

## PART TWO

## THE ROAD OF LIFE

A scenic path. This road of Life that all must tread:  
Nor dare dismay nor turn aside at rut or clod.  
If they would reach their journey's end to meet their God.  
The youth rejoices as he climbs the verdant hill that lies ahead.  
Is he not strong? Is he not free? He has the will, that all can see  
Where danger lurks he bids it flee.  
Ahead Life's venture waits his tread: A conquering hero-he!

Across the sky, or sea, or plain are many paths  
And man must choose. But one will seem to cast a spell  
A golden promise, his to attain.  
To this he hurries. Eager now.  
He finds a mate who goes his way.  
Then hand in hand they forge ahead  
The golden promise to possess.  
Their path is fret with sun and shade,  
And beauty's wand has touched the land. Still on they go,  
Now little know that what they seek is at their hand.  
This is Life's store of promised gold  
This now is theirs to have and hold.

Their path by now has sunset gained.  
The way trends down toward the plain.  
Where sunset's glow makes light the way.  
He plods alone, his step is slow,  
His cloak drawn close to hold the warmth  
Of love once known, she who was once his trusted mate  
Was lost long since on Life's stern road.  
He feels the breath from snow capped hills that skirt the plain,  
And the sunset, now, scarce lights his trail  
As slower still, his halting steps  
Cling to the sod. His head is bowed.  
So thus he goes to meet his God.

by Minnie Alice Rhoads



## STORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD

The later life of my parents, Wes and Nellie Macomber, my sister, Mabel, brothers, George, Sam and Miles and my grandparents, Eliza Ann and Elza Martin and their children, George and Ann will be told in the story of my life as I remember them.

There are a few incidences that I remember of the time when my parents lived in Aspinwall and Nemaha, Nebraska. My first encounter with abject poverty and death occurred there when my mother took me with her to a dug-out home where a baby had died and I shall never forget it. The other was ghost stories which caused me quite an emotional disturbance. Old Hank Barker, grey hair and beard, lived in our community and often visited us in the evening because he was lonesome. He didn't really require answering comments -- just a listening ear for the tales he wanted to tell. Everything happened in sequences of three - a horsebacker would ride by at night three times - a rock would drop on his roof and roll down three times and always it would mean death. The next morning he would receive word of a death. Mother and Dad would always try to explain that the wind could cause such noises in old houses but at any rate when I reached the place in school to read, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", with it's headless horsemen and his trips three, I was well prepared to accept it as a whimsical tale to be enjoyed.

Miles and I started to school but had gone only a short time the winter before we moved to Falls City. The Falls City Harlan Street school was a one story, brick, four roomed structure with Primary, First, Second and Third Grades, and we walked thru the door confidently. There were a number of youngsters in the hallway surrounding a small table where a teacher sat recording things, and a number of other adults were busy about the hall. When it came our turn to be recorded, the teacher looked at us and said, "You are new here. Where did you come from?" She turned to one of the others and said wearily, "Oh, dear! What shall we do with these two?" They conferred a while, asked how much we had gone to school, then someone said, "Put them both in the first grade". Just like they were sorting cattle. I felt rebuffed, as if put some place I wasn't wanted, and to be not wanted was a new experience.

I saw a negro for the first time that day and was so interested in him that I probably missed everything else. If he had said "Boo", I would have run as far as I could. He was bigger than anyone else in the room and his hair looked more like Mother's caracul coat than hair. I ran home at noon telling Mother that there was a black boy there with rag hair.

From that first day at Harlan, Miles and I always remained in the same grade. I'm sure he could have outdistanced me, but he was quite content the way things were. He got his lessons easily and had time for extra activities.



Once when I was quite small Uncle Elva Duryea drove his Reo to Falls City to visit Wes and Nellie and asked if they could take me home with them for a visit. After much coaxing, Mother consented. We crossed the Nemaha River at dusk and how the bugs did strike in our faces as we crossed the wide, low bottom land on either side of the stream. It was my first automobile ride - quite a thrill, and not without incident.

When we had but three of the 20 miles to our destination left, the Reo refused to run forward but it would go fairly well backward. Elva was concerned and said, "If I let anything happen to you, Nellie will never forgive me". We were close to his brother-in-law's, so Elva walked to his house and asked him to take me the final three miles with a team of horses. It was 9:30 p. m. and Hiram Bacon, like most rural men had gone to bed, but he good naturedly got up and got his team into the barn, harnessed and hitched to his wagon and riding high on a spring seat atop the wagon I finished that first auto ride.

One time when visiting Uncle Elva, his daughter, Myrtle, and I found that by putting a sheet of paper under the strings of his grand piano we could produce different sounds and we had a wonderful time with a make-believe orchestra. Our fun lasted until we got several bits of paper down in the piano and Elva discovered what we were doing. He had to sent to Lincoln, Nebr. for a man to come and clean it out.

Walter Duryea was at our house in Falls City on the day of a political rally featuring the late William Jennings Bryan, who was to deliver one of his famous speeches. We were all out front watching the parade except Mother who always found work to be done inside. I was quite small and Uncle Walter picked me up and sat me on the gate post and said, "Now when I tell you, you yell, 'Hurrah for McKinley' as loud as you can. When he said 'now', I yelled as loud as I could with a voice that had a terrible capacity to penetrate. To my surprise, there was Mr. Bryan right in front of me in a carriage. He heard me, laughed and tipped his hat, but before I could figure it all out, here came Mother. She snatched me off the gate post and proceeded to address some scathing remarks at her brother, Walter.

Probably all small towns were much alike in being especially made to order for growing youngsters. No cars in those days to be a hazard to our areas of play. We could coast down almost any street that provided a slope and we had a neighbor boy who owned a pony. When he would harness his pony it was signal for all of us to tie our sleds on tandem style. If we were too many the pony knew how to take care of itself. It simply turned squarely around in the street and started rapidly for the barn. Of course, the sleds toppled and piled up and we were scattered along the street.

In the summer we could wander about town looking for new houses being built to pick up the long honey colored shavings



falling from the builder's plane and pin them around our heads for curls and become blonde beauties. If we had a chance we would walk the floor joists but we were usually sent on our way.

Each girl had a jumping rope and no place was far away as long as we could jump rope. We usually went to the depot to see the late afternoon train come in. We played around the platform until someone heard the distant whistles. At that we all scampered up against the old red depot with the name Falls City in white on each end of the building, and waited for the high puffing engine to come thundering in - close and noisy. We watched every wheel and listened to the signals of the trainmen. If anyone boarded or arrived that we knew, it was a red letter event. After the jaunt to the depot it was time to hurry home for most parents had evening chores for us to do.

My special chore was to clean and fill the lamps with kerosine, trim the wicks and wash the chimneys. Miles had to bring the cows for the neighborhood from the pasture, about a mile out of town, and put each one in it's own barn lot in time for evening milking. Sometimes he rode his pony. Everyone could have a cow, some horses and now and then someone would have a pig or two. Yes, we had flies - hundreds of them. They were universal and every housewife fought them in her own way. The wire fly traps set around public places, sticky fly paper for the house, but no sprays or pesticides to rid them.

Many women stood during the meal with a twig from a tree and kept the flies away from the food. Mother always kept the house cool and dark until the food was on the table. Sometimes we had a general fly round-up. She would arm everyone with a towel and shoo the flies out the door. There was a short broom stick with several strips of clothe nailed to it and it was tied at the side of the door to shoo the flies before opening the door. If a return of the good old days would mean flies, I have no desire to return to them.

We had lived in Falls City one winter and Nellie was using every nice day to do her spring house cleaning. Ours was a rented home and not too nice, but we had nice neighbors.

House cleaning in those days was quite an ordeal. After the curtains were all washed and ironed, windows cleaned and walls cleaned or repapered, the work began on the floors. Our living-room or parlor as it was called, was carpeted with a woven rag carpet.

Carpet rag sewing was quite a pastime - worn aprons and dresses, etc., were washed, torn in strips an inch or more wide and these strips were sewn together end to end and wound into big balls. When enough of these were ready they were taken to Old Mr. Hendricks, the weaver, and made into strips of carpet. The carpets were colorful and quite attractive.



To clean the carpet in those days 'sans' vacuum cleaners or modern sprays, one had to move everything out of the room, then crawl around on the floor to remove every tack that held it down. Then it was put over the clothes line and whipped with a wire until all the dust was out of it. It was left to air while the floor was cleaned. A wagon was backed up to the door and the straw that was under the carpet was loaded and hauled away. It had been mashed down until it was almost powdered and of course, full of dust. The floor was scrubbed with hot water and strong lye soap. By that time, Wes would be back with a load of clean straw which was spread evenly over the clean floor then the carpet was brought in and carefully spread over the straw.

The worst task was stretching and tacking the carpet down. Mother did most of it, and still in my memory is the anguish I felt at seeing her work so hard.

She started at one end of the room, tacking that edge tightly then the ends and up each seam. She had a gadget about a foot long with teeth to hold the carpet tight while she tacked, but the pulling and stretching had to be done by hand and muscle and on hands and knees. Her hands would be swollen and sore for days after the ordeal. No, I don't think everything about the 'good old days' was desirable. To sweep the rug, she scattered damp tea leaves over it and most of the dust adhered to the leaves.

One thing was nice, the first few days the straw under the carpet remained springy and nice. We liked to play on it turning somersaults and hand springs. Miles would be the biggest clown of all, then he would crawl off somewhere and fall asleep so soundly that he had to be prodded upstairs to bed.

Mabel, Sam and George were so much older than Miles and I that we were almost like two families. Mabel was a tiny person with beautiful big brown eyes, an olive complexion and dark, heavy hair which fell down to her knees in two thick braids. She had a beautiful voice and took voice lessons.

Sam spent most of his time out of school at the home of Mary Catherine and Jackson Crook, learning to farm. George finished the eighth grade, then stayed with Elza Martin until he was grown. He got some schooling there and learned to farm. Being away so much they never seemed just like my brothers.

One Sunday in May, 1896, about 6:30 in the evening, it began to sprinkle big drops. We began stepping from one raindrop to another until they got too numerous, so we all ran to our houses just in time. It began to pour and hail furiously. A terrible wind blew from the north and hail began to break windowpanes out. Mother stuffed pillows, rugs, anything available, in the broken windows. The lamps all blew out and it was pitch dark. Dad tried to hold the door shut but he was almost powerless against the wind, so he called for someone to bring him a hammer and some nails to nail the door shut. He simply couldn't hold the door



and hit the nail in the dark so mother took the hammer from him and with never a miss she nailed the door shut.

We all kept watching the stand pipe across the street for it had been filled that day and if it blew over it would just about wash us away but it held. It rained about five inches and the streets and yards were washed full of debris. Little did we realize that one of the worst tornadoes ever to hit Nebraska had literally devastated the south end of town. The storm began at Beatrice, Nebraska and traveled 50 miles to Maryville, Missouri, one-half mile wide and destroyed all in it's path. There along the Nemaha River it had uprooted many big trees, flooded the river and blown a mother and her baby into the deepest part of the flood. The railroad depot and tracks in the area were ruined as well as many cars on the tracks.

Although I didn't know him at that time, the home of my husband-to-be, six miles south of Falls City, was blown board from board and the family scattered. The rain barrel which was at the corner of the house was unscathed. They found a team of horses half a mile away along a small stream called Pony Creek, both tied to the manger as they had been left in the barn. Chickens hung in high trees, every feather plucked off them and straws were driven by that miraculous electric force into boards or trees or cows backs as straight as a nail could be driven. A small neighbor boy was killed.

The storm appeared at first to have missed them, then unexpectedly came back from the opposite direction. An old farmer said the storm went east as far as the old Dutch Brewery, got drunk, then came back west and just raised hell. Huge trees were lifted out of the ground and strewn about and when the two oldest boys of the Rhoads family became conscious they gathered the family and put them under the heaviest leafy part of a big tree for a bit of shelter from the driving rain. Only the light from flashes of lightning guided them. They found their father and youngest sister about a quarter of a mile away at the far side of the orchard, the father with a badly crushed chest on his hands and knees in a ditch of water. Their invalid sister was near but not hurt. Their boys feet were very badly cut from broken glass and nails.

The neighbors to the south were cut off because of a deep gorge full of water and the ones to the north were newcomers who at first protested taking them in, but when the boys explained their fathers condition they took them all until morning.

The next morning the sun shown brightly and the usual repairs progressed and life came back to normal. A banker and several businessmen came to see what they could do for the Rhoads family. They built a house as soon as they could, telling Mr. Rhoads not to worry about the cost until he had a few years crops.



The doctor said if Mr. Rhoads had been a man with any bad habits, he couldn't have lived, but he had all his reserve strength and he said he had to live to care for his children. His wife had been dead about three years.

Many tall tales emerged from the tornado - - one told of a tea-kettle left on the stove full of hot water when the storm struck the house. When found, the water was all gone and some tiny chickens were inside safe and dry and the lid was on.

On nice days I would walk with Miles to take the cows to the pasture. Just at the edge of town a woman had a summer kitchen, and did all her heavy cooking out in the yard under a huge tree. She washed the pots and pans out there, hanging her fruit stained dishrags on the fence to dry. One morning an inquisitive old cow sauntered over by the fence and began chewing the dish rag. She was still chewing it when we put her in the pasture gate.

The next morning the cow made a straight run for that dish rag on the fence. She seemed to find them to her liking. Every morning she got one if she could and went on her way chewing it. The lady of that summer kitchen asked us if we would try to keep the cow from getting her dishrags. We did make an effort but the old cow was determined and, no doubt, we could have tried harder. Finally she decided to hang the rags on the tree.

Summertime meant games at night such as "Run Sheep Run". In the winter Mother almost always read to us or played the organ. It was an old pedal organ but it a lot of music in it and so did Mother. We loved to sing or just listen. She read books like "Little Women", "Black Beauty", and the "Aunt Samantha Series", or what ever we produced that interested those of the group.

We had 'Taffy Pulls' that were such fun. Mother would make a big platter of molasses or white taffy. Sometimes our Sunday School class sponsored it, but Mother was the one at whose house such affairs were always held and she seemed to enjoy them, sticky mess and all. The only draw back was when some Mischievious boy would get taffy in my hair, which was long and curley and very hard to comb.

Once a new girl at school wore a pretty new sunbonnet and I asked to try it on, then went home and asked Mother if I could have one like it. She wasn't much impressed but warned me about wearing others' clothing, especially bonnets because I might get lice. Sure enough, in a couple of days I had a nice crop of them. The way I got my hair washed and dosed and combed with a fine comb made that an episode I'll never forget.

On our way home from school we often stopped to watch old Mr. Hendricks using his big weaving loom, and learned the ways of the webb and woof, or we went to see Mrs. Banks flower garden. Her pride was a Yucca. She told us that the botanical name was



Yucca Willa Metosa, but if that was hard to remember to call it "Uncle William my toe's sore". How I would like to show her the Yucca (soap weeds) of Western Nebraska covering a complete hill side.

There were Band Concert nights when we went to the Court House Square to walk the four blocks around, then rest on the blue grass lawn in groups to talk and laugh. There, too, is where the political speeches were held. William Jennings Bryan many times gave his "Silver Tongue" oration, always pleading for the Silver Standard for the American dollar instead of the Gold Standard, but never winning. Mr. McKinley was there too, making a staid and studied speech. Then, Theodore Roosevelt with his fiery, explosive ways and his white teeth gleaming when he laughed. He always drew a good audience and much applause. He was there on several occasions. Dad took me to many political speeches and insisted that I listen and try to learn something. I did learn things and among them to evaluate politics for what they are - a necessary evil.

The majority of citizens at Falls City in those days were German. Of course, they had an active German Band which provided the music for all of their gatherings. Once a week they practiced at the Old German Hall. The hall was a stone building rather dark and forbidding; we never went inside. It looked too scary but we always managed to be in the neighborhood on practice night so we could hear the music. It sounded to us as though half of their band was trombones, and how they did bear down on those deep base tones.

Such wonderful, carefree days - we played about town at will. However, a distressing thing happened to put a curb to our freedom that left a deep impression on all of us for it happened to one of our play mates. She was taking a short cut home for lunch and was seized by a bum who dragged her into a building back of her home where he abused her in every possible way, leaving her gagged and half conscious where her parents found her.

The men of the town found the bum and took him to the scene of the crime and there, with the supervision of the little girl's father, a tall German merchant, and his brother, a doctor in the town, castrated him, then took him to the edge of town and told him to get going fast. This became known as the Falls City treatment, and it was most effective. The police made no outcry about the mob action and the people of the town were glad to see action taken. The incident put a stop to our playing about town at will and made us begin to grow up. I read a great deal and by the time I was in the 5th grade, had exhausted the school library and there was no city library then.



## PASSING DAYS

About the time Wes and Nellie Macomber moved to Falls City, Nebraska, Elza Martin's father, Isaac Martin, passed away. His wife, Mary Irwin, went to live with her daughter, Sarah Laird, and she wanted Elza and Eliza Ann to move to her farm. It was only one and one-half miles from Falls City where Elza was preaching. The old Martin house was a roomy, two-story house with attic, built about 1830. It wasn't elaborate but very liveable with a big screen porch, always cool in the summer.

Grandmother's yard had roses of every kind she could grow. She liked to tell me all about them - the Moss Rose had a pink blossom and the stems were covered with fine briar like hair, not prickly at all but covered with an invisible stickiness. They are native in Scotland. Also, the Rose Moss, a well known ground cover purslane-like herb that had rose-like blossoms. The true name was Portulacaceae and the seed is very small and said to be the most costly per ounce of any flower seed.

All among the roses in the yard were little brick walks, laid without rhyme or reason, where ever they led past a different rosebush. It was like threading one's way through a maze.

A special treat at Grandmother's was to go to the attic, a big sunny room with shelves of books. She would let us look at her scrap books when she was there. They were large and filled with choice clippings of literature from the best writers of that century. She liked good literature and saved a valuable collection of it. There were many good books and periodicals and I spent lots of happy days there, oblivious of the rest of the world.

There were feather beds as high and as smooth as a table in the second story. I couldn't climb upon them and Grandmother, Eliza Ann, would toss me into the middle of the soft feathers. It was such fun that we always had a good laugh about it. Then I would lie still and the old windmill would keep steady rhythm - a high key squeak, then a low key squeak, softly, softly, unhurriedly -- I didn't remember any more until morning came and I came down stairs to sit on the bottom step until breakfast was ready.

Just south of the kitchen only a few steps was the windmill and the milk house. They were focal points on a hot day for there was always quantities of cold water or milk. The windmill pumped constantly into a pipe which led to the tank in the milk house. The big wooden tank with boards like the cuts of a pie across the top of it where milk was put in bright cans and sunk into the water, each centered under a board to keep it from upsetting. To get one out one had to push the can down and out from under the board. An overflow pipe in the tank constantly ran a stream of fresh water down across the barn lot and into the pasture. There it ran into a small stream where the cattle and hogs had a supply of fresh water.



Two steps up from the flagstone platform that surrounded the windmill and milk house was the door to a small closed porch which lead to the kitchen door. The kitchen was a long room serving as both cooking area and diningroom. The cooking area and pantry were on the west end of the room. There was a wash stand or shelf holding a wash basin, soap dish and a wooden pail for water. A dipper rested in the bucket and everyone drank from it. The east end of the room was the dining area and about midway in the room was a stairway to the upstairs with two steps coming out into the kitchen. It was a wonderful place to sit after coming down stairs in the morning, sleepy and lacking the push to get going.

Breakfast at Eliza Ann's was something to remember. The long table was usually laid with a yellow and white damask cloth, tealeaf china and bone handled steel cutlery. The sun, just up, shining through the east window sent rays of yellow gold to reflect on everything in its reach.

Elza, coming in from his morning chores, brought a pail of fresh, cold water to put on the stand. He took a hearty drink before he washed his face, hands and arms, drying them on the roller towel near by. He got a comb from the little case on the wall to comb his curly, iron grey hair.

He was an impressive figure, tall and thin, as he strode across the long kitchen to a book shelf in the corner near the table and took down his well worn Bible then seated himself and found the passages he planned to read. An emphatic, "Ahem!" was the signal for everyone to be seated for morning worship.

GEORGE MARTIN, the youngest son of Eliza Ann and Elza, spent many summers with his parents, helping with the farming as Elza grew older and in those years I was spending much time there too, and became well acquainted with him and his family. He was a fine and memorable person, more than six feet tall and well built; noticable in a crowd and equally tall in character.

In 1895, Geroge married a southern girl, petite, lovely, Alice Kriger of Kentucky. She had a beautiful singing voice and said her singing could be heard across the wide Mississippi. They had four daughters, Inez, Ruth, Frances and Kathryn.

George was a good student, beginning his teaching career at age 16, and continuing his education as he could until he held his doctorate and was considered one of the best on the lecture platform. He spent his summers on the farm with Elza and said it was his method of keeping in good condition physically.

Elza always raised fine watermelons and being so close to town they were a temptation to many a lad. He tried to watch the patch at night but someway the boys always destroyed a lot of melons and Grandfather never caught them. One night George



said, "You go to bed Dad, and I'll watch the patch." He fixed a place to hide close to the road and that night three boys came on their horses. One of them came into the patch rather close to where he was hiding and started cutting open melons and pulling the vines around. George yelled and startled the boy who ran for his horse but George caught him and knocked him down then got him by the ears and gave his head a good shaking and mauled it in the dirt. He helped him on his horse and gave him orders to never return. He didn't. The boy's name was Charles Heck but from that time on he was "Watermelon Heck".

George taught the Falls School and my husband told me of going to school to George Martin two terms. The first morning when George arrived he had a fair sized bundle of right keen switches which he put in a hole in the foundation, dusted his hands but said nothing. He never did use one and had no trouble.

He taught in Dawson and Nebraska City for some time, then went to Kearney State College as President in 1919 during a revolt among the students. The former president and several of the teachers had been driven out. The State Board asked him what he would do if faced with such a situation. He answered, "I don't know, never having had anything like that happen to me, but I believe I would stand in the door and knock them down as long as I was able".

The students soon found he was their best friend as long as they did their part. He often walked the streets of Kearney to solicit help for a worthy student. He introduced sports in the school for he loved a good clean contest. His one dislike was of a liar, and if he was ever lied to by a student, that one lost all his sympathy.

Inez, George's oldest, loved to read and we spent many days together in Eliza Ann's attic with the fabulous scrap books. She became a Social Worker on the west coast but died of cancer at an early age.

Ruth was quite different and we used to run and play in a very active way. Once I arrived for a few days stay and she met me at the door with her newest doll, I exclaimed over it and asked it's name. She said, "Well, I'm sure it isn't a very pretty name". Then added happily, "But I call her Minnie". Children are so refreshingly truthful and delightfully loyal. Ruth was an exceptionally bright and likeable child - the most beautiful of the four girls. She grew up to be such a wholesome, Christian girl that she seemed too fine for this world.

While they lived at Kearney she married a boy from that locality and when they were expecting their first child Ruth became more beautiful than ever. She did not live to enjoy her baby for she died at it's birth.



Frances was named Frances Wesna for my father, Wesley, because Alice liked him the best of all her in-laws. She said he was always so kind and gentle to her. She was witty and full of fun. She and Kathryn loved to visit me after I was married.

Kathryn, her husband gone now, lived happily in the mountains of Walla Walla, Washington, many years. They had two daughters Mary Alice, who passed away May 24, 1972 and Jeanne is married and lives near her mother.

George, Alice, Inez, Ruth and Frances are all gone now and Kathryn is in very poor health.

\*\*\*\*\*

### CAREFREE DAYS

The days when one is carefree to bask in complete abandon sped by rapidly. Miles and I finished the Harlan Street School and we moved to the central part of town.

At last I was old enough to drive "Old Fann", our driving horse. At one time Fan had been a fine race horse, but was going blind with an affliction called "Moon Eye". We had her racing cart but were never allowed to hitch her to it. She was a good traveler and she was proud. She would go at a good speed if you simply picked up the reins and said, "Get Up", but if you slapped her with the reins, you might as well forget the trip for at least ten or fifteen minutes while she balked and sulked and the more you urged her the worse she acted.

Once some neighbor women came to borrow her and the buggy to drive to the country. Mother told them to watch for sometimes she would bite a stranger. Sure enough - she missed the lady but got hold of a fine black cape of velvet ribbon and lace. She didn't let go until she had torn it to shreds and had it on the ground. The borrowers went ahead with the trip but they didn't ask to borrow her again.

I often drove her and took some friends to Grandmother's where we had lots of fun. Grandmother would load a toy wagon with watermelons and we would take it to the timber about a quarter of a mile from the house to play or pick flowers or nuts, as the occasion allowed. When we wanted melon we simply dropped a big one on the ground and popped it open, ate the heart out and left the rest for the birds or cows to eat. Sometimes we brought home a load of apples, hazel nuts, walnuts or hickory nuts.

We knew where all the longest stemmed violets grew - May apples or Sweet Williams. Even "Jack-in-the-Pulpit" and "Dutch-man's Breeches" were found in their own little lair. On



a little bridge over the creek which we had to cross we usually stopped a while and dangled our feet in the water while we held a weighty debate on some subject as, "which is more destructive, water or fire".

While we were in fourth grade we planted a tree in the school yard for Arbor Day. I was chosen to christen the tree and making the speech was no trouble for me. The flowers had been submerged in water to keep them fresh - the teacher handed them to me and took her place opposite me with the tree between us. I stepped toward the tree, lifted the dripping bouquet, pronounced the name and gave the flowers a toss. Well, the tree was small and that wet bouquet carried amazingly - striking the teacher's chest all wet and soggy. I was embarrassed to tears, and everyone laughed except the teacher and me.

There was Lucy, a tall, lanky, mulatto and how she could dance. We devised shows where she was the chief attraction and she loved the attention she merited and would put on a good show for the penny admissions we charged.

Our sixth grade teacher was Ollie Miller, a tall, big boned woman and an excellent teacher that I was very fond of. The entire town of Falls City had a good laugh at her expense when she served on the City School Board. New fire escapes, the large tube type, had been installed at the schools and were being inspected. She didn't approve, saying that her objection was the immodesty of going down that pipe, especially for the girls with their skirts flying every way. They were standing on the the small fire escape platform and Ollie was stepping around as she explained her objections when suddenly she lost her footing and disappeared down the escape tube. She demonstrated more clearly than words can describe why she objected to escape tubes.

When Miles and I were ready for the seventh grade we were surprised at being sent into the eighth grade room. Because of the crowded condition six of the strongest pupils skipped the seventh grade. I believe my Dad should get the credit for that because his delight was taking part in our home work. He never let us leave a problem in mathematics until we could satisfy him with an explanation of why and how it was worked and in high school it was the same which surely made us stronger students.

Of all my teachers the one I had in the eighth grade had the most influence on me. She was a dedicated teacher and we received a thorough schooling under Cora Botts. She gave us memory training, Christian ethics and things that really helped us in life. Missing a grade never seemed to give us trouble and so ended our work at Central School.

High School was so different from grade school and we felt quite grown up and--indeed we did begin to grow up. For three years I had been carrying milk to some neighbors to pay for music lessons. My teacher lived in the next block and I went to her



home to practice everyday. She was the daughter of a woman who had served as a Lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Belgium and had the best in musical education before coming to America. This year my family bought a piano for me, and I really gave it a good work out. I played for the chorus at high school and for everything at Church. On Sunday afternoons it was the center of our entertainment. All the gang would gather there for singing and Mother loved every minute of it. She would always have a cake ready for us and often let us make ice cream. In those days she really spoiled me because she would say, "I'll clean up the kitchen and the dishes if you will play for me"

### THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH

We lived near the Disciples of Christ Church, the Minister lived in our block and practically all our neighbors went there to worship. I went to the youth meeting and soon found a niche where I was needed. I enjoyed the Junior League and Bible Study classes and the things I learned there have always stayed with me and have served me well.

Mother and I both became members in 1900. Dad would go with us if he could delay his arrival until after the hymns were sung. For some reason they always made him weep. He hated to do so in public and Mother hated to be late. My sympathy was with them both.

So many memories come to mind of the people and activities there. I recall the choir which had only a spot on the "Stage" where the pulpit, the pastor, and the piano also found room. And the old communion set consisting of two copper goblets, at least copper colored, one for each side of the congregation. A fine old gentleman, Colonel Grinstead and his daughter made a gift to the church of one of the new communion sets of individual cups. Most of the congregation was delighted, but the idea caused a rift in the members and several thought the new set was the work of the devil - Christ and His Disciples used a cup and we should, too, regardless of sanitation. So they wouldn't worship there anymore and quit altogether. I have seen other churches divided over things no more meaningful to Christianity. Have they been members of some form of religion or have they been members of the followers of Christ's teachings? One could build a sermon on the difference.

The Disciples of Christ finally built a bigger and more modern structure which still functions in Falls City.



## THE EARLY 1900's

In 1903 Wes and Nellie Macomber purchased a small hotel, in Falls City Nebraska. Wes' health was at the point where he could no longer perform his duties as Deputy Sheriff and Nellie thought that she could make a living in the hotel but it was certainly not easy work - no vacuum cleaners, electricity or city water and sewage system. A wood and coal range with a reservoir and a five gallon tank on top to help supply hot water, an oil stove and a cistern were the only help. The cistern had a little hand pump that brought the water to a galvanized sink and that was used for cleaning and washing dishes. All drinking water was carried from a well. How Mother would have enjoyed a water system such as all homes have today. She simply would not be stinted on water for she was extremely clean about her household.

Mabel was home in the summers and took voice lessons and taught school during the winter. We would be so excited when she came home for a week end but after she had been home a few hours we were all ready to let her go back to her school. She would order us around just as she did her pupils and we didn't think it was necessary. Everything she thought was out of place she would busily put away. But where? We usually had things located and were about back to normal when it was time for her to come home again.

George came home to stay as he had decided to wanted to try something other than farming. He contracted with an oil dealer to haul kerosene to the towns in the county.

Sam was still with Wes' sister Mary Catherine and her husband Jackson Crook working on the farm but came home on Sundays. He and George would spend the afternoon trying out their strength on tricks they had learned during the week or take long rides on their bicycles.

Miles and I were kept busy washing dishes and doing errands. On days when there was a circus in town or some other special event we would have 100 people to feed at the hotel and it would take as long as three hours to wash the dishes.

Of course I pounded the piano every chance I got. One day the manager of a dance hall across the street asked my mother if I could play for his dances but she said no, she didn't approve of public dances. I was glad because I had only played classical or semi-classical music and dance music is different.

The summer before I started to High School I not only got a piano, but a bicycle, too, and the jump rope was laid away. I had a mile to go to school and always came home for lunch.

During the later half of that first year in high school I spent some time with Ann Martin, my father's half sister, who was



caring for their Mother, Eliza Ann who had fallen on an icy walk and broken her arm. She failed rapidly, developing pneumonia and passed away on March 1, 1904, at 64 years of age. No more happy days with Grandmother, looking at her lovely scrapbooks or wandering through the woods. No walks on her little paths to learn about the roses. No morning worship in Grandmother's long sunny kitchen with Grandfather reading so beautifully the poetry of King James Version of God's Word.

Grandfather gave up his preaching and there was a big stained glass window put in the Church at Falls City depicting Christ as the good shepherd which had Elza's name and an inscription suitable to him designed in it. He went to Nebraska City to live with Ann, his youngest daughter, and lived only a short distance from the little one room log cabin where Elza and his second wife, Sarah Morse, had begun housekeeping long ago. It was there that he established what is said to be the first Sunday School in Nebraska about 1850.

He wrote to me in 1912 that he was attending a Sunday School Class and that he had joined a group of octogenarians and was enjoying it very much. "Sometimes we oldsters get into a rousing argument over some passage of scripture. But I believe at our age such things are permissible", he wrote.

In his last illness Grandfather lay in a coma for two weeks. Suddenly he gained consciousness, sat up in bed and said, "To think that I, Elza Martin, should be ushered into the presence of my King", then laid back on his bed and breathed no more. His death came on June 20, 1916.

Ann lived until 1928 though she gave up teaching a few years earlier, and lived in an apartment in Nebraska City. After her funeral, relatives went to get the things she owned. The owner of the apartment had burned everything -- even the fabulous scrapbooks which had belonged to her Mother, Eliza Ann.

The year I was a Junior and took Chemistry was when I made my big mistake. The laboratory was next to the assembly and one teacher watched both rooms. Of course, we always had a little sulphur at hand to burn close to the door so it had to be closed then I got busy with my project of drawing heads of the teachers on glass with some white substance. Then the glass was burned over an acid which made the likeness permanent. I always had orders ahead and I loved doing it but it didn't help my Chemistry grade. One day the teacher caught me and confiscated all that I had and made me make one<sup>o</sup> him. I don't recall the substance used on the glass and Chemistry was my only poor grade.

In my Senior year I took a refresher course of some grade school subjects and passed the State examinations for my certificate to teach. I worked hard that year, was Salutatorian, which meant giving the opening address for graduation exercises. The



only thing that kept me from being Valedictorian was that low grade in Chemistry, so thus do our acts affect us for all our lives and there is no regret quite so poignant as that of remorse. But there I was with a teacher's certificate and a two year scholarship - it was a hard decision to make and it had to be my decision.

In 1907, just a few weeks before my graduation, my parents moved to Indian Territory and that same year the territory was taken into Western Oklahoma to become part of that state. My father, Wes, was in very poor health and was restless but was made a Representative for that area and attended the Constitutional Conferences in Tulsa. The two sections of the state had to consider and agree on the laws that would govern them both. He enjoyed that activity very much and George and Sam did the farming. Miles returned to Falls City after they were settled.

Mother came back for my graduation and I went with her to Oklahoma for the summer. There were some nice people there and I made new friends.

The farm where we lived was near Coweta, an arid country with many dust storms, very hot in summer and a bitter, damp cold in the winter. The wind blew from the Gulf of Mexico which made it so damp that a stove pipe would rust thru in one year, anything that could mold did so promptly and the fleas loved the area.

Oil wells dotted the landscape, many of them belonging to the Cree Indians, a branch of the Algonquins from Canada - many of them very handsome and intelligent people. We could look out and see about a half dozen Oil slick fires every day, mostly along the rivers. There were two major rivers, one on either side of us, the Arkansas and the Verdigris. We often went on sight seeing trips, especially along the Arkansas River. It was flanked on each side by low bottom lands covered with a heavy growth of timber stretching up to 40 miles from the banks.

There were many species of trees new to us and the most interesting was the Pecan Tree, the lowest branches were about 30 feet from the ground. The method of getting the crop was to go out each morning during the nutting season with a battering ram and bump the trunk of the tree to shake the nuts out of their husks, then rake through the leaves, which were the same color, to find the nuts. Special care had to be taken because of a species of tarantula spider that made them it's habitat. The wood from the trees was used to make fine furniture, bread boards and rolling pins, etc.

As we would drive through the wide timber we saw many share croppers cabins, exactly as one sees them pictured. In an open window of practically every one there was a bed drawn close and someone there pale and ill -- with 'Ague' or the 'fever' or the 'shakes' as they called it, which we know as malaria. I am glad to know that most of those cabins are gone now for the people



looked so pitiful and I'm glad to know that most of the malaria has been stamped out.

There were many negroes living around Coweta, Oklahoma, intermingling with the Cree Indians until it seemed many of them claimed and got land just as the Indians did. They carried a big chip on their shoulders against the whites, and many of them became insolent and mean. They forced whites off the sidewalks as they walked and finally went on a rampage because one of them was arrested for something and jailed in the county jail about forty miles away. The Sheriff hired my brother, Sam, to drive his car to take the prisoner to jail. The negroes put five bullets in the back of the car as it pulled out of town then went down the street firing bullets aimlessly.

They happened to shoot a young lawyer, Attorney Beaver, a friend of our. The negroes were really shocked and dismayed when they learned they had shot their best friend for he was their best protector against the scheming oil magnates, or swindlers, who took advantage of their ignorance in leasing their land for drilling. They would often pay the landowner for a lease they would read to them to be for 10 years and often the lease would read for 100 years. Attorney Beaver compelled many an oil man to make the lease honest for the poor. The authorities went through the countryside then gathering up several wagon loads of fire arms they were holding, for what, they didn't seem to know exactly.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### TEACHING

In August of 1907, I returned to Falls City, Nebraska, planning to teach for two years then use scholarship and finish college. Most of the close-in schools were taken by August but one called the Arago Center School, eleven miles from Falls City was still vacant so my sister, Mabel, and I drove a team and buggy out to make application. Arago Center had once been a postal service station and figured importantly in anti-slavery days. I agreed to teach for \$45. a month - pretty good wages for those days. Mabel had taught eight years beginning at \$25. and at that time was getting \$50.00.

I boarded with a family named Gleason who after the evening meal would retire to the living room and just sit and rest, I guess. We were never allowed to sit idly dreaming, we either had to read or work at something. One evening I sat down and played the old organ. That delighted Mr. Gleason and he got out an old fiddle, tuned it up and began to play old country tunes while I chorded and that was the way most evenings were spent.

There is no other place in the state where nature is more lavish with the gift of fall color than along the bluffs of the Missouri River.



Soon the mornings were growing frosty making silver lace of the spider webs atop the weeds along the road side. Diamonds of dew were sprinkled lavishly through the lacy webs. The distant hills had drawn a soft lavender curtain about themselves, making them beautiful to behold. From that distant mysteriousness often came faint reports of a gun for it was hunting season. And during the warm part of the day the amber sunshine brought the busy flies and wasps to buzz in the warm rays within the open door ways. It was a pleasant walk to school those lovely Indian Summer days.

The first day of school I went early in the morning to look things over before the students came, but I wasn't early enough. As soon as I got in sight of the building I caught glimpses of faces peeping around each corner to get sight of me. I went bravely toward the door and spoke good morning to all who came out into view and they all followed me inside. They were big fellows, most of them 14 to 17 or 18 years old. How unfortunate that boys as old as they should still be in rural school and I wondered how to begin teaching them.

I sat down at my desk which had a slant top that lifted up to make storage space. As I lifted the top to look inside, out jumped about a dozen mice put there, of course, by those big boys so eagerly standing around watching me. For the first time in my life I appreciated the training I had had in not acting afraid of mice and worms, etc. in Miles' hands. I sat still - and said, "Well, it looks as if we have company. You boys will have to catch them because we certainly don't want them here. Shut the door and catch everyone of them". They gladly made a big scramble for the mice. One boy said, "Did you see that! One went right across her foot and she never even jumped". The desks were full of rotted apples, sandwiches, scribbled papers and just about everything not pertaining to school.

There were thirty-five students enrolled when school began and in all, probably thirty-five books. I ordered books and was surprised to get them as most of the people were German - very typical of the ones of that time before the World War I. There were as many German schools as there were English and many of the older citizens didn't care for their off-spring to learn English, but the law required them to go so many days of the year. I tried very hard to impress them with the treasure they had in books and they seemed to grasp it and took very good care of them.

I was very busy with all eight grades but in November all of the older German students left to attend German School until February 15th.

One German patron didn't like to have his children attending public school, showed his protest by making a big black mark through his daughter's grammar each month. After he had marked it out the third time, I talked to the girl and had her tell him that it was required while she was in English School



and then made no more trouble. There were ten beginners and many of them could not speak a word of English and they gave me many occasions to laugh. When night came, I trudged home wondering if I had succeeded in teaching them anything.

An epidemic of whooping cough hit hard that spring and at the end of the term there<sup>were</sup> only fourteen students. One of the school board members sent word that he would like me to teach another year because his boy had learned to want to read. The others wanted me too, but I had an offer of the Old Falls School nearer to Falls City and where so many of my relatives had taught.

In the years since, when visiting Falls City, I have met many of those first students and have been so glad to see them and learn what they are doing. They seemed equally glad to see me.

Again, I spent the summer in Oklahoma with my parents, returning in August to prepare for my second year of teaching. It seems that the Old Falls School was almost a part of our family history. My Father's sister, Mary Catherine, and her husband, Jackson Crook had both taught there as had George Martin and Emma Martin Foster, Elza's children.

There was a great deal of activity centered at the Falls School - Sunday School every Sunday - Literary on Friday nights when there would be readings of some old time literature like the "Wreck of the Hesperus", "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight", or some equally choice bit of literature popular at the time. A musical solo or duet if it could be arranged, but the highlight of the evening was always a debate. Such profound subjects were debated as "Which is the wiser of the Two Sexes", or Which is more destructive, Fire or Water?" It was all fun.

My sister, Mabel was married and teaching the Five Point School close to Falls School so I saw her often, but I boarded with a couple from the south called Aunt Nolie and Uncle Jim. They were kindly, elderly people who never ate light bread if they could have biscuits as is the custom of a true southerner. Aunt Nolie's biscuits were tops but they made poor sandwiches for a noon lunch.

There was three-quarters of a mile to walk to school and I always enjoyed the out-of-doors. One afternoon as I walked home a young fellow of the neighborhood came up behind with a team and wagon with very high side boards that put the seat up high. He stopped and asked me if I would like to ride. I would. He was Ralph Rhoads and had been interested in a schoolmate of mine so I climbed up over the wagon, and in no time was sitting on the seat beside Ralph. He told me afterward that the speed and ease with which I climbed into that wagon amazed him. Well, I hadn't climbed trees and fences for naught and Mother was right when



she said I would never learn to be dignified.

My ride on the high seat of the wagon led to a date for Church that Sunday night, and a drive in the moonlight afterward. Not in a wagon but in a shinny buggy drawn by a spirited horse. The dates for Church and literaries continued. Ralph was not the flashy type and I was glad, He was kind, gentle and trustworthy. His thinking was sound - never going off the deep end on any subject.

Ralph's father, Isaac Rhoads often came to visit my Grandfather, Elza Martin. Grandfather told me that they had been neighbors once and that he thought a great deal of Mr. Rhoads and that he was one of the finest men he had ever known; that he lived in the country, had a large family and his wife had died when some of the children were small.

ISAAC RHOADS was born in Wellsboro, Penn. in 1835, where many of the Duryeas lived. His parents were Willam and Mary (Jones) Rhoads and ~~Isaac~~ <sup>William</sup> made fine leather boots which were sold to the British Gentlemen in an early day.

In 1849, Isaac age 14, and his friend age 15, purchased a team and wagon and started to California to search for gold. With a few supplies they started across the wide plains from Lena, Illinois, and one night camped on the spot where the Falls School house stands. Isaac liked the spot and commented to his pal that some day he was going to come back and own that piece of ground. There was an Indian camp nearby and they asked the boys to come and eat with them. They visited the camp and spent an hour or so but the sight of their meat stretched out on a flat surface to ripen and covered with flies was too much, so they went back to their own camp to eat.

They went as far as Beatrice, Nebr. then they changed course and went south to a river port at Atchison, Kansas. They sold their team and wagon and took a boat to New Orleans. They got across the Isthmus of Panama someway and then to the gold fields around Sutters Mill where they prospected for ten years. They didn't strike it rich but had some gold to bring home.

By that time the Civil War was imminent. Isaac enlisted and served for four years, a part of his assignment being with Sherman on his march to the Sea. He was a member of the scouting party.

MARY MARGARET WEBER - When the war was over he went back to Illinois and before long he married a neighbor girl, Mary Margaret Weber, whose parents were Nicholas and Anna (Gerde) Weber, both of Berne, Switzerland. There were only two children, Mary and John, both born in Switzerland.



Soon after their marriage Isaac and Mary started west. He had never forgotten the land where he had camped so took what he could as a homestead and then bought more until he owned what he wanted. His land cornered with the Falls School grounds and his house was one quarter mile away.

He planted an orchard, and people laughed at him, saying he could never grow fruit in Nebraska. He did, and the time came when that part of Nebraska from Omaha south and on into Missouri as far as St. Joe became the greatest apple producing area in the United States. Delicious peaches grew there - so many of them they could not be used and were often used for hog feed.

Isaac Rhoads often told me tales of his Father, <sup>in law</sup> Nicholas Weber saying that he was the meanest man he ever knew, and was most thoughtless of the comfort of his wife.

Nicholas Weber had not wanted his daughter and Isaac to move from Illinois to Nebraska. When the grasshoppers completely destroyed the Nebraska crops, Isaac wrote to his father-in-law, sending money, and asked if he would send him ten bushel of grain for seed, Nicholas wrote back that not a kernel of grain would he send to Nebraska but if he would come back to where he belonged he would give him a well improved farm for nothing. Of course, Isaac wouldn't do that. As he studied how to get some seed grain, he remembered the box and barrel in the attic in which they had packed dishes in oats when they came west. He cleaned the oats and planted every kernel by hand so there would be no waste, and had a bumper crop so started farming again without Nicholas' help. They prospered thru the years, raised twelve children and lived out their lives in that vicinity.

The fates were against Nicholas. In America he had learned to tie bundles of the cut grain with a few long stems. He went back to Switzerland for a visit and they were cutting grain and hauling it to the threshing floor loose. He undertook to teach them to tie it in bundles as they did in America and he was very quick at it so the Swiss watched in amazement. They decided that no human could work that miracle and that Nicholas was a witch and the only way to overcome witchery was by stoning or hanging. Nicholas made a hasty retreat and was glad to get back to America.

Toward the end of the term at Falls School, Ralph asked me to marry him but I asked him to wait until the next spring so I could learn a few things about cooking. He wanted to get me a diamond but I persuaded him that it was too costly and he might need the money to start farming. He got me a pearl in a tiffany setting and it must have been just as expensive. He gave me many presents during the years and just before our 50th anniversary he came home one day with a small package for his best girl. It was a diamond and I loved it.

There went my scholarship - I went back to Oklahoma to learn to cook.



In Oklahoma, I had expected to learn to cook under Mother's teaching but was disappointed as Mother went to Falls City to be with my sister, Mabel, who was expecting her first child. My brother, George and his wife had come to stay with Dad and keep house while Mother was gone. Bertha was a wonderful cook but I didn't learn much. Mother came home in the fall and the next spring Ralph and I were to be married. We had lots of sewing to do in those days as we made everything including sheets. Mine were made of unbleached muslin and lasted for twenty-five years.

Ralph came to Oklahoma on February 22, stopped at Wagener, the County Seat to get our license. None of us had thought about it being a holiday and there he was in a strange town not able to get in the Court House. He walked up and down and around the Court House until the janitor got suspicious of him and asked him what his business was. When Ralph told him he was supposed to get a marriage license, He gave a hearty laugh and said, "Well, I can take care of that", and called the county clerk to come at once and after a lot of teasing Ralph got the license and was at the depot in time to catch the train to Coweta. The train arrived in Coweta early the next morning and the wedding was to be at eight o'clock that night, February 23, 1910, but when night came it looked like the fates were against us. I had called on the minister, quite an elderly man who had been in town only a week. Eight o'clock came but no minister. After a time during which Ralph and I waited in unheated rooms to come for the ceremony, George hitched the driving horse to the buggy and drove to town to find the minister. He was at home enjoying the warm fire - just hadn't realized that we lived in the country and after looking all over the little town for a wedding just gave up and went home.

Ralph and I and our attendants had to go to the kitchen where there was a warm fire and since then I've always rather liked the kitchen and feel at home there.

When the minister finally came and warmed up a bit we had a very informal wedding, then Mother served us all a dinner. We left by train early the next morning for Falls City where Ralph had rented a farm and furnished the house enough that we could start living there. Our home was between Ralph's Father's home and the Falls School. Mother insisted that I take the piano and told me afterward that when I and the piano both left, she felt like it was the end of the world for her.



ISAAC PRESTON RHOADS, WIFE & DAUGHTERS



Mary



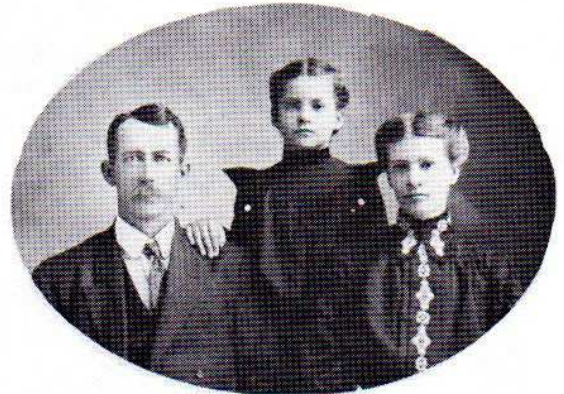
Isaac Sr.



Mary Weber  
Mother



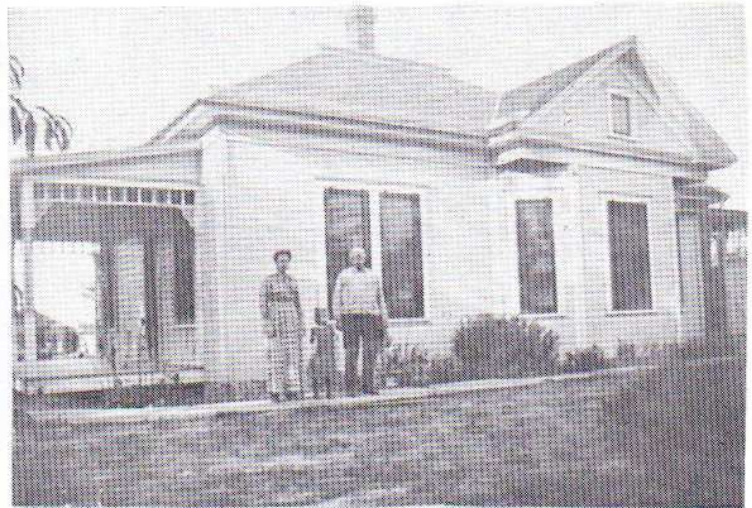
Chas. & Annie  
Martin & Ethel



Chas. & Sarah Tipton & Muriel



Clementine



Rhoads Home



SONS OF ISAAC PRESTON RHOADS SR. - William not shown



Howard



Oscar & Family



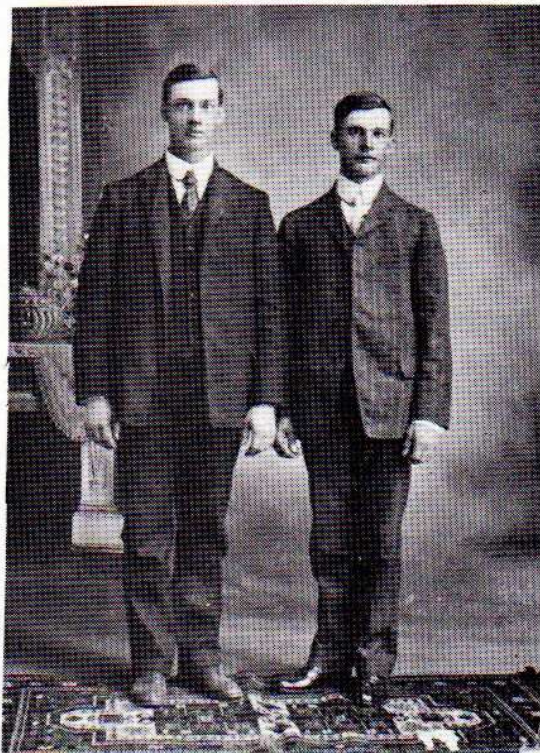
Isaac Jr.



Edward



Ralph



Ralph & George



Oscar & Blaine



## THE LATE YEARS OF WES AND NELLIE MACOMBER

In 1918 following the First World War, a killer type of flu struck our land. Many people died of it and those who did were seemingly the most healthy ones. A virus pneumonia seemed to accompany the disease and with no antibiotics, it was fatal to many.

Early in 1919, Mother became ill with this flu. She and Dad had been living in Emporia with Sam. Mother kept house and Dad was bookkeeper at the Auto Supply Store owned by Sam and George. I went immediately from my home in Dawes County, Nebr. to help care for Mother.

Dad met me at the train when I reached Emporia, Kansas. He said he felt alright but he was very pale. After his evening meal he went back to the store to complete his book work, but soon came back saying he was ill and wanted to rest. Sam came very soon with a doctor, but Dad had already lapsed into a coma. He passed away about midnight with uremic poisoning. His last words were, "How is your Mother?"

Sam and George took him to Falls City for burial. Poor old Dad. Always miserable with asthma. They laid him to rest in Steele Cemetery, John Wesley Macomber, sixty-four years old.

After a few days, Mother's pneumonia began to improve and she was finally able to be up and about, but always remained thin and fragile. As soon as she could stand the travel, she spent her summers with us near Chadron and the winters with Mabel near Falls City.

After George's illness, Mother's chief desire was to see him again and she did see him at Christmas time in 1937. She seemed satisfied after she saw he was doing alright, but the trip tired her greatly.

On January 8, 1938, she simply couldn't gather strength enough to get up as she usually did. Mabel advised her to rest a while longer and she dropped off to sleep immediately. Mabel called the doctor but by the time he arrived her breathing was very weak and it was difficult to tell just the moment her breathing ceased - God had taken her so very gently. We all realized that her frail little body lying there had housed the soul of all that was noble and good. She was laid beside Dad in the Steele Cemetery at Falls City, Nebraska.



## OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WESLEY MACOMBER FAMILY

MILES SYLVENE MACOMBER - Miles did not finish high school - his heart was not in it as he was such an active boy and really needed work. His first job was at the James Poultry House. He didn't like the killing and plucking chickens, but Mr. James soon gave him a better job.

Mr. James came to Falls City from the rural area around Barada, Nebr. with only an eighth grade education. He was ambitious, honest and very successful. Soon he was shipping carloads of chickens to the west coast. He took Miles with him on one trip and after that Miles made the trip alone. The fact that he was only 16 did not bother Mr. James as he said Miles was reliable and alert.

After about a year Mr. James became interested in the oil business and Miles went to work in a furniture store where there was also a thriving mortuary business. By the time I was in my last year of high school, Miles had grown into a nice looking young man - beautiful red, wavy hair full of fiery glints, and an even row of white teeth and a ready smile.

When he was 20 years old and firmly established in the furniture store he married a pretty, blue eyed, dark-haired, Irish girl named Cora McIlvain who was 18. Miles was helping with the mortuary work and studying it and was soon able to pass the state examinations. Cora was employed at the City telegraph office for two years.

Miles and Cora had three pretty girls and the youngest one inherited Miles' dark red hair. She became a registered nurse and when it was time for her to earn her cap her teachers said they regretted covering up so much as one hair on her head.

After a few years the owners of the furniture store and mortuary wanted to retire so Miles bought the establishment and years later sold the mortuary business. The families for whose loved ones Miles had been the mortician still insisted on having him in their time of need. Finally the firm had his name included and gave him a part in the arrangements.

Miles passed away suddenly in April,<sup>21</sup> 1961 at the age of 74. His wife Cora still lives in the home and her three daughters, Helen, Ruth and June and their families can all find room in the big house and try to get together two or three times a year.

Miles had quite an extensive library collected and never tired of studying some deep subject. He often was asked to fill the pulpit during the absence of the pastor of the Presbyterian Church where and Cora were members.

To complete the story of Mr. James for whom Miles worked - hearing of a millionaire oil man in Falls City when visiting there I found that it was the man who had come to Falls City with little



more than a dime in his pocket and started the chicken dressing business years ago.

ARIEL MABEL MACOMBER - The school just west of the Falls School was called Five Point because there was a bell cupalo on top that had five points. Mabel finished her teaching career there in 1908 and during that year was married to Joseph Thompson, the youngest of the Thompson family with whom she boarded for two years. When school was out they moved to a farm in the Salem, Nebr. area about five miles from Five Point. It was a good farm and Joe was progressive so they lived out their lives there. Their five children became Mabel's career.

Hazel was their oldest and went to Kearney and stayed with George Martin to get her teaching degree. She taught many years and is retired now in Hiawatha, Kans. She married first, Roland Myers and they raised four children - Roland, a Colonel in the Air Force, Marjean, Linda and Mary Alice all married and raising families. Hazel married second, Ralph Fridell.

Fred, the only son of Mabel and Joe Thompson, is still on the farm and has added more land. He married Gladys Wenger and they cared for his parents many years as they grew old. Their oldest son, Donald, has graduated from the University of Nebraska is married and has a small son. Steve, Carol and Dwight are at home.

Next were the twins, Margaret and Marjory Alice, looking so much alike they had to be identified with pink and blue ribbons. When grown, Margaret was tall, out going and capable. She went to Wesleyan College and was married to Orville Carlyle, a radio and television technician with a shop in Nebraska City. They raised five children, a son and four daughters - exceptionally beautiful girls.

Marjory Alice graduated from Wesleyan College and is still working in an office in Kansas City. She married Bill Mullen, an employee of the Chevrolet plant in Kansas City, who is now retired. Their two oldest children are married and Susan is still in school. Bill has built a cabin on a lake shore in the Ozarks and enjoys fishing and hunting.

Jean was several years younger than Mabel and Joe's other children and was not very sturdy but an exceptional student. She graduated from the University of Nebraska with an exceptionally high grade average, then worked at the Ordinance Base at McCook, Nebr. after graduation, then for the Officers of the Armed Forces in Leavenworth, Kansas, where she was one of the four top ranking workers. She married Glenn Marmon of Kansas City, who had been supervisor of the Postal Service for many years. They are both retired and spend much time traveling.



In the summer of 1949, a tornado struck the Salem area of Nebraska. Mabel and Joe Thompson's home was directly in its path. Mabel, Joe and Their son, Fred, were in the house. It was a large two story house with a closet in one corner up stairs. The tornado took the west and south walls and completely sheared off the top story, except the closet, which contained all their valuable papers. Fred Grabbed his father and mother one in each arm and locked his hands around a colonade post between the living room and dining room. He said he held on with every ounce of his strength and he is a strong man. The colonade and a small circle of the floor where they stood was all that was left, the rest of the house was in splinters.

Fred's house near by was only moved off its foundation and his wife, Gladys, and his children were unharmed. The garage was gone but the car was not damaged. A new and more modern house was built but soon Mabel and Joe moved into the smaller house and Fred and Gladys with their growing family moved into the big house.

Joe Thompson was fragile in his later years and passed away in the spring of 1963 at the age of 83.

Mabel earned a fifty year pin for membership in the Methodist Church where she did much work. She loved working in her yard and had many beautiful flowers. It was a show place for many a Sunday driver to view, but she fell in her yard the summer following her husband's death, and broke her hip. Her daughter, Jean, took her to her home in Leavenworth, Kans. and cared for her. Her mind stayed clear and her lovely hand writing never changed. The years had mellowed her temper and she was liked by everyone. She loved beauty in nature as well as in people and as it was with Eliza Ann, our grandmother, her greatest joy was always well written literature. She passed away in the fall of 1964 at the age of 85.

SAMUEL EVERETT MACOMBER - Sam married Adar Brown, a teacher in Emporia, Kansas, where he had an auto parts store with his brother George. They had a thriving business and were well liked, probably because there never were more honest men. Like their father, Wes, they were honest almost to a fault. Sam and Adar had two daughters, Thelma and Ardyce. One day as Sam was coming home to lunch, Adar and the girls were on the porch waiting for him. Ardyce, a pretty little red headed child, ran out to meet him just as a truck came around the corner. It ran over her breaking both her legs. Being a witness to the accident was too much for Sam and he suffered severe shock that eventually brought on a stroke, paralyzing him and he was bedfast for two years before his death.

Sam's family continued to live in their home with the girls in school and Adar teaching. Thelma, a steady and studious girl, much like Sam in her ways, married Kenneth Humphreys, an engineer working for Boeing Aircraft. He served four years in the Air Force and they live in Emporia and have four children.



Ardyce, the one who had the accident, was a bright, cheerful and talented high school graduate when she married John Seiler from Woodlake, Nebraska. In less than a year Ardyce was stricken with Multiple Sclerosis. Adar, being a strong woman, insisted that Ardyce be moved to her home, she gave up her teaching and spent her entire time caring for the girl who grew steadily worse but lived about 20 years. Adar still maintains her home in Emporia and does some work for the College there.

GEORGE BURTON MACOMBER-George married Bertha Palmer of Stella, Nebraska, and they had two sons, Grant and Wayne. In the 1930s George began to have serious health problems. He had a large skin colored mole on his chin and one day when he was splitting wood a splinter struck it making it bleed and become sore and then he had it frost bitten. The mole began to spread almost immediately and his doctor sent him to Savannah, Missouri to the only cancer clinic in the area. Bertha was so kind to him during his illness. At last the flesh healed until he could have plastic surgery to build up a new lip and chin and though disfigured, his health came back. George and Bertha belonged to the Baptist Church and lived near it. George spent his last years caring for the Church property.

Their son, Grant, was a dependable lad, strong and a good worker. He married Geraldine Smedeger and they had a son and a daughter, both married now. Grant is in the entertainment business and they live in Madison, Kansas. He looked after his parents as long as they lived. Grant Macomber has custody of the Macomber Bible published in 1803 which contains much of the information in this story.

Wayne, the younger son of George and Bertha, liked people and when with them he lost all account of time or responsibility to home. One house was as good as another to him. After many interruptions, he got thru school and married Juanita Zichefoose. They had a small son when Wayne decided to join the Army. He was sent to the Aleutian Islands on a scouting mission and took his wife and son along. He rose to the rank of Captain, then war was declared and the Japanese invaded the Aleutians. Wayne sent his wife and son back to the United States but he was captured and put in prison where he died a few months later of malnutrition.

A recent letter told me that Wayne's son, Dennis Macomber, is now married and has a son. Their home is in Reno, Nevada.



## MY FARM WIFE UNIVERSITY

The decade of 1910-1920 was a turbulent one for much of the world. In that ten years the United States was in and out of a war on foreign soil. Howard Taft was our President at the first and in 1913 Woodrow Wilson, although he had no son, ran on the slogan, "I didn't raise my son to be a soldier". It was effective and he won. Another reason - the Republican Party was split by Theodore Roosevelt, the former President, who decided to run on a Progressive ticket, making it a three party election.

Wilson, a pacifist, resisted getting into war though Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany was making much headway against England, France and Belgium. The Kaiser had many submarines everywhere and had caused the killing of several Americans. Finally he sank the huge passenger ship, the Lusitania, with 119 Americans aboard. This was too much for the American people to overlook and Wilson was forced to prepare for war. In 1916 our soldiers went over. England rejoiced to see us for they were almost exhausted, and the Germans were amazed at the force of our fighting men and the amount of good equipment we had. They were begging for armistice by the fall of 1918.

It was to have been a war to end all wars. President Wilson organized a form of League of Nations but evidently the world was wasn't ready for it and it didn't last.

It was the year 1910 when the doors opened for my university course - not two years but 48 years. Mother said I wasn't cut out to make a farmer's wife but I spent 48 years at it. I liked school, music and church activities more than housework and most of all the out-doors. I was most fortunate in having Ralph for my husband for he had learned more about house work than most girls. Because of a severe attack of appendicitis when he was a child which left in a weakened condition for a long time, he stayed in the house to help the girls with the house work. He could churn, put out a washing and do lots of cooking and cleaning. He was so very patient with me and didn't seem to mind that I had so much to learn.

We started our farming with four work horses, one cow, one sow and two dozen hens. For machinery, there was a walking plow, a two-row cultivator and a two-row planter. A far cry from what is required in this day to begin farming.

We had a kitchen cabinet which cost two dollars and for additional cupboards we used orange crates covered with oil cloth and curtained in front. Ralph bought a small cook stove, a heating stove, and ironing board, a black iron kettle which set directly over the fire, two or three kerosene lamps and a few odds and ends of dishes - all this for \$20.00. A very plain table and six chairs were our dining room furniture and for the bed room, a dresser, small but with a good mirror and an iron bedstead. We bought linoleum rugs, a few pans, a bucket and



dipper, a set of dishes and we were ready to keep house, A little later I bought a sewing machine with money saved from my teaching. It was like playing house with the little cook stove and everything and I enjoyed every minute of it.

I tried so hard to bake bread but always failed. Sometimes I would put it on the table then go off and have a good cry. Ralph would always cheer me up by saying, "Now, if that was a field of corn that failed it might be worth a few tears, but what are a few loaves of bread. You can always try again and anyway the crust is good. So we ate the crust. I learned about making a garden and setting hens. Oh! the things I didn't know.

At last there was a Chautauqua in Falls City. They were assemblies held in big tents that would seat two of three hundred people and were instituted in the County of Chautauqua, New York. They would last about a week, the one coming advertised a special series of morning lessons on how to make bread. It must have been a fore-runner of today's Extension Service given by our Universities. We both agreed that I should go so on Sunday evening Ralph took me to my brother Miles' home to stay where I could go each morning for my lesson on bread making. The last lesson was on Thursday but on Wednesday Ralph came after me because he was lonesome and took me back the next morning for my final lesson. No instruction ever paid off in dividends as that did.

One summer night after the work was done we went out to sit on the porch where it was pleasant and there was a cool breeze. I sat there complimenting myself inwardly, 'I believe I am getting along as a farmer's wife and he is satisfied with his choice. He seems contented.' About then he heaved a sigh, I said, "What is the matter, Ralph?" "Oh, nothing," he answered, "Only I was just wishing I had a man to talk to". My ego went down flat. For a few seconds I thought, 'I'm a failure - a complete miserable failure'. Then I thought of his life. He had grown up one of eight boys. Of course, he wanted to see them - less than a quarter of a mile away. Then I laughed and said, "Lets go down home.". He agreed and we were soon there. He never knew what a let down I had that night.

Ralph's sister, Annie, had been married for sometime. She and her husband, Charles Martin, a nephew of Elza Martin, with their daughter, had moved to California. This left his sister, Mary, alone with the housekeeping chores but the family was much smaller now.

When the two girls and Ralph were doing the housekeeping for the entire family they had schedule that was staggering. They baked bread every other day - 12 huge loaves of it. They washed twice a week and made the boys' overalls, three pairs for each two boys near the same size. They would bake big pans of beans seasoned and covered with strips of home cured bacon, and a lovely, big glass bowl was always on their table full of canned fruit, berries, peaches, pears -- all kinds grew there.



The cellar was always full of food -- three or four hundred jars of fruit, shelves of jelly and pickles, a barrel of souerkraut and bins of several kinds of apples. There was also a barrel of apple cider which eventually made their binegar.

One day when Ralph was small his father, Isaac, was working in a field and sent Ralph to the house for his plug of tobacco. When Isaac was young he worked along the Erie Canal, about 1820, driving a team of mules pulling a dredge. His face and lips sunburned from the hot sun shining on the water. The older men working there told him that if he chewed tobacco his lips would heal. So he chewed and of course kept it up. When Ralph brought the tobacco a corner of the plug had been nibbled off. He thought it over, then threw the tobacco away and never chewed again.

The first of the boys to leave home were Ed and Howard, the two just older than Ralph. They decided to go to California to seek their fortune in 1906 and arrived there just in time to experience the earthquake and fire that so devastated San Francisco. They were not hurt so they joined the crew of workers who helped untangle the City. They both married out there and both became building contractors. Ed has been gone several years and his wife still lives at Walnut Creek, California. Ed Jr. is a contractor working around Lake Tahoe.

Howard and his first wife divorced. They had one daughter who is married and she and the mother both live near Oakland. His second wife was a nurse and lives with their only daughter and husband in Fresno. Howard built many of the big beautiful buildings in and around Fresno.

Isaac Jr. and his wife, Mary, and five children also went to California hoping it would relieve his asthma, but he didn't live long after they moved. Mary, about 100 years old now, lives with their oldest son Elmer. She is still mentally alert and physically quite agile. Their three girls live in the area and Robert, the youngest son, was killed in a motor cycle accident when he was quite young.

Will and Oscar both stayed near Falls City. Will had 12 children, all scattered and Oscar had two daughters. All four parents are gone.

George, his wife Elizabeth Kratz, and Blaine came to Chadron five years before we came. George and Elizabeth had no family. Blaine married a Chadron girl, Zena Gorr and they had three daughters. The twins are both dead and Betty, a Nurse, lives in Chadron with her husband, Curtis Thompson. George, Blaine and their wives are gone, so now all of the Children of Isaac Rhoads are gone.

The mother and Clemmie had died before I came into the family. So there was only Dad and Mary at home but it was home for all the boys thought of Mary as their Mother and she did give her life to care for them. She was likeable and I enjoyed her.



RALPH S. RHOADS SR. FAMILY



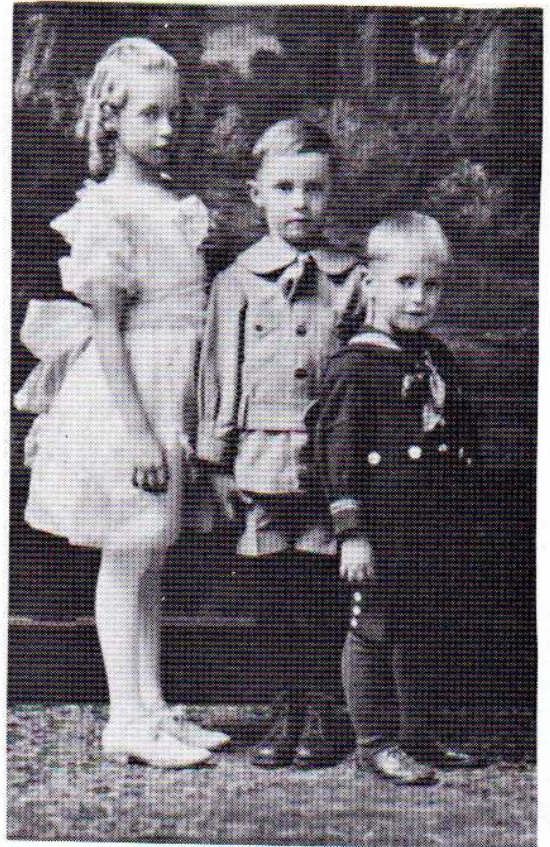
Falls City High School



Our Church



The Falls School



Nellie, Ralph Jr. & Edwin



Ralph, Minnie Rhoads & Nellie





Homes of Ralph and Minnie Rhoads Along the Deadhorse



Minnie Alice and Ralph Rhoads Sr.



My Painting Group



Minnie Writing



Two years after our marriage - 1912 - Ralph rented a larger farm three miles north of Falls City, and we moved there in the spring. It was a good farm and lovely house but had been rented for some time and was very dirty. Ralph's family helped us clean it and it was a pleasant place to live. There were two porches, one on the south and one the east that had seats built along the sides. Big, old trees shaded the lawn and a white picket fence surrounded the place.

George Martin's younger girls visited us in those early years. They adored Ralph, who was good entertainment for them. He was tall and strong and they loved to ride on his shoulders while he did the chores. Sometimes he would carry them and at the same time two pails of milk. And all the time, to amuse them, he would make rhymes of everthing he said. Ocassionally his rhyming would last all day. It was as miraculous to me as to them how he could carry on all day long with such clever jingles.

Once a team of mules Ralph was working in the field ran away while hitched to a cultivator. They took off down a fence row, soon losing the cultibator, then continued along the fence, one on either side. They did the neatest job of taking out every post. When they reached the end of the fence they were tired and stopped. A mule never hurts himself, when he is tired he just quits.

Ralph was hitching a team of mules to a wagon one time to drive to town. They were feeling pretty full of life but the road was icy so they went along with very mincing steps all the way to town. Ralph decided to have them shod to protect their feet. They only had to go about a block to realize they wouldn't slip on the ice. Their good spibits took the upper hand and they staged a splendid run away. Finally to get them stopped, he headed them into a snow drift. That was presenting them with too much effort so they slowed down nicely the rest of the way.

During the next five years the United States was in World War War I against the Germans. Sentiment ran high against the Germans around Falls City. Whether or not their sympathies were with the United States, they knew that no amount of reasoning would excuse them if they stirred up the suspicions of the people, so they were docile. I'm sure that many of them secretly were favoring Der Vaterland, and could not imagine such a thing as Germany defeated because their slogan was always, "eber Allus".

Comic strips are also something that came in this century - the first ones were about 1912 - the Katzenjammer Kids; Happy Hooligan; Mutt and Jeff; and My Dear Alfonso became well known characters. When they first appeared there were arguments, pro and con, as to their advisability for children's reading, but the concern about World War I began in 1914 and soon took precedent over comic strips.



Most of the young fellows were sent across the seas and German or not, I think they made good soldiers. The sad thing is that many of them did not come back.

It was during World War I - the years 1913 - 15 - 17, that our three children were born, there in the big, well built house. Nellie was out first and very tiny and frail - a quiet child and yet so busy that she needed correcting often. Ralph decided I found too many occasions to correct her. He was helping me do the washing as he always did, so I said, "All right, she is all yours this morning and I'll not interfere".

In those days Ralph filled the boiler on the stove with buckets of water carried from the cistern. When the water was hot and the soap melted a bit, the hot suds were carried to the washing machine on the porch. We had all the water in the machine and were getting the clothes ready to take out. During that interval Nellie pulled the plug out of the machine, letting all the hot suds out on the ground. Not so good, but I said nothing. Ralph talked to her very kindly, and started carrying water all over again. During another minute when we were not looking she got Ralph's hip boots which all farmers had to have when the feedlots thawed in the spring, and filled them full of water at the cistern. That was very bad - they dry very slowly and they were needed. In a few minutes she tried to climb the rick of stove wood nearly piled along the fence. She must have been up toward the top at one end when the wood started to slide. We fished her out from under a few sticks, but about a wagon load of it scattered over the yard. Ralph said, "I see what you mean. She is yours now", and I had a good laugh.

A few days before Christmas in 1915, Ralph came home one day with a beautiful brass bed, complete with springs and mattress. It was my Christmas present and I was happy to have it. I believe I repaid him on Christmas morning for I presented him with a son, Ralph Jr., weighing eleven pounds, healthy and hungry, demanding food oftener than every four hours. Ralph Sr. went around that Christmas day with a very happy grin on his face. A man's first son is something special. He adored Nellie, but from time immemorial the first son has been the favorite and important heir. Ralph Jr. had dark brown eyes and hair. His skin was very fair, so a bit of fresh air and sunshine made his cheeks rosy and he was definitely an out-of-doors lad. Before he could walk he would manage to get outside somehow. He loved to tease and especially little girls if they were pretty, he would make them cry and then kiss them. He finally outgrew the teasing but never lost his interest in a pretty girl.

Edwin was born, October 8, 1917, weighing nine and one-half pounds. He was a long baby and we supposed he would get as tall as his Daddy but when grown both the boys were five feet nine inches and Nellie, so tiny to start with is five feet four inches. I barely made five feet.



Ralph's sister, Mary, passed away the next day after Edwin was born. She had typhoid fever and the doctor never quite determined where she contracted it.

Edwin was a quiet little one - he and Nellie could play all day very quietly but the minute Ralph came on the scene there was action. He was a good overseer but one had best know what his proposed project was to be. Edwin loved cars and music.

In the spring of 1918 we moved to Dawes County where Ralph had purchased a farm along the Dead Horse Stream the year before. For three weeks it snowed every night but didn't get cold enough to stop the eaves from dripping. The constant dripping of the water kept me awake as I wasn't accustomed to it.

We had lots of building to do that first summer, and hired a man called Debs who loved to argue. He was a bachelor and always hungry. I made pancakes - big ones the size of a big plate, so Ralph wouldn't have to stop his eating so many times to fix them for the children, and Debs would eat ten or twelve of them and then want fried potatoes and meat, "Something solid with my pancakes so I won't get hungry". We brought 20 gallons of apple butter with us because fruit was scarce here and it lasted no time at all.

After supper Ralph would sit down in his rocker and go to sleep from exhaustion because of his long days work but Debs didn't sleep. He would perch himself where I couldn't help hearing him and chatter away the whole evening. His one extravagance was the World Almanac, and he memorized the facts from it - dozens of them, then would try to argue about them. I could do no less than answer once in a while. He told a group of neighbors that it sure was an evening well spent when two well educated people could discuss world events. How they did tease me about it. It was a jolly neighborhood.

When homesickness was about to overtake me after moving out to this new part of the State, a neighbor, Mrs. Clay Grantham, called and said, "I am entertaining the neighborhood club tomorrow and we want you to come if you care to". I don't remember how I answered but know I wanted to shout, "You bet I want to come".

With the three children, Edwin four months old, Ralph, two years and Nellie, five, with all their things and moving from a house with nine large rooms to one with four small rooms, until we could build on, I really didn't know what to do with everything. My nearest neighbor, Mrs. Ollie Buchanan, was a real help to me, let me store some things at her place and helped me look after the children.

Mrs. Buchanan loved a good story and never tired of telling one on Ralph about the time he was working near their house and she went out to ask him something. He put his pipe in his pocket



without knocking the all the fire out of it and his overalls caught on fire. He kept turning from her and working his way toward the water jug and she kept following him trying to get an answer. Finally he grabbed the jug and poured water on the front of his pants. Then she noticed the smoke and began to laugh.

Ralph and Bill White had come to the Deadhorse Creek area about the time we did and they were good neighbors. The Harold Smiths came from Hiawatha, Kansas, and the Arch Harris' from the Bethel Community. We spent many happy days together and are still good friends. Our families were all near the same age.

Arch Harris was full of fun and loved a good laugh. The neighborhood to the south held a nondenominational Church in their school house. One preacher they had called on parishiners often, and called on Arch one night at milking time. Arch had a saddle horse that was very hard to catch but was always looking for a little extra feed, and sometimes came to the barn door when Arch was milking the cow. Arch heard a noise at the barn door and without looking up, yelled, "You old S O B you. You always show up at meal time". Then he looked up to see the preacher running toward his car. He took off with all speed. Arch's wife, Lillie, didn't forgive him for many days.

The women at the club meetings seemed much like those at Falls City except they all had care worn expressions and the wind of this area does dry the skin rapidly, but I found them kindly, sensible women and their friendship has remained steadfast through all the years. The club is called Rose Hill, because of the wild roses that cover some of the hills in the area, and I go as often as I can. At first the club was the Dorcas Society, and was begun by Old Grandma Morey. She brought Christianity to the Deadhorse Club by inducing members to make quilts for the mission work of the Christian Church in Chadron, our nearest town. Her log cabin home was located toward the south end of the Deadhorse Stream which has it's source in the Pine Ridge south of Chadron, and flows to White River and thence to the Missouri. Grandma Morey's log cabin is steadily sinking to the ground, but her influence still lasts.

Many laughable incidents occurred during the early years of the club. We usually had to go in a spring wagon or a lumber wagon. One club day most of the men were at a wood sawing. My neighbor, Lorraine Schmechel, called and said, "I want to go to club so much, what can we do about it"? I wanted to go to club too but the only conveyance was a lumber wagon which held a small "Jag" of corn. Lorraine said she would bring a team of horses if she could get their harness on, and she thought she could.

Someway I got the corn unloaded and she came with the team. We were soon on our way, stopping to pick up others on the way. The meeting was about six miles away and for some reason the horses didn't guide very well, but we finally got there. Several of the men who had brought their wives came out to take care of our horses for us.



When they came to the house they were laughing so much that we made them tell us what was so funny. They said that we had hitched the horse that was accustomed to working on the right side on the left and visa versa. This put the wrong harness on each horse. Small wonder the poor things didn't understand which way they were supposed to go. The men hitched them up properly when it was time to go home and we made a flying trip. These poems I wrote many years ago bring back lots of memories:

#### OUR CLUB

Along the "Dead Horse", years ago, When friendship's need was great  
The wives and mothers formed an "Aid", Of this we will relate.  
Two groups at first were organized, Long distance meant dismays,  
The roads were poor and travel slow - 'Twas horse and buggy days.

The south group was the "Dorcas Aid", and kind old Grandma Morey,  
Who now has passed to her reward, was leader - so the story.  
And if I have been told aright, at meeting you would see  
The Manchesters and Bertha Law and Mrs. Jim Tyree.

Amelia Whitsel, too, was one who came and did her best.  
She'd speak a piece or quilt a bit or office hold with zest.  
Good Mrs. Egly, gone beyond, was of this group, and too,  
Was Bernice Nylen Masters one, who came, her part to do.

The North group was the "Rose Hill Aid", whose aim, as was the  
"Dorcas"  
Was making quilts or sewing for the needy, or the hostess.  
Since work of both groups was the same, their friendship grew until  
'Bout 1918 they combined, with the name of Rose Hill still.

At Sadie Grantham's home they met. There all would welcome be.  
Her's was the blood of pioneers, -- true hospitality.  
Among those present, so they say, Was staunch Luella Snyder  
And Dora Spracklin and her girls, if nothing did betide her.

The Goff girls, with their Mother came. To her our hats we'd doff.  
She met life's battles square and brave. That wonderous Effie Goff.  
And Mrs. Harris, if she failed to reach the meeting --  
Maybe it wasn't lack of interest - but the care of someone's baby.

The Grantham girls were there, of course, and always welcome they.  
And Lillie Harris, with a smile, and Mrs. Clapp, they say.  
And Ollie B. they liked to see. At telling funny stories and  
Getting lots of laughs stirred up, she gathered all the glories.

The first for president, of course, would Mrs. Geiser be  
Efficient, wise and full of fun and always there was she.  
And I have heard some stories told, of deep, dark mystery.  
Wild things did happen when this group would at their meetings be.



I've heard of buildings over thrown and doors that strangely locked.  
 Of pranks and jests and doing strange but still no one was shocked.  
 And in those days the men would go to "Aid" when'er they could.  
 It was a day for all to be a good pal if he could.

We hope that we can follow thru with deeds that mean the most of  
 Good to our community. So this will be our toast:  
 Here's to our members who have been. Long may their mem'ry live,  
 And to our "Rose Hill Aid" as is. To it our best we'll give.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### ILL WIND

Our Rose Hill Aid on May the 5th with Mrs. Claussen met.  
 The clouds hung dark, the thunder rolled. But we were there you  
 bet.

You see we always try to go our neighbors will be there,  
 And we will laugh and talk with them and share with them their care.

Also, we know what we will have - a project lesson great  
 Which our two leaders, we are sure, will be there to relate.

So on this day as of before we came from near and far.  
 Each lady hoped it would not rain while she must drive the car.

But scarce had we begun our work, when loud the thunder roared,  
 With frightful din upon the roof, the rain and hail fair poured.

We worried, yes, as women will, about the things at home.  
 We pictured all our chickens drowned, also, the sheep that roam.

About the children off at school - and husbands in the field.  
 To all the dire and dreadful things we let our fancies yield.

Our project lesson for the day was "Closets - trim and neat",  
 Our hostess served a dainty lunch and gladly we did eat.

At last the rain was nearly o'er, there came an icy breeze  
 From pine clad hilld where thick the hail, like snow lay 'mong the  
 trees.

"Tis ill indeed, a wind that blows and serves nobody well  
 And that same icy blast that day, for one good luck did spell.

For as a member of our aid, one by us all held dear,  
 Was gathering thistles from the ditch to help the car to steer.

There in her hands among the weeds so wet and icy like  
 A rattler raised his angry head but was too cold to strike.

And so at last we all reached home, our worries were in vain,  
 For husband, Children, Chickens, sheep, all greeted us again.

We meet again on June the 3rd with Mrs. Cecil White  
 And on this one day of the month we hope the sun shines bright.

\*\*\*\*\*



In the 1920s, the State Universities began to reach out to the rural areas with their many facets of learning to the housewife, the youth, and the farmer himself. There were interesting demonstrations on Homemaking and farming. Tractors became a necessity and farmers could care for more land. There were 4-H Clubs for the youth and they learned to vie with each other to raise better calves and hogs or do better baking and sewing and all benefitted.

The first 4-H demonstration in this county was given by Bernadine Goellert and our daughter, Nellie, on altering a pattern to fit.

Ralph joined a Pig Club when he was twelve. He spent many hours getting them ready for the Fair, and I caught him with my hair brush and my best talcom powder on his way to give his pigs a royal toilette. When he was thirteen he won the State Championship which meant a week long trip to Chicago to see the National Stock show. Also, he won a gold watch from the Wilson Packing Co. but had to wait until he was fourteen to accept it and win all over again. He had no trouble winning the second year. He was a member until he was eighteen and has lead many clubs since.

Edwin was a member with a calf project and did well but was not as dedicated as Ralph.

4-H Clubs have broadened into many facets - Money Management, Legal Matters, Reading, Home Decorating, Electricity, Automotive, Entomology and Climatology and others. They are helpful and include urban as well as rural youth.

#### NEBRASKA

Nebraska, in a long past age was part of the Inland Sea that covered the Great Plains. When gigantic volcanic action threw up the great Rocky Mountains the Plains were tilting and drained so the water drained out of the Central States to the Southwest and into the Ocean. The Great Plains States were once the floor of the Inland Sea and evidence of this can still be seen.

A great sand basin was left in Nebraska. It blew back and forth through thousands of years until at last a bit of vegetation held with tenacious root in many places. Sand was held in little mounds until at last the land was in hills and valleys and became covered with vegetation. It was the prairie dog that was the greatest aid to the vegetation for it was by means of it's burrows that the moisture finally penetrated the hard dry surface enough to allow plant life. Buffalo grass, yucca and pines were among the first plants to hold and grow. Buffalo grass is a short, tough plant with wide spreading roots and is one of the most nutritious having a seed pod resembling wheat. It matures quickly and withstands the arid conditions amazingly well.

When the white men first came to Nebraska the Indians of the area never ventured into the Sand Hills. For some superstition



they feared them. Too, the white men feared they would lose their way if once they ventured away from trails they knew. In a winter blizzard which was especially vicious, a large cattle ranch along the North line of the hills lost a 1000 head of cattle that drifted into the Sand Hills with the storm.

The cattle men hesitated to go after them. Finally a young cowboy said he would go if he could have five or six men on horses to help drive the herd home. Six men volunteered to go. Instead of 1000 head of cattle they came out with 6000 of the fattest cattle they had ever seen. They were mavericks that had strayed into the hills. The men also reported that the Sand Hills were covered with lush grass, and that there was water in abundance in the area. It didn't take cattlemen long to grasp an opportunity to own such land.

The ranches are large in the Sand Hills, and there can be found the wealthiest people in the nation today. Nebraska beef is rated the best in the Nation. Tourists driving through the United States along the edge of the Sand Hills perimeter think Nebraska must be the most desolate state in the Union. Little do they know the value of those hills. Every acre is a heritage of gold.

When the Government put electric power lines in Nebraska towns and farms, they halted at the edge of the Sand Hills saying the cost would be prohibitive with so many miles of line between ranches. Mrs. Hilda Black, a rancher's wife, living at Lakeside in the edge of the hills, knew how much electricity would mean to the ranchers and knew that one ranch would use as much as a small town. She loaned the Government \$300,000. which was their estimate for putting in the lines, and told them to pay her back with the money they received in excess of what they figured on obtaining. In ten years she was paid back, the ranchers loving her for what she had done for them, held a big celebration at the burning of the mortgage.

### THE 1930S

A depression of national scope spread across the country in the early 1930s. In 1929 everything was booming and a man could figure his wealth as considerable. Real property had doubled in price as had most personal property. The break came over night and Stock Markets fell, Banks closed, Savings and Loan companies failed. More than one heavy investor took his own life because he could not face the world as a poor man.

President Hoover began at once to set up the machinery to call a moratorium on drawing money from banks, but believed in doing all things through Congress which is a slow process. In the mean time an election was due and Franklin Roosevelt promised immediate aid to everyone and was elected and President Hoover went out of office a down cast and misunderstood man. No one



remembers that the Bank Moratorium was his idea.

President Roosevelt didn't bother to confer with Congress, he simply handed out the money putting the country on a welfare basis. He did help the people by loaning money at low interest and on long terms. The economy began to climb again but it was a slow process, and the midwest particularly slow because of a severe drought.

Several years in the 1930s the only feed we had for our cattle was a pest weed - the Russian thistle. If they were cut and put in small mounds and salted, a bit of moisture softened them and the cattle ate them quite well. Arguments that this land should have been left as pasture went to naught that year because only the cultivated land produced the thistles.

As if nature wasn't satisfied with a depression and a drought in this area, a horde of grasshoppers, the biggest and hungriest ones imaginable came and everything edible disappeared. The more one covered a particular plant to divert the visitors, the more they appreciated the shady, cool places to eat. The garden was as bare as the well swept floor. Even the onions were hollowed out in the ground and the bark eaten from fruit trees.

In spite of all the plagues of drought and hoppers and no money, we found much to appreciate in Western Nebraska, gifts not purchased with money. There was always fresh pure air, exotic scenery, and tall cool evergreens in the Pine Ridge nearby. Fascinating bad lands and beautiful Black Hills, and hour's drive away, and the people friendly, good neighbors. No one ever came from the 'wrong side of the tracks' unless they proved that that was the kind of life they wanted to live. All comers were welcome and had their chance to stay. So much to be thankful for.

Other major events that occurred in the 1930s that brought changes to our family were, Nellie and Edwin were graduated from High School and 1931 and 1934 and Nellie was married in 1934 and Ralph Jr. was married in 1936.

Nellie was married to Forrest Buchanan, a neighbor with whom she had gone to school. Forrest was the son of Reuben Mortimer Buchanan and his ancestors were war casualties from Ireland.

Two brothers were sent to America as war orphans to work. They were in their early teens and one was sent to New Amsterdam, the other to the Mass. Colony. Early in 1885 young Reuben and his brother, Montgomery, the two youngest of eleven children, with their mother, Christena White Buchanan came to Dawes County when the passenger train came only as far as Valentine, Nebr. A group came at that time but there were not enough wagons to haul all that they had shipped from their homes. Christina, the mother, age 65, walked from Valentine to make room in their wagon for a rocking chair, a hand carved table and a small chest of drawers. Reuben and Montgomery walked, too, leading the team of oxen and the cow.



As they came along the trail that passes near the Indian Reservation an Indian man came out and began to talk to Reuben. Of course, he didn't understand a thing he said but he didn't want to offend the Indian so he kept nodding his head in an affirmative way. The Indian took the cows halter from him and led her away, and Reuben made no protest, but the further he went the more he realized he simply had to have that cow. It meant so much of what they would have to live on. The next morning he borrowed a horse to ride and went back to where he found the <sup>cow</sup> peacefully grazing while the Indian sat in front of his teepee watching her. Reuben went up to the cow, took hold of her halter and led her away. The Indian made no protest at all.

The Buchanans came on past Chadron to the Deadhorse Creek just west of our home. With them a relative of Christina, Charley White, who took a homestead about four miles to the northeast. He married Nora Young who lived along the Deadhorse Creek, just south of our home. Nora lived to be near 100 in spite of a Rattle snake bite when she was quite young. Charley White has been gone many years but their three sons, Cecil, Harold and Dale still own the place and Cecil's son, Robert takes care of it. They have raised fine polled Herefords and Shorthorns cattle.

Rueben, Montgomery and their Mother built a dug-out until a house could be made. That was the practice of most homesteaders. Occasionally Christina's daughter, Cora Hutton (Mrs. Charles)), and her two small children came to stay a while with her. Charles Hutton was working on the railroad. The first summer the Buchanans were here they had to go to Valentine for groceries and supplies. That meant a trip of 380 miles, about four days from home. One day Reuben and Montgomery went to Valentine leaving Christina and Cora alone. They had heard so many stories of the cow boys and their rough life that they were afraid of them. Christina was outside the dug-out churning when three cowboys came by and they stopped and asked if they could have some buttermilk. Christina had told Cora to stay out of sight in the dug-out but she was curious to see a real cowboy so she walked past the doorway with little Charles in her arms. The cowboys saw her and immediately wanted to see a little white baby, so she brought the baby outside for them to admire. They were delighted and held him and played with him. They had seen nothing but Indian babies for so long.

They inquired if there was any work they could do for the women, and every day after that they came back to see if all was well with the new acquaintances who decided that all cowboys were not rowdies. After Reuben got a house built, Christina took a homestead near Trunk Butte, northwest of Reuben's and Mr. and Mrs. Hutton and Montgomery took land about eight miles to the southwest on Indian Creek.

The land across the creek from the Buchanan's was homesteaded by Bill West and purchased some years later by the Piersons. The Peirsons came from the same town in <sup>Missouri</sup> as the Buchanans, who had stopped there for a year on their way from Illinois. The Piersons' had a



daughter named Sadie. Clay Grantham came in 1884 and spent his first winter in a dug-out with Pierre Chadrone, a French Trapper for whom the town of Chadron was named. Clay homesteaded about two miles south of the Pierson and Buchanan Homesteads and later married Sadie Pierson.

In the fall of 1885 Chadron was incorporated and filled up rapidly. The Fremont and Elkhorn Railroad had reached the area. In 1903 Clay's father, T. Y. Grantham and wife came from Missouri. Some of their sons came with them and also, their daughter and an orphaned girl who had made her home with the Granthams since she was orphaned. She was Ollie Broderick, a nice looking, lively blonde girl. She took a job at the Buchanan's caring for Christina who died in 1904 and soon after she and Reuben were married. They had two children, Lorraine Christina who married Richard Schmechel and Forest Reuben, who married our daughter, Nellie.

Later in the 1930s our first grandchildren were born, Nellie and Forrest's sons Robert in 1935, and Dean in 1936 and so goes the circle as new countries fill up with families. We had bought the Pierson place in 1918. Mr Pierson had planted a row of cotton wood sprouts east of the house with a few to the south. The creek was on the west and north of the house, so we had good shade and windbreaks on all sides. The cottonwoods are great, majestic old trees now.

The marriage of Ralph Jr. to Ermine Whitsel was in 1936. Ralph had said from the time he was small that he would marry a girl who had had 4-H Club work so she would know how to keep house. And so he did. For a time they lived in town because Ralph was working for the Express Company. He was fortunate to have a job for work was hard to get, but it wasn't long until he was on a farm. Ermine's people were pioneers in Dawes County. Her mother, Sarah, was one of the family of John Butler. Her grandmother Whitsel was Amelia Chilton, a direct descendant of the James Chilton, of May Flower history. William and Amelia Whitsel's first son, Earl, was born in the Court House during an Indian scare. Sarah Butler and Earl Whitsel are the parents of Ermine, our sons wife.

In 1890 when the Indians of the Reservation were hungry and cold in the time of severe drought, the United States Government had cut their rations about one-third, although they had promised to give the Indians 13,000 acres more land, the Indians were easy prey to the wiles of a Pronta Indian from New Mexico bringing them the story that he had seen the Messiah. He led them in a series of ghost dances which were supposed to invoke the Messiah to give back to them their hunting grounds of old. To be closed in on a

reservation of some of the poorest land in Western Nebraska and South Dakota with a meager source of meat they were desperate, defeated and hungry.



At one time the Washington authorities sent each Indian man a McCormick grain binder to harvest his grain. They had no grain no land to grow it on, no knowledge of how to farm and nothing to farm with. They were not agricultural people. They didn't even know what to do with the binders so they were left to rust away in a fence corner. The makers of the machines reaped a nice reward, the Railroad got good pay for hauling them and the Indians were starving. It was a sad situation indeed.

The Indians restlessly started roaming around the country, finally congregating in a place called Wounded Knee, but they harmed no one. The settlers between the Reservation and Chadron began to bring their women and children to Chadron for protection. Many of them were billeted in the Court House, and were supervised by Chadron's Mayor, Jim Dahlman, the Texas cowboy who became Mayor and then went to Omaha and was made their Mayor. He was also the campaign manager for William Jennings Bryan running for President of the United States against William McKinley in 1889-1900. McKinley won on the issue of a high tariff on imports and a gold and silver standard. Bryan ran on a free silver, 16 to 1 basis and lost. Then he blamed Jim Dahlman for his defeat, and a fine friendship broke up. Politics can do such things.

#### THE 1940 YEARS AND GRANDCHILDREN

The 1940 years became even more memorable to much of the world than had the previous decade. Electrical and motor power had been coming to the fore since the turn of the century and by the 40s

had become universal and necessary. Man, as a source of power was pushed aside by mechanical power, but only temporarily because it was soon learned that man, skilled in caring for all the new equipment was more essential than ever.

Schools, Night classes, work shops, etc., were needed at once. The trusty old team, once so valued on a farm, was put out to pasture, and the old walking plow was left to rust away in a fence corner beside the horse drawn mower machine. Every farmer had to have a car, a truck and a tractor along with new machinery and air planes were becoming commonplace.

It was in December 1941 that the Japanese sent a group of their ambassadors over to Washington, D. C. to negotiate some new trade treaties and buy more of our scrap iron. They had been buying all they could of it. They were most affable while here, and we were gullible. While they were bowing and scraping and we were smiling back at them they sent a fleet of their airplanes to bomb our flotilla of war ships, peacefully lying at ease in the water of Pearl Harbor. They destroyed many of our best ships as well as killing many of our sailors. It was all planned so by them - a sneak attack indeed, while they deceitfully bargained with us as our guests. It is doubtful if they knew how nearly our Navy was done in with that blow.



Washington declared war at once, and the conflict was on. Edwin had enlisted in November but was called ahead of schedule and by Christmas was in Boot Camp at San Diego Naval Base. When the officers selected men for special training they chose Edwin to be a signal man. He had almost perfect eyesight and an extraordinary ability to memorize. He rode on the bridge above the deck and his captain called him "Flags".

As long as the war was on, the ship had to sail blacked out. Even a lighted match was forbidden. While in the Coral Sea, Edwin, riding on the bridge, spotted a periscope of a submarine. His ship set off a torpedo in the direction of the submarine. They saw it no more, but they did see an oil slick in the area where the submarine was. The crew of the ship didn't know that there was a serious battle in the Coral Sea at that time.

There was a negro on the crew who often boasted that he was not afraid of any bombing, but when a bomb struck near they noticed the black boys' complexion was close to white. One day the negro took a nap on the deck directly below the bridge. Although each man was allowed but one quart of drinking water a day, Edwin wasted most of his supply that day trying to pour some of it into the open mouth of the sleeping sailor. He finally succeeded and the frightened negro thought a bomb hit him. Edwin had a hearty but thirsty laugh.

Edwin told us many stories of the pranks played on each other. One time a ship sailing ahead of them put a case of beer at the end of a rope down in the water to cool. Their ship following proceeded to lariat the case of beer, pull it aboard and that was the last of that except for a lusty protest from ahead.

At one time their ship was docked in the Figi Islands to be unloaded quickly then return to the United States. For some reason no one unloaded anything except one day. That day United States Secretary of Navy Knox was there for a tour of inspection and they all worked like mad. The ship lay in dock for three months and there was little for the sailors to do. They could go swimming every other day, but their area was limited because of sharks and they could not go inland because of enemy sabotage. Edwin studied for his next advancement there and memorized the book. When at last the ship sailed it went to New Zealand where he took his test for his next rank and he rated 100. The examining officer raved about it saying no one could do that. So one day they gave him a surprise test thinking that he might have cheated. But again he had a perfect score, so they gave up and decided it could be done.

He was offered a petty officers rating next, but he wouldn't accept it. He said he had seen so many officers hated by the men that he would prefer not to be one. The ship Edwin sailed on for two years, I never heard a name except "The Old Rust Pot", was one held over from World War I, It carried warcargoes in the hold and it was manned by salty old seamen. The radio man, Edwin and



his under study were the only Navy men aboard. He sailed all the Seas except the one from Australia to India. He spent six months in the Mediterranean sailing from Africa across to Italy and Sicily and the roughest sailing he experianced anywhere was the Messina Straits between Italy and Sicily.

The only injury he received was in the Marshall Island in the Pacific and it was not due to the war. The ship was held up there for a few days and the boss organized a baseball team. Edwin and another player were both running for first base and as they slid in the knee of the other fellow struck Edwin in the face breaking his jaw bone and causing a concussion which kept him unconscious for several days and his ship sailed without him. His cousin, Betty Thompson, knew the doctor who attended him as they had been in training together at the Mayo Clinic. After three weeks he was flown to Guam where he caught his ship. There was a real celebration for his ship mates never expected to see him again.

In 1943 he was in harbor for several weeks at Beaumont, Texas, and went to some USO dances in Houston, Texas where he met Anita Mary Lewis, a pretty, black haired, French girl.

Anita's Mother was Anita M. LaBauve, born in St. Louis of Franch decent and raised in a Catholic Convent. Her Father, John Lewis was of French and German decent and was born in New Orleans. They owned a restaurant in Houston where they raised their family.

Edwin spent many happy days at her home with her family of two sisters and three brothers. She and Edwin were married but there was no time for a church wedding so they were married by a judge. Anita's Mother was very unhappy about it so when the war was over and they came to Nebraska they were married by the Priest in the Church here. Anita's parents are gone but her brothers and sisters all live in Houston, except John, who lives in El Paso, Texas.

Anita lived at home until near the end of the war when Edwin was stationed at New Orleans. He ended his Navy Career as Senior Signalman on the Commodor Flag Staff Ship, making trips from New Orleans to Guantanamo Base in Cuba. They lived in New Orleans and had a son, Edwin Jr., born January, 1945. Edwin described the streets of New Orealsn the night the war ended as the wildest he had ever seen - like all the Mardi Gras rolled into one. When he was discharged, he and Anita came to Chadron to live.

One April 13th during the war as I was doing my work one morning, I suddenly knew without any doubt that Edwin had fallen in the Ocean. It seemed not to be tragic, but just a light experience. I went to the calendar and noted the date. In a few months he was home on leave and I said to him, "Edwin, did you ever fall off the boat into the Ocean?" He said, "Yes, I did. We were having a drill for emergency and I got my feet tangled in a rope when we were letting a life boat down and just tumbled overboard." He could swim well but was a little afraid of sharks.



He said the fellows razed him a lot. We compared dates but he couldn't remember the exact date but said it was about the middle of April. It happened just as it did with Serena and Eliza Ann when Samuel Parker Macomber died in the Civil War. I do not know why some perceive more than others, but I do know that such things have happened.

During the war we had three more grandchildren in addition to Edwin Jr. Forrest and Nellie's Neil was born February 21, 1940, and their Annette on September 8th, 1943 and Ralph and Ermine's first child, Arvid was born March 2nd, 1943. All lived within a half miles of us, where we had built a new house during the war. October 27th, 1949, Barbara Alice was born to Forrest and Nellie,

Early in the 1950s we had two more granddaughters. Anita Kay was born December 17th, 1950, to Edwin and Anita and Garlan RaVae was born April 21st, 1951 to Ralph and Ermine, making us a total of ten grandchildren.

Ralph Jr. had been on our place since 1943 and told Edwin that if he wanted to come back and farm that he and Ermine would move to Ermine's Fathers place east of Chadron. Ralph Sr. insisted that Edwin take a year of G. I. on-the-job training before he tried farming so he took a year of mechanics training. Paul Rhoads, son of Ralph's brother Will, who owned a Service Station had a good mechanic from whom Edwin took his training.

When the year was up Ralph, Jr. and Ermine bought the place east of town and now have a well improved farm and a nice home.

It was a big change for Anita to live on a farm. She had always lived in Houston, and scarcely knew all of the farm animals. If anything, she had more to learn about the farm and housekeeping than I had. She would longingly say how she would love to walk between two rows of buildings that reached to the sky. She did very well at it without all the help I had from Ralph, because Edwin had much to learn, too. Anita learned to raise chickens and garden, can fruit and vegetables and did very well at raising their three children and keeping them in school. She was a good mother and taught them high principles.

#### THE BLIZZARD OF 1949

Beginning on January 1st, 1949 this part of Nebraska experienced one of the worst snow storms for many years. We got 64 inches of snow. The wind blew constantly for a month and snow fell nearly every day. The wind kept the roads closed in spite of all the shoveling the men could do. If they shoveled a mile of road they would have to shovel the fresh drifts out before they could return home. The piles of snow got so high along the roads that there was no place to throw more snow. The storm began on the first of the year and it was the middle of February before we could get out safely. Snow drifts almost reaching the telephone wires were still evident thru March.



Anita was expecting her second child in January. We knew we must get her to town and the only way possible was to have a small plane land on a hill top about a mile from home, that was swept clean by the wind. Nellie's husband, Forrest, had a good team and a bob sled. Forrest, Edwin and two other neighbors scooped snow most of the day and then it took them four hours to get Anita to the top of the hill in the sled. It was quite an experience for her as she had never ridden behind a team of horses nor in an airplane. Her oldest child, Edwin Jr., stayed with me and we were quite relieved when she got to town. It was a difficult birth and the doctors said both she and the child would have died had she not gotten to the hospital, but Ralph Richard arrived on January 30th, 1949, a fine healthy baby, and our sixth grandchild.

Our cattle had some shelter from the trees along the Deadhorse which ran close to our buildings and through the winter pasture. The cattle bedded down on the ice over the wide place in the stream. Twelve beautiful pheasant cocks stayed with them all through the storm. We had stacks of feed along the pasture fence Ralph could throw feed over the fence to the cattle each morning,

There were instances through the area where the cattle had no shelter, but a few trees along a lake or dam. They found a place to bed down on the ice. After warmer weather came they still preferred their bit of tree shelter and at last the ice gave way, drowning quite a number of them.

We were out of meat, but we didn't kill any of the pheasants. However, one morning a young deer jumped into the yard. Although Ralph had never killed one this one seemed like a providential happening. He shot it and we had meat.

The Government sent out Army jeeps and snow plows to assist in rescuing several families so snowed in that they couldn't manage. Especially along the edge of the tableland the drifts were enormous. One family escaped in a jeep that drove on the drift to an upstairs window to rescue them. Planes hauled baled hay to cattle on the open prairie.

One incident seemed about the worst in this area. A man living on the table land couldn't find some of his cattle. They had been pasturing among the trees below the high flat tableland. One day he noticed a large flock of magpies (a scavenger bird) in a clearing among the trees. He woked his way down to where they were and found his cattle drifted over until they couldn't get out but with their heads partly above the snow. Many of them were already dead, picked to death by the merciless birds who were eating their ears, eyes and the tops of their heads.

Planes brought groceries ordered by phone, dropping them in sacks near the houses. Nellie ordered a box of matches and some cabbage for Forrest's Mother who was a diabetic. When the sack hit the snow drift it ignited the matches, and the heads were



charred but they did not blaze, but the odor of sulphur had penetrated everything until it couldn't be used.

Our neighbor had ordered a sack of flour and a box of powdered soap. Both packages burst when the sack fell and the contents were mixed. She said she didn't know whether to bake or to wash with it. I had a little yeast and made a starter so I could bake bread when we needed it. How little Eddie, Jr. enjoyed playing with a bit of the dough. He made little loaves from it, of course, dropped it several times and it was somewhat off color but he ate it with no apparent harm.

One thing for which we were grateful was the perfect service on our telephone line. We had genuine round table chats every morning.

Our new home was about the same distance from Nellie's and the place where both Edwin and Ralph lived. Nine of our grandchildren had been close by when they were small. Only Garlan, who was born after Ralph and Ermine moved east of Chadron was not close to us when she was small. Everyone of the nine took a turn at running away to our house except Barbara.

When Arvid first ran away, we heard Ermine calling for him frantically. Just then Ralph saw his little white head come into view over the fields of grain, so he ran and picked him up so that Ermine could see him.

When Dean decided he could find his way, he had been eating watermelon and it was a hot, dry, dusty season. Walking was too difficult so he crawled. Nellie discovered <sup>him</sup> in the dusty road and brought him to show me. He was so dirty.

1950

The half century mark was reached. Looking back there were so many changes since the days when I skipped rope to school every day without a thought of being afraid to be run down while crossing the street. Even the few cars that were there traveled at a speed of about 25 miles and hour and felt that was a frantic speed. From horse drawn vehicles, buggies or wagons, with a lantern in case of emergency - to the time when electricity lights much of our road and street, and our cars have lights front and back at the flick of a switch. All the years of Mother's life except a few at the last had been lived in those "Lantern" days.

Another drastic change was in the style of clothes -- especially those of "My-lady". From the long dresses of those early 1900 days, with their high collars and long sleeves and at least two full ruffled petticoats, to the present styles of short dresses for any time of day. Somehow the long skirts which fashion is pushing hard to bring back do not interest me much. I grew up in them and still recall the sense of freedom of movement introduced with the short skirts.



I still recall watching the perfectly dressed women with their tailored suits of high collar, long sleeves and skirts that they must gather with their gloved right hand and hold daintily just high enough to keep them from sweeping the dirty streets. And of being embarrassed the first time I 'dared' to walk down the street with sleeves just below the elbow. It seemed that every one was looking at me.

I don't recall, though, what people told me about my strutting along the street with my head held high clutching a not too long skirt with my right hand and holding it up much more than was necessary, when I was about four or five. It must have been one of the moments of wanting so much to be a fine lady.

After the long presidential terms of Roosevelt and Truman, 1930 - 1948, many of the young people coming of the age to vote in 1950 had never known anything other than Roosevelt and his vice-president who followed his footsteps quite closely. Roosevelt had introduced the Welfare State system and there are many today who still like to follow those principles.

From 1948 to 1956, Eisenhower served as President. He had been Chief of Staff of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II. He was highly esteemed by everyone and was successful in bringing the Korean war to an end.

During the war years we managed on the farm with only a pickup for conveyance and work because the Government asked us to get along with as few vehicles as possible to save for the Armed Forces, so we sold our car.

Ralph was always patient and even-tempered. All children adored him and among the neighborhood men he was called the peace maker. If two men found occasion to use hot tempered words, Ralph would apparently pay no attention to the quarrel, but in a pause he would unexpectedly make some witty remark about the cause of the fight. Then everyone would laugh and forget the argument.

In 1951 I was elected as President of the Chadron Women's Club. It was quite an undertaking because we had a membership of 150 and had three departments to manage. That meant a club meeting every Tuesday for two years. Thinking back over those years of being the Club President, I have often wondered if the membership wasn't embarrassed at seeing my conveyance.

In 1952 I had the chance to join a group of Club Women taking lessons in painting from Etha Brooks, wife of Dr. W. G. Brooks, our college president. Her thought was that through the Women's Club she could interest the public in art to the extent that they would allow a stronger art department in some of the new buildings being designed for our campus. I think I was the oldest one to take the class but I'm sure no one enjoyed it more. Ralph was most patient with my being gone so much. He enjoyed the pictures but we spent much time in the open getting our pictures from nature



and I would come with a rash over my face and chest and breathing hard. It was Asthma. The doctors here, in Denver and at Mayo Clinic all said it was a congenital heart asthma which I had always had in some form and they could only relieve but not cure it. It was inherited from my Father but medical science has found much more to control it than was available to him.

During the 40s I wrote a series of historical articles of the settling up of Western Nebraska. They were sold to the Chadron Record. The editor, Maurice Van Kirk, put the articles in book form and I named it, "A Stream Called Deadhorse," because of the many interesting tales told of how the stream got it's name. The stories were told to me by old timers and the third edition is on the market.

In 1957, a Nebraska Chapter of the National League of American Pen Women was established. Having sold many paintings and writings I was invited to become a Charter Member. We began with only five members but have grown to 25 here. We were instrumental in setting up an Omaha Branch and in so doing lost 12 of our members to them as it was closer for them to go to Omaha. Many talented women belong to the league, so talented that I feel very humble among them. In spite of their talents they are friends I hope always to keep.

In the spring of 1957 Ralph and I went with Ralph's brother, Geroge, and his wife to the sale of a house belonging to an elderly couple who could no longer keep it up. To the surprise of all of us, Ralph bought the place. He said he just thought he would put it in good shape and rent it. So we went to town every morning and worked on the house, getting it painted inside and out and making changes in the lighting and kitchen and really enjoyed making it more libeable. The rooms were all large and on one floor. There was a spacious porch on the east side, where we enjoyed the afternoon shade. By the time the place was in shape to rent, Ralph decided he wanted to live there.

The trips to town - 10 miles each way - were beginning to get hard on both of us. Edwin and Anita had bought our farm on the Deadhorse. We had given the old Red Pickup to Edwin with the farm and bought a Mercury Monterey. It was a good car and delightful to drive after all the years in the pickup.

We made a trip back to our old home at Falls City and visited relatives and friends there and in eastern Kansas. It was in the fall and weather was fine for the trip. The sand hills and the bluffs along the Missouri at the eastern boundary of the State were almost beyond description with their gorgeous colors. The grass in the Sand Hills was lush and had colored with fall to show all of the colors nature can produce. Huge cottonwood trees were medallians of gold against the azure sky. The oak trees covered the river bluffs with red and bronze and seeing them I realized how much I had missed them all the years we had lived in Western Nebr.



We came home across Northern Kansas, to Sterling, Colorado, then north through western Nebraska. It was beautiful every mile of the way. Not many falls are as right for richness of color as that year of 1957.

Ralph enjoyed the trip more than I had thought he would because he had always been adverse to being away from home very long. To my surprise, the high point of his trip was a chance see the tree he had planted at the Falls School when he was a boy. Several of the pupils had planted trees on Arbor day but Ralph's was the only one that survived a hot dry summer. The reason; every day he took a bucket of water that quarter of a mile to the school grounds and watered his tree - an ash - which he named Longfellow. So we hurried to the tree as fast as we could. It was a beautiful tall tree near the gate and I took a picture of him under the tree.

Seeing the four sides of the state and being so thrilled with it's variety of beauty I described it in these few lines:

Hills of green, fields of gold;  
Streams of crystal, clear and cold.

Miles of ribboned highway grey,  
Cattle red, beside the way.

Sage and sand hill, gleaming bright,  
Purpling in the evening light;

Apples turning autumn's hue,  
Or all a sky of blue,

That's Nebraska

For three years I had written a column titled "The Rural View" conveying my thrill with nature as rural people can enjoy it. After we moved to town I tried to continue but the writing fell flat. I couldn't write what I couldn't experience. I had to watch the activities of the fields and woods - to hear the small creatures night sounds or watch the birds in their flight. Writing of something you are foreign to has no depth or imagination to give it sparkle.

1960

The early sixties were sad for us. My asthma was bothering more each day and most of my activities came to a halt. I tried to paint once in a while but it was hard to do. Ralph's reasoning power was ebbing daily and his kind disposition was changing. He couldn't understand why I couldn't do the things I always had done, but he would do anything Nellie wanted him to do. Much of my time was spent in the hospital.



In 1961 Nellie insisted that both Ralph and I should come to her home to live where she could look after us and still carry on her work.

Ralph enjoyed unusually good health through the years. Walked a lot and drove a car until he was 80. He read the newspaper from start to finish every day, nearly always out loud and often without the aid of glasses. He was a beautiful reader. When he learned to read everyone in the school studied reading out loud and all at the same time. He lost one tooth which was the extent of his dental care and he walked as straight at 80 as he ever had. He had always worked hard and his shoulder and neck muscles were muscle-bound causing an obstruction to the circulation to his head. A cerebral hemorrhage took him quietly in his sleep on December 13th, 1963. The children chose a polished oak casket for him because it reminded them of his old rocking chair. They loved to sit on the wide arms of it and talk to him.

I was glad death came easily for him. He was almost 81. The loneliness left by his passing still lingers.

I was in very poor health for several months and spent most of the time in the hospital. By summer I was better and made several trips to the Black Hills with the Sketch Club to paint. Usually we stayed in the cabins at Game Lodge or Legion Lake. Sometimes we cooked a little but usually spent most of our time sight-seeing and painting. We saw several plays at the Black Hills Play House and the Passion Play at Spearfish. Those were real fun times for us and I have many memories of painting days.

I was feeling more like painting these days and won a State award for design representing the State of Nebraska. I was interrupted in this painting with a stay in the hospital and when I was released I only had a few days to get it finished. The painting contained a meadow lark, our state bird, and when great-grandson, Ralph, age two, saw it he said, "Mmm Duck" and with his finger, smeared it clear across the painting. I simply couldn't paint another stroke that day but the next day I did it over. I won the \$50.00.

In 1964, my granddaughter, Annette, went with me on the plane to Kansas City and then to Falls City. We visited all the old friends and relatives and attended a picnic at Leavenworth, Kansas and saw many neices and nephews. All of George's and Mabel's children were there. I visited there another time while Nellie attended a business meeting at the College in Lawrence, Kans.

In 1965, Chadron celebrated it's 75th anniversary - the Diamond Jubilee. Nine days after the town was incorporated, the First Congregational Church held it's first gathering in Chadron so it was also their Diamond Jubilee. That year I wrote a seventy-five year history of the church.



In December of 1966 I went to California and stayed with my granddaughter, Annette, and her husband, Douglas Kirk. I had lots of fun with my little great granddaughter, Kimberly Annette, who was six months old when I arrived. During Christmas Vacation we went to southern California for the Rose Parade and a visit to Disneyland.

In May of 1967 the Pen Women had a Regional Midwestern State's convention in Chadron. Being Nebraska's State President at that time, I was made Chairman of the convention, which was held at the Campus Center of Chadron State College and was well attended. Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North and South Dakota and Kansas were represented. The National President, Esther Dixon, attended as did presidents of most of the states. Mrs. Haven Smith, a nationally known speaker gave the address. It was a beautiful and smooth running three day affair. Nellie made my formal for the banquet and Barbara and her friend Kathy did the the serving for one of the afternoon sessions dressed as Indian Maidens. We finished by taking several of the visitors thru the Black Hills on the fourth day.

After the convention I put on a one man show at the Episcopal Guild Hall and sold six paintings at that time. Of course, I continued to painting in every free minute. Forrest and I had many arguements about which smelled the worst, turpintine or cigars.

In the fall of 1967 I had an unusual accident. A cat jumped at me and bit my leg - took a chunk right out of it. The poison spread rapidly and I was not able to walk for ten weeks. It finally did heal and doctor dismissed me one December day.

I had lost a lot of time so started to make it up. Almost that same day, Mrs. Geirau called to see if I wanted to go to California again. Of course, I did and I stayed for six months with Annette and Douglas. We did and saw so many interesting things - the Big Sur, Sutters Mill, Daffodill Hill, Hearst Castle, Yosemite Park, the Redwoods and so many things. We went someplace nearly every week end and I enjoyed seeing everything so much. I painted during the week while they were at work and sold nearly \$1000. worth of paintings that year that I was , not 29, but 79 years old.

We came back to Nebraska about the 4th of July and Douglas and Annette visited here that summer. I was glad to be back and see all my old friends and to do a lot more painting.

In 1968, Nellie took two of the Sketch Club friends and me to the beautiful land of the Tetons and Yellowstone Park. We left home on the 26th of June and returned on the 30th, but regardless of the summer season, it snowed 15 inches in the Park.

In spite of several sieges in the hospital, I continued to be active, to a degree, in the Women's Club and the Congregational Church. I was president of the Council of Church Women one year and am still on the Board of Directors of the Women's Club. I



attend the National League of Pen Women's meetings but gave up the job of Treasurer when I was 81.

In October of 1969, Nellie drove to Florida to visit her children, Dean, Neil and Barbara. She took my friend Margaret Hebbert and me along and we planned to do some painting and traveling about the State. But again, my plans went a-gee. The first night I missed seeing a step in Neil's home and fell, shattering a bone in my spine. I spent my trip in Cape Canaveral Hospital - a fine hospital with good doctors. I was fitted with a heavy brace after a time and amazed all of them by being able to walk. They had told me I would be a wheelchair patient, but I have walked many miles since then.

I was released on my 81st birthday, November 30, 1969, and there was a cake and gifts at Neil's home. The grandchildren were wonderful to, coming to see me everyday after Nellie and Margaret left.

In about two weeks after I was released to come home on the plane, but was never able to see much of Florida.

Much of my time in the 1970s has been spent in my chair working on this book, writing countless letters to obtain some of the information. I am still able to get around by myself and attend Church and meetings if the weather is good, but missed for the first time seeing the Black Hills this summer. Perhaps the summer of 1974 will be better.

There are few elderly people who are as fortunate as I am in having a good home provided for them. Or, as my friends say, "There are not many Nellie's in the world". If all the elderly people I know had just a little of the attention I get in Nellie's and Forrest's home, what a happy world this would be.

I have written this book so that my decendants may know their heritage as they have ancestors who have been in America since it's beginning - they can say, "This is my Country". Their allegiance is here and they need to know that their ancestry had a part in building the country to what it is today.

Each of them will be different and that is essential to prevent a one-sided society. May they each have a chance to follow a desired path and have the strength to mold an environment which will credit them and their nation.

Since I am the last of the original composite family, I leave these stories for all now and to come of the families I have traced through the past.

My wish - May God's blessing for good be with each one of them.