up high behind a strong, well groomed horse. Those horses always seemed intelligent, and well trained. Arriving at customers home the driver spoke “whoa,” snapped a strap to bit ring; the hitching block weighed I suppose three to five pounds but mister horse never seemed to have any ideas of moving until his driver’s return. Well, on those rides I sure got a lot of look at the Hudson, Grant’s Tomb, and many well dressed ladies and gentlemen out for leisurely strolls. It was great fun.

While on the subject of horses, fire horses those beautiful, romantic creatures, part of every hook and ladder company, were by far out my favorites. Near Uncle Jack’s was a fire house ruled by Captain MacNamara who was our local hero. Acquaintance at a nearby fire house was a much sought favor of the masculine set. Uncle Jack was, so to speak, on beer quaffing and poker playing relations at Capt. Mac’s headquarters. Those privileged “boys” played cards, swapped yarns, moistened throats, and what not well into the wee hours. Sometimes it was rumored that they entertained “fancy girls,” maybe from a chorus at the local theater - just rumor you know! Wives scolded and stormed at hubby - to no avail.

On rare occasions Uncle Jack would take Cousin Marjorie and I to HIS firehouse, and I remember one-time Captain MacNamara let us stay in a safe place until an alarm came in. Three perfectly matched white horses quickly took positions, harness suspended above them was released falling into place on their backs, everything in seconds secured by snaps, and the highly polished brass steamer is off
to the fire. Steam was kept up constantly in the boiler, which fed steam into the pump for water pressure at the scene of a fire. The long hook and ladder followed - this too had white horses, as a fire company always had matched horses all around. What a sight, those galloping steeds bearing down the street to the clamor of bell and blaring of steam whistle. That we will never see again - for sure.

So many horses on the street provided a byproduct, which in turn necessitated street cleaning. (People joked about the departure of sparrows from streets when automotive vehicles came into use and displaced horses. Birds, mostly sparrows, also pigeons did follow the horses and picked over their droppings.) These outfits for street cleaning were simply a good sized metal can, mounted in a two wheeled frame, and a handle bar for pushing it from “pile” to “pile.” They were presided over by either a luxuriously mustached Italian or a well fed Irishman, either of whom could be said that they were real happy to have such a good job in their newly adopted America. It is interesting to note that most public jobs in New York such as street car conductors and motormen, policemen, and up the ladder to mayor were likely to be Irishmen. Probably this is accounted for by the fact that the majority of politicians in the city were Irish Catholics, and they in turn “took care of their family” and friends with city jobs.

The city was a hard place for horses; cobbled streets gave them sore feet, and they often had to be taken outside the city for a rest in some pasture. When I was a kid, farmers liked to buy foot sore car or truck horses; they often had six or eight good years left for farm work. Their sore feet soon healed, and Mr. or Mrs. horse
seemed happy to get back to nature. Winter was the cruelest time for city horses; they slipped about on icy streets, sometimes breaking a leg, in which case the poor animals were shot and hauled away.

Those were the days when the LIVE theater flourished - no “canned” music; movies had not arrived - oh maybe a few one reel comedy “silents” of course. Vaudville - which was a sort of variety show, consisting of five to seven unrelated acts - was wonderful entertainment. A good vaudville show went the entire gamut of acting from comedy to drama: often leading with a popular singer with the latest songs, and maybe leading up to an unknown song which the audience would take unto themselves and make it a new popular number; then would be mixed in a snappy dancer or dance team. Then one could be hearing some future violin or piano virtuoso, or, maybe an act would be trained animals such as dogs, even seals bouncing balls and juggling. For some reason one knew that the last act would be the acrobats - real good too - but by this time the audience who remain is being annoyed by early departures. One could attend a matinee performance for just a quarter. One time I remember several of the family attended a neighborhood vaudville performance. We kids got in for fifteen cents. The regular seats were about all taken, but there were “boxes” to the sides of the stage unoccupied. So the manager escorted our group to one of these boxes where we sat “in style” in regular chairs. During the show a funny comedian delighted cousin Marjorie and me by coming over to our box, and talking to us, then, turning to the audience announced, “Look at all the sardines in a box.”
All theaters maintained first rate music organizations from ensembles of three to four players up to full sized orchestras which played before performances - often overtures or tunes of the day. They also furnished the music for acts such as dancers and singers, and played during intermissions. The whole performance therefore was an atmosphere of continuity.

Quality performances were maintained by good actors and acts being retained on “circuits” of a theater chain. When an act lost its popularity at a theater it was moved on to another theater of the chain. Largest of the circuits was Keith and Proctor; Albee was another.

During my childhood adults did not have much to say about Burlesque shows before children; my goodness they were too sexy. Anything pertaining to sex must not pervert our tender minds, which transparent secrecy surely set the stage for a kid’s curiosity. Well anyway, the ladies attired in brief costumes on bill boards looked real funny, we thought.

In a class by itself was the New York Hippodrome, a huge place, home of great spectacles. Besides the great main floor there rose first, second, and third balcony - the third often called “nigger heaven” for obvious reasons. Giant tableaus were performed on the stage; one I recall was girls climbing a rope net suspended across the entire back stage area, unfurling their capes to form a great American flag. It’s huge stage contained a tank where girls did aquatic acts, and one held one’s breath as a trim lady in tights climbed a rope ladder up to where dome lights shone, poised, and gracefully dove down into the water. John McCormick sang there - I
didn’t hear him - and such orators as William Jennings Bryan\textsuperscript{36} made use of the great place.

The elite in entertainment was, and to quite an extent still is, housed in a number of playhouses within the “Theater District” - an area roughly from Times Square 42\textsuperscript{nd} Street to 57\textsuperscript{th} Street. In these comparatively small theaters one savors the finest in plays from drama to comedy, and musical comedy; light opera - the best. Admission prices being rather high, the closest I ever got to see any of these shows when a kid was the marquee announcements. Over the years I have at some time or other been to performances in most of these houses. Happily, one may still enjoy the offerings of great acting in many of these playhouses, often spoken of as “The Legidimate Stage.” Hope I have not “bored” you with the theater section; the “live stage” is one of my first “Loves.”

Walking in New York was pleasant then; you might say it was the fashionable thing to do on a pleasant afternoon. A stroll over to Riverside Drive, heading north through the park where one could visit Grant’s Tomb, the while enjoying pleasure, or commercial craft on the Hudson. Often several naval craft - destroyers, or big battle ships - anchored offshore, giving the crew shore leave. Then, as I suppose it would be today, it was amusing to find the sailor boys on shore leave seldom without a girl on his arm. The often unanswered question - “Where do the girls come from?” On occasion launches from the dreadnaught took civilians out for a tour of the big “battle wagons.” One time I was privileged to walk the decks of the old battleship \textit{Pennsylvania} when it anchored off 96\textsuperscript{th} Street.
Another easy walk was eastward to the Museum of Natural History in Central Park where on unpleasant days one could spend hour after hour. To me the greatest wonderment was those great reconstructed whales hanging from the ceiling; mummies from Egypt; American Indian villages; ancient jewelry including early watches, and rare precious jewels. While in Central Park one could have fun feeding tame squirrels; visit the zoo; admire the handsomely dressed ladies and gentlemen driving through the park behind prancing horses, in open carriages. Many rode on saddled horses along the winding “bridle paths” of the park. Central Park is contained between 57th and 110th Streets. It contains two small lakes, great trees, statuary and fountains, bridle paths, everywhere natural beauty rather suggestive of a Garden of Eden surrounded by the tumult of the great metropolis.

The lakes were kept clean and attractive. In warm seasons stately swans glided on their waters, young couples, and families leisurely rowed about in rented boats. When the lakes froze over crowds of skaters turned out for the sport. The Parks Department moved small buildings on the ice near shore, where, for a dime - you often tipped the attendant five cents - skates are put on and shoes checked in a warm spot until needed. I skated there whenever possible; it was great fun, everyone seemed so friendly, and “let down” their rather formal city manners.

Our day of departure for Tranquility came with a general sense of trepidation at the prospect of finding our way downtown, then crosstown to the ferry, then getting on the right train. My recollection is that Mom usually got to the terminal after numerous inquiries from ticket sellers at elevated station, and often with the help of a
friendly policeman, but arriving at the train shed she'd usually become helplessly bewildered. The outcome generally then would be that some kindly gentleman, sensing our plight, would inquire our destination and, next thing we knew, have us settled in the right coach for home.

Sorry to say, going back home to Tranquility, our home, offered too much in the way of austerity for one who had tasted the lush fare of New York City. I wasn't, as I recollect, a bit excited.

My brother, John, being ten years older than I, seemed to do everything I would liked to have done but couldn't. Summers found him along the Pequest fishing, or swimming, with his pals. Occasionally Mom would let me go along with John, and what a time I would have. At the swimming hole the boys, naked, dove into deep water from a partially fallen tree, raced on the shore, and stunted. Tired of swimming they often chose sides and engaged in a free-for-all mud battle. After getting thoroughly plastered, they'd swim some more to get the muck washed off, and, after drying off in the sun, get dressed. Somewhere between events John managed to take me for some adventure in deep water - out for a swim - although John did the swimming, I firmly anchored on his back, my arms over his shoulders, holding on "for dear life." No need to be afraid; John was a fine strong swimmer as he is to this day. One winter day 'speciallly I remember John skating on the mill pond, pulling me along on a sled at breakneck speed. Those were some of the happy times in our childhood.

John, alone or in league with his friends, managed to get into a good deal of
trouble through boyish pranks; some of those escapades didn’t turn out too funny either. One practice that backfired occasionally was shooting pheasants in the graveyard. One boundary of this quiet burial ground was a huge property, the Rutherford-Stuyvestant Estate, which abounded with game, especially “birds.” When sportsmen got to plugging away at the birds many of the frightened pheasants took refuge amongst greenery of the cemetery, staying there where they were not bothered so much. Easy for the boys “who knew” to slip in for a shot, and get out with their bird. But the constable thought differently about disturbing the peace of that hallowed spot, and often gave chase - no cars those days and you can just bet the boys saw to it that they didn’t get caught. (Oddly enough, these same boys made good money beating bushes or scaring up birds in other ways for guests to shoot at. They didn’t give a hang if the boys got themselves a bird - or where. The townsfolk did resent “disrespect for the dead”; poor souls had to have something to break the monotony!)38

Then there was the Halloween prank when a dead calf was pulled to the top of a flagpole at the home of a crotchety old fellow who “had it in for fresh young scallywags.” That time John and some of the other pranksters disappeared for a couple of days until the heat died down. Another daring stunt got John into a real serious situation. Over the store was the lodge rooms of the Patriotic Order Sons of America (P.O.S. of A.)39, a “secret order” which threatened dire consequences to any member divulging their ritualistic work. Hard by the lodge rooms stood a great flag pole to accommodate the attesting American Flag. To the boys this pole was a
temptation, and a challenge. John was “elected” to climb the pole during lodge meeting time, to peek in, and see what was going on. He shinnied up the pole, was discovered and promptly scared down and away. Not so easily was assuaged the wrath of those self styled pat[r]iots; that took time. Then, as now, oldsters condemned the younger generation as “worse.”

I never told you much about Pop. He was a quiet, patient person and, like Mom, blessed with fine features. Of medium stature never showing any excess weight, curley and - in my memory showing graying - hair, a neatly trimmed mustache - your grandfather Runion’s appearance was better than most men of his day. Well we just had to watch personal appearances; Mom insisted on neatness about our person, and especially clean clothes. Before getting afield from Pop’s personality, you would be missing something if I didn’t mention his smoking and pipes he smoked. He bought them at “the store” for around “two shillings” (a quarter) and smoked one until it actually burned up. Pop used to say that he smoked “once a day all day long” which was more or less the truth. Pop smoked a cigar as appreciatively as a Frenchman delicately pecks away at his peach. When he’d “come by one” it would be “laid up” for Sunday enjoyment. Then, on the great occasion, using the sharp blade of his pocket knife to carefully clip off the drawing end of his sweet smelling missile, Pop reverently places the nipped end between appreciative lips. Then out of his vest pocket he fetches one of those big blue tipped matches - of yore vintage - briskly scratches it on some conveniently rough surface and, presto, she’s lit. A leisurely pull, a sly little smile, as the aromatic outpouring is duly
appreciated. Now, parted from lips and held jauntily at arm’s length, El Smoko is contemplatively observed before being thoroughly cremated - by Pop. I make mention of my Father’s smoking because it seemed so personal, and part of his personality. So many people just didn’t smell nice those days - baths were few and far between - but believe me Pop had the pleasantest smoke odor about him imaginable.

As far as we could learn, Pop’s formal education consisted of three or four months in a one room school in Bucks County, of Pennsylvania. Where he picked that vast store of general information has always mystified me. The answer may be his habit of reading every available book, or other printed stuff he could lay his hands on. Sundays he read from the Bible a great deal. His politics were Republican; Democrats were in the camp of traitors! Pop wrote a weekly column of Tranquility news for the Sussex Register published in Newton, the county seat. Many of the mechanics and utensils he employed in writing this column are now about obsolete. For instance a bottle of ink, the steel pen which was dipped into the “ink well,” a blotter to take up excess ink, and the fine “Fools Cap” paper he used. One evening a week was devoted to the ritual of composing that column. I can still see Pop leading off with a flourishing capital, and continuing ever so slowly and carefully - no trouble for the typesetter in that copy. At the time I had never even seen such a wonder as a typewriter. Some years later my first contact with this big noisy Remington writer was in Uncle Charles real estate office. (Aunt Amelia did get married to an acceptable German descent young man by the name of Charles Ferdinand F+rer.)
Pop ran a one man operation of the town wheelwright shop. The neat little shop was perched on the bank of the Pequest creek, just a few paces further down the road from the store. A wheelwright was expected to build new or repair any wagon from a two wheeled sulkey to some type of farm vehicle; his was a very important job in those horse and buggy days. In practice he seldom or never built completely a wagon but like a garage man he was expected “to keep ‘em rolling.”

I recall a fine spring morning; I could think of nothing more pleasant than playing around the shop. Next fall would go to school - if the “Board” could get someone to teach. It seems that school had ended rather abruptly that spring; it was supposed to have continued until the end of May, but the teacher, Miss Young put it, she was at the end of her endurance with those big louts John (brother) and Eli Sidner. The climax came when these two culprits were told to stay after school, and they proceeded to pick up teacher, carry her outside where they gently deposited her on the grass. The upshot of the affair was that Miss Young resigned, and the School Board said the boys were expelled. Well, to get on with the story, it seemed a good time to ask Pop so I kind of edged up and said, “Pop would it be alright to go with you this morning?”

Pop - “I suppose so, but you understand I don’t aim to be chasing you off the river bank all morning. Might as well start, where’s your mother?”

“Coming.” (I suspect Mom had been eavesdropping, and glad of a chance to get me out from under foot.) Pop was liable to become all befuddled at any show of affection; he never did seem to used to any demonstration of feelings, and probably
was anxious to be off without a “fuss” - as he’d put it. We kids used to coax, “Pop kiss us,” and then tell him, “Gosh Pop, you kiss funny.” Mom, disposing with us by a hug for me and a smack on Pop’s cheek, and a parting admonition: “Now for goodness sake don’t forget to come home for dinner. How you expect me to keep meals all hours beats me.”

So off we start at a leisurely pace - Pop just could not hurry. He accomplished great loads of work at what he called a “moderate pace.” What a thrill as you’d come to the store, a short way on the shop, and there was the water backed up into the mill pond right up to the bank at the rear of the shop. The wheelwright shop fronted about 30 feet on a lane which ran some quarter of a mile downstream to a grist and saw mill. A dam across the river made deep water for considerable distance up stream. In passing it is of interest to note how these economic packages - grist, and saw mill, wagon shop, blacksmith shop, general store and railroad - kept the small towns on their feet. Also it is interesting that modern auto transportation is dealing the death blow to small towns.

The front of the shop was mostly two big rolling doors, which allowed vehicles to be pushed into either side. On pleasant days most jobs were done out front.

“What we going to do today Pop; much on hand to do?”

“Well” - long pause - “plenty to do, wheels on that buggy got to be readied to ‘tireup’, box to make for heavy wagon, things coming in all the time. Say.” Pop, looking at me sorta sid[e]wise, a twinkle in his eye, “You hintin’ at something? Bet
we’re both thinking same thing; just look at the mist risin’ off the water!”

“Sure ought to be a good day for some fishing,” I allowed.

Pop “allowed so” also. “Probably make more money than the shop,” he continued. “Try working both ends for a while.”

Pop said, “Now you sweep up some, and I’ll see about getting a line out.”

(They tell me Pop used to take me with him when I was a real little shaver, and put me, for safe keeping, in a big wooden box lined deep with wood shavings.) Pop disappeared outside the shop soon reappearing with a large tin can in which would be a few shiners from our bait box which we kept chained to a stake off the bank. Sometimes we would use a lively frog for bait. Then opening a door on the river side, Pop’d reach down a long bamboo pole from under the eaves, hook on the live bait, put the bobber about three feet up, and toss the bait into deep water just beyond a bunch of cat-tails. Fixing the butt of the pole in a loop of leather nailed to the floor inside made a good firm anchor for our outfit. It was not necessary to warn me about watching the bobber.

Pop went to work on a pine board with one of his long wooden planes, working it back and forth over the board leaving it smooth as could be. “Bait looks real lively out there the way he pulls that cork around, Pop,” I’d remark.

Pop - “You’d be too if you ‘was’ a little fish way out there hooked onto a line, where ther’d likely be something swimming around about a hundred times your size, with a hungry look in his eye. Just watch things here a few minutes while I step over and ask Steelo about tirin’ them wheels after dinner.” Steelo was the proprietor of
the blacksmith shop, also on the stream just across the road upstream. After completing the wood work on a job Pop’d tote it over to have the necessary iron work done on it.

Pop maybe’d been gone five minutes when that cork went sailing off, then kerplunk down out of sight. I ran to the doorway yelling, “Hey Pop we got an old wallaper on the line. Don’t know’s I can handle him.”

Big Steelo stood laughing - “Vat you call dat - you got ‘a fish-wright shop’?” Pop started back - at his leisurely pace - looking for all annoyed at Steelo’s “smart” remark. I ran back to take a look at how things were going in our fish department; whatever was on the other end had the tip of the pole under water, and pulling hard. Well, I got the idea I’d better take charge before that fish decided to backtrack and get himself some slack line. Bracing myself against the door frame, and digging in my heels, I grabbed the pole just as Pop walked in - just in time: I was no match for that fish. It turned out to be a big pickeral, over half as long as I was at the time.

Pop was again in good spirits, and said, “Got yourself a big fish boy, what you going to do with him?”

“Gosh, Pop, I’d’a never landed him myself. Do you s’pose I could get him home?”

Pop grinned broad like. “Wouldn’t wonder you might make it. He’s ‘bout as big as you ‘be.’ I’ll cut a stick so’s you can carry him.”

So, off I started for home. Of course Frank LeBar had to be on the store porch, and remarked, “Now I wonder - which is carrying which,” and I’d never been
so near being mad at him. Right then I couldn’t think of any appropriate retort, and had to settle with an ignominious “awh.” I’d just about made it home when mister fish gave a powerful wiggle, loosening my grip on the slimy stick. Down into the dusty road [he] flopped around like a chicken with its head chopped off. This had to happen next to old man Van Riper’s, and he just loved a good joke - that is on the other fellow. Pete Van Riper wasn’t so old really, although he was somewhat older than Pop; anyway that two were great cronies. Pop used to laugh and remark that Pete was just an old liar: Pete got to telling about how he got a pension for serving in the Civil war, and Pop said as how he didn’t see how that was possible unless he was a water boy. One time Mom admired some flowers in the Van Riper yard and the old boy graciously presented her with some little plants so Mom could enjoy the blooms in her flower bed. Well, Mom the city Girl, never forgave Pete, or Pop either for that matter for going along with the hoax, when the little plants grew into big burdocks.

Well, to get back to my predicament, Pete studied the fish for some time with mock concern, and wanted to know, “What’s the matter with the critter? Do you calculate he might be dustin’ for lice?”

I missed the point. “Naw, he ain’t got no such thing as lice.” I managed to get my load of fish across to our place to the tune of Pete’s “haw, haw, haw.” “Hey, Mom, look what I got. Ought t’go over five pounds,” and Mom bounding out to me: “Well for goodness sakes, now isn’t that a beauty - almost frightens you it’s so big. Do you suppose we could dress him to cook? Must say it’s welcome, about the nearest thing you get to fresh meat around here.” We took him out by the wood pile,
that is after first washing the big boy off under the hand pump, and “dressed him off”!

I must tell you about Mr. Colgrove. He was an itinerate stove merchant-deluxe. One day I spied this fine rig, a smart pair of mules stepping ahead of a high spring wagon. On the seat reposed a personality which turned out to be Mr. Colgrove. Next thing I knew he'd pulled up in front of our place and, addressed, “Hello young man, your daddy and mamma home.” No sooner said than done. With one eye on the two shiny black kitchen ranges (cooking stoves), I quickly rounded up my parents. What a man, this Mr. Colgrove - jauntily plump, and smiles from tips of a well trimmed mustache to ears. From the start he seemed to take over as though we were old discovered kin folks. With apparent sincerity he paid Mom compliments about her nicely kept house and cookery. At his suggestion, “Why not set up one of the stoves, and use it for cooking supper,” and presto old stove set off to the side and one of the beauties put in its place. Somehow we arranged stabling for the mules, and our new friend was asked to stay overnight. We didn’t know it then, but I bet he planned it that way all along. (Those days travellers customarily were fed, and, if late in the day, provided with a place to sleep. Many male wanderers called tramps trudged around the country from place to place. Although they seemed to be just a lazy, or discouraged lot country people were most often afraid not to take them in as rumor was they sometimes burned barns or did other damage if turned away. When one of these poor souls turned up Mom would have nothing but to feed him, then try to get him on his way as quickly as possible.) Well that night I was allowed up later than any I’d remembered, the stories our guest told had me entranced. Next morning
at breakfast brother Colgrove related to us how he’d dreamed that big pumpkins
rolled down the slope, and busted up against the house, and fine pancakes, like
mom’s popped out of them. Next morning off drove Mr. Colgrove - with one stove!
Well, no one can say we didn’t need a stove, but I often wondered how, and when it
got paid for. It was, I suppose, our first experience with that modern gimmick,
Installment buying. That turned out to be a good stove and, fatefully, it outlasted my
parents.

Who can say when we left Tranquility? All I can remember is that I was a
little fellow, and I vaguely remember a short term in the little school before that
spring moving - I put it either 1903 or four. We, all except Pop, had the “itch” to
settle some other place. Mom, never seemed to get over her tiredness and, from all
accounts, I was not thriving at all. Home diagnosis was malaria. True the Pequest
river and mill pond were ideal breeding spots for mosquitos, so there may have been
some theory justification for malaria. Then the ever present lack of cash was one of
the compelling reasons for “trying something else.” Pop had worked faithfully at his
trade but like the good natured minister, farmers took advantage of his easy going
ways. Often they “just forgot” to “settle up”; more often he was loaded up with farm
produce, much which we couldn’t use, in lieu of cash. Pop, if I remember correctly,
didn’t care too much for farming, and sort of took a dim view of the matter at the
time.

How exciting, we are going to live on a big farm, and have cows, horses, pigs,
chickens, lots of cats, or anyway that was the way of a little boy’s imaginings.
Farewell Tranquility. Thus ends an Era of the Runion Saga.
Marksboro

In those days, the early 1900's, moving, or transplanting a family “from here to there,” was a major undertaking. Considering that everything had to be handled by horse and wagon, it is not surprising that heads of families were apt to think twice before deciding to pull up stakes for greener pastures.

For farmers April usually was moving month. That time, early in the month, allowed for plowing and getting crops planted, but after an April moving, that year's spring “seeding” generally was late to be sure.

A moving certainly was the test of one’s friends, and their willingness to lend a hand - especially those friends with sturdy road vehicles and a good team of horses.

Well, first one must settle on moving day, then approach likely friends who had suitable rigs. At this point you become surprised at the prevalance of sickness amongst one’s prospective movers. The custom of this day’s services being considered a neighborly favor between friends didn’t help much either. Finally the Fatal day is decided upon, and household things are gathered together as best as our knowledge of moving allowed.

Now, early moving day, a driver with one of the faster teams, and a light rig, loaded with everything necessary for a bountiful dinner, Mom aboard, starts out well ahead of the others. Often the cook stove has been set up the day before, and probably a kindly neighbor-to-be lady gets a fire started. Now is the time Mom finds out whether the chimney in the new home is going to furnish a “good draught” or turn out to be a smoker! At any odds “the cook,” meaning Mom in this case, is allowed no
excuses, and is expected to dish up dinner by the time the last wagon arrives. With luck, and no break downs, no loads stuck in muddy roads, all hands arrive by noon. Pop’s popularity ups noticeably at the offering of a little nip for the menfolks, from a bottle which we do not know exists. So all sit down for a good dinner, and discussions on possibilities for the new farm business. Soon our friends have started back to their homes, so as to be “back afore dark,” and in time for their evening chores. We are now at home on the “Tiel Farm” just a mile or so from the little town of Marksboro.

Pop and John now have the doubtful privilege of getting acquainted with what live stock is on the place, and taking care of the evening chores. They soon find out which cows are hard milkers, and which ones will try kicking over the milk pail. Mom and Jessie, of course, will get beds set up, and some of the furniture set into place before dark. As I remember we were all tired, but we liked the new place and were happy there.

Early memories of that farm home - although I do not remember much about the house itself - are joyful ones. You approached the house and outbuildings from the main road on a lane around a quarter of a mile long, lined on both sides with huge sugar maples. The whole atmosphere of the place was spaciousness, and a feeling of being turned loose!

The farm, as the name implied, was owned by a Mrs. Tiel. There were then three types or methods of farm operations, as follows. First [was the] owner operated, or the family homestead farm, where often generations of a family had
made it their home and livelihood. These farms were most often kept in a continuous
state of improvement. Second method was for a farmer to "money rent" from the
owner. Sometimes these cash renters were good farmers who got a start this way, and
later acquired their own farms. The last method was farming on shares, the owner
furnishing a farm and part of the livestock, and tools; the farmer furnishing the other
half of livestock, equipment, and "working" the farm. Costs, pertaining to the
running of the farm such as seed that had to be purchased, were shared. Likewise, net
income was divided equally between owner and farmer.

The Tiel farm was "run on shares." So far as I remember we got along quite
well there, although, at times, I remember that Mrs. Tiel thought we should be doing
better, and show more income.

What cattle were on the farm when we moved there belonged to the owner,
and we were expected to procure a matching number of cows. There were no horses
on the place, and that situation had to be taken care of, and quickly. Also the farmer
on the place must needs furnish a good share of the farm equipage of machinery,
wagons, and small tools. So to get these neccessities Pop went to "Vendues." (Since
then the colloquialism "vendue" has given way to the term auction, or simple
advertised "public sale.") These farm sales were advertised on posters at places such
as stores, and creameries, also in the local weekly newspaper. The advertisement
generally read something like this:

VENDUE

The undersigned will offer at public sale, the following items, at his
farm located about 2 miles north of Greenville, on the Dark Moon Road on Saturday, April 9th 1904 commencing at 10 o’clock in the forenoon.

(Then items listed)

Sig. Wm. S. Applegate, owner

M. T. Farr, auctioneer

These farm auctions, besides serving as a medium for disposing of no longer needed stock, equipment, and often household goods, were favorite spots for social get-togethers. Often ladies from some nearby church put on a dinner at the sale, for a very reasonable price hoping to clear a little money for their usual sparse treasury.

Manager, master of ceremonies, the man responsible mostly for success, or failure, of each sale, without question is Mister Auctioneer. His stock of jokes, cajoling abilities, and sales chant serve to hold the crowd interest, the while keeping things going at a snappy pace.

It was at one of these venues that Pop bought a pair of horses, Bill and Fanny. They made a likable team - Bill, a slow, quiet grey; Fanny, the sorrel mare, not so quiet, but they were both about of a size, and proved a useful pair. Farm horses were desirably heavy enough for general farm work, but not too big and clumsy for the road. Later, we got another older horse, which had been used some at sulkey racing. Her name was Kitty; she was a chestnut, with rather long legs, and could step along right good with a buggy or cutter. She never was much good on the farm, as her habit of prancing about tromped down row crops, and she quickly tired at
such jobs as plowing. Old Bill, as we called him, was my favorite, but all horses to me seemed lovable creatures.

At other sales Pop picked up whatever else was needed: cows to balance those already on the farm, wagons, farm machinery. All these buying expeditions, spring work, and taking care of morning and night chores, didn’t leave much time on our hands for lonesomeness. We soon settled down to life on the farm; I’m afraid Pop did miss his old routine at the shop, however.

Mornings, every day of the week, Kitty was hitched to the spring wagon to haul the evening and morning milk to the Borden receiving plant in Marksboro. Maybe I ought to tell you how milk was handled “them” days. We milked “by hand,” and I’m afraid with dirty hands more often than enough. Milk from the evening milking was “cooled down” at the spring house, a small building enclosing a bubbling spring of water. Morning milk was not required to be cooled. Sanitary conditions at the time were mostly overlooked; maybe once a year an inspector from the Borden Company would arrive at the farm, and lay down some sanitation rules, or, if he felt the farmer was disregarding all rules of cleanliness, “threwed out” his dairy. Well, arriving at the milk station, you got your rig in line and nobody was in a hurry - a good chance to do some visiting. Kitty usually managed to make a nuisance of herself with her fancy stepping, and shying at everything most she saw. At the platform, the plant manager, Mr. Paddock, takes a big smell from the proferred cans. If [there is] no odor of wild onions or noticeable barn stink, he plunks in a measuring stick, marks down the number of quarts, and dumps it into a vat. In case
the boss doesn’t like the smell of things, you’ve got some milk on your hands which, if it is not too bad can be churned for butter, otherwise - there’s always the hogs. We usually kept the milk from a Jersey cow - this breed gives milk with the highest butterfat, and they didn’t pay extra for high butterfat those days - which was used for the home table, and from which we made butter for home use. (Speaking of butterfat, milk companies had to watch out for watered milk, hence the old quip “The pump is a farmer’s best friend.”) Tommy, the eldest of “the Maguire boys,” as my half brothers often were called, usually drove to the milk plant. Before we moved to the farm he had lived most of the time with my Grandparents in New York. I haven’t mentioned this before: Thomas had not matured mentally; he had had a bout with mastoids when a child, and his mental processes had halted at about the twelve year level. He could read fairly, and write passably, which was sort of a blessing for one of his condition.

Marksboro was about comparable in size to Tranquility - if anything, a little larger. As we drove into town there was the hotel - there were stables in connection with the hostelry. The proprietor was, in the parlance of the day, a horse fancier. Next, one came to two grocery stores on opposite sides of the road. You turned off right, downgrade past the village blacksmith shop, and the road descends to the Paulins Kill valley. Then, the “kill” was a pleasant clean stream, furnishing water power along its course, and providing the railroad a water level grade for it’s roadbed. [The] grist mill [was] on the high East bank; then across the bridge the railroad station and milk receiving plant are located on the lower West shore of the Kill. Continuing south at the stores instead of going to the river, and going towards
Blairstown, you’d come to a one room school, and diagonally across the road [was] the Presbyterian Church\(^{47}\). This dignified old church has since burned, and I am told has been rebuilt.

The Railroad, “The New York, Susquehanna, & Western R.R.” - much shorter than the long name implied: it’s main line ran from Jersey City to Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania; there was a short coal line into the Pocono Mountains - “The Wilkesbarre & Eastern R.R.,” a branch line - all told maybe 125 miles. But it was the town’s link with life beyond our small world. There were two passenger trains daily to New York; two arrived from the city. Besides passengers these trains carried mail, and express shipments. The afternoon train carried all milk for the city in special iced milk cars. One could send a Western Union telegram from the railroad depot, that being our one fast mode of communication. In fact, Mr. Garris\(^{48}\), the station agent, all togged out in his blue uniform with brass buttons, and a smart cap, might easily rate the town’s most important citizen. He could dispatch a shipment of freight or express to about any point in the U.S.; sell you a ticket to many places; transmit and receive telegrams; not to mention his telegraphic duties concerning the safe movement of trains. An interesting sideshow on railroad travel, one of the town’s enterprising ladies had a little deal going with a ten trip ticket to New York, which was considerably cheaper than regular round trip fares. She would buy three or four of these tickets, and rent them to trusted persons going to the city, adding a little profit for herself. Of course the ticket stated it was only for use by the person signing, but in those days most people knew the conductors, and he knew the set up, and

---

\(^{47}\) [Note: The Church mentioned in the text has since burned and has been rebuilt.]

\(^{48}\) [Note: Mr. Garris is described as the station agent, who performed various functions related to the railroad.]
everybody was happy.

The route of the daily trip with milk was past the store where we did our trading - the other store across the road, sold some groceries and dry goods, but I don’t remember much about it. One corner of the store where we traded was given over to the post office; it was run by Milt Lanning, and known as Lanning’s. The stone mill also was owned by Mr. Lanning. So on the milk trip, eggs could be taken along to be traded for groceries, or other household items and, of course, we never failed to look into the incoming mail as well as post any letters we had brought along.

Soon after we were settled on the farm Prince arrived in a crate, a gift from a friend of Grandpa Frank. Prince was something special in the dog kingdom; he was king size, long white with reddish markings hair, soft floppy ears, and a squarish nose. His immediate ancestors were reported half of Newfoundland blood, the other half something else. Prince surely didn’t have any adjustment troubles - he just adopted us and the country in toto. Sometimes I suspect he wandered over a good part of Warren County. Pop and Prince were inseparable; he was on Pop’s heels to the fields, woods, or wherever. Pop ventured outside. Prince had one “trick” which often made Pop real angry. Once in a while it was necessary for my father to “go to town” and companion Prince could never understand why he couldn’t go along. On these occasions, when told to go back, he would dutifully, if sulkily turn around towards the house. But all was not lost for “faithful Prince,” and near the edge of town what should appear but, of course, Prince who is highly delighted with himself. Barking and jumping about, the old boy can’t seem to understand Pop’s lack of
enthusiasm. Prince has made a fancy, roundabout trek, and met the rig just where he’d planned, and no praise! Well, rather than have Prince visit all his canine friends in town, it all ends up by the Prince riding proudly beside Father into town. On most occasions Pop was Prince’s staunch defender. For instance, in certain seasons Prince rather inclined to emulate brother Tom Cat, disappearing unaccountably for days. Pop’s defense - “People shouldn’t keep those sluts around!”

My hazy memory is of that first year on the farm being crammed with interesting happenings: kittens, baby ducklings and chicks, calves were born; finding little baby bunnies in their soft nest fashioned from their mommie’s own hair; discovering the first Jack-in-the-Pulpit along the brook in a damp spot. Or, just trotting over fields and wood, Prince in the lead, stopping where the brook was deeper at a quiet spot to lie down flat on one’s stomach, and peer down at the chubs swimming about.

Crops turned out right good that summer. John plowed a field of old sod, and raised a bumper crop of corn. On a side hill, buckwheat did well, so that took care of flour for pancakes during the cold months. And, while on the subject of flour, all during our farm life corn meal from home grown corn was enjoyed “fixed” many ways. Clean, hard, ears of yellow field corn were selected, and taken to the mill to be stone ground into rather coarse meal. Some of Mom’s corn meal concoctions: she made a delicious corn meal pancake, never to be faithfully reproduced; then there was hot corn bread, and an Indian pudding which was very tasty. Potatoes were a good crop, and there were several varieties of apples for the picking. In my memory we
always had a well supplied table, thanks to a great extent, to Mom’s ability at preparing what was raised on the home grounds into good, substantial, meals.

Come autumn I learned that my free days of romping were about over - school was called. As I remember, I rode with the milk wagon mornings, and I made my way home on foot. It probably wasn’t much of a school, and my stubborn attitude of introvertedness sure didn’t help much. One event at the Marksboro school made a lasting “impression” on, or in, me; it was of [a] physical nature at the time, and remained memorable. It seems that one of my contemporaries in learning, an Alfred Huff, made some uncomplimentary reference to my white knee pants.

Needless to say, when we got through with each other, my pants or shirt for that matter, were no longer white. What annoyed me most was a blow “below the belt” in a soft spot, taking the wind out of my sails. One benefit of the encounter was that, after this Mom saw to it that my clothes were styled more masculinely.

Of course there were Saturdays and Sundays, mostly one’s own time. On the farm Pop located what turned out to be a hand operated apple grinder and press, which he soon put into first rate running order. Jessie and I were always ready to sort and pick up clean drop apples for cider; the men took turns at cranking the grinder, so we had fresh apple cider from late summer until freezing weather. The cider seemed to be of a much better flavor after some frost came on the apples.

Nuts were gathered to eat, for profit - sometimes we got our “Christmas Money” from chestnuts shipped to New York for which we got as high as $5 a bushel - or just for the fun of it. Without doubt chestnuts were the sweetest most tasty nut
Chestnut trees were lovely to behold; some attained old age and became very big, their boughs spreading out over quite an area. When cut, and seasoned, the wood was of a beautiful light grain, and made nice cabinets and paneling. Smaller limbs made excellent fence posts, lasting several years, and, along with locust and red cedar, were valued highly for this use: Are you discussing my use of past tense in dealing with our native chestnut? Unfortunately this family of wonderful nut trees became diseased and, by the year 1925, about all of them had died off. This disease, termed "the chestnut blight" was never conquered. Small shoots from old stump roots sometimes grew up to a height of about three or four feet, only to wither and die. There are, of course, other varieties such as the Chinese chestnut, but their nuts are bitter until roasted, and these trees are not comparable in majesty to the old American family. To get back to chestnuts, the nuts grew inside a prickly burr; it took a good sharp frost to open these burrs, and sometimes we'd help nature release the nuts by clubbing or throwing sticks into the tree. When the nuts started dropping you had to hustle out ahead of the squirrels, which stored nuts away for winter.

We also gathered hard shelled nuts: hickory, butternuts, walnuts, and hazelnuts. These nuts were stored in some rodent proof - we hoped - place, to be shelled during winter, and their tasteful meats mixed with cake batter, in homemade candy, or just eaten along with apples during those long winter days. These trees also were beautiful, as well as useful for their wood. Hickory saplings, or split Hickory make fine axe[s] and other implement handles, spokes for wheels, rungs for ladders; we boys made bow and arrow sets from hickory saplings. Also hickory wood, when
seasoned, makes a hot fire which burns slowly; the bark used in the smokehouse added a pleasant flavor to pork products. Wood from the walnut tree is highly prized for its rich dark coloring when used in furniture. Hazelnuts grow on bushes along stone rows, or on the edge of wood lots.

About the time frosty weather was upon us, rabbit and squirrel dinners began to appear on our table. Mom sure was an expert with these meats; she parboiled them, rolled the meat in flour, and fried it in butter. Hunting rabbits and squirrels was sport for the game as well as for hunter; that is the game had a sporting chance those days with no repeating shot guns, or the like being in use. Pop preferred his musket; John had a single shot 12 gauge shot gun. Pop’s double barreled musket was something out of this world, and it sure awed me whenever he took it down off the high shelf. On hunting expeditions I usually managed to go along carrying, with strap over my shoulder, the stout bag of canvas which contained powder and shot horns (these actually were a hollow cattle horn, highly polished, with a neatly made wooden plug in the large end, and a stopper of some sort in small end where the ammunition could be measured out), a metal box of caps, and some old newspaper. To load this monster, as I remember, you wad up some of the paper and shove it into the gun barrel, and tamp it down with the ramrod; then a measure of shot - powder first for sure, followed by more paper tamped in carefully so’s not lose your load. After all this a detonating cap is placed in a little chamber below the hammer, and she’s ready to shoot. Off we’d go, thumping brush heaps, and tromping through high grass and weeds. Soon, out jumps a rabbit, running for dear life, boom, a loud blast from
musket, and after the smoke clears away (that was black powder) you’d know if you got him! It was some years later when we b[e]gan to hear about “closed seasons” and game wardens, so we just took game when it seemed the cold nights had firmed up the meat.

Before we get out of the gun talk I would like to tell you about one time when Tommy had a very close call with the musket. One day he spied a red squirrel biting the fruit from the big pear tree back of the house, and although forbidden to use it, he took the musket, aimed at squirrel and pulled trigger but nothing happened. So, being annoyed, he stomped the gun butt on the ground whereupon she boomed, sending a load of shot just past Tommy’s head. He dropped the gun explaining “it got hot,” and breaking the stock. We - that is all except Pop, he was furious - had a good laugh over the hot gun. Pop made a lovely new stock for the musket. After the verbal dressing down from Pop, Tommy never again touched it, and for that matter none of us did - we were “ascared” of the thing.

Of course there were unavoidable setbacks in our comparatively smooth way of life, like the time rats invaded the cellar. Those earth floor basements made wonderful storages where root vegetables and tubers of different varieties didn’t “dry out.” The time I remember, one winter morning Jessie, or Mom went down for some purpose, and came running back with the news that a good lot of the apples had been reduced to pulp during the night. What a sight - the rats had chewed up all those apples so they could get the pits to eat. By the time the rats were dispersed by trapping, or poisoning them, apples had become not so desirable to eat out of hand.
People have remarked that rats often do things just to be “devilish” - for instance I have viewed upwards of a hundred baby chicks, killed, lying in little piles, evidently not wanted for food. In later times a fellow townsman, a poultryman, lost several hundred chicks one night to the ravages of rats. He put out baits of red squill, mixed with canned fish, and soon had a “harvest” of dead rats all over the place. Red squill, by the way, is an Asiatic herb, which, dried and powdered, is a good exterminator for certain rodents, but generally harmless to domestic pets, due to the fact that rats are unable to regurgitate, and the sickening stuff kills them, while most other animals can “bring it up.” One thing - you had to get the rats with the first bait, for those rats which got a little dose, but survived, wouldn’t touch anything, with the flavor of squill, again.

For me, a heavy snow storm, which filled up country roads and choked off our lane in early winter, was just plain good news - no way to get to school! We weren’t going to the creamery anyway, as the dairy were mostly “dry.” Some farmers arranged to “make summer milk”; others did their milking during winter months. We made summer milk, and when the cows began to “slacken off” production in late fall we kept our milk home, and churned the surplus. So, we had home grown meat, a few eggs - not many because henhouses were draughty and cold - but we did kill a fat hen once in a while. We had all sorts of produce, and Mom’s canned goods stored away, so not much to worry about. There was no such thing as the town opening up roads for the simple reason that there was no road department. In an emergency the men folks took shovels, harnessed up the team, and did their “dumdest” to break a
road through to town. Well that was quite a “snow-in”; Jessie got restless, and remarked that she’d kiss the first man that showed up from out there, and Mom became real lonesome. Finally our men hitched the team to the bob sled and, armed with shovels, started out, and met another party coming out from town. So now we had a road of sorts, part of it through fields in order to get around the high drifts. School officials were not strict on attendance those days, neither were parents, and, in my memory, I missed most of that year. Jessie took over as private tutor, and proved to be a top notcher.

Keeping in firewood was quite a job; one needed saws, axes, muscles, and the team. The best firewood was that cut a year ahead, and allowed to season. Not having any firewood ahead that year, it was necessary to hunt up dead and dried out trees, which were hard to “work up” into stove wood. The hardwoods such as the oaks, hickory, beech, wild cherry, birch, ironwood, made good firewood. Apple gave out a pleasant aroma; pine knots were favored for fireplaces - they were long burning and pleasant to the nose. It was slow, hard work, with the crosscut saw cutting stove lengths, and splitting into stove size. Woe to the man that furnished his wife with nothing but “green” (Unseasoned) wood, and for good reason - it just doesn’t burn.

Spring found us tapping the big maples. For those who have never had a part of small time tapping, gathering, and boiling sap into syrup, or making maple candy, let me observe that there are few occupations more fascinating and conducive to happy family effort. Pop favored canes of alder growth of about an inch in diameter, and 8 inches long, for the spiles. With a sharp knife he trimmed slantingly,
beginning about 3 inches from the large end of the stick to about the center of the
stick, halving it the rest of the way. Now he reamed out the pith with a stiff wire, and
there it was ready to bring sap from tree to bucket. Now along about the time when it
freezes some nights, and the sun starts thawing by day, we start out with a supply of
spiles, a 7/8’s inch bit in an old brace, some buckets, and a light hammer. Reaching
an old maple you bore, at a slightly upward tilt, into the big trunk to maybe the length
of the worm of the bit, and then with a pocket knife fit the end of the spile, tapping it
into the hole just made. If weather conditions are just right one thrills to the drip,
drip, drip of the sweetish sap. Most kids like to have a cup, and drink some of the sap
from a bucket; we used to think that some trees had sweeter sap than others. Well,
given favorable weather conditions - snow on the ground seemed best for a good sap
run; it ran poorly during unusually dry times - about noon time you’ve got your
buckets full, and, with horse and sled, or stone boat, it is fetched in. We used a
couple of big, cast iron scalding pots; these were hung from a good sized green stick
about the size of a hay mow pole. Now the fun begins: gathering limb, or other dry
wood, and keeping a hot fire under the pots of boiling sap. The “tricky” (critical)
time comes when your liquid starts “getting heavy” (thick); most persons, at this point
in the boiling, choose the safer method of finishing the job on the kitchen stove,
where it can be watched, and is not so apt to burn the syrup. To make candy one
must boil the batch longer, and while it is hot the thick syrup can be poured into
molds of appropriate design, such as a maple leaf, or a bunny to please the children.
So, there you have it, besides using maple syrup for pancakes winter mornings, it was
used year around for all sorts of “sweetnin’.” One seldom, if ever, finds small maple sap boilings today; now the operation is quite commercial, and most of the sap is “reduced” in big “evaporators.” In passing we should take note of the lovely sugar maple tree’s wood. It is of lovely, light colored grain, and makes fine hardwood flooring and furniture; where there are a serious of twisted knots, the grain pattern forms what is called curley maple.

Ryerson Trauger⁵³, Marksboro’s blacksmith, deserves special mention. He was a very necessary man and I don’t see how we ever could have gotten along without his services. Of necessity old time smiths were “rugged individuals,” not “afeared” of horses or mules - also resourceful, repairing anything made of iron, at his forge. Ryerson filled the bill to a “T,” and besides, his other accomplishments of receiving and dishing out much local “news” - good or bad - were considerable.

Horseshoeing was the mainstay at Ryerson Trauger’s shop during winter months, for when the roads and lanes became slippery with ice and packed snow, horses had to be “shod sharp.” The shop itself was a fascinating place, filled with “atmosphere” both for eyes and nose. There were dozens of new horseshoes hanging from the walls, rod and strap iron draped over tie beams, the dormant bed of coals, and bellows, which, by the efforts of a foot lever, fanned the fire to life, and the tub of water at arms length of [the] forge. The smoke colored interior [was] odoriferously unique: smoldering soft coal fire, steam from the tempering tub, hoof parings, just to mention a few of the shop’s smells. Usually a dog, or maybe more, was around the shop; they liked to chaw on those horse hoofs. Horseshoeing requires a lot of “knowhow” with
respect to the animals themselves and especially their hoofs. Improper shoeing can result in a lame steed. Before "bad weather time" horses must have had their shoes "sharp," toe and heel, so they would have good footing while traveling or pulling loads. Suppose we try picturing the operation: Pop and I drive up to the shop, unhook from the wagon, and lead our horse into the shop, fastening him by the bit ring to a short chain attached to an upright wall beam. Ryerson takes a generous cud of tobacco, speaks some horse-language, at the same time stroking from the horse's body downward until he has a firm grasp on the hoof, securing it firmly between his legs. Maybe you have noticed in pictures that the old blacksmiths wore a leather apron, split in the middle, so this made a sort of insulation when the horse's hoof rested against the legs. Also have you noted that the "operation" required our smith to stand in an opposite direction from his patient? Next with claw tongs the old shoe is pulled off; if it is fairly good the blacksmith heats and - how the sparks fly - sharpens it by pounding toes and heels to a point on the anvil. In case the shoe is too badly worn for winter shoes, they were often taken back to the farm to be put on for summer use. A new shoe also has to be beaten into shape and also made sharp.

While the shoe is still hot, the smith grasps it with his tongs and applies [it] to the horse's hoof, and this gives him a pattern so he can pare down the hoof with a special, real sharp, knife, and smooth off with rasp. Before nailing on the shoe the dead matter and dirt is cleaned from about the "frog" (the sensitive part of the inside hoof). In nailing on a shoe the nails are driven at an angle through the hoof so they emerge about an inch and a quarter above the shoe. Then they are clinched downward, and,
with a final rasping to smooth all off, the job’s done! In the summer horses were
shod with light, or worn shoes, mainly to protect their feet from stones and other hard
surfaces. (After the horny hoof is worn down, we often spoke of this extremity as the
foot, hence a foot sore horse.) Did we need a broken utensil fixed, a rod or bolt of
special length — Ryerson was our man. While he worked, commencing with “I hear
tell that,” the talk goes on, and we have some news to carry home to the womenfolks.
Ryerson was proud of his profession, and one had to approach him with a certain
deferece of greeting such as “Good morning sur. Do you ‘spose you can spare time
to shoe the team?” Addressed thusly the answer invariably would be “Yup, bring ‘em
on in.” On the other hand ‘an order to “Shoe my hosses, Ryerson” would likely evoke
“Nope, not today. Just haint got the time.” So, as I said, Ryerson’s being the only
shop in town, and Blairstown being five or six miles further off, we learned to be real
civil to him.

Come spring, farmers got together to “work the roads.” By some arrangement
taxes were worked out this way, and a farmer with his team were allowed something
like three or four dollars per day’s work on a public road — all the roads were just dirt.
If my memory serves me aright, there was a good deal of procrastinating on this job,
and the boys didn’t work too hard, and visited much. Somehow ditches and drains
got cleaned out and gravel was dumped onto bad patches of road. Heaven help those
first few travelers over a “worked stretch” of road. What a mess it was; dirt, sod,
stones, all have been scraped into sort of a windrow in the center of the road. Later
on, when “settled weather comes,” this same road will give off a cloud of dust from
horses clomping over it, their driver and his passengers getting full benefit of it. Is it any wonder that persons journeying, and dressed up wore long, light weight, garments called dusters, and caps - the ladies wore scarves - to protect their clothes and person? Sometimes, arriving visitors seemed to resemble pictures of fishermen in their Nor’easter outfits braving the briny deeps. Can you, by chance, remember the fisherman on the bottle of “Scott’s Emulsion”?

I remember that some time during our second year on the Tiel farm the talk got around to if it would not be better to buy a farm so half of everything produced would not belong to the landlord. The object of our talks soon became reality when Pop and Mom bought the Christman farm near Paulina. Miss Cristman, a middle aged lady, sold us the place for $500 down (Grandpa Frank advanced us the money) and she took a mortgage for the balance of - I believe - $1300.

You might say that I grew up on that farm. It was 1906 and I was all of nine years old.

Our new home was nearer Blairstown than Marksboro, so Blairstown became our post office, and there was my first regular full time school. About midway of our place and Blairstown was and is to this day a small settlement named Paulina. A dam across the Paulins Kill there forms a pond stretching over half a mile upstream, where we usually found fishing very good, and the swimming to our liking. Water power at Paulina turned generators of the first plant of it’s kind I’d seen, furnishing lights for Blairstown and Blair Academy; also a laundry for the academy used electric power from this source. Blair Academy at this time was a co-educational college.
preparatory school, operating under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church.

Our new farm home surely could not compare picturesquely with the Teil farm but it was ours we said, and Mom made it home. Somewhere, I think in The Country Gentleman, a Curtis Magazine, we read of a farm called "The Maple Lawn Farm," so, there being a grove of locust trees growing on a stony patch near the house, nothing would do but our place be named "The Locust Lawn Farm." It is interesting to note that The Country Gentleman had quite a circulation then, and contributors of note like Albert Payson Terhune whose home was near Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, delighted country people with their tales. Turhune wrote about his fine collie dogs, and I believe he originated the "Lassie" name in his series of dog stories, which has lived through the movies and T.V. shows. Tragically, Terhune was killed by a motorist while he was walking with one of his dogs on the roadside near his home.

For me the "Kill" represented attraction above everything; in fact that stream was magnetic for all boys fortunately living within walking distance. You skimmed flat slate stones over the water, fished, swam, or just loafed on the soft grassy bank. In those days there were no "smart Alecs" who'd run sewer pipes into the river, and, so far as I recollect, there were no industrial plants upstream, so you see it was clean, and unpolluted, and no wonder we thought it was so nice.

So, we'll use the kill as a focal jumping off place to our Locust Lawn Farm, home. There was a road following the west bank of the kill, which ran southerly to Paulina and on to Blairstown; to the north was Marksboro. (Excuse my use of past
tense with reference to highways; as a matter of fact: many of the roads I mention are still in use, but, of necessity, some sections are relocated, and most have been rebuilt for the motor age. Our roads were just winding dirt trail-like strips connecting town to town. About half a mile upstream from Paulina, our road, the Squires Corners Road, takes off from the aforementioned highway. Winding away at a right angle, an s-hook stretch carried the road up along a steep slope, where the road leveled off - the view of the river is very pretty here - and follows the crest of this elevation a short way, then continued winding away from the river road, over another steep pitch to our home. How far did we live from the kill, you ask? Let's say, depending on the day, ten minutes jogging time, or on lazy days, pushing one's toes through the dust, thirty minutes away. Approaching our place, on the plateau-like setting above the river, the cut stone homestead of the Lanterman family must have been envisioned by a person of artistic nature: It seemed to blend perfectly with the old stone bridge, partly gone into the bed of the kill, the center arch still standing as I remember. Just under the knoll before our place - many thanks for that knoll, the place was a terrible mess - lived the Wat. Swartz family.

Four generations of Lantermans lived together - Mom said like cats and dogs - in the fine old stone house. There were Jimmy and Gran'ma Lanterman; their daughter Mrs. Hibler, and bachelor son Jace; Mrs Hibler's widowed daughter, Cora Coleman; Mrs. Coleman's daughter, Mabel. I never gave a care, but we used to joke about how Mabel "knew me on the way to and from school, but didn't know who I was in school" - the Lantermans were better fixed than we were. Of the Swartz's I
recall Wat worked on the railroad as section hand, got drunk pay day, [and] kept a
couple of hound dogs around; Myrt Swartz didn’t pretend to keep house, and she
regularly, within a-year’s time, brought forth a “new” member in the family. Mom
sort of took responsibility to keep the Swartz youngsters clothed. She used to “make
over” all sorts of things into nice dresses, pants, and blouses, which ended up by
falling off those kids as rags.

Our neighbors in the other direction were the Howards: Sutton and his wife
Minnie, and their grown daughter, Sadie. They lived on a small place on the edge of
our farm; they kept a cow and an old road horse. Sutton “worked out,” most of the
time for Ike Yetter, who owned acreage adjoining ours, and “turned out” a good
sized flock of sheep thereon after shearing time in the spring. About a mile from us
lived the Quick family - I should say a Quick family as ours was quite a Quick
neighborhood! These four families were our “close” neighbors.

The Christman Farm could be described as being run down, and grubbing a
living from it’s limestone acres was no easy job. Pop got together a small dairy herd -
ten or twelve cows were considered quite a herd. I shudder at the unknown “TB”
potential of those unimposing bovines, whose milk we used at the family table, raw
(not pasteurized), and sold to Bordens’ “For the city folks to drink.” In my memory
north eastern farms were operated on the premise that milk was one sure cash
product, hence necessary, although the big distributers had never paid much for it.
Also, manure, a by-product of the herd, surely helped maintain soil fertility. Old, or
otherwise unproductive cows, and bulls were “butchered off” thereby helping the
family larder.

Flocks of chickens usually were small, hardly ever more than a hundred; ours on the new place was no exception. There were no incubators (if there were, we didn’t know about them) so, the “lady of the house,” Mom in this instance, or one of us kids, watched out for hens “that wanted to set.” When we did we’d try to get the broody hen to sit upon a “china-egg” in some suitably quiet place, where other biddies would not hop in with her and break her eggs. “Setting” hens had to be handled with care; they were cross and could peck you hard, so women folks used to pull an old stocking or something like that over their hands when working with them.

(Poultrymen do not monkey with hens for hatching chicks any more, hence my inclination towards the past talk.) Well, to get on, when you’re satisfied missus chicken means business, you see to it that her nest is well padded with smashed down hay or straw, or most anything else she will not get her feet tangled into when she turns her eggs - some of them sure were stupid. Then, mark her egg with pencil, 13 or 15 of them. You mark the eggs so if some other fool chicken decides to lay an egg in that nest it can be removed. For some reason, maybe superstition, one never put even numbers of eggs under a hen. Talk about a tempermental female, you have one in Mrs. Hen, being prone to all sorts of frivolous stunts: such as deciding she liked the old nest best, and forthwith deserting her nest of eggs for the lone nest egg “back home,” or just deciding she didn’t want to raise a family after all, and walks off the job. On the charitable side, most of the hens turned out to be good setters, turned their eggs carefully and, provided the eggs given her were fertile, she’d hatch out a
good portion of them. So biddie has a family, and she is put outdoors in a little coop which has a slatted front so the baby chicks can run out and come back in to mother’s wings when they get chilled or frightened. Provided the little flock has withstood onslaughts from weazels, rats, hawks, or what-have-you, in about six months we have grown chickens, half pullets, the rest roosters. Those roosters didn’t know of course, but unlikely appearing daddies were destined to our Sunday dinner pot - for sure.

We used hens to hatch out all varieties of domestic fowls as they were just dumb enough to think that an egg is an egg, and were ready to accept various downy babies she hatched out as her own. So a choice settin’ of duck, goose, guinea, or maybe pheasant eggs found their way under missus hen’s wings. True, a hen seemed puzzled when her family of ducklings took to water, and she distinctly did not like their wet bodies. Usually a duck hatched eggs of her family best as the shells of waterfowl eggs are thick and tough, and when a setting duck goes off for a “duck” in the pond she comes back to the nest with damp feathers; this keeps the eggs more on the damp side, and makes it easier for the ducklings to break their way into the world. Ducks are dumber than chickens - if that be possible - and one thought seems to be in mother ducks mind: take off for the pond with her family. One day we watched, helplessly, while snapping turtles swimming under water pulled down every duckling, while mother duck swam unperturbed near by. You couldn’t believe your eyes - little ducks went under and never came up.

Hens were not often selected to hatch turkey eggs as it was believed that a fatal disease, which afflicted turkeys - it was known as “black head” - was carried by
hens.

Hens, ducks, geese, guineas - they all liked to steal off, lay a nest full of eggs, and hatch them out. (Foxes; and other marauders liked them to do it too; it was their "dish.") What a thrill when the mammas brought in their cute families; everyone had to admire the little fellows!

Rooster[s], duck daddies (drakes), [and] guinea pappas didn't recognize their families, or seem to care a darn, they being polygamists: With geese it was a different story: they mated, stayed together while setting, and stayed with their family. They chased everyone away from the goslings with "hiss" warnings, and flailing wings. Needless to say, by keeping their young family between goose and gander, they seldom lost any of their babies. Goslings liked to sit on mother's back, more often it would seem than under the wings. Geese sometimes become attached to persons, and like to follow them about. One time an old gander seemed to be playing a game with me: I was sticking onion sets in the ground, and the old fellow was coming behind me pulling them up and neatly laying them in a row.

Right now I feel an urge to "set a hen"; could I stand the suspense of waiting three or four weeks for my chicks or ducks? Guess I better "get off" poultry, or you folks will think I am trying to lead you into the business.

While I was still a little fellow Pop decided to show us Bushkill Falls, as I mentioned before, the scene of his youth. I suppose that he had decided that "the Boys" could handle chores for two or three days, and maybe there'd never be a better time than after crops were seeded, and hayin' not quite ready. So the surrey was
checked over to see if it could be depended on for the nineteen or twenty mile trip, and back home: brake blocks attended to, axles and fifth-wheel greased, some machine oil squirted on springs and wherever there was apt to be a squeak. Then the shafts for a single horse were replaced with “pole and double trees” to accomodate the team; Bill and Fanny were treated to a “shoein” at the blacksmith shop - we were about ready! What a picture we must have made, I daresay not too far removed from one of a pioneer family: heading west in the early days: Mo[m], and, Pop adirling, on the front seat; Jessie and I in back; the team appearing more suited to plow than the fringed top old surrey.

Bravely, off we go; and about two hours from home our road commences uphill going at the foothills of the Kittatinny Range of the Blue Ridge mountains. About mid afternoon, having descended to a crossing of the Delaware, there behold, tied up, was what amounted to a large raft. Pop walked off to find the owner of this craft; after a spell the two came sauntering up, the horses were led aboard, and we were poled off from shore. Our boatman proudly informed the ladies that “his ferry” “could accomodate two rigs like ours.” Well, as I remember, the horses were quiet - they probably were too tired to notice where they were - but Pop wasn’t taking any chances: he unhooked the trace chains, just in case! There was a cable hung shore to shore to which the flat boat was attached by a cable and pulley arrangement, and which served to keep the ferry on course against the river current; thus our boatman poled us across. He charged seventy five cents for the trip, and Pop peevishly remarked, “Gosh amighty, he charged us aplenty.” Well, maybe it was “plenty”
considering a man worked a ten hour day for a dollar and glad to get it.

We stayed overnight with old friends of Pop’s in Bushkill, and went on to the Falls the next morning. The falls were unspoiled and lovely - in fact deserted that day but for us. About a mile before reaching them the horses “picked up” the strange roar of tumbling water, and began to get unmanagible, so about then Pop tied the team to stout trees, and we cut across a grove to the top of the waterfall. We just stood and stared, and admired a greatness of nature the like of which we’d never beheld. Pop proudly showed us sturdy railings he had put up along paths many years ago. We sure were appreciative of his rustic work; trouble is his efforts were many, many years too soon in a slow moving, home bound era.

It just seemed I had to pull off one of my famous stunts everywhere I went, and this trip was no exception, although on this trip my childish inclination was to place a good part of the blame on Mom. Mom had me all decked out in a white “sailor suit” which I hated to the point of disgust; the paths were rather muddy in spots, I tripped on something and managed to flop down in the stuff - what it did to that white suit! - and Mom sure was mad at me.

Well, we started back early next morning, and it seems reached home without incident, before dark. On the way Pop pointed out mountain laurel and rhododendron, but when we got out for a few minutes he cautioned us to “look out for the rattlers - they like shady spots.” He also pointed out big fallen pine trees, and said that the pine knots burned for a long time, and were real nice smelling too.

Come spring and fall Mom’s hats had to be recast to our local milliner’s idea
of current hat styles. Ladies’ hats ranged all the way from doubtedly artistic to being just plain funny. (I guess that is still the situation, but in those days ladies wore hats generally always when venturing forth.) A milliner, worthy or the name, made semi-annual trips to the city where she observed, visited supply houses, or maybe attended a trade convention to “get posted on styles.” Ma’s hat started out as a wire form, something like a chassis. In a large box, Mom had a large hoard of trimmings: velvet ribbons, artifical flowers, bunches of fruit in the same state, great fluffy ostrich plumes, not to mention bird wings. Some ladies owned mounted birds - beauties from the tropics. If the hunting of egrets, and other tropical birds, had not been stopped by laws many species of these lovely birds now would be extinct. Even songs were written about ladies’ hats trimmed with birds, such as the one that went “Oh, you don’t know Nellie like I do, said the little bird that sat on Nellie’s hat.” One of my sure-fire-diversions at our long, drawn out church services in the Blairstown Methodist Church, was watching the organist’s ostrich plume flopping wildly as she labored on the old pipe organ. (That poor organist, how she was criticized for all sorts of things; she played too soft or too loud, too slow or “much” too fast, etc. Some of the old prudes.- alias worshippers - contended that it was indecent for a “respectable woman” to play a pipe organ “throwin’ their feet around, and showin’ their ankles off.”) Well, to get back to hats, Mom, laden down with much in the way of trimmings and last year’s hat, decends on Mrs. Newbaker, our “exclusive milliner,” and shes got another job - “Please keep it under a dollar, if you can.” Some years ostrich plumes “are being worn” (I liked them) “by everyone,” so out comes
that nice soft tail feather, or both the big and smaller plumes from Mom’s box; they are steamed over the tea kettle spout, and individual feathers are curled by drawing them between one’s thumb and the blunt edge of a table knife. Hats sure were a feminine necessity - men didn’t stick their heads outside either without a hat or cap jammed on - those days. Where would our All American “Gibson Girl” - Howard Chandler Christie’s creation  - have been without her lovely picture hat?

Mom, now fortified with freshly trimmed hat, a chic dotted veil (brought home from New York’s Bloomingdale’s department store), - the veil caught up on hat brim, draped over her face and fastened loosely under chin - and attired in one of Aunt Anna’s “through with” New York dresses, Mamma is ready for church. So, one of the horses being hitched to the surrey, we start off for church - Mom, Jessie and “me.” (The boys, Tommy, and John, claimed Pop’s, “a man’s,” prerogative of not going.) After moving from Tranquility and acquiring horses for the farm, Mom became quite capable with the reins, so she drove. Talk about today’s parking problems: in comparison they are child’s play to getting a horse suitably tied up for a couple of hours. If it were cold your horse had to be blanketed, or one had to consider if, where there is a hitching post, the sun soon would beat down on “our Kitty,” or if horsie is tempermental or figety you had to look up a quiet spot to tie up. Mom always insisted that she wanted her horse to be comfortable while she was in church, so she usually tied up under the hotel shed. It was a real quiet place, Sunday mornings that is; about the only inconvenience being you usually had to kick some empty bottles into a corner. All manner of things were likely to happen to a tied
horse: such as kicking forward with the back foot and breaking a belly band on the harness, or our horse getting restless and shedding the blanket under foot - whilst we were being exorted by the Reverend So-and-So, by the hour most to changing our devilishly, sinful, ways. One particular Sunday I'd never forget, we came out of church and found Kitty had decided she was tired, and lain down. In the process she had broken one shaft, and in the emergency I was dispatched inside the hotel for assistance. Two or three fellows good naturedly came sauntering out, and in no time at all had the shaft bound up with wire. One of our rescuers volunteered the information "Thar she be, good'z new, well - anyway oughta get you back home."

Mom thanked them graciously, they all tipped hats, and the last I remember seeing them standing in the road, watching our departure. (Looking back I marvel at my Mother's great dignity, and modesty of manner. She was a fine appearing woman, and I'm sure more than one male must have secretly admired her, but to my knowledge they all treated her with the greatest respect.) I guess we never did get to Sunday School and Church as much as half the time. Winters posed impossible driving conditions as did stormy days any time of the year. But, dear reader, don't think for one minute that devotions were left to slumber during our absent periods from churching. Never, for any purpose, did we get to bed before Bible reading, and on-your-knees prayer ending with The Lord's Prayer. On Sundays that we stayed home Mom lead an informal worship service, and it was Jessie's job to teach me the Sunday School lesson. I think Pop didn't at all care for "the doings" as he was always embarrassed at any approach to emotions. Pop did ask the blessing at meals
when Mom didn’t, but we never did make out much that he said in a low, mumbling, singsong voice. The point is that Mom was truly a good, practising Christian; when she prayed you just knew there was no doubt in her mind regarding the answering of her petition.

We hadn’t been on the Christman farm — as Pop would say — “a great while” when Pop decided to add a new bay to the barn. There really was no suitable cow shed, so the ground floor of the new part could be used for this purpose. So, when time would permit, it would be to the woods to “get out logs” — big hemlocks, which were hauled to the sawmill for inch boards, 2” x 4” studding, [and] 2” x 6” rafters; oak for two inch planks for the stable flooring. Fine straight oaks were cut for the framing timbers. Pop did a beautiful job with the broad axe, hewing out those sills and beams. These he mortised and tenoned for joints; when this was done the frame would slip together perfectly. A hole bored through this joint made way for the hickory “pin” which secured the joint. Beforehand Pop dug a trench the length and breadth of the addition, and “laid up” a foundation from good sized flat stone — we had stone to spare on that place — and mortar. On this wall was laid the hand hewed 8” x 8” sill. The frame now was pinned together, resting flat on the ground. Pop says we are now ready for the barn raisin’, so men of the neighborhood are notified of the impending event, and asked to come over at a certain time for a “frolic.” One thing I well remember: Pop’s saying “Nobody’s going to get anything to drink beforehand.”

After the frame was up, and secured in place the customary bottle of “firewater” made it’s rounds. Many of the men “politely” spat out their cuds of chewing tobacco
before taking their pull on the bottle. The raising had been a simple operation: the foot of the frame rested where it belonged on the sill, the men lifted the top of the frame from the ground, and eased it to its vertical position. Some of the "braves" used pike poles as the frame progressed upward out of reach; some said they would "stiddy" the critter with a long handled pitch fork. Building was Pop's Glory; he never got so's he cared much for farming. The new barn bay didn't cost much as all that was bought towards it were the nails and other hardware like hinges for doors; a few bundles of shingles, and a couple of window sash completed the bill.

As for me, I took to the little farm above the kill like a duck to water. Mom had an appetite for fish, and fishing became a "glorious obsession" with me. My fishing gear was simple: a bamboo pole, a line, two or three fish hooks of various sizes, some pieces of lead for sinkers (you bit the soft metal onto the line, clomping onto it with your teeth where you wanted the sinker on your line), [and] a big bottle cork completed things. Out by an old manure pile you could usually find lots of worms; along the spring run you could snatch frogs, which were good bait for bass or pickerel. When grass hoppers appeared on the scene, I found out that they attracted all game fish, even a good sized sun fish "struck" them. Well, it seems we - usually I had company, boys from Paulina, mostly the Van Auken boys, Ed and Harry - fished day in and out, for anything that was biting. If nothing else was biting, we knew of a place where you always could get a string of shiners, which seemed always glad to have us come, the way the little fellers chased around after our bait. Small shiners, two or three inches long, made excellent bait fish for the big fellows. It was
fish ‘til tired, then off with clothes and into the water for some fun.

Our favorite swimming spot was opposite the Lanterman house. Most every
time we’d go in there Mrs. Hibbler would come out on the road - it probably was a
couple hundred feet away and below the big house, our swimming hole - and threaten
us, and try to drive us off. She’d yell at us, “You boys ain’t decent, goin’ in with
nothing but ‘tights.’” So, one day, when there were several boys from Paulina in our
swimming gang, she came out with a line of abuse, and we stripped off our little
trunks, and stuck out tongues at her. She let out an “Oh, oh, oh,” running into the
house, and after that we were not bothered.

Our farm turned out to be an excellent place for rabbits, squirrels, and other
game. There were numerous patches where the limestone came to the surface, and
which could not be used for cultivating. These “cobbles,” as we called them, had
been allowed to grow up with brush, cedars, and various scrub growths, which were
natural spots for game. I don’t recall how “I worked it” but the 22-rifle was in my
possession before you could say “jack rabbit” - maybe it was the chipmunks.

Chipmunks were a pesky nuisance; they and the crows often worked havoc when the
newly planted corn began to sprout and come through the ground. Our old stone
fences made excellent homes for the ‘munks, and the corn near a fence was at their
mercy. I got pretty good at picking them off with the 22. Crows were a different
matter - they were, and are real smart; I never got “clost ‘nough” to get a shot at one
of them with the rifle. When a flock of crows decide to “work over” a corn patch,
there is always, up in some tall tree - they prefer, bare, dead ones - a sentinel crow to
give the "Caw, caw, caw" alarm, before a person can approach with gun. For me, although you can’t help admiring their intelligence, crows have few charms: they plunder crops, steal other birds’ eggs and their young, yell raucously. One other black-devil-bird I could dislike more is the starling. Mr. crow is gentleman enough to roost in his forest retreat; those “dern starlings” will go to the extent of picking a hole right through the siding of a building if they decide to nest there. Starlings are, to me, homely as sin, and prey on other birds right under one’s nose, and I guess I’ll never change my mind and get to like them.

To get back to the cobbles, come fall and a frost, rabbits get good for the table. One took the rifle, and treading softly, peered into grass clumps, brush piles, and under low branches of evergreens. Spotting a sitting bunny before he’d spotted you, you pulled up and shot him “between the eyes.” Bunnies, and other game shot with a rifle, “dress off” nicely, and you don’t bite into shot like with the old shot gun. They couldn’t say that I didn’t do my part in the area of keeping Mom’s table supplied with game and fish.

Come the September of the year we took over the little farm, I was started in the school at Blairstown. That school - to me - seemed a big institution: two big rooms on the main floor; and two on second. The school boasted a boiler which furnished steam for central heating; steam pipes strung the lower walls, and they banged like mad when air developed in them. Toilet facilities did not exist, except for the little building a short distance from the main, one side labeled GIRLS, the other BOYS. There was an inch-board partition separating the sexes in that “dump,”
and I'm afraid that some "naughty boys" contrived a peek hole, or two, in that wall.

I don't recollect what grade Mom managed to talk me into; I did stick there through what they had to offer. School was called at nine o'clock, there was a fifteen minute recess during the morning and afternoon, mid-day lunch period was twelve to one, and the closing time [was] four o'clock. During recesses outside games were played. The boys played a game with their pocket knives; it was played on the grass, and called "mumbly peg." Then there was "donkey on the rock" in which you used a good sized stone to knock the "donkey" (another stone) from a rock. The bigger boys played "catch" with a baseball, and sometimes got up a team for a game. Some form of football was played also. The girls did a lot of jumping rope, sometimes devising intricate forms using two ropes and, of course, having a couple of girls for "turners." Others skipped rope, running around the building, of course there were the prima donnas those days, even as now, who promenaded arm-in-arm.

Daily, assembly in the two main rooms - they opened together by means of folding doors - of all grades preceded classes. Our principal, R. M. Van Horn, read a Bible selection, offered a prayer for God's guidance through the day, we sang a song or two, and, after announcements, were dispatched to our respective rooms. Mr. Van Horn was a powerful character of a man: big, handsome, intent. He was a lawyer by profession, and practiced law outside his school duties. Later when I was fortunate in having him for Latin, he just about had me under his spell; Latin was his "love." Those assemblies seemed to give everyone a sense of togetherness, and helped start the day off right.
Getting to school and back posed a problem in days before roads were any too good, and "school wagons" hardly were worthy of the name. Various, well intentioned - I'm sure - men with teams and wagons they owned, drove rigs between Paulina and the school. Sometimes I'd walk to Paulina, and squeeze into the conveyance that happened to be operating at the time. Older boys, sometimes a girl or two, kept up a bedlam on those trips; 'tweren't too pleasant, either. I used to play my "mouth organ" (harmonica) sometimes, on "the wagon" and some of the kids thought up something - shall we say, they began questioning me as to which verse of a song I was now playing. After a spell it dawned on me that the tune is the same for any or all the verses. I'd been "took" and in those days I didn't like it a bit.

When the weather was fine the Van Auken boys and I walked home; there was, as always if you go by foot, a short cut around Sunset Hill, then following the kill to Paulina. The Van Auken boys, Ed the older and Harry, were no angels, and delighted in playing tricks - if you didn't watch out - on you. One afternoon, on the way home, Ed produced a big chunk of cut plug chewing tobacco, cut off a generous hunk, and presented it to me with "Chew 'er up, she tastes like chocolate." I did as directed, swallowed the stuff, 'and, for the first time in my life, thought I was going to die. As I remember, my stomach was on fire, I threw up, passed out briefly, but came around again, weak, but wiser in the potency of the weed. Harry had a queer habit: he continually sucked his fingers, the third and index fingers on his right hand. We used to about get sick to see him bait his hook with worms, handle all sorts of objects, and jam those fingers back into his mouth; afterwards we just laughed at him.
Well, everything that happens in life seems to have its favorable side; the trip to school had. Jace Lanterman, like most farmers then, didn’t calculate to do much but barn chores during the cold months. So, a lot of the time during the winter, he would hook up his big sorrel, Harry, and take his grandniece Mabel and me to school. It sure was a thrill to ride behind that fine, long legged horse. One thing, he was a fast road horse, and another, he had a reputation for “Running away” if he ever got a slack rein and got the bit in his teeth. I was to be disappointed: Harry never obliged by running a way; I still liked that horse just fine though. It was thrilling to be going behind such a horse as Harry; you just seemed to be “riding out” in high style.

One remembers vividly such places as a watering spot for the horses along the Kill. There were wheel tracks leading into a shallow piece of water, and a like guiding-roadway out, where, during the warm weather you could drive right into the water to water your horse, and out the other side. Both horse and those in the wagon seemed to savor enjoyment from contact with the stream. Humans liked the splashing of hoofs in water; other sounds such as the staccato cry of a kill deer, the kerplunk of a startled bull frog jumping from shore to water, [as well as] just lolling there while your horse drank his fill; all of the picture seeming to be part of the Kill. After his first cautious steps, the horse, too, seemed to just love it - soaking dry tired hoofs, and otherwise cooling off. Wagon wheels were helped by the swelling of loose “jints”; this took away the creaks. Oh, that was fun! Who can explain why the same exuberant spirit is not experienced while motoring along at sixty or seventy miles an hour, as lingering along behind old dobbin at a snails pace? Could be the just
effortless loafing along, the smell of horse flesh, time to look the countryside over
and think things through, or just snooping into other people’s farming operations, and
mentally calculating “Why’d they do it thata way.”

Improperly “broke” (trained) horses could be mean, stupid, nervous, even
dangerous. Our horses, with the exception of old Bill, were very much afraid of
trains, or for that matter, anything else strange to them or noisy. Their infrequent
meeting with that new phantom-like vehicle, the automobile, would cause a veritable
berserkness in the beasts. One Sunday afternoon Mom and I started out for a little
drive with Fanny hitched to the family buggy. We hadn’t gone far when the old girl
pricked up her ears and began to prance about. She’d heard the chug, chug of a motor
long before what appeared to be a wagon without any sign of horsepower ahead hove
into sight. Quick as a whip Fanny turned us around in that narrow road, and raced us,
ahead of the monster, to the safety of our dooryard. Pop allowed Fanny was shaking
like a leaf; Mom and I were likewise shook up. That was the first auto to be seen
around Blairstown: a Sears, Roebuck product owned by one of the younger Vail’s, a
branch of the Blair family. It had regulation high wagon wheels, tired with a narrow
strip of rubber, a small, box type body, with the seat mounted high, a bar for steering,
and chain drive [c]ompleted this strange horseless wagon. One fall day Mom and
Pop went on some errand with old Bill hitched to the buggy. It was a standing joke
that you couldn’t get that horse to travel much faster than a walk, so no one worried
when my parents did not return when expected. Along about dark Mom and Pop
showed up, walking; Pop was leading old Bill, [and] wagon and harness were in sad
shape. It seems some hogs were being butchered at a farm close to the road (horses generally are disturbed by the smell of fresh blood), and Old Bill had run away! I never could figure why such big powerful creatures as horses should be so “high strung.” The answer might be that so many horsemen were cruel, and fast with the whip. I think it a true statement that, in proportion to the number of horses driven on the road before the motor age, and compared with the number of motorists today, fatalities with horses were much higher. Horses just seemed to gloat on any excuse to run away, not to mention that a good kick from dobbin could do one off. But who can say we ever could have gotten along without helpful, lovable horses?

When I was twelve, the summer I would come thirteen, Mom and I went for a visit to Gram and Grandpa Frank’s, who had moved “to the country” near Brighton Beach. Grandma’s asthma was supposed to respond to the open, but, if anything, it became worse. Then through a friend’s advice Grandmother consulted a lady dietician, a most revolutionary idea for those days - women’s views generally were not given much consideration, and no one was supposed to monkey with people’s food habits. Grandma’s health condition had gotten to where she was ready to try anything. The lady doctor certainly put her on a strict diet. On the prescribed whole grain cereals, bread made from whole grain flour, no salt, [and] no red meat, Gram quickly regained her health and strength.

That place on Neck Road, Sheepshead Bay\textsuperscript{72}, was lovely, and more lovely and desirable for me because of the nearness to Coney Island, and bathing at a nearby beach. Grandpa bought the square block; a two story farm house and a good sized
barn were on the place.

About half of Uncle Jack's customers took to the mountains or seashore during the summer months, and during this time one or more of the idle delivery horses from the market were boarded at my grandparent's place. So you see there was lots to see, and do, there and besides there was the German cooked meals, as much to eat as you could hold, which made things all to the good.

Near my Grandparents home lived Doc. Sheppard, with his wife Polly, and their niece, Effie. Doc., a veterinary, very English, looked and deported himself much like a titled person, but, despite his reserved manner, he was a very likable person. "Aunt" Polly, to the core all English also, seemed buxomly stuffy. Effie, no longer a girl but every bit a young lady, resembled her uncle in appearance, being tall, and erectly slender; she found, and kept, a place in my heart from our first encounter. Soon she was to become my Aunt Effie through marriage to Uncle Harry. My mother and Aunt Effie were very fond of one another.

Doc Sheppard maintained a good sized stable in connection with his veterinary practice, and there were some saddle horses quartered there all the time. A large pile of horse manure had collected at the stables, and Grandpa Frank devined possibilities therein. Doc was glad to get rid of the stuff, so Grandpa had it hauled over and spread on his garden patches. Needless to mention, corn, tomatoes, dear-to-the-German-heart Kohl Rabi, a host of other vegetables, and great big, sweet strawberries grew Edenlike on those patches.

One day, in a generous mood, Grandpa presented me with a fifty cent piece.
Right away I began to assess the possibilities of this vast windfall. I'd made the acquaintance of Johnnie, about my age, and together we decided that Brighton Beach was the place for us, and the fifty cents. In order to get there quickly we spent ten cents for car fare. Arriving we headed for the Brighton Beach Music Hall where two admissions cost thirty cents; we spent our last dime on sweets. To this day, I've not enjoyed a theatre performance more than that one; we saw, and heard that great Scotsman, Harry Lauder. We hadn't an idea of his world wide prominence, but judged for ourselves his superb performance. We trudged happily homeward!

Meanwhile Grandma had gotten wind of the fifty cent deal! "Where, how, and why had I spent all that money; didn't I know enough to save money? You should have put it in the bank." I don't remember how long Grandmother continued casting disapproving German-thrift stares in my direction, but that episode remains a precious memory.

I venture to say that Uncle Harry had one of the first cars, a Cadillac, which was used for short pleasure trips about the neighborhood of Sheepshead Bay. Motoring, in it's early day, was an expensive mode of travel; for instance a chauffeur was usually employed to drive and look after this complicated mechanical newcomer. It was quite a sight to see ladies and gentlemen out for a drive in their shiny cars, coasting along at about twentyfive miles an hour, a uniformed chauffeur at the controls. One went to a special driving and mechanics school in order to qualify as a chauffeur, so after coming to the city my brother John took a course at the Y.M.C.A. to qualify him. He never took a position after this training - the word got about that.
these chauffeurs were being pressed into all sorts of jobs in-between driving the car -
but the driving and mechanical skills were a great satisfaction to one, then. Needless
to say, John was the indispensible man at the wheel of Uncle Harry’s car. That car’s
interior presented leather finishing de luxe. One wallowed in cushions; the rear seat
back was high enough to pillow one’s head. As I mentioned before, those first cars,
of a truth, were “a rich man’s toy.” No convenient financing - it was cash on the
barrel head; the average man had no knowledge of what made them tick, and was at
the mercy of mechanics tinkering knowledge. Roads were most all dirt and poor
surface, and tires were good for a scant eight or ten thousand miles. No wonder
Uncle Harry and Uncle Jack both parted with their automobiles after a short
“honeymoon” with them.

One ride that stands out in memory took place [on] an evening when
fireworks were to be set off at nearby Sheepshead Bay race track.\textsuperscript{76} I recall that
fireworks were set off there one night a week and nothing can take the place in a boys
imagination which fireworks and watermelon occupies, so naturally I was excited.
We motored to what looked like a good vantage spot, but the older members of our
party decided the car should be parked at some distance from the fireworks display to
avoid danger of fire on the car, and the possibility of booming rockets detonating
gasoline in the car tank! The Paine fireworks were wonderful I thought; nothing
happened to the car.

My brothers, John and Harry, who were now living with the Grandparents,
jointly owned a canoe, and were members of the Sheepshead Bay Canoeing Club.
This gave them shelter for their canoe in the Club’s boat house on an assigned rack. One day John said, “Come on Alfred, we’ll take a trip in the canoe,” which we did, all the way to Canarsie. I never was scared doing any sort of stunts on, or in the water with John; waterwise he seemed like a first cousin to the performing porpoise. That trip was great fun; I knelt in the bottom about midship, John navigated from the stern; the canue seemed larger than fresh water craft. The trick, I quickly learned, was to hit breakers square on until getting beyond the surf, after which in calm water, bay or ocean was duck soup. One didn’t venture forth in a light craft such as a canue when the water was roughed up. What a paradox that canoe trip presents. Here I was a kid with [a] life ahead, and I didn’t give a hoot for the element of danger; now when there can not possibly be more than a small portion of life here left, I shudder at crossing a piddling lake in a canoe. Well, it was great, that canoe trip - I’d be riding high, and John would be down in the trough, then t’other way round, WOWEE!

Coney Island celebrated annually a New York adaptation of the Mardi Gras. I was taken to the festivities one time, and, in modern parlance, had a first class “ball of a time.” The boardwalk was crowded with very hilarious humanity; everyone seemed either to be talking, shouting, singing the latest tune, or just goodnaturedly jostling one another along. You wore a funny paper hat, a mask, maybe a funny looking tie. Oh, one just couldn’t manage to not have a good time - great I should say! My brothers had warned me to be sure to keep my mouth shut, but, sure enough, I forgot the warning and almost choked when someone threw a handful of confetti at my wide open laughing mug. My mother did not go along on this nocturnal expedition;
Mom’s tastes were more Victorian than for the rough atmosphere of the boardwalk. It was fortunate for me that Mom allowed me to go that evening in the care of my brothers, and a young friend, Richard Smith. Richard Smith - his mother called him Ricardo - a very likable person, was to remain a close friend of our family for the remainder of his life; our mother regarded him as one of her boys. His father, a German (Schmidt) and his mother, Spanish gentlewoman, gave the best of their rather swarthy coloring and nice features - he had very black hair - to Richard’s pleasing personality.

Well, we were to pay for our good time at the Mardi Gras the next morning. It seems that generation of German-Americans - to my mind - didn’t approve of too much in young people having good times; also a hausfrau who kept her house looking as though no one ever had soiled it by stepping on the carpets was to be considered just one step below the angels. True, we took off our shoes, and dumped out the confetti, shook ourselves and brushed clothing before entering the house that night but some confetti trailed in anyway. We got a real talking to for our “carelessness” and were treated to a “hurt look” for two or three days; Gram sure took away some of the luster from our night out.

I have purposely injected some highlights of life in the Sheepshead Bay home of my Grandparents; I doubt that this generation could envision that place as ever having been country. I think, for all concerned, that period was a reasonably happy one, which state of affairs seem to me worth recording since my Grandparents later were to be generally plagued with financial troubles. With my grandparents, sons
were of much greater importance; the girls' destinies clearly was marriage, so why worry about their futures? My uncles, Harry and Alfred, were jolly good fellows; they were my idols, and they in turn, were slaves to my many whims. But, sad to say, those two "boys" never were required to mature to the rigors of everyday life. My grandparents "set them up" in several business ventures, none of which were to succeed. This putting money into losing games cut deeply into the Old Folks' resources. One time I recall that my brother Harry, who had taken business courses at the Y.M.C.A., entered my Uncles' wholesale produce business for a time, and, I'm told, got the business paying a profit. However, brother Harry was soon to take a position with a wholesale cotton goods firm; he stuck with that very lucrative line for his entire business career. My uncles, as I have mentioned, were just fine fellows; the only difficulty being, as business men they were very lacking in experience.

On one of the last trips to the city that I made with Mom, Uncle Harry told us to stop at their business stall in the market before getting our train home. The business was called "Emil Frank's Sons" and it was on Fulton Street, just across West Street from the ferries. When we got there my uncle gave me a model full rigged schooner, a beautiful thing, about a yard in length, perfect in detail. He had bought the ship from a sailor who was hard put for some cash. I proudly eased the wonderful craft on and off ferry and train. Pop was very much impressed with the craft. As with other highly prized, otherwise useless, possessions, it gathered dust in "the front room" for some years; I'm at loss to recall it's eventual fate.

Soon after we settled on the Christman place the United States Postal Service
laid out a “Rural Free Delivery” service passing our house. At this news there was great excitement about our home - mail every week day at the door! A brave soul, Ed Jones by name, was our mail carrier. He started out with a good road horse and a light rig; later on he got another horse to take over when necessary; those roads could be deep in mud and ruts, and sometimes horses just gave out. Soon Ed was driving a “run about” (one seater, open top) Model T Ford during the summer months. No one attempted to drive a car over the trecherous dirt roads during the winter season, so our carrier drove a horse rig from late fall until the roads “settled down” in the springtime. (Those days car owners drained radiators and the car was jacked up free of the floor, and it was stored in some tight out building for the winter. Garages were still in the offing.) The coming up the street of a postman gives me a thrill to this day. Hail our letter carrier!

A short drive from our place, at Squires Corners, was a lovely lake known as White Pond. Apparently the name derived from the very clear and whiteish cast of the water, due to it’s bottom of marl. The lake was fed by big springs, and I believe the water was very pure. (It might still be nice and clean, but I have the feeling that by this time “too many cooks have spoiled the broth” - with a few motor boats thowed in.) One strong spring, housed at the boat tie-up, furnished wonderful drinking water; there was a good sized patch of watercress growing in the cold water from the spring. Fishing in this lake could be unusually good. There were small mouth bass, perch, pickeral, gamey bluegills, and they told of real big catfish being caught in the deeper water; I didn’t go after the catfish. Plenty of bait fish were there
waiting for us in the shallows. We called these little fellows shrimp. They were caught by hooking a rather small worm about midway, letting the ends dangle, and you dropped the worm quietly near the little fellows and they'd grab hold of an end and you'd gently lift them into the boat. Often you would get two or three of them at a time, and soon two or 3 dozen minnows were collected. We mostly used the shrimp to "slow troll" from the back of a row boat - very quietly and [at a] rather slow pace. When you got a strike you would let your fish take the bait until you felt the pull "let up" and then pretty soon try to hook and bring in your fish. Sometimes you came onto a school of perch, and caught several in short order.

I suppose that the fascination of White Pond stemmed mostly from it's beauty, and the solitude of the spot; often the boat was the only one on the lake. In passing I must mention the stone house, the Voss homestead just off shore. Sarita Voss, one of my schoolmates, lived there. She played the piano a bit and the tinkling of her playing was pleasant to hear out on the lake. Sarita Voss and Silvia Van Stone were pals during our school years. I imagine they were pretty girls, and that might be one reason their names often come up in memory. Well I liked the name Sarita, and we gave it to one of our cuties when she came along. As for White Pond, it's still there, of course, and I'm told there are camps about it. Ah, progress!

As long as I can remember, first familiar tunes, and growing on me over the years, music has been to me a glorious obsession. Aunt Anna had a piano in her home, and when I visited there as a kid I'd pester her to play for me. She could play the popular songs of the day, and sang along, which feat, to me, was little short of
miraculous. I just ate up any music that happened to be in the air. Ballads were the
order of the day, and composers, to mention three - Reginald De Koven, Ernest R.
Ball, and Harry Van Tilzer, were popular with their sentimental stuff.

About the only mechanical reproduction of music was on the phonograph,
earlier sometimes called the graphophone. Their records were caused to revolve by a
spring which was wound up before each record was played, by a small crank. The
records were “cut” and a needle employed in somewhat a like manner as the refined
process of today. Tones from those early players were rather thin, and voices tended
to sound rather falsetto, but we thought they were wonderful and we walked miles to
listen at friend’s who owned one. Early records were cylinders, like dictaphone
records; later the flat plates, as we have today, came into use, however the first of
these plates played but one side.

Well, there were the player pianos also; they were jolly listening for strictly
instrumental music. And one mustn’t overlook those tinkling “music boxes.” They
were, and are cute, but could one take them seriously?

Uncle Harry bought Grandma Frank a Victor - forerunner of the Victrola. It
had a real big horn, painted and shaped like a Morning Glory flower. Gram liked to
sit and listen to hymns played and sung on it: tears in her eyes, she’d exclaim “Ach,
Isn’t dot vunderful. There were also records by such famous singers as Caruso,
Melba, and McCormick, and they were real good.

I guess Jessie sensed my longing for music; and was touched to the point of
arranging with Emma Pettingill for a piano in our house. Emma was the local agent
for the Keller Music Company of Easton, Pennsylvania, besides being our local, and busy piano teacher.

Moving anything, very far, in the early decades of this century had to be by railroad, so our piano, packed in a wooden box, was hauled to the freight station, [and] shipped by rail to Blairstown, where a local drayman hauled it to Mrs. Pettingill’s store. So, one day, Bill Mackey, a liveryman from town, arrived at our house with the piano loaded on a heavy spring wagon drawn by a pair of horses. I’m sure that the payments on that piano involved some penny pinching for Jessie as wages at the laundry were real low.

Mom arranged for piano lessons with Mrs. Pettingill, Emma being about the only choice in Blairstown, and thirty five cents a lesson - three for a dollar - seemed a charge we could manage. Emma was a very capable person; she managed the store on Main Street; had a large class of piano pupils; [and] looked after her husband, and her mother Mrs. Strickland. Pa Pettingill, Emma’s husband, appeared much older than she, and was about as inactive as possible without expiring. He sat in a rocker, smoking his halfburned out pipe, most of the time; it was rumored that he was ill. I was rather afraid of Mrs. Pettingill at first; she was a tall bony woman, except for her seat which spread - probably from sitting a great while at the piano. Her fingers reminded me of those scarey skelton pictures found in “funny books,” being skinny, long, and with king sized knuckles.

After a brief confrontation Mrs. P. and I got down to business, and I was seen walking away from my first piano lesson with a Hard Cover “Presser Beginner Book”
proudly tucked under my arm. Emma soon had me where I could hammer out very easy arrangements of familiar tunes. That practice of teaching familiar tunes, or themes, and neglecting somewhat technical studies, was about the only complaint against my teacher, but it seemed to please both parents and student alike, and kept them coming. My first “public performance” was at some school affair, playing a “reverie” - “Star of Something or Other” by Mr. Englemann, and what with my shaking (my feet trembled so’s I couldn’t keep one of them on the pedal) and, as I remember the “murder,” it must have been terrible. (That was the time, or period, when saccharine compositions labeled “meditation,” “reverie,” and the like, were popular.) There was much sentimentality about, and, as for me, I’d say we could use a bit of it now. More of “moosic” as we go along; right now my readers might say “Ho hum, fiddledy dee, do, re, mi, climb a tree!”

It seems too bad but Jessie never seemed to get around to learning a great deal of piano. I suppose that work in the laundry and walking to Paulina and back was quite exhausting for her.

Summers we always were sure to be entertaining our “city folks.” That was the order of vacationing those preautomobile days: city folks took train to country relatives, or, lacking them, to a mountain or seashore resort. Those summer times were nice all around. The guests saw to it that our table was well victualed, and much of our drab day to day existance became livelier.

Vacationing, John and Harry were a great deal of fun, and besides they pitched in if we happened to be haying or doing other jobs requiring extra help.
Harry spent a lot of time fishing in the Kill - most of it with little to show for his efforts. One day his persistence was rewarded. He was fishing, letting a line drift down stream from the old stone bridge, with a frog for bait, and using two or three corks to float the line. Well it was towards evening - I was lazing nearby - and, as usual, Harry was disgusted with his luck. I knew what was coming, the usual remarks: “Might just as well pull in and go home; no fish in this d----- river anyway.” Well he commenced winding the line up, when first thing I knew, Harry started to dance about, and yell, over and over so loud you could hear him a mile, “I got him, I got him.” Then, to my amazement, he ran off the bridge to the shore and jumped in - clothes and all - and came wading out with the biggest pickeral or pike I’d ever seen. “Wasn’t going to let that one get away,” and Harry was happy with his fishing for once.

The boys, as most everyone who’d looked over the critters, did not have much admiration for our horseflesh. Those horses mostly’d “had it.” Occasionally one of them took sick, and then we’d try out some of our home remedies, such as ginger preparations; Jace Lanterman often “prescribed” doses of aconite for fever, and, where there was an indicated need of a “purgative,” we quack veterinarians didn’t hesitate administering a quart or so of linseed oil.

One time it became apparent that our horse doctoring skills might soon lose us a patient, and something must be done or the “grim reaper” would get our horse. So the boy, Alfred, was loaded onto Old Bill’s back and ordered to fetch Doc. Peaster. Doc. Peaster’s place was four or five miles ride, and Bill’s sharp backbone, despite a
blanket - held in place by a surcingle⁹⁴ - soon became for me a torture. Doc came quite soon and poked, listened, inserted a thermometer in the animal's rectum, read it, wiped it off on his pants leg, and shoved it away into his vest pocket. Doc shook his head remarking, "Nothing much I c'n do; she seems about gone. Might get her bowels started if you could get her moving a bit" - and drove off. So, left alone again with the ailing beast, Harry urging on the halter rope and John patting her from behind, suddenly "it" happened, and, vulgarly put, John got plastered! That time the horse did recover, but John did not relish the joke which seemed to be directed at him.

One day a letter was received from Aunt Anna asking if it would be convenient to bring along a niece of Uncle Jack's (whom we had not met) when the Leicht's came for the annual summer visit. She wanted someone to sort of look after my cousin Jack, Jr.⁹⁵, and be company for cousin Marjorie. Mom didn't care for another little girl around, she said, but supposed she'd have to put up with her. We were not prepared for a shock, and the "little girl" turned out to be one for us, and the neighborhood: sixteen, and about 140 pounds of "it," topped with a beautiful red "mop." Carrie Merz outshone our home product so far th[at] our gals wouldn't have had a chance competitively, but she didn't choose to compete. Such a "lovely thing" couldn't help but arouse my mild interest - I was to be 15 in August, wasn't I? Carrie liked to climb trees, pretended an interest in fishing, and liked to swim, and I'm afraid, as a baby sitter, she was much of a flop. Well, in a way, Carrie turned out to being almost "the death of me." One day she suggested the two of us go for a swim without telling the family and, of course, I was all for it - we went. We were doing
right well; Carrie’s bathing costume was heavy, her breast stroke wasn’t too hot, but sufficed. Suddenly the quiet was rent by Carrie’s piercing yell; she found that she couldn’t “touch” and panicked. I swam over to her, and of course she grabbed me for dear life, but I managed to break away from her, and urge her to a shallower spot. (The bottom was full of holes, and treacherous.) Then she wouldn’t try for shore alone, and I wasn’t going to give her another chance to drag me under, so I found a loose railroad cross tie, pushed it ahead of me, and towed her to shore. My recollection is that I did not receive any acclaim for saving ourselves. Guess we didn’t have any business sneaking off.

I don’t recall just when Uncle Harry and Effie Sheppard were married; they came to our place for part of their honeymoon. Mom told me to go with Pop to meet them at the station, so it was my proud lot to be the official greeter. The horse sure was to kick up a fuss when the train rumbled in, so Pop took the rig back of the station, and held tight to Fanny’s bridle until the train had pulled away.

It seemed that everybody fell for Aunt Effie’s charm. Probably one good reason for her adoption into the family circle was her omission of the usual city “superiority attitude” towards us. (Those days city folks openly cracked jokes about “Country Hicks” and seemed to delight in belittling our lot.) Uncle Harry also was a very likable person, which made them a very fine couple. Those were happy days at the little farm, the only time these loved relatives stayed with us. Aunt Effie remained as a loving sister to my mother until mother’s death.

A new resident was cause for much speculation, especially when the family
migrated all the way from New York City. So one day, when Sadie Howard came busting in with the News that a new family by the name Belet had purchased the house close by the railroad tracks in Paulina, we were all ears. Sadie also volunteered the information that they were "Swiss, straight from Sweeden!" Despite Sadie's levity with geography, the Belets did turn out to be descendants of Switzerland; they spoke French fluently in addition to having mastered English. The family were full bearded Pappa Belet, and Mamma, son Jacques and his sister Ellen. Ellen promptly took a job in the laundry, which was but a few minutes walk, and so Ellen and Jessie worked together. Jobs for men being scarce Jack took a job on the railroad as section hand. (Jacques very soon was being addressed "Jack.") Pappa Belet had been a chef in a New York hotel, which accounted, I would say, for his being a very excellent cook. In case you wonder at my extended coverage for the Belet family - Jack Belet was to marry my sister Jessie a couple of years after they settled in Paulina.

We figured that Sadie Howard must have a beau. Didn't a young man come walking by our place every Saturday with a good sized paper bag under each arm, and turn in at the Howards place? By paying the Howards a neighborly visit, we were able to check up on the details: the young man worked on a trolley line in Bangor and the bags contained roasted peanuts and peppermint and wintergreen candies.

Visiting Mrs. Howard could be very unique experience - such as, she liked to have her verbal news accounts corroborated, and she invariably ended her discourse by looking Mr. Howard in the eye, and inquiring, "NOW aint that so Sutton?" Sutton obligingly would grunt something or other, which seemed to satisfy the old lady.
Also people were amused at Mrs. Howard’s dried apple business. When ladies came to visit at her house they were likely to be presented with a pan of apples and a paring knife, and, observing the hostess peeling and slicing apples, the ladies would smile and follow example. Mrs. Howard dried apples in trays, and these she took to town, trading them for things at the grocery store.

Sutton Howard was an interesting person for a young boy to be with. Once in a while Sutton would give me a lift in his sulkey; it was great fun to ride in that two wheeled rig, just about over the old mare’s rump. He told me that the mare’s steps were so short because she was getting on in years. Sutton drove to work at Ike Yetters most every day.

One day Mrs. Howard came down and asked Pop to get a swarm of their honey bees down and into the hive; they were way up in an apple tree. Pop and his bees usually got along fine, but these fellows were real cross and stung Pop badly, causing him to faint. After that experience Pop confined his bee keeping to the home colony, where relations were more pleasant.

Another day Mrs. Howard came panting to our door exclaiming, “Sadie’s taken with terrible pains;” and, looking at me continued, “Can he run for the doctor?” I trotted to Paulina and got Pink Egerton at the laundry to telephone Doc Allan. (Pink was boss at the laundry; everyone called him “Pink” because his colorings were albino.) I wondered how come his grin at the news that a person had cramps; Pink must have something up his sleeve, I thought. Well, next thing I knew they were talking about Sadie’s baby! The incident ended happily though: Sadie’s erstwhile
beau married her and the little family moved to near pappa’s work in Bangor.

Probably the most versatile person in our community was Jace Lanterman. One couldn’t help admiring his accomplishments, such as animal doctoring, neighborhood butcher, [and] pioneer with his one cylinder, 6 horsepower gas engine. He would “buzz” up your pile of fire wood with that engine, and a saw outfit, then you returned the labor; there was quite some exchanged work then. Yep, Jace sure was a knowhower to arouse one’s envy. But with morals in general, Jace didn’t hold. He was a sort of free Wheeler in the Morals behavior field. It was common knowledge that Jace “went to see” Myrt Swartz. Sometimes the whole tribe of Swartz kids would arrive at our doorstep, and when asked, “How come?” they’d innocently inform us, “Jace gave us ten cents to come up t’see you.” Mom didn’t indulge in much judging, but when called to be the stork’s free assistant at Mr. Stork’s annual visitation at the Swartz abode, she’d likely remark something like “Well now, no wonder.”

One day, about the middle of April 1912 - it must have been a week end (the Manager’s daughters, the Paddock girls were always asking me to come and play on their piano, and it didn’t do any harm to “keep in” with the Borden boss) - I rode along to the milk plant in Marksboro. There, at the milk station, was great excitement among the little group of farmers. Word had just come over the telegraph line that the world’s largest ocean liner, the Titanic, on her maiden voyage across the Atlantic, had struck an iceberg and sunk. It was feared that there were few survivors. Just a bit of history.
During the summer of 1912, we received a telegram that Uncle Jack Leicht had suddenly died. Later on we learned, as was often the case those days, that he died from pneumonia. Mom decided she should be with Aunt Anna. Jessie was working at the Vail household in Blairstown (the Vails, Blairstown’s most prominent family, were of the Blair family from which Blairstown derived its name), so we menfolks were left at home. Well, to add to the general confusion, Jessie announced at a near day she and Jack Belet were to be married - at home! That was my first attempt at “cheffing” - the wedding dinner! I remember that we stuffed and roasted chickens - after, of course, we’d first ketch ‘em and rung their necks, and scalded and drawed them. Mrs. Hibbler was horrified at the way I wasted butter - the old cook book said to baste them with butter, and that’s just what I did. Along with all the rest I baked pies, and I guess the meal was somewhat of a success. One conclusion, cooking, for me was, and still is, fascinating.

Emma Pettingill kept after me, and I sure liked to play, so soon I got so I could play popular songs and familiar hymns fairly well. Our church had a pipe organ which, I was sure, a musician of my caliber could play better than whoever was playing it at the time. I soon got my chance to play as substitute, and my efforts must have been a trial for anyone of the slightest sensitive perception in the congregation. Many of the “regular pious ones” watched our ministers, and their families, to be sure these humble souls were keeping to the “straight and narrow path” and I often think that this vigilance for the minister might have helped to divert minds from my feeble music making. This was especially so for the Reverend Knox, a good faithful
preacher, but some of the "ladies" were always finding fault with his wife - such things as; she kept a pet dog in the house, and oh, oh, they had found out that she sent to New York for fancy hats and clothes! The chatter must have gotten back to Brother Knox, for relations were not too amicable in the church family. The organ was powered from the water line, and it worked quite smoothly most of the time, but one Sunday when the atmosphere was tense anyway, the water pump on the organ started to squeel noticibly. And, that was the time Brother Knox decided on a showdown, addressing the congregation: "Friends it has come to my attention that some of you good people have been saying Mrs. Knox ties her dog to the table leg in the dining room of the parsonage, and that he whines during services. That is untrue, what you hear is the water pump on the organ; someone should oil it." That stern talk had it's effect; people began treating Brother Knox with due respect.

That period, around the early part of the 1900's, many - most parents, I should say - did not tell their offspring many of the facts of life, and paradoxically expected their children to grow up into models of moral behavior. Unfortunately the dumb kids hadn't much knowledge to work on, except from observing the sex behavior of the bees, birds, and beasts. This parental neglect resulted in tragic situations for many of our young girls. Those who "got their man," and married were more fortunate, although this did not always make for a happy home; those who didn't get the man were apt to be shunned by prudish ones of their own sex. So many of my schoolday friends, including Mabel Coleman - she married her cousin - were caught in that trap. How terribly "shook up" I was to feel, when, referring to a friend in Sunday School, I
was told to “Leave her alone - she’s got herself in trouble” - just when she needed
friends most.

Blairstown offered two years of high school, and when I got through I was
very impatient to be off, and doing something\textsuperscript{103}. My brother Harry had a friend, a
Mr. Hirschberger, who operated the Galindo Mfg. Company\textsuperscript{104}, and who was
receptive to taking me on as an apprentice. Galindo occupied three floors of an old
loft building on West Broadway, New York (of course); most of the business was
manufacturing the frames, mounting and framing pictures of ocean liners, railroad
trains, and other pictures to be used as display advertising. Mr. Hirschberger painted
for me a brilliant picture “growing up in the company” and gave me eight dollars a
week “to start” and cautioned me not to tell the Italian workmen with whom I labored
how much I was getting! Aunt Effie lived in Elmhurst, Long Island then and agreed
to let me stay with her and Uncle Harry. It was some long trip to work: leaving
Elmhurst at about six fifteen in the morning by trolley car, changing to the elevated at
Fresh Pond Road, and at the New York side of the Brooklyn Bridge all dismounted,
and I walked over to work. Even in those days of cheap living eight dollars didn’t
allow for anything but bare essentials, for instance ten cents bought a generous meat
sandwich, coffee was five cents, and that had to suffice for lunch; car fare for the
week came to sixty cents, which made these two items a dollar and a half. So,
allowing something for Aunt Effie you can imagine where the eight dollars went!
That summer, not yet quite seventeen years old - Mr. Hirschberger had cautioned me
that if anyone asked, I should say my age was eighteen - I soon became disillusioned
at the prospect of “working up” with hands covered with rope and wood splinters, cut with broken glass, and slopped with glue. That same fall, a rather homesick boy took train for the reunion with Mom and Pop, and home. It was sad leaving Aunt Effie; Uncle Harry wasn’t doing too well at the time either, but I wasn’t able to do much for them financially so, in this respect it didn’t matter much. I didn’t find out until later that Uncle Harry had gotten involved with a woman of the streets - he and Uncle Alfred were running a “Cafe” on a busy corner opposite the Pennsylvania Railroad station in New York and it was, I suppose, a perfect locale for that sort of thing to take place. Thousands of pedestrians passed that corner daily and it was an ideal location for a “drinking Place,” but my uncles did not take care of business, and soon they lost their investment in the place.

When I got back to Blairstown apple picking was in full swing so I worked at this for a short time. Within a week or so after getting back home Ed Garris from Marksboro and Jabez Quick of Blairstown, both station agents for the N.Y.S.&W. Railroad, sent word that they would like to get an apprentice to train to become a telegraph operator for the railroad. This proposition appealed to me; I chose to work with Jabez as he offered a little money, $16.00 a month, while Ed wanted to be paid for the privilege granted me of learning the trade at his elbow. An apprentice at Blairstown meant being Jack of all jobs. Jabey, as everyone called him, laid out some of my jobs - it turned out that there were to be dozens of them. Exclusively mine was the responsibility of carrying the mail bags from the post office and get them on passenger trains, then return to the post office with incoming mail. It was just under a
mile so you see I got plenty of exercise out of that chore. The first train in the morning was the 6:09 for New York, and the last, which tied up at Blairstown [was at] 7:13 PM. I had permission to go home between some of the trains, but who wanted to do a lot more walking with just about enough time to turn around and rush back? You might say I lived at the station, but I was a fool when it came to railroading, and steam locomotives specially. Other assignments for me were to sweep, keep the big brass hanging kerosene lamps in the ladies and men’s waiting rooms filled, cleaned, and trimmed, check freight off “way freights,” and run errands. One job was to walk down the track to the milk station, and count the number of cans of milk to go on the milk train. The plant manager said to help myself to milk; it was ice cold, and I did just as he said, but neglected to stir it before dipping in, and the result was that I was drinking heavy cream. In no time at all my face became a profusion of adolescent-like pimples. I decided to quit drinking cream!

Those giants of railroading days, the steam locomotives, were my dream boats. I loved them then, and to this day revere their memory. Their lovely noises: grinding steel tires against the rails, rhythmic exhaust of steam, the shrill whistle and clanging bell - how exciting it was! You who've never “rode” the cab of those monsters have missed a great joy. You climb up and settle on the little leather covered seat in the cab; after gaining speed the sensation is a forward roll, or rocking motion. Really I could talk about “engines” - the working name for locomotives - ‘till the cows come home, but you’d tire of soft coal smoke and cinders in eyes, so toot, toot, toot-toot, for now.
Rob Roy\textsuperscript{107} built a movie hall in Blairstown at a time when the silent screen was coming into its own. That movie [house] rated more important to us country folks, I daresay, than the Metropolitan Opera House for New Yorkers. Come Friday and Saturday night, one and all, fortified with a quart or so of peanuts, descended upon Roys for maybe the latest “Serial.” They gave you an episode at a sitting, then left the heroine - and us - suspended midair, for things “To continue next week. Don’t miss this thrilling episode!” Or maybe “Our Gang”\textsuperscript{108} or a Charlie Chaplin comedy, or a Harold Lloyd\textsuperscript{109} thriller, and sometimes some pretty fair dramatic stuff. Those pictures always were showed with background music which was usually furnished by a versatile pianist, one adept at jumping from mood-to-mood music, a sort of Hearts and Flowers to Light Cavalry without batting an eyelash. May Hill played most of the time; she was a naturally good pianist, and, needless to say I envied her talent. A touch of elegance was added part of the time at Roys by Joe Silver\textsuperscript{110} and his violin. Joe was Blairstown’s one and only barber, sort of the “dandy” type; people agreed he played a right nice fiddle. It was inevitable that after Joe and I had practiced together we should play at Roys. As I remember we got along pretty well; no one seemed to mind us. They were intent, whilst busily engaged shelling and chomping on peanuts, with Pearl White’s\textsuperscript{111} latest escape from an apparently fatal drop over the cascading waterfall. Those early films frequently broke - I almost think that we’d been right disappointed if they hadn’t - and this was the signal for good natured foot stomping and hand clapping.
We weren't making out farming at all well, and my parents decided that the best solution was to sell the place. After selling the little farm, and auctioning the livestock and farm tools there was, as I remember, very little left, but we were at least out of debt. I had the small income from the railroad job and Pop could get some carpenter work so, comparatively, we were sitting pretty.

We moved to a little house near the new D. L. & W. railroad depot, about a mile above Blairstown. There were two sort of temporary houses, put up for supervisors of construction to live in while work on the new railroad line was going on. We rented one of these houses from Cal Raub— they stood on his land - for five dollars a month. The other house, just a few paces away, was occupied by an elderly couple whose names I do not recall. This “new” place, which did not smack of permanence, served our immediate necessity; it was an easy walk or bike ride to my job.

Perhaps I should explain about this new railroad line. The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western R.R. at this period was a wealthy line and they could afford to do some pioneering. The new road was a bold engineering step. Instead of following river valleys, with their mild grades, the Lackawanna built a line directly through hill and vale, requiring some spectacular “cuts” and “fills.” It cut several miles from the original line, and appropriately it was dubbed “The Lackawanna Cut Off.” This cut off became part of the main line between Buffalo and New York; the passenger service was excellent, doing in about an hour and forty-five minutes what
took three or four hours on the Susquehanna. The passenger traffic about stopped on the old N.Y.S.&.W. between Blairstown and New York, but the regular passenger trains still had local business, picked up milk cars, and carried express and mail. The Susquehanna depended mostly on freight and coal anyway, so the new line didn’t hurt us too much.

The station agent at the new station, Jasper Jacobus\textsuperscript{115}, decided to build a house for him and his wife, and Pop contracted to put it up. It was to be a ready cut Sears, Roebuck house, which looked like a snap to put up. My recollection is that Pop got $75 for his work. Well the usual thing happened: Mrs. Jacobus decided on changes and additions, which messed up the plans, and took away any possible profit for Pop.

That was a hard winter; the house was full of cracks and the wind whistled right through. There were heavy snows, but this helped the situation by banking around the walls; we got by, it would seem.

An interesting episode of life itself came about that winter. It seems that a grand daughter of our next door neighbors came to stay with them early that fall. We never saw the girl out doors and began to wonder about her. One wild night of blowing and snow the young lady in question was taken in great pain - I slept like a log after the long day at the station, and didn’t hear what had happened until morning. Mom reported that Doc Allen had had to come through the snow drifts on horseback. The details, as they came to me, were that the girl had given birth to a lifeless little baby girl. The reactions of persons in calamities such as this tend to be unpredictable:
holed up, figuratively together, in winter's grip, we sympathized as a family. Pop fashioned a lovely little casket, and the town officials gave permission to bury the little waif in the town cemetery; nature even cooperated: the snow, which was deep, kept the ground unfrozen and easy to dig a grave. Memory relives a picture: Mom and I watching the two graying men, Pop and the old gentleman next door, driving off in a sleigh with the little box between them. Cal Raub had loaned the horse and sleigh as his share of compassion.

As it turned out, the girl was quite a good looking miss but the grandparents were uneasy, and apparently wanted her out. Near as I can remember, she and I walked down town two or three times; needless to say the inevitable grapevine message got to my boss, Jabez, and he lost no time in addressing me on the subject of the girl - for the love of me I just can't remember her name - and women folks in general. The conclusion of his remarks ran something like this: "Now you understand I got nothing against this girl, but somehow or other she got in trouble. Maybe it wasn't her fault, I don't know, but I got an idea she's took a shine to you. Now, just supposin' she's going out with two or three fellers and she gets caught again, what's to stop her figuring she can hook you even if you'd had nothing to do with her? My idea is for you to shy away - you're awful young to be railroaded into marriage." It was good advice in those days, and I "got" the message. As it turned out, the girl did marry a neighbor boy, and last I knew they were making a go of it.

I got along with the young Jacobus's real well; we were mutually interested in railroading, and outdoor sports. One day Jasper asked me to go along with them on a
trout fishing trip along a mountain brook a few miles above Blairstown. So we climbed into their Model T and took off, picking up Edna Allen\textsuperscript{116} in town. Jasper drove as far as the hill road seemed safe, then we made it to the brook on foot - about ten minutes walk. As it turned out I guess we shouldn’t have gone that day nowhow as we’d hardly gotten lines wet when a heavy thunder shower was upon us. By the time we reached the car we were all soaking wet. (Those “tourist” type cars were not much protection, either. When the top was down, it took considerable work to get it upright again.) One lucky thing: it was mostly downhill homeward or I’m afraid the little “Lizzie” would not have made it through the sticky mud. Soon after that Edna Allen was taken sick with “consumption,” the term then used for “T.B.” or tuberculosis\textsuperscript{117}. Her father, Dr. Allen, never intimated any hard feelings towards the Jacobuses or me, although at the time the events of that excursion and her fatal sickness seemed to coincide. The wonder was that we didn’t all get T.B., as later testing showed the majority of milk cows were infected with that disease, and we all drank raw (unpasteurized) milk.

The place where we lived surely didn’t seem suitable - it was hardly comfortable - so we started looking around for some other place to live. There was this place, the Wildrick farm on the outside of Paulina, which I heard could be rented. I had become rather restless on the railroad deal, and let it be known I might quit. There were so many chores on that job that I didn’t have much time to learn telegraphy, and I began to suspect that JB would just as soon I didn’t “graduate” anyway. Another thing that made me mad was an incident which happened one day
while I was checking freight off the way freight. Those freight gangs were overbearing toughies; this day the trouble was with conductor Benzoni and his crew, on the west bound run. I had checked twelve cases of whiskey from the car, which the manifest called for; the train pulled away, and there were but eleven cases in the freight house. Well, the railroad wanted me to pay $60 for the missing stuff, and I made up my mind I wasn’t going to work around there about four months for nothing. The outcome was a sort of tug of war. (I think the railroad officials knew what was going on all the time; the crew were thieving. Some years later this crew all was arrested, and stolen merchandise, like silks, shoes, clothing, was found stashed away.)

There were, as I have said, rough and tough men working the trains those days. I proceeded to learn a whole new vocabulary of cuss words, and many stories not suitable for repeating.

The conductor of the other train - way freight - a George Beck¹¹⁸, also was a character, however of another variety. One crew worked their train east and “tied up” at Beaver Dam¹¹⁹, and coming west next day, laying over in Stroudsburg; the other train operated in opposite directions, which accounted for a local freight both ways each day. To get back to George Beck, he lived with his wife in Stroudsburg, and also maintained a house and woman companion in Beaver Dam. The fellow was bluff and jovial and often very crude; he took pleasure in quoting bible verse, and twisting it in a manner that could be construed obscene. Even in the rough railroad atmosphere, men were often rather shocked with George’s line of conversation. We were overrun with rats in the Blairstown freight station. The pests came in droves
from the kill, tore open feed bags, chewed on anything edible they could reach, generally making terrible messes, all of which made for losses in damage claims.

One day George Beck dropped off his caboose with a black and white tabby cat under his arm, announcing, “This’ll fix yer dam’ rats.” Soon our puss was pretty well discolored with soot and soft coal smoke, and Mr. Beck announced that he’d named her “Smutface.” She chased rats right and left; she cleaned them all out of the place. Smutface had a waiting list for her many litters of kittens for she had become famous far and wide as a rat chaser. We kept her well supplied with milk to counteract possible poisoning from eating rat heads. I dare say our Smutface was to only cat to get her photo in the *Erie Railroad Magazine*, with an eulogy to her hunting accomplishments!

Certainly all trainmen were not ruffians; there was Abe Mabie\(^{120}\), a lovable character if ever there were one. He was nearly as broad as his height, which was not great; his girth was so immense that he had to turn sidewise to go through an entrance to a passenger car. Abe was conductor for a number of years on the “Dinky,” a passenger train which operated over the short branch line between Blairstown and Portland, Pa., so called because the original train had a real small locomotive\(^{121}\). The line had been built as a connection with the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Portland, to accommodate transportation needs of students attending Blair Academy. It seems that about everyone knew Abe, and admired his contagiously jovial manner. He surely knew how to handle, without fuss, large groups of teen agers on his train; they all got to know him quickly. Often there were “specials” over the Portland line
for such occasions as football games with Peddie Institute at Heightstown, N.J., when often there were three or four hundred young folks entrained for the contests.

It occurs to me that I have never said much about Blair Academy so allow me to interpose some highlights about this school. It was founded by a John I. Blair\(^{122}\), I can’t say when. Emma Pettingill’s mother Mrs. Strickland, told me a great deal about the founder, which information, although some of it might be hearsay, I think interesting enough to repeat. John I. Blair ran what we would today call a bar (room); his customers being mostly farmers. The drinks were measured out in a notched piece of wood, and the charge was so much for a “stick” of liquor. Often his customers developed a thirst, but lacked money to satisfy it. Then, according to Mrs. Strickland, “J.I.B.” would say, “Oh, never mind, we’ll just ‘set it down in the book’” Many of his customers ran up considerable sized bills, and foolishly settled accounts by giving him mortgages on their farms. Needless to mention Mr. Blair acquired much real estate by this device. Also by means of wise investments he became a very wealthy man, a powerful figure in the then-booming railroad business. By virtue of his bank account he took on an air of affluent respectability; J.I.B. wanted very much to become the candidate for governor of New Jersey. He challenged a wouldbe opponent candidate - who accepted the dare - to debate issues of the day. When Blair’s turn to speak came, up he jumped from his chair, and shouted, “Ladies and gentlemen, there are two men in this fight; one is an honorable gentleman” - pounding his chest - “the other is a G-- D-- S-- of a B----.” Thereupon his backers pulled him to his seat by the coat tails, and John I. Blair was out of politics.
However, in his way, he was quite a character - wealthy and ambitious. He is remembered as changing the name of a hamlet from Gravel Hill to the town of Blairstown; founding, as a Presbyterian Preparatory School, Blair Academy; building the large Presbyterian church where students of the academy were expected to attend. It - the academy - was considered a "fashionable" school for young ladies, and gentlemen could prepare themselves for college. Minister's sons were granted free admission to the school. At about 1912 or '13, after some unfortunate girl-boy incidents, Blair changed from coeducational to a boys school. The campus and cut lime stone buildings of Blair Academy are very lovely.

To get on with the story, having gotten wind of events, Mrs. Wildrick decided she would not-chance renting her place to me unless I was still working for the railroad. (I now fully admire her business foresight; she knew there wasn't a living to be had from that small farm.) Well, it so happened that JB got the message, and I guess he didn't want to lose a good "hand" of all jobs, so he went to bat for me with the result that the $60 deal got forgotten, and I got more time to listen to the wires ticking out messages. So we moved to the Wildrick place in 1915. The house was real big; actually it had been doubled in size a long time before, and reportedly had served as an inn. Some of the floors and walls were out of plumb due, it was rumored, to some of the workmen on the house taking out their wages in booze, and building accordingly! But we had lots of room and ELECTRIC lights. The lights came about through an exchange arrangement for a line from our soft water spring to the laundry - which had a generating plant as part of the operation.
The electricity was wired from Paulina to Blairstown and Blair Academy. We certainly were happy with all this “luxury” and space. It was a nice place to entertain our city relatives; not too far from Blairstown, and only about three minutes walk to the kill where the swimming and fishing was just fine. Pop was happy here too. We collected a team of horses, a couple of nice cows for family milk and butter; kept a couple of pigs and a small flock of chickens, which gave him something to do. We were “in business” and Pop could take his own good time working when and as, he pleased.

One unpleasant event took place at the Paulina farm. It seems money spread a long ways those days, and I imagine we appeared mildly prosperous, which might have contributed to the account that follows. Uncle “Doc” Runion (it was said he collected the Doc title from his practice of carrying a small bag with various pills and remedies with him whenever he went on trips and when he visited over night), a widower, appeared on the scene, bag and baggage and with an air of permanence, “for a visit” he said. Mom put him up by himself, and we showed him the Runion brand of hospitality. Well, after three or four weeks we were much concerned - but Uncle Doc didn’t seem to be - about our guests intentions for the future. Mom was doing all sorts of things for him, even to play chamber maid. (Chambers were a reality, too, those days; they reposed under the bed and contributed to a nasty habit. Today’s brand of housewife surely would have declared war on the chambers; in Mom’s day women did not know their right to emancipation from distasteful chores.) We hinted some, and that didn’t get us far. Eventually, at brother Harry’s suggestion,
we presented to Uncle Doc, in a nice way, the plan that he pay Mom a nominal sum and become his own chamber maid, otherwise the visit would have to be considered over. Uncle Doc packed and left.

The station work meanwhile was coming along much better and I got so I could receive and send telegraph messages quite well. Also I now could interpret freight tariffs, bill out freight and express shipments, and had learned much about dealing with the public through selling tickets and politely giving out information. One of the telegraph operators at Blairstown who showed me many things pertaining to train work was Conrad (Connie) Cook. He was a kind, likeable person, and we all admired him. Like many persons at the time he didn’t realize how he was gradually wasting away with tuberculosis - daily, it seemed, he became weaker physically. Connie’s father Simeon (Sim) made a fair living as an independent drayman, hauling, with a fine stout horse and wagon, freight from the station to consignees about town. Connie was the Cook's only child; they thought that the sun rose and set on him, and of course he lived at home. I guess his folks knew pretty much what was in store for Connie, and I think they encouraged him to see as much of life as he could while he was spared on earth. Connie bought a Model T Ford “touring car” - a beauty, black of course, with lots of brass trimming up front. He liked to drive it and took a car full of us fellows on short trips, often as distant as Delaware Water Gap, about 18 miles! For some reason, I don’t know why, tires were kept real hard those days; I think they were kept up to about 80 pounds pressure, and the springs being stiff, it seemed one bounced about during most of those rides. But we didn’t mind the
bumps; weren't we flying along at twentyfive or thirty miles an hour, leaving clouds of dust in our wake?

There was another telegraph operator, Doc Edmonds\textsuperscript{127}, whom I remember distinctly. He was rough talking, vulgar, rolled his own cigarettes and smoked them (against company rules) on the job, and chewed tobacco when he wasn't smoking. How I dreaded the cold weather months, when Doc and Jabez would spit tobacco juice at the open door of the big pot bellied stove, which occupied floor space in the middle of our small office. What missed the mark and landed on the hot stove sent hissing, sweetish smelling, steam into the closed up space of the office.

Soon after moving to the Wildrick place, Jabez pronounced me capable of manning a telegrapher's post, and I was assigned to Hainesburg Junction as third trick operator. Thus far in life I'd never had any thoughts about not sleeping nights; that third trick which was a stint from nine P.M. to six A.M. changed this idea for me to be sure. The reason for the job being open did, however, serve to help keep me awake. The fellow who preceded me fell asleep on the job, causing a head on wreck\textsuperscript{128}! He became automatically fired for negligence. The accident happened somewhat as follows. The old Susquehanna was a single track line, and all but regularly scheduled (passenger) trains had to get running orders. The operator charged for this accident was supposed to flag a train for passing orders; the trouble was that, while he had dropped off to sleep, the train he was to flag had already passed his station. We operators received train running orders from the "dispatcher" at headquarters (in our case Jersey City). After taking the orders we were required to
repeat them for verification, the conductor of the train signed the orders - the receiving operators also were required to sign; these signatures were then reported to the dispatcher, who then gave his "O.K." and signed off with his initials. Anything pertaining to the movement of trains such as passing trains, delays caused by minor accidents, [or] cars to be switched or picked up, was reported to the dispatcher. Major decisions were made by the chief operator, or dispatcher. Hainesburg Jct. was the point where the "Lehigh & New England Railroad" - a coal carrier - connected with, and ran over the N.Y.S.&W. tracks for about 30 miles, again entering their own tracks. The L.& N.E. had to halt their trains at the junction for running orders over our stretch; returning L.& N.E. trains had to get running orders over their line also. The L.& N.E. used telephone for dispatching; this "bothered" me at first, but I soon became used to this method. There were not many trains, sometimes only two or three during the night, which made it a lonesome job, and after midnight it was hard to keep one's eyes open. I "dead headed" (rode free) on trains to and from work; getting off at Hainesburg station and walking down the tracks to where the Junction stood alone - no place particular. The station agent at Hainesburg, Sam Gardner (affectionately called Sammy)\(^{129}\), was our boss - a good natured, big stout man, with one wooden leg. Sammy couldn't get around very handily, and he consequently suffered from constipation and the "piles." The general store in Hainesburg didn't carry remedies so Sam had me fetch him medicines from Branigan's drug store in Blairstown; one item was "Pyramid" suppositories for relief of his piles discomfort\(^{130}\).

The little building which housed our telegraph office\(^{131}\) was located on a
narrow strip between the tracks and the kill. Sometimes when the water was right for fishing, I’d stick a cane pole out the window and try my luck. Eels and catfish often bit fast after the water became “roiled” after a hard downpour, and after dark. We got our drinking water from a spring located about a quarter mile off in the woods. That was welcome exercise running there for fresh drinking water; it kept quite well for a couple of hours.

A few feet from the office stood an old passenger coach fitted out with bunks. Some times train crews had to “lay over” for rest, when according to law they had “their time up” and had to rest eight hours before resuming work. Often these bunks were used by trainmen for this purpose, but most often the bunk house, as it was called, was empty.

When I came on the job I “relieved” a Mr. Kelly, a red faced, older man, with the earmarks of having been an imbiber. One day, when I came to work, I was surprised to find a strange fellow on the job who nonchalantly informed me that Kelly had dropped dead in the office the night before! That gave the place an eeriness - Kelly had dropped dead right in this little room, and, in the dead of the night, often a vision of Kelly seemed to pop up right before me!

This fellow that took Kelly’s place plainly was a floater; I knew from the start that he was hitting the bottle but didn’t think it necessary to report him. One night, when I came on the job, I found this fellow was lit quite high, and he had two of the toughest girls imaginable with him - also about drunk. Guess he noticed that I was mad, but anyway ventured to inform me, “One of the girls is for you Al, I don’t care
which.” I remember I just stood there staring at them and asked them to get outside in order to clear the office of that stench. Now they were all three mad as hops at me, and they “retired” to the bunk house. (It seems that their plans had been for me to be one of the retirees!) During the night my visitors apparently got drunker and were noisy with their arguing... As I hoped, Sammy got complete “wind” of the fracas next morning, and another journeyman telegrapher hit the road.

One of our Blairstown M.D.’s, a Doctor Carhart, used to drive his car to Hainesburg to call on Joe Beck, one of those big, good natured fellows who thought he needed a doctor’s care. This doctor did not go out of his way to practice his profession, being somewhat of a recluse. Some years earlier he had married a nurse; they were together everywhere and she went with him on most of his horse and buggy trips visiting patients. One day, while coming home from their rounds, their rig was struck by a Susquehanna engine and his wife was killed; Doc. wasn’t hurt much. Thereafter this doctor lived pretty much to himself, in the big house opposite the Presbyterian church. Miss Elder, a cultured lady, stayed there with him keeping the doctor’s house in order and giving a few piano lessons on the side. Concordia had it they did not give a hoot about each other beyond mutual aid.

Occasionally Doc. invited me to ride down to work with him when he went to see Joe Beck; he had one of the first good sized cars around town, and I accepted with glee. He was a sort of pioneer in attempting to drive his car all winter. (Most motorists drained their radiators and jacked up the car until good driving conditions returned in the spring.) He had had a snow plow fashioned for the front of his car; it
worked quite well in light snow, and we sure had fun and were rather exclusive. Joe Beck was a lot of fun too, but I didn’t like the hard cider he brought by the two quart pitcher from the cellar. I don’t know that I can remember much about Joe’s wife except that she was nice to me, and that she thoroughly disapproved of hard cider. The Beck’s gave me a standing invitation that any time I got stranded and couldn’t get home, I should stay with them. Joe was a horse fancier; he owned a fine pacer and it was a delight to go sleighing behind her: you fairly flew. That horse’s hips swayed regular as a pendulum, and the click of her toes on the hard snow seemed regular as the beat of a metronome. One day Joe took me home, just for the ride, and we made better time than the automobile usually did on a winter road.

As I remember, I spent about two years working that third trick at Hainesburg Junction and, as I look back, the worse part of that job was that I just could not seem to adjust sleeping daytime and keeping awake nights.

Living close to the kill I got my fill of fishing and swimming and found time to do some work about the farm. Telegraphers were about the highest paid class of workers in rural sections those days, and I venture to say that Mom had things about as good as she’d ever had.

There were wonderful apple trees on the Wildrick Farm, varieties - which might not be good shippers, or keepers for commercial purposes - not generally enjoyed today: tangy red Astrican, spicy russets, northern spies, greenings, and sheep nose - sometimes called strawberry apples. Stored in a cool cellar these apples kept quite firm over the Christmas holidays. Some families dug a hole in a well
drained location, and between layers of fresh rye straw "buried" a cache of apples; these came out remarkably firm in the spring.

After a little frost the drop apples and culls were right for making good cider. We gathered wagon loads of these drop apples and took them to the Ike Reed cider mill and distillery, where you could have excellent cider made, or exchange your apples for a quantity of two year aged apple brandy. As I remember the cider mill made your product for a "share" of the apples, just as the grist mill retained a portion of the grist for the grinding. Mr. Reed also bought a lot of apples to satisfy a large operation. That stuff made excellent medicine, believe it or not. We were given small doses of it, usually in hot water and some sugar for such as stomach ache, colds and chills; swished some around your mouth, and spit it out, for tooth ache. It worked!

Being accustomed to a glass or two of wine sipped along with meals, just as in his old world mode of living, Jack Belet’s father turned his chef’s talents to developing the juice of apples - cider - to something better. Why couldn’t a wine, right for complimenting Chef Bel[et]’s culinary artistry, be concocted from the juice of apples? Near as I can find out he simply had the cider run into newly emptied, but not rinsed, whiskey barrels. After a period of seasoning this product did not taste at all like “hard cider”; it was remarkably, and disarmingly, mild flavored, and tasted very much like champagne.

One summer evening some of us dropped over to visit Ellen Belet and her father. They were the only ones of the family still living in the house beside the
railroad tracks; the old gentleman never formed many acquaintances around Paulina, so he welcomed company. Henry Belet was a vanishing-bearded profile; I thought he resembled pictures I’d seen of President Benjamin Harrison. Ellen retained her rather tawny French-Swiss complexion; she was rather slim and of medium height. Ellen had made a pan of fudge and set it out for us to enjoy; the old gentleman brought up a bottle of his apple-juice masterpiece. He never drew it into a pitcher; I imagine, to him, that would be a desecration of his wine. Aunt Anna seemed to be enjoying the fudge and “champagne” immensely; the rest of us were not going in for the combination, I imagine. Anyway - we thought it great fun - Aunt Anna got sort of “lit” and we had to catch her up by the arms to get her home.

Every day, when it was summery, all the young folks around Paulina went swimming. Male outfits in suits were not bad for swimming - either trunks and a top or the two combined in a “one-piece.” Most good suits were wool - there were no synthetic fibers on the scene in that early day; wool was nice, drying quickly after you’d come out of the water, and was nice and warm to the skin. Ladies and girls outfits were a scream, and how they ever kept afloat with all that bulky yard goods clinging to them - one wonders. Let’s see if I can give you a picture of cousin Marjorie’s bathing suit, hung out to dry, the subdivisions took up twelve or fifteen feet on the line. First you see an ornate boudoir-like hat, next observe a very businesslike brassiere, then bloomer pants, a pair of long black stockings, above the ankle laced canvas shoes; all of this topped off with an elbow length sleeve, shirtwaist-dress type “suit.” Like a Model T Ford, my lady could have any color
bathing suit - provided it was black.

The house at Paulina was a be[e]hive of activity all summer long; it was a nice place for vacationing. Aunt Anna, with my cousins Marjorie and Jack, came for the entire school vacations, and John and Harry, plus an assortment of Aunts, Uncles, and friends, were to be expected most any times. As a Scotsman might observe, “None came empty-handed,” and our table overflowed with victuals we ordinarily wouldn’t buy.

Jessie had taken her piano sometime after her marriage and, as I remember, one time when Mom was visiting in New York she got ahold of fifteen dollars someplace and bought an old Wheelock piano for me. Somehow this ancient piano withstood shipment from New York in a freight car, the moving from the Christman place to the railroad house; to Paulina. One might say that it was a regular trooper. That Wheelock had a sweet tone (one might say a tone of love from Mom), despite its age, a cracked sounding board, and loose action. We pounded it a lot on those summer days - there also was an old reed organ at Paulina which got regular workouts.

Somehow I got sidetracked on pianos, which brings to mind a rather humorous family anecdote. Marjorie and Jack studied (can we say?) piano with the same teacher. Neither of them became much in the way of being players, but Marjorie did get as far as playing popular music. In fairness to my cousins, that teacher’s capabilities seemingly were lacking; her appearance reminded one of an old tintype. Before our first meeting with the lady at Aunt Anna’s, my aunt warned us to
be prepared to keep "straight faces." She came bedecked in a huge flower trimmed hat, bosomly tailored suit, high shoes, and dramatically fluttering; she preferred tea before lessons. Which prelude brings me to the little story. Jack brought along his music, which he currently was working on, each time he came our way on summer vacations. During one of Jack’s short bouts with the old Wheelock, Pop was sitting in an adjoining room contemplatively stroking his chin. After the ordeal had ended Pop was heard to remark, to no one in particular, "Goshamolly, seems like he’s been fiddlin’ with that piece three year or more; sounds about same as first time he tried it."

Pop’s interest in music did not go beyond a few folk tunes and maybe a half dozen old hymns. Once I remember some company asked me to play something and I guess I was doing my best with music in the Poet & Peasant category when, Pop broke in with, "Why can’t you play something folks can understand? People don’t like that kind of playing.” I guess I quit right there. Pop had a right nice wooden fife and blew away on such tunes as “Pop Goes the Weasel,” and “We won’t Get Home Until Morning” - etc. There was a fine drum also (wonderful to me), about a yard long, which had a hole in it of about two inches diameter on one side, but not completely through, that was said to be a Civil War scar. No, Pop said he was rather young for that war; he was not in it. Pop did mention a fife and drum corps and intimated he had played in it; I never made an acquaintance with one of those groups of players in my youth. Truly a few generations ago, to utilize a then current venacular, music was a “scarce ‘artickle’” out in the country. It just occured to me -
while we are on the subject of music - that I never mentioned the time, term '15-'16, that I studied piano under Blanche Wagner\textsuperscript{138} at Blair Academy. Miss Wagner attended Blair Academy when it was a coeducational school, then went on to study at the New England Conservatory of Music. After completing her studies there she returned to Blair, heading the music department. Emma Pettingill had kindled a flame inside me and I very much wanted to become someone in music circles. Had I realized how little I knew about piano playing or my lack of technic that day when I barged into Blanche Wagner's studio I'd probably never "done it." Yes, I could enroll for piano lessons would cost me six dollars an hour! Probably sensing my consternation, the lady kindly said, "Why don't you take fifteen minutes." That studio, for me, was heaven, with two grand pianos and a lovely old square - all Steinways - thrown in. Blanche went on, "My time is my own, and we could arrange a long fifteen minutes." I was again dismayed when I found that I must start pretty much from scratch; I guess my performance, to Wagner, was rather elementary. Blanche Wagner knew how to get her ideas across, such as shading from pianissimo to fortissimo, effect a smooth legato, and relaxed staccato - well she had me long enough to get me somewhat on the right track! Not to burden my readers further, I can report that I played in two recitals, both two piano. When I left at spring term end Wagner inquired what plans I had and I brashly announced I planned to teach piano. There followed one of the few stern lectures that have been directed my way, the gist of it being that at the time I knew just a small part of what there was to music, and whatever I could accomplish would be mediocre. Now, she continued, if I could'
work and get a college degree in music, well and good. She was a fine honest person; I left there a bit sad, but she'd "informed" me and, of course she was right. (How many ladies are teaching - probably not as many as in the old days - who should not be. There are some men at it too, but the ladies most often unqualified were housewives doing this as a side line. One time I knew a young woman who had a considerable number of piano pupils, and one day when asked to play a simple piece ("Parade of the Wooden Soldiers") she said, "Oh, I can't play that - I never practiced it; I just give it to some of my pupils.")

My brother Harry had made a great deal of money in his cotton textiles business during the war years. After a couple years of the European conflict there developed shortages of many commodities, one of which was cotton and its products. After the U.S. entered the war, World War 1, business became even brisker; Harry had amassed quite a stack of money. He became fascinated with a farm, the Van Camp homestead, just on top of the hill from Paulina. It was a lovely place; two brooks meandered along woods and rippled through slate eroded gullies. There was a fine apple orchard, about a hundred acres of rolling fields, and twenty-five or thirty acres of woods.

The house was a nice rather Dutch colonial style, and there were adequate barns and other out buildings. Mom seemed to think she'd like to live there; Pop and I were enthusiastic about the prospect. Someone had to make a home for Tommy as he seemed mentally incapable of managing his own affairs, and Harry had the thought that this would be a good place for him. Accordingly some time, I believe in the
fall of 1917, Harry bought the Van Camp farm, and in the following spring we moved there.

It was but a short distance, half a mile or so between the two places, so we were able to do our own moving. We had one moving casualty which I will now relate. We had a small flock of chickens, maybe 125 of them, so I got the bright idea we could easily move them by stapling a cover on the big wagon box and moving them in two trips - it being just a short trip. Everything probably would have been fine if it had not been for the half mile trip up the hill, when the dopes all slid to the back end, and, when we got there, we found about half of the biddies were suffocated. The other half of those chickens we made sure to put only fifteen in a crate.

Going to the new farm cost us one “luxury,” there being no power lines outside of towns, so we no longer had electric lights. So what, kerosene lamps were dug out; one couldn’t have everything.

How uncertain are the destinies of families - we looked forward to making this lovely place our home “forever”; it was to be in the family barely two years.

We needed another good team of horses on the new place and Harry and John decided New York, of all places, was the best spot to get our farm horses. So I took the train to the city to get in on the deal, and at the same time explain to my boss in Jersey City that I had to get away from railroading for a while. (Due to some personal characteristic - I suppose it was some mental fixation - I never got so I could sleep much daytimes. This situation tended to “keep me on an edge” and affected my digestion to no good.) In New York my brothers and I visited Pat Reardon, who
managed the International Trucking Company. (It wasn’t as big as the name might imply, but the firm had a good share of the business in the city.) Pat, I suppose, felt obligated to help a good customer, Maguire & Co., and he picked out for us one of the nicest pair of young geldings I’d ever laid eyes on, or have since, for that matter. On the scales they were within fifty pounds of being the same weight, medium heavy but not clumsy; they were jet black, and of surprising intelligence. For them and a fine set of harness we shelled out $750. Those boys didn’t object [to] being led into a freight car and came to Blairstown without a scratch. Old timers shook their heads at our “foolishment with city horses”; afterward they were to shake the same heads in wonderment at Tom and Jerry doing all kinds of farm work like old timers. I recall one time that we three, Tom, Jerry and I, were not, so to speak, in tune. Let me say that any one with “horse sense” speaks to a horse upon approaching him to let him know he’s there. Well at about the time these fine fellows had taken up residence on the farm, I’d go out after dark to see for sure if they were O.K. They stood with their backs to the outside door and, well, this time I came up quietly, reached up to stroke a hindquarter and next thing I knew Alfred landed in the manure pile. Fortunately no bones were broken; it was good for laughs.141

As I look back, those two years for me on the Van Camp farm were not too enjoyable. Maybe we were doing less in the way of enjoying the country, and we were allowing work and more work to take over our lives.

Harry now had a car and he and John, often accompanied by Richard Smith or some other guests, drove up from the city several times during the summer months.
The car was a Chandler, complete with wire wheels, one of the snappier turnouts of
that day. But, can you imagine a day of torturous driving to cover about sixty Miles?
Roads were hardly fair, simply connecting town with town; you passed through all
settlements at some foolish speed limit such as fifteen miles an hour. Town and city
cops were “eager beavers for speeders”; town and city officials looked to fines from
motorists as an easy source of revenue, so motorists had to be very careful to observe
traffic rules to the letter. The expected arrival of the boys meant that we, ‘specially
Mom, would start scanning the road, hours ahead of the time they’d be likely to make
it, for the cloud of dust preceding the rumble of motor. Mom loved to ride in a car - it
could be that this motorized transportation brought nostalgic memories of city life -
and she found it hard to understand why my brothers didn’t want to start right out
exploring the countryside with the car as soon as they arrived.

We needed an extra “hand” on that big place quite often, and Clint Hill turned out to be our man. Clint really merits a bit of telling about; no one could possibly double for him, being a regular “don’t give a dam what you think about me” individual. Structurally, Clint was just above medium height; his bony frame and notably his face were rather frontierishly gaunt appearing. His white hair was sparse, his eyes were inclined to be watery, moustache sort of bushy - also white - and you were sure to notice his oddly turned up toes! “Well,” in answer to my query, “got drunk one evenin’ and when I woke up alongside the railroad tracks they’d got froze that’a’way.”

Clint carried his around-70 years at a steady gait; his slow appearing
movements were misleading; his every move clicked an accomplishment. He worked when he felt like it, but he wouldn’t let you down in a pinch. Try to get Mr. Hill to work on one of his “off days” and his answer likely would be, “Hell no, don’t feel good.” (As in other war years, manpower was scarce and you were glad to get the Clint Hills to work for you.)

Clint, Tom and Jerry got along just perfectly. (Horses invariably react unfavorably to a nervous person, but with a steady driver they work accordingly, which, I suppose, explains the working partnership between Clint and the team.)

The big farm proved to be a wonderfully productive one. Big fields of oats, corn, rye, winter wheat, and the lowly buckwheat which would thrive on fields of poorer soil, all was a joy to the eye. War shortages had created a grain-hungry market for our crops, and we could sell most anything that could be used for foodstuffs.

One of our projects was raising pigs and we sometimes had two or three dozens of them on the farm. Pigs, besides “making hogs of themselves,” are, to their credit, really quite interesting in their playful antics. One Hampshire boar (that’s a daddy pig) had a habit of following persons about like a dog, and we thought this quite fun to watch. One day Mom started to drive to Blairstown to do some “trading” and, in about a half hour, we were surprised to see a very indignant Mrs. Runion come driving into the yard, and behold Willie, the Hampshire, happily trotting along behind. Mom burst out with “All those people laughing at that spectacle I made of myself,” and something about how we all ought to be ashamed of ourselves. Mom never could be convinced that Will, the pig, had thought up the jaunt by himself -
which indeed was the case.

One day we read in the *Press*\textsuperscript{143} that a new confection, the “Eskimo Pie” was in town and could be had for a nickle. My imagining ran wild as to the form and filling of this new edible; Mom or I had no idea that it had anything to do with ice cream. The next time that Mom drove to town I asked her to fetch me one of “those things”! It must have been a cool day as the treat reached home in quite good form. I was delighted with it and I’m sure I could have eaten a dozen of them, non stop, if they’d been handy. Mom liked the taste I gave her too.

During the fall and winter of 1918 Blairstown experienced it’s share of the “flu” (influenza) epidemic\textsuperscript{144}. Considered nationwide, the flu that year was credited with the loss of more U.S. lives just among the fighting forces than in combat. Like most epidemics the flu was no respecter of persons, although it did seem to spread faster where there were concentrations and, during the height of the siege, public gatherings were discouraged. Victims were sick briefly, seemed to be over it and, without warning, died. None of our family - for some unknown reason - got the flu. Clark Jones\textsuperscript{145}, who ran the “ice cream parlor,” a very popular meeting place in town, died from it, as did the town Dentist’s (Doctor Amandus Shubert) adopted daughter, Amanda\textsuperscript{146}. The Shuberts were intensely devoted to their talented Amanda. She was an accomplished pianist and was now studying voice at a New York conservatory, when taken sick. Thinking her to be back to normal health, her parents visited Amanda in New York, and had a Christmas tree brought into her room for a little Christmas celebration. Apparently the excitement of the occasion was too much for
her heart and she dropped dead. The middle aged Shuberts took Amanda’s death very hard; overnight they became an older German couple and living much in seclusion. (Feelings against all the German people, even good citizens of German descent, after the U.S. got in to the war, was to the point of cruelty.)

About Dr. Shubert it was said that Blair Academy was responsible for his coming to Blairstown. People joked that Doc had brought from Germany the dull drills which he used to grind away on our teeth - he sure was slow; an afternoon appointment was the afternoon. About mid-afternoon Amandus would announce, “Excoos me pleeze fur kaffe;” and there you sit in the chair fifteen or twenty minutes while he has coffee “und cooken.” After a while Doc gets back, and burpingly go to work on you again, and in that manner, secondhandedly, you have coffee and cake too. But for getting a tooth pulled, many preferred the old family doctor - he charged fifty cents without cocaine, and “got ‘er out fast.” Amandus charged two dollars, gave a shot which didn’t seem to do much good and took his own good time. Doc used an maddening cliché - “It didn’t hurt me” - as a sort of excuse, I suppose, for the murder.

One day in the late summer of 1918 an official letter came for me with instructions to report to the draft board in Belvidere, the county seat. I was surprised as no farmers were being called for military service, however there wasn’t anything to do but see what they wanted with me. Belvidere seemed so far those days - it was all of eighteen or twenty miles! - too far to drive with our farm horses. So we hired the town liveryman, Bill Mackey, to take us in his car. Arriving at the office where the
“board” was supposed to be we - Pop had come along - were confronted by a county
judge, who greeted Pop as an old acquaintance. After asking a few questions, the
judge remarked that we had quite a big place, and said that it was his opinion some
crank had reported me as dodging service, and that was that. Pop said that was one
way to find an excuse for an auto ride and a day’s outing.

Uncle Doc had bought himself a new car, a Studebaker touring car, and
apparently couldn’t resist showing it off to us. So one day we were surprised to see
him drive up and stop “out front.” Of course we all crowded around and admired the
new car, which certainly pleased Uncle, no end. The next day being Sunday we were
invited for a ride and, brushing aside any doubts as to Uncle Doc’s driving abilities,
the Runions piled in. Then, setting the gas and spark, our chauffeur gave the crank a
whirl (no self starters those days), the motor caught with a roar and Uncle Doc
jumped in behind the wheel for takeoff. Our ride almost didn’t make it out of the
dooryard; in attempting to turn the car around, Uncle got flustered and took his foot
off the clutch pedal while the motor was still accelerated causing the car to dart
forward faster than he could make the turn, and running the left wheels over a low
stone fence. Apparently there was no damage to the car or passengers, and Unc. Doc
proceeded to prove himself a pretty good straight ahead driver. So all went well for a
time and I guess we were a gay bunch of riders for sure. But suddenly a loud bang
announced that we’d had a tire blow out. Blowouts were not unusual those days; tires
were not too dependable and seldom lasted for as long as ten thousand miles. Getting
a tire on to the rim and pumping it up was quite a hard job; all of us helped but Mom
and in about three quarters of an hour we were again rolling along. We got back home in time for evening chores.

I guess few men liked to tie a horse on the treadmill; or use a team on one for heavier jobs. Treadmills were used mostly for running threshing machines; some farmers sawed fire wood, using a team of horses on the mill to furnish power for the buzz saw. It was hard work for horses; many horses were very nervous from just walking and getting nowhere, and they usually “lathered up” a lot. We never had a treadmill on that last place. One day before threshing time our mail ordered, 6 horsepower “Galloway” gas engine arrived at the freight station. It was a beautiful red, one cylinder job, with big fly wheels; to start her up you adjusted the gas, grabbed one of the big wheels and spun it until it “fired.” Pop decided on general principles that he thoroughly hated it and swore that some day “the danged thing’ll blow up the barn.” Pop was a confirmed steam engine man. I think that he became more tolerant of the gas engine as it worked for us more and more, but he never backed down publicly on his opinion of the “danged thing.”

Another machine bought new and used on the farm was a “reaper” which displaced the hand swung “cradle” for cutting small grain. The reaper, pulled by a team of horses, consisted of a cutter bar for cutting the grain which then fell on a “table” where revolving rakes pushed the cut stalks into bundles, the third or fourth rake around pushing the sheaf size bunch off onto the ground. A man walked behind the rig, took a handful of the straw for a “band” and with it tied the bundle of grain into a sheaf. Those sheaves of grain were right pretty when stood up in shocks. We
paid the $75 cost of that reaper from our first crop of buckwheat that year.

The year 1918 was one of food shortages, due to the drain for shipments oversees during the war. Wheat products were scarce and white flour became rather dark colored as meal from other grains such as corn and rye were mixed in. Most housewives were still making the bread for the family, and the heavier grains resulted in a heavier loaf. For me the chewy breadstuffs resulting from these wartime flours tasted just fine. The cornmeal was milled coarser than wheat flour, the latter being “bolted.” Pop hated wartime flour and firmly stated “the danged stuff’ll kill abody.” (Pop liked smooth foods. He loved such as cornstarch pudding. Of green vegetables Pop had an aversion which just about registered insult on his face when greens (he lumped most foods, except meat and potatoes and sweets, as “greens”) were put before him.)

Coal, which was widely used in “Parlor stoves,” was often hard to “come by” during the war. The coal yard in Blairstown had gotten quite bare but word got around that there was coal to be had in Marksboro. So, in a round about way, I was sort of pushed into hauling coal. A widow lady had arranged with us to board her light (road) horse, Jim, in exchange for using him for driving to town hauling milk and the like. One day our widder lady asked if I would haul some coal for her from Marksboro. And right then and there I almost got inveigled into the coal delivery business, as suddenly every other person that knew me found out they needed coal, or so it seemed. We didn’t use our Tom and Jerry on the road very often as they were too heavy and more useful on the farm. So I hitched another nag with Jim to the
heavy bob sled, put on my sheep lined coat, and we were off to Marksboro for coal.

That Jerry horse was a nice looker, medium fast with a light rig, and usually well
behaved, but he had one very mean habit: he balked occasionally. Everything went
fine until we got onto the scales at the grist mill and got the load weighed; then
Jimmy decided he didn’t want to help “start” the load and reared back. That might
not have been so bad were it not that the sled, horses and I were moving towards the
brink of the mill race twenty five or so feet straight down. Fortunately somebody had
left a pitch fork in the sled when I’d left home and I proceeded to put it to use, fast.
About the second jab in his rear and Jim decided to get out of there; we shot forward
in grand style. After that “thank you” job for the widow I made two or three more
pay trips, and was glad when the Marksboro yard decided not to sell any more coal
out of town.

Things were going along fine on the farm I thought; there was no foretelling
that lives were running their span in our family and that we would not be together in
this home a year hence. Mom got so she said she couldn’t sleep; that was all that
ailed her at first, but she seemed to be steadily declining in health.

Farm life early in the century for a gentle soul like Mom could be cruel. Now
I wonder if she hadn’t been mostly lonesome. For myself Mom was a person set
apart and above, but how was she able to hear the unspoken word of praise or love?
How reserved we were in our false rural dignity! Then on the physical side the labor
load for our womenfolks was stupendous: three hot meals daily to be contrived, water
pumped and lugged, and heated on the kitchen stove, for the family wash, which also
was "done by hand." Everything done by hand; a woman could get thoroughly overwhelmed and discouraged. The "good old days" you say?

Pop was taken sick early in 1919. None of the doctors would ever tell us what ailed him. Maybe they didn't know. His digestive system was not functioning and there was a stoppage of the bowels. On a cold day I accompanied him by train, lying in the baggage car, to Paterson where he got settled in the General Hospital. While there he was fed intravenously - that much we learned. Pop came out of the hospital for a while and stayed with his daughter, my half sister Linnie (Mrs. Matt Apgar) in Madison, N.J.

One day I received a letter of encouragement from Pop in which he said he hoped to be back home soon, and as how we'd get things going again, and to hold on. He was not to make the grade though; it was very sad - Pop died May 10th 1919. How hard it was to realize, Pop was gone?

I remember that I asked a neighbor who had a Ford car to take me to Tranquility so I could make arrangements for the funeral and burial in the Runion plot. On that trip, as we were approaching Tranquility, we came upon an old lodge friend of Pop’s plowing, sod ground for corn. He seemed the picture of contentment as we stopped and he "whoa’d" the horses, and he came over to the fence to "visit" a while. It was hard for me to blurt out the brief message of Pop's death, and ask him if he would arrange for bearers at the funeral. The man stood for a time trying to comprehend such unexpected news; he shook his head in disbelief, questionably remarking, "John Runion dead?" Yes, he said, he'd do anything he could for us.
A dear friend, the minister of the Presbyterian church in Blairstown, was a great comfort during our sorrowing. This fine person made friends all around the countryside by pedaling his bicycle from farm home to home, visiting briefly, praying together and being on his way. People never seemed ill at ease in his presence; it was as natural as going in to dinner to pause in prayer with this man. Brother Armstrong went along with us on the day of the funeral to assist with the service - the minister at Tranquility at the time did not know Pop.

That day we gathered at the old Methodist church where I first had gone, and awaited the arrival of the hearse. They were bringing Pop by motor hearse from Madison. (Had it not been for our sorrow, I'm sure that an automobile supplanting horses for transporting the dead would have been exciting for us. For a period of time about then you would often hear such remarks as. "Seems like they couldn't get him - or her - to the graveyard fast enough." ) At the funeral I just "broke down"; suddenly I realized how much, in our suppressed way, we'd meant to each other. The P.O.S. of A. had quite an impressive service at the grave. One of my parents would no more talk and walk with us here on earth.

Back at the farm, right then, I felt had Mom been there she would have remarked that I seemed "possessed to do something foolish." And I sure did; I got Pop's old pipe, filled it with his old strong "Blue Paper" mixture, lit up, and the next thing I knew I'd been doused with cold water. The old pipe and strong tobacco had been too much for me and I'd passed out. Mrs. Griggs who was "helping out by the day" in the house got scared when she saw my condition and resorted to the cold
water treatment to revive me. Thereafter I smoked pipe, cigars, and cigarettes quite steadily for many years.

Mom was much too sick to be informed of or be at Pop’s funeral. She spent much of her last weeks with Aunt Effie; she most probably did not realize that Pop had left us. Aunt Effie was making her home in Newark then, and she and Uncle Harry felt they could look after her better than we could up in the country. (As I have mentioned before, Mom and Aunt Effie were very much alike and were very fond of each other.) Soon after Pop left us I went to see Mom, who was now in a Newark hospital. I was shocked to find blood about her face - her teeth had just been pulled - a medical foible of the day; they “tried” it for treating many types of ills. Happily for Mom, she seemed to be but semi-conscious for the last week or ten days.

Aunt Effie told me of a rather cute idea Mom conceived in one of her more rational moments while a patient in the hospital. It seems Mom was attracted to a pretty little nurse and confided to the young lady that when she went back to the farm the pretty nurse should go along for her Alfred!

About this time I’m afraid I was rather insensible to much that was going on, including nurses. Mom was not going to recover we knew. On May 23rd 1919 Mom left us.

We buried our mother in her family’s plot in the old Luthern Cemetery, Freshpond Road, Brooklyn. John, Harry, Tom and I rode to the cemetery in the old Chandler Car. There was very little talk that day.

For some reason no minister or bearers accompanied us from the funeral
parlors. We stood sadly dumb at the grave as the attendants lowered the coffin; one of the Germans began softly to intone the Lord’s Prayer: “Unser Fatter, etc.”

After the funeral and grave, Harry got the idea that maybe some food would do us all good. Why we went to Greenwich Village, except that it might have been handy to drive to, I can not say. Anyway when I’d had my last meal I couldn’t remember, and suddenly hunger seized me. Someone ordered onion soup, a new item for my palate; I liked it. The Bohemian atmosphere of the place was relaxing.

I hadn’t the faintest idea what to do next, but it sure was urgent for me to get back to the farm ere Clint Hill decided to drown his responsibilities in apple brandy. For my part the place no longer mattered, except to look after things as best I could. As a home it had ceased to exist.

Mrs. Griggs came once or twice a week to clean up things. I began to get reports of cutlery and other household items being seen in Mrs. Griggs’ buggy, which was most disturbing. I hadn’t any idea that the woman was dishonest.

Aunt Anna sent her cook, Christina, to us a while before cousin Jack’s school let out for summer vacation. Christina was a hustler at housework, besides being a good cook. She had things all “ship shape” by the time Aunt Anna, Jack and Marjorie arrived.

The summer dragged on; the house, no matter how many were there, without Mom’s presence seemed empty. You got up in the morning, and before thoughts became clarified you’d start listening for voices which were no longer, or noticing such things as the dog, that had followed Pop everywhere, sniffing about the familiar
spots inquiringly; maybe he too missed the strong tobacco aroma which had been a part of Pop's personality. Memories were everywhere about the place; they proved too much to take after Aunt Anna left in the late summer.

That fall we auctioned off the live stock and farm utensils and most of the household goods. I was very much attached to Tom and Jerry and hated to part with those intelligent beasts, and sure hoped they would have a kind and understanding master.

No doubts about it, for me an epoch was finished. I have wondered ever since, had I done my best for my parents; could I have made things easier for them? And that age old question, for me and countless other earthbound offspring, can but remain unanswered.
Wandering

The winter of 1919 found me in New York making my home with Aunt Anna. Christina presided over the kitchen there, which assured eating like a king - German king, of course.

Aunt Anna lived in a seventh floor "walk up" apartment on West 81st Street, just east of Amsterdam Avenue. After you’d climbed the spiral stairs - looking down from there gave one the impression of a bottomless pit - the roomy apartment proved pleasant enough. Fresh air, from the Hudson to the west and Central Park the other way kept the apartment quite airy. My cousin Jack shared his room with me and I was treated as one of the family.

The 81st Street locality was central to many points of interest. You walked to Central Park where the Museum of Natural History never ceased to be exciting; there were many nice walks through the park and, of course, the zoo. Many times have I skated on the Park lake, where gay crowds glided over the ice on wintry days. Morningside Park, along the Hudson, was a fashionable place for strolling; where affluent society motored leisurely along. (As yet middle class citizenry could not afford to own an auto.) Evenings, sometimes with cousin Marjorie, I’d walk down Broadway window gaping. Around 57th Street were located auto display windows, and could you believe that, while admiring those cars, it never entered my mind that one day I might own a car?

One did not go forth on a walk in New York those days with fear and trembling of being waylaid by thugs or juvenile gangs. Frequently you would
encounter a businesslike cop walking his beat; one just did not hear of much violence. Times were bound to change along with the mobility afforded with the wide distribution of automobiles. Now, also we have potential crime courses right on T.V. and at the movies, subtly suggesting that "crime does pay."

Neighborhood show houses were offering three or four acts of vaudeville and a movie for a very nominal sum, about thirtyfive or fifty cents. Also, we had our own movie show every clear summer night! There happened to be an empty lot next to our apartment building and, as was common practice at the time, an enterprising citizen had put up a tight board fence on the street sides of the lot, and had himself an outdoor movie. Each evening, come dusk, customers started coming and paying their fifteen cents admission found a seat; the piano player started banging away and the show was on. Those piano players were a sort [of] itinerant lot, seldom staying long at a place, and it got to be like a game to see which of us was to spot a new player. We viewed the show, surprisingly well from a window. Had you guessed it?

Week days mostly were spent at John’s little office at 366 Broadway, the Royal Typewriter building. He and an older man, John Marshall, an old professional in textiles, ran a cotton cloth brokerage business. They called the business Marshall & Co. in order to keep the Maguire establishments separate, although my brother was the actual head of the business. John gave me enough money to get along on in return for doing various chores around the office. I took a night course in touch typing, and before long was able to do quite a few things for the business. John never did learn to "run" a typewriter.
John and Harry had, for as long as I could remember, held membership in the 23rd Street Y.M.C.A. I became a member there and John and I went for exercise in the calisthenics class twice a week. Harry did not get to the gym so often since his marriage.

Pardon an omission of sequence, I should have told you that Brother Harry had married back somewhere in '17. To be honest the probable reason for not mentioning this before is that, for my part, there was little admiration for Elsie. John and Harry had met these two girls, Elsie Smith and Ruth Welsh, at Roseland, the "Dance palace" in midtown New York. Lest my readers form a wrong impression I should mention that Roseland was a very nice place; there were two top notch dance bands alternating so that the dancing was continuous. I have seen some lovely exhibition dancing there; the last time I saw a New York paper, Roseland was still in the advertising news. To get back to the girls, in my opinion, Elsie was a presentably good looking young woman; Ruth was a handsome, raven haired, creamy complexioned Irish type. Harry flipped for Elsie and she in turn grabbed her "gold mine." After their engagement Elsie promptly developed a social-ladder-climber complex, dropping her old friend Ruth and began "oh, but my deahing" us common folks.

Harry bought a nice house in Kew Gardens, Queens, commuting to business on the Long Island railroad. The man who owned and developed Kew Gardens had promised to restrict the community to individual homes. Those first homes were lovely I thought, closely resembling pictures I'd seen of houses in English towns.
This ideal situation soon changed; it was too close to the big city for Kew Gardens to hold the line and soon modern apartments began to appear on the scene. Lovely Kew Gardens had become another conformity, spreading out to join other developments like Garden City.

The summer of 1920, Harry rented a big old house in Sea Cliff\textsuperscript{160}, a quaint old Long Island town, perched high above the sound. After you had worked your way down a winding path to the beach, the bathing was fine. Elsie, their little girl Jeanne (soon there was to be another girl who was named Harriet)\textsuperscript{161}, and a maid stayed there for the summer, having rented it for “the season.” Harry came week ends and some times John and I were invited. Elsie’s mother and sister Mildred were there, as they were in Kew, much of the time. Mildred was not very attractive; also she was rather dull company. Elsie made it no secret that she thought her younger sister Mildred would make an ideal mate for John; John’s reaction to such a match was decidedly on the negative side. Elsie didn’t help the cause either by making sly references to Ruth Welsh’s position on the low rungs of the social ladder. John was quite fond of Ruth.

Elsie’s father who was a very successful plumber was a very likable person. The family home, from which he operated his business, was an old brown stone house in Brooklyn. The old gentleman was a Methodist and he owned a small spot in the “Camp Meeting Grounds” at Ossining, New York, on the Hudson River. I went there one time, just to see the place, and found it to be very nice. Owners of these little plots of ground owned a wooden floor over which a tent was set up when they wished
to stay over night. I do not recall Mr. Smith holding forth at Elsi[e]'s for long; he
sure was not at all a pretentious person.

Now let me interject some observations on those Methodist Camp Meeting
Grounds. Probably the most important of them - in the East I'm sure - has been
Ocean Grove on the New Jersey (Atlantic) coast. There is a community of several
thousand persons, with permanent housing, places to rent or to board at, much like
any other small city excepting that the atmosphere of the place was all on the
religious side, and I believe remains thus. The central building is a great auditorium
seating a great congregation. The great organ in the auditorium has ranked as one of
the largest and most important in the nation. No one holds property within this
“Camp,” all the titles being held by the Association, but residents can enjoy virtual
ownership by use of a 99 year lease arrangement. You see everything possible is
done to preserve a religious atmosphere within the community. As I remember,
Sunday there was delightful, with cessation of all commercial activity. Streets were
closed to vehicular traffic, all activity given over to the purpose of The Day of
Worship. As far as I know, this unique situation still exists despite legal contests
seeking to open the road through Ocean Grove on Sundays. No one apparently has
ever thought of consulting the U.S. Supreme Court. Surely those guardians of
freedom of expression and action would see to it that this “road block” to progress be
removed. I doubt that many of these Camps could be located now; for them the
modern nomenclature is “Retreats.”

Richard Smith always was as one of our family. Most of the time he was
either working for John or Harry, looking after special customers who demanded much attention and entertaining. Richard could be a very polished gentleman and had capabilities for winning friends to himself and for the business. He generally managed to be financially "broke" and often got into debt, probably from his ven for high living - good liquors; food, and parties. We fondly addressed Richard as "Rich.") His mother was a Lady in the classic sense; she was definitely of Spanish lineage. Her first marriage was to a man named Raynor, and Rich was born a Raynor, but, in respect to his step father, took the name Schmidt. (During the first world war hatred of anything smacking German ran so hot that the Schmidts changed the German form to Smith.) Rich's step father certainly was a very German type. He was usually enthusiastically in the midst of, or planning, some money making venture, and the family often was on the worse end when these dreams flopped. Richard's half sister, reared as a lady, was quite an accomplished pianist, and studied classic dancing also; Consuelo Smith sure was Victorian bred, surely not equipped for the twentieth century. I visited at the Smiths a few times; the house was kept closed and seemed stuffy. Mrs. Smith was a very prim person but was very pleasant when I called; Connie, as Consuelo was called by the family, was so far ahead of me as a piano player that I liked to see how she handled compositions that I worked on.

Some one had told me about the organ recitals at City College on Sunday afternoons. A Professor Samuel Baldwin played the Skinner organ there. Baldwin, in my opinion, played as well as any organist I've heard any time. His programs were heavy on Bach and the classic but often he would play some folk
tunes for the enjoyment of the untrained ear, I suppose. The console was located on a
stage in a position so you could observe the keyboard and pedals.

One Sunday I asked Mrs. Smith and Connie to go uptown for the recital. That
Sunday wasn’t too much of a social success for me. For one thing I found out that
Mrs. Smith didn’t favor riding on the subway, but we did just the same.- I doubt if I
had money for taxi fare that day! Then, when we got to the auditorium, the
cosmopolitan audience, especially a smattering of colored persons, seemed revolting
to the lady. The recital was excellent as usually it was, but the excursion that day fell
flat; afterwards the whole thing just seemed to be funny.

One spring weekend in 1920 I decided to go to Blairstown for a visit with
Jessie and Jack. I had quite a wonderful time with them and the kids 164. I noticed
that a couple of the boys were in need of haircuts. Jessie made some remarks about
them having been sick but I didn’t pay much attention to what she said. I did
volunteer to cut their hair before going back to the city, and thereby hangs a tale.
About a week or ten days afterwards I became very sick to my stomach and ran quite
a temperature. Not thinking much about what I thought to be simply an upset from
something I’d eaten which disagreed with my stomach, I went off to bed and slept
fine. Aunt Anna came to our room, as she usually did to wake us up, next morning
and, taking a look at me, just about flipped. Addressing me she shrieked, “For
goodness sakes whatever have you got - just take a look at yourself?” The looking
glass revealed my face a blotch of red. Nothing would do but the family doctor look
me over; his diagnosis wasn’t too reassuring either: he said it could be chicken pox or
it just could be small pox! The doctor directed me to take a taxi to a certain city hospital on the East River for an examination. John showed up and rode to the hospital with me, and I thought it strange on arrival there that they wouldn’t let him inside. I was showed to good sized, white tiled room, given a hospital “suit” and told to change into it; the attendant walked off with my clothes. I didn’t tumble to the situation until I’d inquired from a nurse what was the nature of my ailment, and how about getting my clothes and being off? To my first question she just grinned and then added, “You can’t get out of here until you’re all cleared up in about ten days. This is an isolation hospital.” Later in my stay I spotted “varicella” on the chart and asked an attendant what it meant. She laughed and said, “Oh just a kid’s disease, chicken pox.” Jessie’s kids had had the chicken pox; apparently I had never had them as a kid, and they gave them to me.

If it hadn’t been for the nurses that came to the ward occasionally - I had the place all to myself - I can’t imagine how I’d passed the time. They would sit on my bed and chat away like good fellows. One night I was disturbed by wild yelling, moaning and noises like scuffing of feet, and then all became quiet. Later an older nurse, a very nice person, came in and said, “Come up the hall with me quietly; I’m not supposed to take you outside.” There, in a room we came to, were several terrible looking women, just “down and out” looking. The nurse explained to me that they were dope fiends, who had been rounded up. She had to give them a “shot” to quiet them down, and they were all “out” when I saw them. They never disturbed my peace again; I wondered their fate. The nurses were nice other ways too, such as
sneaking me paper and sneaking out letters which they said was against all rules. I didn't find out for some time why all those good looking nurses were there, and thereby hangs another tale, if you read between the lines.

Come time for me to go home to 81st St., John again was at the gate and suggested we walk up town. I was all for it, and we set out at a brisk pace. Trouble was I had done no walking for over a week except around that ward, and the next day my legs were so stiff that I could hardly get one foot ahead of the other.

I had gotten the name of that good looking blond nurse before leaving the hospital, and dropped her a note suggesting a theatre date. Not having a reply for over two weeks, I had about given up that girl, and then I got a reply from the west coast. She explained that some nurses, herself included, were doing sort of postgraduate work in specializing hospitals around the country, and that my letter had just caught up with her across the nation from New York. She said how sorry she was that she could not accept my invitation, and, instead, that she would consider it a favor if I'd take her sister who lived near Aunt Anna's. I decided to take a chance on the sister, and phoned her. She had a job in one of the big department stores and I arranged to meet her at the store at closing time, and we would [go] out for a dinner and show afterwards. When I arrived at the appointed spot, what a riot ensued as several giggling young women gathered to look me over and see us off. To this day I can hardly see how those two could be sisters; this latter one turned out to be anything but good looking, and acted rather silly. One of her annoying characterizations was impersonating an Irish brogue in a not too subdued tone; from sly glances we
received I gathered that people heard the foolishness and were not too amused. The evening was not what one would call a social triumph. Well, we just didn’t talk each others language or have any common interests so I didn’t pursue her further.

That next spring, 1921, I guess I got the “itch” to get outside again. So I went back to Blairstown and worked for John Mingle on the farm. Of all the crazy things to do I suppose that was the craziest, but I just had to get fanning out of my system, you might say. John was delighted to have me; I liked him too, and we had quite a time together. But Lulu, John’s wife, was a fry pan cook, very generous with the lard can, and how our stomachs took the punishment, I wonder. One of Lulu’s specialities was “warmed potatoes” which she accomplished by slopping a scoop of lard into the “spider” (iron fry pan), allowing it to become liquid and slicing boiled potatoes into the mess; the potatoes absorbed much of that hog fat, and it’s a wonder that I’m here to report things “A.L.” (after Lulu). Lulu did make a pretty good chocolate cake which I liked quite well; John liked her ginger cookies too, but for my money they were just about as tasteful as ginger flavored cardboard.

Below the Mingle house there was a natural ravine through which flowed a little spring fed brook. When I arrived to stay and work at John’s I was surprised to find a concrete dam across the lower end of this ravine impounding a rather stagnant body of water. John told me that some politicians from the state capitol - Trenton - had seen to the work on the dam being done, and had stocked the pond generously with trout; in return, the “servants of the people” were to have more or less private use of the little pond. John told me to go ahead and fish there when none of “the
boys" were around, but I didn’t care for the fishing much as the rather dead water made the trout about as lively as a sucker - no fight. One time a Catholic priest came to fish at the trout pond and, being somewhat inebriated, he fell off a stump from which he was fishing and had to be fished out himself.

While I was at the Mingles my cousin Jack came up to “board in the country” with me during his summer vacation and we roomed together. We were, I’m afraid, rather indiscreet with some of our pranks. For instance, the “bath room,” Jack’s name for the little outhouse, was very inconvenient to reach at night, so we contrived a plan, which we proceeded to put into practice, using our bedroom window to advantage... Alas, it stained the siding; John was madder’n I’d care to see any man be, and I guess if the work hadn’t been unusually heavy then, we’d been booted out of town.

That fall John decided to put up a silo for chopped corn silage and I helped, blasting the slate rock alongside the cow barn to get the silo level with the basement. This way the silage could be shoveled directly into the stanchions area. It seems that people reveled in doing things the hard way those days; for instance the holes for blasting were drilled by hand. Another fellow and I struck the drill with long handled sledges. The old fellow in charge of the blasting held the drill upright, giving it a turn regularly - this with bare hands. Before he commenced - he was Wat Swartz’s father - he sort of gave us a dirty scrutiny, up and down, spat out a brown defiance, in word and cud: “Any man misses that drill and hits my hand - like as not gets killed.” We sure were careful. John’s brother Henry, a carpenter by trade, came from his home in
Stroudsburg and did most of the work assembling the silo.

After the silo work John and I sort of got “powder blowing” into our veins, so to speak. On the farm there were some right big rocks in otherwise nice fields and we decided to “blow them” and get rid of the nuisance of working around the obstacles. So we got black powder, blasting caps and fuse, and had ourselves a regular celebration. We found out that by putting powder on top of a big rock and capping it with wet dirt that the force of the blast was downward. After the rocks were shattered we hauled them off with the team and stone boat\(^{166}\). Which shows that you can accomplish a lot of work when you kid yourself that it’s just play stuff.

John and Lulu bought an Overland touring car that summer. They were real proud of that four cylinder black - of course - beauty. One day John took an old Gent for his first auto ride; no one thought about the tobacco chewing until they got back, and then John discovered the right side of the car plastered with tobacco juice. That fall John took Lulu, their little girl Ruth, and I to the county fair in Belvidere. We had a fine time but on the way home the car ran out of gas. (The gas gauge on that car was just a float gadget way back on the top of the tank. It registered empty alright.) I remember walking quite a distance to a farm and coaxing a couple gallons of gas engine fuel from the farmer. Gas pumps were few and far between then; quite often a side line at the feed store or grocery.

Lulu’s victuals were becoming so monotonous that I guess I wasn’t eating too much that second spring. There was a plum tree at the edge of the dooryard which was loaded with green plums and I took note every morning, as I set out for the cows,
how the fruit was coming along. One day, sure enough, I spotted a ripe plum, popped it into my mouth and clomped down on it so hard that I broke off a tooth on the pit.

One day mid summer I got a letter from Harry. Would I go to Arizona and look over a ranch that he had some money tied up in? I told John Mingle and he sure didn’t feel too good about me leaving; I’d been doing a lot of work there, and this sure would foul things up at the M[ingle] place for a spell. But I didn’t hesitate accepting Harry’s commission. I’d been casting about for some painless excuse to make my exit, and this was IT. Right away I packed up, literally shook the dirt from my shoes, and took off for New York.

Railroading being next to an obsession with me, I was very much excited at the long trip by train. Leaving New York on the New York Central Railroad\textsuperscript{167}, at Chicago my ticket read \textit{via} The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific\textsuperscript{168}, and the Southern Pacific Railroad\textsuperscript{169} (the train: “The Golden State Limited”). One thing I noticed, as you travelled west the trains and service improved greatly. It was my first long trip, my first brush with a Pullman berth\textsuperscript{170}, and I certainly had some misgivings regarding how to deal with undressing and dressing in those cramped quarters. Then there was the questions of dining car etiquette; how much do you dress before going to the wash room; [and] how to steal glances at the fellow’s performance who you’ve picked out as a “veteran traveller.” As a traveller this character had many things to learn, and much careful observing was helpful. My destination was Casa Grande, Arizona\textsuperscript{171}, and I was on my way.

One meets some very interesting persons on such a trip, very often sitting
opposite you in the dining car. One such person turned out to be the captain of a
Standard Oil tanker who said he was going to the coast for a vacation. He had, it
would seem, been most everywhere; he was a fascinating talker and told me about
places that before had been only in geography books for me. The second morning we
awoke and found we were standing still in the Kansas City terminal. My captain
friend told me that we would be tied up there for over two hours. (There was some
kind of strike going on at the railroad shops which caused the delay in getting a
locomotive for our train.) So he said he knew K.C. like a book and why not take a
walk and eat breakfast out. No sooner suggested than done, and the captain, as a
guide, was good as his word. “Just look beyond the tracks;” - the neighborhood
wasn’t too nice - “watch those women beconing from the windows. We’re in the ‘red
light district’ of town.” He knew a nice restaurant for breakfast; we got back to our
Pullman refreshed from our jaunt.

Another very interesting person that I talked with often told me that he was an
artist. He invited me to visit his studio in Greenwich Villiage when I returned to New
York.

Meanwhile several soldiers, gas victims of the war, enroute to a convalescent
camp in Tucson, Arizona, were preparing for their party. The colored porter was
given some money and he agreed to get the soldiers a supply of corn likker. By the
time we got moving again the soldiers were celebrations for sure and everyone in the
car was invited to join the festivities. No, I was scared to sample the stuff. Before
night the porter was busily making up berths for most of the drinkers as they could
The last day of my trip west I gave up the Pullman accommodations to save money and found out that the only other place to ride was the smoking car, quite a let down serving as sort of a Jim Crow place for Indians. Above the stale smoke odor there was a powerful smell, maybe it was the bear oil they used on those black braids, or maybe those Injuns never bathed.

It was about midnight when we reached Casa Grande. I stepped off the train to be confronted by the tallest constable ever, with a gun to match. As I remember he was very polite and asked me about my business in town, and where I wanted to go. In answer to my inquiring glances at his gun he volunteered to say that sometimes undesirable characters came to town, “you know.” I told him that all I wanted right then was a nice clean bed; I guess my luggage and I looked alright to him. He took the heavier bag and off we went to the hotel where the big man showed me a room in the “Nogales House” and remarked not to bother the proprietor until morning. It was lovely and cool that first night in Arizona; I slept like a log after those Pullman nights. No one had warned me of Arizona’s mid day inferno, which only too soon I was to find out for myself! Casa Grande, I was to find out, was then just a small habitation on the Arizona desert. A cup of coffee at the “chinks” (most far west restaurants were run by Chinese) to my horror, cost ten cents, and other items were correspondingly high priced. Arizona hadn’t gotten off to much of a start yet; the state was mostly noted for its dry and healthful climate which beconed to T.B. sufferers. Many thousands of sufferers came to the state and most surely a good
many of them had complete recovery.

My host turned out to be a real nice person, but he, like the majority of the land poor gentry I was to meet, and despite my definite denials, decided that I was there to buy out their real estate holdings. At the time I rather think I was a bit homesick, and were I the owner of the state I'd gladly part with the whole kaboodle for a nickel an acre: Everyone was talking about the Gila dam\textsuperscript{172}, then just a dream - guess Runion was the guy without any imagination; some years later the dam did come and the desert blossomed and prospered.

That first morning I got up early, and after breakfast started out for a walk. There was not much to see but cactus, some scrub growth, and a vast expanse of sand. Some Indians, astride scrawny ponies, came along and asked me for cigarettes, and I obliged. It was getting real hot so I turned back, following the same path I'd started out on. The hotel proprieter - I clear forget his name - said he'd been worried about me, that it was easy to get lost out there, and that a person not used to the climate could get a sun stroke.

One gadget in the little foyer of the hotel that took my fancy was a drinking fountain with a refrigeration coil (the first one of this type to make my acquaintance). That drinking fountain for me was an almost inseparable companion where I "drank and sweated" and formed my own opinions of Arizona climate.

But, given water, there was great possibilities for growing all sorts of crops, as I was to observe. Where wells had been drilled - there seemed to be lots of water under the dry soil - and water pumped for irrigating, mellons, lettuce, grapes, [and]
long staple cotton grew like mad. One day I wandered towards a fine water mellon
patch and was sharply warned by the owner to watch out for the rattlers; he said those
snakes liked to lie in the shade of the mellon vines.

Another time an odd looking loaded Cadillac stopped at the hotel. The big car
was loaded down with treadle (old fashioned sewing machines, foot powered); there
must have been a dozen of them in the back of the old open car and some tied on.

Early the following day the man, a Mexican, who owned the outfit invited me to go
along with him for the ride. I accepted, and the trip I had with him showed me many
things about Arizona that I wouldn't otherwise have seen. Approaching an Indian
settlement we would be greeted by several of the women and children. The houses
were made of "dobe" brick (adobe, made from the native soil, moistened, formed into
bricks and allowed to dry in the sun), said to be cool and comfortable. My friend had
a nice installment business going with the Indians, leaving a sewing machine at a
household and collecting on his trips. Everyone seemed to be very friendly all
around; I imagine that my Mexican chum might have hailed from an Indian tribe also.

About mid afternoon my friend asked me if wouldn't like to go into Mexico
with him, but I chickened out on this proposal, and at Tucson I made a train
connection back to headquarters.

Having completed my mission in Casa Grande, Harry asked me to go to
Tulsa, Oklahoma, to see what was going on within an oil company, the Turman-
Louisiana Oil Company that he had a financial interest in. So I hopped a Southern
Pacific train, changed some place to the "Kady" (Missouri, Kansas, and Texas R.R.)
and after quite a long trip arrived in the beautiful city of Tulsa. One thing I found out for sure, it wasn't cooling off so you could notice it; at San Antonio I got to think that maybe someone had built a fire around me, but no fear of catching afire with my clothes dripping wet with perspiration.

Tulsa, often referred to as the “Oil Capitol,” I found to be a lovely clean city, the headquarters of several big oil companies, big oil rigging supply houses, [and] railroad shops; the picture of prosperity. I telephoned the manager of the company, a Mr. Ramm, and asked his advice about lodgings. From his rather startled manner I gathered that he was not too happy to have me drop in unannounced; later I found him to be a rather nervous, tense man. He did come over to the station and we decided, since I might be in the city for some time, that a room in a private home would be nice for me.

I found the people of Tulsa very kind, and I do remember that the room I had was very nice. I was rather surprised the day after my arrival, Sunday, my hostess, although I was taking all meals out, insisted that I should eat at her family table. So I rather liked Tulsa, it being about the most modern and cleanest city I'd come to, and it's people were a friendly lot.

Of course my job was to find out if possible what was being done, if anything, in that oil company. The fact that the company had been in existence for some time and no wells were in production did not speak well for management. I started riding about with Ramm and he pointed out various lease holdings, but no drilling was going on for Turman-Louisiana. Oil wells were everywhere; more oil was being
produced than could be used at the refineries\textsuperscript{174}, and crude oil was being stored in big reservoirs scooped out by the wells. The countryside smelled very much of crude oil: not too pleasant.

I had some conferences with Ramm, who had apparently become disheartened with the prospects of a successful operation of the venture. In short he told me that about the only money he had received was his nominal salary; there had been no provision for production. At the time he was trying to interest some "wildcat operator." (An individual or group who is willing to risk drilling a well in an unimproved fjeld. These persons were the pioneers of early oil field exploration.) So far no driller had showed interest. Such a wildcat operator would be entitled to a royalty on any oil produced from such well.

What apparently was happening was that there was a somewhat crooked operation going on in the New York office of the company which was housed in the law office of Alfred Simons. It seems that Simons, the company secretary, had been interested mainly in floating stock issues which far overcapitalized the small company. A great deal of the money that the public had subscribed for this stock must have "disappeared" some place. Apparently I had found the unsatisfactory answer to the riddle of that company. There were details to be fished out and I decided to stay in Tulsa or near there for a while.

Just out of curiousity I spent some time perusing geology books, with reference to oil producing strata, but I was getting bored just hanging around. Then too, I thought I’d like to have some of my own money to spend, so [I] hied myself
over to the Y.M.C.A. to inquire about some remunerative work. There wasn’t much choice - Tulsa was big oil business or business derived from railroad workers, and that shop strike was still on. So the Y.M.C.A. secretary suggested I take a Fuller Brush sample case and go to Muskogee where there was better sales opportunity. I did. Muskogee, too, was a clean, modern, although smaller city; it had aspired to be the capitol city before Oklahoma City won out. There were some fine buildings in that comparatively small city; Muskogee had built, sure of her destiny. Folks still talked about it, and remarked what a blow it was when Oklahoma City had been chosen the capitol.

I liked it real well in Muskogee, and strange to say I got along pretty good with Fuller Brush. Housewives accepted my little gift brush - they cost me three cents - and usually I came away with an order.

While in Muskogee I boarded at the home of a sheriff’s deputy who was always coaxing me to attend court, which I did a couple of times. Come Sunday I asked him about the locality of the Methodist Church. He says, “Which one: North or South,” and stupid me, I replied, “I don’t care what part of town, North or South, I go, just so’s I get there.” He laughed like the Dickens and said, “Naw, what I mean is that the South Methodist is fer the South and if’n a band come along playing ‘Dixie’ they’d all fall in behind. North church don’t feel thata way, and they don’t pretend to mix much.” As I remember I went to Methodist North.

After a couple or three weeks in Muskogee I moved along to Okmulgee to skim the cream off in that place; that also proved a good “town” for me. Incidentally
Okmulgee is in Okfuskee county. How you like that for Indian names?

After I'd gotten together enough funds for railroad fare back to New York, I decided to chuck the Fuller Brush business, add up my assignment with Ramm and "go home."

So it was return to Tulsa, and I got the idea that Mr. Ramm was using Mrs. Ramm to keep me occupied - out of his hair, so to speak. She invited me on short auto rides, introduced me to a very attractive blond girl acquaintance, Frankie Hamilton; she tried hard to keep me on the hook socially, which I would guess she concluded to be quite a job, considering my unresponsiveness. Those auto rides were something to endure, Mrs. Ramm - being rather a nervous person; she confided to me that she had "just picked up" her driver's skills, and the way we jerked along, sometimes jumping the curb, I was inclined to take her statement as quite true. One day Mrs. Ramm took me grocery shopping in the local Piggly Wiggley market, and I was fascinated to observe the new method, "self service." I believe that small chain was THE original of the Super Market merchandising as we know it.

In case you wonder about my "escapades" with Mrs. Ramm, perish the thought of anything much above boredom on my part, considering that any person, especially a female, who was approaching their thirtieth birthday, in my book was "getting on in years."

It would be amiss not to mention the Ramm's little boy - about four years old I'd say, and who was a nice little companion on all trips. We got along famously.

One day Mr. Ramm took us over to Sapulpa, which place turned out to be
like an Oasis in an otherwise foul, oil smelling countryside. Crude oil indeed smelleth.

How that lovely lake, the first I'd seen on my western trip, happened to be there seemed to be a mystery, but I lost no time jumping in for a swim. I liked Sapulpa.

There was one oil operation in Sapulpa which I think was called a natural gas cracking plant. Many wells came in as natural gas, and when I was in Oklahoma, most of these "gas'ers" were capped (sealed off). This gas cracking plant subjected the natural gas to great pressure and, if I'm not mistaken, the result was gasoline. This plant, I believe, was experimental.

Another time the Ramms took me for a camping week end in Arkansas. We took off from the Ramms and the first night camped along the Arkansas River, sharing the night with, it seemed, hosts of mosquitos - the man eating variety! Which clinched my already formed opinion of camping in general - it's fine for gypsy bands and indians.

Before I take leave of Oklahoma, those colorful Indians who naturally belonged there deserve some words. The Indians for the most part, which I observed, were noble appearing persons. Many of these people were quite wealthy from oil royalties: a fixed sum for each barrel of oil pumped out of wells drilled on their land. Often the oil rich Indian was fleeced by the white brother. One story about the well heeled Indian brave proved more or less factual - from my observations: they craved the possession of a red Buick roadster which, with some firewater
encouragement, they drove around like mad. (Well, this-only goes to prove, considering today's imbibing driver, they were just a bit ahead of the times.) I was told that there was an Oklahoma law requiring a white man to have at least $500 in assets before he was allowed to marry an Indian woman. This law presumably was intended to protect an oil rich Indian woman [from] an unscrupulously gold digging husband.

Mid October reminded me that it can get quite cold in Oklahoma; I found one evening in Tulsa that my summer duds were insufficient and that sort of made up my mind to depart for home. I said good bye to the Ramms, bought a one way ticket to New York and that concluded my sojourn in the South West. Pleasant memories.

My presumption of going "back home" to someplace in New York didn't exactly happen. Aunt Anna had since Mom's death always welcomed me back home at her place; but I should have known better; Aunt Anna had remarried while I was at John Mingle's, and now she was not sole head of the house, so to speak. Her new Hubby, Fred Boss, elderly, dignified, still maintained an insurance brokerage business in the financial district of New York. He "had money," which at the time I imagine was a life saver for Aunt Anna, due to her unskilled management of funds, and I guess she was beginning to scrape the bottom. As I look back now I suppose that my arrival on the scene for the apparent object of staying was rather nervy. Uncle Fred could be fairly sociable or just plain grumpy; today he would without doubt be classed a stuffed shirt. Then Aunt Anna had somewhat of a housekeeping problem; Christina by now had become almost as one of the family, and she was getting old.
She was becoming somewhat untidy with herself, and began to have sick spells, and Uncle Fred was too penurious to have another houseworker in addition to Christina.

The Boss house was in a fashionable neighborhood, 96th Street, Central Park West; three floors and basement of "brown stone front" elegance. It rated more domestic help to be sure. Aunt Anna rather nervously told me I could stay, implying however not for permanence. Since I would be on the Maguire & CO. payroll, it was agreed that I pay nominal board, and so for the time being was rather shakily shettled.

There was one object at the Boss residence that I'd about exchanged any or all my possessions just to have for my own - that tremendous Steinway Grand Piano. Well I did use it when Uncle Fred was not around; he never said I could or couldn't use it, but I never had the nerve to ask. My cousin Jack was rather on the scared side too. Probably he had been a fair player some time past; when I was there all Fred Boss ever played was some popular stuff from Broadway shows. Outside that Steinway I guess I didn't give a hoot for the place; there was a complete absence of the old merriment of the 81st St. walkup.

Uncle Harry meanwhile, having lost out on the café at the Pennsylvania station, had moved to Bradley Beach, New Jersey, where he became engaged in an insurance venture. Odd as it might seem, after his numerous failures in tried fields of business, he thereafter made a modestly successful living selling sick and accident insurance to low salaried workers, many of whom were colored people. My guess is that Aunt Effie had a (large) "finger in that pie"; she could be a very determined woman. What I'm leading up to is that much of the time while I worked in New
York from 1920 to '23, I spent as many week ends as could be managed at Aunt Effie’s on the New Jersey shore. For me it was lovely there winter or summer, and Aunt Effie, Uncle Harry, and cousin Billy were nice people to be around. About the only fly in the ointment in that household (flies, it should be plural) were six or eight Pekinese dogs that Aunt Effie kept in the house. She bred and sold them, which of course was a very good reason for them being around. My objections to the pooches were many; to mention a few, sore eyes, their long hair on everything where they’ld been, yapping a lot, and worst of all they were careless about droppings and drippings. Well, I liked Aunt Effie so much I could have put up with a herd of elephants, droppings included, and so I just more or less ignored the dogs.

Even the trip down to Aunt Effie’s was enjoyable for me, especially during the summer season when the New Jersey Central R.R. ran two very nice boats between New York and Atlantic Highlands. This route was called the Sandy Hook Line: an hour and twenty minutes on the boat and a short rail trip to shore points. I remember such resort stops as Little Silver, Asbury Park-Ocean Grove, and Elberon. That boat trip could be great excitement; sometimes there would be a dense fog engulfing the bay so you couldn’t see anything, and there’d be constant tooting of fog horns, and tinkle of bells on the buoys all about you. One foggy morning, amid horn blasts and bells bonging, our boat came to a dead stop, and there we were just about rubbing against the S.S. Leviathon. She was anchored, awaiting lifting of the fog before docking. Presently our comparatively little boat pulled gently away and soon our capitán had us safely tied up at pier. During winter
months the trip had to be made by rail - quicker but not near as interesting.

Summers at Bradley one did much as the tourists: enjoy the ocean bathing, stroll along the boardwalk and take in the amusements, [and] chew on “Atlantic City Salt Water Taffy.” Winter was different; the sea about could be fascinating; often there would be no one but me on the cold, bleak scene. One cold day the shore seemed covered with fish; people were all over the beach scooping them into baskets. They were called frost fish. Local residents told me that this not unusual phenomenon was caused by schools of larger fish pursuing their victims which, rushing into shallow water, become stranded on the beach and become inert at contact with the cold air. The skating on any of several lakes near Aunt Effie’s was a favorite winter sport which I enjoyed, along with many other young persons.

Harry wanted me to stay with the textile business and came up with a plan to solve my housing problem, as follows. He suggested that I take a room near his home and take my main meal at his home, which sounded reasonable to me. I did rent a room in Garden City, within walking distance of the Maguires, and it wasn’t long before I realized that I had made a mistake. Elsie probably meant well but, at my age, I couldn’t take her motherly counseling. She made me feel too hemmed in, and soon I got to figuring a way out. (One amusing incident took place while I stayed in Garden City. Have you ever taken note of those housing developments where there seemed to be thousands of boxlike identical dwellings, street after street? I lived in one of them and one evening nonchalantly walked into a wrong house. The lady let out a mild yell; I about flipped and had to do some good, quick, explaining.)
So, I said to myself, [w]hy not get away from the unpleasant family ties and job in New York by going back to my first love, railroading? No sooner thought than done; John McEntee\textsuperscript{185}, my old boss, seemed glad to have me back. He assigned me to a place that I'd never heard of in New Jersey: Tenafly, a suburb of New York City. The job was at the passenger and freight station of the Northern R.R. of New Jersey, a branch of the Erie R.R\textsuperscript{186}. My job was general railroad routine: telegrapher (train and Western Union), ticket selling, freight billing, and a lot of little jobs on the side. My working hours would be from 12:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M.; I was to work under the agent, Alec Fell\textsuperscript{187}, who reportedly was "a bundle of nerves."
Tenafly

Now something about Tenafly, which was to be my home until 1932, and I might mention in passing that I'd become much attached to the town by the time the Alfred Runion family moved from there. But I mustn't get ahead of my story. The railroad, and lower part of town was in the "Northern Valley" and actually this section was below sea level. The nicer homes were on elevations to the East and West. There was a little stream wandering through town called the Tenakill. (The railroad, incidentally, followed this valley to it's northern terminus at Nyack, N.Y.)

To the east all roads ascended quite sharply to the crest of the Hudson Palisades, and from there were several points where the roads lead a winding course down the cliff to Ferry-crossings to New York. The closest ferry to us was at Englewood; that winding road was so steep it was paved with brick; that crossing was known as the Dykeman Street ferry. There were several other ferry crossings to New York those days before the George Washington bridge and the vehicular tunnels had been built.

The day I arrived in town, I had no idea where I would hole up that night. Someone directed me to Hough's; when I got there the front-porch was occupied by some burial paraphernalia - caskets, burial cases, etc. I moved on; the associations at that place, a funeral parlor, were too ghostly for my taste. Finally our hero ended up at 77 Columbus Drive, the home of a maiden woman, Julia Blackwell. There the house was clean; the-board and room amounted to a great deal I thought - $15.00 per week - but Miss Blackwell also threw in keeping my clothes clean, so I decided to stay.
Julia needs describing. Starting on top she had odd shaded red hair. (One day she confided to me that a former admirer, who also was her employer at the time, had dubbed her “carot top.”) Of about normal height, she was one of those women who’d gotten too beefy in her late middle age; one who would gladly explore her physical ailments at the slightest opening, and tell all about her gall bladder operation from - one would assume - a memorized script.

Soon I was to learn that Julia set a foolishly abundant table, laden with more food than we, her boarders, could possibly eat. It seemed shameful to throw out so much left over food; she didn’t know how, or wouldn’t try to fix left overs into appetizing dishes. So it was no surprise to have her enlighten me of her indebtedness to the butcher, Mr. Herman, and Mr. Knox, her grocer. To the former she owed over $100, and to Mr. Knox a good sized bill also. I guess I told her “that’s too bad”; I wasn’t going to get mixed up in that little matter. Anyway you might look at it, though, I didn’t starve while at Julia’s.

Helen Brewster lived at the Blackwell house; she called my landlady Aunt Julia. It seems Julia kept house for Helen’s father John Brewster, who reportedly became a widower when Helen was just an infant. Julia told me that she had been the only mother that Helen had had. My only interest in Helen was in her little grand piano, which she said I could use.

It wouldn’t be fair to my reader to attempt to give an account of the other boarders at Julia’s; some of them do hold special interest, and will be mentioned from time to time.
To get back to Tenafly, it was then a lovely, mostly unspoiled country town. A good share of the working class commuted to New York by train; this accounted for most of the passenger business from Tenafly. (There was a commutation ticket which allowed the purchaser rides daily to and from the city, and which cost $9.32 - a fraction of the regular fares, which were $1.24 for one round trip.) There also was a very good trolley service to the Fort Lee Ferry, which crossed to 125th Street, New York, from there the subway offered very good service up and downtown. Also there were two, not too good, bus lines which gave transportation between us and towns up and down the valley. One might note that autos were not too numerous, so walking could be a real pleasure.

One of my favorite walks was to the Palisades overlooking the Hudson, a distance of about three miles, all up hill, the last half being unpaved roads and through a lovely wooded area. Arriving at the cliff, one was awed to behold that sheer drop to the river; your fiftieth visit would be another thrill. And being alone didn't matter, there being much wild life all around, besides woods flowers and fern growth. Those days I did quite a bit of walking, my "trick" at the station being 12:40 P.M. to 9:40 P.M., which gave me all morning to do anything that pleased me.

Those days the "Northern" really furnished good passenger service: There were six trains departing for Jersey City mornings and a like number returning afternoons. At Jersey City passengers either took the railroad ferry or used the "Hudson & Manhattan tube" to New York. The ferry, being a railroad facility, was free, and generally that was an interesting, pleasant trip, especially when standing on
deck observing the Manhattan skyline for the "ump[t]ieth" time. Oh yes, there also were two or three "shoppers" trains during the day and a late train to bring theatergoers home. Those were "the good old days" when people travelled like ladies and gentlemen.

The Methodist Church in Tenafly seemed to "call" me, and I guess I was a pretty good attender. The minister, Thomas Coulta, who had retired from preaching and gone back to it, in his eighties someplace, was the magnetic attraction. He was a topnotcher of a preacher if ever there was one. The little church also boasted the best pipe organ in the area, and an accomplished organist, Mrs. Elenor Fincke. So you see there were two very good reasons for going to church as often as I could.

My landlady, Julia, was from the start more or less of a problem. She assumed guardianship over me; finding things for me to do in my free time - "so I would be happy," she said - and more or less appointing herself my social secretary. Julia lost no time espousing, for me, the desirability of her niece, Florence. For a time it was Florence from morning 'til night; Florence was beautiful, sweet, smart, and just the right girl for me. Somehow I managed to get out of three or four dinner invitations at Florence's house. Julia, having had a hand in arranging them, got quite peeved at my ungratefulness, and grumbled around quite some at the times she flunked those dates. When I did meet up with Florence at an Epworth League meeting at her house I rather concluded that Julia's sales talk was much exaggerated with regard to Florry's attractiveness. My impression was that she had begun to fade
noticably; she was a very nice person however - maybe some years older than I. Oh well, I just was not interested - in the type, shall we say?

I hadn’t been in Tenafly very long when my boss, Mac, told me about a good job that would be open in the general office, traffic department, in a few months, and which he said he thought I could have. He advised me to study a correspondence course on the subject, especially the legal phases of railroad traffic matters. So presently I found my bank account about $125 leaner for “the course” and soon received in the mail a half dozen good sized tomes, and began to study. I really concentrated, with “youthful enthusiasm” on the texts and lessons, looking ahead to that big job. Not to bore my readers with endless details, I might as well break down and tell how that bubble came to burst. One day, several months after taking up the course, “Mac” dropped in for an official visit and I proudly informed him that the course was becoming mastered by the master, and soon would be done. Immediately I knew that something was amiss; Mac just stood for a moment, finally saying, “I’m so sorry; that job went to a relative of the big boss. I couldn’t do anything for you.” Oh well - shall I coin some consolation: “though sadder; wiser”?

One thing, working six days a week, at those hours, there wasn’t much chance to spend wages, so my bank account began to grow satisfactorily.

I got along quite well with Alec Fell, but he sure was “a bundle of nerves.” In an emergency he’d sort of freeze in inaction; at such times Runion got a telephone call to come down to the office and take over the telegraph duties. (Alec wasn’t too hot on the “wire” during normal operations.) Well, I didn’t mind emergencies - such
as the time when a commuter, late for his train, jumped for the step of the moving car, missed, and got both legs amputated. One thing that did nettle me was Alec’s “home work” relative to “working his way through the ‘chairs’” up to Master of his Masonic Lodge, and his tendency to ask me to take on much of his work, such as making out monthly reports and the monthly balance sheet. That made a lot of work and responsibility for me.

Bill Blackwell, a cousin of Florence, was a good friend of mine for a number of years; we palled around a lot and did quite a bit of running around together. Bill’s brother Ed owned a Studebaker touring car. (That was a full sized car, an open top, which looked something like a big bathtub. There was a folding down top, which in case of rain could be raised, but it sure took effort, and by the time the thing was secured, everyone would be wet anyway.) Bill often would “borrow” it so we could take short spins around town. For some reason Bill nicknamed me Bozo and I’d get a kick out of Bill’s “Hey Bozo - how’d you like to take a little ride in the Studey?”

Later on the Blackwells acquired a “runabout” (single seat) which had a rumble seat (a seat in the spot where the trunk in modern cars is located). One day Bill asked me to go along on a visit to his sister and her family in Dobbs Ferry, across the Hudson, via the Nyack Ferry. When we arrived I sure was in for a jolt to find Bill had the rumble seat space loaded down with “hooch” - those being prohibition days, and transporting that stuff, or possessing it for that matter, was a federal offence. Brother Ed “bootlegged” some, it was rumored, and it must’ve been so. (Come to think of it, Ed never did seem to be doing much in the way of work.)
There’s been a lot of kidding about my girl friends, all Ruth’s in Tenafly: Bill’s sister Ruth, Ruth Ware, Ruth Grahn, and THE Ruth Esau who, in the end, collared me for good - or bad. Let’s give the first three a rundown: As to Ruth Blackwell, she was quite a fair looker, but most surely was not much interested in thinking. I took her to a movie or two, and that was about that. For some reason I took Ruth Ware out just once in real style. Don’t I remember how much that cost? Tickets cost $3.30 each to see a “premier showing” of Douglas Fairbanks Sr. in “The Thief of Bagdad.” The theater was all decorated oriental, and to add atmosphere, there were pots of incense smoldering about the place. As the magic carpet, fantastic character aboard, drifted by, with a little imagination one dreamily became enmeshed in the “1000 and One Nights Tales.” I looked over at friend Ruth Ware, and Holy Scherherezade, the girl was bored! Afterwards the grapevine conveyed to me that I didn’t take her anywhere after the show, and she thought I was “slow” - Ho, hum. Of the Grahns my memory isn’t so hot. I came to know Ruth Grahn through her married sister Ann who lived across the street from 77 Columbus Drive and who played the violin quite beautifully. I dropped over there a few times and murdered piano accompaniment for her; and I guess she shooed me over to Ruth, who played piano some. Nothing startling came of that friendship, although the Grahns were very nice people. Of the fourth Ruth, right now I’ll just mention one tie-in detail: Ruth Esau and Ruth Blackwell were close friends. Guess we didn’t do much noticing each other at first.

During the early twenties radio was becoming the popular rage in homes and
public places. My cousin Jack learned much about constructing sets in high school; and he built a lovely little set which he gave me. The little case for that radio was, I should say, about \(10'' \times 8'' \times 8''\) and finished in high polish; there was one tube and it was powered by two standard size flashlight batteries. Radio sets as yet had no speakers - you used a set of head phones; one advantage: other persons in the room weren’t disturbed. Should a friend also want to listen, you took the ear phones apart and each had one of the receivers. There was much discussion relative to the merits of different makes of head sets, two of the leaders being DeForest and Brandies, and there were probably ten more names in the field. All programs at first were “live” and gradually, as technics of broadcasting and receiving sets improved, radio brought the best in music, drama, news, [and] sermons to an eagerly listening public.

Returning to my little set, there is an episode worth repeating. One day when I came in, a real old lady that boarded with Julia greeted me with “Julia put those things on my ears” - pointing to the head sets - “and she made beautiful music on that box!”

Helen Brewster was getting married, which otherwise would not matter much to me, but she would be taking her piano to the new house which she had built on Knickbocker Road. Helen was marrying a fellow by the name of Frank Miller, and everyone including Julia thought it was a queer match. Frank was a rather crumby looking fellow; came most week ends [and] sat around silently, picking his nose a great deal; the young couple rarely went out. Odd we all thought. Helen did have money though; her father left a fair estate, I was told. But, as I have said, I was mainly concerned about a piano, so off to Englewood to see what was to be had in
that line. (Englewood was the “Big Town” and shopping center of Northern Valley.)

The instrument I picked out turned out to be definitely a member of our family, and it’s still with us and just about holding its own - we hope. That Kranich & Bach\textsuperscript{212} has had a tone all its sweet self’s; very individualistic one might say. So you might say that a piano, the K. & B.[,] became the second member of the Runion family, the Alfred Runion branch. One statistic remains fixed in my mind: Messrs. Furman & Mann collected $235 for that piano, and what a fine investment it turned out to be.

Soon after acquiring the piano I found out that it needed an overhaul job. Someone recommended Mr. Albert Petrucci\textsuperscript{213}, who turned out to be just the right man to work on it. He told us that he had worked a number of years in the Steinway Company factory, and the way he went to work left no doubt as to his abilities with a piano.

According to the “book,” the Kranich & Bach was about twenty years old then; you might say that it and Alfred grew up together. Mr. Petrucci took care of our piano as long as its home was in Tenafly and sometimes one could wish we could have him to take care of it again.

A Mr. Barenborg\textsuperscript{214}, who had been a professional violinist, was then giving lessons on the violin, and also piano lessons; I met him when he came to give Helen Brewster instructions on her piano. (Always wondered about his piano knowledge; he sat and talked with Helen most of the time when I observed the “lesson” - just casual conversation. Later I learned that, left to his own devises, the procedure was about the same with his violin lessons. With young Fred Esau\textsuperscript{215} he would talk sports for the entire period!) Barry, as everyone called him, suggested that, with Ernie
Hatch, an amateur violinist, and Lester Diehl, an accomplished cellist, we could have a good time playing as a group. Which we did. We would get together every week or so, usually at Ernie’s home, playing by the hour, sometimes way into the early morning. It was great fun playing anything and everything from popular stuff to difficult classics - the latter often being “murdered.” A few times we went to Lester’s house, but I don’t think his family approved imperfection - they were a more cultured group. Lester later became a headmaster of a boys school, but that was after we’d had much good fellowship together.

Ernie Hatch’s grandmother was Norwegian, and I soon found out that she baked tremendously good, old country pastries. One Christmas season I guess I indulged too freely on that Grandma’s cakes, they being very “rich,” and the resulting upset stomach taught me something about “why it’s unwise ever to be a glutton.”

One night, during a session at Ernie’s, we being blissfully unaware that one of those spectacular New Jersey fogs had dropped down; all about was a mantle of gray, and, as the saying goes, “You couldn’t see your hand before you,” and I had to go home. I argued against them taking me in the Hatch family car, it being only about three miles home from Cresskill, the next town above us where the others lived, and not too much of a walk. Pooh, pooh, nothing to it, they’d drive me home, of course, yes sir. I recount the event for it’s uniquely humorous side - we actually walked the car after blundering along a few feet in zero visibility. One of us walked ahead holding out a white hankerchief, jokingly taking turns being walking pilots. As it turned out, I was the big winner because when I’d gotten home, my friends still had to
retrace their steps homeward.

Mostly Tenafly was a nice quiet community that people liked to return to after a busy day in New York. Often one wished for some relief from the monotony of routine in the sleepy old town, and got it too, with a vengeance, when least expected. One such eruption took place when Tavenier’s old livery stable caught fire. The livery, a barn like structure, with space for stables and wagons on first floor, and a loft above for storing hay, was even then a symbol of an era of horse transportation. It was a good sized building, probably 125 feet deep, and 70 feet front right on the town’s main street, Washington; there were stores on both sides, and up and down the street. When the blaze was discovered, early in the afternoon, it had gotten a right good start and was a beauty to behold. Firemen from town and roundabout were kept busy as bees putting out roof fires; no one seemed to have any ideas about saving the wooden livery building. Big hunks of blazing wood flew through the air like flaming kites; we had to hold up one passenger train for a while, being afraid the car roofs would catch afire. The station, being of stone with slate roof, wasn’t endangered, and furnished us a wonderful view. The payoff of the fire was, besides Tavenier’s, three stores and The Tenafly Weavers, a speciality hand weaving establishment of widespread reputation, all pretty much wiped out. The Weaver’s, by the way, got together more of the hand looms and started up again and, to the best of my knowledge, they are still in business. Nothing much more exciting than a good fire, and that was a good one for sure!

Another series of fires furnished much excitement; all of them took place at
night, which was accommodating to those of us that ran to fires. None of them were in houses but occurred in some unoccupied outbuildings, such as barns, shops, etc. It got so [that] many of us looked forward to these fiery diversions; we speculated a great deal upon who was setting the torch. I had a pair of knee boots which I set by my bed, handy for when the siren blew, and I could pull on a pair of pants and the boots, a jacket, and be off. We men that followed the night blazes might have been called the volunteers to assist the volunteer fire department. One Sunday evening, after several other small “set” fires were extinguished, a town cop was talking to a group of fellows, and casually remarked, “I bet the next place will be Dawson’s Garage.” That remark clicked and a bunch started for the garage in question, when sure enough smoke appeared coming from the Garage. Everyone in town was excited by that time, and even the church where a bunch of us were in attendance gave up the idea of any service that night. The quick apprehension of that fire was fortunate, that building also being a wooden structure, right in the center of town. Alas for our nocturnal fire fun; the firebug, Mr. policeman was apprehended and taken out of circulation. They thought he had done it for merit points on his service record, but many of us had the notion that - like us - he was fascinated by fires. No, our policeman didn’t go to jail; he landed in the nut coop, and afterward I think was released.

The Tenafly postmaster Bill Bodecker, was a very interesting character; he knew practically everybody in town, which was helpful to us in the railroad station at times when we received a telegram for someone we’d never even heard of, or a
perishable shipment arrived consigned to someone unknown and with no local address. Bill dabbled in real estate on the side - later on his son Chester op[ened an office, and they did quite well selling lots and homes. (People were becoming speculation minded, and real estate and the stock market were probably the most active items on the list.) One day Bill Bodecker came to me and said, "Alfred, I've got two lots on Richard Street you should buy. They are a bargain at $200; you can't lose." It turned out that Richard St. was still in trees, but only about a block from Knickerbocker Road, a nice high section of town. I bought the lots, and two years later, Bill sold them for me for $600! This gives you an idea how the speculation fever was on. Not so bad for me but that was the extent to which I got involved in the speculation craze of that era. Maybe I lacked imagination!

Business and the stock market were booming; it seems that about everyone had an urge to get into the whirl, and "make a killing." Harry had been coaxing me to come back into Maguire & Co., as he needed someone to see customers that were not being contacted, mainly in the auto industry about Detroit. Since I liked nothing better than riding trains, and I'd collect about double the wages I was getting on the Northern, I figured, "What did I have to lose?" So, I jumped back into cotton textiles. Offhand let's say the time was about January A.D. 1926. My brother John held the position of vice president in Maguire & Co. and had a few profitable "pets" which he cultivated. Richard Smith took care of a clientele which required "wining and dining." There were other salesmen which came and left. (Maguire & Co. was not the pleasantest selling spot, and some men would not work under what they
considered questionable business practices, which came to their attention after they’d
been with the outfit a while and talked with customers.) A Rudolph Gabler was
secretary and treasurer, a man out to corral the fast buck - one way or another. Soon
I had a list of customers in Long Island City, Newark and Paterson, N.J., and in
Philadelphia. Every month or so Detroit or around Boston and New England,
made about a two weeks selling itinerary, all very interesting after one became
accustomed to travelling and hotels.

One day, walking up Broadway near 57th Street - the time was mid-1926 - I
was surprised to see a crowd of women milling around the Campbell Funeral Parlor.
Later I learned that there had been a near riot involving around 5,000 female fans
trying to view the body of their idol, moving picture actor Rudolph Valentino.
Valentino seems to have caught the emotional imagination of girls - any age; his
portrayal in “The Shiek” was rated tops on the “silent screen.” I doubt if any actor
has surpassed his accomplishments - for the ladies - as “the great lover.” Yes, he-
men snarled at mention of his name, nevertheless they took their girls to see
Valentino; maybe as the song “I’m in the Mood for Love” implied, Rudy served to
put the girls in the mood - For?? Valentino died in his 31st year; seriously he was one
of the greatest pantomimists of the screen.

Radio was going through growing pains, and many of them we, the set
owners, were enduring. A good sized radio required the services of one storage
battery (which had to be kept well charged. And you had to be careful not to spill any
of the stuff, which was lethal to carpets and furniture), and a couple of “B” batteries
(dry cells). Head sets were giving away to "speakers" which were separate from the console and which sort of resembled glorified mounted pie plates. My second set, a "DeForest," took up a great deal of space, which was about the best thing I could say of it. John had had it, and sold it to me when he got a new Colonial. I never could do much with that set; it was a temperamental player - off and on again described it's performance to a "T." Bill Flynn, Alex Fell's wife's brother-in-law (he was the expressman at the Tenafly station) bought the DeForest from me for $15, and liked it fine. Well one had to be an imaginative genius to run those early complexities, but they were improving all the time.

Radio was bringing in news from all over, such as the first solo flight over the Atlantic. One day during 1927, without fanfare, a young man took off from New York in a small, single engined plane for Paris, France. On the streets everywhere radio loud speakers were reporting nothing else; the air seemed tense with expectation; it seems we were almost afraid to listen. Nothing like this had ever been attempted; the odds seemed all against the success of the flight. Well, Charles Lindberg and his "Spirit of St. Louis" made it, and people went wild with joy. Even the president, "silent Cal" Coolidge, got excited, sent a destroyer to bring Lindberg and his plane home, and received the brave young flier at the White House.

Lindberg wrote a book, *We*, about himself and his plane "The Spirit of St. Louis," concerning the lonesome hours over the Atlantic. "The Spirit of St. Louis" now rests in the Smithsonian Institute. To his everlasting credit Lindberg never would allow commercial exploitation of his brave flying feats; to my knowledge he never allowed
his “endorsement” of any food or drink product, ciga[r]ettes or gadget.

On my business trips to Paterson the Y.M.C.A made an excellent place to drop in for lunch, and soon I’d made several fine friends there. The “Y” building, across the street from city hall, was old and too small, but it didn’t lack “friendship space.” Down the street “a ways” was the Young Mens Hebrew Association, and it was the talk that the management of that organization complained about the Christian association stealing it’s members. The explanation apparently was that the Y.M.C.A. had a much better program and better facilities; applicants never were screened for religious backgrounds, and so the Jewish boys were welcomed.

Soon at the “Y” I was being greeted into a rather “exclusive” dinner group - men of business and the professions. Paterson was for years conceded to be the “silk capitol” and one of the most interesting persons I met there - who knew the silk business “inside and out” - was Eli Maranden, then a man in his seventies. At lunch one day he told how, when he was a lad, his father migrated from France to French Canada. When word leaked out, in that almost 100% Roman Catholic territory, that the family were of protestant faith, Eli said that they were about totally isolated socially and economically; no one would employ his father, and the family probably would have perished had they not found a way into the United States. So one can easily understand Eli’s love for his adopted country. One day Eli got to talking on religion; he was a practicing Christian through and through - a pillar of the Baptist Stronghold. But he didn’t toady to evangelists, at all; “Here today and gone tomorrow,” he said. Billy Sunday had been in Paterson, and when he left, Eli
swears he had left a mess at the house, where he'd stayed - including plenty of beer bottles; "Just a bag of hot air," said Eli. Allow this scribe to make an observation: have my readers noticed how the contemporary big time evangelist appears well fed, and usually draws down a substantial salary?

The "Y" at this time, besides it's fine physical and spiritual program, offered some very good study courses. One of the courses that particularly appealed to me was the Dale Carnegie public speaking classes. Certainly most people could benefit from a course such as this then, as they can now. I enrolled in a class; from beginning to end it was inspiring; there were no dropouts. After completing the basic and advanced courses, quite a bunch of Dale Carnegie course alumni decided to form a public speaking club. We wanted to call it "The Lincoln Club" but were strongly urged not to, there already being so many Lincoln clubs, so we did choose for the name "The Abraham Lincoln Public Speaking Club." Alfred M. Runion was chosen as the first secretary of the club. At one of our dinners, Dale Carnegie, the man himself, consented to be our guest speaker; and don't you think that we were not puffed up with such an honor coming to our club. About this time the officials decided that Paterson deserved a new Y.M.C.A. building, and a drive for funds got under way. Needless to say we public speakers were used very often to interest groups from churches, clubs, [and] unions with our "dynamite" talks.

It was 1927 when I sort of became a fixture at 46 George Street, the Frederick Esau residence, more or less through the connivance of Julia Blackwell; Julia had never given up her efforts at arranging a match between her Florence and me. Ruth
Esau and Florry were both pillars in the Methodist church; Julia cooked up a bit of master strategy, Ruth Esau-unknowingly to be her helper, aimed to bringing me more in contact with Florence. Julia suggested to me that maybe I’d like to play duets with Ruth Esau who, she said, “was a real good piano player.” I found out later that Julia had the idea I would get in with the bunch of young folks at church through Ruth’s crowd, and come more in contact with Florence. The plan was sort of involved, to be sure. Well, the duet suggestion was one of Julia’s few sensible one’s; it wasn’t long before our duet playing became marathon sessions, on and on and on. Julia’s plan worked to a point; Ruth and I played duets nightly; Sundays it seemed we spent long hours in church services, walked home to Ruth’s, and Florence was still just a member of quite a large group of our church friends.

This new turn of events did not improve Julia’s disposition which, at best, bordered on the sour side. As I began spending more evenings and Sundays at the Esau’s, things got progressively less pleasant for me at Columbus Drive, and I was to learn, through conversations carried on with herself, in profane phrases, what a dope I’d turned out to be.

I was invited to accompany the Esaus on vacation that summer at Horseneck Beach on Buzzards Bay, and hastened to accept. The trip would be made in the family car, a four cylinder 1926 Maxwell - top speed 45 M.P.H. - a good car for the times; like the model T it was very dependable transportation and got you there - eventually, that is. So the trip started. Roads were fair to poor, most often unmarked; “my Ruth” sat beside her father, who drove, with the A.L.A. Bluebook on her lap,
spelling out turns at designated spots, which sometimes were such indefinites as a small sign on a tree or building pointing to the next place to aim for on our route. Roads were simply arteries from [one] good sized town to another, and city to city, and the early traffic expert was sure to see to it that the motorist was obliged to coast down the main city drag at about 20 M.P.H., when lucky enough to be able to move at all. We, on that trip, worked our way through such places as Danbury, Springfield, Watertown, Conn., Providence, and dozens of town and settlements, where the speed was regulated at not over 20 M.P.H. Going through Providence we got completely lost and had to ask directions out of the railroad yards. When we got to Fall River everyone got into the spirit of things it seemed, that being the last city to navigate and not too far from Westport Point, which was the little town and post office for Horseneck. The tortuous 220 mile, twelve to fourteen hour trip - I was jammed immovably in 'with Freddie and his mother and luggage - was forgotten and forgiven when we gazed out upon the surf and cluster of unpretentious dwellings called Horseneck Beach.

True to good old New England conservative manners, no one came out to greet us, although I mistrust our arrival was under discreet observation. I had arranged to put up at an old, old, seaside lodging house - it was of unpainted wide board construction, and seemed a part of the general scene; the part of the structure where I had a room was over piling, something on the order of a pier with the surf swishing around under me. That first night, hearing the surf pounding under me, was rather eerie but soon I'd succumbed to the music of the deep, mingled with a rather
gentile sway of the ancient structure: My venerable dwelling was owned by an
equally venerable Mrs. Petty.

Soon one found out that this part of the New England coast abounded with
Pettys. Also numerous about were Silva and Sousa families whose forebears came
over from Portugal to work in cotton and other textile mills. As employment in the
mills declined, the thrifty “Portagees” settled on farms or took up other local work.
But the old “New England stock” was made up of such names as Petty, Small, [and]
Gifford.

As you have probably guessed, Horseneck Beach derived its name from a
narrow peninsula, shaped rather like a horse’s neck and head, which jutted out a mile
or more at about right angles to the shore line. The neck served somewhat as a
breakwater for our beach and added measurably to making our beach a tamer bathing
spot. The walk out on neck and, at low tide, onto Gooseberry Island was a favorite
pastime; out there we could inspect the wreckage of an old rum-runner of prohibition
days, and pick berries.

No, the beach was not clean white sand but rather it ran more to gravel and
larger stones, and boy the bathing was superb. What more could one ask; bathing
about a stone’s throw from the back door in old Buzzards Bay?

It’s interesting to note that the Esaus had been spending their vacations at
Horseneck for a number of years. Pop Esau’s brother’s wife was a Riley from New
Bedford. Her father John Riley was a loom fixer - a skilled profession in textile mills
– [and] he owned a home in New Bedford. So Uncle Bill Piper and Auntie Alice
had introduced the Esaus to that very fine seashore spot. Before Maxie - fondly referred to by that nick name - came upon the scene the family had gone up on The Old Fall River Line to Fall River\textsuperscript{233}, and arranged with a man to meet them dockside and take them to Horseneck in his car.

Probably that first two weeks at Horseneck Beach were to be my happiest vacation. We became engaged then (although, in our case I'm quite sure we'd known in our hearts for some time). Looking back of one thing I feel certain - that there is nothing quite like being engaged; therefore why not extend it to at least a year. Besides the happy times together, the longer engagement can serve to be a good testing period before marriage vows have been spoken. My girl and I spent much of our free time together; Sunday was a special day when we practically lived in the little Methodist Church, which was only about five minutes walk down George St. from the Esaus. Sunday afternoons, when it was pleasant outside, we explored the countryside for miles around - the palisades, and wooded hillsides were very pretty those days; if the day were not suitable to be out we played duets and visited with the family. Somehow we were able to have the energy to drag ourselves to a delicatessen supper of cold cuts, cheeses, fresh rye bread; then clean up and back to Epworth League (now it's called M.Y.F.) and evening church service.

After we had gotten back from Horseneck, and the news of our engagement spread out, Julia Blackwell's disposition towards me became progressively violent, and at the urgings of the Esaus and friends who knew the situation, I came to the conclusion that the safe thing to do was to move out. A widow lady, Hannah
Lawrence\textsuperscript{234}, had a room for rent at 26 George St., about a block from the Esaus, which I took. This location was much handier to trains, and church - and my girl friend’s. This time, prompted by past experiences, I decided to keep things more formal with my landlady; it was always Mrs. Lawrence. On the score of meals, things worked out fine also; Mrs. Lawrence got my breakfast and the Esaus had me at their house most evenings for dinner. (In case my readers get the idea that I was presuming on the Esaus hospitality, let me say that the idea was entirely my future mother-in-law’s.) Breakfast did not appeal too highly for I didn’t care too much for Mrs. Lawrence’s long haired, smelly pooch, or her big old lazy cat that shared the house with us, and hung about the table at meal time. (Otherwise my landlady was quite clean. She agreed to do my laundry; it always was very nicely done.)

It wasn’t long before Ruth was doing the typing for the Abraham Lincoln Public Speaking Club. It’s membership was fairly large and the secretarial work for this organization was at times fairly heavy.

Earlier Ruth had applied for admission to State Teachers College, in New Brunswick (N.J.) and had been accepted. After our engagement we sort of agreed that maybe being away at college would be too much of a separation. So, largely on the recommendation of the music director of The Tenafly school system, Dr. Clifford Demarest\textsuperscript{235}, the future Ruth Runion decided to continue her music studies at an accredited school in New York, and live at home. After investigating several of the recommended schools in the city, a Julliard affiliated school named “The American Institute of Applied Music” was selected as having the most to offer. The school was
headed by a very competent, little old lady, a Miss Kate Chittenden, still remarkable alert although in her eighties. She originated a piano course - I never fully understood the implication of it’s title: “The Synthetic Method” - which was, nevertheless, a very fine approach to the technics of piano playing. That school, housed in an old and sometimes coldly uncomfortable brown stone house on 57th Street, sure didn’t boast any frills; it was all-business. That section of Manhattan at the south tip of Central Park, with the art galleries, Steinway Hall, Carnegie Hall, American and foreign piano show rooms, just oozed with artistic atmosphere. Fondly remembered in the 57th St. neighborhood was the little French restaurant “Le Petit Trianon” where Ruth and I sometimes lunched together.

The year 1928 must have been very busy for both of us; we were making plans aplenty. Our vacation was again spent with the family at Horseneck. What wonderful times we had: swimming, playing tennis, eating at church suppers and at those fabulous clam bakes.

These clam bakes need some special talking about; I daresay the best ones were put on by churches, and the standard price for all you could eat was $1.75. The bakes were prepared in a pit somewhat as follows. In a rather shallow hole 12’ to 15’ in diameter and lined with small to fair sized stones, a fire is kindled early the day of the bake. After the stones become real hot the ashes are raked off and the stones rinsed with water, which creates steam. Now quickly layers of clams (most everything else is in cloth bags), fish, chicken, lobsters, white and sweet potatoes [and] sweet corn. Most everything cookable could be in the bake, and I bet I left out
a lot of items. Well then, for flavor the whole Kaboodle is covered with sea weed and a tight canvas sealed in the steam for cooking and to hold the flavor. But certainly the "bake" was presided over by a Bake Master, who seemingly staked his reputation on the outcome of each bake. While waiting for the main bake to come off we were served steamed little neck clams with a cup of melted butter; I suppose this could have been considered the first course. Oh sure the ladies of the church likely would be selling cakes, candy, and cookies to take home. Well, I wonder if anything like this epicurian bonanza can be had today; bet it would cost $10, and it's a safe bet the folks'd foul up the whole mess by swilling it down with beer.

That fall Ruth again commuted to school five days a week, which with practising, kept her well occupied. Business was not too good and required much plugging for any results. But in between my out of town trips, Ruth's work at the conservatory, and our talent for acquiring church jobs without half trying, we did seem to find time to do things together.

Business outlook was very jittery; an air of uncertainty in the future was evident. Yet so many of the men you came in contact with were "playing the (stock) market," and many of them I'm sure, by so doing, were neglecting their personal business affairs. For instance in Paterson, a comparatively small city, a branch office of a New York brokerage house opened in a store room; any time you would pass the place it was full of men tensely watching the fluctuations of stocks as they are received on the ticker tape and posted on the board. This same scene could be duplicated in most fair sized cities; you might say people were speculation mad.
The stock market "fever" seemed contagious; wives were known to prod their husbands, who were not playing the market, and the craze also reached into lower salaried groups - office boys, stenographers, switchboard operators, or such as elevator operators. My brother's wife Elsie pointedly brought to his attention that one of their neighbors "had made a killing in the market," but Harry was not convinced; I don't think he ever did any trading on margin. (Later when the depression was at its worst, Harry was able to acquire some valuable apartment houses at a fraction of their worth. When business became stabilized, these properties proved very profitable investments.) As I remember, brother John did succumb to the lure of Wall Street in a small way, and about at the worst time, which was about when the market had leveled off and started the downward plunge. Luckily John was not too heavily involved so his losses, although considerable, did not floor him.

The G.O.P. were prodding president (Silent) Cal Coolidge for his declaration that he would be the candidate to succeed himself in the November (1928) election. Apparently he saw the hand writing on the wall, and when pressed for his answer, came out with one of his uniquely terse statements: "I do not choose to run." Before election Coolidge, probably to shore up the sagging econo[my, coined a phrase that he used once or twice in speeches, "Prosperity is just 'round the corner," which statement later was to be derisively kicked about. Herbert Hoover was nominated by the Republicans, and Alfred E. Smith, former governor of New York, was the Democrats' choice. Two factors made Smith's chances of being elected president very doubtful: the Democrats were the party not in power, and no part of the country -
possibly with the exception of the industrial east - would vote for Roman Catholic Alfred E. Smith. Hoover's one term in the presidency turned out to be a heart breaker; few men have been used as shamefully as the scapegoat for conditions beyond an individual's control. After the election, conditions all over the land could have been assessed as dispairing.

Blissfully disregarding economics, Ruth and I planned ahead to "Our Wedding Day" come June (1929). We went on trips together, sometimes with her family and Maxie; I was one of the family! One weekend we went to visit Aunt Effie and uncle Harry (Frank) at Bradley Beach. We sure were surprised when my cousin Billie met us at the station with his Franklin automobile; he was so proud of that car. (Those of you who have never come in contact with a Franklin auto have surely missed something. The car, especially the front end, was homely - resembling somewhat the scoopy cow catcher on an old steam locomotive - but on the whole it was a very practical vehicle. The engine was air cooled, which eliminated the danger of freeze ups in cold weather.) Aunt Effie and the future Ruth Runion were, I daresay, very warmly attached from the start. We had a wonderful weekend, dipping in the Atlantic, strolling along the boardwalk, not to mention the fine time visiting with our hosts. A druggist on the boardwalk sold us a "brand new cream, just on the market, called Noxema" which was guaranteed to protect one from sunburn. Ruth had her profile done by a charcoal artist on the boardwalk; we felt the world was ours!

During those two years when Ruth was going into New York for conservatory
classes, we often stayed in the city for dinner and took in a Broadway show. Those
days one could watch for tickets to a good show at Gray’s, a cut rate theatre agency,
located downstairs in the old Times Building at Times Square. There, for example,
one could buy a $3.30 seat for $2.20, etc., the explanation being that the tickets
offered were for shows that hadn’t gotten off the ground yet, or maybe for a show
coming to the end of a long run; Grays bought up blocks of such tickets. Some time
during the life of a show you would be sure to find tickets for it at Grays. I always
tried to get tickets in the mezzanine, the forward seats in first balcony. As I
remember we averaged taking in a Broadway show about every two weeks. We also
subscribed to a Students’ Music Series at Carnegie Hall. These concerts were
excellently performed by the New York Symphony Orchestra; Walter Damrosch was
the conductor. Damrosch would hammer out principal themes of numbers to be
played at the same time explaining interesting facts about the compositions. In
dealing with Richard Wagner’s Mythologically inspired operas, he liked to pinpoint
the recurring motifs. This series was very inspiring and instructive; they were
performed Saturday afternoons, and young people came from far and wide to them.

One day Elsie Maguire asked me to go with her to help pick out our wedding
present; her requests usually were in the nature of a command but this time I went
along willingly. Imagine my surprise when we went into a very high class shop on
lower Broadway, and she told me that the gift was to be Gorham solid silver table
ware. Elsie just wanted my ideas on pattern; the price tag came to several hundred
dollars. After upwards of forty years that cutlery is still servicable and beautiful.
Our wedding day was drawing close. The day before the fateful knot was to be tied[,.] Ruth Esau graduated from conservatory. As has been the case ever since we seem to have thrived on being extremely occupied with whatever was on hand to be done. Ruth’s colleagues at the school, and her teachers were greatly surprised that she would be married the next day!240
Married

Our wedding day, June 22, 1929, dawned clear and hot; I'd venture to say that it was about a perfect wedding. Ruth's old piano teacher, Miss Pond, offered us roses from her yard to decorate the church for the wedding; we did a fine job all by ourselves. (The old Pond place where Levinia and her mother lived - although the house was going into disrepair (they were not too well off financially) - had been one of the show places in Tenafly. The mother, a very sweet person of Quaker faith, was a joy to know and behold, with her little lace headpiece piously worn at all times; she was well informed and an interesting conversationalist.) The little church was crowded, and an air of happy anticipation seemed all about the assembled guests.

Only one hitch occurred in the ceremony: Ruth's mother forgot to stand as the procession moved up the aisle so no one else did! If this break with tradition boded ill luck for us, as some might think, nothing ever came of it. Rev. Murdock's hand trembled and his voice quavered some - we wondered what had come over him - but again the old adage "All's well that ends well" I guess was working for us.

Pop Esau took the wedding party to the Red Coach Tavern for our celebration dinner (it was strictly Methodist - no "spirits" (alcoholic)), after which we rushed back to change clothes before taking off on our wedding trip.

We had arranged with Leo Fitzpatrick, a taxi driver, to take us to our train in Hoboken. (Tenafly was still small and democratic enough so we knew about everyone including cab drivers, so, although we paid Leo his going rate, the trip to our train was pleasantly shared in conversation about the wedding.)
Sure, dear reader, we knew where we were going; we’d decided that some time before. A Cooks Tour trip had been settled for; it turned out to be one of the best arranged and carefree trips imaginable. We were routed by train to Niagara Falls; we had a Pullman upper and lower section - I was “gallant” and crawled up into the upper—[and] we arrived at the Falls early in the morning. Our booking was for a day and night at Niagara Falls, being booked at the Niagara Hotel. That was the first and last time that we’d seen and ridden the Gorge Trolley Trip, a grand ride down the American side to Lewiston, where the line crossed over to the Canadian side, then up to the Falls again, where we crossed the Rainbow Bridge to “the end of the line.”

Motor travel soon was to rob the Gorge Line of so many customers that it was forced out of business.

Next, we were to take a rather leisurely jaunt shipboard. After Canadian customs officers had good naturedly looked over our baggage, we boarded a smallish craft which ferried us to Toronto, where we shipped on a fine steamer for the trip to and over the St. Lawrence. At Kingston our English speaking waitresses told us sadly that the French chef that we would take on for the remainder of the voyage would not be near as good as our Canadian cook. How wrong that was; the French cooking was - shall we say - heavenly. From Montreal another steamer took us for a thrilling trip up the canyoned Saguenay river to Tadussac, which seemed to be a big logging camp, and where the crew unloaded a great number of beer kegs, and other supplies before returning to Montreal. Our only poor accomodations on the trip were at the Montreal hotel - I think it was the Mount Royal.
Either Thos. Cooks Tours thought we were Roman Catholics in good standing, or it was the French Canadian country influence, our itinerary certainly was sprinkled lavishly with Roman Catholic churches and shrines. One bus trip was to the shrine of miraculous healings for cripples, St. Anne Beaupre. But to compensate for this trip we were bussed to that lovely gem, beautiful Montmarency Falls. Back in Montreal we embarked for that quaint and very French city of Quebec, and were booked at the incomparable hotel Chateau Frontenac. What service: our bags were opened for us, beds turned down ready to tumble in - ho, hum.

Quebec was one place where we had no coupons for meals, and happily we hunted out fine little French eating places. I just had to have a glass of wine with dinner. Ruth wouldn’t indulge.

Just for fun Ruth and I started out to try finding a protestant church and, if my memory is right, we did exactly that, finding one United Church. Well weren’t we in a city 97% French lineage? What a time we had trudging through the old city where streets were too narrow for any vehicle but that horse drawn affair called a cal■che. The owners and drivers of these open carriages fairly implored our patronage, but we preferred to tromp about, poking into the old fort, and other spots we fancied.

Doubling back to Montreal by ship, we rather sadly bid farewell to Canadian Steamship Lines. Even our little French “garcon,” who fancied my girl to be one of his little Frenchies (does she have rather a French beak?) and brought extra pastries - not for me, I dare say - to our table would be missed.
We entrained for a start back to the U.S. border and stayed over night at the Ausable Chasm House; near Ft. Henry. Next day we had time to explore about the Gorge\textsuperscript{252} before boarding a fine lake steamer on Champlain, calling at Burlington, VT, but not disenbarking there. Thence for a long sail to a rail head, where by train our tour wended on to the shore of Lake George; then by another craft we newlyweds coursed beautiful Lake George\textsuperscript{253}. Both of these lakes were, as viewed with the spring awakening ashore, breathtakingly pretty.

Then by train we reached Albany the evening of July 2\textsuperscript{nd}, where our coupons put us up for the night at the Hotel Ten Eyck\textsuperscript{254}. On the morrow our trip was to end on water, the Hudson River Dayline\textsuperscript{255} to New York, where we were “on our own” so to speak, for the first time in about two weeks. We were glad to be home, as ever since we have been happy to be home together.

Now how glad we are to have sailed Champlain, Lake George, and the Hudson, since most of those fine ships, many which were palacial with their fine promenade decks, lounges, and stairways, are no more. Recently in *Holiday Magazine*, there was an account of one Hudson River Day Line vessel, *The Alexander Hamilton*, which in this year 1966 still makes short holiday and charter trips\textsuperscript{256}. It was of an era, a romantic mode of travel, as well as being an economical mover of goods, this river and coastal shipping complex. There was the Hudson River Day Line for just a relaxing good time; the night Line ships\textsuperscript{257} fitted out with berths and great cargo space. Mr. business man could board ship late afternoon, have dinner aboard, get a good nights sleep aboard ship too, and be ready for appointments next
morning in Albany; this line did a heavy freight business also. Coastwise Providence
Line, Fall River and New Bedford Line, the Boston trip through Cape Cod Canal\textsuperscript{258}:
all did a thriving Passenger and freight business. To illustrate the dependability of
delivery, all you had to do to get a bale of cotton goods from a Fall River mill
delivered in New York on a certain day, at a certain time that morning, was to get it
aboard ship the night before; it would be there! I recall that Maguire & Co. had
dealings with a cotton brokerage house in Fall River: Grandfield & Mycock. Once or
twice a week my brother Harry would say “Call up ‘Grandfather’ & Mycock” - his
way of “being funny” - “and ask him to have three or four bales of print cloth on
tonight’s boat.” We could bank that our shipment would be on the New York pier on
schedule. The motor truck you can be sure “ruint” the coastal as well as Hudson
River cargo ship business, just as the automobile killed passenger traffic on
waterways. If there could be any consolation in the old saying that misery loves
company, it can be noted that the railroad passenger business suffered the same fate
as our ships, with the rapid development of airplane travel.

Ruth and I had arranged to rent Mrs. Lawrence’s house for our first home\textsuperscript{259}.
She would retain her bedroom, and we’d share the house facilities. Before this we
had talked with Cliff Demarest, who was more or less the executive officer in the
Tenafly Building & Loan Association, about financing a new house. He, it would
seem foreseeing a financial crises throughout the country and the resulting fall in real
estate values, appeared at the time strangely reticent about discussing our case; he
certainly did not talk encouragingly. Harry, my brother, also strongly advised not to
buy a home and stressing the difficulty of selling, if need be. So, we rather sadly
gave up the idea of owning our own home, for the time
gave up the idea of owning our own home, for the time; our decision proved sound,
as houses, figuratively speaking, couldn’t be sold for a song during the depression.

Before the wedding we had been shopping around for various pieces of
Before the wedding we had been shopping around for various pieces of furniture, and had gotten some really fine things. Wanamakers were still located downtown at 8th Street, and from them we bought our kitchen table and chairs,
downtown at 8th Street, and from them we bought our kitchen table and chairs,
unpainted; Ruth and I enameled them shiny white. From the same store also came our ice box, big enough to take a 75 pound cake of ice! (Refrigerators had not yet
our ice box, big enough to take a 75 pound cake of ice! (Refrigerators had not yet appeared generally on the home scene. Our friends, Rod and Helen Kessler, had one of the few about town, a G.E. with an unsightly metal cooling apparatus mounted on top. They were reported to work quite efficiently.) From another of the reliable old stores on 14th Street we bought a fine dining room suite, and for the living room a gorgeous Oriental rug! Ruth brought her bedroom set from home - also fine furniture - which took care of our bedroom needs for the time being. Our living room suite did have one of the few pull out davenports 'round about then, which made an extra bed, in case we got company. So you might say that we were all set for furnishings. Later on we bought a fine combination dresser and desk in unfinished wood, which our next door neighbor, Jack Arzonico, an artistic sort of fellow, finished beautifully for Al and Ruth. Jack and Waneta were nice people to have for our first neighbors. Summers Jack bordered their walk from the street with cute portulacas; sometimes called moss rose, they were perfect, stately little border plants. I most likely associate these friends and their portulacas because I admire the little
blooms—and again because this gem of the flower kingdom did not respond too well to my efforts to grow them, if that makes sense.

Ruth and I were getting, without half trying, more church jobs, such as that one in the church basement level, where most of the Sunday School held classes. The rumor was that some of the workmen who had done plastering and finishing had been drinkers—and the basement surely looked rather tipsy, and the porous plastering and sloppy trim work was rather a shocking sight. No attempt had been made to finish these walls. There wasn’t any money in the church treasury, but some of the young folks were ready to work, and somehow, working nights or whenever there was time, the plaster got sealed and calcamed, the woodwork painted, and floors varnished. The young people, Epworth Leaguers mostly, wanted to put on little plays, religious dramas, and such, so the outcome in this area was a slightly raised platform. There was a curtain for the stage, fashioned from dyed burlap, which was hung by means of metal rings to a wire. With the use of some small pulleys and cords our improvised curtain worked very nicely. So, the basement, housing the Sunday School, the inevitable kitchen, and Epworth League and “social rooms,” really was a big success. We sure had a lively bunch of young folks!

Ed [B]ohlen had been Sunday School superintendent about as long as old timers could remember. Being the sanctimonious type that was wont to question most others’ “worthiness,” he used much time assuming the preacher’s prerogative of exhortation and lengthy prayers during Sunday School opening exercises. Some of our less conservative youth sometimes whispered, yawned—out loud—and coughed
unnecessarily during the ten minute-opening [that was] often extended to about half an hour. Often there was hardly enough time left for a lesson.

When we got a new minister, Charles Tibbetts266, it soon became apparent that he would like to do his own preaching. Rev. Tibbetts was a distinctive character; he looked much like the personification of the then comic strip character Bim Gump267: rather a gaunt, tallish figure, pale of complexion and with a great beak of nose and cut off chin. Most of the time he wore a Prince Albert outfit, and a rather funereal expression; but make no mistake: he was doggishly stubborn in what he considered to be right. Most Sunday School board meetings Ed Bohlen brought up the theme [of] how he was overworked and should resign. So at the 1929 fall meeting of the board, I venture to say that brother Bohlen was about the most surprised person present when some kind soul made a motion to accept his resignation — with regret. The motion carried, with out dissent. Ed was real upset with the new supt. Alfred Runion — I admit I was pretty poor timber, but eager — and never seemed to warm up to me.

Between business trips out of town, and the church work, Ruth’s music students268, and her column in The Northern Valley Tribune, we never seemed to have time on our hands. One winter night I arrived home late from an out of town trip, flipping my overcoat onto the bed, and, presto, my eagle eyed bride pounced on an unfamiliar looking bug. How come a bug on the scene while winter’s cold reigned all about? She, wifey, that is, carefully scooped buggie into an envelope and walked up to her folks place; mother Esau promptly identified it to be a BED BUG269! The explanation seemed to be that I’d acquired the bug from the plush upholstered seat
on the train. Mom Esau confided to us that she'd picked up head lice in this manner, on the train, when she and Pop Esau took off on their wedding trip! Soon we were to have another adventure with the insect - or bug - fraternity, and again on our bed. One day my girl found Mrs. Lawrence's big cat on our bed, chased him off, and soon after saw this cute little thing jumping around the bedspread. It turned out to be a flea. So - what to do? We decided to keep our bedroom door closed.

We decided to buy a car and started looking over what the manufacturers had to offer. Rod and Helen's folks had one of the first Model A Fords, and it seemed to be giving first rate service; we sort of sold ourselves on one. So we got a snappy "sports coupe" - they were scarce, and we took what was to be had without waiting - model A, price $750, our first and last new car. The cash for it came out of Ruth's and my savings accounts. Jack Arzonico advised me some about taking care of our big investment; Mother Esau really was the one that taught me to drive. Can you imagine never having been behind the wheel of a car - me? Ever since I have been very sympathetic to a poor guy who could not [drive], and wanted to learn, and have helped them all I could.

We loved that little car and drove it here, there and everywhere. On Easter Sunday (1930) we started out for a business trip to New England. We drove up to North Adams and over the Mohawk Trail, which is memorable to me as one of the most beautiful rides ever. As we were going along there was this sign along the road every so often saying the distance to Sweetheart Inn, and urging travellers to stop for the best meal ever. Well, we kept getting hungrier and hungrier, and by the time we
got to the Inn there was nothing to do but stop. So, into the fine establishment, perched precariously on the side of a mountain. Oh'yes, the bill-of-fare; wowee the cheapest thing on that menu was a chicken sandwich at ninety-cents; we took it, and got away from there fast. (In 1930 a dollar was a dollar, not our present-worth somewhere in the neighborhood of thirty-five cents.) We found out that Lenox, Mass., near where the Sweet Heart Inn was located, was “Ritzy territory.” Coming into Boston we got “chicken” when we saw all the traffic, so we put our little car into a garage, and finished the trip into the city on a street car. One day, later on the trip, we drove to a customer in out-lying Reading; it was a beautiful spring day, but quite windy. Just as my girl was getting out of the car at the company office a strong gust of wind caught her full skirt, whiffing it skyward. I'm sure that from looks of approval on the faces of the male observers Ruth must have presented a terrific picture. Later that spring we made many business trips around local territory, and as far away as Philadelphia; I'm quite sure my young wife’s being along didn’t hurt business a bit.

We all, the Runions, Esaus, and Pipers, planned our vacations together at Horseneck in 1930 and my recollections were that we had a real fine time. One day, when we were all on the beach Auntie Alice really hit the “keen perception jack pot,” remarking that she “believed the Runions were going to have a baby in their house.” As you might guess, we were not at all surprised at Auntie Alice’s announcement, but I’m sure she was delighted, in her Victorian way, in having ferreting out our “secret.”

One outstanding event that year was our visit on Nantucket Island, which was
a pleasant boat trip from New Bedford. We fell in love with that place - its quaint atmosphere of old whaling days, the street leading from the waterfront paved with cobblestones, and the stately old homes that had been built with whaling fortunes. These homes, many which had been purchased by wealthy visitors, were kept in a fine state of repair; painted snow white - white like you see no other place but "down east." Ruth and I started out to find a truly Island eating place, and we did - a little nook along the waterfront where the board proclaimed "good victuals served"; it was the truth, too. Always wanted to return to this pretty island, and I have pondered what those "convenient" plane hops have done to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Are they now reduced to stereotypes of other common vacation spots?

One trip we made in our little car stands out in particular, and illustrates the nonchalance of youth. It was to an Epworth League training class, in Hackensack, one night late in autumn. The trip over was fine; then it began to rain, got colder and iced over, and we skidded all eight miles home, turning around completely on the road a couple of times. And, we thought it fun. You see we were young!

Pop Esau had bought a campsite in the Interstate Park, along the Hudson. It was operated by the Kraftsmen Club of the Masonic Lodge, of which Ruth's father was a top officer. The plan was that a member purchased the wooden floor, which was slightly elevated from the ground, and got himself a canvas top and sides - sort of a glorified tent. The organization furnished cold running water, and more or less sanitary toilet facilities at a central point; it was a perfect set up for being uncomfortable away from home. Now that you know the approximate location of the
place - it was about 75 miles from Tenafly - what else is there to say? The Sr. Esaus just had to show it to us, so off we all went, headed for Bear Mountain, with Maxie doing the hauling. The road proved to be rather rough, and Pop Esau got in a hurry; thereby hitting many bumps in the road; Ruth took a beating, and whispered to me that she had fears for our unborn child. We came, we saw, we allowed that it “was nice” - and we returned to our house. Ruth didn’t again ride in Maxie until after our child was safely with us in person. Carefully driven, our little Ford proved comfortable for Ruth, with either of us driving.

It seemed that our first baby never would be born; then all at once she was with us. You might say that on December 24th 1930 the Ruth-and-Alfred family had commenced assembling. Honestly, I could not imagine a baby born with more black hair straggling ‘way down o’nto her face; people came to the Englewood (NJ) hospital, and gazed in wonder at the “little Eskimo baby.” Before long, pretty features overpowered the black hair, and proud parents showered Gladys Ruth with love, and everything else we thought she should have.

In one respect we were lousy parents to our first child; you might [s]ay that we were victims of the book, or the books. One admonition of “the book” was - under no circumstances feed the brats oftener than at three hour intervals; keep the child on schedule. To which I now emphatically say nuts! The baby was developing fast in one area - plainly she was destined to be a great vocalist. One day we got the idea that, somewhere or other, the book was holding out on us, for Gladys didn’t seem to be doing so good. We took Gladys to Dr. Ruch; his diagnosis was that
nothing [was] wrong with the little girl except being hungry. She perked right up on a supplement diet of Eagle Brand condensed milk. So, you young prospective parents read the book if you must, then throw it in the ash can. And, a word to the wise: "mammals" are the best source of food for babies; cow's milk is alien food, and good for raising calves.

The spring and summer of 1931 found the country struggling with an infantile paralysis (now known as polio) epidemic. Parents were advised to keep children at home, isolated from groups of people, and we complied to the letter. Gladys spent her days in the fine carriage on the front porch, and memory tells me that she didn't get off George Street for the duration of the sickness. The siege was very frightening; many children were left crippled and many died.

Business was steadily declining everywhere and it seemed prudent to keep an eagle eye out for orders; for that reason no mention of vacation was made in 1931. At Maguire & Co. we just kept plugging away, and surprisingly did some fair business. On the streets the plight of men out of work was pitiful. Men, most of whom were able looking and appeared intelligent, were offering apples for sale from a box, along the sidewalk. At home a housewife might be offered little things like pensils, or often needles, for ten cents - from a mature man. And so it was - there were nice looking men asking another of us to buy them something to eat. For so many the means of earning a living had simply vanished. No money in the bank you ask? Well, banks and businesses went busted by the wholesale; their assets figuratively melted away. For instance, in Philadelphia I had friends in the Geo. W.
Blabon Co., a big linoleum manufacturing concern, of whom had their funds in a big bank near the plant; that bank and its several branches went under, and my friends found themselves about destitute. The irony of this particular case was that my friends had mostly come from England - the Blabon company came here from the British Isles - the bank I referred to was "The Bank of America" and the victims had looked upon it much as they would have The Bank of England, which guaranteed deposits as a government obligation.

With the coming of winter the infantile paralysis epidemic, to our very great relief, died off, and you can not imagine how great was our relief.

We had the coal bin at Mrs. Lawrence's house filled, and like the woodchuck probably feels when he crawls in for the winter, we began to feel settled down after the anxiety of that summer. But Mrs. Lawrence had become annoying in various ways, such as letting the dog and cat roam all over the house; she was doing washings and ironing - we paid electric bills - for some families, in the cellar, which had not been the understanding of our agreement. One of the things that bothered us most was that she was afraid a good hot fire in the furnace would, for some reason or other, blow up the boiler. So when we'd get a nice fire going and go up stairs to be comfortable, she would shake down part of the bed of fire so, as she said, it wouldn't be so hot. We tried to be patient, until one night after both of us had had a full day and were tired, Mrs. Lawrence confronted us with an ultimatum: "You will have to keep your newspapers out of my cellar."

That did it: "O.K. Mrs. Lawrence," I said, "we'll move."
Such a surprised lady I’d never before encountered. “But you can’t move, you’ve got your coal in the cellar,” she told us. (Actually at the time, we hadn’t the vaguest notion where we would move to. But our verbal agreement let us free to choose, and we sure had made up our minds.) We found a fine, about new, house on Tenafly Court; the rent was higher, and the coal had to be moved, but it was done in short order. That place on the Court, which also was not far from the Esaus, was the nearest to a new house that the Alfred Runions ever managed to come by. It belonged to a young fellow, who after building it, found that he couldn’t afford to live in the house. It really was a fine house, tight and comfortable; it even had a fireplace. The one feature that we disliked was that it stood on a forty foot front lot, which really put us quite close to our neighbors on either side. Our neighbors to one side, the Keevins, were so close that their breakfast nook fairly rubbed elbows with ours, but they being very agreeable people, or we for that matter, didn’t seem to mind. Our other neighbors next door were the Kimmicks, also very neighborly; Frank Kimmick and I got to be very good friends.

Kimmick and I had some very nice fishing excursions the early part of 1932. He was a great prankster and I soon found out you’d better be on the watch for his tricks. Like the time when we caught quite a few small sized fish that neither of us wanted to be bothered with; that time I played it smart and quietly deposited them on his back porch, forgetting all about them. About a week elapsed and one sunny day the air was real fishy upstairs at our place; we had to climb up and fish the fish out of our rain gutters! Another time he sneaked limberger cheese into the side pocket of
our little car, and when the car warmed up inside it really did smell. But you couldn’t
get mad at the clown, he being such a likable fellow. Marie Kimmick, too, was a
very good neighbor; she and Ruth got along real fine. The Kimmicks were expecting
their second child, and Frank got himself worked into a lather worrying about Marie.
One day near her time Marie said she had a tummy ache, and Frank seized this bit of
information like the firing of a pistol for the race to start. Off Marie was whisked; in
about an hour or so Frank and Marie drove back into their yard; Frank was grinning
sheepishly - plainly feeling a bit foolish. Marie hadn’t wanted to go; the hospital
folks kidded her a bit, but she took it all goodnaturedly. As it turned out, in about two
weeks Frank got himself a son . . . which made him the father of a girl and a boy, and
don’t think he wasn’t proud.

Now we were doing practically no business at Maguire & Co., and I was not
surprised when the nudge out of there came for me; Harry simply told me that he was
going out of business, which I disbelieved. But for some time the situation seemed
apparent that there could be no advancement in that company - he was plainly out for
Harry’s interests only^{277}, so the blow did not hurt too much.

There were, so to speak, no jobs to be had, however I did look around
seriously. About that time we hit upon the idea that we always could make a living
from the land; now after considerable experience I can say that that notion is largely a
fallacy. A national agency, which guaranteed mortgages - I think The Federal Land
Bank^{278} - was advertising farm properties which they had for disposal due to default
on payments. There were several properties listed in Southern New Jersey which
looked interesting to us. So early one day, Fred, my brother-in-law, and I, took off for Vineland\textsuperscript{279}, the locality of several of these farms. The long drive, about 300 miles round trip, we afterwards felt, had been “just for the drive,” for that part of our state seemed rather sandy and desolate, and about every person you met was Jewish; in short terms, we didn’t like it at all.

Listed also were properties in the vicinity of Princeton\textsuperscript{280}, so Ruth, I, and Gladys drove down there to see what we could see. What gorgeous scenery and fine estates; out of our class financially speaking - the price tags starting at somewhere around $30,000 - but that country sure was inspiring!

The Lindberg estate at Hopewell Junction, also in the capitol section, was then very much in the news: From his home the son of Charles and Anne (Morrow) Lindberg had but recently been kidnapped from his bed. The search for his abductor lead through so many false clews that, set down in writing, the account easily could outdo fiction. One note directed Lindberg to a rendezvous with an intermediary off the Atlantic for the purpose of handing over ransom money. That and some other supposed “contacts” with the kidnapper turned out to be hoaxes. The details of the Lindberg kidnapping, en toto - gruesome, but fascinating - would fill a book [and] gripped the attention of the nation and many other parts of the world. One man, Bruno Hauptman, did pay for the crime by the way of the electric chair, but many persons thought the kidnapping was the work of a gang\textsuperscript{281}.

To get back to real estate, and farms, the Runions concluded that these gentlemen’s estates were beyond our means, and decided to give New Jersey farms
no more thought.

What a chance for a good long vacation, with no job to worry about, and we felt free as a breeze. We planned for Horseneck; the Esaus and Runions rented the Williston house. Auntie Vi Nicklaus, a girlhood friend of our Esau mother, was going to be with us. She had recently lost her husband - they'd had no family - and we hoped the change would ease her heartache a little.

Not being sure how well Gladys would ride that distance in the car, Mommy and Gladys, and Auntie Vi, who liked to travel by water anyway, decided to come up by The Fall River Line. Fred and I started out early that August morning; Ma, Auntie Vi, and Gladys would leave on the boat the same evening. The arrangement we made fitted together fine; Fred and I made it to Horseneck that afternoon, and next morning we met the voyagers at Fall River dockside. The seniors were coming along with Maxie - I think it was a day or so later.

How could I forbear mentioning some amusing incidents Fred and I experienced on that trip to the coast? Can you imagine driving the only car in sight over the great George Washington bridge? We did just that, about daybreak that morning. On the Manhattan side we hunted for U.S. highway #1, the Boston Post Road. Frustratingly, we drove around a reservoir until a man, out for an early morning stroll, pointed out that road to us, and we were off. Thereafter we negotiated the 200-odd miles in record time. Auntie Alice's mother and father were vacationing in "Little Rhody" - named so for Rhode Island by it's owners who hailed from Pawtucket - the house next door to ours. The Willistons owned both houses. Mrs.
Riley had swordfish steaks for supper the night we arrived, and Fred and I were her guests. Auntie Alice's mother was a first rate cook; Auntie Alice couldn't cook for sour apples.

As to the boat trip, the outstandingly important activity reported was that Gladys liked that mode of travelling so well she stayed happily awake most of the night "choochooing" a pottie hither and thither across the smooth stateroom floor. Little Gladys seemed happy over the voyage, but I recall Ruth and Auntie Vi were weary - rather.

What a time we had that summer, especially Gladys. One day Gladys' grandparents asked to take her for a ride in Maxie, and on their return Gram mentioned that Gladys loved ice cream cones. Her mother was furious; we hadn't intended introducing her to ice cream for a while. While the others were still there we did the usual things at the beach, but later when the rest of the family had left for home we decided to stay on as long as we cared to, and it was nice to be by ourselves.

Fortunately living costs were very low; food costs were less than they would be in Tenafly. Mrs. Petty - another Petty, not my old friend who owned the old hotel - came along two or three times a week driving her horse, hitched to a light wagon which was loaded with all sorts of country produce: sweet corn at 15 cents a dozen, eggs 18 or twenty cents the dozen, berries, all sorts of garden truck, or whatever edibles grew on her farm. Some days we ate just sweet corn; others would find just swordfish on the table. It was a happy existence.

There was a very rough plank walk down to the water, over which we'd
always carried our child, but one day she slipped away and ran barefoot along the planks. That time Gladys collected a lot of splinters on the soles of her feet, and her mamma had quite a time getting them out while I held the screaming child. That summer our little girl became a lovely tanned, little beauty.

After a month by ourselves we decided it was about time to return to Tenafly. Starting out real early we had resigned ourselves to finding out what kind of an auto traveller Gladys would be. We had her potty chair loaded in a handy place, and told our little girl to tell us if she “had to go.” After she’d called for that facility a half dozen times the first fifteen to twenty miles, obediently, and happily sitting on it, surveying the Massachusetts landscape, we decided it inexpedient to go on with the act and stowed the potty away out of sight. We certainly didn’t have time for that old steamboat routine.

We stopped in Providence at a nice diner for breakfast; Gladys loved it. After eating we’d driven on for about ten minutes when Gladys proudly held up two restaurant-spoons, so back to the breakfast spot to return the loot. The diner folks were highly amused. From then on we had a pretty good trip home.

Incidentally this 1932 visit was to be our last view of Horseneck Beach before the great hurricane of 1939 swept away houses, and everything else in it’s path; Horseneck’s shore line had undergone a complete relocation. We came home to a very uncertain future; what was to be the means of our livelihood? Both of us had made a practice of banking some money out of our income, and we were far from being destitute, but living off our nest egg wouldn’t do.
I continued going into the city a few times each week, looking into prospects of jobs. One day I noticed an ad in a New York morning paper which listed farm properties for sale in upstate New York. The Batson farm agency, which ran the ad, was located within a few minutes subway ride, so it occurred to me a good idea to drop in and talk over the offerings. After some conversation with this Mr. Batson, he sort of sparked an urge in me to look into this bit of Eden for my own satisfaction. So one October morning I took off by myself in the car for Sidney, N.Y., to meet a Mr. Oles of the Oles Farm Agency, who was the local representative for Batson. After driving about two hundred miles came Sidney, and Mr. Oles. I arranged to start out with him early the next morning.

Oles and I started out, up hill and down, from one run down farm to another; most of them on dirt roads, no electricity, and many with doubtful water supply. Along early afternoon friend Oles picked up a couple of hitchhiking girls, who were trying to get to a relatives home. Soon the young women and I got the same idea: apparently we were being joy rided, and Mr. Oles forthwith was informed that his plans definitely were out of line with our wishes. After a few words were exchanged along these lines, Oles soon delivered the girls safely, and Oles asked me sheepishly if I would like to visit a cheese factory nearby and get some cream cheese to take home with me. No sooner said than done and, for a quarter, I was presented enough cream cheese to upset the gall bladders of a small army.

We drove south on N.Y. 8, from the cheese plant, headed towards Sidney, to conclude I thought another fruitless venture. Oles remarked that there was a place
just across the Unadilla River, on a dirt road that had just been listed, and would I like to take a look. So we went over there, and, before I’d known what happened, I knew that I wanted that farm. Then and there I told Oles that the place was more or less of interest to me, and I would bring my wife up to see what she thought of it.

That same afternoon I left for Tenafly feeling that I’d caught up with something fine for the young Runion family. Mom soon caught my enthusiasm for the wide open spaces and, after a day’s rest from my travelling, we started out again for up-state New York so we could look over the farm.

We stopped in Sidney for the night, intending to go up to the farm early next day, which we did. Not knowing how Gladys would behave we took a clean looking room by ourselves over a store, and planned to share the big bed with our little girl. It turned out that Gladys certainly was not in any sharing mood that night; she amused herself mostly kicking off the blankets, while downstairs our host must have turned off the heat, and it was COLD!

Both of us fell for the nice old house; it had most of the conveniences that we were used to: a furnace in the cellar, electricity, telephone - rather a museum piece, to be sure; on the wall with a hand crank; our number 37 F 11 - and the fine spring water coming off the hill on the farm. The countryside, late October, was bleak for sure, but we knew that winter would pass, and how lovely it would be to have 107 acres from the east banks of the Unidilla, over the river flat, up over the big hill and on through a great wood lot. Somehow we decided for it on the spot.

The owner, Mr. Greenman, an elderly man, had lived on the place but three
or four months; he allowed that there was too much work for him on the farm. His housekeeper, a Mrs. Shipman\(^{287}\), seemed sad at the prospect of leaving the nice house. She apparently was a good housekeeper; I surmised that she had had a sense of security on the farm and was not too sure of the future.

The house seemed cozy to us that day as we inspected it from attic to cellar. The old man had stood the farm team, Babe and Bess, and wagon in the driveway just alongside the dining room where we were doing most of the talking. He had been picking up drop apples - there were two apple orchards on the farm - to go to the cider mill. Our hosts had several gallons of sweet cider on hand, and we were making the most of the sweet stuff; little Gladys wound up with a tummy ache from drinking too much for her own good. When we left for our New Jersey home, we had bought ourselves a farm.

We decided against spending another night in bed with our little wildcat, and midafternoon started back to Tenafly. Looking back I can hardly believe that it could be possible to have had about 200 miles of highway practically to ourselves. (People didn’t start out for the North wintertimes around ’32, and natives pretty much did their travelling daytime.) Gladys soon fell asleep, and Ma and I had a real nice ride home together, the while building our furtunes all over 107 acres of upstate New York. We reached home before midnight.

Next day when our folks heard the news I’m quite sure that they got the notion we had gone crazy - pioneering way up in the arctic! Now I’m not so sure that we were not just a bit imp[e]tuously crazy. On the other hand, real estate was about
the only sound medium of investment at the time: the land was there, and that was more than you could depend on with money in the bank.

Uncle Bill Piper was concerned about the securing of a "clear title" to the farm, and he arranged for the lawyer who attended to his company's legal matters to look into this phase of the transaction. This lawyer's name impressed me as being original; it was Orange B. Van Horn\textsuperscript{288}, but he evidently did a satisfactory job "searching."

Van Horn's office was in Cooperstown, N.Y., the county seat of Otsego County, and again I set out for upper New York State to see him. The appointed day proved one of those foul, late fall, rain and freeze days. As I vividly recall it was slippery and very slow going, and I recall that the driving didn't bother me very much. "The same type of driving today would freeze me to inactivity. Up near the Ashoken reservoir\textsuperscript{289}, the road had a high crown and the Ford kept sliding to the curb, but we just pushed on. The Ford had pretty good summer tread tires - snow treads had not appeared in '32; when in trouble you would put on chains. Oh well, I did average 20 M.P.H. and eventually got there. Cooperstown was new to me; it was and is for me one of the prettiest of towns; some of the views along Otsego Lake are breathtaking. I put up that night at the Fenimore House, an ornate old hotel, which seemed to echo sounds of a graceful, leisurely past\textsuperscript{290}. I slept well. Next day on to New Berlin where I met a lawyer, Arthur Morse\textsuperscript{291}, who handled our legal affairs until his death, about 1960; his successor Jim Honeywell\textsuperscript{292} continues to look after some of our business.
Probably the most tortuous trip of my life, not to mention its frightening aspects, was just before we moved to our new home. Pop Esau gave us the Maxwell car; maybe we could convert it into a truck to use on the farm. So again, luckily alone this time with Maxie, I took off northward. The back seat we loaded down with carefully packed jars of canned goods which Ruth had put up, and other breakables, to leave at the farm; just a routine trip I surmised. Things seemed to be going my way - nice day, early start, and Maxie was running along nicely at 40 to 45 miles an hour, and I should get up to New Berlin (our town, by the way) by darkness. We'd passed a little place called West Branch about noon time, and had come to a gas station where I gassed up and got a sandwich and coffee. The day was real pleasant and I sauntered around the car, looking things over, when one of those things happened: a back tire sort of sunk down while I watched in dismay. No matter to worry about I thought; I'd get the spare rim and tire on, and it was flat! The lady at the stand said that a man at West Branch would fix the tires for me if I could get there. Then I found out that Maxie hadn't a jack in the tool box, so I borrowed a jack from the station, got the rim off, and waited for a hitch back to West Branch. Soon a farmer came along and seemed glad of my company, so off to the accompaniment of brother farmer's lamentations on the woes of farming, and the condensed aroma - I'll wager - of ten cow barns! At the shop I was informed, by a fellow sitting outside, that the repairman also ran a rural mail route, and ought to be back in a half hour or so. Eventually the man did get back, and fixed the tires in short order, taking me back to Maxie and seeing me on my way again. He was a nice guy. But precious time had
been lost and twilight was coming on. At Deposit my route changed to N.Y. 8, which ran over long hills down into Sidney. It was dark now and I still had about 60 miles yet to cover, over comparatively strange roads. About an hour out of Deposit - now it was snowing lightly - there was a bang and jerk to the left, which unmistakably indicated that my left front tire had blown out. What to do, without a jack? I felt sunk. Over across a field I spotted a faint light; about the only thing I could do was head for it, and hope for the best. When a short distance from my only hope for help, evidently my intrusion set off a bombardment of howls, which I likened to the baying of “The Hounds of Baskoville.” The dogs must have been chained, for I was not chewed up, so I marched - not bravely, I admit - to the door of the lighted house and knocked. “Who’s thar, what do ye want?” [said] a masculine voice from inside. In answer to my request, I got, “Sick with head cold, don’t want to be bothered; anyways, last man loaned a jack to run off with it.” Eventually, after offers to pay for it’s use, and much coaxing, the fellow let me use his jack, which luckily turned out to be in good working order. So, by the light of my flash light, my fingers wet and stiff with cold, another tire got changed. (I didn’t dare hope to complete the trip, after past performances, without more tire trouble. Ironically they all held for the finish line.) My “benefactor” would not take anything for the use of his jack; I guessed he wasn’t such a bad fellow after all. Soon I picked up the lights of Sidney; I spotted a garage - they were few and far between - got a little gas and asked the attendant to look over my tires; he pronounced them “OK far’s I can see.” Glory be, twentyfive miles further, and I’d be there.
There was more snow towards New Berlin, but Maxie was a good wader in mud or snow. Bigger wheels those days, and we got to our destination without further incidents. (Right now it occurs to me a trip over the Alcan highway today would not incur any more fuss and bother than that trip gave me.)

Mrs. Shipman had a wellblanketed bed for me and I slept that night in the house which the Runion family proudly called home for 31 years.

Next day Greenman and I went down to Arthur Morse's office and settled most of the legal details of the ownership transfer for the farm. About all left to do was to get Ruth Runion's signature when she next came up, and pay the agreed amount.

Pop Esau and Fred, by prearrangement, drove up the day after I had, in order to take me back home. Incidentally it is interesting to note that Maxie was the first Runion possession to settle down on the farm. Mrs. Shipman put us up for the night and made a fine breakfast of sausage and pancakes to fortify us for the trip back to New Jersey.

The new Esau car was an evolution of the Maxwell; I disliked that car from the first sight of it. That red Plymouth, I'd guess, caused the dislike I still have for red cars; to me it was the ungainliest vehicle on wheels; especially I distrusted a gadget on it, termed "Free wheeling." We did make a quick trip home; cars were getting faster. Going down the Wertsboro mountain, the Esaus kicked the car into free wheeling; I had hold of the door latch, ready to jump, just in case the thing got out of control.
An era for the Alfred Runion family had come to a close. Great, hard, nevertheless happy events, that we could know nothing of, were in store for us!"
New Berlin – 1932-1940

We three Runions took leave of Tenaflly the day before Thanksgiving 1932 for our new home, very excited and happy at the prospect of - we said - settling down for good. The day was clear and cold; the Ford didn't sport a heater, but, by closing windows, the motor soon warmed us so we weren't uncomfortable. At Liberty, New York we stopped at a nice restaurant for dinner; I remember that we all enjoyed the fine roast lamb. Auntie Vi had again agreed to come to our assistance by helping us get settled in our new home. She came by train as far as Deposit²⁹⁸, so the little car would not be so crowded for the long trip; by prearrangement we would pick her up at the railroad station.

The trip was not without incidents. After we'd gone on a ways from Liberty, evidently the combination of lamb, closed car and motion of travelling were too much for Gladys and she threw up on the pretty new coat her Mamma'd just made for her. Then after we had picked up Auntie Vi in Deposit, and were driving through town to rejoin the highway, a woman driving a big Studebaker drove out of a side street, and pushed us across the road, denting the mud guard of our right rear wheel against the tire. There were a couple of men standing on a store porch, who couldn't have missed seeing what happened so I asked them who the woman might be; meanwhile she had driven off. No help from the natives - they answered me, "Aint see'd a thing," so we concluded there was nothing to be gained by hanging around there. Ma and I pulled the bent fender away from the tire, and we drove on. It had been a pretty good trip anyway, and we were glad when the little Ford sailed into her stall in the
farm garage. (That car really had thick gauge metal in her body; Art Perkins, who had a body shop in town, hammered the bent mud guard out into perfect shape, with a hard rubber hammer - for just $5.00.)

Harold Dennis, a fellow we had known well in Tenafly, and who did trucking locally, wanted to haul our household goods to New Berlin. We were rather apprehensive for the safety of our nice things, but his price of $75 seemed too good to let pass, and we told Harold to go ahead. Incidentally the next nearest price we got was from Roy Miller of New Berlin, who hauled eggs to the New York market and often returned empty - $200. Sure enough, Harold came rolling in with our stuff, two trucks, on Thanksgiving Day. Everything was in fine condition.

On our way through town we had bought a nice pork roast; we had pork for our first Thanksgiving on the farm. We were really thankful for our nice home; but there was so much to do, and I do not recall that we took time for much holidaying.

Now I wonder how my young wife ever managed to adjust to the rigors of farm life; she certainly hadn't landed into a bed of roses. For myself, whether I'd thought about it or not, there were identical sets of chores to do - milking, feeding, collecting eggs, etc. - most of them morning and afternoon. Which goes to prove one can do a pile of work, without noticing the labor, if you like it.

One could have observed that our lives sort of centered around the kitchen stove. That "black beauty" furnished heat, Mommy cooked and baked on the heat and energy of that wood burner, and then there was a "water front" in the firebox which heated water for the household. The range also had [a] string of other chores -
like drying wet clothes and shoes, [and] warming cold feet on the ledge of the oven.

On wash day, when it was too cold to hang things out, damp wash hung all about the perimeter of the stove, and yes there was a warming oven, so called because a home maker could keep victuals warm until the family all were gathered at the table. Often, justly irritated housewives would find it necessary to shoo sitting males away from “her” stove, so’s to get her cookin’ and bakin’ done.

Seven or eight cows - I’m not certain as to the exact number - were on the farm, and they were a poor looking lot for sure. One, a black and white heifer, looked like a pretty fair specimen, but she turned out to be a very cantankerous female; her favorite trick being a display of docility until you’d about finished milking her, then neatly kicking the pail over. Before selling her I tried all sorts of tricks to get her into better habits, from petting to cussing and hobbling her - all to no good results. Soon we were to realize that at the going price for milk, around eighty cents a hundred pounds for milk, which amounted to about a cent and three quarters per quart, we sure were working hard for the milk company.

Charlie Watson, who share farmed nearby, came along mornings with his model T truck and picked up our milk, which he hauled along with his to the Sheffield plant in New Berlin. He got ten cents a hundred for this accommodation. Charlie was a hard worker, and Jennie Phelps, his landlady and owner of the dairy, was understood to be very well satisfied with her half share of the net income of the farm. Charlie, for his part of the bargain, plowed, planted, harvested, milked, and even cut and hauled wood to “MIZ Phelps.” He didn’t complain too much beyond
the usual grumblings from an overworked man. Charlie’s wife, Izetta, was quite dull; they had no family.

At first, we had a flock of about 500 laying hens. There was housing for about 2000, but when we came there were about 250 pullets and we bought in 250 more. We cleaned, graded, and shipped the eggs to dealers in New York. The poultry end was somewhat more on the profit side than milk; it just had to be for us to be able to stay in business. Roy Miller trucked the eggs to New York for 40 cents a crate, picking them up at the house twice a week. There were several farms in the vicinity housing large flocks of laying hens and Roy had quite a big business going.

Milking, which on our small place was done by hand, just about crippled my hands and arms at first, but it appears that I survived. While on the subject, it is interesting to note that Auntie Vi was scared to death of the cows. She referred to all bovines, regardless of sex, as “he’s.”

Auntie Vi stayed with us for about three weeks; she was a wonderful person to have around. The day she left was cold; Ruth elected to ride in the rumble seat on the ride over the hill to Auntie’s train in Norwich. She was wrapped up prettily, I imagine somewhat like a girl from the arctic, and her cheeks were nice and red when we got there.

Now it seemed we’d broken all familiar ties, and I guess we didn’t care a bit. But we weren’t to be alone for long; my girl’s parents apparently couldn’t get used to being away from their baby, and were planning on visits. The “Folks” were coming up for Christmas, and much as we wanted them, we couldn’t keep from worrying
over the long winter drive. Sure enough, the Esaus came during a light snowfall, happy to be reunited with their child and grandchild. How proud we were to be able to cut an evergreen Christmas tree from our own hillside! I'm sure the family thoroughly enjoyed Christmas 1932.

The day our family started for home didn't look so good - one of those ominous winter days. We anxiously awaited word from them, telling us they had gotten there safely. They did get home, but not without contending with freezing rain, and slippery roads - quite a trip, they remarked.

Pop Esau soon got the idea that he'd like to move upstate and establish a poultry farm. He had kept a small flock of laying hens all the while the family had resided in Tenafly, toting the eggs into the city, and selling them at retail prices to his friends in the office. We guessed that a big reason for his wanting to come up our way was that he missed us and wanted to live closer. Then, too, he could retire with a nice pension from the Typographical Union, besides having some investment dividends coming in. We promised to keep on the lookout for a desirable place.

After the holidays we began making plans for spring operations. One item we must take care of, if we were going to be in the chicken business, was raising a new flock of chickens. We became acquainted with a big scale poultryman, Archie Bingham, who specialized in hatching chicks commercially. From him we ordered 2,000 white leghorn chicks, for delivery the first week in April. There were four, 10' x 12' "brooder houses" on the place, where the chicks were to be started. How they needed repairs! Window panes had to be replaced [and] all others had to be puttied,
floors scoured and disinfected, and the houses had to be moved to new ground which, presumably, would not be carrying contamination from the last flock raised there. Coal burning brooder stoves were set up, equipped with thermostats which controlled temperatures by opening and closing dampers on the firebox; under the canopy quite a uniform temperature could be maintained. Before putting in the chicks, two or three inches of fresh litter was spread on floors and a solid ring - of some sort of stiff material - round the stove, about a foot high, and a couple feet from the edge of the canopy was set up. This latter precaution kept the babies confined to the area about the stove, and prevented them from wandering into a corner where often the outcome was smothering from piling atop one another for warmth. Two days prior to the chicks arriving, fires were started and we began to regulate temperatures. Those first weeks were anxious ones, when we watched over the little fellows day and night! Those first chicks seemed to confirm the old theory of “beginners luck” - they did just fine, maybe because we took such good care of them!

One thing certain; we miscalculated the amount of wood our kitchen stove would burn and, before spring, we had to get out and look for dead and seasoned trees which could be worked up into fire wood. But our first winter turned out to be fairly mild and the big coal furnace kept the house quite comfortable.

One day we received an official letter from the U.S. Agriculture Department stating this was the FINAL notice to have our cows tested for T.B. For noncompliance there would be a penalty. It was of course surprising news to me, but we wrote that we had not been acquainted with [the] situation, and would be glad to
comply if they would send their veterinary. On the appointed day a Dr. Farmer - he
turned out to be a fine fellow - told us that the local vet., licensed to do this work, had
repeatedly been refused permission to test, so the Federal agency had stepped into the
picture. When most of our cows turned up "reactors" which meant they had the
disease, we certainly were glad to know about it. We actually had been using milk
from those diseased cows, besides selling it for other people to drink, but the milk for
our customers was required to be pastuerized, which protected them to a degree. Mr.
Farmer told us that the reactors would be appraised by a certified appraiser, and that
the government would indemnify us at the appraised value for the animals we would
lose.

Our neighbors to the north were Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Day, rather elderly persons. Calvin, I was to learn, was a rather sharp trader, and wouldn't hesitate trimming a neighbor in order to turn a deal. Otherwise they were good neighbors, and we got along fine; I just avoided "trading horses" with him after an encounter or so. When we lost the cows with T.B., Calvin came down and offered me two heifers (he had mostly registered holsteins, but they were tending to run small from too early breeding) from his herd. He asked a good price for them, $150, but his herd was certified clean of TB, so we decided to take up his offer. We stanchioned them with the others in our cow stable. It was dinner time and we were at table, when we heard a loud thumping sound from the stable. Down we ran to investigate and found one of our fancy new heifers on the floor, threshing about; she'd merely broken a leg. It seems that she had doubled her head back into a too large space beside the stanchion
and, becoming frightened had thrown herself to the floor and kicked about, thusly injuring herself. Well, the local vet. said better butcher her off before she got a fever. To make a long story short, the weather being warm, she went to the local butcher for the tremendous sum of $15; they stuck to their story that due to her being in the milking stage, all she would be good for was hamburger. Our one butcher shop, The Elliot Brothers\textsuperscript{308}, were good businessmen, reputed to be the wealthiest businessmen in town.

The Elliot boys, as they were called, really had a fine shop, and did a thriving business. Their hamburger always seemed first grade, and even in those hard times was a bargain at two pounds for a quarter. They did most of their own butchering, and made such items as pork sausage; one either did or did not care for the Elliots' sausage, it being flavored generously with sage. We did not like it at all, which didn't bother us too much, seeing as how we made a good deal from our home grown porkers. In 1932, grocery stores did not carry much in the meat line, which explains why a butcher shop was essential. One thing you could say for the old time butcher, he seemed "more human" - like passing out free a nice bone for soup, or for your pooch, or a slice of baloney - on the house - for the kids. Well, I'm sure them good old days are gone for ever.

The Runions were going to have another Runion, so said Dr. Tuttle\textsuperscript{309}. She - Dr. Tuttle was a lady - and my girl confirmed that upcoming vital statistic one day, when it was suggested that I mind Gladys while she visit the doctor's office. My young wife got a kick out of Madame Doctor, when she didn't recognize Ma as a
native and asked her pointedly if she were married. Anyway, we did find out that come late July or soon thereafter Gladys would have a baby sister or brother. These announcements of an imminent new life do have a way of creating such feelings of wonderment to the expectant parents - or should, I think.

One professional person, Dr. (Eugene) Hammond, soon became our family doctor, and never-to-be-forgotten friend. When he died, after we had had close relations with him as a doctor and working with him in the church, our family had the feeling we had lost one of our own. The lady doctor that we consulted first turned out to be anything but reassuring; Doc Hammond was of an opposite character - people depended upon him. Doc Hammond was a natural obstetrician; he had an “eazy” way with children and was a first-rate family doctor.

Carrie Colgrove and Doctor Hammond were a perfect baby team. Carrie lived in a fine, big old house on North Main Street; Harrison Camp’s garage was just across the street. Carrie Colgrove, it was told us, had been a widow for quite a few years, her husband having died soon after their marriage. Don’t think, however, for a moment, that she did not manage quite a sized family. There were her aged father, her also-old aunt Ellen, her widower brother-in-law, and his two teen-age daughters; also there was lawyer Morse’s mother, who must have been crowding ninety. She somehow mothered the lot of them and, so far as I could see, Mrs. Morse was the only paying soul there. But Carrie usually had a maternity case at her place, sometimes two, which seemed to keep her going economically, first rate. So, on Doc’s recommendation, we arranged to have our second child borned at Carrie’s.
Soon after we got settled, Jim Elting, the man - and wife - who had sold out to Greenman, and who'd lived on the farm about three years, paid us a visit. We were in luck to have had the Eltings on the place; Jim had done a lot of repairing, as the place - house, barn, and other buildings - had been neglected over the years. Elting had been in the feed business in New Berlin "Beacon Feeds," and it turned out that Leslie Day, who had owned the farm for a number of years, got hopelessly in debt to Elting, mainly for stock and chicken feed. The outcome was that the farm was turned over to Elting to settle the debt. The Eltings seemed like nice people, and from all I could learn, Jim has been "too easy" with too many customers; Jim got out of the feed business and moved onto the farm. Leslie Day was Calvin Day's son; people 'round rated them poor managers, but who am I to say?

We were to see quite a bit of the Eltings; Jim offered to help with haying, and that first year we were glad to have him show us the whereabouts of things generally. Jim and Clara Elting were older persons, probably in their early sixties but appearing much older. Evidently they were happy to have us for sociability sake, and besides they showed a sentimental interest in the old farm. Jim’s father was one of the founders of the West End Brewery, in nearby Utica, and reportedly Jim had a comfortable income from substantial holdings he retained in that company.

So, we, raised a flock of laying hens - they were very pretty and we thought we had the future all sewed up! We planted, made hay, took care of the cows, [and] worked early and late - we even packed eggs for shipment evenings. How we worked! Happily Mommy was getting into the New Berlin Methodist church
activities; otherwise, being a couple of miles from town and any social life, she might have gone nuts from boredom. (Our nearest neighbors, the Days about a quarter mile up the road, and the Gaffneys\textsuperscript{317}, about the same distance down and across the river, both but couples, were old enough to be our grandparents. Mrs. Day and Cloe Gaffney did compete in trying to help the new farmer's wife to become acquainted with local details and methods.

The big garden, as if sensing our enthusiasm and becoming inoculated with it, was tremendously productive that spring. Ma Runion canned and canned the fresh vegetables, not to mention that our table was ever loaded down with the green stuff. The cellar shelves, by winter time, were satisfyingly loaded with canned vegetables and fruit, preserves, and pickles of various kinds. Let another winter come!

One of Ma's conservatory class mates, Beth Thinnes\textsuperscript{318}, had a younger sister, Ruth, who was getting married. The young couple expressed a desire to - in their words - pioneer in the wilds. They had saved up, and wanted to invest the whole of $200 in sort of a partnership basis with us. Certainly we had no desire for partners; $200 would not be a drop in the bucket anyway. But, foolishly - we didn't even know the young man, Bob Talmage\textsuperscript{319} - we decided to give them a try. Bob would help me outside, and Ruth [would] help out in the house; in return they would have their own room, otherwise live with us, and receive a small wage. The young Talmages accepted; of course they had no idea of the harsh manual requirements on a farm. Somehow, Bob had formed a ranchman's complex; he wanted to do everything astride a horse - like getting the cows in from pasture. One of his bad habits was
chain-smoking cigarettes, often while in the barn, which alarmed us greatly. For that matter they both smoked, and Bob’s romantic query to his wife, at all hours, “Have a lucky with me honey?” became maddening lingo for us. Ruth Talmage had majored in art and, I daresay, art was her goal in life. Her big job in New Berlin turned out to be taking care of Ruth Talmage; although she meant to do well, I’m sure, she just didn’t grasp what it was all about. One thing the bride did do was taxing our springs capacity that dry summer; she bathed often, the tub filled to dangerously near overflowing. In between it seemed to us that the toilet was being flushed without mercy. Then the water got low in the spring from overuse, air filled the line and there was an annoying, loud thumping.

Bob Talmage had the appearance of declining health; he was thin, rather listless, and coughed a great deal. We formed the opinion that his father, a medical doctor, knew that he was unwell, and probably had urged his coming to our place for health reasons.

One day Bob came to me with the news that they were expecting a family, and that now my wife could not expect as much help from his. Maybe the girls could help each other, he suggested! Well, Ma and I talked the situation over, and decided that we’d have to part company with the Talmages. For one thing, Bob could conceivably have a lung condition, and they had thus far been more hindrance than help. So we told them in a nice way that the arrangement did not seem to be working out. About a month before our second child was born, the Talmages left for the city. Ruth is still friendly to us; Bob died within a year of their departure. An interesting sidelight:
Beth died, leaving a husband and a little boy, and Ruth Talmage and Beth’s husband married. Ruth had had a boy and girl and her new husband’s little boy made them a family, which turned out well all around considering that the latter marriage was a prosperous one.

Margaret Louise was born August 4th 1933, the pinkest little girl imaginable. Everyone was proud of the little one - even her grandpa, although he really expected a boy, this time. Now certainly the Runions were not to have a male heir; there would not be any more children, you see - those famous last words!

Meanwhile the Esaus had bought a small farm on the edge of Earlville (N.Y.) about fifteen miles from us. Archie Bingham had taken us around to look at several places, and finally we located just about the type of place they desired. They planned to keep a flock of laying hens as a business. Young Fred and Mother Esau moved there in May and began settling in; Pop Esau came up several times and came for good in November 1933. Ruth’s father had always wanted to have a poultry farm, he said, and this location with nearby neighbors - they’d originally come from Brooklyn and were city or community minded - suited the seniors well.

One handy utility near the Earlville place was the nearness of the D. L. & W. railroad; the depot being only about five minutes walk from their house. How nice it was to arrive practically at the front door after a comfortable trip from New York, or to simply push an express shipment over on the wheelbarrow, and send it off to the city.

Pop Esau had very good ideas on merchandising his eggs and they usually
fetched a nice profit. The plan, briefly, was to sell direct to users. Two or three of Pop Esau's old colleagues at the printing plant where he had worked received and distributed the Esau Ranch - as they called it - eggs to customers. The eggs were candled for quality, and graded for size, and to my knowledge the Ranch did a brisk bit of business in this manner as long as they maintained the farm.

One time when Pop Esau came up, he brought Adolph with him - his name was Adolph Bohleke. Reared in a Lutheran orphanage-farm, the Lutherans had apprenticed Adolph to the Isaac Goldman Company to learn the printing business. As it turned out, the city and printing business weren't to his liking, and he craved to return to farm life. So we acquired Adolph, nineteen but not at all mature - more sixteenhish; he loved to be with the animals and other wild beings and got along fine with them: Adolph at once adopted us as Pop and Mom. He did not smoke, which was a relief after the Talmadges.

When Adolph came he brought along - and I don't recall where he said he'd acquired her - a collie dog, Princess. We did relish her presence, knowing that a bitch dog meant puppies, which we neither had the desire or time to bother with. Princess didn't last long though; she was a jealous animal and wanted exclusive attention. One day she snapped at Gladys, raking her head, breaking the skin. We rushed the little girl to the doctor who was concerned whether the dog had been inoculated for rabies. Gladys soon got over the encounter however, but Adolph, who already was very fond of Gladys, was furious with the dog, and would hear of nothing short of shooting her. The first thing we knew Adolph, had taken the dog off on a
chain, gotten someone to shoot her and buried the nuisance.

Gladyș already had her puppy which had come from the Earlville farm. The former owners, the Nixons, had this Boston bull terrier, which had a litter of puppies when we were there one time during the negotiations for the farm. The puppies were what a lady would describe as “adorable” - we just had to have one of them for our little girl, and picked out a male, dark brown with white markings. His mother’s name was Applesauce, so in recognition of one of the sauce’s ingredients, we named our puppy Cinnamon. He sure was a dandy.

During the summer we had to replace the back wall of the barn, part of which had gone out the winter that we moved onto the place. During the first winter we had to stuff the open space - the west side of the barn, facing the river - with hay to protect the cows and horses. A local contractor, who at the time was hungry for work, replaced the wall by fixing 8” x 8” corner posts, and 2” x 6” studding in between, snugly under the plates of the structure, and boarding it all up. Of course he had to pour a cement foundation for the new supports. As best I can remember, the contractor, a Mr. Stevens 322 of Edmeston did the job, which took the better part of a week, for $175.

The young farmers felt that our second winter on the farm should be easier all around now that we’d sort of got the hang of things. Until after the first of the year (1934), that proved to be the case. Then in February, nature really took over as though for vengeance. Temperatures dropped way below freezing, sometimes minus 38 degrees - it was cold. For a day or so we didn’t worry much over the cold,
figuring that it was a cold snap that would quickly pass, but when the cold continued, never getting above zero by mid day, even old timers began shaking their heads. The situation was made doubly worse by the absence of snow on the ground that year to furnish insulation against the ground freezing deep. The intense cold stayed with us for about two weeks.

One morning - it was February 6, 1934 - we tumbled out of bed to find an icycle hanging from the cold water faucet; no water was running at all. After heating all the inside pipes and no water, we came to the only other conclusion: that the outside line from the spring had frozen up. We worked and sweated, probed, tried to test, and the fruit of that effort was that our water started off again June 15th! Then a day or so later, frost caused cracks in the wall of the big spring in the barnyard, where we depended on a supply of water for the stock and chickens. One calamity after another, all chargeable to the severe cold, came our way that February.

Now we had no water on the place. The river had about frozen solid by then, and we were beside ourselves with worry over where we could get water; we just had to have it right quick. John Gaffney came to our rescue; he had a spring, he said, that never froze and we were welcome to use it. So we were now in business hauling water several hours each day, using the team and farm wagon. What a job - by the time we would get back to the farm with the milk cans filled with water, about a quarter of it would be frozen around the edges. It was painfully hard work; we had to lug water to cows, and chickens; the horses were watered at the spring. And what a mess, with milk cans standing around the kitchen to melt the frozen water.
panes steamed and froze with eerie patterns; one had a sense of being caged in. As soon as the severe cold let up, we were able to fashion a wall into the barnyard spring, which helped tremendously; we now could turn the cows out to drink and get water for the chickens in the barnyard.

One evening, Ma and I were hunched by the kitchen stove trying to keep one side of ourselves reasonably warm; it was well below zero; the frost penetrating and expanding beams of [the] house and outbuildings, and the swelling of big trees made loud cracking noises. The effect on one’s mind was weird and troubling - rather portending some other imminent calamity. It came: lights suddenly went off all around! The main power cable had snapped; it had contracted and tightened from the intense cold, throwing New Berlin town and the countryside into darkness. Now we had another job on our hands - our 2000 laying hens were on the floor when the lights went off, and Ma and I had to go out with lanterns and place them on their roosts. They’d have frozen if left on the floor all night. (Laying hens, subjected to artificial light, thereby extending their “work day,” were thus fooled into laying more eggs. We also employed a dimming device to simulate evening at such time as the chickens should go to roost, and a clock arrangement automatically turned on the lights in the morning.)

Somehow the Runions got through that winter; it was I daresay our most trying time. Added to our physical discomfort was the great loss in production from the chickens and the dairy - both which seemed to go into rather a half-hibernation state. Roughly speaking, production sagged 50%, and income went pot. In such
times the word was that domestic livestock “were eating their heads off.” But, for some unaccountable reason, we were growing into a love affair with the old place; suffering together, you might say. Looking back, some of our trying experiences during that winter certainly seem amusing now. Like the way we would fearfully peer under layers of blankets to see if our baby Margaret were still breathing.

One job that had to be undertaken every winter was harvesting ice from the river (there was a cove to the west of our hen house) and storing it in the icehouse, adjacent to the milk house. Night’s milking had to be cooled down, and a cake of ice in the vat of water was the method then used; few springs were cool enough to bring milk to the required temperature. “Making ice” was a cold, hard job. You started out by cutting a hole in the ice, then pushed in your saw, up and down, sawing out cakes of ice, and you were in business. The cakes were loaded on [a] sled, [and] hauled to [the] ice house where it was packed in layers between sawdust, leaving a space of about fourteen inches around the sidewalls which was insulated by sawdust. The job of icing usually entailed getting hands, feet, and most often clothes, wet, not to mention feet and knees getting banged when a slippery cake of ice got loose from [the] tongs. On cold days, as they usually were during icing, horses stomped their feet and were often a nuisance to manage. One result for man and beast working on an ice pond, was a ferocious appetite.

There were always necessary side jobs one must do in connection with such as making ice. One such chore was replenishing sawdust which had rotted away or otherwise become disbursed from use previous years. On one memorable occasion,
old Cal Day suggested that we hook up our teams to sleds and go to the location of a sawmill, off four or five miles in the Peckville neighborhood. That was before I’d heard about Cal’s standard practice of starting out places “somewhere’s after dinner” which could be construed as any time before supper. What a trip - the sledding was poor; we had a job finding the site, out over some fields beside a wood lot; it got dark; the horses tired; we walked to lighten the load and keep warm. When we finally got home, coming out of pitch darkness - it was about nine o’clock - it sure was good to be safely back. The family had been worried, and my young wife asked, “What are you trying to do, give me gray hair?”

Springtime “up our way” always was nothing short of being inspiring; it just seemed that the harder winter had been, the lovelier would be spring, soft to ones feet and sweet smelling.

Certainly the cold winter had left its scars - much killed vegetation, and some fruit trees including our prized Baldwin and Greenings apple trees which turned out to be not as hardy [as] some varieties such as Northern Spies. Then there was our water line which we never did get running until the middle of June; the old lead water pipe proved unequal to expansion when a thawing outfit applied heat to it; it started up briefly, then developed leaks all along the system. Over the years, that challenging job of restoring, piece by piece, that very long water line, was quite a nuisance, but eventually it became quite dependable.

Adolph loved to be near the cows; talked to the critters pet fashion; stroked their necks, and even playfully kissed his favorite ones. Every animal on the farm
was named - with reference to some physical or other characteristic it possessed. For instance, we called one of our favorite Jersey cows Marlene because, we said, her shapely slender legs resembled Marlene Dietrick's, who was a very popular stage and movie actress of the era. Another good-looking Jersey was Louise, named for our friend Louise Blume, because both of them were good lookers. A huge Ayrshire cow we called Sophie Tucker, after the buxom actress by that name. By some obscure reasoning we dreamed up the idea that we didn't like the President's wife, so a big white sow pig became Elenor R (the R. for Roosevelt). And so it went; we never lacked appropriate names. Forgot to mention Frank. People asked how come a bull by the name Frank; we'd tell them that he was named for an ornery old friend, living in New Jersey, Frank Kimmick.

Summers the Runions were honored with guests - no end; we had, it would seem, friends who never were before. Then there were relatives; it was nice to have them, to be sure. Daisy's family had acquired a car, and the six of them were more or less regulars week ends. At times Ma and I found ourselves sleeping on the floor; who were we to deprive the guests of our beds? One incident, involving "guests," would seem unbelievable had it not happened at our home. The Sayer girls brought two girl friends along to stay at the Runion farm on three week end occasions, no forewarning, no introductions; they came, they ate, they slept, and left, no communication. We finally learned in a roundabout way that one girl's surname was Desetta; all we got of the other's was - just Jean.

At one point we about suspected the Sayers were offering themselves to us for
ad[0]ption and, in all fairness, one couldn’t help loving them all. They apparently regarded our farm as their big, big playground. For instance, when we were making hay, the hay cocks were to them as so many piles of leaves to cavort in and scatter about. How sad they were when told “mustn’t do.” And never were we quite able to convince them that [not] all things on the farm came free.

Late summer 1934, a little bird, or some other small voice, told us that maybe the Runion family was not to be so small after all. The rumor turned out to be so, and as autumn wore on, Ma and I were wondering what best to do with our Gladys and Margaret about Christmas time, when another Runion would be expected on the scene. The only solution seemed to take the girls over to their Grandparents until their Mamma got back from Carrie Colgrove’s. So on Christmas Day— it was starting to snow, and we feared getting snowed in - we bundled the little girls up warmly and Ad[ol]ph and I drove over the hills to Earlville with our precious bundles: We turned the little ladies over to Grandma and Grandpa and, before they had time to realize they were being left behind, drove away home. What a forlorn trio were we back in the farmhouse; we were so lonesome for the little girls. Afterward it seemed to us that had been the solemnest Christmas time ever for the Runion family.

Those days we were more than thankful for the old telephone on the wall which linked us with town, or long distance, not to mention those on the line. Sometimes when too many receivers were off the hook voices faded. Mostly listeners were just unashamedly nosey, and to their credit would be first in line if the call indicated an emergency. We could ring our friends on “the line” direct by
cranking so many longs and shorts. For others we cranked a long for the New Berlin operator, and get a pleasantly inquiring "New Berlin" reply. Most callers didn't say "operator," but something like "Bea, see if you can get 'so-and-so' for me, willya?"

Just about everyone 'roundabout knew and liked Bea Smith, and Bea, in turn, knew everyone, and what was going on. She either connected you with your party, or explained they had gone somewhere for the day, and about when they would be expected back. Then, as an afterthought, Bea would often tell of someone being sick, an accident, fire, or what have you; she was days ahead of the New Berlin Gazette for local news.

After Margaret joined the Runion family, the Ford didn't seem big enough for us all, so when Jim Elting told us that he was trading in his big Hupmobile on a new car, we got the idea that the Hup would make us a good family car. If we were seeking a status symbol, the Hupmobile certainly would prove that the Runions were moving up in the world; it was one of the better class cars of the day. Actually it was of the same vintage as our Ford - it's advantages being it was quite roomy, and a six cylinder with low mileage. The Eltings were more than pleased that the Hup was to be back home on the farm.

It was January 9th 1935 when our third child had decided that she would join the Runion family. We were lucky that day to have a big, high wheeling, car to plow our way down the muddy road to Carrie's place. The weather had turned warm, melting snow, and turned our road into axle deep mud in places; it was a sort of midwinter breakup. Lucky too, were we to have Dr. Hammond on this case; a less
skillful Doctor quite certainly would have been fatal for this baby. Sarita Ann weighed 11 pounds at birth - she lost about a pound and a half the first week - and was a "blue baby." Well, she lived you know, and outgrew what the doctor termed a heart murmer.

One thing stands out in Ma's and my memory - no family could have been happier to be reunited again. We surely had three cute little girls, but I'm sure that father Esau was desparing of ever having a grandson from the Runion union.

Every winter we must needs "get out" a good supply of wood for the kitchen stove. Up over the hillside there was a stand of several acres of soft maple, which grew in clumps of several trees, four to ten inches in diameter, and 25 to 40 feet tall. These trees were easy to cut - growing quite thick, there were few branches to trim off; we spoke of it as pole wood. The butt ends were chained to a sled and dragged down to a pile near the house. When we got a good sized pile together, one of our neighbors that owned a buzz saw came over with his rig and sawed it into stove lengths. (Adolph and I would "return" the work when our good neighbor got a buzz pile ready at his place. It required at least three persons to keep the saw busy.) The soft maple was not as desirable as hardwood - like oak, hickory, or apple - but, when well seasoned, it made a quick, hot, fire, and it did smell right nice.

We preferred having Averill Holl do our sawing as he kept his outfit in good, safe working order. Cal·Day also had a saw rig, but it had the apparent life expectancy of a venerable example of the "One Horse Shay"; we always were - so to speak - ready to hit the dirt when it was in operation. Those buzz saw outfits were
great labor savers - a couple days sawing between chores, when the things were
working good, often would produce enough stove wood for our annual needs. Early
models were often driven (powered) by old car motors; later the farm tractor
furnished steadier power. (One time, when we were helping Cal Day with his
buzzing, Old Calvin decided to do some oiling from a glass bottle while the old
model T motor was running. Somehow a protruding set screw nicked the bottle, and
how the glass and oil did fly. As a single man we dropped to the ground.)

The Averill Holls, as farmers went upstate New York, were about as
prosperous as you’d find; too, they were good accommodating neighbors. They had
been childless but did adopt a baby girl about the time our Margaret was born, calling
her Elizabeth. Later our girls used the short “Liz” when playing with her. Averill
was probably as stubborn a man as you’d find in ten counties. Oh sure, you could get
along fine with him at work or visiting provided you’d concede that his methods and
ideas always were right. Mary Holl was a reasonably perfect wife for him - going
along, you might say, with his wishes. Socially Mary was talkatively dull. But Mary
worked hard in her house, and outside helping with chores and sometimes in the
fields riding the tractor. She baked doughnuts and cookies to fill Averill’s demand
for one of each with a glass of milk for his breakfast. Averill’s parents, the Tom
Holls lived on a small adjoining farm where some light farming was done. Tom also
was of a stubborn, uncompromising nature, demanding his own way in most matters.
He had accumulated a modest fortune from hard work and thrifty living.\textsuperscript{331} The elder
Holl put out mortgage money at 5%, and carried a small mortgage on our place for
some years. The Holls' places were down our road towards New Berlin - about a half mile.

Just north of the Day place, on a nice site high above the road and overlooking the flat to the river, stood an unpainted two room cabinlike house. We learned that Harmon Shatzel had built it, on the edge of his property, for the Amz Hills. Shatzel had the idea that the cottage - if it could be dignified by that title - might assure him the services of a "hand" when he needed help. Amz and Ellen Hill were of old fashioned country stock, and from appearances didn't have a care in the world; further pursuing appearances, it seemed apparent that they didn't favor soap and water contacting their person. Amz didn't always wear a beard; one would suspect that he used a razor every two to four weeks, or as the spirit moved him to. Ellen's countenance was a study in wrinkles, darkly outlined, somewhat resembling a soiled map. The couple were tobacco devotees, obviously enjoying either smoking or chewing; it was amusing to watch the pair proceeding up our road, spitting terbaccer juice with abandon, or pulling on their cob pipes. They were getting on in years when we had moved to New Berlin, and, outside of taking care of an old cow and raising a couple of hogs, the pair didn't do much besides helping Harmon Shatzel haying or the like. But Amz and Ellen had worked as a team, for years, in what had become an outmoded profession: hand cut shingles. The way it was explained to me, the couple went to the woods [and] felled a likely looking pine or hemlock of good size. From the trunk section, with crosscut saw, they'd cut blocks the proper length of shingles; then with a specially designed wedgelike tool they split thin strips from the blocks.
These strips, smoothed down with a drawing-knife, became fine durable shingles. They could be proud of their work as these shingles often lasted more than a man’s lifetime.

Often our road, being narrow, became snowbound during winter storms, and was practically impassable to automobile traffic. On several occasions Dr. Hammond called us on the telephone and asked if we’d meet him at Five Corners with the team and sled to take him to some sick person on our road. I guess it was during the second winter that I’d taken Doc to the Amz Hill place when I got inquisitive and asked the good doctor how come, always about the same time of the year, they got sick. He just grinned at me and said something like, “Can’t tell them anything. They butcher and eat fat pork three times a day, and their gall bladder cuts up.” Those days a doctor never refused to come, whenever it was possible to get there, and we often wondered how many $2.00 fees, like the Hills’, he never collected. Now that I think on it, I don’t recall that Doc ever handed me anything for those uncomfortable trips with the horses, but he sure did “aplenty” for the Runion family.

Doctors, however even in those lean years, were among the prosperous class, due I suppose to long, long hours of attending patients. Those days our country doctors impressed me as an honest lot, and didn’t resort to unintelligible names for old ailments, and keep people stringing along for extra fees. They’d likely tell a person point blank “Now don’t take up my time” if they came to the conclusion that not much ailed the bellyacher. During the winter, Doctor Hammond had a heavy load of house calls, many of them way out in the hills. Cold days he’d start out in his
Cadillac, not turning off the motor until his return to New Berlin. When the going got real bad sometimes Doc employed an experienced driver. So much for our old doctors; what a comfort they were those days.

Harmon Shatzel really was a fine person to be living nearby, and was always ready to do a "neighborly turn." He was of the rugged pioneer type. He'd served in the Navy during the Spanish American War, and was loaded with interesting yarns and anecdotes. One cold, snowy day - our first or second spring on the farm, Harmon drove by and noted that I was having trouble, with our one team, moving brooder houses. In no time at all, to my surprise, Harmon came along with his horses, hooking onto the skids alongside our horses. Well, we were to learn over the years, that was the way with neighbor Shatzel. His wife, Elsie, never could have been much of a help for a farmer man; she was one of those complaining, whiny kind - generally alternating "sick spells" with resting in the rocking chair. Harmon farmed some and did rough carpentering as a side line. He was one of the few "horse and buggy" persons who never could seem to get orientated to a gas buggy, and usually managed to get "broke down" with his old Star car. One day - to mention his type of troubles - he came up behind our cows which we were driving down the road, and bumped into the rear of one bossie. The car came to a stop - Mrs. Cow's only hurt were her feelings - and Harmon remarked, "Couldn't help it: aint got any brakes." The Shatzels had two boys, Albert and Melvin, and their sister Thelma - all remarkably "sharp" and nice kids.

Harrison Camp had "built his self" a garage across the street from Carrie
Colgrove's. He was one of those tinkering naturals; an auto mechanic, figuratively, that got in on the ground floor; also one ready and able to patch up some ailing piece of farm equipment. Harrison was a likable person - a veritable pillar of the Baptist church, a practising Christian, if ever there were one. One day I drove Maxie down to his shop, and asked him about turning her into sort of a pickup truck. Yes he could do. The depression still had its grip on the land; Harrison was hungry for work, and came up with a fine offer. He would cut out the center section of the body, move up the back end to enclose a cab, and fashion a truck body - all for $25. It turned out [to be] a fine job. We didn’t find too much work for the truck however, and it soon took residence with the Esaus in Earlville. What a remarkable motor old Maxie had; it served the chicken farm, hauling feed, eggs, [and] litter for most of the time the Esaus remained there. Gladys, at an early age, jumped in and drove it around the fields at her grandparents.

Harrison often took on electric jobs, wiring and the like, for farm buildings and homes. He would appear for work shod in rubber boots, remarking, to inquiring glances towards rubber boots being worn on a hot summer day, “Best kind of insulation.” Harrison, by all appearances, was the ambitious member of the Camp family; his wife Leila, the two boys and four daughters, none of them seemed too concerned about helping him, and Harrison always seemed a bit tired.

We were to learn, be fore-long, that politicians all over the country were long on promises before, and forgetful of them after they were elected. We joked, over the years, about the way Ma and I were “taken in” the first year (1933) we voted in our
town. A fellow by the name of Earnest Sargent was the Republican candidate for town Supervisor, the executive officer of a township. To make a long story short, he informed us that if elected, our dirt road would be paved and taken over as a county maintained road. Yes, we voted for him and he was elected; the road was paved - starting two miles south of our place, past Sargent's home, and continuing to the South New Berlin town line. The section of road past the Runion farm was paved - about fifteen years later.

Now, I suppose, would be as good time as any to set the record straight regarding the political location of the town where the Runions lived. While our post office, businesses, railroad stations, churches, and schools were located in the town of New Berlin, Chenango County, our place on the East River Road was in the town of Pittsfield; Otsego County. Our Unadilla River separated the two counties; Pittsfield being on the northern edge of Otsego, and our trading center of New Berlin was just over the river. Pittsfield boasted two hamlets, one called Pittsfield (for some reason nicknamed, and usually referred to as, Pecktown). Pecktown boasted a very small collection of houses and a combination general store and garage. The other settlement, which was probably three times the size of Pecktown, had acquired the title "Hoboken", the place had no official destination on maps - to my knowledge. We surmised that the naming of Hoboken had been inspired by the New Jersey city of that name for the following reason. The Borden Company, with headquarters at Hoboken, N.J., had operated a milk receiving plant for a number of years in a large stone structure located in this section of Pittsfield. Bordens processed milk there into
Eagle Brand condensed milk, and other labels. The operation had ceased when we moved up state, but we were told that a hundred or so were employed there when the plant was in full operation. (We were told that the big stone building - it had a railroad siding for shipping and receiving - was originally a silk mill. There were a number of “company” houses there already when the milk plant moved in.\(^{341}\))

Although local nomenclature had it “Town of Pittsfield” properly the title for an extensive political area should be “Township.” For instance Pittsfield township embraced many large farins; there was one big undertaking, the maintenance of over 150 miles of dirt roads, which accounted for most of the Pittsfield town budget. In short, we were very, very rural.

During the early years our roads often became blocked after a big snow storm. The town equipment was not too dependable, and the more severe the storm the longer it took for a snow plow to come through. The one good rig that could get through most any drift was a crawler type vehicle, the Lynn Tractor, which by the way was manufactured locally in Morris\(^{342}\). The Lynn’s big drawback was that it was quite slow on the road - ten or twelve miles per hour. Often we’d get tired out waiting for our road to be cleared so motor traffic could be resumed; then, with Averill Holl’s “contraption”, and the horses, Adolph and I’d try our luck. Averill had fashioned heavy planks in a prow shape, fanning back to a width to accommodate one lane of traffic. To hold the rig down he had loaded it with a heavy anvil; we fastened a pole to the back, like a rudder, to guide “the thing” somewhat. This homemade plow worked fair, it’s one failure being that it persisted following the line of least
resistance; we’d chuckle at our efforts, which looked somewhat like the trail of a big snake.

Chickens always had looked so healthy to us, before we got into the poultry business, and I imagine they had been quite a robust hunk of feathers when flocks were small and they were allowed to run free scratching for a living. But, confined to so many square feet of floor space, forced into abnormal production with high protein feeds, and artificial lighting, chickens became hosts to a number of respiratory diseases. And a hen can be judged, without question, the perfect hypochondriac; they seemed to be perfectly content to languish along, and “chicken hearted” to die. Maybe it was pure frustration from laying eggs day after day; no family, not even an ordinary looking rooster for company. They contracted common colds, laryngitis, pox (very contagious), leukemia, and one period it was a paralysis of wings and legs (called range Paralysis); then there was coccidiosis which also was a killer. There were other diseases which, traceable to forcing diet and confinement, I could go on enumerating. One day Doc Hammond remarked, with a smile, that he’d given up his small flock of chickens, when he found out “They were getting most of humans’ diseases - and a whole set of their own.” But we persisted with our flock; we kept telling ourselves that “Next year we’d have better luck, and that prices would be better.”

Our three older girls started their schooling in the Five Corners School, a one room country schoolhouse teaching grades one through six. Gladys started school the fall of 1935, at the tender age of four and a half years, more or less the
result of a school closing social at Five Corners. It was the custom at that school for
the teacher to arrange a picnic on the school lawn when school closed for summer
vacation, to which parents and friends were invited. We were asked to come, so Ma
and I took the three girls over. Gladys was entranced with the idea of going to school
and told the young teacher, Miss Louise Benedict\(^4\), that she wished to come there
with the other children. I suspect we were rather surprised when the young lady
responded with the announcement that she was agreeable to have Gladys try it next
term. So it was arranged. I have an idea that our kids probably rolled up one of the
best attendance record of any group of school kids, in any family.

Five Corners School was much like a home away from home; the little group
like a family. In later years Gladys often extolled the advantages of that little school.
She told how her grade “recited” and then she’d go to her seat and observe what the
higher grade was doing. In this manner Gladys was becoming familiar with the work
she would be doing the next term.

Mustn’t forget to tell you about Irene Colgrove\(^5\) - no relation to Carrie. She
took over at Five Corners in 1936, from the pretty school teacher, and taught at the
little school until it closed for good. Irene was a dumpy-ugly-duckling appearing
lady, younger than one would surmise from her looks. Appearances aside, she was a
whiz of a teacher, unquestionably as good as they came. The scholars liked Irene,
and she got first rate results from them. Some of us adults may have regarded her as
a bit odd, but I’m sure no kid ever shared that idea with us. Irene ran Five Corners
much like a family operation - she demanded discipline, but I never knew a child that
feared her.

Often during winter months the trip across the flat to the school was a hard, cold experience. Snow drifted the Five Corners road full at times; then we'd drive around the drifts, through field, or wherever it looked passable. Their mommy bundled them up to their ears to make sure they wouldn’t freeze - that was entirely possible you know. Somehow or other Gladys, then Margaret, and Sarita were gotten over to Five Corners School; from the start the Runion Kids had few absent days showing on report cards. We took them by car when possible, or by the horses and sled, and sometimes, when we couldn’t get through otherwise, Ma or I hustled them over on foot.

The Runion girls were about as well dressed as any you’d come across ‘round New Berlin. Sometimes I thought that our girls had angels working for them, like the printed bag bonanza. It seems that some imaginative personage in the bag business had thought up the idea of using cotton material for feed and flour bags, the cloth being printed with attractive designs. Taken apart - that operation, when started at the right spot, took about two minutes of unraveling - you came out with a couple yards of nice cotton print. Often their Mom, by collecting several bags with the same design, had the girls dressed alike to go to school. Often Ma would trade with a neighbor to get some desired print, and on rare occasions we bought some coveted patterns to dress up our girls.

For years, their Uncle John, when he came up to visit, proudly took his neices - later nephews - in his car to Norwich for school shoes at Endicott-Johnson’s. So, as
by a feat of magic, was presented the paradox of the Runion kids being about the best
dressed on a very lean till.

Babe and Bess never did endear themselves upon us noticeably, probably
because they'd never been properly "broke" (trained), and often reminded one of a
couple of nervous old maids. Those mares were a bundle of nerves, ready to run
away at the drop of a hat, and they couldn't be left standing alone for one minute.
But, like the child that had not been brought up properly, it wasn't their fault, and we
probably expected too much from them for their keep. One episode could have been
fatal for Gladys, who when about twelve years old, after she had coaxed us much,
was allowed to get onto Babe's back. The horses were hitched to the hay rig at the
time, and we started out across the flat for a load of hay. One of the mares, glimpsing
Gladys' shadow, we surmised, took off at a gallop, touching off the other nag which
joined in the frightened run. Gladys lost her hold on the hames and off she went; we
heard her yelling behind us at the top of her lungs. When I'd got the fool horses
stopped, we went back and happily found she had fallen in a soft spot; by a miracle
the wheels had missed her. Later she told us, matter of factly, that she had done as
she read about in a story - kicked away from her mount.

Certainly the horses often had good reason for fright, like the time they
stepped into a ground-hees' nest - they were mean little devils. I think we called them
yellow jackets. That day we were hayiring and the horses and we too were stung
aplenty. After dark we went out with some kerosene and burned out the nest.

Another time Mary Holl just about wrecked me and the horses trying to pull
off a practical joke on me. I’d driven the team to Averill’s to borrow his lime spreader. When I entered the tool shed to hitch onto the spreader, I laid my pipe down on a stone wall just outside. Off down the road we went, meanwhile sticking my pipe into my mouth; not a care in the world, I thought, as I sauntered along behind the horses. Noting that the pipe had gone out, I struck a match to it and - BOOM - there was a powder flash before my face. I threw my right hand up to protect my eyes, meanwhile holding onto the horses with my left as we galloped into the Runion yard. Someone took charge of the team. Ma was anxious about my eyes; eyebrows and lashes were badly singed, my face flushed from heat and excitement. About the same time Averill drove up; he was furious with Mary. It seems she had heard you could frighten a person by slipping some gun powder into the bowl of his pipe, but she hadn’t inquired how much of the stuff to use - just a wee speck. Mary had emptied all the powder from a shot gun shell into my pipe. My guardian angel must have been on duty that afternoon, and the blast happily went straight upwards, with no aftereffects.

We depended heavily on radio for news and entertainment; radio held sway undisputedly, then. Entertainment “hours” - and many of the shows were hour long, “live,” and tops - were put on the air by most big retailers. Some of the best were The Telephone Hour, the Firestone Hour, [and] The Cliquot Club Eskimos; two other shows were enactments of Sherlock Holmes plots, with such master actors as Basil Rathbone, and just about everyone - every red blooded American - listened to the Amos and Andy show. Speaking of the Sherlock Holmes production, the announcer
used to tell you to put out the lights, and I can still imagine the hair standing up straight on my head during the enactment of some of those thrillers\textsuperscript{346}.

We always were on the alert for news. One evening - it was May 6\textsuperscript{th} 1937 - we were listening to a program when the announcer broke in with the news that the Zeppelin, \textit{Hindenburg}, as it was preparing to moor, had burst into flames. (The big dirigibles were as yet, for carrying passengers, more or less of a novelty, and I presume that the person that reported the accident was there for the purpose of interviewing some of the passengers.) That disaster, at the Lakehurst, N.J. airport, took the lives of thirty six persons\textsuperscript{347}. That disaster was about the Swan Song for those big fellows; I was always so thrilled at the sight of them as I'd watched as they moved gracefully through the air above New York. There were the \textit{Graf Zep.}, \textit{The Akron}, \textit{Shenadoah}, and the \textit{Hindenburg} - they'd all come to grief one way or another.

Sometimes crazy things happened in radio broadcasts, much of it necessarily being spontaneously done, like the time during the 1937 Mississippi, Allegh[e]ny, and Ohio rivers flooded great areas, when the broadcasters were right at the scenes. The Ohio had flooded out the power plant in Louisville which supplied power for broadcasting operations and storage batteries were being used in the emergency. We were excited as we heard calls from workers, with groups of marooned persons for rescue boats, to take them off small spots of refuge\textsuperscript{348}. At the height of the excitement, some nut at the studio put on a record[ing of] "Beautiful Ohio." I daresay, right then, riverbank dwellers most probably didn't have any such sentiments.
Corinne Sue was born October 20th 1938 and, like her sisters, she was a cutie. By this time Grandpa Esau and Doc. Hammond had practically despaired of the Runions acquiring a son, I fear. As for the rest of the family, we didn’t give a hoot; we loved each other which was all that mattered.

One warm day - it was a Sunday, I believe, the family were lolling about on the side lawn. Mom observed Margaret digging in her hair, and remarked, “Blondie, YOU act like you have bugs.” Just about that time Mom did see a little creature, happily I’m sure, making his way along the hairline on Margaret’s forehead! Mom was stumped what to do, so she called Doc Hammond on the phone, and he thought it a big joke. “Well, well, you got bugs up there; let’s see what you can do,” and he gave some simple remedies we could try. But bugs were one of those things that sounded simple - but weren’t - to deal with. Upon inquiry we learned that bugs were no novelty at Five Corners School. It seems that the Runion girls were unique in the area of families where cleanliness was a virtue. There were kids going to Five Corners School that might be described as piggish. Oh yes, Irene Colgrove coped with the bugs - head lice, she called them - right in stride. She lined the scholars up each morning for inspection, and those with inhabited domes had to get their hair clipped - real short.

Ma did a great many things against the infestation; they sure were persistent little fellows, and it was a matter of months before all traces of them were eliminated. All the family, but me, picked up some the pests. For some reason they didn’t care for my short dark hair, and I don’t think that Sarita was bothered as much as the
others. With a fine tooth comb, most evenings, I’d go after the little devils that wandered into Maw’s mop. Altho the lice were repulsive, I must admit it was rather fun capturing them this way.

Later on one evening during winter, Gladys, Margaret and Sarita picked up the whooping cough - it must have been ‘39. Corinne also had a light dose, as I remember. Ma and I were frightened and, when the kids started whooping at night, we’d be out of bed in a flash to attend them. One person who wasn’t perturbed over whooping cough was Irene Colgrove; we kept the girls home from school one day, and Irene said she’d taught school before right along with the stuff, so send them along and she would handle the situation. So, you see, school was “kept” regardless of vermin and whooping cough.

Carrie Colgrove became sick with a peculiar malady, one that Dr. Hammond either could not diagnose, or would [not] discuss. Now it seems to me that the poor soul probably had a brain tumor. She complained of a buzzing and hurting in her head; she might be talking in a detached manner, abruptly close her eyes and be in another world. It was a case of drifting away to her reward. Carrie had been a part of us all and we missed her very much.

One serious family illness came one Sunday in early 1939. Mom had been nursing a cold, and that Sunday asked me to take the children to Sunday School, and she would keep baby Corinne home with her. When we got back home, there sat Ma shivering beside the hot kitchen stove; the room was warm too. Not knowing what to do I called Dr. Hammond, and found that he was sick himself. To complicate the
situation, a light rain had started and was freezing onto the roads making travelling hazardous. Finally I got in touch with old Dr. VanWagoner, but he was reluctant to drive out on the very slippery road. He instructed me to take the patient’s temperature - I’d never done this before - and when I had told him my reading he exclaimed, “No it can’t be that high, try again.” The second time registered the same, and the doctor was now alarmed for sure. Soon he came chugging up the road, and was soon to announce to me, “Well, your girl’s got pneumonia.” He left some pills with directions to me to watch Ma carefully, and to report to him if she did not perspire by a certain time. Also the doctor said that I’d better get a practical nurse in for a few days - and that was our introduction to Mabel King. Mabel was, I would imagine, a sort of self-styled nurse, but she was anxious to help out, and a comfort to have around. She was one of those big-all-over, past middle age gals; she liked to talk, and enjoyed food. But cook she could not for sour grapes; her speciality, milk gravy (a concoction of frizzled salt pork, flour, and milk, which you were supposed to pour over potatoes, etc.), would give a strong man’s gall bladder nightmares, if anything would. Bill Payne brought Mabel over Monday morning, and incidentally thereafter she more or less attached herself to the Runion clan, remaining a close friend for the rest of her life. (Over the years, Mabel’s visits became routine, often at very inconvenient times, when we had other plans. During school times, Mabel often came on the school bus in the morning and stayed until it returned about four in the afternoon. She revelled in small town talk, and really enjoyed Ma Runion’s table.)

Ma came along fine, and bounced back to her old self in no time at all.
Meanwhile I had Baby Corinne on my hands, and she really was a problem; she wanted her personal-Mamma- cafeteria, and how she howled for food. I fixed a bottle and tried to introduce it to the brat. Corinne was cradled in my left arm, while with my right I pushed the nipple to her lips; quick as a flash, both her arms flailing, she knocked the offending bottle to the floor. Never did get anywhere with that bottle, and believe it or not next day her Mamma fed her! Mabel stayed around for a couple of days, and deciding that we didn’t need her any longer she went back home to her husband, Carol, and cousin, Raphael (Raf) Matteson, who made his home with them.

Some time before this the Lew Glodts, Lew and Lillian, and their two boys, teen age Dick and William, somehow wormed their way into our more or less close knit family. Lillian just stopped one day, and that was it. Lew had a good job as plant engineer at Kraft Foods in South Edmeston. He was rather of sour disposition, being almost completely dominated by Lil, but he was rather o.k. when you really got to know him. Lillian turned out to be a complainer and gossipér, hypochondriac and sponger. About once a week Lillian managed to “stay for supper” - mostly Sundays - the four of them.

Then Lew brought the Paynes, Bill and Myrtle, along, so, as Bill Payne vernacularized, “we c’u’d have an orchestree!” Bill really was a character; one could write a good sized volume about him, without half trying. He looked for all like that old silent movie actor, horse faced William S. Hart. His self acquired skills were many. For instance he’d taught himself to read simple music, and to play a trumpet
and violin; on the manual side he was a fair mason and carpenter, and knew a great deal about farming. Bill also was well informed on nature's creatures, and [was] a good fishing partner and hunter. He never "set" around the house on what Bill termed "lowery" days - then it was rod and creel, and hunting season found him in the woods. Bill was one of the few men I've known that could successfully trap foxes, but let's not get into that as it's a long story. When we first knew Bill he was strong as a bull. On the objectionable side, Bill nipped the bottle too regularly, and persisted carrying around, in his index and third fingers, half smoked, stale cigars. (Lew Glodt did this too, and they'd leave our house stinking after both of them visited.) Then as time went on, we were to find out that Bill fancied himself as a "ladies' man." Myrtle was a good true friend to the Runion family; she most always came along when the fellers came down to play. I'm afraid that Lillian and Myrtle were quite a bore to poor Ma with their shallow dribbling, while the orchestree played sloppy waltzes and monotonous marches, on and on.

That instrumental group was pretty bad, and that's no kidding. Bill had this music, the piano accompaniment mostly ump, dum, dum, etc. with the tune spelled out for the trumpet (Bill) and clarinet (Lew). After a spell it just got awful, as they both tried to outdo with volume - no expression whatsoever. Horrors. Bill remarked one day that "We were good enough to play at affairs"!

Adolph had gotten word that his father and two sisters were living somewhere in the New York area and decided - I think that was Christmas 1937 - to try to establish connections with them. So, it transpired that Adolph went to New York,
and probably figuring the distant fields greener, he never returned to stay. But
Adolph did come visiting frequently.

Over the next three or four years we tried other help. There were three that I
will describe somewhat briefly.

First on the list, Stella Card\textsuperscript{357} wanted to work for us, she said. We figured
that maybe Ma could help me outside while the girl looked after our kidlets, and did
some housework. Stella made a fair appearance but didn’t present a picture of
alertness; she was sort of dreamy eyed. Anyway we did decide to give her a try, and
told Stella to come along. Stella turned out to be a dud; she could fall asleep any time
any place - and did. One day Ma and I stepped inside and no kids, no Stella. The
children were happily playing; they’d ensconced themselves under the linoleum rug
in the dining room, and we found Stella fast asleep on her bed! And what a job to
wake Stella. Asleep she seemed good as dead, and hardly responded to shoutings or
jousting. Stella had a boy friend, Gunar Lindberg\textsuperscript{358}. They announced their
engagement, which happily resulted in marriage and an out for the Runions. That
Christmas, Gunar confided to us a number of items “Stella could use,” but we didn’t
fall for that one.

Sometime early in the spring, after four or five months with us, Stella asked
Mom if she could be married in our house. For a number of reasons we were
delighted to oblige, and the net outcome would get her out from under our feet. On
the appointed day, Ma prepared a wedding supper, the Methodist preacher, Rev.
Austin, and his wife came, also a considerable assortment of Gunar’s Swedish
friends. But listen to this: Stella had the last laugh - so to speak; she came to Ma with
the plea that she had no slip to wear under her wedding gown, and would Ruth loan
her a white slip just for the wedding? I guess Stella liked that slip real well; she
apparently couldn’t bear to part with it, and didn’t.

Then, we decided no more gals, and we got Maurice Ashley\textsuperscript{359}. He was a nice
boy, and we made arrangements for him to have his home with us and go to high
school in return for doing chores nights and mornings. He had to leave after a short
while to help out his father.

We’d just about decided to try to get along without help, [and] then Bernard
Dye\textsuperscript{360} came to see us one day. He very much wanted to have a place to live and
work. Bernard was a nice young fellow, not much in the wa[y] of formal education,
but quite a capable worker and ambitious. He certainly needed looking after
motherly, and obviously he was hungry. For instance when Bernard first came, Ma
asked him jokingly if he could eat eight or ten eggs. He nodded yes, and proceeded
to do just that - the larger number. When Ma inquired about no sox in the wash, he
regarded her with a “Never heard of such a thing” expression and remarked, “Caint.
Got ‘em on.”

Bernard was an odd, trusting fellow, and he must have regarded us as his
doting foster parents. Like one Sunday morning, we noted several masculine voices
emanating from his room. He’d bedded down several of his friends, and trotted them
out for breakfast. On a certain Saturday evening Ma remarked how nice Bernard
looked in freshly pressed clothes, her handiwork. Next morning Bernard appeared
the product of a nights boozing, announcing, “Guess I got drunk.” Exit Bernard.361
For a number of years I was a member of the Pittsfield Town Board, having been elected on the Republican Ticket to such offices as councilman, or Justice of Peace. The Board consisted of two councilmen, two Justices, the clerk of the board, and the town Supervisor. As a matter of fact, the supervisor was the town’s executive officer, also being a member of the County Board of Supervisors. The latter body met at the County seat, Cooperstown, where a supervisor was tacitly expected to look out for his town’s interests.

During the early years, and to quite a degree later on, the town clerk and supervisor were the only ones receiving regular compensation for their services. Every time I’d get elected, I would question myself as to why anybody could be foolish enough to get into small time politics; you might say it was smart to keep shy of the mess. The office’s duties took up considerable time, and quite often our efforts were appreciated negatively by one’s constituency. For instance a councilman received a couple dollars when the supervisor called a meeting of the board; Justices of the Peace, in the early days, were on the “fee system” which meant that a Justice retained criminal fees he imposed. It was a vicious system courting dishonesty in public officials, and I didn’t like the practice at all. In larger towns, state troopers and local J.P.’s often formed a working arrangement whereby the trooper saw to it that a goodly number of “traffic offenders” were brought before the Justice. Afterwards the two officials of the law split fines. Later on, happily, the fee system was abolished and justices were granted a modest salary.
But to get back to WHY, I suppose that a sense of civic obligation prompted a good Republican, or Democrat for that matter, to attend town caucus of their respective parties, where candidates for town jobs are chosen.

Besides the town board members, there were the Road Commissioner, two or more assessors, and a collector. The upkeep of the town's roads by far accounted for a good share of the town's expenditures, and consequently Mr. road commissioner, being on the job at all times, usually was the highest salaried town employee. So the road commissioner job was most hotly sought after. It was important to get a good road boss; he could mean the difference between good or impassable roads, promptly opened highways after a snow storm, or sitting by the stove at the town barn, and waitin' it out.

Some leader of your party would likely seek you out the day before caucus to see if you would be willing to run for a certain office, if nominated. If you acceded, your interviewer could be expected to nominate you - that is put you up for the nomination at town caucus. If no other nominations were made from the floor, you could consider yourself elected; if there were other persons nominated, the one with the most votes cast for him became the party's candidate. At times, useful liaison work between the parties effected the getting of good town officers, by disregarding party lines in the instance, and putting a candidate's name on both tickets, thereby assuring his - or her - election. For instance, as was often the case in Pittsfield, a known to be efficient Democratic lady would be first nominated for town clerk by her party, then by prearrangement her name would be brought up on Republican caucus
Usually the outcome of this maneuver was her name appearing on both party's space on the ballot, which assured her election by the voters.

I forgot to mention the town constable, which Pittsfield had when anyone would agree to take the job; it was an appointive job and the town board always tried to get a good, brave citizen for it. Lynn Colgrove, Irene's father, was constable for a number of years. He did a first rate job too.- apprehending law breakers, serving summons for a variety of purposes, etc. The Pittsfield constable received a small salary; he also kept fees for serving summons, and was allowed a certain mileage rate for necessary travel. Service fees and mileage were levied against the unlucky person who got served with papers.

The first time I got talked into running for the office of Justice of the Peace, I had been more or less assured there would be few or no cases to handle. Certainly I was not very much interested in "trying cases" against townspeople, who would most likely be my "victims." Soon I was to learn that I'd been somewhat mislead regarding the number of cases that would come up before me. For instance, on my first trip to town board meeting, I was confronted by a state trooper who enquired, "Are you Alfred Runion?" "Yes," I admitted to being that person, and inquired just what he wanted from me. "Oh nothing," he replied, "but you must be the new justice, and I've got a traffic case for you." And so it went. One of the board members gently imparted the information that the other justice didn't hear cases; the troopers and others, with cases, just had quit trying to get anything out of him. So Judge, as I became known, Runion got a variety of cases thrown at him - on the criminal side,
traffic, disorderly conduct, etc.; on the civil calendar, I issued summons for many purposes, such as unpaid bills, delinquent dog licenses, witnessing the signing of certain papers, and such.

A Justice had to be on the alert against getting involved with cranks, or those who would badger the JP for special favors. There was the group from Shacktown Mountain; three woodsy characters showed up before me with the news, “They’s a pack o’ wild dogs up in our woods, and we want y’r say so to go out and shoot ‘em.” I explained that the granting of this request was not within my jurisdiction, and suggested that they confer with the area game warden. They departed in sour mood. What I learned from consultation with other board members was that my callers just might have plans to jump the deer hunting season, which would be opening in a couple of weeks. A day or so later I was surprised to read in the New Berlin Gazette a news account that “Justice Runion was about to grant permission to hunt down a pack of wild dogs in the Shacktown Mountain area.” To inquirers I said, “Nothing at all to it.” Next town board meeting the spokesman for the group of petitioners appeared, and among other things said, “It looks like the new judge thinks more of wild dogs than our kids.” The board gave him the silent stare treatment, and that ended the episode.

Often there would be a dog or two of them which had been abandoned, or otherwise untended, and had turned wild. A good sized dog could outrun a deer in deep snow - or when there was enough crust on the snow to support the dog, but not the sharp hoofs of a deer - and maul it to death. But such cases were not numerous,
and were taken care of by the game warden or his deputies. Well, Pittsfield wasn’t too wild, even back in the 30’s and 40’s - no indians, wolves or other dangerous wild beasties.

Small time dairying was fast goin[g] out, and herds were tending to be larger for economy of overhead, same motions to go through for 10 or 50 head. Our little dairy had never shown any profit worth mentioning, so some time before 1940 we discontinued selling milk to the creamery in New Berlin. For one thing, to continue sending milk to Sheffield farms, or other dealers for that matter, we were confronted with an investment of ten or fifteen hundred dollars to comply with New York City and State Board of Health requirements. We decided it wasn’t worth the money and effort; we would churn the cream into butter, raise calves on skim milk, [and] feed buttermilk to the chickens. (Somewhere along the line we had given up raising hogs for meat, and for a somewhat unique reason. Pigs, being classed with the dog family, they can easily become pets, which was the case with our family: We gave them names, petted the little pigs, and often spoke about how this and that pig was getting along. Consequently when they were killed for meat on the family board, everyone started to be sad for “poor Elenor or Bill” when their flesh got dished up for dinner. And what brought up this pork dish is that I wanted to mention that pigs, being very partial to sour milk, would have loved some of our dairy byproducts at this time.)

Poultry also was going the route of mass production. Automatic equipment in the poultry house was making it possible to handle five times the old standard 2,000 hen flock with about the same help as before. We began to wonder if our northern
clime was the best locality for chicken farming. Definitely those that stayed in the line would have to expand operations, but we were not in the mood for borrowing and spending. A new wrinkle in the baby chick business was "sexing," a skill developed by the Japanese. This method of determining the sex of day old chicks, enabled a poultryman, wanting only pullets for his laying houses, to buy for about a third more cost than straight run chicks, guaranteed 95% females. The cockerel chicks were, I should guess, a pain in the neck for the hatcheries, and they were offered for sale at eight to ten cents each. For a while, until too many got into the business, we did quite a stroke of business with cockerel chicks, which we fed for about ten weeks, selling them for broilers.

John Frederick Runion was born August 10th 1941. Every one went around with that look - "Can it be possible, the Runions, A BOY?" Doc Hammond couldn't have been much happier were the young man born into his family., How happy Carrie Colgrove would have been, but that dear girl had gone to her rest, and John (for Grandpa John Runion) Frederick (for Grandpa Frederick Esau) was born in his own home. Mabel King came down to help with the newborn and Grandma Esau came over from Earlville to help with the housekeeping.

I guess the little boy must have brought us luck - I applied for, and started work at Kraft Foods, starting work a few days after the big event. How badly we needed money; we were just about sunk financially. Fortunately our big creditor, The I. L. Richer Co. stock and poultry feeds - were not pressing us too hard, but that $1800 which we then owed them was a lot of money those days. It took almost
twenty years of austerity for Ma and I to get back into the clear. Five Runion kids
now - who’a’thought it?!

About this time Bill Payne also was a gone gander with his poultry business. He hadn’t taken care of things, having spent too much time on the road and in the inns. Bill decided to try his luck with a dairy; one of the cattle dealers agreed to finance him with several cows. The bill was settled by the dealer getting 10% of Bill’s milk check, which was the usual arrangement on livestock contracts. Bill adapted to cow husbandry real well, and apparently made a fair living for himself and Myrtle in the dairy business.

One day Bill Payne came down and asked if I would play for a square dance at his place of a certain evening. One of his empty laying houses, of considerable size, had been cleaned and an upright piano of quite ancient vintage stood at one end of the “dance hall.” What I didn’t know about playing square dance music was just about all of it wrapped up, but what is that old saying regarding “fools treading” some place or other, where lions would not dare venture? I agreed! Luckily for me a pair of “natural” fiddlers, Gladys Calhoun and her father, were there with their instruments a’rarin’ to go. Pop Calhoun was a rare individual; he must have been seventy five years old when I first met him, that night. Lean bodied, standing erect at six feet or thereabouts, his rather long gray hair seemed to crown that rather noble appearing figure. He had fashioned some quite acceptable toned fiddles in his day, one of which he played that night. Gladys was definitely hill type - I couldn’t help thinking that she must’ve favored her mother in looks.
The dancing was pure spontaneous fun for one and all. Those, including me, who’ve never got around to doing the square dance, sure have missed something of life. Gladys and her father played as a team, she sitting on an old chair stomping out time with her left foot which somehow was too much for the garter on that leg, and the stocking came rolling down, slopping ‘round her shoe. The old Gentleman stood up, performing something like Fritz Kreisler could be expected to, except pretty much on one string. The piano player? It didn’t matter too much as the piano was a wreck, being hopelessly out of tune, and many of the keys had given up the ghost, as had I. But hold, never underrate the importance of the square dance caller. That man is as indispensable to square dancing as music. He directs, animates the show; entertains with humorous chatter. Three cheers for the Barn Dance!

In twentyone years punching the thing, I never, shall we say, could bring myself around to graciously accepting the Time Clock. That robot policeman of one’s time, paradoxically validating one’s pay check, but on the other hand insulting one’s ego, one must admit to be a necessary evil. For one thing, factories do tend to tear down one’s vision; my humble advice to a factory hand would be to keep telling yourself, “I’ll do a good job, but some day I’m going to get the Hell out of here.” But to put it honestly, one could not deny that Kraft Foods was a much better place to work, and shorter hours than the average farm.

Milt Fish was Kraft plant manager at the time I signed on. He could be quite civil or, when things didn’t go his way, his temper often became violent. Workers allowed that Milt was the old time Hire and Fire type, and liked to do the
latter.

For a while I worked on the truck, mostly handling supplies from and plant products to freight cars on the U.V.R.R.\textsuperscript{371} siding. That was quite heavy work, but the advantages were that one was working mostly outside, and it was daytime work. When I got my first pay check, and noted it was for fortyfive cents per hour, I thought there had been a mistake somewhere, but the office assured that was the starting rate.

Probably some worker kicked - the office soon told me that those with lower seniority were required to work the night shifts. That paid five or six cents more per hour than daytimes and, to show how tight money was at that time, many of the men preferred the night shift so they could collect the forty cents more for eight hours work. One hard condition at Kraft when I came to work there was Fish's insistence that just about everyone work Sundays taking off time during the week. His explanation was that if he let one person off on Sunday, everyone would want off that day. Brother Fish, to my knowledge, never attended church, and it looked like he didn't want anyone else to go either.

Come Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, and our imminent entry into World War 2, I perceived the management was grabbing up any loose men who'd work for the duration. For instance two quite old men [and] a partially paralized fellow, among others, were taken on. It seemed rather foolish, considering that all they were good for was messing around with a water hose, pretending at cleanup. One young man, totally blind in one eye and with but 20% vision in the other, came to work. Everyone feared that he would come to grief on our slippery, wet floors, or get
messed up in a running machine; but he, being a highly intelligent person, did first
rate from the start. The last I heard of him he, Ruppert Baggs\textsuperscript{372}, was still working at
Kraft.

Those night shifts could be terrible. One night that first winter, the
thermometer dropped and dropped until, when it was time to check out midnight, the
temperature was in the twenties below. I had the Hup parked on the steep ground
alongside the plant for help in starting, but the wheels didn’t want to turn; I pulled on
the choke, thinking to try the starter, and the wire pulled out in my hand, and the
starter didn’t respond to speak of - just a little grunt. Andy Bayer\textsuperscript{373}, who also had
just rung out, pushed me for about a mile until his car heated up; then he abandoned
me and drove off. So I forthwith left the Hup alongside the road, and started the three
mile walk home. Never, I dare say, have I been colder; that coldness at midnight
seemed to choke off one’s breath - it was sort of frightening. Next day dawned clear
and sunny; about noon Bill Payne came down with his little Model A truck, and we
went up to where I’d left the car standing the night before. Bill gave me a smart push
and the car started right off. Harrison Camp did remark that the cold made choke
wires brittle, shoved in a new wire and said that he guessed it ought to be all right for
a spell.

Due to the evident manpower shortage, I got rather brave and let it be known
that I would be unable to continue doing night work. They decided to put me on
days. Working in a milk processing plant never was, or would be, an elevating
position, and many of the jobs were pure hard drudgery, but wages were on the
upgrade, and the job could assure our family the security of some steady money coming in.

One day when I stopped at Harrison Camp’s garage, I was told that he had gone up to Bill Linger’s place to try getting Bill’s Model T started. Bill was apt, at times, to take on a bit too much likker; he was sort of a mouthy feller, sort of a horse and buggy mechanic by trade. Presently Harrison’s came along towing Bill’s outfit. Harrison climbed out, and shook his head at why a Model T wouldn’t run. Some smart Alec bystander suggested maybe a little gas might help; sure enough the tank of Bill’s car was empty. But, while the tank on his car was located back about the same place as they are now, the gauge was a float affair on top of the tank; one had to get out and go back to read it. I can picture them now, Harrison shaking his head wonderingly - no gas? - and Bill eyeing him sort of accusingly.

Over the Christmas holidays, our weather - by New Years - could be depended upon to be treacherous for driving. That first year at Kraft, New Year’s morning was a picture of ice, overhead, around, and under foot. About two thirds of the way up to work - Milt Fish didn’t believe much in holidays like New Year’s either - I came to the sharp dip in the road, just before the Erdley Johnson place. As the car broke over the brink of the hill, the back end began to whip, soon whipping in a wider arc, then we turned completely around three times. Fortunately, at the foot of the hill, the car eased against a tree and held. There was a steep bank on that side of the road; I thought musingly that surely God must have put that tree there - to catch me. I was not hurt, although it had been the closest brush I’d had or would have in
several winter skids. But the frame of the Hupmobile was bent from the skid against the tree and, although Herb’s “mechanics” heated it with a blow torch and worked it over, it never drove right thereafter. To tell the truth that car never had handled well; it steered and drove like an old dump truck.

War regulations were fast being put into force. I had to register and carry my card; gasoline, tires, fats, sugar, meat, and other essentials were being rationed. Fortunately price ceilings were put on such items as meat - otherwise they would have gone sky high. Then the rationing board required me to pick up several Kraft workers from New Berlin, so they would not have to drive and use gasoline. How I hated that deal. Subsequently the old Hup had given up it’s will to go, and we didn’t know where to find a car at the price we could afford, or for that matter at any price - most everything being in short supply. Ralph Waffle had a 1936 Dodge - Ralph drove school bus and worked at Kraft part time - which he said we could have for $100. There was a joker in the deal; that car would hardly ever start for Harold. It happened that we had just finished paying for a hundred dollar war bond at the plant, so we cashed it and bought the Dodge. As I mentioned before, the big objection to that car was that that 1936 model Dodge had some queer quirk in it’s ignition system, and come a little frost or dampness it was balky as a mule. Talk about undependability! Winter nights we burned a 75 watt bulb under the hood, and on real cold nights we set an electric heater under the hood, and covered the front end with a blanket.

That car was a nightmare for sure. It’s wiring was none too good, and
sometimes driving along early, on dark mornings, a fuse would go, leaving us in total
darkness. What fun - I carried a bunch of skittery females to work then, and what a
production they’d put on. I learned to cope with that problem by carrying along a
supply of fuses and a good flash light. The radiator couldn’t seem to be sealed
against leaking; one day on the way home - in the winter I added alcohol when the
mixture got low, and it got too rich - the stuff slopped onto the motor and caught
afire! Fortunately I was wearing a good pair of gloves and slapped the fire out before
it got a good start.

For three or four years after the Kraft era, we kept on with the cows, young
stock, and some chickens. The taking care of the milk cows was drudgery, especially
getting up a couple hours earlier to milk, and set things a bit in order. Due to
rationing of fat stuffs generally we could be certain of a market for all the butter we
could produce. We always seemed to cling to the idea that the farm could be made to
pay - some day; you get so attached to a farm. On the other hand all evidence showed
that about the only farmers making a go of it were the bigger operators.

One day Eddie Bice\textsuperscript{378} came to me during a recess in the plant, and asked if I
thought Maw would give his girls, Nina and Ruth, piano lessons. I told him that I’d
ask her. And that was the beginning of Ruth Runions school of Piano\textsuperscript{379}. It grew and
grew over the years - happily so, for the $’s certainly helped the Runion girls and
boys through college.

So, together, Ma and I somehow started and “got ‘em” through - and I may be
getting ahead of the story. The piano lessons were no mean effort; for myself I’m
very much afraid I could not have taken it. Many of her hopefuls were musical
“dunkopfs.” Of course the gifted few were of great satisfaction to their teacher.

Soon after we settled in New Berlin, we transferred our church memberships
to the New Berlin Methodist Church. You might say truthfully that our kids were
brought up in that church; it was to most of the family, I daresay, like a second home.
Probably the similarity of the Church’s and our economical fortunes would stand that
comparison cliché, “Misery loves company.” Sometimes I almost believed that “poor
as a church mouse” originated in The New Berlin Methodist Church.

The young couple in the parsonage when we first came upstate were New
Jerseyites which struck a responsive cord on our rather homesick heartstrings. The
Arthur Salens were a very nice couple, and during their two or three years in New
Berlin, Mother and I became quite friendly with them.

The Austins, somewhat on the far side of middle age, came next; very
different from our former pastor and his wife. Rev. Austin, rather short of stature;
topped rather balding, with round pink cheeks, and slightly on the stoutish side below,
made a good figure in the pulpit. Sundays he always wore a black cutaway coat and
looked real dignified, and in my judgement he was a well informed Bible student and
a good preacher. His voice [had a] distinct lisp to his speaking, which did not seem to
hamper his preaching effort. When Brother Austin baptized Sarita, we were much
amused when he managed to make “Sabita” out of her name. Rev. Austin had one
grand, loving, obsession – funerals. For instance in recounting a year’s
accomplishments, the number of funerals he had conducted came first in order of
importance. One day, while visiting with him, he launched into great detail telling me about the fine funeral parlor, complete with portico enabling the hearse to be driven up and loading the coffin nicely in all kinds of weather, which belonged to an undertaker-friend of his in Liberty, New York. This characteristic of the Rev.'s was amusingly mentioned in church circles, but apparently most everyone liked him; he worked hard for the church. Mrs. Austin could be forgotten; she was a sitterarounder. One often wonders why so many ministers seem to have picked wives with their eyes shut.

Then came next to New Berlin Theodore and Carmel Hubbard. They fit in well; it was his first charge, and the Hubbards worked as a team; Carmel Hubbard was a fine minister's wife. They were in New Berlin three years, I believe.

Ted Stone was minister at New Berlin for one year. He was a good preacher, but somehow didn't get along with the congregations at all well. Clara Stone we remembered as an intelligent, hard working minister's wife. They had a family of four children, as I recall. The last time I met Ted, sometime in the 60's, he was at Cooperstown.

Sometimes a man turns out to be a "natural" parson for some special type community. Such a person was Robert (Doc) Webster for New Berlin, the pastor there for six years. He staunchly withstood the entreaties of spinster and widow - a bachelor to this day. Bob was, for one thing, a "joiner" attending the Masons Lodge, and such other organizations as the Grange; besides he was a "hail, good fellow" for all sorts of "worthwhile causes." He worked with Boy Scout troops; he took his car
out - banners flying for whichever mission happened to be foremost that day - on all sorts of pick up drives. Sundays found him sitting beside the pulpit, mouth open - I suspect enlarged adenoids - ready to preach when the choir relinquished to him. His preaching did everything to uphold Boy Scout levels of profundity, and New Berlin loved it; they'd drowsily complain about “a deep sermon” which they couldn’t understand, that had been preached by the visiting preacher “last week,” and remark, “You always can understand what Doc’s a’drivin’ at.” That was New Berlin, for instance a stomping, twirling color guard would get more attention than the school band, playing their best, would receive. Doc just seemed to have a knack of doing things that gained him town folks’ approval, like getting house numbers affixed up and down Main St. and on Genesee Street and West St., as though people in New Berlin already didn’t know where everyone else lived. But don’t for a minute think that Doc Webster wasn’t ambitious; he’d turn up at unpredicted times and places with some worthwhile project in mind. True to clerical tradition, Doc drove his car at hairraising speeds, not worrying whether the road be dirt or paved. But he was a good - people often remarked that God protected Doc Webster - driver, and we thought nothing of intrusting our kids to his transportation donations. Well, so much for Doc Webster.

During our thirty year association with the New Berlin Methodist Church, Lawrence Schomo was its choir director much of the time. One could write reams about Schomo; he was a most colorful personality. Schomo, without doubt, was somewhat of a braggart regarding his abilities, but more often he made us,
figuratively, eat our doubtful receptions of some of his claims regarding his accomplishments. His job, when I first knew him, was master mechanic at the Unidilla Valley R.R. shop in New Berlin; and to illustrate a point in his favor, one of the mechanics at the shop once told me that he’d made the mistake of telling Schomo that a certain piece of welding on a locomotive couldn’t be done, whereupon Schomo proceeded to demonstrate, step by step, doing the job perfectly. No doubt he did bluff a good deal, but the old boy surely could make it hard to tell when he wasn’t. Like the time he said that he had been a member of John Phillip Susa’s Band, and some of his listeners sort of snickered. Whereupon Schomo fished out of his pocket folder a picture of himself, holding a big tuba (and he did play a tuba well in the New.Berlin town band) with his baby daughter seated in the bell of the instrument; in the background were seated some band members ahead of a large banner, proclaiming “John Phillip Susa’s Band”!

Schomo was immensely proud of his choir, telling one and all how good it was - “As good as they come” he’d report. He attempted complicated works and have the little group practice for hours at a time. Results of these forays into oratorios and the like often were surprising quite good. Schomo probably had had a very credible voice in his younger days, and still sang a good strong and pleasing bass. He was, however, a very proud critter and would not admit to failing eyesight, or submit to eye glasses, although he was getting well on into years. Consequently during processionals parishioners often were much amused to hear Schomo booming out sounds like moo, woo, waah, and the like. One Sunday the congregation was startled
to see Schomo’s graying hair had turned red (hair dyeing, especially with men, was not commonly practised then). But, no mistaking, Maestro Schomo was by no means lacking in abilities, for one thing in mechanics. For example when that old pipe organ went haywire, as it frequently did, back into the works he’d go and generally in no time at all he would have the old girl a’moaning again.

There was another trouble spot to cope with in that choir, and Schomo wasn’t very successful in dealing with it - or, I suppose one should say with Her. Gladys Carpenter was wont to start off at good volume and tempo, gradually getting slower and slower, until one might fear that she was about to stop altogether. No amount of weaving, flailing his arms, or other calisthenics had much effect on Gladys. Some times it seemed that Gladys didn’t give a hoot, but she also was growing old.

Like many persons, coming off farms and working for Kraft, I had, at first, no idea of staying on permanently, but with a growing family, and debts remaining to be paid off, it seemed like a good idea to hang onto something which guaranteed regular income. Much of the work was real heavy, and some jobs like tying cheese bags have left a couple of my fingers bent out of shape. Three or so bouts with slipped spinal discs, while at Kraft, scared the daylights out of me, but evidently pop survived.

How the years rushed on! October 11, 1944 dawned, and another Runion with it. We named him Stephen Vincent. We had asked Mabel King to come down and be on the scene for the young one’s arrival. She seemed very pleased at the
invitation but said she was needed at home - how about Mommy visiting at her house for the event? So that’s how it came about that our sixth child was born in South Edmeston. John would not have to grow up the loner male in the Runion household. To all appearances Doc Hammond and Mabel King were bursting with pride over the Boy child; one might conclude the entire event to be the culmination of their efforts.

Our farm home, meanwhile, was becoming one of the show places along the Unadilla Valley. One of my childhood memories was the flag pole in the front yard of the Tranquility home, which must have been the reason I always liked to see flag poles in some prominent spot wherever we lived. So during most of our years in New Berlin there stood a flag pole\textsuperscript{388} planted in a level spot on the steep hillside ‘cross the road from our house. The elevation at that spot was about level with the roof ridge of the house and a flag atop the 38 foot pole was visible for miles up and down the valley. The hemlock pole we’d cut out of a thick growth of trees, where it had to reach up high for the sunlight. It was about perfectly formed and very straight. We set it between two locust posts, securing it with two long bolts, and used the other to swing the pole up or take it down. The pole had been peeled of bark and painted white like the house; how inspiring to see it glistening in the sunlight, the flag floating overhead. During the war the flag was up there every day!

Gladys had more or less assumed the role of foreman around the barn. It was some sight to see her in boots and old pants, directing her sisters as they filled the wheelbarrow, and to watch her wheel out the stuff. Those kids never seemed to tire working about their home - cleaning, digging, raking, building - but for some reason
they preferred working outdoors rather than household chores. One time we decided
to have a big patch of cabbage - it was good green feed for chickens during winter
months, - and set out about half an acre on a piece of ground on the river flat.
Somewhere along the line the weeds and grass had just about taken over and I'd
pretty much decided nothing could be done with that sorry patch. Imagine my
surprise when driving home from work one evening there before my eyes was
nothing but clean rows of cabbages, where before all you could see was weeds.

Probably Gladys inherited her liking for building things from Grandpa
Runion, although she'd never had closer earthly contact with him than viewing old
photos. Anyway, Gladys "built things" where she sensed a need - like the bunks she
built for her brothers to sleep on, using what materials were available. Give Gladys
some boards, a saw, nails and a hammer, she was in business and some creation of
her's would soon appear. The beds were fine; they filled a need; the boys didn't mind
when occasionally one of them woke up in a tangle of rope mattress, after a board in
the frame had given out. Later Gladys bought double decker steel bunks from Sears
Roebuck for them.

Mostly the children "did things" together; certainly many of the things were
amusing - sometimes exciting, or frightening. One such episode, or adventure, turned
out to be very frightening for their Mamma. I was at work, and Mom was home
alone with the kids - which was not unusual; when I drove into the yard that
afternoon, Ma came running out to meet me, and said the girls were at a farmhouse
over across Meeker Hill, and I'd better drive right over and get them. Later I found
out that what had happened was that the girls had asked permission to take their lunch about a half mile to the edge of the woods for a picnic. But it seems the woods enticed the little girls to go on in, and I suppose they only intended going into the woods a little way. Gladys, being the oldest, was the navigator for the party and she must have lost her bearings, and they were lost. It was reported that Sarita, a little tyke then, sat down and cried, "I want my Mamma" and, I venture to say, about that time they all wanted their Mamma. Their leader knew they had to go down a slope, but they'd trudged down the wrong slope, on the wrong side of Meeker Hill. How happy the trio were to get back to the safety of their own home. Oh yes, the old "party line" as our phone was called, helped the little girls back to their Mamma - Mrs. Lawrence, at the farmhouse where the girls landed, telephoned.

One day, when I had my day off at Kraft - some time later than the foregone incident - I was off fixing fence a ways from the house, Ma was busy and assumed the children were playing together somewhere close by, John caused some amusement. As told to me later, Mom was surprised to see coming up the road our neighbor from across the river, Mrs. Anderson, leading our little son John by the hand. Mrs. Anderson said she'd wondered what was up when John came tripping across the old highway bridge, and had asked him where he was going. Nonchalantly John said he was going to his Grandpa's. So Mrs. Anderson talked John into going back home with her. Well, it would only have been seventeen miles for the little fellow to walk to Grandpa's.

We had a few head of cattle as late as 1947, but we gradually tapered off
livestock as we began to realize that it was, for a small operation, a losing game. One evening that year - Gladys was attending her first Class Alumni banquet - I had three or four cows yoked up for milking, and there was a full pail of milk hanging from a peg on one of the big beams overhead. Suddenly, with little warning; a very black cloud appeared overhead; there was a terrific clap of thunder right close by, and a strong sulphurous smell filled the air. The cows, frightened, dropped to the floor; I ran to the door way to have a look at things. About that [time] Ma yelled, gesturing to above my head, “The barn’s on fire.” Margaret certainly displayed amazing strength as she ran from the house, grabbed the full pail of milk and another half full, and ran to the first floor overhead where smoke was pouring out. After I’d recovered my bearings and ran up there I was to find a perfect team of firefighters - Margaret had thrown milk on the burning hay, and Ma had completed the job by smothering the flames with a handy horse blanket. Lucky too for the quick action; soon we were to find out that the bolt had put our telephone out of service, so no outside help could have been summoned.

Gladys was going to Oneonta State College\textsuperscript{393}! She would not be seventeen until December 24, 1947, but the college had let her start the fall term. Money in the Runion household was still on the very short side, and she would have to make a go of it on a shoe string, you might say. We arranged for her to live with a professor at the college, a Mrs. Yager\textsuperscript{394}, where Gladys would assist with the housework at the instructors home, in exchange for board and room. So Gladys was our first in college.
How forlorn can a sixteen year old, or seventeen for that matter, look? I say that they are at the lowest point of being homesick when you drop them off for the first time at a strange doorstep and drive off without them. I’d venture a guess that then they start thinking, “Well, this is it. Childhood is over for me, and I’ve got to be a big Girl (or Boy) now. I wonder how soon I can get home for a day or two?”

Our trips to visit Gladys were, alas, not too frequent. There was so little time, what with Kraft and chores at home, music lessons; and the old Dodge never could be depended on when we did want to go. But to allow that old she-devil her just dues, one thing that the Dodge did well was holding to the road when it was slippery. When we decided to fetch Gladys home for Thanksgiving that first year, we certainly were not sure whether or not we’d make it to Oneonta and back. We started out in a light rain; we loaded a couple hundred pounds of feed in the back for traction, and everyone piled in - Margaret, Sarasita, Corinne, and the boys, Ma and I - hoping to make Oneonta. The going wasn’t too bad as far as Morris, but before tackling the three mile upgrade of Patrick Hill, I decided that it was time to put on tire chains. At the service station where we stopped to put on the “luggers” the attendant allowed that we couldn’t make the hill. But we lumbered off, second gear, over glare ice, and crawled over that hill at a steady 15 MPH. Several cars were off alongside the road, but weight and a steady pace did it for us. We made the twenty-four miles over in two hours - how about that? You can never predict the weather, though; it decided to warm up while we were in Oneonta and we were able to take off the tire chains and drive home over fair roads.
Speaking of roads, the county was finally getting around to grading and paving our road, almost fifteen years after it had been offered as bait for our votes. The Runion boys went wild over power shovels, dump trucks, graders, and other equipment, which was being used on the new construction work. They played road building all day long, using a little wheel barrow for a truck and improvising power tools, groaning, grunting - "putt, putt, putt, brrrr, wheee!" The boys' road wound up the banks of the hillside; there were play truck garages, gravel banks, and the like. What fun they were having. The foreman on the road job was very much interested in the young road builders, and did a lot of fooling around with them.

For the house, clouds of dust from tearing about with the road machinery day after day certainly didn't help us keep it clean outside or in. Dust settled on the house siding, and dampness plastered the stuff on tight; it was a terrible mess. It seemed that we never were able to get the house white again, no matter how much scraping and painting we did.

Then the road boss didn't know or care about the condition of the road when they quit work at the end of the day, and it often seemed dangerous to take the car out onto the mess. During the construction it was common occurrence losing tail pipes and mufflers. One late afternoon we were driving home from New Berlin; the road was full of stones and holes - something like driving over a stone fence. Coming to the power shovel, parked to the side, Stephen excitedly said, "Daddy they forgot to shut off the shovel, I can hear it." The noise? Again we'd lost our muffler. But we reasoned that we were getting our road through at last, and that would be fine.
Doc Hammond, although still a comparatively young man, had been in failing health for some time. Unhappily he had adopted a fatalistic attitude in regard to his life expectancy. He'd told us, on one or two occasions; that his father had died, from some sort of hereditary malady, in his middle fifties. Doc said he believed that probably would be his fate. Sure enough, Doc seemed to be in a gradual state of decline, and he died at age fiftysix. He was one of the kindest men you would meet in a lifetime. He was present at the birth of Margaret, Sarita, Corinne, John, Stephen, and was as close to our family as anyone outside the inner fold could be. The Methodist Church and the whole community had lost a true friend. Doc Hammond’s last service to the Runions, performed at his bedside was a statement of Gladys’ health record for college entrance. (Incidentally Doc Hammond never charged students for this service. To be consistent one must add that our other doctor W. P. Elliott did the same for students).

One day we decided to go over to see Gladys. We didn’t make it there too often and the kids were all quite excited. But the old Dodge had different ideas; it balked and stalled all the way to Morris, and part way up Patrick’s Hill we stopped dead. Stephen loved cars, and the vicissitudes of our old rig really bothered him, and this time, perched on the steep hill and some scared, he began to cry. It was rather scary for us all too, but finally - at length - one of us at the wheel and the stronger ones pushing, we got her headed down hill, and with the motor in high gear drifting down the grade it started up. Then by goosing the motor when it tried to die, we were able to limp back the ten miles to Harrison Camp’s garage. The fuel pump was at
fault, and as Harrison rarely had new parts on hand, he went to work rebuilding the thing. His stock remarks were generally something like “Ought to get you home alright,” or “Guess it’ll last awhile now.” But, as I’ve said before, Harrison was a natural born, first class mechanic, and seldom was at a loss locating trouble spots in a running thing, be it a time piece or huge truck.

Mother and Father Esau were retiring from the chicken business and decided to see how they would like to make Florida their home. They came down first in 1948, renting living quarters for the winter, on the ocean side of Daytona Beach. Obviously the Sunshine State was much to the seniors’ liking, and they decided to locate permanently on the Florida East Coast. They purchased a property on the west bank of the Halifax River, a tidewater stream - part of the inland waterway, and which parallels the Atlantic shoreline. The separating strip of land, spoken of as “the Peninsula,” is a very desirable place to live, the climate being tempered by both river and ocean. Their home, in the city of Holly Hill, just north of Daytona Beach - the two cities actually have grown together although maintaining their respective corporate identities - is really a very nice place for a retirement home. About ten minutes auto drive across the Seabreeze Bridge and the peninsula sets one down on the very fine beach. Most of the time, except during unusually high tides, cars are driven and parked right on the hard sand, where one can bathe in the surf, sun bathe, sit, or walk on the beach. Or, if you happen to be real lazy, you can drive your car along the beach - at ten miles an hour.

Fred and Carol Esau also decided, it would seem, that they would pioneer to
Sunny Florida. After selling the Earlville property, they made plans to follow the seniors south. Often I’ve thought what courage it must have taken to carry out their plans. Carol, Fred and their little girl, Diane\textsuperscript{398}, visited us before they left; they were buying a house trailer, and would pull it to Florida. Most roads then were narrow, two lane, and went right through towns and cities. That must have been SOME trip. The young Esaus lived in a trailer park in Lakeland at first. Later on they bought a new house there, and have lived in Lakeland since.

Cliff Bound\textsuperscript{399} was the minister for two years following Doc Webster’s “reign.” What a character to follow - Bound being of a dignified, intellectual bent, and rather quietly reserved. The Bound family consisted of Cliff, Ester (Mrs.), two girls and a boy - they were a fine family. Well, you might say that New Berlin got the idea that anybody following Doc Webster was shortchanging them; the folks at the church barely “tolerated” the Bounds. Cliff went on to Oxford where the folks liked him so well that he about got life tenure there - until the church burned down.

Joe and Betty Fiske\textsuperscript{400} were at New Berlin for three years, and what years of work and activity that was. They were a fine young couple - Joe good naturedly plump - his coat buttons were being overworked; Betty a very good looking young woman. Joe was an excellent preacher, but, alas, I always felt that any hint of profound discourse was pretty much wasted on New Berlin congregations. During those three years, The Lord’ s Acre, a first class fund raising organization - predominatingly a male group - early in Joe’s ministry got going. No repair work had been done on the church buildings for a long, long time; they certainly cried for
attention. We excavated the church basement (there had been but a hole dug out to accommodate the furnace), laid up new foundation walls, remodeled the first floor, installing rest rooms, and installed a brand new kitchen. (For those not familiar with the church, the first floor was given over to Sunday School Rooms, and the aforementioned facilities; the sanctuary [was] on the second floor.) To raise money for these projects, the Lord’s Acre had Pancake Days, Oyster Suppers, produce auctions (of things raised for the L.A.), gathered and sold Christmas trees and sold wreathes which we made, and took orders and sold fruit cake. All the holiday items mentioned were sold in some unheated “borrowed” store that we could find, and not being used at the time for regular selling. No we didn’t use the unheated places to look like we were martyrs; the Christmas trees didn’t drop their greens in the cold places. One Christmas we secured the old quarters of the town drug store; it was located just opposite the Eagle Hotel. Soon “they” started kidding me about “hitting up the bottle” to get warm. Well you stand around all day with freezing feet - and you’ll find you “gotta go someplace often.” The hotel had nice warm men’s rooms.

To illustrate the sad state of accommodations before we got to work, there had been a single seat toilet, a chemical affair, located down a short flight of stairs in the furnace nook. It smelled disgracefully, and we used to try sending any inquiring customers over to the parsonage bath room. Ma used to bring a can of chloride of lime, and sprinkle the stuff around [on] Sunday mornings to try and improve the odor of that spot. We used to refer to that seat of stained crockery as the church’s
genuine antique.

Somewhere along the line we came to the conclusion that it was rather foolish to gather hay in the summer and feed it to the horses during the long winter. We weren’t using them enough to bother having them around; they were getting old too - as horses go. So - and it was one of those heartrending decisions we sometimes have to make, off to the rending works for the nags for a consideration of $30. We felt rather sad about it, but that’s how the chips fell for Babe and Bess.

Gladys had done first rate work at college, and she was going to do her practice teaching in Schenectady. The officials at college asked Gladys how she felt about rooming with a colored student in Schenectady, and she told them that she’d no objections. The young lady proved a very pleasant room mate, Gladys reported.

Our first college student was graduating; the occasion would have been perfect had Ma been there in the auditorium sharing the honors. But the Vital Statistics Callender had decreed otherwise; there was imminent still another Runion, and Mamma Runion wasn’t travelling. E. R. Eastman, president of the Board of Regents for the State of New York, was the honored speaker of the occasion. In retrospect, Eastman seems to picture for me about the same pithy Yankee Stuff as a Dale Carnegie - I admired him from the start, although for the love of me I can’t remember a word he said that day. Eastman “worked up the ladder” from country school teacher, I’m told, and was an admirable character. For years Eastman published a little farm magazine, The American Agriculturist; it had brief and informative farm articles. His joke column, “Eastman’s Chestnuts,” was usually droll
and funny, and I turned to that part of the little paper for first look.404.

Gladys had signed a contract to teach in Walton, N.Y.405.

When we first learned that another Runion was coming; there was consternation in our camp. Not at the prospect of another in the family, to be sure; that was gladdening news; what alarmed us was that Doc Hammond was no longer around, and we were not too confident, in our minds, as to Dr. Elliott’s skill in baby cases. When we first lived in New Berlin, we were enlightened about a maternity hospital which Doc Elliott had maintained in his large house. It seems that the mortality rate of infants born at the little hospital was much higher than average, and state health authorities ordered the place closed. Carrie Colgrove had told us that she preferred not to have his cases as Doc was always impatient to “get it over with.” However, soon after we came to the neighborhood, the Chase Memorial Hospital came into existence, and Doctor William (Billy) P. Elliott became the head of that institution. It seems that the doctor was growing up, and most everyone agreed that he was doing a good job at Chase. People had praise for him as a surgeon. For my part I often felt that Doc Elliott was too knife-happy, anxious to remove tonsils, gall bladders, and other glands and organs that were evidently put in there for a purpose. But skip my opinion - let me say that I concurred in the general concensus of thought that Doc saved more of ’em than he lost. Be it as it may, it would either be Doc or some out-of-towner, who we would not be acquainted with, so it would be Doc. But Ma’d have none of Doc’s little Chase Memorial Hospital. Mabelle King, as I recall, was delighted at the prospect of yet another visit of the stork to her house, so “It
would be at Mabelle’s.” Evidence of Valerie Christine Runion in the flesh should be sufficient proof that her birth on June 29th 1951 had taken place without mishap. Incidentally, Doc Elliott became a trusted consultant, and friend, of the Runion family, and now occasionally, one of our kids writes of seeing him for something or other.

Margaret was going to Fredonia State that fall, to prepare for a music teaching career. Now two of our girls would be away from home, and we were beginning to have pangs of lonesomeness just thinking about it - before they’d left!

Gladys had to find a place to live in Walton, so we started early one day for that town. Interestingly, one soon found out that whichever route one would choose to Walton, it was all uphill and down, sort of a roller coaster ride. Walton had been a summer resort town, but was on a decline with summer visitors. However, it was and is the County seat of Delaware County. It lies in the hills at the western end of the Catskills. When we had driven the 58 miles to Walton, we found out that all of us were hungry, so [we] decided to continue out of town, on a good appearing road, and find a nice spot to eat the lunch which we’d brought along. Soon we realized that the road was going up and we were climbing. This was a mountain for sure. We shifted to second and then low gear, and the old car was just crawling. Then we spotted a turn-out on the downhill side; we turned fast and made for that nice level spot. We were looking over the clouds that were overhead a while before! How pretty it was. Should you sometime take the Walton-Downsville road over Bear Spring Mountain - that’s it! Often I have thought what a fine road that is - to keep off of in the
wintertime storms. Gladys found boarding accomodations with Mrs. Peck, who, with her sister, Mrs. Morehouse, both of them elderly, took in boarders as a means of living\textsuperscript{409}.

We had traded in - our first of several deals with Herb Coman\textsuperscript{410} - the 1936 Dodge for a 1940 one. What big shots we Runions were getting to be, now only about ten years behind the latest models. Just after we'd traded, Jim Elting came around and told us that he was trading his 1940 model Dodge for a new car, so knowing that Gladys wanted a car and that Jim took good care of his, we got in touch with Gladys, and arranged for her to buy that one. These were nice riding cars, and getting more on the dependable side, but still they were slow starters in winter months.

I must tell you about Herb Coman: he is sort of an "outstanding character" to be sure; Herb kept a used car lot and garage in South Edmeston. He had been a star salesman for the local Chevrolet agency and had decided to go into business for himself. In appearance, Herb reminds me now, as I look back (I am speaking in present tense - Herb’s "spirit" will ever be here), as a dead ringer for our United Nations Ambassador, Arthur Goldberg\textsuperscript{411}. A Gentile by birthright, Herb possesses the Hebrew business acumen, how-be-it one always found him strictly honest dealing - not to say that Herb ever overlooked a "good deal" for Herb. Right now I'm convinced that before Herb talks with a customer ten minutes, he'd figured what the fellow needed, how much he could afford to pay, and other facts about him which would affect a deal.
Ma had made all arrangements by mail for Margaret’s entrance to Fredonia College; she would be majoring in music. It was 260 miles to that spot on Lake Erie; at the time we hadn’t the money, satisfactory car, or time to make the trip that far off. We Runions were determined to educate our kids, but we were still scraping the bottom of the pocketbook and robbing the kitty, and that’s the way matters stood. Margaret would take the evening Greyhound Bus to the college town. I took her to West Winfield, where she boarded the bus for Buffalo, changing there for the Fredonia bus. Before, and after she’d boarded the bus, I was beside myself with misgivings. What were we doing sending this kid away on a night bus, alone, never having traveled alone before? Those bus terminals, tough places. Would the old dorm house be satisfactory? Would she get a taxi in Fredonia, as we’d cautioned? The bus was stopping; I shoved the young lady aboard, and turned quickly to the car; the Old Man couldn’t trust his feelings at that moment. Aside, one might remark that, in our case, lack of material thrills served to weld us into a closely knit family; well then, we’d just have to adjust to the idea of our older children leaving home, hopefully, temporarily, for college, and then for their work.

Certainly sending the young folks off to college presented many difficulties—not the least of them being finances. For instance, Margaret, like Gladys, as soon as she could, arranged to live with a family, helping with the household duties, during part of the four year stretch. Then too, Ma sent off all of her teaching earnings to whichever one needed funds most.

The Fiskes’ first child was born January 25, 1952, and they named her Alice
Over the years, with the kids’ help, many repairs and improvements [were made] around the Runion Place. Gladys bought paint, and helped paint the garage and house - one of the first things she undertook with help of her Walton salary check. At different times I arranged bank loans, and had the house, barn, and garage reroofed. The boys took great pride, as they grew older, in keeping a fine lawn; appearances, as one approached, made the heart seem glad - the result of “teamwork” all around!

During Gladys’ first year teaching, she got the idea that our old cast iron stove should be replaced with a more modern looking one. For some time stoves finished in baked on enamel were being displayed in stores, and that probably gave her the idea that it would be nice for our kitchen. Through no fault of Gladys’, that first Sears-Roebuck stove, being only about half the size of the old one, more or less threw the household into a tail spin. The firebox was short and we had to cut special sized wood to fit it; during cold nights I’d have to get up during the night to replenish fuel, so the fire would not go out. The oven also was of very small dimensions, and wouldn’t accommodate the makings of a good sized baking. Well it was one of those times when I felt sorry for myself, and for poor frustrated Mamma, both of us trying to cope with the stove situation. One day I was in the hardware store and saw a G.E. electric oven on the floor; Vern Shaffer told me that he had taken it in on a trade for an electric stove. It looked about new; he offered it to me for $15. and I thought it would be worth a try for Ma, and bought it. That little appliance was just wonderful
in relieving the cooking and baking emergency. By the way, it is still going strong - ready to cook an entire meal, bake bread, or roast a big turkey! When Gladys came home for the holidays, she realized what was up and ordered the big stove. It turned out to be somewhat bigger than the original stove, a real peach, and we loved it.

Our place was near enough to New York so we were assured plenty of guests during the pleasant months. Occasionally old friends from Tenafly or around New York would pop in for a visit with us on the farm. John and Vi Maguire were sure to be up two or three times during the summer. My half sister Daisy came when she could, as did her family - the Sayer nieces and nephews - and I’m sure we heartily welcomed them all. Incidentally Daisy had an odd concept regarding the origin of products that came off the farm. We often were constrained to remark that it looked like Daisy thought that everything grew on trees, free for the picking. Like one day, just before she was starting off for home, she hefted a good sized churning of butter, remarking that she’d take it off our hands, and past experience told us that she wasn’t fooling either. That was too much of a good thing for our “good natures” and we told her, “Sorry, got a customer waiting for it.” Right then we had lots of customers for home churned butter, and we needed the money besides.

It must have been the 1954 Wyoming Conference when Joe Fiske asked me if I would like to go with him and some others for the closing session in Johnson City, when the appointments for the coming year would be read. I accepted. I remember that I was real tired from a hard day at Kraft, and the others in the car laughingly told me that I’d snoozed all the way down. I don’t remember the others
besides Joe and I, but I’m sure that we all were greatly surprised when we heard that Joe was being moved to Greene, and a fellow, Jack Wolfe was assigned to New Berlin. To put it briefly Joe later confided to us that the man who had been in Greene had gotten into an intimate affair with a woman of the parish - an old failing of his - and, as a consequence, that church was in need of a trouble shooter. Fiske was picked as a likely hand to patch up feelings within the church and the community, and get church affairs running properly again.

Of Jack Wolfe, no one seemed to know much, and if they did know anything of his background, no one cared to comment. Piece by piece we learned that his father was an ordained minister in our conference, but when Jack came to New Berlin his schooling amounted to the possession of a high school diploma. He had worked for a time in the Scintilla Magneto plant, Sidney, where he reported that he had developed a nervous condition and, somehow, concluded he had “been called to preach ‘The Word.’” The whole situation seemed irregular; Wolfe, by some arrangement with the District Supt., was under promise to do theological-related studies at Hartwick College, Oneonta, meanwhile assuming the pastoral obligations of the New Berlin Church. It seemed like a big job, but the congregation were in agreement to give the young fellow a fair trial. Certainly the church officials were not enthusiastic over the arrangement, considering that the church had committed themselves to a budget for the services of a full time pastor, and would have to abide by the budget promises.

For a short while the affairs of the church went along quietly enough - maybe
Jack's sermons were rather all of one pattern. They concerned "bad men" who sinned all their lives, and on their deathbed they'd invariably testify to their repentance, and were saved. There was a little story going the rounds, that the sermons which he read from the pulpit came in the mail each week, the product of his father's pen. But soon it became evident, by his presence in town at the times when his classes were being held at college, that he was not going to Oneonta much of the time, if any. His replies to inquiries were often arrogant and evasive - sort of the "whose business is it" attitude. The D.S. was not of a mind to become involved; it was a perplexing situation. One night, at a Lord's Acre Executive meeting, Brother Wolfe declared that all our actions in that committee were contrary to the Discipline of the Methodist Church, and he would take personal charge in getting matters of the L.A. to order. (As a matter of fact The Lord's Acre never has been or is an official body of our church. One might say that it is a sort of "Extra Mile," or work of love effort.) I happened to be secretary at that time, and turning to him said, "O.K., I'm turning over my records to the president. You've got one less officer to argue with now." I confess that he was not my ideal person to head up the church; such things as his remarks on other Tuesday nights, our meeting night being Tuesday - "Let's hurry up this deal so I can get back and look at the fights." Well, that was the year of not too much Lord's Acre activity.

The situation at church seemed to be worsening; on occasion neighbors reported Wolfe using profanity in the parsonage; his children and wife acted afraid of him. Certainly there was widespread bad feeling both within the church and out in
the community. But the young fellow went about registering smugness; from
outward appearances, he was set for the long, soft, pull; somewhere Jack Wolfe had
“connections” that one could not put one’s finger on. New Berlin could complain
endlessly, but it became more and more apparent that the situation would not get
attention on the District Level. Among the Runion tribe was the urge to do something
before another annual conference returned our liability for a second year. Since the
District Superintendent apparently regarded Brother Wolfe as a hot potato, and would
not act, Gladys drafted a letter to our Bishop, J. Fred Corson\textsuperscript{421}, setting forth the facts
regarding the ministerial situation at New Berlin. By return mail we were informed
that the matter would be put before the cabinet. We did not hear from the Bishop
directly again, however New Berlin got a change; when conference convened, Rev.
David Dawson\textsuperscript{422} came to us from Hartwick - and - it was an exchange - poor
suffering-Hartwick got Jack Wolfe. (Wolfe was at Hartwick a year; one day we read
in the Gazette that he was preaching some place in Vermont.)

One day during the autumn of 1954 we were very much surprised and
saddened to receive word that Pop Esau was suffering from a well established
cancer of the pancreas, which could not be treated. The doctor told Fred and Mother
Esau that the infection would probably prove fatal within three months. We
discussed the matter through and through, and decided that Ma, being his closest of
kin in our household, should go down to Holly Hill as soon as arrangements could be
made. John and Vi Maguire were up for Armistice Day, November 11\textsuperscript{th} and were
staying for the week end, planning to leave for New York that Monday. Sunday
afternoon our phone rang, and it turned out to be Fred Jr. calling from Florida. The report on Pop Esau's condition was grave, and Fred told us, if we hoped to see him alive, best to come immediately. I skurried around for enough money to send Ma and Valerie to Florida and back again. They rode to New York Monday morning with John and Vi, staying overnight with them, getting the first available train Tuesday, and getting Ma and Valerie to Holly Hill around six Wednesday morning.

Thursday of the following week would be Thanksgiving. Gladys had invited Ray Williford for dinner since Ray was now engaged to be her husband, although I don't remember - except by general agreement - that we'd been told about it yet. So that made, with Sarita, Corinne, the boys, and counting me, seven of us for Thanksgiving Dinner. We were, as I remember, having ham, and finishing off with plum pudding with hard sauce. Gladys was to demonstrate her artistry at the kitchen stove and, barring the "desert incident" the dinner went off with satisfactory eclat. Oh yes, it was, to be precise; the rum flavored sauce for the pudding that just about upset Gladys' equalibrium. 'You must understand that Gladys was a practicing teetotalering Methodist, who couldn't abide anything smacking of demon rum. She came prancing into the dining room, confronted me with the jar, labeled "rum flavored," exclaiming, "Honestly daddy." But it took some of the wind out of cook's sails when "honestly daddy," pointed out in the contents label, "artificially flavored". But I still imagined that rum flavor taint sort of spoiled the pudding for Gladys.

Our two Florida girls were gone only about two weeks, but it sure seemed an eternity. None of us actually suffered for food or comfort, but it was real lonesome
with the Mamma and Baby of the family away. Returning they travelled from New York by bus to Oneonta and all of us went over to the terminal to bring the family, intact again, back home. Pop. Esau, it was reported, was happy to have his girl down to visit him. He was weakening steadily from inability to retain food in his stomach. While he'd not mentioned going away from us, Ma said that she was quite sure he was aware of his condition. During their stay in Florida, Fred, Jr. came over regularly and one time took Ma and Valerie over to his home in Lakeland to show her how that part of the state looked. Maw was more than pleased with Florida's charms of climate and tropical growth, and told us that we had to see it some time when we could all go together.

Pop Esau died December 8th, 1954. His body was cremated and the ashes were scattered into the Halifax River, as was his wish.

Gladys and Ray were married April 15, 1955. The wedding took place in the Methodist Church, Factoryville, Penna., where a mutual friend, Rev. Tom Kline, was minister at the time. Ma had made a real fancy wedding cake, and we loaded it carefully in the trunk of the car for the hundred mile trip to that village. About half way down there we encountered extensive road construction, which made some very rough riding. Every so often, some one of us would remark, "Oh, oh, there goes the cake," but miraculously, the cake rode it out fine.

The family seemed to be growing up so fast! Easter came, and some of us work horses of the church were down in the Sunday School room below the auditorium, having given up our regular places "up there" to the "Once-a-years." As
the choir procession wound up the center aisle someone looked up, and pointed incredulously - mentally asking, was or was not the ceiling overhead bouncing up and down, in time with the procession’s footsteps? Yes, it was. That was where John - who, it seemed had but yesterday been Dr. Hammond’s prize package to us - Glen Carpenter, and his grandson Charles⁴²⁷, came into the picture. Glen Carpenter, our organist’s husband, never to my knowledge came to church services, but Glen and Gladys did contribute to the church’s support. Glen, one of those natural born handy men, had built two houses for himself, and did all around very neat carpenter work. He’d been road supervisor for Pittsfield way back, however for a number of years and at the time of which I write he had a government contract to haul mail between New Berlin and railroad connections. Reports were that this postal hauling job, employing two trucks, made him a nice income. Glen, himself, had quite a bit of spare time. As you might surmise, what I was leading up to concerned the church, and the shaky floors. Those three fellows started at the basement level, with a 4” x 6” beam running the length of the building, supported by like size posts, repeating the operation on the first floor directly below the middle aisle of the auditorium. When this job was completed, New Berlin Methodist church had firm floors for certain. While we remained in New Berlin, I daresay hardly a month passed that some Runion was not down there doing some bit of cleaning, repairing, [or] painting.

That old church building and most of the accessories remind me of the story of the One Horse Shay⁴²⁸; it just seemed ready to quit and fall apart. For instance, soon after leveling up the floors the old pipe organ - “tracker action” - decided it had
had it. Some wiseacres laid the blame on the new floor beams, but even S[c]homo agreed that it was worn out. (It had been costing about $500 a year, besides what work Schomo did on it, to keep the old instrument going.)

We learned that replacement with a conventional pipe organ would be financially out of the question. So a music committee took a look at several makes of electronic jobs, none of which, it would seem, suited our music requirements too well. There was a fair organist, and mechanical man, Randy Miller, who we learned had the agency for the Conn Electric Organ, and we decided to give the Conn a trial. After much examining, and listening - Schomo said the Conn didn’t seem to "squeal as badly as the others" - most everyone seemed to think that the Conn did the most towards meeting our church’s needs. Gladys Carpenter, Rev. Dawson, Mr. & Mrs. Runion were delegated to go over to the studio and see what Miller had in the way of console. A “Cathedral model,” two manual, appealed to the committee. The price was $2600, which was lot of money for New Berlin to come up with.

While at the studio I took note of two baby grand pianos, which Miller had taken in trade allowances on organ deals. New Berlin sure could use a better looking piano than the old upright, in the auditorium, not to mention the old one in the Sunday School room which was about ready to fall apart. So I said to Miller, “If we buy the organ, will you throw in the Wurlitzer baby grand?” No, he said he couldn’t do that; but he would let us have it for $200, that being the amount he had tied up in the instrument. To me that seemed a real good bargain, the piano being in right good condition. Now the committee’s next step was the superhuman job of selling the deal
to the church financial tightwads. The deal went through; it was fully underwritten by the church's members pledges; Gladys Runion paid $100 towards the piano, although she was staying in Walton most of the time.430
That spring (1955) Margaret was set to graduate from Fredonia. Ma thought that the 1940 Dodge should be capable of carrying the family there for the honor of seeing our second daughter receive her degree. But I wasn’t too certain - that old rig, I’d say, was just about 50% trustworthy. Such gadgets as the gas gauge, which we never could get working, although we’d taken the one from a wreck of the same model, and put the whole works in our car, and no matter what we did the gauge registered “full” when empty, and vice versa. The starter also was on the tempermental side, but we sort of got that figured, and found out some manipulations that worked when it got cantankerous. Anyway the day before commencement, after I’d gotten home from work, we started out to go as far as possible before dark. At Seneca Falls we really struck it lucky - I’ll never forget our relief, when for eight dollars the seven of us got nice accommodations for the night. (The New York Thruway had been operating for a short while, and most through traffic was using that route.) Beautiful Cherry Valley Turnpike, U.S. Route 20, on which we were travelling, was practically deserted, which accounted for our bargain. Incidentally, the turnpike has since been gradually coming back in public favor, and now both roads are busy thoroughfares. The next morning we steamed into Fredonia.

Margaret had arranged, she thought, for us to stay over Sunday night at the house where she had been working. The lady had, in fact, invited us to come to her place after the exercises, saying that she and her family would spend the night at their cottage on Lake Erie, and we could have the house to ourselves. But evidently the
lady had had a change of heart in the matter; we were met at her door with a dark expression, and little vocal communication. She did complain of a headache. So we changed plans, packed up all Margaret’s trappings, and started off for Niagara Falls, where there would be motel accommodations. There were, we found, plenty of motels near Niagara. But at every one of them the demand was $5.00 a head - no reduction for family or children. It was “the association’s rule for all” they told us. It was a very convenient rule, we thought - for the motels. As I said, I’d thought we would stay at one, but I didn’t have $35 to spare, and wouldn’t have parted with that much money for a night’s lodging anyway. (An old Oneonta college mate of Gladys’, Millie Brady, had been doing graduate work at Fredonia College that summer. She taught school just outside Buffalo and had a room near the school, and she had decided to drive her car along with us, it being in the direction of her lodgings.) What we did do was to park the two cars in Millie’s driveway; two of the girls slept on the floor of her tiny bedroom, and the rest of us catnapped on the car seats. When patrol cars drifted by we all held our breath. What a queer thing to be doing - a whole family spending the night in cars! Next morning, at daybreak, we were off, stopping at a nice restaurant where we washed, combed our hair, and had a fine breakfast.

We toured Niagara Falls, both American and Canadian sides, enjoying ourselves just wonderfully. Then Millie took off for her home, and we drove homeward via Avoca, where we visited briefly with our old friends Howard and Sally Warner. Well if you have never viewed a motor car bulging at the seams with humanity and luggage, you should have seen our entourage that day. But the old
Dodge got us home safely - mission accomplished, without mishap.

Sarita had started college the year after Margaret, at Oneonta State. Seems it was getting to be a habit, Runions off to college. During much of her college years, Sarita lived with a very fine Jewish family, Sam and Goldie Rosen. The Rosens had two children, a girl and boy, Susie and Barry; Sarita had them in her care much of the time. The Rosens evidently became quite fond of Sarita and I'm sure the feeling was, and remains, mutual to this day.

Margaret experienced a rather dull demand for her services as public school teacher of music. Oddly enough after looking into the openings in quite an area, she finally settled for Brookfield and Bridgewater. There would be quite some tricky driving during the bad winter months, especially the two days a week over mountainous hills to Bridgewater. She did not drive; neither did she have a car, and it was about time for school to start! Herb Coman came through with a 1950 Chevvie, which appeared to be in quite good condition. After a period of intensive practice, Margaret passed [her] drivers test and got her license. And that was a quickie for sure - I drove her up to school the first day; her license came in the mail that same day. Margaret turned out to be a very good driver, as all the Runion kids have.

Mert Kelty, a fireman at Kraft, was trading cars, and the one he was trading in I knew to be a good one. Mert said that there was nothing that he knew of wrong with the 1947 Chevvie; he said if we were interested in it that Herb Coman was the man to see. The '40 Dodge never had been too dependable, especially in the matter of starting on cold mornings so, all things considered, Mom and I decided there was
nothing to lose and maybe much to gain by trading. That 1947 Chevrolet car was, without doubt, the best performer in our family since the time of our first love, the Model A Ford.

We had so much confidence in that little vehicle, that Maw Runion decided - but I wasn't too certain - that it would take us to Florida and bring us back home. We decided to give the trip a try. Those days one had to make elaborate plans for the trip South. There were few Interstate Highways, and one had to crawl through or slowly circumnavigate cities that got in the way; it was most torturous I can tell you. We joined the AAA, which furnished their "Trip Tick" covering several pages of routing, which we made up our minds to follow to the letter. Such matters as a system of unfair "speed traps" in a place called Ludovici, GA, were set forth in that folder. One had, starting out for Florida by motor during the middle 1950's, I should imagine, somewhat the sensation that the westward ho'ers had when they started forth, covered wagon two-oxen power.

The night before departure, Steve Gregory, who was then town Supervisor, called a meeting of the board, and as was the custom, the boys talked farm stuff - crops, milk prices, farm machinery, the latest in manure spreaders, etc. - until along about midnight. Then after that town business was sleepily approached, the meeting concluding along about one in the morning. That day - we were leaving about five in the morning - I did what was about the stupidest stunt I believe I'd ever done - after about four hours sleep I swallowed two "No-Doze" tablets just before we left for Florida. That night found the brave Runion band well into Virginia, where we found
lodgings for the night in an overnight cabin (forerunner of the motel of today). The countryside there was parched and crying for rain, and from the pounding noise in the water line at the cabin, I judged that the water supply was low and that the racket was caused by air in the line. Whether it was the pills, the air in the water, or a combination of the two [that] caused Pa Runion to get sick, who knows. I really got the idea that my tenure was up, that night. Among other things I fought for breath, I sweat, and really was scared. Next day my poor suffering family had a “time” with delirious father. I wanted to get out of the car all the time, and when they did let me out I would lay out along side the road, and didn’t want to get back into the car. Somehow or other Ma and Margaret - fortunately they were good drivers - subdued me sufficiently so we could drive on to Gladys and Ray’s in Dunn, North Carolina that day. I remember I stumbled into their house, flopped down on their couch, and slept, and slept. What a nuisance one person can be!

It was real hot in Dunn the next day, which was one of those real hot July days that they have-way down south. But it was so nice to have the family together; I seemed to have recovered. It was so hot with the family packed in the little car like sardines in a can, that the following evening we decided to drive off and get as far as we could during the-night, thereby avoiding the heat of the sun. Ma was driving, and cutting down mileage real well. We got to the beginning of the Okefenokee Swamp about midnight and pulled up at a truck stop for refreshments and gas. The car starter didn’t respond, so the attendant there gave us a shove, which served to get us under way. But, just a way down the highway, our lights dimmed, and the needle flipped
way over to ‘‘discharge’’ indicating that our generator had given up. Quickly I turned back and made it to the gas station, wondering what now to do. The attendant informed us that there would be a mechanic on duty at seven in the morning - how nice. That attendant, a tall and slightly dark complexioned - we decided that he must be a mulatto - looking over the dismayed faces in our car, evidently took pity on us. He said, ‘‘Suh, ah got one on maah caah, that ah’ll jest trade wif you folks, and get you’z fixed in monnán.’’ Which he did for the sum of $2, and who says there are no compensations in looking none too affluent, and having a big family. I’ll just never forget that man, no suh! Next day about noon we rolled to a stop at Grandma Esau’s, looking for all - had we had a goat aboard - like the arrival of Mrs. O’Malley and her brood, of Early Saturday Evening Post literature popularity. We were in Holly Hill for the 4th. of July; that spot in Florida was pleasant and cool, after the heat of the ‘‘deep south.’’ How we marvelled at the wonderful beach, where cars could drift along beside the ocean, and at the nice warm water. One day Fred and Carol came over, and we all spent quite some time on the beach and in the surf. All of us palefaces were very careful to protect our bodies from the hot sun, especially did I, but forgetting all about my feet, and the exposed uppers of those extremities were severely burned that day. Mostly I remember that we had a fine holiday in Holly Hill. We then drove over to the young Esaus in Lakeland on our way home. From Lakeland we drove on route 301 for home. My two weeks vacation from Kraft was going fast.

Ma’s Uncle Bill (Piper), some years younger than his half brother Pop Esau,
had visited us several times over the years, always accompanied by his wife Auntie Alice. Auntie Alice had been victimized by cancer for a number of years, and had had several operations, hoping thereby to arrest the trouble. So we were not too surprised to hear of her death in Florida, where she and Uncle Bill spent the winter months, September 8, 1956. Her going must have been unusually sad for Uncle Bill. They had no family, and he would be lost for some time, we thought.

The spring following Auntie Alice's death, during the Easter season, Uncle Bill took a trip through the Canadian Rockies Banff Area. He was taken sick during the trip, losing contact with the rest of the group, and continuing on alone after he had recovered from whatever ailed him. Later that spring Uncle Bill and Mom Esau drove north from Florida to Tenafly, for the purpose, we were told, of disposing of his furniture and personal things, and selling the old home. We concluded that he just couldn't bring himself around to going on with that task; probably memories were too fresh. Anyway, we learned that not much was done about disposing of the homestead, at that time.

Mother Esau departed, by bus, for her home in Holly Hill, and Uncle Bill came to New Berlin for a good long visit with the Runion family. He seemed very contented, being with us, and we expected him to stay for quite a visit. Uncle Bill seemed to like our family chatter and grub. He and Valerie were great pals as they often, hand in hand, strolled down the road to the gravel pit and back, the while talking animatedly.

One time Uncle Bill became very serious, and told Ma and me that should
anything happen to him, that we should communicate with Merrick Fuller at the bank in Tenafly. We made light of his concern at the time - he seemed in robust health - and laying his anxiety over his separation from auntie Alice.

Uncle Bill had been with us for a week or ten days, when he got a summons for some business matter. He remarked "Umm, umm, guess I'll have to go on down." He left us with the understanding that he would soon return, and spend a long time at the Runion Ranch, as he called our place. That was the last time we were to see Uncle Bill Piper here on earth.

Mabel King was, in certain fashion, as close to our family as an outsider could have been. After all, she had come to nurse Mom through pneumonia, and had assisted at the births of our three youngest. As I've mentioned before, she always seemed delighted to "surprise Ruth" with a visit, spending the day with her small talk. Needless to say; the day always proved boresome for her listeners. Mabel would recite, in minute detail, the doings, aches and pains, other troubles, of relatives and friends, many of whom we didn't have the remotest acquaintance. But she was a lovable old girl, none-the-less and a fine friend.

Mabel, we were to find out, hadn't an iota of humor in her makeup - her demeanor singularly was melancholy. Heed the following episode. One evening we had an early supper, so we could go to a comedy movie at Dakin's Theatre. But, before we could get away, who should turn up but Mabel King - to spend the evening, she said, and would we please take her home later? One of us --not to be fooled out of the show, I guess it was I - said, "Come on Mabel, we'll take you along to the
movies," and she agreed that maybe she would go. The show was hilarious from start to finish, but a glance at Mabel told, without any doubt, that she was not even looking at the screen, and she sure was itching to get out of there. Then, turning a funereal expression to Ma, she remarked, "I just remembered Susie Mae said she'd drop in some evening. Maybe she come and I wuzn't to home." But she was a good faithful friend; I guess we loved her in a way. And isn't that a dam foolish obituary? Mabel King died one day in April 1957.

Mommy and I got to thinking what fun it would be to take the gang to Horseneck Beach, if there were anything left of the place after that hurricane of '38. So we wrote to the postmaster at Westport Harbor, Mass., asking him if he knew of any places there which we could rent, and he replied to get in touch with a Mr. Kelly. From that gentleman we rented, for a nominal sum, a cottage for two weeks that August 1957. We were all off to Massachusetts. Margaret drove her 1955 Chevvie; Ma and I had the 1950, which we had taken on the trade when Margaret bought the later model from Herb Coman. What a time! Never was there such a vacation; we had Horseneck practically to ourselves. The cottage turned out to be just an overgrown shack, but it and another identical one sat on two acres of white sand. I guess that old man Kelly took a shine to our young ladies (they, those New York State farm gals, and Mommy Ruth, weren't hard to look upon) and he generously said that we might just as well use the other house, which we did. But one thing that seemed to hurt Kelly's feelings was that we weren't willing to go with him to Roman Catholic Mass, which he attended every morning. We swam, ate swordfish to our
stomach's capacity, played in the sand, and loafed around some. One day we drove to Plymouth and looked over the Mayflower replica, and "The Rock" too, of course. It seems unlikely that that near Paradise setting will be offered us again; we made the most of it. Even as we were having our fun on our private patch of sand, word was about that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was taking over old Horseneck Beach for a State Seashore Park. There would be a high speed road from Boston to the beach. Progress, I suppose. 'By Horseneck.

Going home, Margaret's and our car became separated somehow in Albany. Ma, Sarita and I cruised around that city for over an hour, trying to find the other car, finally giving up the search and driving on towards home. We'd gotten to within 35 miles of home when the motor konked out, with a broken piston rod. After some consolation among ourselves, with crossed fingers, we called home. The other travellers had arrived and answered the telephone! Margaret drove up and got us and our stuff. The news from home was not too good either - cows had gotten into the Runion's garden and had done considerable damage. But we'd never forget that time in Horseneck.

Herb Coman drove up with me and the boys next day and towed in the car. The motor in the '50 was not worth repairing; it never had been too lively. Herb had, I should say, a couple hundred junked cars in his lot, and one Chevvie which was still in running order, but it's body not too good; Herb said had a "real good motoo, yes sir.443" So for $80, Herb's boys exchanged motors, and true to Herb's word that motor ran and ran with little trouble.
Came the fall of 1957 and Sarita was ready to join the Runion teaching sorority. She had signed a contract to teach vocal music in the Catskill village of Cairo. Oneonta State, after three years, seemed not the best place for the preparation in the teaching profession; Hartwick College and a degree in music was the result. The change did take another year in college, but Pete now had both elementary and music degrees. What a smart family!

Cairo, at the time, was a Catskill Mountain summer resort, patronized mostly by Jewish families. The permanent population was predominately Italian; anyway let us say the school kids were, to put it mildly, a rough and tough bunch. Cairo’s principal, being a physical Education man, didn’t seem to give the music program much thought - just so it was being carried on to the extent meeting state requirements. So teaching music at Cairo could be discouraging.

Corinne had entered Fredonia College in 1956; she would major in music education. So the fourth Runion girl was off to college!

Uncle Bill had been hospitalized around the holidays 1957-58 for what was described as a mild heart attack. No one had any idea that he was seriously sick when he was discharged from the hospital and went back to his living quarters in The Riviera Hotel, not too far from Mother Esau’s. He took his main meals with his sister-in-law, Mother Esau, which seemed a happy arrangement, and made company for both of them. So it was a great shock to us all, on the evening of February 7th 1953, as our telephone rang and Merrick Fuller, calling from Tenafly, said to me, “William Piper died suddenly today.” (Later on Mom Esau told us that Uncle Bill
had had lunch with her, and gone back to his hotel room to work on his income tax report. He had felt the attack coming on and asked the hotel people to summon his doctor. The doctor came promptly, but Unk was dead when the doctor arrived.)

Fuller told us that Uncle Bill would be brought to Tenafly for burial services. This news, so unexpected - he was just seventy, and fit appearing - was very upsetting; we had had a notion that Uncle Bill might choose our place as his summer home, and now he was gone.

We did manage some quick planning, and by the time Fred called from Lakeland, we were able to settle arrangements for Maw and Valerie to meet the others at Tante Anna’s place in Wortendyke. All that I can report about the last rites for Uncle Bill Piper is that, fulfilling his wishes, his - as was Auntie Alice’s - remains were cremated and laid to rest in their plot in Shady Side Cemetery, Englewood, New Jersey. He left provision for a memorial window in the Tenafly Presbyterian Church.

We’d hated to see our Maw Runion and Valerie travelling by bus to New Jersey and back during winter’s most treacherous month, but on their return they reported a fair trip. There had been some snow and ice, and the bus was so[me] late coming into Oneonta. We were glad for clear roads on the trip home from the bus terminal. That Oneonta-New Berlin road sometimes could be downright frightening; it was something like going up and down mountains, going in either direction.

Mommy reported, among other things, that Uncle Bill’s estate would be divided equally between Gram Esau, Fred Esau, Auntie Alice’s (deceased) sister’s
son, and Ruth Runion. I think that this bequest was a surprise all around, for it was known that at one time The Cancer Society had been named the principal beneficiary. What apparently had happened was that Uncle Bill had changed his will after Auntie Alice’s death.

That summer the executing of the Piper Estate notified all the beneficiaries that an inventory and appraisal of personal items had been completed. Any items that the heirs would care to have, would be given over at appraised value, and the amount for such items would be deducted from whoseever’s share in the final settlement. So we decided to drive down to Tenafly, Mom and I, Sarita, the boys and Valerie, and look over the things we were interested in. After a certain date the remaining things would be sold at public auction.

When we got to Tenafly, Merrick Fuller and another of the executing accompanied us to the Piper house, and we began selecting things that we’d like to have. I had strolled to the Hallway, and noticed a police car come to a halt outside; a cop with a hand on his pistol butt charged in, demanding to know what I was doing there. I guess I made some remark about this having been our uncle’s place, which didn’t seem to satisfy the copper at all. So I said to him, “You must know these gentlemen,” calling the two men out where we were, and, between them, things got straightened out. As matters stood, the police were keeping an eye on the place against possible looting, and our friends should have notified the local police department before they took us there.

There was plenty to look over in the old Piper home. Auntie Alice, while
she'd been every bit the embodiment of a cultured New England Lady, seemed also to embrace parsimony with religious zeal. Rarely did the Pipers discard anything that could be of any value. For instance, a year or so before her death, Ma and I, and several of the kids, drove to Tenafly to visit old friends, The Kesslers. Before going to our friends place, we decided that we ought to stop in to say hello to the Pipers.

(For some reason Auntie Alice never extended us an invitation to stay at their house. She just didn't "entertain.") So there we sat in Auntie Alice's living room - it was a hot day, and we'd driven about 200 miles - and after a while Auntie said, "Would you like a glass of water?" Yes, we allowed we would. Then one of them said they had some things which they were sure we could use on the farm. The things turned out to be an old five gallon kerosene can, some used fruit jars, and an assortment of crocks.

We dutifully took the stuff, and drove over to Rod and Helen's (the Kesslers). After greetings and talk, our hosts asked us to give them our bags, and then we mentioned the Piper's donations, which certainly did look foolish, crammed in with our-luggage. Rod, contemplatively shook his head, then laughed and remarked, "They collect here tomorrow" - and that was the answer.

But, make no mistake, there were many lovely things stored away in the Piper home. Mommy selected some fine old tableware, and some very nice household linens. The officials remarked that such personal objects as Bibles, family photograph albums, and the like, would not be sold anyway, and suggested we take anything like that which we'd like for keepsakes. There was an old, old, English hymn book (Aunt Alice's folks, the Rileys, had immigrated to Fall River, Mass., from
England. John Riley (her father) was, by trade, a loom fixer, and worked in cotton
mills when New England wove about all the nation’s cottons. The Rileys owned a
fine little home in the quaint, lovely, New Bedford. Their English origin explains that
old hymn book.) As you might have surmised, we did take the little book, and some
other momentos.

How fast families grow up. Yesterday the boys were building roads; one
furnishing ‘‘horsepower’’ for the other’s car or truck, playing, playing, playing, in a
child’s fantstic world, the magic of childhood slipping away with passing years. And
now, 1958 in the summer, the three of us Boys are installing a used furnace in the
 cellar, the old one having given up the ghost. Leon Grant449, like so many moderns
about that time, had switched to an oil furnace, and offered his used coal burning job
for $75. We didn’t mind hauling out the ashes - just so’s we could keep warm. The
boys - seein’ as how I was working - really were establishing themselves as heating
engineers. Those fellows puttied and painted windows, painted the house a couple of
times, and were self appointed groundkeepers for the estate. Maybe the kids had
catched their Old Man’s fever. I’d said, when we came upstate New York, that I never
wanted to move ‘agin. We were in love with that patch of river flat, hillside, forest,
spring runs, and the cluster of venerable structures.

The Bartz - Bill and Lulu450 replaced Dave Dawson in the pulpit of the New
Berlin Methodist Church. Billy, as Lulu addressed him, was a natural for New
Berlin; a man with the common touch, he won respect and admiration from most
everyone in town and countryside. He was a big man; hands big and hard - big all
over, but not the fat big. Years back he’d tried his hand at farming, over Columbus way, but from bits I’d heard, I gathered, as a farmer, he’d been just about average. One day, he told us, his Mother-in-law - of whose judgement he had great respect - said to him something like, “Billy, I believe you are cut out to be a preacher of the Gospel.” Bill Bartz took her advice, and by golly, how right she had been. He was in Abe Lincoln profile way quite homely; on the other hand he was the picture of dignity in the pulpit. When Bartz came to New Berlin, the church was about half filling; he proposed, “Let’s fill this church wall to wall” - and it turned out to be just so.

Lulu Bartz made a perfect minister’s wife. She kept a clean inviting parsonage, and encouraged visitors. Lulu taught school while they were in New Berlin, and I have an idea that she had helped finance Bill through his theological studies through her teaching.

The Bartz couple were in New Berlin from 1959 to ‘63, when Bill retired from appointed pastorates. The last word I’d had, Bill Bartz was “filling pulpits” as guest preacher most every Sunday, not to mention innumeral marriages, christenings, and buryings, and when Saint Peter calls, He’ll probably still keep at it - up There.

Corinne and Bill were married July 3rd 1959. Bartz tied the knot; it was a big, pretty affair, at our church. Besides the Runions - Bill’s aunts, uncles, and others of the Shamey clan, as yet strangers to us, were in attendance. But, of course we knew Bill’s parents. An aunt of Bill’s, from up Lowville way, made the wedding cake, a masterpiece, too pretty to cut, some one remarked. Another of Bill’s kin
volunteered to spike the punch, to which suggestion Corinne said, "Don't you dare,"
and it would seem that that message got through. Spiked punch in a Methodist
meeting house, horrors! A weird thing happened to me as I stood on the landing
outside the church, greeting friends and looking over the scene generally before the
wedding. A lady, total stranger to me, reminding me of my Grandma Frank, rushed
up to me and planted a kiss on my cheek. I was very much Buffaloed for a suitable
response, but the Kisser obligingly rushed off, no doubt to further embraces. Bill said
he had an idea which member of his family the fond lady was, but she went out of my
life, that day, for ever.

It was, I daresay, about all one could expect from a wedding; everyone
expectantly happy, a good sized attendance, [and] a lovely day. After the wedding a
much larger group gathered at the Runion house for supper than hostess had
anticipated. But she'd coped with such situations before, and the supper went off
without a hitch - everyone still happy, we thought.

For three or four Christmases the Lord's Acre went into Christmas trees head
over heels. For a couple of years we bought trees "on the stump" (uncut) from the
woods at the Methodist Youth Camp at Sky Lake. (By the way, Sky Lake, up in the
hills a short drive from Windsor (NY), is a fine secluded location for the purposes it
is designed to serve. The large tract of land and water had been the Kilmer Estate.
Some of you old timers might remember "Dr. Kilmer's Swamp Root," 452 a tonic, as
many of the patent medicines were termed, concocted by Kilmer, and which is
reputed to have made him a very wealthy man. The Wyoming Conference of the
Methodist Church bought the place for $75,000, and named it Sky Lake. Actually the several hundred acres and a good sized lake were a bargain at that price, and I suppose that now, with the several permanent buildings added, the camp now would be worth upwards of a half million dollars.) When we went for the trees, Bob Angel took his big coal truck, and several of us hearties along. At Sky Lake we would cut proper sized trees, eat lunch that we'd brought along, then drive the 55 miles back to New Berlin. It was usually dark by the time we arrived in town, and often the trees were covered with snow and wet, so not to take chances of them freezing together on the truck over night, we would unload them into OUR storeroom. Those storerooms were of interest and were procured somewhat as follows: one of us would spot an empty storeroom; then the one of us who happened to be acquainted with the owner did his best to get it donated to the Lord's Acre for a couple weeks before Christmas. The first two or three years the Lord's Acre really cashed in on Christmas trees, greens, wreathes that we made when business was slow, [and] fruit cake. Then all sorts of organizations - boy scouts, other churches, and some individuals who thought we were "making a lot of money" - muscled into our Christmas tree business. So we voted to let the others divide it up, and try to find other greener fields for our Christmas projects. Well, it had been a cold, cold job working in those unheated stores.

Margaret had signed a contract to teach in Tully, having tired of the Brookfield routine. Sarita, who had taught two years at Cairo, decided she didn't care for it there anymore and came home for the summer. That was 1959.
Sarita didn’t have a car, so we figured the ‘50 Chevrolet would be a good starter for her. Like so many of us, who at first agonized getting familiar with the mechanics of driving, Pete said that she just hated the ordeal of learning to drive a car. But the nervous beginner, like Pete, and many others I’ve helped with their learning, most often turn out to be good careful drivers. Oh yes, now Ma and Pa Runion had another of Herb’s bombers, a ‘55 “Terverlet, yes thir, yeth ser, motoo sounds real good, yeth thir.” So now Margaret and the family each had ‘55’s and Sarita had the ‘50, - all three Chevvies.

Sarita swore she was disgusted with teaching; anyway she said she’d had it at Cairo. One day John Grantier, principal at Brookfield stopped at the house, and inquired about Margaret, saying he needed a second grade teacher badly. Ma said to him, “We have a grade teacher right here,” and told him about Sarita. Apparently Pete and Grantier agreed on a deal; she would take over at Brookfield when school started. Incidentally Grantier was rated tops as a principal; he was all business, and ran a fine system. But he was a good natured man; about the only time he was apt to be in bad humor was when the Yankees were losing ball games. That’s a fact. But little to worry about from that quarter, for those days the yanks were mostly near the top of the first division in the American League.

One outsider, who had more or less wheedled his way into the Runion family circle was Bill Payne. True, he had often been a pest, had taken up our time, and stretched our patience, but he could be depended upon, whatever the emergency, to offer his help. So, when Bill became sick, and the diagnosis was cancer, we all felt
very badly. We did what we could for him, like driving him to and from the hospital in Cooperstown, and doing errands for Myrtle. Poor Bill just seemed to be wasting away, and shriveling up. He died, seventy years of age in the year 1959. For him a fitting epitaph could be something like: “Here lies Bill Payne, having lived life to the fullest that he knew how. He worked, played, ate, drunk likker, admired women - all to his hearts content. God Bless Him.”

John was entering Hartwick College for the fall term 1959, majoring in music education. He was the recipient of a college scholarship of $500 for the first year, renewable annually provided he maintained satisfactory grades. During the freshman year, students were required to live at dormitory, and happily John’s dorm was comparatively new, and his room rather pleasant. However, we were to learn, later on, that the board at Hartwick that year was hardly adequate - at least for J.F.R. He appeared half starved when he came home for the summer vacation. The next year, when John asked our opinion about going in with a couple other students on an apartment, cooking for themselves, the idea seemed worth a trial, and it worked fine too. What a house it was, though, which contained their apartment upstairs, and two down. It was dirty brown color and perched along Chestnut Street on a steep, steep bank. The easiest way to attain it was to park the car on Chestnut Street and climb two series of steps. Or when the road was clear and dry - it lead to the college by a series of S curves - you could drive it if you were a brave soul. But it was handy to stores, laundromat, and college; the three stuck it out there for the duration.

In August 1959, the Runions still in the nest at New Berlin, Margaret, Sarita,
Valerie, John, and Steve, Ma & I, were going on vacation to Long Island. Uncle John and Vi were planning to sell their place in Jamesport, and go to Florida to see how the climate there would agree with John’s artheritis. So, I got the bright idea of renting a place near them, where we could visit back and forth, and swim in the sound. The Advertisement sounded good so we rented a cabin for two weeks at a spot called Baiting Hollow. It was near Riverhead, and but a short drive to John and Vi’s place. So far, so good. The trip we figured out to Long Island turned out as expected very pretty and interesting. We traveled via Oneonta, thence route 23 to Catskills, NY, across the Hudson to Hudson, Hartford, New London, [and the] ferry to Orient Point, Long Island, which was but a short drive to our destination. We had started out real early and reached Cairo for breakfast. Some of the waitresses at the diner there remembered Sarita, and stopped at our table to chat with her. Yes we did get lost in Hartford, which reminded us that it is a real big city, but soon got straightened out, and on the road to New London. It was a pleasant trip for us all, and our expectations were high for Baiting Hollow. But what a surprise to find the spot we’d rented to be in the woods, and up on a high cliff from the water. From our location one must descend about 150 steps to reach the shore. Woe to any person who might be skiddish of high places. Then the sun disappeared and it rained - and it rained; it got cool, and there wasn’t any heat in the cabin. That vacation wasn’t too much of a success but we had some fun together. Yes, John and Vi seemed happy to have us vacationing near them. But apparently they thought our choice of accommodations rather a joke.
Sarita and Margaret had to leave for home the middle of the second week; Margaret had taken a teaching job in Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, and wished to get there and settled before taking up her teaching duties. Ma and I, John, Steve and Valerie left Baiting Hollow "Sans regrets" the end of the week.

The Runion family had embarked on a tree planting project. The hillside opposite our house and running to the woods was too steep to be of much use for anything but pasture, and the grass which grew there soon dried up when the weather became hot. Bill Craig, who we knew through our church, and who was working with the State Conservation Department, first offered us the suggestion, got the little trees for us, and gave us pointers on planting them. The first batches from a state nursery in Saratoga cost us $5 per thousand. Later years the price doubled, but the seedlings still were a bargain. Then for three or four spring seasons we were out with bundles of trees - one person ahead with mattock, another following and dropping a tree in the hole and firmly stepping down the dirt over the roots. 75% was considered a good rate of survival. Before we'd stopped planting trees I daresay there were ten to twelve GRAND of them. (The seedlings were "counted" by weight; if they were small there were more of them than the 500 to a package; if large it was the other way 'round.) We planted white spruce - they made fine Christmas trees - some Scotch pine, red pine, and Japanese larch. The trees made the hillside look real pretty.

Speaking of trees, probably one of the most beautiful trees any of us has ever beheld stood in our side-lawn when we moved to New Berlin. It was a giant of a tree then; beautiful in full leaf of spring, majestic in its nudeness of winter. We were
proud of that tree; none of us could even remotely imagine it not being there. Then about 1955 one small limb at a time began to drop its dead leaves, and failed to leaf out again. One day we particularly noticed coppery colored bugs in quite numbers about the trunk of the big tree. When I again talked with Bill Craig I mentioned the pretty colored bugs, which were cavorting around our elm. Bill shook his head, and said, “When you see the little beetles, you can make up your mind it’s too late.” Bill was right; it seems the little devils work their way between the bark and wood of the tree, and suck away it’s life-giving sap. By 1960 our fine old tree stood dead, the victim of The Dutch Elm Disease.

One day Bill Shamey came down from Watertown, with his chain saw to cut the old tree down. We had tried to talk the electric company into doing the job - sweet talk like “It might fall onto your line,” but they didn’t see fit to rise to the bait. The foreman did loan us a couple sets of heavy block and tackle to pull it in the desired direction, though. Bill worked like mad, cutting a great wedge from the tree on the side which he planned to drop it. Then working the upper side, he began sawing it down. We’d already fastened the pulley lines, and when it got about time for the tree to drop, I was pulling on one line and a neighbor another - we had our block and tackle lines attached to a couple good sized tree butts. Suddenly there was a sharp crack, and our giant started falling - at first in the right direction - hesitated momentarily and seemed to spin on the stump, taking off for the house! Down it crashed! But for the top limbs being quite rotten the south end of our house would have been considerably damaged. As it turned out, the branches snapped on contact,
and the damage amounted to only a few broken window panes. We might have called it a real happy ending. For one thing the big tree worked up easily into firewood. (Elms sometimes are so cross-grained that it is next-to-impossible to split them.) We didn’t figure the number cords of firewood cut from that tree, but it did furnish firewood for the kitchen stove for over two years. We counted 137 rings on the stump of that tree, which did not account for all the years of its life, as dead wood near the heart of the trunk prevented counting them all. Our Giant Elm had been an ancient one.

During the summer of 1960 I recall a trip to Cornwall, so we could see where Margaret was living. That is such a lovely part of New York State - beautiful hills, and hundreds of acres of apple trees mile after mile along Route 9W, the west side of the Hudson River. Then, when you get down near West Point and switch to the Storm King Highway, a road cut into the almost vertical stone cliffs - what a thrill! Like Niagara Falls, West Point seems never to pall on one’s imagination; there are, to me, no places to compare with the cliffs and winding Hudson below - both uniquely individualistic. This time we visited the West Point Chapel; I thought how nice it would be to hear that great organ. Whenever this old fellow sees a great organ he seems to have the longing to hear someone bring it to life.

The next summer, Sarita and Margaret were attending summer school in Fredonia. Pete’s old Chevvy was beginning to show the ravages of time. It had quite some rust and several holes in the body. The boys had teased her no end, saying they were going to paint it every color of the rainbow while she was off to Fredonia.
The boys did work like beavers, fixing the holes with fiberglass patches, and touching up the bad spots with paint.

When the girls returned from college everyone was invited to the "unveiling" of Pete’s car, and, spellbound, speechless, Sarita stood there beholding her brothers’ artistry. All over the car were polka dots of different colors. If you don’t remember, or haven’t figured it, the dots were just round bits of colored paper pasted onto the surface of the car. But they looked for real at first glance. It all washed off quite easily.

Margaret and Bob Millspaugh were married that year, August 16th (1961), in the family church, New Berlin. We knew little of Bob, except that they had met at a young adult group meeting, in the Methodist Church near her teaching post. Bob quickly became just one of the family - accepted, you might say, a very likable chap.

A funny thing, which could have had tragic consequences, happened the evening of rehearsal for their wedding. Bob was totally unfamiliar with the old church building, especially its booby traps. For some reason he came down stairs, and walked out the back (kitchen) door, and onto the small landing, where to reach terra firma one must immediately make a turn to the right and descend four or five steps. The trap was perfectly set that evening, the light outside the door having shorted out; and poor Bob walked off into four or five feet of space. Luckily Doc Elliott found no broken bones, but the accident sure didn’t do him any good! Someone reported to have heard Bob cry "J--s C----t, what the hell!” Bob couldn’t kneel at the altar next day.
So Bob and Margaret went on their wedding trip. Next day Ma and I, Sarita, Valerie and the Boys drove off for Maine. We were curious about Maine. What was it like? We decided to see for ourselves. It had been tentatively agreed that we would go to Florida to look after Mother Esau after I had retired from Kraft, and we thought this might be our last chance to see Maine’s rockbound coast. After much correspondence, an old Maine native agreed to rent us his house on Bailey’s Island for a week - after his summer renter had gone. And weren’t we proud of ourselves; we’d drive through Vermont on the way there, and see some of that rugged state also, or, we thought so. That morning we pulled into Duanesberg, NY, where we ate breakfast, and would pick up route 7 for the trip through Vermont. While there it started to rain. It would likely soon stop, we told ourselves, but it didn’t. Joking, later on, we told everyone that all we’d seen of Vermont was rain and water, which was pretty much so. For instance, John was driving along about 45 M.P.H. - that being the best he could do in the rain slick road - when suddenly water loomed up on the road right ahead. He couldn’t stop in time, and we plowed in, dousing the motor - and there we were. I jumped out and ran ahead to a building which looked to be a garage, and now I was wet. The fellow, evidently in charge, wasn’t concerned with a towing job, and said that the hot motor probably would dry itself, and it would start “presently.” Which it did, but although the motor had dried out, that certainly wasn’t the case with me - no sir. Shortly after noon we chugged into a little town, Waterford, Maine, and spotted a cluster of overnight cabins. Quite plain they were. We couldn’t get into the house we had rented until the morrow, Sunday, so we
decided to stop overnight in Waterford [and] get dried out and rested. Approaching the man of the cabins, I asked about the prospects for a good supper in town. Sure thing, fine Saturday night supper, baked beans and such down at the firehouse. ‘Twas probably the traditional Saturday Night Boston Bean supper that touched off the revolt. One and all gave me the dirty stare, as though it were I alone that had planned this Noah’s Ark voyage, and now beans for supper? Someone said, “I’d rather go back home,” which suggestion got nowhere with Pa, since the rent was already paid for the week. So, after getting prettied up, I said, “Let’s look around for supper,” and - what do you think - after driving along for about fifteen minutes, we beheld lights, lots of them! It was Old Orchard Beach, where we got a most satisfactory meal, in very pleasant surroundings.

Next day we had dinner at Howard-Johnson’s in Brunswick, very top-notch, and which put us all in reasonably good humor. It was now but a short drive to the Island. One crosses a short causeway to Orr’s Island, then ditto to Bailey’s Island. The air on Bailey’s was sharp and invigorating; we guessed we’d like it there.

Our house was perched on a sharp, blufflike rise; there were steps leading up to it, and I thought at first glance that the steps were of seasoned, weathered logs, but upon examination they turned out to be stone. (The stone formation on Maine’s coasts intrigued us. Why did those huge slabs of rock stand on end?) We left the car below in a little turnout, and went up to explore the house. We found it to be very adequate for comfort; there was a fine Franklin stove and firewood inside. We found need for the stove’s warmth each evening. Monday we agreed we’d go for a nice
swim. Two things we were to learn about Maine’s coast: (1) There may be some warm days in July, (2) the water reminds one of ice all the time. There was a fishing boat - just one - on which we had planned going out fishing “at least once.” The day before we arrived, during a storm, lightning had hit the boat, ruining the ship’s compass and burning out its wiring. The boat wouldn’t be running while we were there. So no deep water fishing for us. Another vacationer, a native schoolteacher, Mister Plaisted, offered to make the foursome pitching horseshoes. He was a nice fellow, but the skunk turned out to be sort of a professional horse shoe pitcher, and we were made to look like the novices - that we were - playing with him. He talked slow Maine talk - like when the horseshoe left his hand, he’d casually remark, “This one is going to be a wringaar, boys.” And, so ‘twould be. Not too much fun doing that, as you can imagine. But we walked, exploring the island, and really had an enjoyable time for the short week. But, really the water was too cold for bathing.

Friday dawned cold and foggy; the fog showed no signs of lifting by noon. All hands were of one accord when someone said “home,” and in fifteen minutes we were on the road. We took the Maine and New Hampshire turnpikes to Boston, then a belt strip to the Mass. turnpike, and the New York Thruway to Canajoharie; then route 10 to The Cherry Valley Turnpike, and we were home by early morning.

“Home Sweet Home.” Pete would be going back to Canajoharie soon - most of you know that she was living in Canajoharie while teaching at Fort Plain.

Pete was getting to be a real hotrodder - or perhaps I should say she was driving, necessarily, quite a bit. On her second Easter vacation at Fort Plain, she and
another teacher, Carol Christie, left in the latter’s car for Florida. Sarita would stop off at her Grandma’s and the young lady was going to drive on to her brother’s home in Ft. Lauderdale. When Sarita had been in Holly Hill for a short time, I guess that she realized that, without a car, she would be quite cooped up at 100 Peterson Court. So she up and rented a car from Hertz, and she and Gram Esau were then able to get around conveniently. Hertz was then, I believe, the sole rental car agency in the Halifax area, and Pete found out that their rates were quite high. On the return trip - her friend Carol evidently had been burning the midnight oil in Ft. Lauderdale - the young lady constantly was falling asleep, and the driving fell mostly to Sarita.

Somehow - and I guess I’d hatched the idea - I wanted to take Ma and the young folks that were still at home for a visit in New York before we took our final leave for the south. I’d been checking with hotels, which advertised in Saturday Review; the best bet seemed to be the Hotel Paris, at 97th Street west. The drive there was simple - The New York State Thruway and Westside Drive right to the hotel. The drive certainly had been a revelation - just like going downtown - and fun.

The hotel itself was large and clean, and made a satisfactory headquarters from which to take the subway. We were way up on the 13th floor! What I was totally unprepared for was the change in that neighborhood since I’d lived there with Aunt Annie on 96th Street. Thirty years, I suddenly came to realize - nearly forty - they had gone by so swiftly - is quite a number of years for a neighborhood; it either improves or deteriorates. The part of New York whereof I speak, where cultured people had lived in the fine brownstone houses, where uniformed nurses walked their
charges in perambulators, and ladies and gentlemen strolled along Morningside Park, where streets had been clean as floors inside the private homes, just was no more.

The Street numbers and Park names, were the same, but run down houses were all.

Not worthy of the saying "gone to the dogs"; I'd say the section had gone to the pigs.

Just once did we venture onto Broadway, where bearded Rabbis, colored people, Puerto Ricans, and a conglomeration of Hoodlum types sort of crowded you - not for us, we decided. So we slept in the hotel. Then Ma and I, Pete, John, Steve, Valerie hotfooted it all together into the nearby subway entrance. First to Bronx Park for a whole morning of that wonderful zoological garden. Lunching there, we then rode the subway all the way to the battery, and took the boat to the Statue of Liberty. (I'd never visited there, although I had passed The Lady often while going over to Staten Island on the ferry.) We visited some of the big stores, ate at the Automat for the novelty of it, and had a ball for ourselves generally. One place I really wanted to visit was the old brownstone front house on 96th St., where I'd lived for a time with Aunt Anna. Then at the end of the street, at Central Park, I wondered about the beautiful Christian Science Church, where I often attended services. (Those days the ushers wore cutaway coats and striped trousers at morning service.) So we all struck out for those places on foot. The house looked filthy; the church had a padlock on the door, and I wondered if it were still in use. Unlikely, I thought. Central Park at that point looked neglected, unused. Hundreds of people used to stroll about the beautiful paths, and many children played in it, while their nurses and mothers sat on a nearby bench. Now would one dare to enjoy the park as we used to? Not I, I'm sure. We
spent three or four nights in the big city; nights in New York were always so exciting, I thought: Times Square after dark, with all the blazing lights and the crowds. It wasn’t the same as I’d remembered; there was something of the sinister about the place. We dropped into a movie theatre just off the Square, and looking about us wondered if it had been a good idea - some of the young fellows about there with their long locks and unshaved mugs looked sort of “shifty.” It’s just that somehow the middle class had gone - there were now just the Old Bowery Types and the Cultured ones. Well, perhaps one should not expect too much of the Status Quo, when visiting cherished spots after a long absence. Well, it had been a grand Aufwiedersehn for dear old New York. For me, I’d just as soon go back for another round right soon.

Steve entered S.U.C.E. Cortland for the fall term 1962. Like the other Runions, there never was any question of his deportment while at college. Cortland, NY, was a rather sleepy college town, and remains so today. Steve liked it quite well there, I would guess.

All of the family, I’m quite sure, wanted to hang onto the old farm. After all, we’d been there a long time, and it was a part of us. Had the locality been more on the temperate side of the thermometer, we probably would never have offered it for sale. But the prospect of frozen water facilities, and frost invading the house, seemed too great a risk to assume. Then there was the concern for fire, and the everpresent danger of vandalism. So, we began to think about just what we could do with the old home.
So we began concentrating on disposing of the farm, hoping that the family which got it would be "worthy" of the fine home it offered. The job certainly wasn't without disappointments; the few local persons, that called themselves realtors, turned out to be totally lacking in imagination and/or push. One establishment in Sherburne told us the place wasn't worth much, and my parting words to them were, "I return the compliment, neither are you."

Very well, we would sell it by ourselves, to someone from the big city, for a nice country home. So we took photos of the house and buildings from up on the hill. They turned out so fine it about broke my heart, thinking about someone else living on the Runion homestead. We put advertisements in two New York papers, and sat back awaiting inquiries. That campaign didn't produce anything tangible - just some half hearted inquiries:

About a month before we were scheduled to leave for permanent residence in Florida, the local agent for Strout Reality came to see us. He said that he believed he could sell the place, if we'd be willing to accept 10% cash, and a long term mortgage. We gave him the go ahead, and supplied him with the pictures left over from our unproductive New York City sales effort. Then we all got so busy with moving plans that not much thought was given to selling the farm.

There were items of furniture, dishes, tools, and some keepsakes that we wished to take to our new home, and we began looking around for a suitable mover. Our final choice was The North American Van Lines. (After the transporting job was completed, we realized that, for the van line charges, we could have purchased new
Nothing seemed to be stirring with our real estate man, and we’d mostly dismissed the matter of selling the farm, what with frenzied, last minute preparations for moving. Somehow this state of affairs was just what the Runion Clan wanted. The “children” - Margaret and Bob, Corinne and Bill, as well as Sarita, Stephen, and John (we were later to learn that Gladys and Ray concurred with the others) seemed reluctant to move a foot off the home soil.

But we had, so to speak, to “wind up things,” so various pieces of furniture, tools, [and] things like hand sleds for the children were sent off to make their home with the family that could use them to the best advantage. So, really, much of the family stuff is still in the family.

The van people said they would take the garden tractor and clothes dryer along with our stuff, and drop them off at Smithfield. Everything seemed to be shaping up; the household goods were loaded August 18th, and we would be leaving the 19th.

Chuck Dog had been on our minds ever since we had definitely decided to move. We couldn’t seem to find a good home for him in his native state. At last there seemed nothing we could do but take the mutt along. So, when Doc Hoyt came up to put the old beagle, Betty, “to sleep” a day or so before we were leaving, we arranged to have a tranquilizer shot for Chuck on the morning of our departure.

While the moving men were getting things ready and loaded, our pesky old friend, Lillian Glodt, was constantly under foot. They too were coming to Florida,
and Lil was hell bent to find out all she could about moving, etc. The driver of the big van was a very nice, polite, young fellow, but he finally said, "Lady you just have to get out of our way."

Our leaving was not to be without a show of fireworks - totally unexpected. Two days prior to the event of our leaving, I answered our telephone, and our neighbor on the old Day Farm, just up the road, Pauline Weisberg excitedly announced to me that their big barn across the road from the house was afire. Her husband was not home, and she was too excited to give instructions to, so I did what she should have done in the first place - called the New Berlin Fire Department, which came in no time flat. A quick look told us that the barn, filled with baled hay, could not be saved. It was a case of the improperly cured hay heating to the combustion point. There were added fireworks from exploding gasoline, fuel for farm machinery, to complete the show. In my memory, it was second only, as nice big fires go, to the Washington Street, Tenafly conflagration, back in my 1920’s railroading days there. The New Berlin Fire Dept. did wonders, protecting the old frame house from the flames.

During the heat of the fire, Steve and John were up at Herb Coman’s having one of the cars serviced. Returning, as they got closer to home, and saw all the smoke, and took note of all the cars lined up and down the road, they told us that they had become excited and fearful that the fire might have been one of the home buildings. Needless to say, they were very disappointed at missing all the excitement.

On "the fateful" morning, Chuck got his shot, [and] curled up asleep on the
back seat of Pete’s Blue Streak. The Runions - Maw and I, Sarita, John, Steve and Valerie - pulled away from The Place in our’s and Pete’s car. No one, as I remember, had much stomach for chatter as we travelled out of New Berlin, to the South.

We reached Gladys’ in the early evening, having made good time. Thanks to the tranquilizer shot, the dog had rested most of the way, that first day; we wondered how he’d behave next day - on his own behavior.

The final lap of our trip to Holly Hill was quite uneventful. All that comes to mind now was the August heat through the deep south, which was somehow put in the background of our thoughts by a delightful evening meal at Howard Johnson’s, in St. Augustine. The Church had presented us with a farewell purse of $31, and we blewed ourselves to a right good dinner with it.

Chuck came through in a very gentlemanly fashion, clean and not much fuss. Dogs certainly love to ride in automobiles. We were rather surprised to find Grandma Esau receptive to the mut’s ingratiating approachment.

The arrival at The Court also was uneventful and we all settled in upstairs for a much needed rest. Next morning everyone soon reached the conclusion that there was dire need to clean up and throw out. The “new” stuff we were to live with turned out to be of twenty-five years and older vintage. The Van company had notified us to have $720 in cash or certified check on hand when they came with our household things, on the 21st. The local agent took a look at the house, and announced he would not take the responsibility for not pulling out the side of it, if we put a bracket to an upstairs window, and tried to pull the piano up with block and tackle. So I got the
idea that a fork lift would put the piano onto the porch roof, and we could then slide it through a window. Which was done easily, but that cost us $15 more!

The kids went back north; Valerie was duly installed in the seventh grade at Central Jr. High, Holly Hill; we sometimes wondered how the old place was fareing.

One day Maw and I were downstairs talking with Mother Esau when Mike, the postman, came along, and handed us an official looking envelope, requiring our signature. It was from the Strout Real Estate man, telling us that the farm had been sold, and for us to please be in New Berlin, September 26th to close the deal. As things are apt to transpire, it had happened when we’d least expected. But, we left Valerie with her Gram; she didn’t miss any school, although there occurred a violent northeast storm in our part of Florida while we were away. Our good neighbor, Mrs. Williams474, drove her to school during the hardest rains.

We spent a couple of days with Gladys and her family on the way north. The tractor and clothes dryer had not been delivered!

Driving north on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, high in the mountains near Scranton, we observed - the first time for us - wild turkeys strutting unconcernedly near our car. It was real nice.

In New Berlin we phoned the moving people about the dryer and tractor, and was informed that the van with our Holly Hill things had taken another route, so the things for the Willifords had been left behind. Oh yes, they said the Smithfield things were safe in the Norwich warehouse, and yes, they’d forward them. There would be a slight additional charge of about $80!
Somehow Maw and I managed to stay in our house while we were in New Berlin. We arranged to give most of the remaining furniture to our church. Our nice bedroom suite went directly to the parsonage. The dining room furniture went to an auction place in Morris, then came “back home again” when the new owners, the Babcocks, found out about it. So I guess that nice furniture is in the house.

The Babcocks, the new owners of our home, surely were the answer to our dreams for the old place. They have improved the property, and apparently love it as we did. They have invited us to come and stay whenever we wish. For myself, and I think the sentiment goes for the rest of us, I prefer to cherish memories of the old home as it was.

Mother and I stopped at Smithfield returning south. The tractor and dryer arrived while we were there. Speaking of moving vans - famous last (sour) words, “never again.”

Well, Maw and I have each other, and in turn have our fine family seven strong; now our wonderful grandchildren, a clan to love and be proud of. We headed south on route 95, that fine day in September 1963.
Afterword

The author and his wife spent the next seventeen years in Florida enjoying the same mundane daily events they had for some time, except in new surroundings. They now occupied a house one block from the Halifax River, taking the same upstairs apartment in which her parents had lived. A screened porch looked west toward the river and the beachfront peninsula beyond. A massive pin oak shaded the front yard, and an equally large grapefruit tree protected a dilapidated open-bay garage that was much too shallow for the elongated cars of the '60's and '70's.

Originally the first floor of the house had been a garage, but the Esaus had converted it into two small apartments that were the mirror image of each other. Christine Esau, Ruth's mother, moved into the one on the right.

Ruth and Alfred's lives were drastically different, however. Alfred had retired from Kraft after twenty-two years of labor, and Ruth had abandoned a piano studio that had paid for the education of seven children. They had moved from their rural New York State farm to a lot within a fifteen-minute drive of Daytona Beach. Formerly they had raised their own produce, baked their own bread, and canned or stored the residue for the winter. They shopped at grocery stores right down the road. The soil was sandy, the air was muggy, and the roaches were definitely a nuisance. The only child of the seven at home was twelve year-old Valerie. Gladys, Margaret, and Corinne were married, and Sarita, John, and Stephen were either teaching or going to college; Valerie would leave for college a few years later.

Within a very short time, Ruth and Alfred had a busy retirement. Ever since
their marriage, the couple had been very involved with the Methodist church, and they quickly joined the Methodist church in Daytona Beach. Ruth was soon leading children's choirs, teaching Sunday School, and singing in the choir, not to mention accompanying Valerie's school chorus. They frequently attended concerts of the Daytona Beach Symphony. The couple delivered Meals on Wheels to senior citizens in the area, and neighborhood children soon depended upon Mrs. Runion's cookies. Alfred busied himself with a small produce garden and raised a whole new array of flowers and shrubs. Between 1965 and 1967, Alfred typed out his autobiography, apparently never telling family members he was doing so. Various tenants occupied the other apartment, supplying extra income. The Runions made frequent trips to Sanibel Island, FL until Christine Esau's health declined. In 1978 they took a cruise to the Western Caribbean. Ruth was notorious for her letter writing, and wrote frequently to all of her children. Three times a year, Stephen, John and Sarita made trips from New York, and Alfred and Ruth returned occasionally to the Upstate to visit and attend weddings and other family occasions. They had little time to be bored.

In the mid 1970's, Alfred began having angina attacks and later congestive heart failure. In 1979, he was hospitalized for a heart attack. The end came suddenly. On the night of April 21, 1980, Sarita, her husband, Joseph Fiske, and their eight-year-old daughter, April, visiting the Runions, were asleep in Alfred and Ruth's bed, while the latter slept on the pull-out sofa. Ruth roused the Fiskes to tell them Alfred was having a heart attack. By the time help could be summoned, Alfred Matthew
Runion had passed away.

His words live after him as a testament to his life.