

MEMOIRS
OF
W.C. WILKINSON

VOLUME 1

PROLOGUE

It seems proper that I should be writing something of my own life and activities. I have spent many, many hours searching libraries, court houses, and archives, and in reading old manuscripts, books, ledgers, and in ruining my eyes using microfilm readers just in attempting to learn a few facts about ancestors. Each one of them, at least those few who could write, could have in an hour or two put down immensely more than I have been able to learn in days and weeks of searching.

In some ways there are even fewer records made and kept today. The advent of the telephone has almost eliminated the personal letter as a document. Land transfers are less informative and probably fewer in number. Birth, death, and marriage records are kept more formally. Fires are still taking tolls as witness the great fire in the military records at St. Louis. The use of microfilm as storage is not yet fully proven to be lasting. Many manuscripts and records have been kept with ink and paper which is much less lasting than those of 2 and 4 hundreds years back. I wonder how long this cheap notebook and RCA ballpoint combination will stand up?

The plan here is to write a narrative type record. A simple draft. It may well be somewhat rambling. However, I will try to maintain it in time slots, at least, or in areas of activity. The literary aspect will be suspended, to the extent that I am capable of, in favor of immediacy and reasonable speed of completion. I have jotted down key words and phrases in periods of time and these will be used to key my thoughts. There likely will be additions now and later. Hopefully, a lifetime of writing reports, proposals, memos, talks, and such in the technical areas of my life will be of some aid in achieving a coherent and lucid journal.

Appropriate or not this effort is being started on the porch of a motel unit of Riding Rock Inn located on the island of San Salvador, the outermost island of the Bahamas. I am but a few miles distant from the spot where Columbus and his men came ashore on their first landing in the New World, the "Indies". This took place 490 years ago. It is now 13 February 1982, my daughter's birthday, a Sunday. The Breeze is gentle, the sun is warm and the surroundings are peaceful and serene. No telephones, no TV, very few vehicles, but with a landing strip which allows DC-3's to enter and leave. (None of these planes has been manufactured in over thirty years!) The most advanced aspects of this island are the scuba and underwater photography gear. I plan to use neither. This island environment may all change drastically within the next ten years as the 500th anniversary of the Columbus landing approaches.

The scene has been set, let the story commence.

Earliest recollections

My earliest memories are of incidents during my life on a small farm in Starke County Indiana, a few miles distant from another small farm where I had been borne some years earlier. This second (in time) farm was known, by my mother, as the "Smith Place". (It was owned by one Martin Schmidt.) It was 80 acres of reasonably good land, farmed on shares by my father, with a single team.

We lived here almost four years, my age being 2-6 years, which transcended babyhood to the start of formal education in schools. These recollections likely only include the last few of these years. At this time I had one older and one younger brother but the twins were borne in the later portion of this period.

Neighbors were the Hanke's & Weinkuf's, the former with three children, Lloyd, Edna, and Harry, between whose ages Floyd and I fitted. The Weinkauf children were older, Julia being a teen-ager who assisted my mother at times and became a life-long friend. (She died at an early age, however.)

One activity engaged in, which I am sure I was never told of by an adult, was skinny-diping in a small branch at the rear of our farm, the three Hanke's and my brother and I. Thus, I was introduced to the female body. It did not particularly intrigue me until some years later.

The cows, I suppose three or four, were pastured some distance from the barns and one chore was to bring them in in the evening. Hanging on to their tails and being dragged was frowned upon but also took place. Also, running them before being milked was also improper. One of the cows, "Old Bossy", had a penchant for grass in the "other side of the fence." Despite use of a neck yoke, she succeeding in breaking free with a resulting hunt & fence fixing.

At the end of the working day the team was unhitched from plow or harrow or such and taken to the barnyard water tank. Occasionally my younger brother and I were put on the separate backs of the team and allowed to ride to the barn. The horses, after a day's work were ready for the barn wherein they knew was food. Generally after being water they would bolt for the barn unless restrained. A vivid memory is of Charles being wiped out at the barn entrance. The upper of the dutchdoors had blown closed and the horse broke loose or got away sooner than expected and did its bolt. It made it through the lower door by squatting a little but my brother was swept off. He survived.

It was during this period that my father became interested in cars and made his first purchase. It was either a model "T" or, more likely, a predecessor model. I learned later that it was the first car to be brought into Starke County. This had been several years and probably owners earlier. I recall it coming up the lane the first time with the whole family eagerly sighting the

acquisition. Sometime later Floyd, while riding the running board for the lane trip, fell off and broke an arm. This was the first of our second hand cars, my father never quite got to the point financially of purchasing a new car. (Neither have I really willingly.)

A more vivid transportation was the bobsled. How much it was used I have no idea. Roads were not generally plowed and northern Indianan snows could be deep. I do remember this one trip into the village of San Pierre, a distance of several miles. The bobsled consisted of the two sections of sled runners on which the grain wagon body had been fitted. The floor of the body was covered with hay. A bell or two had been fastened to the team's harness. In memory, a beautiful ride. There were numerous other such at the hitching posts in San Pierre.

Memories of buggy rides are less vivid but do remain. This preceded, generally, the Ford purchase. This was a small one-horse buggy, just adequate for the then small family. Mostly this was to church on Sunday.

My own semi-permanent injuries from farm life were two in number. These left life time scars but I don't think I recall them directly. Passed on stories I believe. In one instance I fell from the seat of the grain wagon, which was perched well above the body, onto the wagon tongue. Unfortunately my head hit the tongue bolt which linked the tongue to the wagon and allowed movement of the tongue. This is a large bolt naturally, and its top section is shaped into a "U" which fitted the wagon wheel axel nuts and has this secondary use. Legend had it that my father had not been able to drive the bolt "home" at the latest assembly of the tongue, but that my head accomplished the feat. It left a "U" shaped scar permanently.

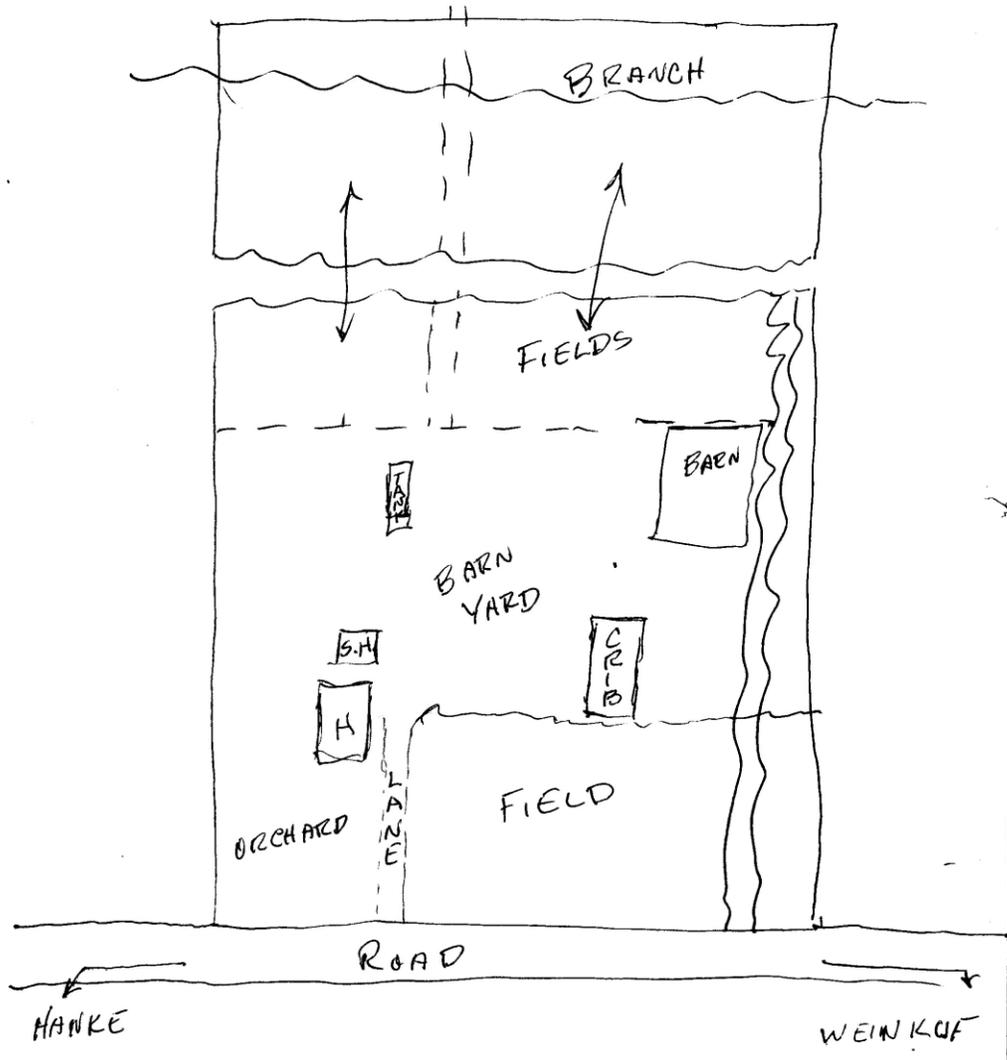
On another occasion, I am told, I was allowed to sit in front of my father on the mower while cutting something, hay possibly. The cutting bar some 6 or 7 feet long is dropped to the side and raised, when not in use, by means of a 24 to 30-inch lever. The base of the lever has a set of ratchet stops for setting the blade's angular position. One of these stops is just the correct size for a 5-year-old thumb. My right thumb was nearly severed but did hang on and heal. The nail was badly distorted but over the next 60 years gradually smoothed out leaving only a simple distortion.

I was entered into the San Pierre school a few months before my sixth birthday, into the first grade, no kindergarten. We were taken to school in, as I recall, a automotive bus. My father had driven it the year previous, which means, probably, that he purchased the Ford at a prior time? As I recall, there was a complete lack of trauma leaving home to enter school. I had the good fortune of an older brother, 2 or 3 grades ahead. Thus, I enjoyed the awareness of his classmates and to some extent was befriended by them. This saved me from some hazing and ragging by peers and upper classes. I was always the smallest one in the class, at all ages and levels.

The high school (inserted) I think (end insertion) was located across the road. The basketball court was outside, dirt base, and kneepants were worn by the boys even at that age.

I attended school here for only one-half year and then transferred to an even smaller school at English Lake, Indiana, when the family moved that winter.

In recent years I have passed this "Smith Place" and even shot a photo, but have not gone up into the barn yard. Maybe I will the next time. The house, I think has been remodeled. I'm not sure. Memory is very weak. The attached sketch is from early memory and is not to scale.



Birth Place

My birth took place on a small farm, 160 acres, in northern Indiana. It truly was in a rural area. The farm had been purchased by my great grandfather, William Maguire in 1877. He, with his wife Margaret and three unmarried sons, had moved there from Oxford, Indiana, and all five lived out their lives on this farm. They started out with very few resources and certainly did not prosper. All four men were not knowledgeable in farming and were ill-fitted for such an environment. Apparently the main attraction for William was the hunting possibilities. This area, just on the edge of the Kankakee River drainage region, was a favorite wild fowl and small animal hunting preserve. Many of the hunting clubs and wealthy individuals from Chicago and nearby urban areas maintained hunting lodges along the Kankakee River.

The "Sand Hill" farm was made up of two 80-acre parts separated by a road. The home, a two-story frame type, was located back from the road on a small hill on the north-80 piece. The house had been torn down before I ever returned to it in adult life. A letter from Samuel Maguire to his brother Alfred shortly after they moved into the house speaks of preparations to paint it and of planting their first crop of corn with hoes. They had no horses.

At the time my parents moved into this house they were newly married and Samuel was the only living one of the five Maguires who had settled there. Samuel was then about 60 years old. He lived another two years. His age, the marriage of his niece, and the fact that my father had a farming background, were probably the factors that led us to locate on this farm.

My birth, the second sons, took place on December 17, 1914, on a cold winter day during which the temperature dropped to -14 degrees. I must have entered into the external life shivering indeed, as these houses were heated by a living room wood stove and had no insulation of any sort.

My mother who had been born and raised in Oxford, Indiana, never spoke with pleasure of this house. On point was the sand. She always compared its gritty appearance on the floors with the black loam of Benton County.

I was named after my father who had been named after a cousin of his father's. However, my grandfather and great grandfather were both William Wilkinson. Thus, with my grandson, there has been an unbroken string of six by that name. My older brother was named after his grandfather, Alfred Maguire, and my next brother, Charles was named after a pair of uncles, one on either side. All three of us were born at "Sand Hill".

When my great-uncle, Samuel Maguire, died in 1913, before I was born, he left no will and the estate went into litigation. His nephew, William Cullen, claimed costs and charges for care of Samuel during various years when he was alone and elderly. These were contested by my

grandfather Alfred, unsuccessfully. Local sentiment was in favor of the Cullens and their lawyer. My grandfather was very bitter about this act by his only nephew and remained so throughout the remainder of his life. Over the years that his parents and brothers had lived on this farm he had contributed much labor and some resources to its continuance. As described by his uncle, Alfred, William Cullen, had been a drifter after his marriage and had contributed little or nothing to the farm.

This litigation stretched on for about four years, until in 1917. After the settlement, my father removed from the property and located a few miles away on the "Smith Place". The sale price minus lawyer fees was equated to the claims of William Cullen.

Margaret Maguire, Alfred's oldest sister, had married William I Cullen in Philadelphia. They continued living with William Maguire in Philadelphia and then in Louisville after the removal there in the late 1840's. William I. Cullen died there and is buried in the Maguire plot. Seemingly the Cullens continued being supported by Wm. Maguire and family even after the move to Oxford and then to later after the move to Kankakee township in Jasper County. This apparently was the sore point to Alfred during the litigation by his nephew aided and abetted by other Cullens. Within the Alfred Maguire family: "the Cullens got everything".

People in San't Pierre/Teft area

Michael D. Flavey & Anna

Richard L & Jennie Hogan

John F. Boyle

William & (blank) Fullan: Catherine, Maria, Joseph, Anne, Mary Agnes, Jerome

Emil Weinkauf & Marie (Kruger): Mable, Ella, Marie, Vernon, Lester, Julia (Fendig)

Harry Stalbam & Bessie (Dolezal)

Wm. J. Solt, M.C., Trustee Railroad Tp.

Hugo Reinewamz, Trustee Railroad Tp.

John, C. Hankey and Lydia M. (Weinkauf): Edna, Herald John, Lloyd

John Collins: Ginrich & Elizabeth

John & Bessie Dalezal (general store)

Leaving the Farm

My father farmed three seasons on the "Smith Place", '17, '18, '19. These were the war years with high prices but he may not have done well. Perhaps he tired of farming or he may have seized the opportunity to return to teaching. In any event he sold out in the spring or summer of 1920 and took a teaching position at English Lake, Indiana, not too distant from the farm. We remained there until about the beginning of 1921 before a house could be found at English Lake and the move made. Thus, I transferred in mid school year.

My father never returned to farming. Occasionally he helped a relative bring in crops and such and sometimes in later years reminisced about farm life and particular incidents. It must never, however, have been very attractive.

Following a team in plowing, cultivating, and reaping is an arduous task. He was not a large man and so the physical part of this activity had to be more than normally tiring. When he left farming in 1920 he was 39 years of age. He had spent the years since he was 16 on farms, and during the ages 16-30 had done farm work when not in school or teaching school. Thus, he had lived on a farm for 23 years and had been a full-time farmer for the last 9 of those years. His ancestors for at least 175 years had been yeomen farmers. None of his children or grandchildren has returned to the farm.

English Lake

When we moved to English Lake in early 1921, it was a sparsely settled area of not more than 25 homes, 2 stores, one of which included the post office, 2 railroads, a railroad station for the 2, an ex-saloon which had been "converted" into a soft-drink parlour, a dance hall with outside gambling equipment, and a two-room school. Also, a pickle "factory", for processing pickles and cucumbers, operated in season. The community subsisted on the combination of a small amount of farming, the two railroads, and activity connected with the Kankakee River which flowed through the north edge of the community. This latter included illicit stills, fishing and employment at the hunting and fishing lodges. Naturally the class of the residents fitted the activities. They were rough, ill-educated, poor, and stimulated by basic desires. The recent advent of prohibition had changed their personal habits very little, only thrown up a light dust cover.

Our first "residence" in this community, the only one available, was a 2-or-3 room house located on the north side of the Kankakee and probably about 2-3 miles by road from the school. However, a much shorter route was over the railroad bridge. This house was on the fringe or flood plain of the river and was elevated somewhat above the ground. It was located just along on of the railroads and both suffered and gained by their proximity. We lived here for only a few months, until the following summer.

These few months must have been very traumatic for my mother. She was very alone when my father and we two older sons were at school. Even though the few years of farm, life had introduced her to such loneliness, she had always had a few nearby neighbors with kindred problems. Not so at English Lake. The railroads were means of transportation for hoboes and bums. The small home immediately adjacent was a prime spot for handouts. On one such occasion, the story goes, a huge silent one came to the house, entered the kitchen, and stood there in complete silence. He did not respond in any way. My mother herded out my younger brother, Charles, grabbed the twins under each arm and exited quietly through another exit. She got to the road on the blind side of the kitchen, shoved the children through the fence, and hurried a few hundred yards down the road to the nearest house. Fortunately she found the lady of the house, Mrs. Early, at home. This woman, a mullatto, was generally employed at one of the hunting lodges with, I believe, her husband as servants. She was a cut above most of the community and seemingly quite resourceful.

After hearing my mother's terrified tale, she walked down to our house, prepared some food for the intruder, who apparently was still standing and waiting. He ate and left. Thus ended the story. In later life my mother related the take many times. It left a mark.

One of my tasks here, along with Floyd, was to pick up coal jostled from coal cars on the railroad. On several occasion friendly and sympathetic brakemen would kick off large lumps when they saw us gleaning the track bed and right-of-way.

On time during a trip to one of the two stores, shorts, we purchased kerosene which was used for lamps. We went via the railroad bridge, as normal, and returned the same way. The kerosene can was stoppered poorly, probably with a corn-cob, and leaked. Floyd as the older carried the can and succeeded in spilling kerosene over one leg and thigh. This caused considerable blistering and resultant dismay to my mother.

By summer another location and house had been found. This was much better for location but not much of an improvement over all in house. It was an old house but located just across the road from the school. During the time we lived here an old shed or barn was torn down during which time I was unlucky enough to step on an old nail. As rusty nails were always the immediate predecessor to lock-jay, I had an anxious few days.

We must have lived in this house only a few months as I remember it very poorly, just old & unpainted. However, it was during this period that my sister, one of the twins, became ill and died. [Note: she died of diphtheria] During the illness, I was farmed out to the Scheetz family, Clara Scheetz being my mother's sister. This must have been late spring or early fall as I recall attending school with my cousin, Azalia Scheetz, about my age and in the same grade. The school was one room and located about a mile from their farm house. This attendance

seemingly was only for a few weeks but I recalled becoming ill or something and being excused to return to Aunt Clara's. The teacher sent along a couple of upper-class girls as escorts, probably 7 or 8th graders. I recall their conversation during the journey which included a bridge over a creek or river. In their opinion, sick people, particularly children, did very odd things like jumping from bridges into rivers and so had to be watched very carefully. They apparently were taking their assignment very seriously. However, I was appalled at the stupidity of girls, particularly older girls.

Our next move at English Lake was into a much better house. It was located just across the road from the other house we were in and adjoined the school property. This house was owned by the Treudeau family who were moving out, where, I don't know. I do recall two teen-age Treudeau girls, however, 17 or 18, maybe. We lived in this house till we moved to North Judson in the early fall (insert) or winter (end insert) of 1923. Thus, we lived in English Lake for about two years. In retrospect it seems much longer.

The school, in the Railroad Township district of Starke County, consisted of two rooms. It was of simple frame construction with a (insert) separate (end insert) woodshed and two outside privy's just down the hill to the rear. During the first term that I attended my father taught the upper grades in the front room (towards the road) and Sada Watson, the lower grades in the rear room. As I recall, her son also attended the lower grades and had a nice pair of knee-high red boots.

During the second year, Sada did not return and my mother was recruited to return to teaching for a year. She had left teaching upon her marriage about 10 years previously thus I attended a school which had a staff of my parents. When I was "sent to the principal" it was indeed "double jeopardy".

During these two school terms my father attempted to bring culture to English Lake, both school and community. He purchased a portable RCA Victor victrola and a set of records which he felt appropriate for the school. One day a week the lower grades moved over and sat with the upper grades for a music appreciation hour. Records were played and the title announced. The upper class was queried on the titles after several weeks of these sessions. I recall coaching my seat-mate friend, Pat Welch, on one occasion when my father rather pointedly questioned him on a record. Pat was somewhat slow and had no idea what was being played. However, I recalled my parents discussing the various records at a dinner and mentioning that they thought Pat liked a particular record. I put 2-&-2 together and supplied Pat with the correct answer.

During the second year of school term, the upper grades received an influx of older students, mostly boys, having sat out a year or two. An Indiana state education rule was being put into

effect which required a student to be an 8th grade graduate or be 16 years or older. The return of these older boys brought discipline problems to the school. On one occasion, the chore of passing the waste basket became the duty of one of these chaps. He felt it demeaning and refused. I have forgotten the solution but I do recall that some of the more recalcitrant were excused for the remainder of the year.

Another improvement my father brought to the school was outdoor playground equipment. This was primarily a set of swings. A pipe frame was set up as the main support and ropes were suspended from the cross beam. The ropes were linked to the cross beam with large iron U-shaped hooks. These were free to turn on the cross-beam and on occasion came off generally due to horse-play by students. The (sic) were re-hooked by the students in a throwing action which caused the hook to be thrown over the cross-bar and then pulled back up slowly to successful "hook" occurred. One evening I received the full weight of one of these thrown hooks on the top of my head. This was another one of my permanent head scars.

My father's activity in doing good for the school weighed heavily on his meager pay check, so much so that the grocery bill at the local store grew alarmingly. At least it did to my mother, if not my father. This was one of the reasons she returned to teaching. She paid off the grocery bill with her salary. There were numerous emotional discussions on this aspect of finances. On one occasion (sic) I heard him say that "he wasn't afraid to buy on credit and run up a bill". This is true and he demonstrated it at nearly every locale that we lived in. Neither were they always paid eventually, either, much to my chagrin and embarrassment. Particularly was this so when the money was owed to parents of my schoolmates and friends.

Activity on the school grounds was not limited entirely to the class room or even to the daylight. The play ground area was (insert) also (end insert) used for certain clandestine contests and adolescent mingling. One such was a continuing contest to which boy could generate a stream to the highest point on the back wall of the school. Score was kept by the clapboard number. There were some remarkable efforts, as I recall. I don't believe I was ever really a contestant.

When sap began to run in the spring there was a certain amount of "hide-and-seeK" and "catch-me", all coed and with normal results. Neither was I a full-fledged participant in these, either.

During the second year my mother became pregnant with my youngest brother. This soon became obvious and to my fellow students. There was much comment and a certain amount of hazing. This fell on my older brother particularly but he seemed unaware of the situation. In some ways I must have been precocious. I learned many facts of life during this English Lake period.

The summer following our move into the Trudeau property, my father planted pickles on the large lot to the east. In cultivating them he obtained a horse and small cultivator from someone and I took turns with Floyd leading the horse down the rows while my father guided the cultivator and my younger brother rode the horse (for fun). Later we did some weeding by hand and had the daily chore of picking the small marketable-size pickles each morning.

My father also ran the “pickle factory” that summer. This was a delivery and processing facility located between the two railroads just beyond the end of our road to the east. Seemingly there were numerous pickle patches in the community and neighboring area. These were brought in daily during the growing season, graded for size and quality, weighed and credit given. The pickles then went into large brine tanks maybe ten feet across and ten feet deep. A portable pitcher pump was moved from tank to tank and the brine pumped from the bottom to the top to obtain circulation. I spent many an hour pumping brine. (There were no child labor laws in English Lake.) The elevated runways between the tanks were covered with salt residue. This was very irritating and painful to cuts and abrasions of my bare feet. At the end of the season the processed pickles were shipped out on the railroad.

At this time prohibition had just been enacted. Numerous illicit stills operated up and down the reaches of the Kankakee. Probably some had always been there. Prohibition merely increased their number and profitability. Evidences were everywhere. One drop was made in the trestles of the railroad bridge in gallon jugs. The “ex-saloon” which was now nominally a “soft-drink parlour” was located at the end of our road next to Hansen’s store. The operation of this speakeasy was obvious even to me. The thirsty customer paid his price within the parlour, trudged down a short path to the north which ended in a brush pile. Within the brush pile was a gallon jug of moonshine. He took his drink and returned to the parlour.

The stores of English Lake were operated by the John Hanssen family and the Short family. The later was located just north of the road – railroad intersection and also contained the post office. The Hansen store was located at the main intersection (a “T”) of the settlement, just south of the ex-saloon. The Hansen’s, John, wife Rose (Smantek), and two children Harry and Bernice, lived above the store. I was befriended by Harry, some ten years my senior, and spent time on the Kankakee River with him. In a river town, this was man’s activity. (I learned recently that he was drowned many years later on the same river.) Another older boy, Hal “Dude” Green, son of the railroad agent, was another friend. Both were major local heroes to me.

On one occasion Hall talked my mother into allowing me to accompany him on a drive to North Judson, some five miles distant. After his chores in Judson were completed we returned to English Lake and on the way picked up three teen-age girls who were walking along the road. They all sat in the rear seat. Hall carried on a “lively” conversation with them interspersed with

their giggles. Hal was a sharpy. At one point he asked them which could do the fastest lay. I was quite thrilled at this and was looking forward to witnessing the event. The girls only giggled and pointed at one another. Nothing evolved.

The Kankakee was a slow meandering stream which wound its way through a large swamping area. During the two years spent at English Lake, dredging commenced, to divert the river into a more tractable path and to bring about some drainage of the swamp. Two dredges were shipped into English Lake by rail and then assembled along the railroad siding. This took place not far from our house and I spent many hours at the site and being "part" of the operation. The technical aspects of the assembly required the employment of outsiders and furnished an exciting diversion from the normal. One of the young men whom I came to know was a brother of a classmate, later, in North Judson. I was tolerated by these men and it was really my first acquaintance with anything resembling machinery and engineering.

After the dredges were assembled and checked out they moved to the river to start the dredging operation. They built their own transportation as they proceeded. Their mode of travel was by rail and they built a railroad ahead and removed it at the rear as they traveled. To me these were huge machines. Even more exciting was to see them in operation at the river particularly at night. They furnished their own lighting for this night work.

The dredging was still unfinished when we left but it had already succeeded in ruining the favored swimming area. It was bitterly opposed by the river people and ended up turning the river almost into a ditch along major portions of its route. Environmentalists as a group were unknown at that time. Land reclamation had priority.

Part and parcel of river activity were the accoutrements, one of which was rubber boots. My parents acceded to my pleas and finally ordered me a pair through the catalog. When they finally arrived I was expecting knee-high boots but wonder-of-wonders, when the box was opened there was a pair of thigh-high boots! My parents expressed the opinion that Sears had made a mistake. I expect it had been planned.

These boots could be folded or rolled to be knee-high or pulled up their full length as needed. Generally they were worn folded. I looked exactly like the rest of the river people. Not too long after their arrival, I was trying them for depth and over shot in one of the nearby ponds. The damned water went over the top and filled one boot. I certainly was dismayed but kept it a secret and finally succeeding in getting it dry.

On the north-running road close to the river a dance hall and gambling area was operated. Activity generally only took place on Saturday night. The gambling was operated on outside tables and all I recall distinctly were the dice-in-a-cage game. The hall was the scene of at least one cultural event. As part of the program my parents put on a dialogue, humorous, and witty,

“Please Pass the Cream”. The plot evolved around a married couple at breakfast with milk in the cream pitcher.

Operation of the school brought on one distinctly recalled incident involving children and parents. During class a boy sitting immediately behind a girl did not dip her pigtails in the ink well, he cut off a fair portion with scissors. The girl did not tell my father, she told her parents when she got home. That evening her father arrived at our house in a very belligerent mood bolstered by moonshine. Nothing particularly physical took place. In some manner my father pacified him sufficiently that he left without fisticuffs. I think the argument presented was “Why do you let them have scissors?”

One of my class mates, Tony Jancovick, and I were good friends generally but I recall one fight with him during the winter down on some frozen pond. I think it was a draw. The fact that I had a new pair of gloves may have had something to do with it. I don’t recall that they helped me, however.

The river was the center of sports activity. In the winter, much of the area immediately surrounding froze over and one could skate for “miles”. In the spring and summer there were many large bull frogs to be caught. Fishing took place nearly the year round. The swimming area of the river was about up to my eyeballs at its deepest part, not very deep. Swimming suits were unknown in my age group but I don’t recall any mixed swimming sans suits.

People at English Lake

Jan Jancovick, children: Frank, Tony, Anna

Chas & Anna Kubic

Frank Patucek

Joseph Rodack

Joseph Smantek

Andrew Vanoskey

Pat Welsh: son Pat

Wm Haskins: son whipped with leather belt

Katrzyna Kapustka

Hal K. Green, railway agent: son Dude

Emil Teske

John & Anna Hess

Shorts: son Jim

Origer

Halibut (?)

Wickizer (?): dau Irene!!

John & rose (Smantek) Hanson: Harry & Bernive & Lorraine

Bernice mar. Malcom Ness

Harry died 5 Mar 1948

Lorraine mar. _____ Wappel

North Judson

The teaching position at English Lake had been obtained through the San Pierre physician, Dr. Wm J. Solt who at the time was trustee of Railroad Township, Starke County. He was our physician through the Sand Hill, Smith Place, and English Lake eras including attending physician during the illness and death of my sister. The trustee's position was an elected type and he had charge of township schools and teacher assignments. Dr. Solt's term ended at about the end of our second year at English Lake and apparently he did not choose to run again. He advised my parents to vote for one Hugo Reinewanz which they did and he was elected, unfortunately.

This was the time period in Indiana during which the Klan was raising its hooded head. Roman Catholics were one of their group of targets. When the new trustee began setting up teacher assignments, my father was not on the list. He was of the wrong religious persuasion even though he had hundreds of years of solid bedrock Protestants back of him. He had changed his colors at marriage. The "Little Red Schoolhouse" must be preserved. My parents were very disenchanted with Solt for having touted Reinewanz. But it was too late.

My father began casting around for another source of income and came up with what was to be his last choice and change, construction. Apparently at one point in his younger years before marriage he had been introduced to carpentry in some small way and had been attracted to some extent. He located a job at North Judson, some five miles distant and the market town for the surrounding area, including English Lake. His job was with a building contractor who had a coal dock or elevator under construction alongside the railroad about a mile or so west of North Judson. Again he obtained the job then came the inevitable problem of locating housing. Eventually we moved to North Judson.

North Judson is located in Wayne Township, Starke County, Indiana. It had been laid out in 1866 and had grown to a population of about 1600 by 1915. The town was incorporated in 1888. A major segment of its population when we moved there was composed of eastern European Czecks and Slavs who had filtered down from the urban areas of Chicago and northern Indiana. This segment was predominantly Roman Catholic. They had built their church, SS. Cyril & Methodius in 1913. The parish included that at San Pierre, All Sains church. The Catholic enclave at North Judson included the church, the (insert) frame (end insert) rectory, a four-room brick schoolhouse and school yard, and a frame dwelling for the six or so nuns. These were the order of Sisters of St. Francis and they staffed the school which included 8 elementary grades and 2 years of so-called business courses. These buildings were located one block from the center of town and immediately adjacent to the publish buildings: library, fire-house/water works/jail, high school, and elementary school. The priest at this time was Rev. A.C. Van Rie.

North Judson was a railroad town, being at the inter section of four rail roads:

- Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St Louis RR
- Chicago & Erie RR
- Chesapeake & Ohio RR
- Chicago, Indiana & Southern RR

All were eventually double tracked. At the period we lived there, North Judson was surrounded by truck farms which included as produce: onions, carrots, and mint. These farms did well in the deep muck soil and were a source of employment for school age children during the summer months. In later years, apparently, these farms shifted to potatoes and the area became a large potato center.

We lived in North Judson from the beginning of 1923 to the summer of 1930 (my age, 8 - 15 ½), seven and one-half years. We lived in rented housing and the family income was just above subsistence in the first years, and barely in the later years when the depression took hold. My father worked in construction at the coal dock until it was completed and then was asked by the contractor to continue on with a construction job at Joliet, Illinois. This lasted probably two years, all told. The next several years he did carpentry in allied work in North Judson. Early in this work, he spent time at the lumber yard operated by Otto Kreis. I remember one task was unloading a box car of Portland cement. This was very arduous and apparently the cement caused some skin irritation as well as muscle fatigue. When he started carpentry he required a nail apron and as I recall my mother bombed out and he had to complete it.

Carpentry work was not easy to come by. Religious preferences dictated whom one employed. In the latter years at North Judson he did much work for Frank Vessely a prosperous business man (houses and automobile (Chrysler) franchise). Vessely family was Catholic. Daughter Liz was in my grade at school. Son Frank was in Floyd's. There were numerous more

During the local coal dock construction period it was the children's task, generally, to carry lunch from out home to the construction site. This was probably a mile or two. When my turn came I was badgered while passing the home of the two Csinskis, Anton and Walter who lived en route. They were slightly older and, naturally, larger. Later they both became friends as we attended the same school and were all in the same grade.

One Sunday when the dock was nearly completed my father took the family to visit the site and explain his work. While there I recall climbing one of the ascent ladders, enclosed above 30 feet or so, and falling quite some distance. I lost my wind and had a severed side pain but did not disclose my misadventure. (This may have been the cause of a broken rib which appeared in

X-rays some 50 years later.) On these construction jobs my father learned to work at heights without fear. This ability remained with him throughout his life and he tried to inculcate it into his sons. He succeeded more-or-less. I did much work with him on church steeples & swinging scaffolds without severe trepidation.

During the period in which he was located at Joliet, Floyd and I were allowed to visit him. We took the train into Chicago, transferred to an inter-urban train to Joliet where he met us. Floyd was 12 and I was 10. It was an adventure. We all three slept in his one room and came home together in a day or two. It must have been in the fall or winter as I remember the dark, cold streets in the morning when we went out to breakfast. I was not attracted to the city life.

We moved to North Judson during my 4th school year, I think. We children were entered into the public elementary school, located at the south corner of Land and Central. My one recollection is reading. Each student was called, at random, to stand up and begin to read at the place where the preceding student had stopped. Many times my eyes would wander from the book into thoughts elsewhere. However, apparently the spoken words were being recorded because I could always find the spot to start while getting to my feet. One advantage of this short school period was that I became acquainted with a few peers who were non-Catholics.

Not long after we entered the public school the priest began putting pressure on my parents to have us transferred to the parochial school. He succeeded and this took place after about six weeks. During this short period we passed the Catholic area on our way to school and I had noticed the parochial classes on their way to and from school and church herded by the black robed nuns. This apparently left or created deep impressions. When the axe fell and we were told we were to start in the Catholic school the following morning, I was shattered. All my protestations and a night of crying were to no avail. We entered the following morning. It was no better than I had visualized! It took many days for me to settle in. The general level of the students was rather low and I had no difficulty maintaining a reasonably high relative level. Despite rather severe corporal punishment, class order was quite often not good.

Some of the nuns were almost vicious in their administration of punishment. In the lower grades my first few years I was more than once put over a seat bench and shipped severely with a red rubber hose. It hurt! On another occasion because of an outbreak of paper-wad shooting with rubber bands, the priest was called into administer more severe punishment. He carried his weapon in a rear pocket. It was a piece of leather harness strap about 12 inches long, one inch wide and ½ inch thick, a formidable instrument of torture. It was applied to the open palm with considerable force. When my turn came and I put forth my hand some half dozen rubber bands around my wrist were displayed. This brought added strap blows. Excruciating pain! I never cared for Van Rie (or his successor).

[PAW Note – WCW also recalled that one of the boys was able to run around the classroom, just out of reach of the nun chasing him, to the delight of the class!]

Lesser punishment consisted of writing a word, sentence, or paragraph a “thousand” or more times either on the black board or on paper. In Palmer method calligraphy! On one such occasion I did not finish quickly after school, or it was such a tremendous amount that I was taken to the nun’s home to complete the assignment. I was put in the rear enclosed porch and the exterior door locked. This nonsense did not deter me. When I finished I whipped out my skeleton key, opened the door and fled for home. Inevitably, a note was sent to my parents. I was brought in by my father, and an apology was in order. Quite unfair.

I recall at one point in this era being awake at night and wondering if I would ever be free of black clouds hanging over my head. I seemed at that time that there was always something impending that was not good, some disaster that would eventually be found out, some impending punishment, some embarrassing procedure to be gone through. If not continuous, these incidents were so close together that they brief intervals were not noticeable.

Because Floyd and I were a cut above other students we were selected for school play parts and such – we could learn the lines. This was no reward for me. Some of these plays were yearly spring affairs and took place in the high school auditorium with an appreciable audience. I was no great actor and enjoyed none of it. On one such presentation, I was a comic photographer with a large black mustache. The damned mustache kept falling off and I ended up holding it on with one hand while saying my lines and taking photographs. Embarrassing! A.F. always did much better. He was the real brain of the school and the favorite of the nuns. They talked him, and my parents, into taking the first year of commercial work under the argument that it was equivalent of the first year of high school. They wouldn’t let go! He had difficulty squeezing in all required subjects in three years of high school but made it with honors.

During our few years at English Lake, partly because of the general educational level of the other students and partly because of his innate ability, Floyd was advanced several grades. When he entered the public school at North Judson, he maintained this level. However, when he was transferred to the Catholic school he was dropped back one grade. He was too young!!!

When I reached the fourth room, things became somewhat better. The head nun, Sister Herman Joseph, was a capable understanding woman. While we quite often did not see eye-to-eye, she was not a complete teacher autocrat and was willing to listen to my opinion. Also there was a small library in a set of shelves in the corner of the room. Many of the stories were of the Irish versus the Black and Tans and interesting. As an eighth grader one graduated to desks which opened at the top, had much room inside, and two shelves above. Much prestige.

Too, by opening to top one was screened from the teacher's desk in the front of the room. This allowed candy to be eaten with some impunity. Also, a few sentences from a book of fiction could be snatched now-and-then. Herman Joseph would station herself at the rear of the room off-an-on to thwart these activities.

Each morning after assembling in each classroom, the entire school and staff would march to the church, a half block, for mass. Thus, I attended mass five days a week plus Sunday for five years and stored up much credit to last me through later life. As the boys advanced in school they were introduced to the Latin litany of the mass and then allowed to act as altar boys. Gradually one worked his way up from 3rd or second altar boy to be eventually the top man who carried the gospel, served the water and wine, and directed bell ringing. Week stints were rotated for the before-school mass. Also there were schedules for the Sunday masses, a more prestigious assignment, at first at least. A certain amount of camaraderie and, naturally, horse play took place in the sacristy and even, sometimes on the altar itself.

One such was to instigate or fake the under boy into ringing the chimes at the wrong time, then act as if he had done it on his own under the glowering of the priest and later admonition of the nuns. The holy water was good for last minute slicking of the hair and even wine sips were tried by the older, more adventurous youths. On one occasion we shoved a boy out the sacristy window and locked the rear door. He had to re-enter through the church with his cassock stuffed in his pants in an attempt to fool the nuns.

Another stint assigned older boys was organ pumping. The organ was located in the choir loft at the rear of the church. Hand pumping was done on a lever extending from the side of the organ. A small chair was provided. Pumping had to be just adequate to maintain pressure which was denoted by an indicator which rose to a fixed level, indicating adequacy. Pumping harder was pure waste. Thus, with experience, a pumping rate could be established which just maintained the indicator at its proper level. On hot Sundays of under the influence of far-reaching thoughts the pump rate could slowly slow down, pressure was lost, the organ tone would fade away. This was catastrophic! The audience knew, the priest knew, and the organist knew. Everyone in the choir loft would turn to stare at the culprit. Generally, however, the organist, usually a nun, would sense low pressure before this point and come out with a hiss and a black look. This shook up the pumper sufficiently. After one reached this status of a pumper, he could use the choir loft to attend mass. This was a less formal arena and to be preferred to the main church area. I was slowly working my way back up, and out of the church.

During one winter, the priest's housekeeper, on Mary McMeal, an aunt of Beebe Daniels a movie star, offered crucifixes for sale as Xmas gifts for mothers. I brashly made the purchase with an initial down payment of probably a quarter, and a second payment possibly but never quite was able to make full payment even after the gift was made at Christmas. As I recall, Mary

dunned my parents later, to my embarrassment. Another of those black clouds which hung for several months!

When report cards were issued each month, they were to be returned within the week with a parent's signature, and accompanied by 50 cents tuition. At various times this amount of money was not available at our home. Returning a card under these circumstances was not a happy event for me.

The parochial school contained four equal-sized class rooms, two on each floor. Ten grades were accommodated, 2 to 3 in each room. I worked my way from the 2nd thru the 4th and out, with a diploma and commencement. The rooms were on one side of the brick building, with the stairs and hall on the other side. A basement area was included and used for rainy weather recess activity. Male and female outdoor privies were provided. The playground had no equipment. Games included marbles, skip rope, tag and duck-on-rock, as well as the usual horse-play including fights. These latter were always short lived, the one-or-two punch variety. It hurt too much to continue! Just to one side of the school ground, across the alley, the rear of a funeral parlour was located. On various occasions this was a source of chilling investigation and peaking. The most exciting was the killing of a bum or hobo, shot by a railroad "dick".

During the years in North Judson we lived at three locations. (See accompanying map.) The first was on Main Street at the end of Keller Street. We lived here probably no more than a year. The house was owned by Harry Rust and he sold the house not long after we moved in. We were then pressured to move out but there seemed to be extreme difficulty in locating a suitable house, maybe any house. I think things became rather tense before we did move. I remember very little regarding this house. The new owner remodeled it extensively so it was not the same in later years when I returned for visits. The only vivid recollections are that of the fiery cross being burned across the street in front of our house and of the church and rectory desecration just down Keller a block away. (more on this later.)

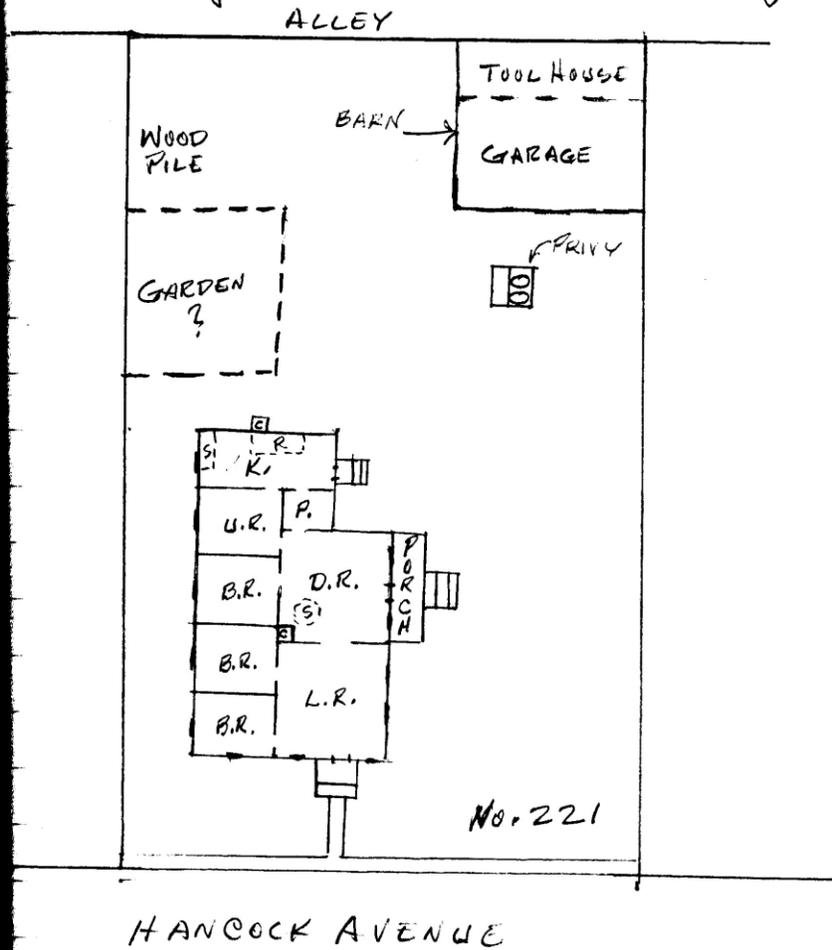
Our second residence, selected in desperation apparently was a flat on the second floor at the corner of Lane and Adair Streets. It was located above an ice cream parlour. I don't believe it was ever designed for residential use. There was no water source and I have a vague recollection of an odd room arrangement. An outside privy, of course, was located in the back yard. This latter was enclosed on the two street sides by a board fence. The lot adjacent to the south east, very narrow, was vacant. Next was the movie house.

We obtained our cold water from a garage located next door across Adair Street. It was carried up in pails by the children. Only about three events come to mind. We were able to watch the jubilee celebrations from our front window which would have been in the fall (more later). The movie house had a side door which opened into the vacant lot and, physically at least, our back

yard. This gave us some rights or a sort. This door was used unofficially by movie goers, particularly children, to relieve themselves, generally during intermission or between reels. Some used the privy others the ground. One trick was to wait until girls came out to squat then frighten them with a yell. This must have caused some discomfort for them. On some occasions it was possible to enter the movie house through this door with a "back yard pass". I recall a fight between me and Bob Rust at our gate. This was egged on by two other youngsters, seconds probably. We were of the same size but he hit hard to it was only a two-blow fight, a draw. I think we spent only about six-months at this location. My mother was frantic the whole period.

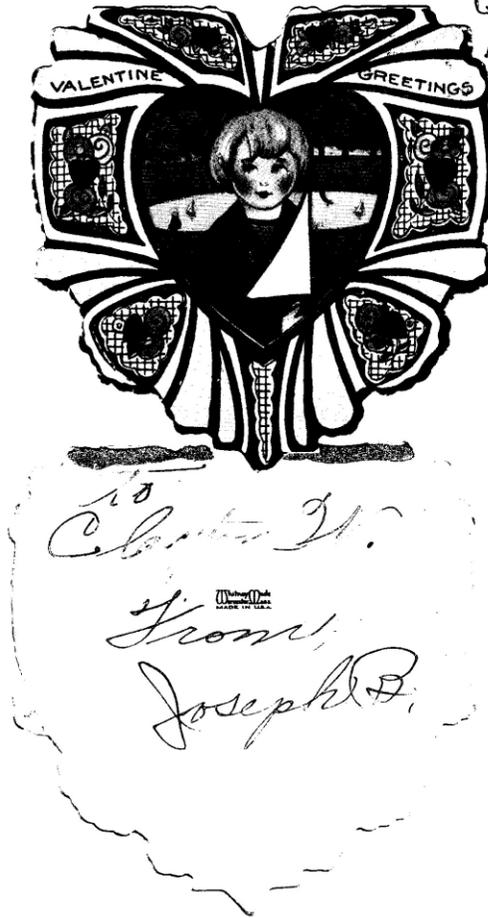
Our next and final move was to a small one-story, frame house located on the east side of Hancock Avenue between Talmer Avenue (Rte #10) and Central Avenue. At this time there were only houses at each end of the block with gardens for these two houses located between. The Vanek family lived at the Central Ave. corner. The houses had yards with depth to the rear alley. The front was served by a sidewalk but the alley was always used to-and-from town. The sketch shows house, buildings, and layout. This house had single sideing,

to the rear alley. The front was served by a sidewalk but the alley was always used going to-and-from town. The sketch shows house, buildings, and layout. This house had single siding,



NOTE: THIS PAGE & THE NEXT ARE IMAGES
OF TWO ITEMS "LAIN IN" AT THIS
PLACE IN THE MANUSCRIPT. THE ITEM
SHOWN BELOW IS A VALENTINE CARD
(THE "MARK" ON THE BACK READS "WHITNEY
MADE,
MASS

WORCHESTER,
MADE IN USA."



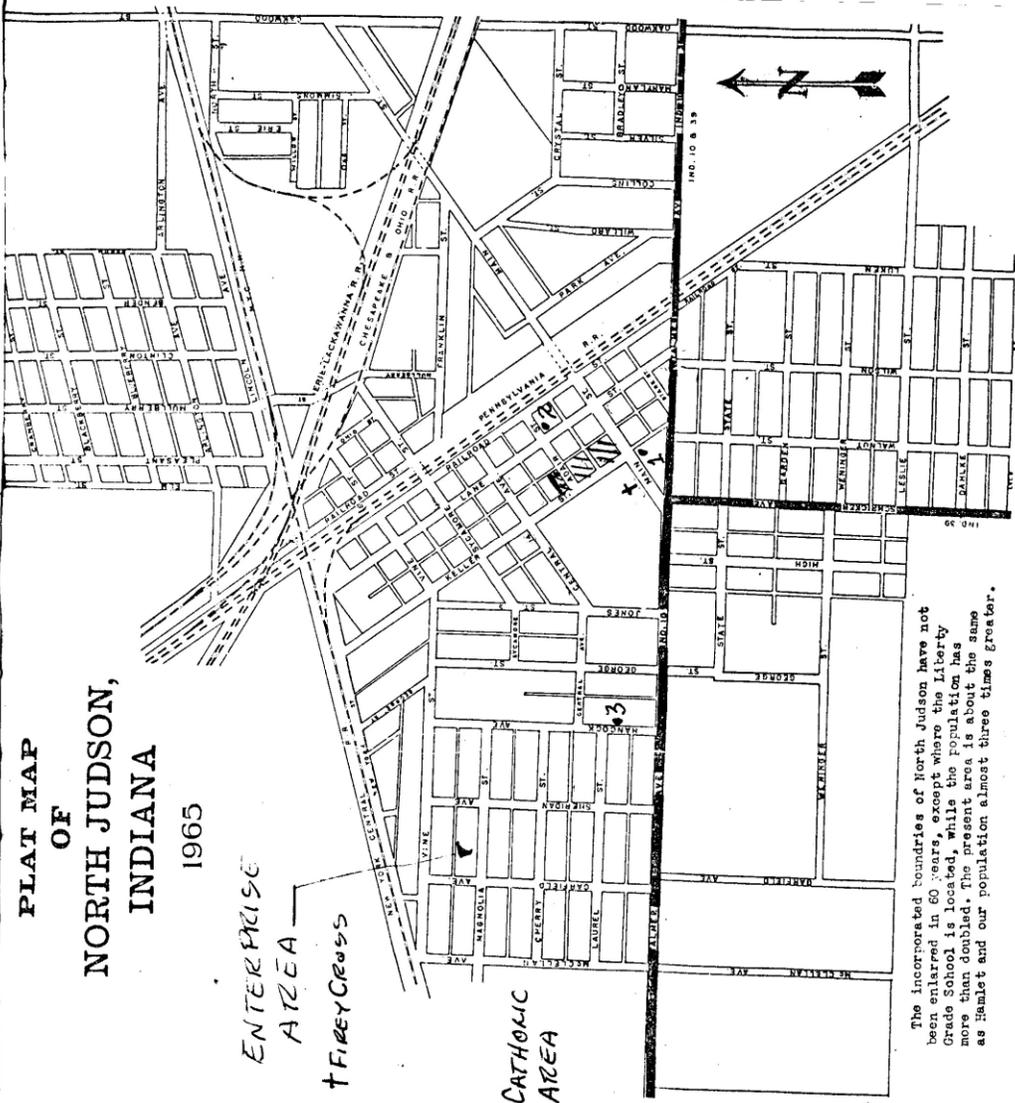
Tent site in North Judson

Just north of the bank (corner of Lane and _____ Streets) a vacant lot offered a logical and appropriate site for tents, apparently. Some covered revival meetings, others wrestling against all comers, boxing and medicine men shows. Any of these was an exciting event for a week, generally. For the revivals, we sat in the rear. For the athletic events, a front row was preferred. ~~A certain amount of without money~~ [For those without money,] the front entrance was forsaken in preference to a rear or side flap where there were no ticket takers.

I recall the revivals as being very interesting, interspersed with hymns, exhortations, and spontaneous salvations. As the nuns had instructed us to steer clear of such places they became more attractive. The wrestling and boxing were quite often rather grim, as the town favorite mostly lost. Although medicine men mostly worked from wagons (later small trucks) sometimes they too set up small tents.

MAP NORTH JUDSON, INDIANA

90



PLAT MAP OF NORTH JUDSON, INDIANA 1965

ENTERPRISE
AREA
+ Firey Cross

CATHOLIC
AREA

The incorporated boundaries of North Judson have not been enlarged in 60 years, except where the Liberty Grade School is located, while the population has more than doubled. The present area is about the same as Hamlet and our population almost three times greater.

no basement or cellar, had a hand pitcher pump in the kitchen, and two chimneys. A coal/wood range heated the kitchen and a wood/coal stove heated the living room. The rest of the house was cold in winter. All three of the North Judson houses or locations had electricity but we never had a telephone. After some time at Hancock Avenue the landlord installed an electric pump with a small holding tank beneath the sink.

Vivid recollections are of the cold in the winter. My father would bank snow, when available, about the foundation to prevent the wind from blowing beneath the floors, single of course. When we arose in the morning there was a mad dash to the kitchen range in our long johns and carrying our clothes. We dressed huddled over the stove. Many mornings croup would require hanging over the steaming tea kettle to clear throat and lungs. Although my father would bank a fire in both kitchen and dining room, on some occasions the teakettle water would be frozen in the morning. On cold winter evenings everyone kept close to the living room stove even to the point of burning the soles of shoes. As the fire declined after banking, late readers were forced into bed to keep warm. The dining room was the family center for reading, studying and general evening sitting. The living room was seldom used, particularly in winter. Being a family of all boys, we had our turns at doing dishes as well as other chores such as filling the wood basket and getting in a supply of corn cobs for starting the morning fires.

[PAW note: WCW also recalled that during this time he and AF loved to sleep in the winter with the window open, and would often wake up to find snow covering their bedclothes. He said that his father would stuff material around the outside of their bedroom door to prevent the house from getting any colder. It was his father who got up in the mornings to get the stove fired up to heat the house.]

During our early period in North Judson the KKK activity reached its peak in Indiana. In North Judson this was celebrated by two major acts of violence against the Church. On the first the entire ornamental portions of the church front were severely damaged and broken. A short time later the priest's home or rectory was bombed. The front door bell was rung late at night and just before the housekeeper reached the door, a bomb exploded immediately outside. The door was blown off its hinges into the hall, all the glass in the house front was broken as well as the porch construction. The housekeeper was injured but not severely. A few weeks later a fiery cross was burned in an empty lot a short distance, just across the street, from the Catholic buildings. It was also just across the street from us, the no. 1 residence. Also during this period a Klan parade was held traversing Lane Street from end-to-end in the evening. I recall vividly the floats and the white robes and hooded marchers. One float contained a small replica of the "little Red Schoolhouse" and a sign "Keep our schools American" a direct reference to the local parochial school. Others had remarks re the pope and Catholics in general. Rumor had it that many prominent Protestants were under the sheets. These animosities were passed on to

children, naturally, and we were taunted on our way to-an-from church and school, a typical cat-call was "cat-lickers". My father found it almost impossible to obtain work from the average protestant. In later years, at Oxford, he remarked that he had finally broken the Protestant bias; the local Methodist minister had given him a construction job!! Methodists were in the forefront of the Klan and discrimination. The Lutherans were much less so and possibly even neutral. Their small church also supported a very small school.

The Catholic community, Czeks and Slavs with a few Irish, made up a not small portion of the town and so was able to defend itself and subsist without major deprivation. It included a number of the town's better businesses and thus had real stature and some political strength. In combination with the more liberal protestant elements, a reasonable balance was struck and the town as a whole did not suffer greatly.

As noted earlier, one of the local industries was truck farming. The major crops were onions and carrots. Some of these were operated by Asians: Japanese and maybe Koreans. Children were employed during the summer break to weed the crops and, late in summer, some of the reaping or harvest. I engaged in both over the years. The weeding job's day started at about 6:30 AM when we grouped at some convenient spot set by the employer and were picked up by a stake or flat-bed truck, lunch pails, straw hats, and barefooted, all. Boys & girls, mixed. We were transported to the country some few miles and work started at 7 and lasted to 5 PM with a lunch break of 45 minutes to an hour. These fields were made up of muck soils and were bad either dry or wet when crawling along on one's knees pulling weeds. This was the hour-in hour-out occupation straddling the rows and crawling steadily along while pulling weeds, not onions. Crops in a row were carefully scrutinized by the foreman. Carrot weeding was much worse as many weeds resembled the small carrot plants. Our only surcease from this work was Sunday or a rainy day. Rain was truly a blessed event.

The soil, hot and dry or cool and wet, readily passed thru the blue cotton overalls into the skin pores of the knees. At best it was irritating, almost impossible to remove by casual washing after work. At worst infections occurred with quite often (insert) these (end insert) would turn to boils or carbuncles. These were devastating to the knees and extremely painful. They lasted one to three weeks and almost immobilized the particular leg. I still have scars from the more virulent infections.

As I recall, horse play was not a prominent part of the day but conversation tossed back and forth between rows was fairly common. I learned more about sex at these tasks. On one day, a storm swept down on the open field forcing everyone to flee for shelter and safety. The ominous clouds and winds were labeled by the older children as a twister. This made a deep impression on me. For many years any cloudiness or approaching storm filled me with fear. It took a very long time for this to wear off.

The pay from this work varied from 15 to 20 cents per hour. I don't recall making any large sums from this work. I did have enough (\$7.50) once and was allowed to purchase a second-hand Ranger bicycle. This was much too large for me as it was full size. For some time I road it "through the bars", the bike leaning to the side. Later I fixed a seat in the crotch between the seat part and the rear fender which allowed me to just reach the pedals. This was my only bike.

On one very hot work day, grousing at the heat became so rampant that discussion turned to quitting for the rest of the day. The foreman did not buy this argument. My brother Floyd, always vocal, became one of the ringleaders in fomenting a strike. A major portion of the work crew walked off the job and walked home. The next morning (maybe it was cooler) when we arrived at the truck stop for pickup, we, Floyd and I, were told we were not needed. The rest of the strikers were reemployed. As a brother of the agitator, I also got the ax.

After I got into high school age, I was able to spend some time at hoeing weeds from mint in the summer. This was a much more prestigious task. One stood up and used a hoe. The mint was also a more expensive crop. The pay then was 25 cents per hour. I never made the highest ranking labor of operating a wheel hoe cultivator. I was too short. I think Floyd finally made the grade. There were several mint stills where the mint plants were processed into mint extracts.

Late in the summer or early fall the onions were harvested and work crews were again employed. The onions were plowed or lifted from their growing depth to the surface. The crews then picked them up, cut off the stems with sheep shears, and placed them into one-layer, 30-inch square crates. These were then picked up by trucks and taken to the warehouse. Payment for labor was piecework, by the crate. I only engaged in this once or twice. My father worked at this one year, much to my embarrassment. Employment was so bad he dropped to this menial task to subsist.

In these years there was little or no organized youth activity that I recall. A boy scout troop operated for about one year and I attended a camp of one week at the newly formed lake at Monticello, I believe. The lake was filled with just submerged stumps and our rowboat hit one causing me to lose my newly acquired fish pole. A late night rainstorm threw the camp into an uproar and the usual highjinks occurred. The best part of this camp was the food. A local restaurant owner came with us and did all the cooking.

In later years a CYO was organized at the church and my mother pressured me into attending a meeting and one outing. I was the youngest and did not fit in too well. The outing ended with one vehicle going into the ditch while trying to pass another of the group on a gravel road. Some injuries but not permanently serious.

At a lower organizational level, our side of town played baseball games now and then. We called it the Enterprise Team, after a development area at the northwest part of town where we had our field. This Enterprise development or addition to the town must have been ten or twenty years old but there were only one or two houses. There were many laid-out streets with good-sized maples lining them and drainage ditches along the streets. It was all in grass. Maybe once or twice a year (summer) we played

the other end of town. I recall having a set of metal cleats which I screwed into my only shoes. Also I think, my mother bought me a uniform from Sears or Montgomery!

During some portion of this time, the use of hoops became a fad. The hoop or wheel was propelled along the sidewalk with a wooden 7-square-shaped affair made of lath or similar light wood. The hoop was started rolling by allowing it to roll down the handle portion and then propelled by pushing it with the crosspiece. At the time, this adjunct became a fixture with me such that it went wherever I did. Just like my cap which I always wore.

The principal lake for swimming and boating was Bass Lake, about 10 miles east on Rte #10. Family outings with the Scheets' were held here periodically. Some of the Maguires came up from Oxford once or twice and had a cottage for a small period. These were the years of jazz, Black Bottom, Charleston, etc. at the dance hall which adjoined the picnic area. I watched.

Our local skinny-dipping creek was Bogus, about two miles east of town. Our only hazard was passing cars who stopped to photograph us. Summertime was a time for bare feet, from June 1 through Labor Day. Hazards were stubbed toes on the sidewalk, stone bruises in the heel off the sidewalk, broken glass, and sand burrs. Softball pickup or rotation was played at an empty lot at the N.E. corner of George and Central. Girls were allowed to play if we were short of manpower. Some could hit very well. The lot was edged with lilacs and for years the smell of lilacs would bring memories of the game.

My particular chums were Ralph Dolezal and Jim Lindauer, both in my grade at school and who lived within a few blocks of our third house. Jim moved to Chicago at about the 7th or 8th grade but Ralph is still in North Judson operating the family store, Two Joes department and groceries. I have not seen him since we left in the summer of 1930. The Dolezals were a large family, Joe the father having married twice. Ralph was third or fourth youngest. Much of our activity and rendezvousing took place at their home. Jim and I would whistle him out for whatever. At one time we had a backyard "shack" with a long tunnel which exited at an unlikely hidden spot behind the barn for secret exit and entrance. We engaged in cat and bird shooting with .22 rifles. I would sometimes be able to obtain my father's Stevens rifle on the QT and purchase a few rounds at a cent or two per round, always shorts, they were cheaper.

One spring we built kites, large ones, higher than I was. These were the standard, then, of three supports. These were made of the previous year's sunflower stalks which were stiff, strong, and lightweight. Wrapping paper from the store was used for covering. Flour and water paste. Instead of a long tail of rags, the normal technique, we used a short tail and tied a railroad spike on the end to obtain sufficient stabilization. We built several of those and they flew quite satisfactorily from the field (garden area) of Dolezals. If that spike had fallen and hit anyone it would have been fatal!

One evening at home, my younger brother, Charles, came to the house and reported that he had spilled something in the tool house. Ralph, who happened to be visiting, and I went to the garage area to inspect. It being dark and no electric light in that building, I struck a match or two to investigate. Unfortunately the spilled liquid, probably turpentine or such, caught fire with immense flames. I ran to the house for water, Ralph ran home for a fire extinguisher. I don't believe I told anyone at the house immediately what was happening. They discovered by my acts. The fire was somewhat under control by

the time Ralph returned. I think his family called the fire company. All in all, it was a traumatic experience accompanied by lectures etc. The damage was severe but not major.

Lindauers lived on Laurel a half block from our #3 house. When they moved the house was occupied by a mother and two sons who moved down from Chicago. Their names escape me. The two boys were about 17 or 18 and I was about 13 or 14. These two boys had been active in amateur radio in Chicago and brought their equipment and knowledge to North Judson. I rapidly became interested and my lifelong career in radio, communication, and electronics was launched. By careful operation and negotiation I was able to beg, borrow, or (as a last and seldom resort) buy a few parts to set up and experiment (play) with. I managed to preempt a small area in the utility room and create a bench with light for my laboratory. My parents were reasonably understanding to the point where my father put up a small amount of money to complete a three-tube radio. This consisted of a regenerative detector followed by a package, two-stage Atwater Kent amplifier. I believe we borrowed a horn loudspeaker and finally the era of radio entered our home. Batteries were always a problem. The B batteries were expensive and the filament batteries being 6-volt car batteries were messy and always needing charging. They were cast-offs from local garages. I held on to this equipment for many years. (It finally disappeared in a fire in Oxford in a "shack" under the aegis of my youngest brother, Harold, and his pal, Dan Fell. I was at sea at the time and didn't learn of it until years later.)

My small amount of electrical learning brought on naturally horseplay. We obtained an ignition, high-voltage, generator from a garage junk pile and by attaching it to metal fences we could, by cranking, generate enough radiated interference from the fence to put considerable "static" in nearby radios. Exciting! I was in the first or second year of high school at this time.

During his younger years, my father had learned and played the trombone in bands or such. When Floyd reached late grade school he inherited the instrument and joined the North Judson town band. Somewhat later Ralph Dolezal did the same, also a trombone. His brother, Jim, much older and married, played the drum. (He was also town marshal for a year or two.) After a year or so Ralph bought a new trombone and his brass starter was up for sale. We were not able to buy it and my parents suggested I "borrow" it. To my chagrin, this took place. (I knew it was charity.)

Thus, I too became a trombone player. The band leader was John Stejskal, who operated a soft drink bar, probably on Olive [?] Street just across the street from a Penn RR depot. He and his elderly mother lived in the rear of the bar. He apparently was a good musician and directed this band for many years. He also, though a non-Catholic, I believe, played the violin in the church choir loft at Christmas and special mass festivals.

Before and during their initial entry into the band, the younger members were required to attend practices once or twice a week in late afternoon after school. This took place in the Stejskal "bar" and included two to five boys, generally. Full-fledged band practice was carried out in the high school once or twice a month. The trombone section was about six total. I was always last and didn't do much more than "ump-pah" along with tubas and such. I never became a musician!

Our most memorable activities other than horseplay at practices, was playing at the annual Harvest Jubilee held in the fall and, once, when we went to Bass Lake to play and got in to a wrestling match free in the evening.

The jubilee was an annual affair of some magnitude which took place the length of Lane Street, principally, with some small extension into the beginnings of side streets. The entire street, in memory at least, was lined on both sides with tents, stands, and such with food, games, and novelties for sale. At each end of the street, probably at Main and Vine, elevated platforms were erected. Periodically during the day and evening events occurred on these platforms. Acrobats, magicians, singers, dancers, and other entertainment. The band participated by marching from one platform to the other down the street, in uniform to attract the crowds to the next event. I was just old enough to participate but one year, I think. During one event at the Vine end, a newsreel team was set up. When the band terminated its march down the street ending at the platform, the newsreel team requested some shots of the band in motion playing. The newsreel team leader asked Stejskal to have me lead or direct the band (I was quite small.) I was overwhelmed and didn't do much of a job in directing. I was afterward told I was keeping time in "three-quarter" time while the band was playing in "half" time! So much for my newsreel starring. I never saw the results, probably lost on the cutting room floor.

A much earlier contact with the band had occurred when, while running beneath the Vine Street platform, I had stumbled and fallen into instruments standing there. Unluckily I slashed the lobe of my right ear with much blood. The scar still remains.

Other boys whom I remember as associates of one type or another are: Dick Culp and brothers who also came from English Lake, Howard Black who had a brother named Pearl (to my always amazement). Ben Weninger who married June Schricker, Valerius Sindelar, John Sanrt.

Floyd was the enterprising son. He started paper delivery routes and I was allowed to help, later, and still later had my own. One task which I never liked and only performed when he was otherwise occupied consisted of selling papers on a passenger train. The scenario was as follows: one secured the papers delivered from Chicago, Indianapolis, or Logansport on a Pennsylvania train at its depot near Vine Street; by hustling one could rendezvous with a NYC passenger train entering from the west while it was stopped just at the edge of town waiting for the switching flag; the conductor would lower steps and the paper boy scrambled aboard; during the wait and while running the distance to its depot between Mulberry and Clinton one traversed the coaches and hawked the papers. There were always a few smart types with remarks and such. I was always relieved to reach the station and hop off.

During one period when I was particularly in need of money, I went around part of the paper route and tried to collect the weekly charge several days in advance of the regular collection day. Some of the customers complained to my brother and I was in trouble, once more.

The Logansport Gazette was one of the delivered papers which put on a new subscription campaign with various prizes for blocks of new subscribers. I recall my father going out to help us and collecting several "scout" axes as part of the winnings. It was winter and he wore his bearskin long overcoat. The memory is vivid of his pulling out a handful of filled-in subscriptions from the coat. We were astounded. I used

my old Ranger bike to deliver papers whenever it was in riding condition. It seems to have been a chronic axle breaker. Probably I never had the bearing cones anchored properly.

As I neared and reached high school age I began working with my father at his carpentry jobs. He charged 10 or 15 cents an hour for my efforts but I received no regular allowance or payment. Times were hard. We were quite poor during the latter part of the North Judson period. Food was often in short supply. Potatoes and bread were the staples. Fried potatoes with a small amount of seasoned grease was often the main course. Breakfast was always bread and cocoa, the former dunked or sopped into the latter. Occasionally, oatmeal for others (Cream of Wheat for me). I recall more than once surreptitiously investigating the pantry larder to see if there would really be any dinner (really supper). I was shaken at times but I don't recall any *real* foodless meal times.

We owed bills at various stores which were seldom completely paid off. My worst chore was being sent to Two Joes to buy food on time where we already had an appreciable charge account. I was never turned down but I knew all the clerks, most of whom were Dolezals, brothers and sisters of Ralph, and it was embarrassing. When we left North Judson in the summer of 1930, we left a 40-50 dollar charge account. I don't believe it was ever paid.

Dolezals, Two Joes, was a department store, including groceries. It was located at the south corner of Central and Lane, an "L"-shaped arrangement with a bank on the corner point. Two Joes (for Joe Dolezal and Joe Sindelar, the founders) had a front entrance into the clothing leg from Lane Street and a side entrance from Central Avenue into the grocery area. (Apparently the complete building, including bank, burned on Christmas Eve, 1947.)

The Carnegie library was located on Keller Street next to the high school. It had been built in 1921 and was of brick construction. It was divided into two equal parts, separated by the librarian's desk and checkout counter. The librarian was continually hustling me from the adult side to the children's side. My size again. I spent much time there.

Next to the library, south, the waterworks, firehouse, jail building was located. The jail was in the basement but there were windows, barred of course, through which one could look into the cell (or cells?). Whenever, which was seldom, there was an occupant one could sneak a peek at the culprit. This had to be done on the QT, particularly so that the criminal could not see, or, at least, not identify you.

I attended the high school for two years. The first year Floyd was a senior and I had some status, as an entering freshman from the parochial school, by this fact. I had no problems scholastically but did not really strive to excel. I was passive rather than active. I remember only two teachers, C. C. Diettert, a hump-backed social studies teacher and Ingwell, the math teacher and basketball coach. H. C. Clausen was superintendent during this period. I was too small for any sports activity.

A large room, assembly, housed all four years of students. This was home base when one did not have a class and for the daily full assembly. The seats (desks) had been compressed such that two rows were side by side, each pair being assigned to a boy and girl. My freshman year I shared or sat with a very shy quiet girl and we probably exchanged not more than two words the whole year. The second year my

seatmate was quite the opposite and my report grade in department dropped markedly. I don't remember either of their names. The first girl may have been a daughter of Otto Kreis, the lumberyard operator.

During my high school career I had two shirts, adequate, as I wore one while the other was being washed. I recall a vivid scarlet pullover sweater purchased through the catalog. I stood out.

With one or two exceptions, the parochial students that went on to high school did not do very well. Floyd did well but only spent his last three years there. He was at the top of his class, a debater, and an active participant.

Our cars were a succession of second-hand Ford Model Ts starting with side curtains with isinglass windows which snapped onto the car. We had one later model which I believe had glass roll-up windows. Our last car in North Judson, purchased in the spring of 1930, was a green 1928 Chevrolet sedan. This purchase was very much of a surprise to me. We were in debt, poor, and my father did not have steady work. How he managed to acquire this relatively new model I have no idea. I was almost ashamed to have my friends see it. We kept this car quite a number of years after our move to Oxford and I was allowed to drive it alone at times. As it grew older and I more dextrous, I learned to shift gears without clutching, merely by moving the gearshaft at an exact speed after releasing the accelerator. It worked very well, no noise and no gear rattle. I think we had this car up until I left home. I was allowed to use it only once in the evening on a so-called date!

I learned to drive the Model Ts at a very early age, probably 12 or so. I had to sit on the very edge of the seat to reach the three pedals and manage the clutch-brake lever. I recall making a trip from the English Lake area to North Judson, alone, to obtain a needed tool for my father. He believed in allowing children to become experienced at an early age. Everything went well until I was almost back when smoke started to arise from under the "dash" or wiring area. I brought the car to a stop and started pulling on wires until the smoke subsided. I don't recall how I got the news to my father. I was not more than 12 or 13.

On another occasion while we were cutting wood at some distance from town in the winter, he slashed his foot severely through overshoe and shoe. I had to drive him to the doctor, posthaste. We spent considerable time in the winter cutting down trees, then sawing them into burning-size sections suitable for splitting later at home. I finally learned to operate reasonably effectively at one end of a cross-cut saw. It even could be a not onerous chore at times as one warmed up in the cold woods and muscles settled into the rhythm. I think we borrowed a team and wagon to cart the wood chunks home. I recall the team becoming balky with a load as we were leaving the farm for town. They finally bolted and dumped the load. I was nearby but not on the wagon. This was one of the very few times I heard my father take off with a swearing routine. I was startled, amazed, and filled with respect. Our home life was remarkably free from profane and crude language, and off-color humor or jokes. My mother was dead set against such language and my father was also, apparently. I never became adept, partly, at least, until after I had gone to sea, and late in life when I finally lost some of those early-life inhibitions.

We used the cars for family visits to relatives. In those days these were long, tiresome travel events. The cars would average only about 30 miles per hour or less, and a top speed, very seldom, of about 40 mph. These trips were primarily to the Schutzes when they lived near Goodland on a farm and later, when they moved to town in Plymouth. Clara Schutz was my mother's next younger sister and they were always very close friends. George Schutz was a very likeable person and he and my father got on well together. Azalia, "Daughty," was their oldest (of two) children, about six weeks older than I. Our families visited each other several times a year for [?] or more days. Sometimes we met at Bass Lake for a summer picnic. These were always fun outings. At other times, earlier, we picnicked at one or more river spots, whose location I don't recall. Here we fished as well as swam. Uncle George and Aunt Clara were always favorite relatives throughout their lives, even as they aged. The Schutz family came from Benton County, Indiana, and George had several brothers as well as one sister.

Azalia was good fun up until she reached late high school and became emotionally involved with her to-be husband, Raymond Cox. She became intolerable at this point. As adolescents we were close friends and shared many common experiences.

During one or more summers we journeyed north into Michigan to purchase peaches for canning, my only trip out of state as a member of the family. My mother did considerable canning to carry us through the winter.

The longest trips were those to Oxford to visit the Maguires, my mother's parents and brothers. The distance was about 75 miles and it took about 3 to 3 ½ hours. "How much farther" was a refrain which would drive my father "up the steering wheel" coming often and from several children confined to the rear seat of an old Ford. The roads were gravel and dusty. It was generally summertime and hot.

There were the inevitable flat tires which had to be patched and rerimmed alongside the road. This was an arduous task, at best, and left the driver in a not kindly mood. On one trip we broke down, completely, with a crankshaft or main bearing problem which required us to stop overnight. This was spent in Remington or Rensselaer at a hotel, my first. We were all in one room, probably on the second floor. I recall a coiled rope which was to be used in case of fire emergency. This was an exciting departure from the norm!

The Oxford visits were always in winter, made only about once a year. When we finally arrived, generally, late in the afternoon or early evening, we children hopped out and raced around the sidewalk to the rear or kitchen entrance of the Maguire house. We never entered but knocked and waited. Quite often my grandfather would come to the door, peer through the screen, and exclaim, "Looks like Lullie's children, Sarah."

My favorite cousin was Joe Maguire, son of Uncle Will and Aunt Lucy. They lived in a ramshackle house in Cabbage Town, next to the Rasmussens, about a block distance. Joe, who was several years older than I, always tolerated me and I was allowed into his shack and activities. At Oxford I was always called "Tiny," a carryover from infancy when I was referred to as "Tiny-baby" for an obvious reason. This never bothered me and lasted until sometime after we moved there. In some way, Oxford was exciting during these visits. There were lots of aunts, uncles, cousins, and their friends to renew friendships. All my

mother's brothers and sisters (seven) lived mostly in or nearby Oxford. Likewise my father's relatives , though we saw less of them. Every Saturday night there was a band concert in the town square park where kids could run and tear.

Miscellaneous vivid recollections of North Judson flash back now and then. Cary Pohlman's father's suicide. They lived a half block from us at Hancock and Talmer. Mr. Pohlman operated a hardware store at Main and Lane. He used a rifle from the store stock. I never heard a good reason.

Bringing corncobs from the corn processing plant near the railroad at the end of Keller Avenue. This was a demeaning task because it was an occupation of the poorer families, Two children carried out the assignment, one to hold the gunny sacks, the other to scoop them full, and help tie up. We used a wagon to transport two or more bags. These corncobs were used for fire starts and summer cooking in the kitchen range.

To and from town was past a main cemetery on the south side of Central east of Jones on a hill. In the evening or dark this became a trying block or so. I resorted to various ruses to carry me through the minute or so of passage: whistling, watching the road, thinking deep thoughts, and even a more rapid walk, up to and including running. It was over this path of sidewalk that I first acquired the mania in which toes should land in a clear space, not on a crack. This has stuck with me throughout life, in a very mild form, of course.

My grandfather, John Wilkinson, died in the spring of the year 1927, when I was in the 7th grade, 12 years of age, I believe. In any event, the family went south for the funeral while I remained at home because I was a principal in the yearly school play. This was my first experience living alone for several days. In some ways I was sorry about his death. He always liked me, seemingly, and always called me "Bill," possibly to differentiate me from my father, "Clayt." He carried a handlebar mustache all his life. In later years he lived near his son, Uncle Charlie, in Attica and operated a small store, set up by his son. This sold a small line of groceries, as well as, more importantly, candies and ice cream. He was always generous with this latter commodity. His nickname, I learned from those who used the store, was "Banty." Uncle Charlie was called "Shorty" by his associates. Wilkinsons were short people and I was always at the lowest end!

Aunt Myrtle Wilkinson, married to Uncle Charlie, almost towered over him. In later years he developed somewhat of a pot belly and she an imposing bosom. They made quite a pair. My father and older sons generally visited them during our trips to Oxford but seldom my mother. We were practically never visited by my father's relatives.

For a time Aunt Rose and Hazy Lisey operated the Oxford Hotel and, later, a café in Oxford. Once or twice, this was good for an ice cream cone when I identified myself. During one trip to Oxford the Maguire home must have overflowed as my father,

[End of Vol. 1]