

AUTOBIOGRAPHY¹

Written Primarily for my own entertainment and employment but dedicated to my dutiful two sons and two daughters². --S. Robert Rendall³.

Antecedents:

I come of respectable middle-class English families. My father and mother were born, reared and married in old England. My father, Charles Rendall⁴, was born in Somersetshire on March the 18, 1817. His mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Churchill⁵, a strong upright character who lived to a good old age within my memory. One might suspect from the name that there was some connection with the English aristocracy, but no such claim was ever made, to my knowledge. My father's father⁶, a blacksmith by trade, was a moody individual subject to fits of despondency and sometimes took to his bed for days together; was given to decided ups and downs. He died before I can remember. Charles was one of a family of several boys and girls and at the age of twelve years was apprenticed to a tailor for a seven-year period to learn the trade. At the age of seventeen he was "converted" and joined the Methodists; and at the age of nineteen graduated from his apprenticeship a full-fledged tailor.

My mother's maiden name was Ann Apsey⁷ and she was born in Devonshire adjoining Somerset July 21, 1821. Her mother's maiden name was Hannah Keetch⁸ and her father, Job Apsey⁹, was a farmer by occupation. There were three children in the family, of which my mother was the eldest; followed by a brother, William¹⁰, who later married¹¹ and emigrated to American, and a sister, Mary¹², who married a man by the name of Connibier. When my mother was nine years old her father, Job Apsey, died of consumption; and five years later her mother

¹ I (Douglas C. Rendall, great-grandson of S. Robert's brother, Joseph Benson) have attempted to take a pdf of a typewritten copy of this autobiography and transcribe it as true as I can, leaving in all punctuation and most spelling as I found it. The rest of these footnotes going forward are my attempts to give clarity to the people, places and events that the author is referring to, including birth and death dates where known. Most if not all of the people mentioned herewith can be found in my genealogy website at rendall.com. If you have suggestions for improvements to this annotated version of this work, or if you might have information on the whereabouts of this original work, please contact me at douq.rendall@gmail.com. [completed January, 2022]

² Effaretta, LeVerne, Harvard and Vera, all mentioned later

³ **Simon Robert Rendall** (2/16/1866 – 2/5/1952)

⁴ **Charles A. Rendall** (3/18/1817 – 12/28/1916)

⁵ **Elizabeth Hannah Churchill Rendall** (3/30/1788 – 8/31/1876)

⁶ **Charles William Rendall** (1/25/1786 – 5/2/1859)

⁷ **Ann (Apsey) Rendall** (7/21/1821 – 11/7/1914)

⁸ **Hannah (Keetch Apsey) Clarke** (10/2/1791 – 12/31/1868)

⁹ **Job Apsey** (4/6/1798 – 9/9/1830)

¹⁰ **William Apsey** (11/1/1823 – 7/19/1898)

¹¹ **Ellen (Flowers) Apsey** (3/23/1825 – 3/9/1903)

¹² **Mary (Apsey) Conibear** (Connibier?) (b. 1826)

married one George Clark¹, who sad to say was, or became, seriously addicted to "drink". Of this marriage one daughter was born, named Anna², who married James Hoare³, a brother of John Hoare⁴ who married Elizabeth Keetch⁵, daughter of Thomas Keetch, a brother of my mother's mother. Both the Hoares and the Keetches were to come into my life later from another angle. After her mother's second marriage my mother, being fatherless and not enamored of her stepfather, lived for some of the time with this Uncle Thomas Keetch and his wife, Aunt Sally⁶, whose maiden name was White and who was, I understand, from among the aristocrats.

It may be noted in regard to the drink that at that time the drinking of mild alcoholic beverages was a common practice among all classes. The crusade for total *abstinence*⁷ was in its incipiency; and my father was one who, in early life, signed a pledge of total abstinence which he kept to his dying day. He also never [2]⁸ used tobacco in any form, nor profane language; although he used some rather nasty words sometimes when exasperated.

My father and mother met, I believe, in a hayfield as "on a summer day they raked the meadow sweet with hay"⁹; and were married on July 30, 1839; my father being 22 and mother 18 years of age. They went to live at a place called Stoke; where on July 18, 1840 their first child was born. They named him Job Apsey¹⁰ after his deceased grandfather, and called him Apsey. The following year my father decided to emigrate to America and though my mother was very loathe to leave her people, my father's decision prevailed. In those days the wife was expected to cleave to her husband for better or worse; and my father being decidedly "the head of the house", in his own estimation, and rather headstrong and self-willed, I don't think my mother's wishes in the matter had any great consideration. At any rate, in the summer or fall of 1841 they embarked from Bristol, England, on a sailing vessel, arriving in New York around Christmas after a voyage, I believe, of eleven weeks.

Here my father found work at his trade and remained for about eight months; then moved with his family out on Long Island to a place known as Graves End; where he followed his trade for a period of about eight years. During this time three daughters were added to the

¹ **George Clark** (Clarke?) (b. 1806)

² **Anna Apsey (Clark/Clarke) Hoare** (1839 – 11/4/1922)

³ **James Hoare** (1836 – 3/4/1922)

⁴ **John Hoare** (3/27/1843 – 9/19/1922)

⁵ **Elizabeth White (Keetch) Hoare** (5/27/1841 – 8/17/1934)

⁶ **Sally (White) Keetch**

⁷ This word and all other subsequent italicized ones are the misspelled or questionable way they are typed in the original manuscript (note – only the first occurrence is italicized).

⁸ This indicates the start of page 2 of the original typewritten version, and all subsequent pages will be likewise denoted.

⁹ From the poem "Maud Muller" by John Greenleaf Whittier, written in 1856

¹⁰ **Job Apsey Rendall** (7/18/1840 – 5/15/1863)

family: Hannah¹, Elizabeth Churchill² and Mary³. While here my mother's grandfather Apsey, who with other members of his family had emigrated to Virginia some years *previos*, came to live with them for a time but returned when the family left Long Island; and if any of his descendants survive, all trace of them has been lost. He left a small hammer which I have, and will pass on as a relic. He probably brought it from England more than 100 years ago.

Business must have been fair at Graves End and a good degree of economy and thrift practiced, for when the call of the West came again my father decided to obey and undertook a journey into the interior of the continent. Accordingly we find the family of six making their way up the Erie canal on a tow-boat to Buffalo. The cholera was raging at the time, but they escaped it and keeping on westward by boat and train, landed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, about the year 1850. My father had joined the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.P.) to which he always gave credit for his success in finding work at his trade in Milwaukee. He also supplemented his earnings by serving as janitor, or sexton of the church.

After about a year and a half in Milwaukee they moved out about thirty miles farther west to Summit, Wisconsin. Summit was a sort of country *centre*; with a post-office, a Presbyterian church and, I believe, a store; also a school not far out. Here my father set up for himself with a tailor shop of his own; and I have preserved as a relic one of his business cards. He bought a house and parcel of ground, his shop being in one room of the [3] house. He also worked on the adjoining farms some at harvest time, and secured appointment as post-master and mail-carrier from the railroad town of Oconomowoc about three miles distant. This daily trip for the mail he made mostly on foot after his day's work at the tailoring. The stay here of some thirteen years or until 1864, was probably the most prosperous and satisfactory of any so far, since they arrived in the new world. The family joined the Presbyterian church which was presided over by an excellent pastor, the Rev. E. J. Montague. The society in general was of a superior character and the schools good for the times. My father was active in the Odd Fellows lodge; the home was paid for and improved. My mother always referred to their life at Summit with high appreciation. Her brother, William Apsey, and his wife had arrived in America, landing at New Orleans and coming from there to Summit. He was a cabinetmaker by trade but soon moved to a farm at Onalaska north of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, later living at Sparta east of that city. They had no children. While at Summit the Rendall family was augmented by the birth of another daughter, Susan Ann⁴, then four boys in succession: Charles William⁵, John Fletcher⁶, George Whitfield⁷ and Joseph Benson⁸; also one daughter, Ellen Anna⁹, the youngest of the

¹ Hannah (Rendall) Cook (10/4/1843 – 1/18/1922)

² Elizabeth Churchill (Rendall) More (1/27/1846 – 10/18/1927)

³ Mary (Rendall) Young (10/14/1848 – 2/10/1926)

⁴ Susan Ann (Rendall) Harding (9/14/1851 – 9/22/1889)

⁵ Charles William Rendall (10/8/1853 – 6/2/1932)

⁶ John Fletcher Rendall (10/19/1855 – 2/10/1920)

⁷ George Whitfield Rendall (8/31/1857 – 12/26/1860)

⁸ Joseph Benson Rendall (7/29/1859 – 5/9/1921)

⁹ Ellen Anna (Rendall) Lewis (6/9/1862 – 10/9/1943)

family at that time and the last of the girls. The boys were named for their father, and uncles and three famous men: Fletcher, Whitfield and Benson.

Before the birth of Ellen the family was to meet its first great trial and grief in the death of little George at the age of three years. He was buried in the cemetery there¹ and a little headstone erected. I had the opportunity of visiting the place some seventy years later and found the grave with the inscription on the stone as I had heard my mother describe it.

It was at this time that the agitation over slavery brought on the great civil war; and another great sorrow was in store for the family. The oldest son, Job Apsey, who had grown to manhood, had attended a higher institution of learning for a short time at Appleton, Wisconsin, and had taught school, enlisted as a volunteer and went south as a soldier in the army. He soon took sick of the southern fever and died at Helena, Arkansas, where he was buried without ever seeing any of the family again. Travel was a different proposition in those days from what it is today; and to go away for a few hundred miles or more was often to say goodbye for all time; as it was with my parents on leaving England. As far as I know none of the family have ever visited the spot where he was laid to rest; but the army officer wrote comforting and sympathetic letters to my mother and father.

Soon after these calamities were overpast, my father decided to make yet another move to the west; this time to obtain a farm on the frontier in Minnesota. Again my mother was loathe to leave their home and associates; but my father as usual made the decision and had his way; which as it turned out a probably for [4] the best, all things considered. There were several considerations which prompted the decision: The homestead law granting 160 acres of unimproved government land after five years residence had just been enacted. He was getting along in years with a large family including three growing boys; also the sewing machine had been invented and ready-made clothing from the factories was beginning to appear on the market, threatening competition with his tailoring business. By the way, I believe he bought one of the first sewing machines, which he never used extensively in his work but more as an experiment. So the home at Summit was sold for \$300 which may have been a fair price at that time. This modest amount in cash, with their household goods which they decided to take along, appears to have been all the resources they had with which to make the move and establish a new home on a farm which as yet had not been seen or selected. It was a bold and hazardous if not a foolhardy undertaking. My father later received some aid from William Apsey and one of his brothers-in-law in England.

The family now consisted of the four older daughters, two of them grown to young womanhood, three sons ranging in age from four to ten years, and Ellen two years old. The older girls had completed what was known as a common school education, about the equivalent of the eighth grade; which qualified them to teach in the country schools in Minnesota. My knowledge of the details of the trek to Minnesota is rather *meagre*; but it was

¹ Summit Cemetery, Summit Corners, WI

the early spring of 1864 that they left Summit for my uncle's at LaCrosse; and from there they came to Austin, Minnesota.

Here they halted while my father went farther west about eighty miles to the Winnebago land agency located at or near where Winnebago City now is. I believe he made this trip alone and on foot. From Freeborn near what is now Albert Lea, for 18 or 20 miles in Faribault Co. it was mostly naked prairie with no settlers. It appears Faribault county was first settled along the Blue Earth river from Mankato to Blue Earth city and beyond, and at this date eastward as far as the present site of Delavan. Next eastward from Delavan township, then known as Guthrie, is Lura; and my father "filed" on the northeast quarter of the southwest section; that is, section 31 Lura Township. Everything to the west as far as the river was taken and the other three quarters of this section in Lura. The selection of this farm was probably due more to circumstance and the desire to get as close as possible to neighbors on the west than to anything else. It was, however, a good average piece of land in as fine a farming section as could be found anywhere. This particular farm was rather flat, and low in places which was some disadvantage at the time and for many years to follow. There was no timber within five or six miles and no stream or surface water in a dry time. The nearest store was at Winnebago, the post-office at Bass Lake. There were no railroads and few roads or bridges other than beaten paths across the prairies. There were of course no buildings on the place, no trees, and no lumber at [5] hand. I think my father rather got cold feet, for when he returned to Austin he for once left to my mother the decision whether they would undertake the farm or take up again his tailoring business in Austin. Her decision was for the farm and so on to the farm they came. By what means of transportation they made the journey I cannot say; but they arrived at their destination in June. The bulk of their household goods had been shipped by rail to St. Charles; not so far beyond LaCrosse; and which appears to have been the railroad terminus at that time. They were brought from there by team by the nearest neighbor, a Mr. Mead. The Mead family lived one-half mile west where the White Bros. now live. The other chief neighbors were the Andrews, a good Methodist family one and one-half miles or more to the northwest, and an Ames family, Baptists, about the same distance southwest.

The two older girls had secured schools at Austin and stayed behind, joining the family later. The first shelter was made by piling up the boxes and furniture, and I think they must have lived most of that summer in the open or a rude shack. My father's first move was to start on foot for my uncle's at LaCrosse, a mere 160 miles which he made, I believe, in about five days, walking practically all the way. There he obtained a pair or yoke of young oxen, a wagon and two cows. With these he made his way back to the farm and the family had milk. There was unlimited wild grass for feed. There could have been little if anything raised that summer. By fall some lumber had been obtained and a house built; that is, its building was sufficiently advanced so that they managed to live in it. There was only a single board wall, no plastering. When the very cold weather came my father plastered up the inside somewhat with clay, which he dug from a shallow cellar reached by a trap door in the floor. This froze to the wall and of course at the first thawing weather, fell to the floor. It must have been a trying winter. There

was no coal and fuel had to be *hauld* by ox team from the woods five or six miles distant, and was not always dry enough to burn readily. Sometimes the snow drifted in at night and covered the beds.

I imagine spring and the summer sun was never more appreciated. That summer Dad and the boys broke up about ten acres, where the east grove later occupied the ground. From all reports this was some job with a single yoke of oxen and a plow none too good. Not much crop could have been raised that year; some corn perhaps and beans; and I presume some ground near the house was brought under cultivation for a garden.

The older girls also were teaching school. My father no doubt laid claim to their wages, as he did with all of us until we were 21 years old. I am not saying this to cast any reflections. I think considering the times and circumstances he was probably fully justified in doing so. He had to scour the whole country with his ox team to find the schools for them; and it helps to explain how the family managed to live through those [6] early years.

Before another winter some lumber had been obtained and a carpenter by the name of Ballard employed to plane the boards, tongue and groove them and ceil the whole house, making it more habitable; and the stage was set for my advent.

There was something "*phoney*" about my coming into the world; some four years had elapsed since the last baby, Ellen, was born and my parents doubtless thought, and probably hoped, that nature had called a halt. I can recollect my mother remarking on various occasions that she thought it was a strange providence. But I was not to be deprived of my birthright, and on the 16th of February 1866 I was duly born in the old, or new, farmhouse, without the aid of a doctor. The older Mrs. Iams (the mother, not the wife, of Ed Iams) attended successfully to the obstetrical details. My father's youngest brother was my Uncle Simon; so that was chosen for my first name; and Robert for my second name from Robert More¹, the recent addition to the family.

Less than three weeks before the date of my birth my sister Elizabeth, or Libbie, who had taught school at Pilot Grove was married² to Robert More at the parental home, the first of the family to enter matrimony. Hannah, the oldest, continued teaching for about ten years before marrying. Mary, the third of the family now living, and who also taught school, was married a year or two later³ to James W. Young⁴, and located on land adjoining our own on the southeast. They soon moved about a mile farther south and east to the other side of what we always called the big slough; which lay to the east of our farm and extended for a distance of a mile and a half from north to south. Beyond the big slough was what we knew as the big hill.

¹ Robert Thomas More (7/7/1839 – 8/23/1928)

² 1/28/1866

³ 5/6/1867

⁴ James William Young (5/18/1938 – 8/24/1924)

Robert More and Libbie commenced their married life on a farm at Pilot Grove some five miles southwest of Blue Earth city, where they lived and prospered for many years.

Before closing this account which, as will be observed, I must have gotten as related by my parents or other members of the family, I will give a description of the house where I was born and which I remember distinctly from living in it later. It was, I should say, about 16x20 ft. and a scant 1½ stories high; which provided a rather low upstairs and a large room downstairs. There were no partitions upstairs or down. The longer dimension was from north to south with the door at the east. There was a stairway at the south end running up from east to west. Later as I remember there was a sort of dugout storeroom or cellar on the west side mostly above ground and built over with sod. The house was located on the north side of the farm where the building site remains to this day. This house was struck by lightning at one time but no one was hurt seriously, and at another time it caught fire in the roof which was extinguished without causing any great damage.

[7] This completes the first section of my story and I will now come to the story of my life proper, in which I will relate my experiences and reactions, together with the connected persons and events "much of which I saw and part of which I was". Also, it may be, I will indulge in some further comments and philosophizing as the panorama of my life scene proceeds. The span of my life falls naturally into three periods of approximately thirty years each: the first, my infancy, youth and young manhood up to thirty years of age; the second, my married life of approximately thirty years, thirty-one years, seven months and seven days, to be exact; and third, the following thirty years, more or less, not yet completed. In recounting my experiences I shall treat each of those periods by itself, while not confining myself to the exact chronological sequence within the limits of the period. The fallibility of memory will probably render that impossible; also I may find it expedient to carry some aspects of my experience through to the end of the period before following out others of equal significance.

Infancy, Youth and Young Manhood 1866 to 1896

As far as I can judge, I was a normal child. I was said to be a very good baby; and I have no doubt that I received the best of care possible under the circumstances. I developed a head of curly hair, a mass of golden ringlets; a sample of which is preserved among the relics I shall leave to my posterity. Nothing to boast of otherwise judging from my earliest "likeness", also among the relics. The outstanding events during the first three years of my life were the marriage of my sister Mary to James Young, already mentioned, and the birth of a younger brother on June 6th, 1868. He was named Enos James¹, after James Young, and E. J. Montague, the greatly beloved pastor of the church at Summit. This may be considered an event of first

¹ Enos James Rendall (6/6/1868 – 9/5/1966)

importance to me as it supplied me with a playmate near my own age, and naturally an intimate relationship developed between us which has lasted for over more than seventy years; not that we were always harmonious for we had plenty of scraps while growing up, for which I am willing to accept the major share of guilt.

"My brother Jim, my brother Jim,
How well I do remember him.
He was my junior by two years,
And I his senior nearly ten,
How much superior I was then."

Shortly after my third birthday I sustained the loss of a part of the index finger of my right hand, just missing the second joint. I have no recollection of the accident and have never felt it to be any great handicap; but no doubt it seemed serious enough at the time to my parents, brothers and sisters. It must have been the spring of 1869 and as told to me later, happened in this way: My older brothers were engaged in caring for some of the [8] stock and needed the ax for some purpose. I don't suppose they asked me to fetch it, but evidently I attempted to do so, tripped and fell over a log, the sharp ax coming down on my finger. I think it was completely severed and a gash was cut in my next finger, the scar of which can still be plainly seen. I was not rushed to a doctor but a neighbor from across the road, a Mrs. Stockley, was called and dressed the wound, apparently making a good job of it. However the family must have been panic-stricken for my father borrowed a mule from a neighbor, a Mr. Cornish, and rode twelve miles to Blue Earth to see a doctor; but bringing back nothing but advice and directions in the case. I can treat the matter lightly now but it can be readily understood that my folks did not at the time. They buried the severed member in the good earth, not far from the house, and marked the spot by planting live-for-ever on it; and while it is now obliterated I think I could locate it very closely. I can point to wearing a covering or cap, a clean one for Sunday, on this finger before it was fully healed, as my earliest recollection.

At this time the surrounding territory was largely occupied by settlers; much of the vacant land to the east having been taken up the same year my folks moved in; so that they soon had neighbors on all sides. In the year 1872 the railroad came through from LaCrosse, missing Austin by about three miles to the north and the south line of our farm by ten to fourteen rods, and terminating at Winnebago. It was promoted by H.W. Holly and was known as the S. M. R. R. (Southern Minnesota Rail Road). A station and town was established one and one-half miles southwest from our building site and named Delavan. I was at this time about six years old and can remember running and getting up on the cow stable to "see the cars go by."

I will at this point give some account of our neighbors and the conditions surrounding my life on the farm during these early years as I remember them. The road from the east through to Winnebago followed the northern boundary of the farm, and across the road a little to the west lived our nearest neighbors, the Stockleys. This place was previously occupied by a family by the name of Cliff; but that was before I can remember. The Stockley family consisted

of the parents and three children: Darwin, Jane and Will; the latter about my age, and the most intimate of my playmates outside of the family. The Stockleys lived there till I was twenty years old or more, then sold the place to a Mr. Johnson, who lived in Delavan. The Edward James family settled on the place directly west of ours. There were two girls, the older near my age, and they lived there continuously, their son or grandson occupying the place to this day. There were no near neighbors to the south. To the east lived the Cornish family for many years, and adjoining our farm to the northeast a family by the name of Frost, at first less than a half mile away but early moving to the northern boundary of their farm near where a log school house was built before my school days began. At a farther distance the neighbors with whom I came most in contact in school [9] or church were the Woods, the Evans'es, the Chestnuts, and the Andrews already mentioned.

My early years were spent in this typical frontier country environment and I literally grew up with the country. At first there was much unbroken prairie which only gradually came under the plow and my earliest important occupation, aside from a few chores, was herding or watching the cattle. This I worked into gradually with my older brother, Ben, and it continued well into my 'teens. I cannot say that I think it was ideal employment for a boy. Two or three hours forenoon and afternoon day in and day out, alone on the prairie in enforced semi-idleness, became very boresome and uninteresting. However I survived it and probably profited by it in some ways.

Another of my jobs that stick in my memory was peddling asparagus, of which we had a surplus. This I used to take up town as a barefoot boy and I can distinctly remember some of my customers. Not a bad job and I usually received a nickel of the proceeds for spending money, a very scarce item in my boyhood experience.

For some ten years my father stuck to the oxen for all farm work and for long trips which he took to mill or to market. I can remember his having a box which was filled with provisions to last several days on trips to Mankato or Waseca, thirty or forty miles distant, with little more than trails across the prairie to follow. Occasionally too some of the family would make the eighteen or twenty mile trip to Pilot Grove to visit the More's over the week end. This was an all day journey behind the slow-going oxen in a springless farm-wagon.

Most of our neighbors soon switched from oxen to horses; but my father was one of the last to make the change. I was, I think, seven or eight years old when he traded two yoke of oxen for a team of horses named Fan and Doll; neither of which were perfectly sound and normal. Doll was a high-spirited sorrel with a ringbone on a front foot that lamed her so that she went with a limp, and Fan was a bay mare that had the uncanny trick of kicking over the tongue of the wagon or other farm implement, sitting on it with all her weight till she broke it down. She was, though, a good brood mare and produced a half-dozen good colts in succeeding years; every one of which I can name and describe in detail till they were disposed of, so fixed in memory are the incidents and circumstances of our youthful days. I can well remember riding across the prairie to church at Delavan with the horses and wagon, which the older boys

at first had some difficulty in getting hitched up properly. We surely thought it was swell. This horse *geneology* is of interest to me. They were our daily companion in work and play, and either [10] our pride or our embarrassment.

The other farm animals, especially the cattle, were also interesting in lesser degree and I can recall many of them individually from my earliest recollections. We developed a medium sized herd through the years, having usually I should say from ten to twenty head. These were cared for through the winter mostly in straw sheds during the earliest years. We never had any sheep, and only comparatively few pigs. There were always chickens, and at different times, ducks, geese and turkeys. Also several dogs that I can remember.

But it was the horses apparently that interested me most, and I will indulge in tracing out the line to the end of the period. First came three bay colts: Kit, Molly and Billy; then a sorrel, Fred, a rather large, lumbering creature, followed by a trim, sleek black named Nell, and another sorrel, Bess. When I was perhaps about thirteen years old my father traded old Doll and Kit for a very good yoke of oxen; which left us with old Fan, and Molly broken in at two years, the oxen taking the heavy farm work. We must have kept this ox team for several years for I did considerable plowing with them. Molly and Billy were of medium weight and would have made a nice team for us; but the winter I was fifteen my father sold them to my brother J. F. who had bought a farm of his own and who traded them for a heavy work team that were very high-life and later came near being the cause of my undoing.

It was the summer of 1881 at harvest-time, the first day of August, that I met with a serious accident on my brother's farm, sold soon after to W. E. McNeil. I pause here to recount this experience and the circumstances connected with it. At this time the grain was harvested with a machine drawn, usually, by three horses and carrying a driver and two men who bound the grain in bundles by hand, with bands of straw from the grain as it was elevated to a table on the machine. This was followed a few years later by the self binder; at first using wire for bands, which was not very satisfactory and was soon *superceded* by the twine binder, a rather intricate piece of machinery for the time and which is still in common use. On this particular occasion my two older brothers were binding the grain and a neighbor boy, Pearl Cornish, was driving the three-horse team; the big pair just mentioned, and our old Fan. My father and I were a booking the grain on the west side of the field and as the harvesting machine turned the northwest corner a short distance from us, the horses took fright and staged a run-away. This was dangerous, for the driver especially; and with the idea of stopping them I ran directly in front of them, holding up a bundle of grain, and was ground under their hoofs and the heavy machine.

This would appear like a senseless and foolhardy performance on my part but there was a reason for it which I will explain later. The chances of my stopping that team, as I see it now, were just about zero and it might easily have ended my young life; [11] but that was not to be my fate. I came out of it with only a broken leg and an ugly gash. One naturally wonders what sensations of fear or pain a person experiences in an accident of that kind. I suppose they vary a good deal but in my case there was not much of either. It all happened so quickly there was not

much time to think. I was knocked senseless for one thing, as I have been on two or three other occasions that I can recall; but I was conscious for a split second at least, as that outfit went over me. There was no sense of pain in any particular part of my body; just a dull general sense of being mauled and a conscious thought for a moment of what was happening. The next thing I know I was lying on the ground with the men around me and saw that my right leg was broken between the hip and knee. The next I remember distinctly is riding home a mile or more in the lumber wagon. A neighbor, Walt Chestnut, who was working near by, had gone to town for a doctor, who arrived in due time at our home. No one else was injured and the team was stopped shortly, after running into some shocks of grain. Neither the ride home nor having my leg set and bandaged caused me any severe pain. Sewing up the wound was worse but I grinned and bore it and so far as I can remember shed no tears that day.

In order to enable them to dress my wound my father made a wooden frame with cross strips of strong cloth on which I lay and could be lifted from the bed; but lying quietly and continuously on my back was tiresome and gave me a fierce backache for a while which was hard to bear. Everyone was kind and sympathetic and no one reproached me for my folly. As I have said, there was a reason for it: Some time previous my brother Ben had seen a runaway team stopped up town in some such manner and was telling about it. I remarked that I thought it would be a dangerous thing to do; or something to that effect, and he replied to the effect that they were very likely to stop if a person blocked their way. That thought, and the danger the driver was in, flashed into my mind when I saw that team start to run and I acted on it. I thought over that as I lay there and how my brother would be blamed and would feel if it was known what prompted my foolish act, and I decided to say nothing about it out of consideration for him. I have felt since that for a fifteen year old kid that was a bit chivalrous.

It was three or four weeks before I was allowed to sit up in bed and about seven weeks before I got on my feet. I was supplied with some good and interesting reading, including a copy of Robinson Crusoe sent me by my uncle at LaCrosse. The doctor on measuring my leg found it an inch or more too short which has given me a distinctive limp through the years. I came out, too, with a very stiff knee which took some time to limber up.

However in the next five to ten years I developed into a tolerably well-appearing young man over six feet tall with heavy hair and sandy mustache, then in style. While recovering from my accident, on crutches, I went to stay for a few days in Delavan at the home of my sister Susan (Mrs. Henry Harding¹); and while [12] there visited at the Methodist preacher's, a Rev. F. Y. Smith. They had two children, Jessie Frances, about eight years old, and Elliot, six. This was my first meeting with the girl I became engaged to marry some eight or ten years later. But that is another story. The father died the following spring. He was a fine man and greatly beloved by the church people. The family then moved and were away from our community for several years. I also went to Pilot Grove for a visit and by the following spring was able to take up work

¹ Henry Nelson Harding (4/14/1853 – 7/27/1926)

again; and during the following three or four years gained experience with the heavier farm work.

To carry the horses along in my story, after disposing of the first three colts we were left at this time with the next two; Fred, the big sorrel, and Nell, the high-spirited black, which formed the main farm team for several years. They were not well mated and were very disagreeable to drive; especially on the road where Nell fretted and fumed and tried to keep half her length ahead of her slower-going mate. I would tie her back to him on one side and hang on to her with the line from the other, but she would prance and fret and sweat to the end of the trip. They were a trial to drive but I went with them on many a trip; sometimes twenty miles or more for wood, taking two days for the trip. The horses were individually all right but were badly mated.

The other sorrel, Bess, which might have made a good mate for Fred, my father sold for a good price as soon as she was grown. He also sold old Fan somewhere along about this time. Nell, the high-spirited black, was now used for breeding, and raised two fine colts; one of which I can only faintly remember, except that she was chestnut in color. The other was a bay which we named Fan and kept for many years. It was about this time that I bought a sorrel with a white, or light, mane and tail; and called her Doll; a serviceable animal but with no style. She raised one colt which I traded at two years old for a buggy. Later Nell raised four blacks: Kit, Jennie, Dan and Ruth. Kit I traded for a Plano binder (harvesting machine). We had previously traded old Fred for a second hand Champion binder and Nell died in the effort to produce another colt. The horses left on the farm at the end of this period were Fan and Doll, Jennie, Dan and Ruth.

The Family: I will return now in point of time to my earlier recollections and give some account of the family and my relation to them during this first thirty year period. My mother and father were forty-five and forty-nine years old respectively, the year I was born; so my memory of them has to do with the years after they had passed the half-century mark. My father was an austere person who maintained a strong authority over his family but was never abusive. This authority he held till we were twenty-one years of age, and none of us ever staged a revolt against it; at any rate not a successful one; which I think reflects credit on both sides in the inevitable conflict. He never was what you would call a pal and there was a certain aloofness and lack of sympathetic understanding in his relation [13] to us that I do not consider as ideal. Still, he was respected and respectable. He was morally upright and I believe genuinely conscientious; and he scrupulously observed the conventional religious formalities of the time. He was a loyal church member while being in a measure critical and independent in his thinking. As a matter of course Sunday meant church and Sunday School for the entire family unless there was some good reason for omission, and in the home he conducted family worship every morning by reading a chapter from the Bible, kneeling with the family and offering a prayer of standard form and length. The prayer naturally became somewhat stereotyped and I think I could repeat much of it from memory even today. Also asking a blessing at the table was

an invariable rule. In these formalities my father officiated exclusively until we were well grown up.

The value of such observances may be debatable. I think it is true that they do not represent the essence of true religion. and may, and sometimes do, degenerate into mere form without any real substance. Nevertheless it is equally true that something of the kind is often, and probably generally helpful and even necessary as a means to an end; and I cannot help but feel that in abandoning the formalities to the extent to which they have been abandoned, there is a definite moral and spiritual loss. I do not advocate a return exactly to the old forms and practices, but rather the development of something better and more suited to present-day conditions and modern culture. As far as the daily Bible reading is concerned, and my father did much of it for himself at odd times, reading aloud whether anyone was listening or not, I attribute much of my knowledge of the book to being exposed to it in that way all during my early years.

My mother possessed all of the virtues and few if any of the faults and shortcomings of my father. In contrast, her relations to her children was close and intimate. At the same time we were kept in our place. We must have been taught obedience by some sort of soul-force as neither my father or mother resorted to physical punishments during my lifetime, although I think they practiced it to some extent in their early married life. At my earliest recollection my mother's health was badly shattered and my most poignant memory is of her suffering severely with her back and I think it was due to this that my care was delegated largely to my sisters. Later there was some improvement in her health but I always knew her as more or less of an invalid. She was I believe an ideal Mother, absolutely devoted to her family and practically immune from criticism by any of us. As far as her health would permit she was the bread-baker and butter-maker along those years. All of our bread was home-made and the milk from our cows was set in pans for the cream to raise, to be churned and made into butter for use or sale. Most of it was taken to the store to exchange for groceries or dry-goods at prices ranging from six to perhaps twelve or fifteen cents a pound. During the summer when the price was low my mother used to pack it in three and four gallon jars, cover it with a layer of salt and keep it till fall to realize a higher price. This [14] was the early dairying practice; and I might here give a brief account of the development of the modern creamery or butter-factory.

The first one near us was at Winnebago and the cream was gathered by men and team from the surrounding country within a radius of ten miles or more; the milk being set in water in deep cans with a glass gauge in one side to measure the cream by the inch. The skimming was done by the man who collected the cream and hauled it to the creamery. After a few years the cream separators came into use and were installed at the creameries. The milk was then hauled to the creamery by the farmers to be separated and the skim-milk returned for use on the farm. Later, hand separators came into general use and the separating was done at the farm. By these methods the quality of the product was steadily improved to reach the present high standards.

To return to the family, my eldest sister Hannah, who taught school for several years, was not much at home and I remember little of her before her marriage in 1872¹ to Silas Cook². I remember the wedding, being six years old at the time. They located on a farm three miles south-west of Blue Earth City, where they resided for many years and reared a family of six.

My next sister, Elizabeth, Libbie or Lib, already mentioned as married just previous to my birth, was the mother of five boys.³

Mary, the next, married soon after⁴, had no children of their own but they adopted a boy, Ed⁵, and his sister Fanny⁶, both near my age; and later another girl, Pearl⁷, and a nephew, Charles Harding⁸. They resided during all of this period about a mile and a half southeast of us at the southern extremity of the big hill.

Following Mary came Susan Ann, my sister Susie or Sue; and well I remember her for she was like a mother to me, my own mother being so much of an invalid. She was at home when not teaching school, until 1874 when she was married to Henry Harding⁹. Two or three years previous to this the family had a severe siege of typhoid fever. It began with brother Charlie who contracted it, I believe, from a neighbor, the Meads. Five others of the family contracted it, only my father, brother Jim and myself escaping. Most of them were down with it at the same time but they got along somehow without much outside help. Brother Jim and I were small and probably more trouble than help. Sister Libbie came for a while and they were attended by a Dr. Winch from Blue Earth, and all recovered; but it was the worst siege of sickness in the family I can remember.

While on the subject I will record in regard to my own health that I was none too robust as a child or young boy or even as an adolescent. I think I had all the standard ailments, from belly ache to measles, with headaches, fevers and so forth. Fever of some kind was a frequent occurrence. One occasion in particular when I was quite young stands out in my memory. I was thrown into [15] some sort of a spasm, due it was thought to administering a dose of senna tea while at the same time giving me a warm foot-bath. That was a harrowing experience; like a bad dream; but utterly beyond my power to describe even now. The effect of it followed and *harrassed* me at times for years, especially in the dark. Fortunately I outgrew it, along with my other ills, into the enjoyment of normally good health.

¹ 5/15/1872

² Silas Cook (4/15/1845 – 12/3/1912)

³ Andrew Russell More (10/23/1866 – 9/22/1912), Charles Rendall More (7/11/1868 – 11/17/1957), George Robert More (4/19/1874 – 6/9/1957), Elwin Delbert More (9/5/1879 – 3/23/1954) and Clarence Wilbur More (10/1/1886 – 2/12/1957)

⁴ to James William Young, as mentioned previously

⁵ Edward Joseph “Young” (we presume, since he was adopted) (7/4/1865 – 5/10/1894)

⁶ Fanny Hadley “Young” Van Slyke (1866 – 5/31/1888)

⁷ Pearl Mae (“Young” Elliott) Hough (2/16/1882 – 10/15/1961)

⁸ Charles Nelson Harding (3/17/1889 – 12/18/1973) – he was the son of Susan Rendall and Henry Nelson Harding

⁹ 10/31/1874

To return; the Hardings lived for a few years in the country near his father's farm home, then moved into Delavan. They were the parents of a son, Will¹, two daughters, Lettie² and Elsie³, and Charles, adopted by the Youngs after his mother's death which occurred in the fall of 1889⁴.

I do not remember my brother, Charles William, or Charlie, being at home much before he started teaching school. He taught successfully in the country schools both before and after his marriage, at the age of twenty-three, to Agnes C. Ogilvie⁵, in the year 1876⁶. I was not present at their wedding. At that time and for a year or so after he was teaching twelve or fourteen miles directly south of our home in a Norwegian neighborhood. My memory of him at this period centers around his more or less frequent journeying back and forth to his school work. A common means of travel was on horseback; usually without a saddle as we had none of our own. I must have covered many hundred miles in that way during my 'teens; sometimes going part way with my brothers to their boarding places when teaching to bring the horses back. When brother Charlie acquired a horse and buggy of his own it was quite an event. Not all of the farmers had buggies at that time. A springless farm wagon with perhaps one spring-seat was our usual conveyance. Charlie and Aggie, after a year or so of teaching in the Norwegian districts, settled permanently on a farm some five miles southeast of Winnebago and reared a family of five boys.⁷

My next brother, John Fletcher or Flet, as he was called, was at home until he too started teaching, and off and on thereafter until he married in 1882⁸. He it was who bought the farm where I had my leg broken the previous year. He married Adaline or Addie Lewis⁹ whose family lived near Vernon Centre some eighteen miles north west. I did not attend their wedding. They lived one year at Vernon on the Grannis farm, then moved to their own, built a small house and soon sold out to the McNeils. They then bought out a store in Delavan, ran it a short time and then moved to Ashland, Wis. After a few years they returned and had a store at Ledyard, Iowa, where Addie died in 1893. He then went to Duluth for a year, returned in poor

¹ **William Apsey Harding** (8/22/1875 – 11/7/1959)

² **Lettie Francis (Harding) Wheeler** (1/2/1877 – 12/26/1905)

³ **Elsie Henrietta (Harding McLeod) Hawley** (9/12/1878 – 1/27/1972)

⁴ 9/22/1889

⁵ **Agnes Coutie (Ogilvie) Rendall** (2/3/1854 – 5/15/1928)

⁶ 11/15/1876

⁷ **Alton Hartlow Rendall** (6/19/1878 – 10/19/1949), **Elmer Apsey Rendall** (8/8/1882 – 3/24/1969), **Alfred James Rendall** (2/16/1884 – 2/9/1941), **George Ogilvie Rendall** (5/2/1886 – 4/8/1969) and **Dwight William Rendall** (3/11/1889 – 9/7/1960)

⁸ 3/15/1882

⁹ **Adaline Josephine (Lewis) Rendall** (3/22/1862 – 10/11/1893)

health and hired out to Robert More. At this time he had three daughters: Minnie¹, Esther² and Faith³, distributed among their aunts and uncles.

I was much with my brother Ben on the farm. He was six years older than I, was quite a hand to trade (jack-knives, etc.), got hold of a little money now and then, and before he as twenty-one managed to circumvent the strict discipline and get out at night once in a while where the two older boys had failed. He was a 100% good brother and I could relate many things connected with our [16] boyhood days. Once when we were out with the cattle some distance from the home a family of Indians came riding by across the prairie on their ponies, headed for somewhere. That was the only time I ever saw Indians in the open; but they paid little if any attention to us and went on their way. On another occasion we started with a few head of stock for the Mores at Pilot Grove about twenty miles distant. The idea was to get them into a herd a few miles beyond there for the summer. Two or three parties made a business of herding large droves of cattle through the summer on unsettled prairies at the Iowa state line and beyond, at a very low charge per head; and they were sent there from far and near. I was some ten or twelve years old, and we started out on a Saturday morning with one horse, old Doll, so as to take turns riding, driving the cattle before us. Some distance on the way we fell in with one of the herdsmen driving a large herd, and turned our few in and went along with them. When we got to the Blue Earth river the whole herd were allowed to go over the bridge at once, which was *cntrary* to the law, and the old bridge rocked and swayed and I imagine came near collapsing; but happily it held up. At Blue Earth we found a chance for me to return to my sister's home, the Hardings, by team and wagon, and brother Ben went on with old Doll to the herd grounds ten or twelve miles beyond. I *staid* at my sister's that night and made the trip home, three miles or more, the next morning. on foot. Brother Ben *staid* at the herdsman's over night and returned after a day or so bringing a hand corn-planter which he bought at Blue Earth; the first we ever had. Previously our quite large fields of corn were planted with the hoe, dropping the seed by hand. Now it is done with a team or tractor. But that handplanter was a good one and I still have it and may leave it as a relic.

On reaching maturity Ben also taught school. It was getting to be a family tradition. Meanwhile I think he was looking around for a wife; and became engaged to one of our neighborhood girls. The summer of 1882 he went to work with brother Fletcher at Vernon and fell so deeply in love with the younger Lewis girl, Eva⁴, that he canceled any engagements he had and waited three years for her to grow up. They were married in 1885⁵ and I attended their wedding, driving over I think with my sister Ella. I was nineteen years of age and at the wedding dinner we were paired, my partner being Effie Sower whom I had not met before. I was supposed to escort her to the table, which I did with much trepidation. I thought then, and I

¹ Minnie Ellen (Rendall) Frederick (12/18/1883 – 1/14/1930)

² Esther Lorraine (Rendall) Van Dien (9/21/1890 – 12/18/1940)

³ Faith Adeline (Rendall Nielson) Giles (11/26/1893 – 1/6/1946)

⁴ Evangeline Ellen (Lewis) Rendall (7/26/1867 – 12/10/1946)

⁵ 9/15/1885

think still, she was the nicest of the Sower girls. I believe this is the first affair I ever attended with a partner of the opposite sex. It was something of an ordeal for me and, for better or worse, Effie died not very long after. As for brother Ben, they went to Ashland, Wis. for about a year, then returned to Vernon where a son, Orrin¹, was born, and afterward they lived at Ledyard, Iowa, for a number of years.

My sister Ellen, Ella or El, being more nearly my own age, was of course a constant companion during my boyhood and as it turned out we were together in the old home to the end of this period and beyond. After teaching a term or two of school, in the fall of 1886 when I was twenty years old, she was married² to Andrew Lewis³; this being the third wedding in the same two families, a rather unusual occurrence. There was still another possibility or two and I was next [17] in line, but failed to follow suit. Neither did my brother Jim. However our two families appear to have been very compatible and I think we have always felt more involved and at home than in the case with any of the other connections by marriage. My sister's marriage followed a rather turbulent courtship and the engagement was broken off the previous winter. To fill the aching void she bought a parlor organ, quite a luxury at that time and less common than pianos are today, although not expensive. After the wedding in September they went to South Dakota but returned the following spring, Andrew being in very poor health. They stayed a short time at Vernon, then with her sister, the Youngs, where the husband gradually failed and died in September, one year and one week after their marriage. After the funeral Ella came to live with us again and in January her daughter, Samantha⁴, was born. This was my first experience of having a baby born in the house and they continued to live with us from that time on.

My brother James, Jamie or Jame, we never called him Jim until after he left home, trailed along with me through the years. My mother called us her two little Minnesotans; and nothing particularly eventful happened to him that I can remember. He cut off no fingers and broke no bones. He was more quick-tempered than I, which I took advantage of, occasionally at least, to stir up a fracas; in which I usually had to act on the defensive and became quite adept in warding off attacks being as I was two years the older. But we played together, worked together, slept together and went to school together. In school he kept well abreast of me for his age and was, I think, a little quicker at figures. We had few playthings except such as we devised ourselves and were just as well satisfied so far as I can see. Our play horses were broomsticks or other suitable sticks, astride of which we roamed the farm up into our 'teens I guess. Corn-cobs, white and red, served for cattle, and broken into short pieces were pigs. Later, of course, we had the real animals to care for, and we early had our regular chores to attend to. I still contend that the farm, large or small, is the best place to grow up.

¹ Orrin Cyril Rendall (10/10/1886 – 12/17/1964)

² 9/23/1886

³ Andrew Bixby Lewis (12/22/1864 – 9/30/1887)

⁴ Samantha Anne (Lewis) Anderson (1/28/1888 – 3/6/1943)

The winter of 1889, to keep up the family tradition, Jim taught school in the Lang district. This was before he was twenty-one years old and I have to record that he failed to complete the term by a few weeks. I was at home that winter and on one occasion some of the *Lewis's* and Adra Sowers¹ came to visit us and a bunch of us went over to visit Jim at the school four or five miles northeast. About all I can remember of that trip is that Adra was my riding partner. The following summer Jim remained on the farm with me and after that took some business schooling at Blue Earth and Des Moines, Iowa. He did some canvassing as a book agent, worked at Ledyard a short time and from there went to Duluth with brother Flet, where he took up stenography and secured a position with a law and real-estate firm at Ashland, Wis. which he held for several years.

The Farm Buildings: I have given a description of the first house built and it was about nine or ten years later, then I was seven or eight years old, that my father undertook the building of a new house, doing the work himself. The first part of this was 16x22 ft. [18] with 12 ft. posts. The foundation was oak blocks or posts and there was a basement cellar with a depth or height of six foot or more, with a window at the south end. The first floor was divided into a front room, at the north 13x16 ft. with a door in the east; a bedroom 8x9 ft. to the southwest, a stairway and pantry to the southeast; the stairs running up from east to west. At the foot of the stairs was a door which at first opened out into a lean-to on the east, suitable for a summer kitchen only. A few years later on, an L. 14x14 ft., one story high, was built in place of the lean-to to serve as a kitchen, leaving the main front room for a sitting-room or parlor. There were two upstairs rooms in the main section, one large one to the north and a narrow one to the south, each with a closet. This house when completed was a creditable one for the times, but it's building progressed by stages. When we first moved into it there was no siding or clapboards outside, and only back-plastering between the studdings inside. Later a mason by the name of Toler was employed to complete the plastering and with a small lean-to at the rear of the kitchen and a small porch over the front doors, it did good service to the end of this period in 1896.

The first outbuildings were straw sheds and a log granary with a corn-crib on the east; the building of which I cannot remember. I do remember a log-chain swing at the south end of the corn-crib which we used a lot. This building had a thatched roof of swamp-grass bound in bundles, and did good service for a number of years. In the spring or summer of 1881 my father sold four steers for sixty dollars and started the erection of a frame building for a granary. This was completed while I was laid up with my broken leg in August and September. It was 14x20 ft. with 10 or 12 ft. posts and a ten foot lean-to on the west and south for cattle and horses. Two years later another building was built 16x24 ft. with 12 ft. posts and used mainly for a horse and hay barn. There was a corn-crib on the north side and the old log-granary

¹ Adra (Sowers) Rendall (8/3/1860 – 8/14/1950)

disappeared about this time. These two farm buildings sufficed for barn and granary until after the close of this thirty-year period.

School Days: Before proceeding with my story from the 'teen age on, I will give some account of my school days. I cannot remember when the log school-house was built; which was situated midway on the north side of the farm to the northeast of us near the farm-house. There was a small grove there too, some of the trees remaining long after both school-house and farm-stead were gone. This was about three-fourths of a mile from our home, as the crow flies; our usual route; a little over a mile by the road. The school year was usually a four months term in winter, beginning in November, and a three months term in the spring and summer; more often than not with a change of teachers. This was sometimes abridged to three months in winter or two in summer, and frequently the pupils missed a part or all of either one term or the other. There was no compulsory school law.

About the best that could be done under those circumstances was to complete the common branches, about equivalent to the eighth grade, by the time we were eighteen or nineteen years old. Many failed to do [19] that. Those of us who succeeded were eligible to take an examination and if we stood well, receive a teacher's certificate. There was little formal grading in this school. Each of us went forward as fast as we could, -or did, dependent of course on our natural ability, how well we applied ourselves and how regular we were in attendance. The *curriculum* consisted of the three proverbial 3's: reading, writing and arithmetic, along with spelling, geography and grammar, and latterly U. S. history. The first schools, I presume, were conducted by private individuals or by voluntary cooperation of the settlers; but school districts were soon organized under state laws and functioned under a school board consisting of a Director, a Clerk and a Treasurer, elected at an annual school-meeting. They were then supervised by a county Superintendent of schools who visited the school once or twice during each term. For many years our Superintendent was R. W. Richards and after him one of my former teachers, John Geddis, who died and was succeeded by his wife.

Corporal punishment was permitted but there was not a great deal of it in our school. The usual penalty for infraction of the rules or failure in studies was to "stand on the floor" for a certain length of time or stay in at recess or after school. I was never whipped in school and incurred few of the milder punishments; being a good student, rather timid and not given to mischief or violating the rules; but I once saw two little boys about my own age and whose names I could give, receive a good switching on their bare legs, and later another was punished severely with a flat ruler on the palm of his hand. Later still I witnessed a lively scuffle between the teacher, Maj Way, and a grown up girl. But on the whole our school was quite amenable to discipline and there were no real tough guys. There were, however, two or three bullies among our neighbor boys from whom, as I see it now, I suffered all too meekly. I sure was an ultra-pacifist; due partly I suppose to natural timidity bordering on cowardice but more I think to home training and my mother's influence. I am still a pacifist but I think there is a limit beyond which it ceases to be a virtue.

Most of my schooling was in the afore-mentioned log school-house. It was, of course, a single room. The seats for some years were home-made benches; the most of them provided with a desk of some kind, also home-made. When we were called up to recite it was to sit on a long backless bench. I remember my father once making a new bench for this purpose. There was a blackboard, also home-made, and a small table and chair for the teacher. The room was heated in winter with a wood-burning box stove placed somewhere near the *centre*. I think, however, before a new school-house was built, some patent seats with desks were installed and a few other improvements made. Two or three years before I finished my schooling, a new frame building was built nearly a half mile farther northeast near the McNeil home. This building was more commodious but I think it was later that a vestibule and belfry were added to it.

I was started in school the summer term of 1872 or perhaps '73 and my first teacher's name was Ellen Traver. I do not think that I can make a complete list of my succeeding teachers or the exact order [20] in which they came; but I can remember the most of them. There was Amelia Kellog, a Miss Shannon, Jane Stockley our neighbor, Minnie Whitney, James Young my brother-in-law, my brother Charlie, Agnes Ogilvie afterwards married to brother Charlie, Charles M. (Maj) Way, John Geddis and Jim Geddis, the last on the list. It was customary at the close of each term for the teacher to present each pupil with a card usually known as a "reward of merit"; and I have a number of those to leave as relics along with a diploma and my teacher's certificates.

I always liked school and was proficient in my studies. My favorite subject, I would say, was arithmetic and I completed the list rather ahead of the usual time. Our teacher, Maj Way, introduced us to elementary Algebra, and Physiology and Hygiene, two high-school subjects which I mastered before my school days came to a close. Algebra especially fascinated me and I have never forgotten *it's* fundamental principles. The solving of mathematical problems is, I believe, a good preparation for solving the practical and philosophical problems with which our human lives confront us. One little incident which I have never forgotten I may mention. My neighbor playmate and school-mate, Will Stockley, who had made himself rather disagreeable to me, was always pages ahead of the class in his arithmetic. One day we were putting some work on the blackboard and I saw clearly that he was copying mine. That troubled me but I said nothing and only thought that time would tell who would come out best in the end. My thought was vindicated for in the next few years he turned out rather badly and finally skipped the country.

My schooling was completed at 19 years of age and in the fall of 1885, having secured a teacher's certificate, I started out to find a school for the winter. Mounting old Fred I rode to beyond Blue Earth where my sisters lived and where they had taught in the early days; and after scouting around a bit, secured a three months term in a district some eight miles southwest of Blue Earth; three or four miles beyond the Mores. There was a little red school house in a section. of the country rather sparsely settled, and I registered 15 or 16 pupils with

an average attendance of perhaps 12 or 13. It was not a difficult school to handle and I got along fairly well, although I never considered that I made much of a success of it, and I certainly didn't enjoy it as I should. I question whether I really gave satisfaction or could have gotten the job for another term if I had tried, which I did not.

Perhaps, though, I earned my money. The wages were \$25 a month out of which I had to pay board and room. I went first to a very good boarding place nearby, with a family by the name of Stewart who had one small child; but when I found they were going to charge me \$2.50 a week, I thought it was too much. I planned on spending the weekends from Friday night till Monday morning at my sisters homes without charge, which I did. So I looked for another boarding place and found a good one about a mile distant. This was with a newly married couple and they were very nice to me. The man's name was Will Dunn. They were Irish Catholics and they charged me 2.25 only, which helped a little, although I thought I ought to get it for \$2 or less. [21] Such were the conditions of those early times.

My other expenses were very little. My only timepiece was a small clock which I carried with me a good deal. One week-end during the winter I went with Mr. Dunn twelve or fourteen miles west to East Chain Lake in Martin County where Mrs. Dunn's people lived. They were nice appearing people, Doyle by name, and there were two or three fine looking girls at home. This trip we made with team and *sligh* across much open prairie. It was, I think, the first time I had been outside of Faribault Co. unless possibly I had been to "The Cobb" in Blue Earth County for wood before this. There were three or four grown up girls in the school with whom I got along all right and there were no grown up boys. I can remember most of my pupils very well. I went home for Christmas and it was a peculiar dreamy experience as though I had been gone for ages. It was my first stay away from home for any length of time and, as it happened, my longest for many, many years. I believe I made the trip home on the railroad, my first train ride. After paying my board and deducting a few other expenses, including a couple of books which I presented to my sisters, I had about \$45 left. This I took home to my father, asking only to buy a watch for myself, which was allowed and I bought a Waltham at about \$15. I was still a minor at 20 and was considered, and considered myself, completely under parental control. But the day of deliverance was not far off for at 21 we were given our freedom.

During the summer I stayed at home and worked on the farm, undecided whether I wanted to follow teaching or not, but decided to have another try at it, so engaged a four months school about two or two and one half miles southeast of home in the Claude district. This was a more difficult assignment. The school-house was small but was equipped with about thirty individual seat-desks, which were filled to capacity with pupils of all ages and grades; and I might say, of all descriptions. The previous winter's experience probably helped me some; but I don't think I did a very satisfactory job. However I stuck to it and completed the four months. I do think I exhibited, and probably developed, courage and perseverance. But I look back to that four months as about the longest and hardest I ever waded through. It seemed to me any kind of rough work was preferable and I looked at men hauling wood twenty miles or more through

the snow and cold, with envy. It was not that I lacked in education, but I was weak on the technique of keeping that heterogeneous mass of humanity interested and busy, and along with that, maintaining proper order and discipline. What I might have done with more experience and some teacher-training such as is required now I cannot say; but by the end of that winter I was thoroughly fed up on teaching school. To be honest I have to reckon my school teaching as pretty much of a failure.

That winter I boarded at home, walking the two miles and more each way every day, only stopping at my sister Mary Young's in cases of too severe a blizzard. Also I went early enough in the morning to build the fire and did the sweeping out in the evening after school hours. Monthly wages were the same, \$25, and incidental expenses were but little; so at the end of the term I had practically \$100 clear money. Teachers salaries at that time usually were not paid till the end of the term. I was 21 on Feb. 16th of that winter of '87; and as my father [22] made a practice of giving the older members of the family a yoke of steers or something equivalent on reaching their majority, I was allowed the \$100 I received from the school with which to start out on my own.

Social Life Etc. - I will now give some account of what may be broadly designated as my social life during my early years, including my training and experience in religion as well as my relations with the opposite sex and the romance connected with it, all of which is more or less interrelated and can well be carried along together. Social life in our family was of a very restricted nature, due in part to financial and frontier conditions but more especially to my father's strict discipline. There was of course the family at home and near by, and we made yearly or semiyearly visits to those beyond Blue Earth as a rule. Then there was the school which brought us into contact with other children and young people; but there were few extra-curricular activities and such as there were we were denied for the most part. Any entertainment or social affairs at night were suspect; and an occasional spelling-match or a debate was a bone of contention between my father and older brothers, in which my father invariably won. The same held true in regard to the church; and there was little outside of school and church at all within the range of the society in which we moved.

Dancing and card-playing, the theatre or circus were utterly banned as immoral and wicked by the church people with whom we were connected. There was in my later youth a temperance organization, known as the Independent Order of Good Templars, which had quite a vogue with chapters in almost every town. It was organized on the pattern of the Odd Fellows and other secret fraternal orders, and held weekly sessions. This furnished an opportunity for young people and others to get together of an evening under very good auspices. But this also was frowned on so far as we were concerned until we were "grown up". Having seen the issue threshed out with the older boys, brother Jim and I made little attempt to break over the line.

My social life then up to 21 years of age was confined pretty closely to the daily school sessions and weekly attendance at the Sunday School and church service. I do not consider this ideal. I think something of real value was missed in being denied the wider social contacts all

through the formative years. Nevertheless in this particular case it worked out fairly well and the gain may outbalance the losses.

My religious training was on the whole very good. The moral and religious influence of my mother was especially effective, and I grew up in the atmosphere of the church and Sunday School. Some of the things I was taught I have discarded or revised but the real fundamentals of true Christian religion were not lacking, and I absorbed it as naturally as the air I breathed. In the teaching of the church such emphasis was placed on an experience of conversion; not so much by my parents, and as a matter of fact, there was and is nothing in my experience that I can point to and honestly call by that name. My parents had joined the Methodists on coming to Minnesota, and our first Sunday School and services that I can remember distinctly were [23] held in the school-house in Delavan, with Joseph Gallaway as my Sunday School teacher and A. Davis as preacher. The Free Baptists and Free Methodists also had preaching in the school house for a time. My father was S. S. Superintendent for a number of years. Before I was 12 years old a Methodist church had been built on the present site, and it was at this age that I became a member in fullstanding. How I got in without being "converted" I don't know, as it wasn't as easy then as it is now. However I have been an accepted and apparently acceptable member ever since, and I was an enthusiastic supporter of the organization all through these early years. I accepted in the main what was taught, but gradually developed considerable independent thinking and ideas of my own. With little experience of life outside of the farm, the school and the church I grew up with the idea that I would be a preacher. This idea persisted almost without question until I was about 20 years old. Public speaking and oratory fascinated me and I think I always had a fair appreciation and judgment of what constituted good performance along that line. However I doubt that I had naturally, or could have developed, any great ability for it. As to creed and doctrine, that is a subject by itself outside the scope of this story; and I have only to record here that my early teaching was ultraconservative, on the order of what is now known as fundamentalism.

The subject of sex and the ethics of sex is likewise outside the scope of this story. I may say, however, that to my mind it always was a perplexing problem; but that my relations with the girls and young ladies was always within the bounds of the conventional code of morals. During my school days I always had a particular girl that I called my own, although I doubt if any of them were ever made aware of it. My restricted opportunities for social contacts were such that I seldom or never went anywhere in company with a girl friend until after my 21st year. There was once brother Jim and I took the two lame girls to a Christmas Eve program at the church with the team and bob sleigh. One girl that attracted me greatly in my later 'teens was a Minnie Stewart, daughter of the depot agent, who I met mostly at Sunday School. Her mother was our S.S. teacher and I was at their home one Sunday practicing some music for a Christmas program, a bright spot that stamped itself on my memory. The family moved to another town and I learned later that Minnie died before marrying. Seems that my early choices were too good for this mundane sphere.

To begin now with the year 1886, I will from this point on follow out the years consecutively for the most part, taking in, so far as possible or expedient, all aspects of my life as I proceed. In February of this year I was 20 and was away from home teaching my first term of school at Pilot Grove. It was at this time that I seriously called in question my idea of being a preacher. Preachers were supposed to have a special call which they refused at their peril. But so far as I could see I had no such call. My big idea appeared to me more like a childish fancy and that had now reached the practical realities of mature life. I do not think there was any rebellion or desire to escape from plain duty in this reaction. Nor did I abandon the idea entirely at this time. There was no other career or life-work that especially attracted me or toward which I bent my ambitions. I [24] had another year before it was necessary to make decisions on my own responsibility anyway.

I have already related the main historical events of that year and the winter of 1887, that being the winter my sister Ella was in Dakota and I teaching in the Claude district. I had passed my 21st birthday in February and was now free to chart and follow my own course, standing at the threshold of my own independent life. I suppose the great majority of young people fail to realize the importance of the decisions made at that time, and that I was no exception to the rule. But, consciously or unconsciously, I believe I made the most important decision of all, to maintain and develop true Christian character and earn an honest living. I had no overweening ambition to gain or accumulate wealth; in fact as I see it now I was lacking, if anything, in that respect. Of course I wanted to be a success, have a good time and enjoy life. I would have enjoyed more schooling and a college education I am sure; whether it led to the ministry or some other profession or line of work. I was aware that I had not made a real success of teaching, and I felt some urge to overcome my weaknesses and wring success out of failure there. But the lure of domestic life was strong and with four years of high-school ahead of me, and another four years of college, to gain which I would have to work my way, it looked like a long, hard road. So when my father made me an offer to take over the farm on a partnership basis I decided on that, for the time being at least. Perhaps I followed the line of least resistance, but if so I did it with a clear conscience. If fortune had favored me in the succeeding ten years and I had achieved a sufficient financial success, I might at any time have turned in the direction of some more intellectual pursuit; for I never lost my love of study nor abandoned entirely for some years my hope of being a student in the higher institutions of learning. I was, however, being controlled and guided largely by circumstances which I took as the leading of Providence, a position I have never had reason to renounce or discard.

That summer my brother Jim was still at home and worked with me on the farm. About the first thing I did with my \$100 was to pay the preacher, J. A. Barnard, four dollars on his salary. Then I got a top-buggy from Robt. More which he was ready to discard, at a cost of \$25. I made some repairs on it and drove old Fred on it single. The buggy, of course, was to provide a more acceptable way of getting around or take out a girl if I had a good opportunity and wanted to. The balance of the \$100 I must have used for current expenses or put into the "business".

In this partnership business, the details of which my father had worked out, I filled the role of "secretary" and kept the accounts; and my father, who furnished the equipment or working capital to start with, acted as treasurer. The arrangement was reasonable and worked out all right for a number of years. I had my living, a comfortable home and what money I wanted to spend, which was never extravagant; but I didn't accumulate savings very rapidly. My father left the conduct of affairs on the farm quite freely to me, as well as my own personal conduct. We usually had some differences over the [25] *accounting*, but if I exercised patience, he always came around to my point of view or better.

It was about this time that my father and mother made a visit to her brother, Uncle Wm. Apsey, at LaCrosse, going by train. They were royally entertained there and waited on by a young lady, Nellie Flowers, a relative of Aunt Apsey's. My mother was greatly taken up with her and I think had some wish that I might meet her and perhaps develop a romance, but I never did, but I admit I had some inclination to do so. I have her photo and she was a swell looking girl all right. I met the lady, after marriage, many years later when in LaCrosse on business.

That fall of 1887 brother Jim and I drove to Winnebago in the buggy, with old Fred, and witnessed the laying of the corner-stone of Parker College. The winter of 1888, if I have it straight, Jim continued attending district school with Carrie Bachtle as teacher. It was that winter that Samantha was born, sister Elle having returned to the home to live. Her services as housekeeper as well as her company were needed and acceptable. My mother was old and feeble and my father had been doing most of the house-work and cooking. *Previous* to her marriage she had been receiving one dollar a week. My father's proposal was that now, with the baby, she should stay without my stipulated wages; but I took the ground that she should have the dollar a week, which was agreed to, and she continued on that basis as long as our partnership lasted. In the spring I took them to the church - for the baby's baptism. I do not remember whether I stood up with them, but I continued to fill a father's place as far as I could. I think I enjoyed having a baby in the family.

Brother Jim continued with us on the farm that summer and helped with the work, being still under age. It must have been that 4th of July or the previous one that I picked up my first girl at a celebration in Delavan. This was Susie Davis, a relative of the Hardings. We rode around together and I took her home toward evening. She was quite young and I never followed up that lead any farther. She became a nurse and a fine young lady and married well a good many years later. The Parker College building was completed that summer and I believe school opened there in the fall. I do not think I gave any serious consideration to going there. It would have meant giving up the farm, and I felt I was where I was needed and should be.

I was thinking seriously, too, of getting married as soon as I found a suitable partner; and to put that off for eight or ten years seemed too much of a sacrifice. As it turned out, I came near doing that anyway. About this time I was elected Sunday School Superintendent; a position I held without interruption to the end of this period and beyond. I was also elected to

the school board, and I joined the Good Templar lodge which I attended regularly, thus getting out into society to quite an extent.

This being my first year for voting in a presidential election, I had to decide on my political affiliation. There did not appear to me to be much to choose between the two major parties. About the only [26] issue between them was the tariff; the Republicans favoring a higher and the Democrats a lower schedule; and on that question I was inclined to side with the Democrats. But national prohibition of the liquor traffic was being agitated intensively and that naturally enlisted my interest and sympathy. The Republicans were more favorable, or I should say less hostile, to the idea than the Democrats but failed to take any definite stand on it. The temperance forces, that is to say, those who considered it the most important political issue, were divided. The majority believing it the best policy to work through one or both of the old political parties, were organized under the Anti-Saloon League. The others supported a third party definitely committed to prohibition as the major issue. This Prohibition party never polled only a very small fraction of the total vote; but it was making some rapid gains at the time, and seemed to me the best and most logical way to win and make a success of it; and I still think we had the right idea if agitation for national prohibition was the wisest way to attack the evil of the traffic, which I now seriously question but which at that time made a strong appeal to me. Consequently my first vote was cast for the Prohibition party candidate, John P. St. John¹, for President; and I continued voting that ticket and supporting that party for many years, *altho* I always considered myself pretty much of an Independent in politics.

The winter of 1889 brother Jim taught school, as I have related; and in the spring, or it may have been the previous one, I or we bought the three-year-old white mane and tailed sorrel, Doll, of Phil Cornish for \$50 and Jim and I broke her to drive single on the buggy. She was not as heavy and clumsy as old Fred but she hadn't much style or speed.

Joan Scoville was teaching in our district that winter and I went to visit the school, or perhaps the teacher. Anyway I made a date with her to go some five miles to a church social. But when the time came it was a very stormy night. Undaunted I went to her boarding place, the Chestnuts, but we decided not to go so spent the evening visiting. I liked her physical form and appearance and she was very attractive and I am sure I could have fallen in love with her. But I think she would have been rather fast for me. I never got to take her out and she got to going with the Cornish boys who had faster horses and more dash (or nerve) than I. But they failed to bag their game. She was a very successful teacher and was there for two or three years.

The preacher Smith's family, whom I have mentioned, had returned to our community, the mother having married a Mr. Jowett who lived in the next school district to the north of us; and who had three daughters of his own; the oldest one of which took my fancy but was

¹ John Pierce St. John (2/25/1833 – 8/31/1916) was the eighth Governor of Kansas and served as the Prohibition presidential nominee in 1884 (Wikipedia).

married about this time. The youngest of three was named Jessie; so the Jessie Frances Smith thereafter went by the name of Frances. That spring the family moved to Delavan and lived in the first house on the north side of the street coming into town from our farm. They were Methodists but had taken exceptions to a certain party in the church and joined the Baptists on moving to town. But the Smiths attended some of our church services and it was there that I again [27] came in contact with Frances. She was then not quite sixteen and I was past twenty-three. Nothing was more natural than for me to ask to see her home one evening, which I did; and that was the beginning of a rather romantic but disconcerting experience, and I suppose my first love affair. From that time on I had a "steady". She was quite an accomplished pianist and soon began giving music lessons and acting as organist at the churches. She also sang fairly well. So I always saw her home from church or wherever we happened to be out together and soon got to calling for her and taking her to about everything that was going on. That 4th of July I took her with Doll and the buggy to a celebration at Bass Lake. These 4th of July celebrations were one of the outstanding events of the year at that time and were attended by practically everyone within driving distance, which was then approximately ten miles.

Bro. Jim was 21 in June but stayed with me, I believe, until after the harvest for wages. I think my father's idea was for him to stay with us in partnership; but he was not disposed to that and I do not think that I urged it either. This year Bro. Ben was living at Vernon and J.F. and family were at Ledyard, Iowa. Ledyard was the first town in Iowa south of the state line at Elmore, which is ten miles south from Blue Earth. It was at that time a new town, the surrounding prairie just in process of being settled.

July 30th of this year was the fiftieth anniversary of my *parents* marriage and was celebrated at the farm, all of the ten living children being present, as well as the numerous grand-children and in-laws, and a very few others from outside the family. There were, the Methodist preacher another Rev. Smith and his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Jewett. I don't think Frances was invited although I am quite sure it was suggested to me. But I had only been out with her a few times and I think I was not over-enthusiastic about her. There was a program and a variety of gifts by the guests, my own being a large, plush-covered photograph album which later returned to me and which I still have.

It was that same fall that my sister Susie (Mrs. Harding) died; leaving a family of four small children. It was on a Sunday and I was at the home in Delavan but not at the bedside at the last. The next year, 1890, I handled the farm work alone, only hiring by the day at harvest or when necessary, and everything went along quite normally. I was at this time going out a good deal evenings; attending church services on Sunday, official meetings of the church and Sunday School, the Good Templars lodge every week, entertainments, lectures, socials and parties. Also I attended and took part in some debates that were held in connection with the schools, both in our own district and at Delavan. Then a little later the Epworth League was organized in our church and I was active in that, as well as being mainly responsible for the church choir. I was at various times head of the lodge and the Epworth League, as well as the Sunday School. I think

my farming operations must have suffered some on account of these varied activities. However a young fellow seems to be able to stay up the first half of the night and still get along pretty well with the day's work. It was along about this time that I won the [28] gold headed cane in a speaking contest with a number of local men and women, using the Demorest Medal Contest selections. We were beyond the age for the medals so chipped in and bought the cane for a prize. I had no occasion to use it so it was finally wrecked for the gold head I guess and disappeared.

Meanwhile I was faithfully continuing my association with Frances Smith. I don't think I had been going with her more than six months, before I got to thinking seriously of marriage; waiting till she was grown up to 18 years of age; and I became involved in a sort of engagement. I do not think she ever satisfied me very well, however, and my dissatisfaction increased rather than diminished. She seemed to me to lack both mental and emotional depth. But Cupid, having done a perfect job, I was unable to give her up either to or for anyone else. This second July 4th we went to a celebration at Winnebago with horse and buggy. In the year 1891 there was little change on the farm. I had accumulated less than \$200 property interest in the four years I had been operating, but I was my own boss and was filling a place where I thought I was needed and where circumstances seemed to have placed me. I was not making a great success financially but neither was I making a failure. So I never gave any serious consideration to leaving the farm or trying my fortune anywhere else at this time. I was 25 that year and Frances was 18; the time I had calculated we could marry. But my dissatisfaction was such that I proposed or decided to postpone it at least another year.

At that time Edna Lewis from Vernon was in our community and she and Frances became fast friends and chums. She was keeping company with a young man at Vernon by the name of Mort Robinson, whom she afterward married. So that Fourth, or a day or two before, I drove with Frances to Vernon and the four of us went to Mankato by train, stayed over night at a hotel to spend the Fourth there the following day. I do not remember much what kind of a celebration they were putting on, but it was all right with us. We had our pictures taken together, one of which I still have; then in the afternoon took the train and rode as far as Blue Earth and back again to Vernon. So I must have been away from home for three or four days. In such cases I would get a neighbor boy to attend to the necessary chores on the farm. So the year rolled around and in 1892 my total situation remained much the same. I had broken in Fan the bay mare, and sometimes drove a double team on the buggy and usually a three horse team at farm work. Fan also made a good single driver.

Evidently I did not force the issue with Frances for her 19th birthday passed in June and I was undecided what I should do or wanted to do. To make a long story short, or as short as it well can be, after spending the Fourth at Ledyard where we went by train and stayed over for a day or two, we soon after set a date for our wedding in October. But about three weeks before the time arrived and after some turmoil, she deliberately cancelled it and broke off our engagement; a thing I had attempted a few times unsuccessfully. My reaction to this turn of

events was peculiar to the point of being paradoxical. I had a glorious sense of freedom and release, and at the same time of bitter frustration. But the latter was not wholly [29] new and I went along as though nothing had happened, without much if any outward demonstration. However I think my family and friends wasted considerable sympathy on me. I reasoned that I would have some one more satisfactory or that Frances would find herself as unhappy as I had been under similar conditions, and that she might reverse herself and be different; a *consumation* I must admit I fervently wished and hoped for. So I entertained that hope for about a year until forced to give it up. I wrote her what I have always considered a good Christian letter, leaving the door open if she should change her mind, but not urging her to do so. Some time after, she came to my home one Sunday afternoon with the Iams girls, with what motives, if any, I cannot say. Another young fellow was visiting me and they so arranged it that I took one of the other girls and Frances to church with me and back to the Iams home. So I dropped the Iams girl and took Frances for a ride to see if she had anything to say. But nothing new developed and that ride was short and my last private contact with her. In the spring of the next year, 1893, she moved with the family to Fairmont, about 25 miles away, but returned to Delavan for the Fourth where a celebration was being held. I made no advances nor did she, but I picked up another very acceptable partner, Eva Lowe to be specific; and Frances accepted the attentions of one Gunder Gunderson who was, or had been, publishing a paper called the Delavan Herald. That evening the four of us attended an entertainment at Holt's hall and that was the last I saw of her till she became the bride of this same Gunderson. I think they must have come to Delavan on their honeymoon for it happened they were present at a meeting, I think it was a prayer-meeting at our church. Did I get out of there in a hurry? I did not. I staid to the close of the meeting, went up and greeted them and wished them much joy. They went to live at Elmore where he had transferred his newspaper business and I did not see her again for many years. Thus ended my first love affair and romance.

I believe that it was in the fall of this year of 1893 that I went to the World's Fair, the Columbian Exposition, at Chicago. I went in company with my brother-in-law, James Young, and it being the first time I had seen a large city or been far from home, it was quite a thrilling experience. The exposition was in Jackson Park and we found our way out there and stayed at the Epworth Hotel, a temporary Methodist headquarters near the grounds. I had got hold of a guide to the city with maps, and managed to keep my bearings pretty well. My brother-in-law, who I expected would know how to find the way around in the city, proved to be no good at all. We took in the fair for several days and were up in the vicinity of the "loop" only once or twice; once at least to see and hear the famed evangelist, D. L. Moody. Also I got the chance to see and hear Prof. Henry Drummond, who spoke at the University nearby. I know of no two men then or since that I would prefer having had the privilege of seeing and hearing. I think we took one of the trains on the lake shore from the vicinity of Grant Park to Jackson; but where we went to hear Moody we took a street-car. I suppose my worst break was jumping off the car before it came to a stop; and I think my brother-in-law followed suit; but fortunately neither of us suffered any injury. There were, I believe, a few electric trolley cars operating in the city, [30]

but I saw none. The ones we rode on were run by some sort of cable; and were the next thing, I think, in advance from horse-drawn cars. Telephones were in use but long distance lines were rare. One place at the fair a line to New York was operated as a novelty for a fee; and I said hello and talked a few words. That too was quite a thrill. Electric lights too were in use and our hotel was equipped with them. I had heard of gas lights but never had seen either gas or electric and for some reason never thought of the electric. So we were puzzled how to get light in our room. We tried lighting it with a match but had to give it up, and I went down to the office to find out about it. But the fair was great and I have no doubt that I got my money's worth out of the trip.

Nothing else of importance occurred during that year, except it being the year that brother Fletcher's wife Addie died at Ledyard. Brother Ben and family had settled there and Jim was also there; and I do not think that I got away from home even to the funeral. She was buried at Mankato and shortly after J.F. and Jim went to Duluth and conducted a commission business for a short time.

The years 1894 and '95 were much alike so far as I was concerned. They were good years on the farm and by the close of '95 I had accumulated about \$1000. The most of this was represented by stock and equipment on the farm; but I think I had some \$200 in surplus cash which I lent to my brothers at different times. Sometime previous to this my father had made a will giving me an interest in the farm which would allow me the increase in value from the time I entered the partnership, which value was slowly but steadily increasing. But up to this time and until later I took little stock or interest in it. For one thing there was not much increase up to this time, and I figured that I was getting a square deal in the partnership, so did not concern myself greatly about the other. It was a bird in the bush at the best.

I was keeping up my church and other outside interest and activities, which brought me in contact with the public to a considerable extent. At Christmas the Sunday-School always had a program and tree to which a lot of people both in and outside of the church brought most of their family and presents. There was usually a packed house at which as Superintendent I had to preside. On one occasion during those two years I was on the program at a 4th of July celebration at Bass Lake reading the Declaration of Independence; and either at that time or another sang in a quartet. At another time I was elected and went as delegate to the District Lodge meeting of the Good Templars at Eagle Lake, where I was entertained very agreeably by a family and their young lady daughter. At another time I went as delegate to a place way beyond Mankato called Cordova. It was a country centre some way from the railroad and it took me all day to locate it and get there. It was winter and I went first by train to Mankato where I made inquiries and finally located it; and the only way to get there was northeast by train to Waterville, then north and get off at a crossing which I did, and walked some miles through the woods arriving at my destination after dark. I was warmly welcomed by the lodge members and after another day and night returned with some of them by [31] team and sleigh twelve miles or more to Elysian, where I got the train again for home. One thing I remember

was seeing a coal fire in the depot at Elysian. Coal for fuel was rare up to that time. I remember when a boy picking up a small chunk along the railroad and taking it home as a curiosity to see if it would burn. On returning from this trip, of course, I had quite a report to make at our local lodge session.

I think I enjoyed my two or three years of freedom pretty well and I went out with a girl or young lady only occasionally. I had no "steadys". After my experience with Frances I was wary and didn't propose to fall deeply in love until I knew what I wanted and where I was going to land. It was the fall of 1894 that J.F. returned from Duluth badly broken in health. He stayed with us for a month or two, helped me husk corn, ate chicken broth and got to feeling so much better that he went to work for Robt. More at Pilot Grove. So the time went by till the fall of 1895 when I was nearing 30 years of age and decided I had better get busy. There were several nice girls about my age or somewhere near in our community, that I had been out with a time or two, three in particular that I thought highly of and within range, but neither of them suited me exactly. For one thing I wanted a good musician; and neither of them could fill that requirement. Two of them were Baptists and rather plain in appearance and the third, Eva Lowe, happened to be teaching in our school that fall and winter. So I had my mind made up to try and keep her steady company with a view to marriage.

But for some reason or other I hesitated and postponed it all the fall and at Christmas. It may be the fact my second cousin from Cleveland, Ohio, was staying with my uncle at Sparta, Wis. and had been invited to visit us, had something to do with it, but if so it must have been almost unconsciously; for I had no reason to think that her coming would affect me in that respect; and if I thought of it as a remote possibility I am sure I gave it little serious consideration. However we got word that she would arrive by train on New Years morning and as a matter of course I went with Fan and the buggy to meet her. I don't think it was exactly love at first sight, but I liked her appearance all right as I met her on the station platform. Again, to make a long story short, although in point of time it was not very long, we were having a family New Years gathering at my sister Mary Young's and my father and mother not being able to attend, I took the newcomer home where she was served with a cup of tea and a light lunch, then to my sister's where, of course, she was the center of interest and attraction. It is well within the truth to say that she made a favorable impression all around.

After returning home we just naturally went out together, sang together at the piano and had a glorious time; finally decided to make a trip by team and buggy to Pilot Grove and Ledyard to visit the other members of the family; -- and I suppose, fell in love. I hardly dared hope but determined to find out before taking the trip, not with any idea of cancelling the trip however, in any event. After some hesitation I got an affirmative answer with full commitment; and [32] from that time on things moved rapidly to a consummation. It could not well be otherwise so far as I was concerned. Everything I had felt to be lacking in my other case; or in any case that I had considered, was fully met and satisfied. The only thing that gave me "pause" was the state of her health. I had ample warning in the experience of the two months after we

met, of what might be involved. But I decided that if any special care was needed I wanted the job; a decision I can honestly say I never regretted. I had expected that she would want to return to her home at Cleveland and have me come there sometime later for her. But as she was not much disposed to that we set the date for our wedding on March 11th, 1896; which took place at the old farm home, Anna Elizabeth Keetch Hoare¹ becoming Mrs. Robert Rendall. The officiating clergymen was the Methodist pastor, Rev. E. W. Haley. My folks insisted on having a party with the relatives present to celebrate the event. The only wedding trip we took was a buggy ride with Will Harding's horse and buggy, about a half mile and back and we honeymooned and were at home without further ado.

This completes my account to the close of the first thirty-year period of my life and I will go on from here, beginning with the year 1896. I suppose that those early years are the most vivid in my memory, but I think I can make a fairly accurate record of the leading events of the succeeding years.

My Married Life 1896 – 1927

The outstanding event of the year **1896**² was of course my marriage; with which I was perfectly satisfied and have remained so to the present day. This is not to say that things were always as I would have chosen to have them. There was sunshine, with shadows a'plenty; but on the whole and broadly speaking, I consider my married life a happy and successful one.

Following our wedding by about one month, my brother J.F. was married³ to Adra Sowers and went to farming at Pilot Grove, getting his family of three girls together again. Brother Ben was settled at Ledyard and Jim was at Ashland, Wis.

I do not recollect that we made any very definite plans previous to our wedding as to what we would do, but by common consent we remained on the farm and in the home, living all together as one family; and I proceeded with the farming, which was expanding somewhat, without any material change in our partnership arrangement. My sister took the chief responsibility of the housework and we planned to enlarge the house to provide more room. This my father did during the summer at his own personal expense, hiring carpenters to do most of the work, although I helped some with it too. In the spring I bought a two-seated buggy or light wagon, an old one at an auction, which I *remodelled* and which served us well for

¹ **Anna Elizabeth (Keetch Hoare) Rendall** (1869 – 10/18/1927). Robert previously mentioned that Anna was his second cousin, but her father's brother married the daughter of Robert's grandmother's second husband (Robert came from her first husband), so there's really no blood relationship at all. With first husband Job Apsey, Hannah had Ann Apsey who had Robert. With second husband George Clarke, Hannah had Anna, who married James Hoare. James' brother John (and wife Elizabeth) had Anna, Robert's wife.

² The first appearance of each year going forward have been bolded here, but are not in the original manuscript.

³ 3/27/1896

several years, along with the single top buggy. On account of the extra demand on my time, I decided to hire some help by the month, and secured Asa Andrews for the summer at \$17 per month, with of course room and [33] board. This made us quite a large family and it is a wonder and perhaps a credit that we got along as well as we did. I kept on with my activities in connection with the church, happy to have a first class musician and good singer of my own to help out when needed. But I dropped out of the lodge, as my bride and wife, whom I shall speak of from now on as mother, was not a member, and we had plenty of other interests to absorb our time and energies.

The house was enlarged and remodeled by extending the east wing 12 feet and raising the whole a half story, with two dormer windows in the north, an 8 foot lean on the south and a larger porch in front. This gave us a down-stairs room 12x14 and two good *upstair* rooms. The stairway was taken out of the lean, running up from east to west to a landing then turning north to reach the rooms on either side. Those three were our private rooms which we furnished to our liking: while the dining-room and kitchen was used in common. When finished and painted the house presented an improved appearance and the old homestead at this time was about at the best of its first fifty years of history.

We were having a run of dry seasons and the crops were generally good. I had most of the farm under the plow and I rented some acres from James Young that spring. We had the five horses, Doll, Fan, Jennie, Dan and Ruth. Jennie raised a fine colt that year which we named Nancy. Ruth and Dan were three and four years old, and one day in the spring when I was using them on a Strobridge grain seeder, they started to run. For some reason the seeder tongue broke and the result might have been serious; but luckily they broke loose from the truck and I was only thrown or dragged out onto the soft field; one of my many narrow escapes from an obviously dangerous position.

Along about mid-summer we attended an Epworth League convention at Winnebago for two or three days, being entertained there. Mother had done some solo singing in the church at Delavan, previous to our wedding, which was greatly appreciated especially by the pastor, himself a good judge of music; and she was put on the program at this convention for several solo selections, and accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Haight, then Ella Humes. I was of course greatly delighted as she always did herself credit in that role, or for that matter in almost any performance in public.

A presidential election campaign was on that fall, with the free coinage of silver issue injected into it by the democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan. On that issue I sided with McKinley and the Republicans, who stood for the single gold standard. McKinley was elected¹,

¹ November 3, 1896

but I didn't consider the issue of paramount importance so continued to vote for the Prohibition party candidate¹.

I had been given a hint before our marriage that probably we would not be blessed with any babies, due to some supposed physical disability; but it soon became apparent that such was not the case; and it remained for the other outstanding event of the year to occur on Dec. 25th when our first baby was born. This happened in the night in our down-stairs room. There was no hospital to go to as is [34] the common practice to-day, and no telephone. So I must needs mount old Doll and gallop to town for the doctor which happened to be Dr. Broberg. I had some misgivings that due to the rather abnormal state of mother's health all would not be well; but in a short time there was a baby's lusty cry which proved to be that of a girl baby, perfect in every respect. I shall never forget the thrill of that first baby's first cry. My sister was at hand to take charge temporarily while I went with horse and buggy about six or seven miles for the nurse, Susie Davis, who had been spoken for, arriving home before morning. I don't recollect whether we had a name in readiness, but we decided on Effaretta Alice²; Effaretta being my choice. I took a fancy to Effie, probably from my meeting with Effie Sowers; but thought to dignify it by making the real name Effaretta. It is a good name all right anyway. There being no serious complications in the case, we were soon going along happily in the winter of **1897**.

In the spring I hired an older and more experienced hand for the summer at \$20 a month. This was Sorn Peterson, a Dane, who proved quite agreeable and satisfactory. Old Jennie raised another colt that spring which we named Nell. It was another good year on the farm and a busy one for me. I was putting in some acres again for James Young and with one baby to help take care of and another in prospect, I had my hands full enough.

Nevertheless I was enjoying it and I got away along in May, for two or three days, to attend a sunday-school convention at Wells. Having the baby, mother did not care to go, so I took along Pearl Young, then twelve or thirteen years old, driving over with Fan and Doll. I was entertained at a home there in company with John Rorman from Winnebago who was not married at that time, and he borrowed my team and buggy to take his girl, who soon became his wife, for a ride. I had an enjoyable time on that brief vacation, and especially appreciated rooming with my friend Rorman. We had been young fellows together at Delavan. He was highly respected and I always liked him although our ways diverged considerably in many respects in the ensuing years.

It was this year, I think, that brother Jim was married³ to Jessie Lamb⁴ at Ashland. I do not remember them paying us a visit at the time, but I think it likely that they did. With a heavy

¹ Probably Joshua Levering (Prohibition), or possibly Charles Eugene Bentley (National Prohibition).

² **Effaretta Alice (Rendall) Carrell** (12/25/1896 – 11/1/1973)

³ 1887 (*unknown date*)

⁴ **Jessie Lillian (Lamb) Rendall** (7/21/1872 – 5/8/1933)

harvest and the demands my increasing family made on me, it was fortunate that I had No. 1 farm help. In the early fall Sorn decided to get married and go to farming for himself; but I secured another Dane, Gerhard Nelson, equally as good or better, for the balance of the season.

It was becoming apparent, though, that living all together as we were, was not satisfactory and was constantly becoming less so. Our partnership arrangement was especially distasteful and a trial to Mother. We were doing well enough from a purely business standpoint but the large scale farming I was engaged in, even with hired help, was a heavy burden; and the situation otherwise was becoming so impossible that I was fast coming to the conclusion that a change would have to be made. But my father was strongly opposed to making [35] any change; and what we were to do was a problem. I proposed to him that he deed me the north-east forty acres in lieu of my interest in the will, and I would build and live there by ourselves, and rent the forty acres south of it, and he could rent the west eighty to someone else. But he rejected the proposal as he would have any other I might have made. My idea was that we should get away by ourselves on a small place that I could handle without hired help and sink or swim as the case might be.

In searching for a solution to my problem I began to wonder if I had missed my calling: if after all I should be preaching the gospel instead of following the course I had taken. I was deeply interested in church and religion and I had some definite ideas and ideals as to what a preacher should be and do, I had a wife with fine capabilities, in some respects at least, for a preacher's wife; and it would have been possible, if I had been given a local preacher's license as had been once and recently suggested, had secured an appointment as a supply and succeeded, and had followed out a course of study, to have become a full-fledged Methodist preacher without any further schooling. I do not think that I took the idea very seriously, but I decided to leave the question, if question it was, to the decision of circumstances. If the way had seemed providentially to open in that direction I think I would have been disposed to enter it: and I might have made an average success, or at least done as well as some I have met with. However I saw no open door and have been satisfied ever since that my destiny did not lie in that direction; in fact, I have come to be rather glad that it didn't.

The other alternative, and which I considered seriously, was going up north somewhere, where land was cheap, getting a forty acre farm with some timber on it and moving up there after another year.

The year **1898** was now ushered in and on Jan. 27th our second baby was born, a boy who we named LeVerne Walter¹. The circumstances of this event were much the same as the previous one, except that it appeared a little premature and I was called on to get up in the night and move the bed downstairs. There was the same doctor and nurse and everything proceeded normally. LeVerne was rather a fretful baby and required considerable care and

¹ LeVerne Walter Rendall (1/27/1898 – 4/14/1984)

attention. This was the year of the Spanish War and I have wondered if that had anything to do with his natural *beligerency*. However we were happy to have a son and as it turned out, have been well repaid for any extra trouble he caused.

I had decided quite definitely on making the move to the North and planned to go about in June and try and locate and arrange for a place, and move there the following fall, or as soon as possible after the year's crop was harvested, It was a rather bold adventure under the circumstances, but I was bent on doing a little real pioneering if necessary. I would have had better than \$1000 to go with, and I planned to take a team and a few cows, some farming equipment and our household goods and make the venture. With all this Mother was in agreement, or rather we were both in agreement, as we managed to be on practically everything. That spring I hired the same good [36] farm hand, Gerhard Nelson, for the summer, and I could get away and know that everything would be looked after and taken care of as well as when I was there.

I think some pressure was exerted by my mother and other members of the family, and when my father was convinced that I was really preparing to go, he came around with a proposal of his own which materially changed the situation. This was to divide the house, giving us the whole east wing, dissolve our partnership arrangement and rent me the farm for a share of the crop. This put a different face on matters and we decided to give up our idea of moving and stay by the old place as being the safest and best. It was something of a disappointment too. There was something fascinating about our scheme to move North, and to compensate we decided on a month's vacation and a trip to Cleveland, which we took in June.

We of course had to take along the two babies and wanted to, which made it quite an undertaking as well as an enjoyable and thrilling experience. I had never been far from home except the one trip to Chicago, and Mother had not seen any of her folks since leaving, single and alone, some three years before. Wishing to take along something for her family, we had some views taken of the farmstead showing the house, the horses and the cattle; three views. Also one of Bass Lake. The three views I still have and value very highly.

We went first to LaCrosse and stopped for a visit with Uncle William Apsey who came there from Sparta to meet us. We also visited with Will Harding, who was newly married¹ and living in LaCrosse at that time. After a couple of days there we took the train for Chicago, transferred there in the night and arrived at Cleveland the following day. We spent most of the month there and were present at the marriage of Mother's sister Nellie² to Herbert Clare³. I do not remember distinctly of our return trip, but we came through without stopping and I think took the sleeper at night. It was a very enjoyable occasion in spite of a rather worrisome baby.

¹ Married to **Laura (Lindall) Harding** (6/19/1876 – 10/18/1964) on 3/8/1897

² **Ellen Maud (Hoare) Clare** (11/29/1873 – 12/31/1954)

³ **Herbert O. Clare** (10/11/1875 – 5/16/1952)

The trip cost me about \$200, \$100 for railroad fare and \$100 for other expenses, including some purchases Mother made in view of our going to housekeeping by ourselves.

That harvest was a heavy one; I had about 100 acres of wheat besides oats and I think barley or flax, or both. I had some machine trouble and got badly behind with it, which gave me plenty of worry. But the grain turned out well so that I raised that year some 2000 bushels of wheat, some of which went to James Young for the land I rented of him.

I think it was in July of that same year that Uncle Wm. Apsey died and my father and mother, sisters Ella and Mary Young went to Sparta, Wis. to the funeral. He left property to my mother which Robert More handled and which netted her \$1000 in cash, \$200 of which was used to buy a phaeton¹ and a few other things for use, and the balance left with Rob More to go to sister Ella on my mother's decease.

[37] My father made a liberal settlement of our partnership that fall which gave me all of the farm stock and machinery except old Doll and the chickens, and I calculated my assets at that time at about \$1400. My father had built a small addition on the south-west for use as a kitchen, the door between us was boarded up making the house into a duplex; my father, mother and sister occupying the west side and myself and family the east. This was a great improvement over the previous arrangement and proved quite satisfactory for a number of years. I planned now to farm only what I could handle without hiring much help and subrent a good share of the plowed land to my neighbors and so lighten my burdens which were becoming too heavy to be borne. Consequently I sold Jennie and the two colts and Dan, leaving us a three horse team, Fan, Doll and Ruth. I also sold off some of the cows keeping four of the best ones with some young stock and the pigs.

I was abridging or dropping some of my activities in the church but keeping on with most of them; the Sunday School, the official board and the church music for the most part. H. F. Ackerman was the Methodist preacher and was there for a term of two years. I think it was this year that the church building was remodeled. A good job was done and it has stood without much change to the present. I think we put \$100 or more into that.

I planned, too, on building an addition on the barn which I did the following year of **1899**. In the spring of that year the Youngs sold part of their farm to Dick Evans and moved to St. Paul at Hamline. Spring was unusually late in coming that year and when they had their auction on April 1st the winter's snow had not yet started to melt. That year I rented part of the crop-land to Henry Trembley and at harvest brother Ben came from Ledyard and helped me with my own work. I also hired him to do most of the work of building the addition to the barn. This was an extension to the south 16x24 feet for hay; with a 12 foot lean on the west for

¹ A phaeton was a four-wheeled open carriage.

cattle, four tie-stalls¹ for the cows and three *stanchals*² at the south end. It was equipped with a track and pulleys for unloading and taking in the hay by horse power with slings.

It was about this time or soon after that I relinquished the superintendency of the Sunday School to Amy Burnham Evans. I had dropped out of the Epworth League for the most part, so that my church work was confined mainly to the official board and church finances; although we both continued to be an important factor in the music for some years. The new set-up in the home and farm was proving quite satisfactory and the closing year of the century, **1900**, continued much the same.

The outstanding event of the year was the birth of another boy, who we named Harvard John³ after his grandfather Hoare⁴ and the street on which the old home in Cleveland was located. Dr. Broberg had moved to Blue Earth so a new doctor, I think it was Replogle, was in attendance. We persuaded Mother's sister Blanche⁵ to come out that summer and between her and my sister Ella got along without a regular nurse or other hired help. Harvard John was a good baby which helped some, and as it had been two years and seven months since the previous one, we gave him a royal welcome.

[38] Rev. Kemerer was the Methodist preacher that year and McKinley was re-elected president⁶ and soon after assassinated⁷. It was, I believe, this year that Zion City was founded by Dr. Dowie⁸ and brother Ben moved there⁹ from Ledyard, having become a *fullfledged Dowieite*. I gave them a fair hearing and a careful consideration of their contentions; but failed to be convinced of the soundness of the premises on which they based their faith. But things like that kept me studying and examining the foundations of my own beliefs, which were in a rather fluid state at that period of my religious experience. But I was inclined to move away from the traditional and established order, slowly and with due deliberation, if at all.

Everything went along quite normally the following year of **1901** and without any material changes. I was, of course, kept very busy with my farm work and caring for Mother and the babies; but it was what I wanted to do and I got a good measure of enjoyment from it. After caring for the three all day Mother had to have her rest at night; so for many months I used to take Harvard John with me in the other room, get him his bottle in the night and see him

¹ A tie stall refers to a type of housing in a barn for cattle.

² The meaning of *stanchal* (as written) is unknown, but a *stanchion* is a type of cow barn.

³ **Harvard John Rendall** (9/7/1900 – 4/16/1980)

⁴ **John Hoare** (3/27/1843 – 9/19/1922)

⁵ **Blanche Laura (Hoare) Pote** (10/10/1876 – 1/9/1957)

⁶ 11/6/1900

⁷ 9/14/1901

⁸ John Alexander Dowie (1847 – 1907)

⁹ Records in Zion, IL show 4 addresses for Joseph Benson Rendall: Ledyard, IA; 1701 Herman Ave, Zion City, IL (6/5/02); 2321 Gideon, Zion City, IL (11/16/04); 2408 Gideon, Zion City, IL (7/5/06).

through till morning. But he was not hard to take care of and when morning came I was ready for a farmer's long hard day of work.

I think it was that year that brother Jim and wife came from Ashland to visit us with their two small children, Edith¹ and Rex², and I borrowed a surrey (two-seated top buggy) and the nine of us went for a trip around, to visit the various family relatives. Also we were beginning to have wetter seasons and by the following year, **1902**, it rained so continuously as to interfere seriously with farming the land; much of which was low and flat; but I waded through the mud and water and hoped and thought the next year would be better. The same was true through the following siege of wet seasons which continued for about eight years.

It was this summer of 1902 that grandmother Hoare³ paid us a visit of a several weeks. She seemed much interested in everything about the farm; and there are a number of incidents I remember in connection with her being there. One time she went with me in the farm wagon while I was making some fence through water a foot or two deep; and at another time to Easton to the mill. We had the threshers while she was there, and she went with my own mother out to watch them at work. Grandmother Rendall being past 80, was becoming quite feeble and had to be helped back to the house. Before grandmother Hoare returned home, Mother went with her to visit the folks at Pilot Grove and around; driving Fan on the single buggy. I do not remember whether or not they took any of the three children along. If so I think it was LeVerne. In either case their Aunt Ella helped to look after them at home, as she did on many occasions.

While speaking of threshing and having the threshers, or thrashers as we always called them, I must go back in point of time and give some account of this important event in our farm life and the evolution of it. It called for a crew generally of ten to a dozen or more men, about three of whom were required to operate the machine and went along from farm to farm with it. The balance of the crew were got [39] together by the farmers "changing work"; altho in later years it became the practice for several extra hands to follow the machine. The men were fed and sometimes slept at the farm where the work was being done, which made a busy and exciting time for the housewife; and it was usually a strenuous time for the farmer, lasting for from one day to perhaps a week according to the size of the crop, the successful operation of the machine and the weather. The first machines were comparatively crude affairs, run by five and later six horse teams hitched to an apparatus at first moved around by trussing up under a wagon, but later mounted on wheels. This was called the horse-power; the team going round and round with a driver standing in the centre. The power was transmitted to the main machine, called the separator, by means of a heavy iron rod known as the tumbling rod; and the hum of the outfit when in operation could be heard for miles around. The grain was delivered near the ground into half bushel measures and put into bags to be carried or hauled

¹ Edith Lillian Rendall (11/13/1899 – 11/2/1977)

² Rexford Granville Rendall (12/9/1900 – 8/9/1955)

³ Charlotte Hoare (1812-1884)

to the granary or market. The straw was delivered at the rear end of the machine by a short straw-carrier and taken care of by one or more men, who often had to work in choking chaff and dust. In fact a day or two of work around a threshing rig always nearly used me up; altho some seemed to be able to stand it day after day.

The first important improvements were mounting the horse-power on wheels, installing an elevator which measured and tallied the grain and delivered it directly into the grain bags, and a mechanical straw stacker which helped a lot in taking care of the straw. Then came the steam tractor engine to replace the horse-power and which required a tank man with team to haul water and coal; but sometimes straw was used to fuel the engine. There was also a self-feeding apparatus to relieve two or three men at the mouth of the machine, and a blower which would take care of the straw and pile it up without any other stacking, if desired. Later gasoline engines have been substituted for steam power and the grain is usually delivered into wagons or trucks without being put in to bags; and the very latest is small outfits run by ordinary farm tractors, or combines, that do the threshing in the field as the crop is harvested. All of which simplifies the job and makes it less of a headache for the farmer. But the older threshing time was a holiday of entertainment and excitement for the younger members of the family. Once, perhaps this year of 1902, when the steam outfit was pulling in to our place, Effie and Verne ran out pretty close to watch it, when the engineer let out a blast from the steam whistle; and it was laughable to see those youngsters wheel around and beat it for the house.

It was somewhere about this time that brother J.F. became "converted" to Dowieism and closed out his farming near Elmore and moved to Zion City. There he built a house¹ but soon became dissatisfied and returned to Vernon for a year, then started farming again at Pilot Grove. Brother Ben and family remained at Zion. He was ordained a Deacon² and was very positive of the soundness of their beliefs for many years. In consequence I was kept in close touch with the movement and with their arguments for it; but I never got to visit there during Dowie's time so never saw or heard him personally. I always [40] believed Dowie to be an honest, sincere Christian but mentally confused and deluded on some of his ideas, especially in his later years. His argument for rejecting pork as an article of diet, however appeared to me logical from the standpoint of biblical authority from the fact that in almost every other respect we follow closely the regulations of the Jewish law as to the animals fit for food. I had previously abandoned the eating of pork, as a rule, for reasons that appealed to me personally; but I was engaged in raising pigs for market with considerable success and profit. While I was not fully convinced on the subject, the agitation from this new quarter had the effect of making the whole business questionable. So when my herd became threatened with an epidemic of hog-cholera, I decided to sell them all off and quit the hog business until or unless I experienced a change of mind; and I never went into it again.

¹ Records in Zion, IL show 4 addresses for John F. Rendall: Elmore, MN; 2411 Gideon Ave, Zion City, IL (12/30/02); Vernon Centre, MN (3/11/05); Blue Earth, MN (1/31/06).

² On 5/24/01, according to church records.

I told grandmother Hoare that we would try and arrange it for Mother to visit Cleveland again the following year, and that was the outstanding event of **1903**. She took with her Effie, past 6, and Harvard John, nearly 2, leaving LeVerne with his Aunt Ella and me; and I don't recollect that he made any objection to staying or caused any particular trouble. While they were at Cleveland Mother's sister Ida¹ was married to Lee Weber²; Effie acting as flower girl at the ceremony. The trip and visit was attended with good success; the family, and especially Harvard John with his bear stories, attracting considerable attention on the train.

The wet weather was keeping up unabated and crops were poor so that I was unable to meet expenses and began to make serious inroads on my capital. This continued the following year of **1904** and in addition another baby was born on Sept. 11th, a girl who we named Vera Blanche³. The name Vera I got from Florence Vera Ogilvie who was married to Geo. More; and Blanche, of course, was from Blanche Hoare. This event took place in our east upstairs room with a new doctor in attendance by the name of Rudolph. It had been four years since Harvard was born and another girl was a welcome addition to complete the family. It was, however, a trying time for us. To begin with, the doctor was out of town and for a time I was at my wits end. We had no regular nurse, having decided to get along with a Mrs. Crossland from town and my sister Ella, and later a young girl by the name of Rose Yeakel. But I finally got hold of the doctor in time to save the day but Mother underwent the most severe strain she had had; and with three other youngsters to take care of, my farm work in the mud and slush from spring till fall with little return for it, and the state of Mother's health in general, I had just about all I could carry.

These wet years from 1902 to 1910 were about the most discouraging from the economic standpoint of any in my history. If I had seeded most of the farm to grass at the start and went in for more livestock, I might have done better. But I kept thinking there would be a change and the next year be better; and it did come of course finally. I was fortunate in not trying to farm the whole myself; for the neighbors who rented a part of the land, took a share of the [41] punishment. Every year my capital was being depleted so that it was becoming difficult to carry on at all. Sometime during the early part of these years Herbert Clare, returning from a business trip to Minneapolis, stopped off to see us and offered to lend me some money: and I got a loan of \$300 from him; and later I borrowed \$200 from Uncle John Keetch in Cleveland; all of which I paid back with interest. Finally I got some loans on my personal notes at the Delavan Bank. So by hook or by crook I pulled through what was for me the worst business depression I was ever to experience. It was along those years too that I had a siege of the smallpox. It was not the most virulent type but was bad enough. I also had the mumps, which I must have missed when younger.

¹ **Ida F. Keetch (Hoare) Weber** (3/6/1876 – 4/19/1959)

² **Lee John Weber** (7/9/1878 – 4/9/1964)

³ **Vera Blanche (Rendall Constable) Smith** (9/11/1904 – 7/26/2001)

But there were bright spots also to relieve this seemingly dark picture. My family of four were about ideal and they were well mothered and we were justly proud of them. We managed to maintain a respectable standard of living and enjoy a good degree of the comforts and joys of home and family life. About twice a year we would drive to Winnebago where Mother would do the family trading at Damon's store. I had to figure to meet the bills but my credit always seemed to be good. Our social life was mostly in connection with the church and there were many happy times at home and among relatives and friends. One thing cannot be forgotten: For many years as Christmas approached a barrel would arrive from Cleveland filled with canned fruit, jams and jellies, candy, nuts and whatnot from grandfather's¹ grocery store in Cleveland, to make a merry Christmas last a long time.

Some incidents in connection with the kiddies are worth recording and are still a pleasant memory. This one, which happened probably when the chief actors were two and three years old, I made a note of at the time; Mother usually put Effie and Verne together in one bed; but one night Verne wanted to go in the other bed in the next room. This is the dialogue she heard after she came down²:

Vernie: "Effie, Effie!"

Effie: "What is it little Vernie Brover?"

Vernie: "Vernie in Effie's bed."

Effie: "Mustn't det out, your tooties det cold; Papa come affer a file. Tut your paddies in under the coes so jat Frost won't bite um."

Vernie: "No sah!"

Effie: "Shut up you wittle eyes and go to fwep like good wittle Vernie brover. Effie shut Effie's eyes and go to fwep".

(After a while)

Effie: "Are you afweep Vernie?"

Vernie: "Yesah".

Effie: "All wight."

Then mother went up and put them in together and soon they were both "afweep".

At another time when Vera was playing up in the hay-loft she fell through the opening down into the manger. I expected to hear a terrible wail; but she got up, shook off the hay and simply remarked in a disgusted tone: "What's the mattie wi' me anyway."

To return to the year 1904: Vera was a restless baby from the start. She would giggle and fuss awake or asleep, and I spent many hours of the day and night trying to keep her pacified. Withal she was not very vigorous but with expert maternal care she developed into a fairly healthy youngster; and at two or three years old was considered a very beautiful child, as her sister had been before her.

¹ This probably refers to grandfather **John Hoare** (1814-1884), husband of grandmother Charlotte from Cleveland.

² All of the "typo's" in the following conversation are intentional, as written.

[42] It is evident from the spaces between our four that we were giving some consideration to the matter of birth control. I shall not attempt to discuss that debatable and much debated subject; but by this time I was fully persuaded of the necessity of it in our case. The state of mother's health, our financial and other circumstances convinced me that at any rate it was the least of two evils. This is not saying anything as to method; but the principle appears to me to be sound and entirely justifiable, provided there goes with it a proper sense of obligation for the propagation of the race.

It was probably this year 1904 that we started Effie and LeVerne in school, their teacher being a Miss Montana West and not very satisfactory. At any rate the two started in together and kept parallel in the grades, LeVerne finally outdistancing his sister somewhat. Our district school by this time was considerably improved. There was a library, free text books and other equipment. We were maintaining a nine months' school year and there was some attempt to follow the regular grades.

About this time, I think the spring of **1905**, I bought a trim grey-roan half-western three-year-old colt or mare of Tony McGuiggan, giving him my note I think for \$100. We called her Daisy and I broke her in to drive single. I had bought a light open second-hand single buggy from Sam Hodge, and with Daisy it made a nifty outfit. I think now it is a wonder I escaped a serious accident for Daisy, being half broncho, was never entirely trustworthy, as I learned later.

I was on the school board at this time and a young lady teacher by the name of Edith Iliff¹ came to apply for the school. I drove with her over to Geo. Root's in this new outfit, taking a rather reckless chance as it appears to me now. However we returned safely, having hired Miss Iliff for the ensuing year. She proved very satisfactory and agreeable in every way. The following year Len Wood was engaged to teach.. He was a native of the district, married and living on the old Wood homestead. He had considerable teaching experience, was a fine fellow and we kept him on the job for three or four years; and I was happy to have my two growing boys under his influence; this being Harvard's first year in school. In good weather they could make the trip to and from school alone and on foot; but in bad weather, which was frequent, or in the winter, I would drive with or for them or both, with the team and buggy or sleigh.

During the ensuing years we planned quite definitely on making some change when Effaretta und LeVerne were through the grades. For one thing there was no high-school nearer than Winnebago. Also Mother was becoming rather restive and discontented with conditions on the farm; and I calculated her health and our well-being demanded a change of some kind sooner or later. Just what we would do or where we would go we left to be decided when the time came.

¹ The last name is iliff, with a capital "I".

I cannot date decisively the other events of these years up to 1910; but Lee and Ida Weber made us a short visit one summer not long after their marriage in 1903; perhaps in 1905; and I am quite sure [43] that Mother made one or more additional visits to Cleveland. These trips served as her vacation from the nerve-strain of our family life, and she always returned much benefited. Also she would return with a supply of second-hand suits, overcoats and other goods which helped to offset the expense of the trip.

As I have already indicated, these were poor years for farming due to the unfavorable weather. I continued renting out part of the land to neighbors; at different years to Will Aldrich, the Iams family and the White brothers. But grain crops and even potatoes and garden stuff was hard to raise and of poor yield and quality. We did have at different times, though, some nice strawberries and raspberries. Our chief source of cash income was the four cows I kept. My boys were getting old enough to help some with the work; even to handle a trusty team, shock grain, pitch bundles and help with the hay and the milking. And finally I got most of the lower land seeded to timothy and handled the whole farm with the boys' help. Outside of the farm work I took on an extra job or two. My uncle, Wm. Apsey, had left some property in LaCrosse to relatives in England, to be transferred on the death of his wife; and when that occurred they wrote to me about it to see what they could get out of it. So I went to LaCrosse and spent several days there. The property had depreciated in value and there were other complications with Aunt Apsey's relatives so that I was not able to get much out of it for them after paying expenses; but I did the best I could and didn't overcharge them for my own time but it was rather a thankless job. Nevertheless I rather enjoyed getting away for a few days and doing something different. While there I went out to the cemetery and saw where my uncle and aunt were buried¹.

I think I must enjoy taking care of other people's business, for along those years I took the job of looking after the Wetherbys². They were sister and brother-in-law of James Young, incompetents, and under the guardianship of Robert More. They were elderly and lived five or six miles northeast of us on a farm, which they owned and rented to a young Norwegian who lived with them. I also took large responsibility in the business of the church, acting as financial secretary, and for several years did all of the soliciting, collecting and accounting. I think I did a good job and I took pay for my time or donated it in lieu of a cash contribution I would have felt under obligation to make otherwise. These jobs took me out on the road and around the country a good deal but I had Fan and Daisy, two good single driving horses, and rather enjoyed the change from the farm work. It was not very lucrative but I did get pay for my time. When the old Mr. Wetherby died I was notified and went out there in the middle of the night. James Young was sent for and after the funeral took his sister to live with them at St. Paul. Their farm was sold and that piece of business wound up.

¹ Oak Grove Cemetery, LaCrosse, WI, section 30

² **Christiana (Young) Weatherby** (sp?), James Young's sister, and her husband **Jerome**.

I got from there a black mare which we called Betty, and for which I paid or allowed \$40. She was afflicted with the heaves but still quite serviceable and mated well with Fan for a trusty farm team. I think I got more satisfaction out of them than any team I had had up to that time. I then sold Ruth to Ed Haight at Winnebago, leaving us still four horses counting old Doll, who was becoming [44] considerably crippled. I was raising no colts along these years; and I purchased a new two-seated open buggy of Tony McGuiggan which we used for a family conveyance and light wagon, along with a single buggy, until worn out.

It was at this period, in my early forties, that I experienced the most definite change to which I can point as affecting my religion, or perhaps more properly, my religious thinking or philosophy. This had to do principally with my view of the Bible. Up to this time I held and defended the traditional doctrine of infallible inspiration and authority; and my whole religious life and philosophy was built on that presupposition. To abandon that for the more modern and liberal view, to which my honest study and reason was leading me, involved a revolution the implications of which would fill a volume by itself. I came definitely to the point of decision one day while at work alone in the field, being forced to it to maintain my intellectual honesty and integrity. The result was that I had to reconstruct my theology on the more solid and secure foundation of simple faith in Jesus Christ and reliance on the Holy Spirit. This I have succeeded in doing, I believe, not only without disaster but with much profit and satisfaction, both mentally and spiritually.

Up to the year **1910** there was little change on the farm or in the home. My parents were aging in the neighborhood of the nineties; my mother becoming gradually blind and very feeble, and my father quite irresponsible but with few physical disabilities. Their care devolved mainly on my sister but we were all affected by it to some extent. One of my father's hobbies was an impractical scheme for draining the big slough, which he worked out to his own satisfaction and outlined on a largo chart, and which he insisted on presenting to the county authorities at Blue Earth or the township officers at Easton, starting off alone if we refused to take him. This caused us considerable trouble.

He also got the notion of changing the will which was on deposit with the Probate Judge, Vance, at Blue Earth. My interest in the will had come to be a matter of importance as the farm had increased materially in value, and with my family to support and the crop failures for several years, I needed whatever there was in it and felt I was entitled to it. This seemed to be the feeling of the family, so there was general opposition to making any change and my brother Charlie tried to persuade the judge to refuse my father the will on the ground of his incompetence. The judge, however, delivered it when he called for it, so my father won out on that. I think his idea was to arrange matters so that I could not or would not leave the farm; and he proposed to deed the place to me, intending to keep it in his possession, I suppose, as long as he lived, not delivering the deed. I did not like being tied up in that way and it would leave the other members of the family out entirely. The will gave them \$350 each with the exception of Ella, who was to have \$500. I think my mother would have refused to sign without my

consent. However with the will gone I was out, so I conceived the idea of having or letting them make the deed and "if he put" it on record, signing my [45] note to him for \$3500 which would constitute his estate; interest on which would go for their support, and the principal, if not needed, could, if divided equally as the law provides, give the other members of the family their \$350 as in the will. This scheme we carried out and the deed was made out and duly signed on Apr. 1st, 1910, and was put on record the 8th. My father did not ask for, and I never mentioned to him about the note which I gave into the keeping of brother Charlie. It could have been probated and collected after my father's decease if necessary as the farm was good for it, being worth at that time at least \$8000. This was fair and satisfactory to the family. Their only recourse without the note would have been to contest the deed on the ground of my father's incompetence. All the conditions were present for a first class family quarrel and fight, and that nothing of the kind developed is, I think, a credit to all concerned including myself.

This year of 1910 marked the change from extreme wet to dryer seasons, and it was about this time or the following year that Mother's sister Nellie, with her daughter Dorothy, paid us a visit. One of the things we did was to take them on a trip to Winnebago one day. Elmer Rendall¹ had moved into Delavan and had a bay mare named Kit which I had out to the farm off and on. She mated well with Daisy and they made a swell driving team. So I borrowed Geo. Root 's surrey and drove them on it to Winnebago. As we were driving by the Baptist church Daisy, for some unknown reason, kicked up her heels and came down astride the tongue. Then she kicked some more and we were in the midst of a fine fracas. I guess I lost one line for they swung around in the street and we were in imminent danger of a serious accident and runaway. But instead of upsetting the vehicle the evener² broke, letting the team free from it, and no one was hurt but all were badly scared. I managed to keep or get control of the team and put them in a barn and then had to see to getting the damage repaired. We had planned to drive out a mile or two to Will Harding's for dinner but could not, so Will, who had his office in town, got someone with a car, just then coming into use, to take Mother, Nell and Dorothy out. I had an errand at Blue Earth and went over by train, about as sick from fright and worry as I have ever been. When it came to going home, Nell and Dorothy preferred to take the train back to Delavan but Mother decided to stay by me and we reached home without any further accident. I have never fully forgiven Daisy for that day's trouble but she never did anything so very bad again.

About this same time my mother became bed-ridden and totally blind, being nearly ninety years old. This added to the burden of care and along with other circumstances and conditions, the long years of service with little or no change, began to tax my sister severely; and in the spring of **1911** she came so near to a breakdown that I decided to take over the whole job ourselves for the time being and release her. The girls as well as the boys were getting older and able to be of some help and the change was agreeable to Mother as well, and

¹ Elmer Apey Rendall, son of brother Charles William.

² A swinging crossbar, used to equalize the draught, or pull, between two horses.

for a short time was quite satisfactory. But Mother was not equal to the task if it was to continue indefinitely and [46] before the summer was over I was convinced that something different would have to be done before very long. Effaretta and LeVerne would be ready for high-school the following year; in fact Verne was practically ready in 1911 so I kept him home to help with the farm work a good part of that school year. As to the farm I had everything in my own hands and I had paid Ella \$150, the amount necessary with her share in the note, to equal the \$500 provided her in the will. But I recognized that I was morally responsible for caring for my parents or seeing that they were cared for.

In the circumstances however, I decided in the spring of **1912** that my family, at least must move to Winnebago or Blue Earth for the coming school-year, at all costs. My big problem was to make suitable provision for my mother and father. Sister Ella was in no mood or perhaps circumstances, to return to the task, so I canvassed the family to see what could be done. Bro. Charlie was strongly against my carrying out my purpose; likewise Robt. More. But I knew my own mind and what I should do. I wrote first to brother Ben at Zion City to see if he would consider coming to the farm for a consideration; but he would or could not and urged me to stay on. The only other one of the family that seemed to me to offer any hope was J.F. He was at this time farming at Pilot Grove but was considering making a move, and had been to Missouri to look at some land he had a chance to trade his house in Zion City for, but had decided against it. So I went to see him and he appeared willing to undertake it if I would make it a sufficient object to him financially.

The bargain we finally made after some consultation with brother Charlie and Robert More, was for me to deed him the west 80 acres with the farm buildings, he to assume payment of the note, and have the use of the east 80 as long as father or mother lived by paying the taxes. In return it was understood he was to live there and care for the old folks as long as they lived; but that any extra-ordinary expense might be deducted from the note. This left me in undisputed possession of the east 80 but with no income from it for an indefinite time except from mortgaging it. I cannot say just how we arranged about the note, but it was held against the southwest 40 acres and I relinquished my interest in it. This gave J.F. clear title to the 40 with the buildings and the arrangement was satisfactory to me and so far as I can judge, to all concerned; and I have never regretted it, although it is evident that I laid down some considerable value, perhaps thousands of dollars. If I had been able and willing to stay on there another five or ten years there would have been a material advance in value on the farm. In the real-estate boom following the war it could probably have been sold for \$40,000, on paper, although it is doubtful that it would ever have been paid in full.

We arranged to make the change about Sept. 1st, and our next problem was to decide where we would move to and how. We were now free to go where we chose, and I could feel that my mother and father would be taken care of; but having the 80 and our relatives here, we [47] did not consider moving to a distance. I was inclined to get settled somewhere and had in mind to get a small farm of 20 to 40 acres near Blue Earth or Winnebago and began to look

around for something at both locations. We looked, I suppose, at a dozen or two places in or near the two towns, or cities, without finding anything to suit at a price I was willing to pay. Finally one fine day in June we were looking at Winnebago and drove up the north road past what is later the Bottomley 80 and back, the view to the west across the river valley being at its best; and stopping at the first place in town, simply fell in love with it; at any rate Mother did. I had been there before when alone and found it was for sale at \$2500; but it was not what I was looking for, being only a house and two lots with a barn on the northwest corner. However I liked the location. It was on the edge of town near the Parker College campus, at that time lying idle, the school having been discontinued by the Baptists who started it. There was vacant land around it and the buildings were about ten years old and in good condition; the house quite suitable for our family, having city water though not wired for light.

There was not, of course, the chance to continue farming except possibly I might rent some land near by and then no sufficient barn room for cows and horses; so that did not appeal to me, but after some consideration I decided to buy it and take a chance on getting work or a job to make a living. I had the 80 acres back of me valued at five or six thousand dollars but not much besides; my farm stock and equipment being about offset by debts I owed. So my only way to finance the purchase was to borrow money on the 80. This I succeeded in doing, offering the mortgage first to Robt. More, who refused it personally but got a loan of \$2000 for me through the Blue Earth bank with which he was connected. I then bargained for the place paying \$1500 cash and giving a mortgage for the balance of \$1000. This put all I had under mortgages but it seemed to be the best I could do and I am not sure to this day that I could have done better. It settled us in a home that we liked and it left me with enough free money, after selling most of my farm stock and machinery and paying up my debts, so that I would not be stranded financially for a year or so in any event. I had an attack of the "blues" I remember the day after I closed the deal; but I soon recovered from it and went along happily.

That year and the previous one the weather was much more favorable and the crops fairly good, which helped some, but having much of the farm in hay I did not profit by it to any great extent. It remained to prepare for our move to Winnebago, and I sold off the cattle with the exception of two of the best cows. I sold the best of the farm machines to J.F., also most of the hay, and the corn crop which it was too early for me to harvest. I had previously had old Doll killed and her hide made into a robe which I later gave to Ella. I sold Betty and I had bought Kit from Elmer, together with a good single buggy, my other single buggies being worn out. We still had the two-seated open buggy.

We moved to our now home the latter part of August. Never [48] having moved, this was quite a thrilling experience for me, as well as for the rest of the family and was thoroughly enjoyed. We moved by team and wagon, the boys making some trips alone. We took with us the three horses, Fan, Kit and Daisy and one of the cows, a white one, this being all the stock the barn could accommodate as it was when bought. Also we took about thirty buff-rock hens there being a small chicken-house attached to the barn. The white cow I sold later, I think that

same fall, and brought the other one, a blueish one, from the farm. I also kept considerable of the farming implements, mostly old, and some hay and grain for the winter. We of course moved our household goods and we bought a gasoline range and heating stove from Elmer and had him install a gasoline lighting system. Comfortably settled, my chief concern was to find some work, preferably with team. I got a few days right at the start, but I never succeeded very well at getting work by the day, either with or without the team.

I needed a steady job, and I had my eye on the janitorship of the college which was about to reopen under Methodist auspices, and I put my application in for that. Nothing was doing there till about the first of December, so our four children started in at the public school, which was about a mile from our house; Effie and LeVerne in high-school, Harvard in the seventh grade and Vera in the third. This was a new experience and LeVerne especially had plenty of worry at the first; particularly with his Latin. The school Superintendent at that time was a Mr. Graves; and the high-school Principal, a Miss Pine was rather disagreeable. But they all soon got adjusted and went through the year successfully.

One question up for decision was what church we would affiliate with. Mother had made some friends among the Presbyterians, the Damons, and others, and myself not being any too enthusiastic a Methodist by this time, we considered seriously changing to the Presbyterian church. But the fact that the college was to be under the Methodist and of our interest there, and the further fact that preacher H. F. Ackerman, whom we knew well and worked with at Delavan, and liked, was coming to Winnebago, decided us to stay by the Methodists; so there I have remained to the present. I avoided getting deeply into church work as much as possible, having lost some of my early enthusiasm for it, and my hands full enough at home. At present I am very much of a cipher so far as routine church work is concerned. My fundamental religious faith and interest, however, is as strong as ever, or stronger.

That fall of 1912 I kept busy at one thing and another as I always have, and my application at the college was acted on favorably. I had made no stipulation as to salary, and was somewhat disappointed to find the board disposed to hire as cheaply as possible, suggesting \$30 a month. The fact was they were not planning on much of a school that year, and only had four months to fulfill some condition in connection with the title to the property. I finally took it for the winter for \$35 as being better than nothing and a start on a permanent job.

[49] During the fall grandfather Hoare made us a visit which, of course, we all enjoyed. In due time the college president, Dr. Benjamin Longley, an old Methodist preacher of some reputation, arrived. Two lady teachers, Joy Secor and Florence Damon, were hired and school opened about December 1st. My work was not exciting but it took up most of my time and Dr. Longley proved to be rather disagreeable and hard to work with or for. However I got along with him and completed the four months, not knowing whether I would get a steady job there the following year or not.

It was now the spring of **1913**. Having to give up my original idea of a small farm, which was and is one of my hobbies, I planned to do a little farming on the side and take up the janitor work again in the fall if I was wanted. I still had the three horses and necessary equipment, so I looked around for a piece of land near town to rent but found none. Finally Max Knoff offered me, without rent, a few acres on a hill that he wanted broken up. There was one or two acres of level ground at the top with steep slopes on one side. It was about the most foolish thing I ever did in the farming line; and I put in a lot of work on that steep side-hill plowing from the top down. It was impossible to work with a team in any other way than to climb the hill idling and plow down. I planted corn on the top and potatoes on the side-hill and had visions of a bumper crop. What I got was a small crop of corn and no potatoes. At harvest time I went back to the old farm with Kit and Daisy and helped J.F. and Meryl¹ with the harvest and stacking at three dollars a day. During the summer the boys worked for George Rendall² on the farm at \$13 a month changing off on alternate weeks. It was a busy summer.

We were well satisfied with our home and surroundings and decided we were there to stay. But I wanted more room and decided to put what I had into the place. There were two vacant lots east of us, thick with the native oak trees and under brush and six lots to the northeast, clear of timber, that were going on a final tax sale and that I could get for \$180 or less than \$25 a lot. Also I was short of money to pay interest on my mortgages, and other expenses. So I got a second-mortgage loan of \$1200 on the "80" through the Winnebago bank and bought the eight lots. I then had the barn moved to the rear of the two lots to the east, bought an old barn up town, which I and the boys wrecked, and built a 12 ft. lean on the north and east of our barn at home. I put in a tile drain from the house to the low land beyond the barn, and piped the city water to the barn. We also did some remodeling to the house inside and built a wool-shed³ and wash-house 10x16 to the northeast of it. I had laid out almost a small farm which gave us plenty of garden room and more room for horses, cows and chickens. There were two lots directly north with some oak timber on that should go with the place but were not for sale at that time and which I hoped to get later at some price. There was and still is plenty of room for development and improvement, but the place was and is, well laid out.

That summer the dormitory was built at the college. I got a small amount of work there and the boys helped some with hoisting up [50] mortar with one horse, usually old Fan; and along in the fall I sold good old Fan for \$25. We hated to part with her but had no use for a third horse if I was to take up janitor work at the college again. Dr. Longley's idea, I think, was to get along with the students for janitor work, but the college board thought differently. The dormitory was to be occupied with a separate furnace to take care of and there was certainly need for a regular full time janitor. Also I had two or three prospective students that gave me a

¹ John Fletcher and Adra's firstborn son, **Robert Myrle Rendall** (1/4/1897 – 5/21/1982). Genealogy records show the spelling this way, but SRR spells it "Meryl" throughout this writing.

² This could be SRR's nephew, George Ogilvie Rendall, son of his brother, Charles William. George would have been about 27 at this point.

³ This looks like "wool-shed" but could possibly be "wood-shed".

pull. I asked for \$60 a month and finally compromised on \$50 for the fall and spring and \$60 for the winter months. Spring and Fall was supposed not to take my full time, so I could get off some to do some work at home or elsewhere, and which I did to some extent by putting in good long days. My idea was to develop something at home on the place as a side line to supplement my salary and while I never had much cash income from it, the cows, chickens and garden did help out materially with the family expenses. The horses never paid their way but they were nice and handy to have in many ways, and served us in place of a car when we wanted to go anywhere or take a ride. Autos were not so very common at that time, nor could we afford to own one.

We preferred the college, or Parker College Academy as it was called, to the high-school and I got some reduction on tuition by entering three students: Effaretta and LeVerne were sophomores, having passed the first year in high-school; Harvard managed to jump a grade and followed them by only one year. Vera continued in the public school, taking the fourth grade.

Our course was now pretty well charted and satisfactory, and everything went along according to schedule in general. My big problem was to make ends meet financially; in other words, to balance my budget. I had not been able to do this on the farm after accumulating my family, and I hoped to be able to do so under the changed conditions. But I found it impossible in the circumstances, with four in school and the limits of my income. Our goal was to get the four through high-school, or its equivalent at the college; and to that end both Mother and I bent our efforts, willing to sacrifice if necessary. There seemed nothing better to do as I could see than to go ahead and do the best we could regardless of the consequences financially and let the future take care of itself. This I decided on and have never regretted. It was no easygoing life I lived, but there was much compensation for the sacrifice and the effort put forth. I think school boards and people generally have an idea that a school janitor has a sort of soft job. But I can testify from experience that it is a full time man's job and no snap. This can be said for it though, that it is steady work and sure pay. With a yearly deficit to contend with I was constantly *loosing* out financially instead of accumulating something for a rainy day or old age, as I wanted to and always aimed to. It is not a pleasant experience. One feels like a man on a sinking boat, bailing hard to keep the water out yet gradually going down, down. However I did not let it upset me too greatly and I did not go under. I managed to pay our way, never defaulted on interest payments and never was dead broke or bankrupt; and I maintained a decent standard of living for the family.

[51] At the close of the school year in the spring of **1914**, my relations with Dr. Longley were such that I would not ask to stay on another year if he was to continue as president; and I had no steady work there through the summer vacation. There was general dissatisfaction with him and we hoped for a change. I got some work at Hights and around, waiting to see what developed. Harvard got a steady job by the month for the summer vacation with Charlie Hall, who was then living some two miles north of town; and LeVerne went to work for Ralph Johnson some distance southwest; conditions there were not very satisfactory and after a few

weeks, at his mother's suggestion or insistence, he quit the job. I was inclined to insist on his staying on there which probably would have been wrong. So he secured some work at Hights by the month and at odd jobs by the day or at home.

It must have been the spring of that year that I disposed of the 80 acres. With interest and expenses I would soon have been in serious financial difficulty; but luckily, or providentially, Adra inherited some money and I sold the 80 to them for \$6000; they of course to assume the mortgages amounting to \$3200 and paying \$1000 down, leaving a balance of \$1800. But according to our agreement J.F. was entitled to the use of the 80 as long as father and mother lived, so I took his note for the \$1800 without interest; \$800 to become due on the death of either one of our parents and \$1000 when both were gone. It would have been possible at this time to have paid the \$1000 mortgage on our Winnebago place and had it clear; but I could not have kept it so and gone ahead with our program as we did. So I deposited the notes at the bank as collateral and borrowed money there as I had to have it.

It was that summer or the previous one that our one good cow got sick, and after lingering around for weeks finally died; or I had her killed. That was a severe blow and a dead loss of \$75 to \$100. I bought another one, old Bluey, from Milo Haight for \$50 which gave us good service for two or three years. Also soon after, I bought a jersey from Frank Wilber as I was furnishing milk for the dormitory. That spring of 1914 Daisy raised a nice little sorrel colt sired by a Hambletonian, which we named Don; and the year was to witness some notable events.

There was of course the outbreak of the war in Europe about Aug. 1st; and in our family there was the 75th anniversary of my father and mother's marriage with both of them still living. This rare occurrence, the Diamond Wedding, we celebrated at the old farm on July 30th with the nine living children¹ present and a large gathering of in-laws, grandchildren and a few great-grandchildren; also the Broberg family, Judge Vance, and Rev. Westhaver, the Methodist preacher, and wife. I took considerable responsibility in arranging the program and other matters in connection with the event. It was a very rainy day but we drove over from Winnebago in the open buggy and they all got there one way or another. There were gifts but mostly confined to two upholstered chairs. Charlie Young, I believe, was the only one who presented a diamond. There were telegrams from Cleveland, Ohio, and a cablegram from England. There were speeches, and music was furnished by the Broberg girls.

[52] Before the opening of school in September a change was made, Rev. J. D. McCormick being secured to take over the presidency of the college. He proved to be quite

¹ Hannah, Elizabeth, Mary, Charles William, John Fletcher, Joseph Benson, Ellen, Simon Robert and Enos James. There is a picture of these 9 all together (<https://rendall.com/pics/charles-kids-c.jpg>), which possibly could have been taken at this event. The 3 that had already passed were George (age 3 in 1860), Job (age 22 in 1863), and Susan (age 38 in 1889).

agreeable and satisfactory and held the position for about six years. I continued in my position as janitor on the same terms and was kept plenty busy.

The other outstanding event of the year is my mother's passing on Nov. 7th¹. I had been to see her a day or two previous and we were getting ready to drive over again, then we got word by phone that she was gone. But we drove right over and on Nov. 10th laid her tired body to rest in the Lura cemetery. She was 93 years old the previous July. Precious is her memory. A practical nurse to assist in her care, a Mrs. Sophie Habinger from Mankato, had been in attendance for some months, I have always had a deep appreciation of the kind ministrations of this lady, and of my sister-in-law and brother, the two and four years after I felt obliged, in justice to my own family, to leave the farm.

Thus closed the year of 1914 and I had planned to raise another colt to mate Don in the spring of **1915** but lost it; so Don was the last of my line of horses and I sold him at three years old to Chester Hubbard for \$35, leaving us Kit and Daisy, a very nice team for our purpose. Kit, while *high-lifed*, was trusty and Mother or any of the family could drive her single with comparative safety.

We completed the school year successfully, and Harvard John went to work again for Charlie Hall who moved to about two miles east of town; and Verne continued to work around by the day or hour. He did not take to farm work as naturally as Harvard John, and he had the misfortune of getting into some accidents. At one time out at Hights he tipped over with a load of bundles and sprained his ankle severely. At another time I sent him with the team and wagon to haul grain to town from where they were thrashing at Lesters. Through a little misjudgment another boy with a heavy load was crowded off the side-hill where he tipped over and was injured. It looked at first like a fatal accident; and LeVerne came back home terribly shocked and upset, as he had good reason to be. I was at fault in sending him on that job and have never quite forgiven myself for it.

I think I worked by the day or hour, off and on, at the college through the summer vacation, and for at least several years, and continued as janitor when school was in session. That summer of 1915 we sent Effie to Winona to make up on some of her subjects at the State Normal² summer school, in preparation for graduating the coming year at Parker. She stayed at the home of our nephew, Arthur Cook³, who was filling the pastorate of the First Methodist Church; and helped with the housework for her board. I think it must have been some time that year that we had a bad time with the smallpox. Mother was on one her periodic visits East and LeVerne had been to some affair at Albert Lea and, as we supposed, contracted the disease from somewhere on that trip. I called old Dr. Durgin and we were quarantined, but I was

¹ This occurred exactly 100 days after the 75th wedding anniversary celebration, and 109 days after her 93rd birthday.

² "The Winona Normal School was Minnesota's first teacher-training school when it opened in 1860." (mnpedia.org)

³ **Silas Arthur Cook** (1/21/1875 – 4/17/1958), son of sister Hannah.

permitted to continue with my janitor work at the college. All of the four had it more or less violently, and I wrote Mother that I thought we could get along without her, but she could not content [53] herself and returned at once. It broke into the schooling for the four of them but they made it up one way or another. It was really not very serious and after fumigating etc. we were O.K. again. I was immune, having had it. I was a little concerned for Mother but she was vaccinated when a girl and did not contract it.

In the year **1916** the big event in our family at Winnebago was the graduation of our two eldest at the close of the school year; and expenses were heavy. LeVerne required three new suits that year: school suit, a Sunday suit and a graduation suit. But graduation night brought me a new thrill of real satisfaction. We were beginning to realize our ambitions; and I had hoped that I would be able soon to balance my budget; but that hope was long deferred. It was evident we could not do anything for our four in the way of schooling beyond the high school course; and they were given to understand that after that they would be expected to make their own way and go forward on their own responsibility. Instead of following my father's program of keeping them under parental control till they reached their legal majority at 21, or trying to, we practically gave them their liberty at their graduation; or about at 18 years of age. I calculated, however, that if they were able to do so they might help us out in a financial way if we needed it.

Mother had spoken to Herbert Clare for a chance for LeVerne to get a start on a job with the General Electric Co. at Chicago. So our plans for him, in which he concurred, were well laid. We did not like the idea of sending him to the big city alone; so as I felt myself entitled to a little vacation and trip, I decided to go with him to Chicago and from there to Cleveland for a visit with the Hoare's. So we worked around the college mostly until after the Fourth, and Verne earned enough to pay his fare to Chicago. We left by train about the middle of July and arrived in Chicago to find Herb and Nellie away on a visit to Cleveland. Brother Jim was living there at the time, so I left Verne there and went on to Cleveland. Neither of us took along much surplus money and when I returned to Chicago LeVerne had only two cents left; but Herbert had returned and started him on the job. I could only spare two dollars and told him I would send him three more when I got home, which would last him till his first payday, and he could pay me back as soon as he could. To his credit he sent me the \$5 from his first pay check and financed his own way from that time on. I arranged for him to stay at Jim's at \$4 a week for room and board; and Herbert started him in at 40 a month; and I guess he got along on that for some months till he got a raise. He seemed to take quite naturally to the city and to his work and continued to go up the ladder.

For Effaretta we looked to teaching. I do not think she had any great enthusiasm for it or ever developed much; and it may not have been the wisest choice for her. It was necessary for her to have a year of normal training, which she could take at Blue Earth, in order to teach in the country schools. So we arranged for her to put in the year there; and I financed it to the tune of \$150, with the understanding she should pay it back her first year of teaching, which

she did, or nearly so. She could get home quite often and our team and buggy did good service between Winnebago and Blue Earth. LeVerne I think went with the [54] resolve to stick to his job for a year without coming home. But I thought he might afford to come home for Christmas and persuaded him to do so. It was our first separation in the family and a year seemed just too long.

It remained at the close of this year for my father to depart this life. He passed away peacefully and with little apparent suffering on Dec. 28th, at the ripe age of 99 years, 9 months and 10 days. I was over to see him a day or so previous but was not present at the last. The funeral was held at the house on, I think, the 31st and he was buried by the side of my mother. It was a worrisome time for me. Harvard was out at Halls, where he had worked during that summer, doing their chores while they were away, it being vacation time at the school. I had work at the college to attend to and the cows and things around home; and on top of that Harvard got sick out there alone, and I went out a time or two to see and help him. It was cold winter and the day of the funeral Mother and I drove over with the team and bob-sled. Then Mother got one of her bad headaches and could not go to the cemetery or ride home. So I had to leave her there and drive home alone. I brought back with me my mother's Diamond Wedding chair, which I still have. Mother returned the following day or *soon* by train. Luckily Harvard's illness did not prove to be very serious and we all came through alive and not much worse off to begin the new year.

The \$3500 note I had drawn to my father, representing his estate, and payment of which was assumed by J.F. in accordance with our agreement was settled I believe by allowing for the extra nursing help, the funeral expenses and the monument, the balance being divided among the heirs netting them around \$275 each. As already stated, I had relinquished my interest in it to J.F. This so far as I know was a satisfactory settlement. My last note from J.F. was also due and paid, but had been mostly used to keep up expenses; and by the spring of **1917** my funds were running low again and the \$1000 mortgage on the place came due that year and would have to be paid or renewed. So either then or the previous year, I got a new mortgage loan through the bank, of J. E. Burnham, and increased it to \$1600. With this I paid the original mortgage and the balance went for other purposes.

On April 6th we declared war on Germany and made common cause with the Allies. I had followed the course of events more closely and with more sympathetic interest, I think, than the average American citizen. While my sympathies were altogether with the Allies, I was no extremist either for or against our going into the conflict. I do not think I was deluded by the propaganda to any great extent, or a victim of hysteria; so have never repudiated the position I took at the time. Of course I hoped that my own boys would not have to go. LeVerne, I believe, volunteered for service, being old enough, but rejected as not meeting the physical requirements.

That year Harvard John graduated from the high school course at Parker and went to work for the summer for Geo. McKay; Charlie Hall having moved out of the community. When

school opened at Parlor in September he took some studies in the commercial department and continued working part time at McKays. Later that fall he was recommended for a [55] position that was open in the bank at Truman, which he took and filled with good success. I think he must have gotten quite a severe attack of nostalgia; for one night, I believe it was at Thanksgiving, he started out and walked the 17 miles to Winnebago arriving home long after dark; a very tired but happy boy. After completing the year of normal at Blue Earth, Effaretta engaged to teach the school at Pilot Grove, at \$50 a month and boarded with a family by the name of Osmundson. She managed to get home several times during the nine months term, and I did some driving for her back and forth. I required that she pay me \$15 a month to liquidate the expense of her year at Normal, which she did. LeVerne was forging ahead at Chicago and had his salary advanced to \$75 a month; and as I was still unable to meet our expenses from my income, I asked him to help out \$15 a month; which he did with more or less regularity till he had contributed in the neighborhood of \$200.

This takes us into the year **1918**. The war was on in full force and we were expected to buy some Liberty Bonds even if we had to borrow the money at the bank; which I did to the amount of \$200. The bonds were supposed to be saleable later on and were, at a discount, and I disposed of mine in that way. What it amounted to was a contribution to the support of the war to the amount of the extra interest paid at the bank and the discount on the bonds. That year the draft was in effect and our two boys were eligible and were taken into the Students Training Corps about the first of September and stationed at Evanston, Ill. Soon LeVerne was selected and sent to Louisville, Kentucky, for training as an artillery officer. Effaretta engaged to teach five or six miles southwest in the Nichols district and boarded with the Nichols family. She managed to get home almost every weekend and I usually took her back on Sunday. The roads were fierce most of the time and the driving was not very pleasant. Vera entered her first year at Parker that fall, taking some commercial subjects in the high-school course. On Nov. 11th to our great relief the armistice was signed; which meant that our two boys would not have to go farther than their two months of training, and they both were honorably discharged soon thereafter. The emotional release I experienced at the close of hostilities after the months of tension, even though the war had not affected us very severely, was something to be remembered; and the year closed for us very happily, all being together at home for Christmas.

LeVerne returned to his job at Chicago for the following year of **1919**; and Harvard got a job with a farmer and dairyman some few miles northwest. In the spring he left there and went to work for Geo. McKay again. Prices were high and farmers were paying around \$60 a month with board, for hired men. The real estate boom was on and farm, and town property as well, was selling at abnormal figures. Money was flowing freely. I think I could have sold our place easily for \$5000 if I had put it on the market, and have gotten clear of all indebtedness. But I hesitated to do so. For one thing the general idea seemed to be that prices would remain high or continue to advance. Then too we were satisfied with our home and did not care to make a change and renting would have been expensive at the time. Wages and salaries had also advanced greatly, but work around home was taking considerable of my time; so I had not

asked or received any raise in wages at the college up to this time. Consequently I did not gain anything from the [56] higher prices. I was no war profiteer. On the contrary with the higher cost of living I was incurring some additional debts, in notes at the bank, store bills and so forth. But about this time I asked for a raise in salary and got an increase to \$90 a month. At the close of her school in the Nichols district Effaretta secured a position as saleslady in Damons store; which I think was more congenial to her, than teaching.

During that summer vacation we had a disagreeable experience involving Vera and the school at Parker. Vera was 14 and had been one year at the college. She was helping me, dusting the books in the library, and was working there alone one day before I returned after dinner. The professor who was at the head of the commercial department and who was the only head man in charge at the time, returned to the building and proceeded forcibly to take liberties with her which to this day she declares to have been serious, and thinks would have been more so if someone else had not come into the building. The office girl chanced to return, upon which the professor let Vera free; and she came over home in a hysterical state and reported what had taken place. Mother of course was greatly incensed and excited and was ready to go right over and raise Cain with the professor. But I advised more deliberation before taking any action. She then proposed calling Rev. Teachout, our Methodist preacher. The professor, however, was Presbyterian and naturally quite prominent in that church. So I thought better to call Rev. Bailey, the Presbyterian minister, which we did. He took a serious view of the case and the question was what to do about it. If it got out in the town it would have created a scandal and no end of gossip that would have been disagreeable to us and very bad for the school. We could have let it drop and said and done nothing; but I was not disposed to do that, and I don't think Mother would have consented to it; although she rather lost her nerve and was greatly worried not knowing what to do. That left it up to me; and after considering I decided to go over when the professor was alone, and face him with it, and see what he had to say. It took some courage for I didn't know what his attitude would be. I thought he might deny it, get angry and threaten to beat me up; or try to make out it was nothing and if I insisted bribe me to hush it up. But he hadn't much to say. I think he saw I was resolute, and he didn't know me so very well and may have been afraid of getting beat up himself. But I left him after letting him know that I didn't propose to let it drop. I reckon he was some worried after that. My Irish (or English) was up and I wasn't going to let him think that just because it was the janitor's girl he could get away with anything he wanted to; and we decided we would not pass it by and let Vera go on in school and take studies under him. President McCormick was away in the eastern part of the state; so I went and conferred with Rev. Bailey and he consented to go half way across the state to see McCormick. McCormick returned at once and I laid the matter before him. He then called a meeting of the professor and myself with Rev. Bailey present. I had made notes of what I knew and what Vera had reported. She told her mother some things she declined telling me. I presented the charges, slighting nothing, and the professor had little to say in his own defense. The sequel was that he resigned and a successor, Penrose by name, had to be secured on short notice for the opening

of the school year. So far as I know no hint of what occurred got out, and the professor I believe gave out that he was resigning on account of his health.

[57] This outcome fully satisfied us and everything went along happily with the opening of school in September. I have often wondered since if we took the matter too seriously and made too much of it; but with Vera's view of the episode after these 20 years, I am inclined to think that I acted judiciously.

That fall of '19 Harvard went to Minneapolis and secured a job with the N. W. National Bank; and roomed with Harold Talley for a time. Effaretta did not make any effort to engage a school; but was asked to take one at Kiester; some distance southeast where a vacancy occurred, and the salary \$110 was too good to be refused; so she accepted the offer and had good success; boarding with a family by the name of Hintz.

After celebrating Christmas at home with my family, I went over to Delavan for a visit and came in contact with another religious sect that was enlisting the interest and adherence of my relatives there. I was gradually becoming more and more unsatisfied, rather than dissatisfied, with the Methodist and other major denominations, but soon decided that this new outfit was not what I was looking for. Considerable pressure was brought to bear to draw us into it but with no success; although I gave them a fair hearing as I had the Dowieites. Both groups I believe were and are earnestly and sincerely christian; but too narrow and conservative in their beliefs for me. Soon after this in January of **1920** brother J.F. suffered a serious mental collapse. I went over to visit him and saw that there could be no question as to his condition; and it was decided that he would have to go to the hospital at St. Peter. Elmer Rendall and Adra went with him, coming first to Winnebago by train where they had to wait over most of the day for a train to St. Peter. I met them with the team and sleigh and the three of them staid with us till afternoon to get the other train. His trouble was attributed to hardening of the arteries; and it is probable that some physical ailment was the chief cause, as he died the following month¹ there at the hospital. The funeral was at Mankato and I went by train in company with Rev. McElroy who preached the funeral sermon. Rev. McElroy then living in Winnebago was a Baptist preacher whom J.F. thought much of. Burial was at Mankato² by the side of his first wife Addie.

During this year Effaretta completed the school at Kester successfully. LeVerne was succeeding at Chicago and formed an attachment for a young lady by the name of Bernice Van Vranken. He also became interested in Christian Science, one of the newer religious sects but which by this time was well known and established. Harvard was in the bank at Minneapolis and Vera in school. By this time Harvard was helping us some financially; for one thing turning over to me his state soldiers bonus of \$60. During the summer a change was made in the

¹ 2/10/1920

² Glenwood Cemetery, Mankato, MN

presidency of the college; E. C. Reineke succeeding President McCormick. Effie took the school again at Kiester in the fall, running into the year **1921**.

Brother Ben at Zion was at this time failing in health with what was presumably tuberculosis, and died in May of this year¹. I was not in a position to be able to see him at any time during his lingering illness, nor go to his funeral; but I corresponded with him considerably the previous summer while he was vacationing on a farm in Wisconsin.

[58] He had lost his strong faith in Zion and Dowieism, but not in God; and was much interested in Russellism, another minor religious cult and idea, which survives to the present under the name of Jehovah's Witnesses. Previous to this Dowie himself had died² but the concern he started was and still is carrying on under his successor, Voliva³. Brother Ben, however, never resorted to the doctors and died at home without any medical attendance, and was buried in the cemetery at Zion⁴. Sister Ella was at Zion and with him at the last.

It was about this time or a little before that the real-estate boom blew up and prices of farm land declined abruptly; town property and general prices more gradually; and wages and salaries least of all for a time. But even with my salary of \$90, the maximum I ever drew, and the help the boys gave me, I was still unable to balance my budget; which was the goal I was constantly aiming at and to which I was bending my best efforts. Just before the collapse I decided it might be wise for us to sell the place. I put a price on it of \$5500 and had two or three buyers who came and looked it over; one of them, the Sweeneys, considered it seriously. But we failed to make the deal and they bought a house uptown at an equally high price. It has been for sale ever since at receding prices, but I still hold it in my own name.

That spring on March 23rd, after a somewhat turbulent courtship, LeVerne was married to Bernice; and during the summer they came to visit us at Winnebago. Effaretta was being courted and was corresponding regularly with Alba Carrell; following an acquaintance that started with their school days at Parker; and that summer she worked in Alveys store located in the Sharp block. She appeared to me as quite happy and satisfied with her work in the stores. But I could see no future worthy of her in that; and I confess to having advised and persuaded her to marry; which I have never had occasion to regret. Alba had learned the butter-makers trade and was second man in the creamery at Farmington.

Harvard had lost or *quitted* his position with the N. W. Bank, but soon secured another with a bank on Lake St. Vera was entering her senior year at Parker and was keeping steady company with one of her classmates, George Smith. He and Roy Hagen roomed at our house for a time. Both George and Vera were young and foolish enough to form a marriage engagement which neither Mother nor I fancied. Still George was a religious steady-going boy,

¹ 5/9/1921

² 1907

³ Wilbur Glenn Voliva (1870 – 1942)

⁴ Mt. Olivet Memorial Cemetery, Zion, IL

and we thought her safer in his company than with whoever might happen along. They quarreled occasionally but stuck together for some time after graduating.

That fall Alba took full charge of the creamery at Clear Lake, a small town near St. Cloud; and on January 10th, **1922**, he and Effie were married at a quiet ceremony in our home, Rev. Teachout officiating. The same evening George and Vera took them to Amboy with President Rieneke's Ford; from where they went on by train to St. Paul and Clear Lake, and so far as I can see lived happily ever after. LeVerne was not so fortunate; and soon gave us hints of discontent and domestic infelicity. Harvard was not yet seriously threatened with love and marriage; although I believe he was more or less interested in some one or two of the city girls with which he came in contact. Vera graduated with honors at the close of the school year, having taken stenography and typewriting in the course, and so was equipped to take a job and [59] make her own way. She went to stay for a short time with Effie and Alba at Clear Lake, and to look for work in Minneapolis. With Harvard's help she soon landed an office job with a real-estate man by the name of Medgorden at \$60 a month, which she filled satisfactorily and managed to support herself in the city with Harvard's advice and a frequent loan to bridge her over to the next payday. George went on to school for a year or two at Hamline. It was in January that my sister Hannah died¹ at Blue Earth; her husband, Silas Cook, having preceded her by about ten years.

In the spring of that year my finances had reached another crisis. My \$1600 mortgage was due and I had other debts piling up. Money was plentiful at high interest rates, and I succeeded in getting another mortgage loan through the bank, of the elder Phipps; this time of \$2000 at 8% interest. The banker valued the place at \$3000; but I was holding it at \$4000 or more at this time. This high rate of interest, among other things, kept me in the red for the succeeding five or six years.

In mid-summer I had the chance to go to the cities and on to Clear Lake with Alfred Rendall² who was driving a Ford coupe; and so I had a few days vacation and an enjoyable trip. We stopped in Minneapolis going, and thought we broke a record making the trip home from Clear Lake, about 200 miles, in one day. That summer Verne and Bernice made us another visit in Winnebago.

Hoping to realize some financial gain as well as for other considerations we decided that fall to rent the downstairs part of the house; Mother to go to Minneapolis for the winter and keep house for Harvard and Vera; and they rented rooms on Elliott Ave. We secured a good renter at home, at \$25 a month; and I took my dinners at the dormitory and boarded myself for breakfast and supper, and slept at home occupying the upstairs. This arrangement worked out fairly well and Mother was thus able to go to Clear Lake for a week or two in November to

¹ 1/18/1922

² Son of brother Charles William.

welcome our first grandchild, Robert Frederic Carrell¹, who was born at the hospital in St. Cloud on November 15th. At the holidays I got away to go to Minneapolis, and we all went by bus to spend Christmas day with Effie and Alba at Clear Lake; beginning a practice that has been followed with few exceptions ever since. I was nearly crippled, and suffering, with a very sore toe at the time, but managed to get around.

On returning to Winnebago I found that the grade building at the public school had burned to the ground while I was gone. During the winter in 1922 father Hoare died at Cleveland. Because of the circumstances we were in, Mother did not get to see him during his illness or go to the funeral. On Feb. 4th [1923] the Methodist church in Winnebago burned down. It was on a Sunday morning and we were beginning the services when fire broke through the floor of the room at the rear. The preacher himself, Rev. Knehans, gave the alarm and we all made our exit in safety and watched the building go up in smoke.

In the spring our second grandchild was born at Chicago to Verne and Bernice, and named Jane Ann. Hope was entertained that her coming would pacify the troubled marital situation, but it appeared to have [60] little if any effect in that direction. Mother returned from Minneapolis in May and we planned for her to spend the next winter with Mother Hoare and the folks in Cleveland. That spring Alba got the chance to take over the management of the creamery at Farmington where he had learned the trade, at a big advance in salary, which looked too good to turn down; so the family moved there and during the summer I took a few days vacation and visited them there; getting a ride with Pres. Reineke who was making a trip to the cities. Alba had purchased an Overland coupe with which he brought the family to Winnebago for a visit. LeVerne was also home for a visit at the same time, while Bernice and Jane Ann were in California; and the three of them went out to the golf grounds for an outing; and while there Effie had the misfortune of losing control of the car and going backwards down the river bank. She jumped or tumbled out and rolled to the water's edge but neither she nor the car was seriously injured; a lucky escape which furnished some merriment after the scare was over.

The creamery at Farmington had changed hands and the move there did not turn out as well as at first appeared, and early in the fall the family moved to St. Paul and stayed with the Carrells for a short time, till Alba secured a job on a dairy farm at Withrow some 12 miles northeast of the city. Harvard continued in the bank on Lake St. in Minneapolis and Vera at Medgordens. Mother went to Cleveland about Sep. 1st and I planned to rent the downstairs again but did not have as good luck renting as I had the previous year. I let the rooms to some of the students at the college with rather indifferent returns. However with my \$90 salary I think I managed to catch up some on my finances. At Christmas that year, I went to Minneapolis and stayed one night with Harvard, who was rooming out in Midway, and one night at Hamline with George Smith, and went with him Christmas morning to Withrow, where

¹ Robert Frederic Carrell (11/15/1922 – 10/7/2005)

with Harvard and Vera we spent the day; and we all continued in our respective locations in the following year of **1924**, which was to witness some changes before its close.

In the spring Mother returned home from Cleveland, stopping in Chicago to visit with LeVerne and Bernice at their home; and the new 40 or 50 thousand dollar church which the Methodists had built was dedicated. This rather ambitious enterprise was undertaken on the supposition that Parker was a permanent and growing institution. It was at this time functioning as a preparatory and junior college and appeared quite prosperous. But it was never self-supporting and was more or less in competition with Hamline University at St. Paul for support. Consequently the high authorities in the church decided to close it up with the 1924 commencement; to the great disappointment of the Winnebago church and community. The cost of the new church building was supposed to have been provided for at the dedication but it finally emerged with a debt of about \$10,000 the greater part of which remains unpaid after fifteen years. During the summer while the college property was in process of being liquidated or returned to the Baptists, I was retained as caretaker of the buildings and grounds by Rev. Knehans who had it in charge, and was paid my regular salary of \$90 a month; and in the fall I served as janitor at the church during the Methodist annual [61] conference which was held in Winnebago. At that conference we entertained Rev. and Mrs. Haley, the preacher who had married us 28 years before. My job that summer was something of a sinecure¹, as there was not much to do; the buildings and grounds not being in use. During that summer LeVerne and Bernice with Jane Ann made us a short visit; going on from there to Withrow; this being the only time I have ever seen Jane Ann, and which I but faintly remember if at all. I think it was at this time that Harvard quit his job at the bank and so on after went to work for a short time for the Pillsbury Milling Co. He was also keeping company more or less steadily with one Florence Grainger² with whom he apparently fell in love. Vera quit at Medgordens in Minneapolis that spring and went to a bank job at Miles, Iowa; for what reason I cannot say; but while there she broke off her engagement with George Smith, which Mother also had come to disapprove of. Also she neglected to write for a period of several weeks which caused a great deal of worry. However we finally heard from her and she returned home before winter and went to Effie's at Withrow for a while.

With the return of the college property to the Baptists that fall my ample salary there came to an end; but I continued on under the Baptists at \$25 a month and had to look around for some additional source of income. I applied for a job as bookkeeper at the poultry concern under Dan Collette but failed to land it, so finally hired out to Bottomley, the dairyman, at \$50 a month for about an 8 hour day. This included Sundays and holidays but along with it I was able to hold my job at Parker. I put in about 2 hours morning and evening milking, and 2 hours forenoon and after dark delivering milk; I boarded at home, the dairy farm being close by. This

¹ sinecure – “a position requiring little or no work but giving the holder financial benefit”

² **Florence Luella (Granger) Rendall** (8/13/1898 – 5/20/1961). Note, “Granger” is the proper spelling of her maiden name.

was not a bad job but it cut my income down to \$75 a month which was not enough to keep up expenses and pay interest and taxes on the place; so I continued to run behind. This in spite of the fact that I borrowed another \$100 from LeVerne intending to pay it back which I never felt able or called on to do. Harvard also had helped out on our finances to the amount of \$200, along these years, and I settled one store bill at Damons of near \$200 by giving my note at 7% and which ran for a number of years.

Mother too was becoming somewhat tired and discouraged, and while she had outlived to some extent her earlier troubles, particularly her severe headaches, she developed other distresses that were difficult even for the doctors to diagnose. At one time we called Dr. Cooper who concluded she was suffering from gall-stones; but her symptoms varied so greatly from time to time that it was hard to settle on anything with any certainty; and as she always recovered quite speedily and fully from any attack, as she always had, we took no great alarm and made the best of our situation.

I sold off our cows and I had previously sold Daisy to Meryl Rendall; so we only had a few chickens and old Kit which I used some delivering milk. I commenced with the job at Bottomleys about Dec. 1st and having to follow the routine every day, Mother and I spent that Christmas at home, LeVerne and Bernice in Chicago and Harvard and Vera with Effie and Alba at Withrow. Early in the year of **1925**, Rev. [62] Knehans secured a job for Vera with Collette's Poultry Concern in Winnebago and she returned to live at home which was very agreeable to Mother and me. Harvard's girl friend, Florence, had gone to Chicago and got a position with the General Electric Co. in Herbert Clare's office, and he followed suit and secured a job with the same company. Meanwhile LeVerne's domestic difficulties were becoming acute; and in mid-summer while vacationing in Wisconsin, Bernice and Jane Ann returned to Chicago and LeVerne came with the car to Winnebago and took mother and me for a trip of several days, going first to Withrow and from there northwest to Lake Mille Lac¹ and Brainerd; returning home by way of Minneapolis. This was a very enjoyable outing for us as we had never been in northern Minnesota; but it was rather cool camping out at night.

During the school vacation that summer I was only working half time at Bottomleys helping with the milking; so was able to get off for a week. I also had my application in for janitor at the public school where a vacancy had occurred; and landed the job at \$85 a month; and I started work there in August. LeVerne returned to his work in Chicago and in September sent Bernice and Jane Ann to California for an indefinite stay with her mother; concluding he would rather live alone, for a while at least. At the school I found I had a full time job at a distance of a mile or more from home which I made on foot, taking my dinner or lunch with me, and I was expected to be there evenings when anything was going on, till ten o'clock or after. Also the engineer, Dan Nichols, with whom I had to work more or less, proved disagreeable and hard to work and get along with. However I managed to put up with it and didn't let it worry me

¹ About 100 miles from northwest of Withrow, which is just outside of Minneapolis.

too greatly. In order to do a satisfactory job without overworking, it appeared to me wise and almost necessary to get nearer my work for the winter months; so I looked for some rooms to rent uptown and found three unfurnished but heated rooms in the Sharp block about two blocks from the school-house; which I rented for three months for \$50; and we moved there taking only what furniture, cooking utensils etc. we would need and closing up the house for the winter. Vera was still with us and working at Collette's, and the arrangement worked out well for all of us as it was a change for Mother too.

We decided we had better dispose of old Kit under the circumstances. It is a trial to part with an old horse that has served faithfully for years but I decided that rather than sell her for a song to someone who most likely would not give her decent care, I would have her killed. I never felt more like a criminal than when I was arranging for it; but I knew it was the best thing to do and went through with it.

In Dec. 1925 LeVerne came from Chicago, being too greatly upset with his family situation to go ahead as he was; and from Winnebago he went to Withrow and stayed with Alba and Effie until after Christmas. I got off from my work long enough to go there for the day. Mother and Vera of course went and Harvard came from Chicago and we were all together once more and had our picture taken, standing in single file.

[63] Returning to our several places, LeVerne decided in January **1926** to quit his job and follow Bernice and Jane Ann to Los Angeles, California and straighten out the tangled situation in one way or another. We did not hear from him for months and I must leave him to tell his own story; but the outcome was a divorce and a job again with the General Electric in San Francisco. This episode was another cause for worry but I marveled at the fortitude with which Mother went through it. I got along quite well with my work and enjoyed it, but it was new and kept me busy early and late with a possible hour or so off in the middle of the day. My sister Mary died in Florida in Feb. of this year¹, James Young having preceded her by less than two years².

In the spring we returned to the house and sometime that summer Vera quit her job in Winnebago and went back to Withrow to look for work in St. Paul. During the summer I took a three weeks vacation from my work at the schoolhouse but put it in repainting our house at home, giving it two coats; and worked harder I think than I would have on my job. Meanwhile Harvard's courtship or engagement with Florence was not proceeding any too smoothly; and there were periods when he thought it was all off; and in the fall of '26 he offered to help us some more on our finances. It began to look as though I would have to let our home go for the mortgage which I was reluctant to do. I was also reluctant to accept any more financial help; as it meant giving up my ambition to achieve financial independence; and I did not do it without a

¹ 2/10/1926

² 8/24/1924

pang. On the *otherhand* I thought that if H.J.¹ was destined to remain single he might better help me to hold the home then to dispose of his surplus money in other ways. So beginning with November of this year he sent me 25 or 50 dollars a month for several months, aggregating some \$300.

That summer Alba and Effie left the dairy farm at Withrow and moved into St. Paul at Hazel Park; and Vera, after working at some temporary jobs, secured a position in the office of the Travelers Insurance Co. In the fall we rented two of the rooms we had previously, from Mrs. Dr. Hill who had taken them over and was occupying the adjoining ones. Two was all we needed now that Vera was gone, so we closed up the house and Mother and I moved in there again for the winter. That year we remained in Winnebago for Christmas and Vera came from St. Paul to spend it with us. The day she came the Florence Hotel burned to the ground. So the winter of **1927** found us in the Sharp block. After some months of rather indifferent employment in the city Alba and Effie moved from Hazel Park to the upstairs apartment at Carrells and Vera took a room across the street from them; and in May LeVerne was transferred from San Francisco to Portland, Oregon, to take the position of District Auditor of the Northwest district. While in San Francisco he met a young lady by the name of Frances Coffey² and apparently they fell in love, at any rate she followed him to Portland but he did not write us anything very definite in regard to it.

Mother's health that winter and spring was precarious and she took some treatments from Dr. Hill for neuritis with apparent benefit, and she took up some work in the Sunday School. After moving out to the house about Easter, Mother suffered a severe attack one Sunday at the church of what, with little doubt, was heart trouble; but we did not recognize it as such at the time. I could not get hold of a doctor and [64] she finally rallied and someone brought us out home with a car; and we went along without any unusual alarm. My work at the school was heavy and I was some worried over Mother's condition but had no idea that our married life was approaching the end. So in June I took a little vacation and went for about ten days with Effie at Carrells. We also arranged for Harvard to drive out from Chicago and take his mother back with him, from where she would go on to Cleveland for another visit. He was driving a used car and they left Winnebago on the 4th of July, and on the 7th my sister Libbie More passed away at Blue Earth and I attended her funeral. Robert More died the following year³.

Mother was in no condition to make the trip to Cleveland I now know; but she had always benefited by it and I thought it probable she would again. She could have prolonged her visit indefinitely; but there is little doubt that she realized she was slipping and so cut it short and hurried home. She came by way of St. Paul, arriving at Effie's about all in. After resting there she came by bus to Winnebago. I met her at the bus and saw at once that she had not

¹ Harvard John

² **Frances Mary (Coffey) Rendall** (7/22/1900 – 2/6/1980)

³ 8/23/1928

gained anything physically. It was pure luck or a divine providence that she arrived safely home. But she continued to fail and suffer severely by spells. In September Harvard come home during his vacation, and I suggested he might take us to Rochester; but Mother was not favorable to it and did not care to go. So he took us over to Blue Earth to see Dr. Broberg, who at once discovered that her heart was failing and gave us little hope for any permanent recovery; although he did not predict any immediately fatal result. He gave her the usual treatment and she took his medicine, but to no effect and she continued to fail.

I was busy at the school early and late and had to leave her much alone; sometimes making an extra trip home, of a mile or more, during the day. Mother never wanted any of the neighbors or strangers fussing around if it could be avoided. In the circumstances I thought it would be best for us to move up town as soon as possible, where she would be near Dr. Hill who was always very kind to say the least. So I engaged the two rooms again with that in view. But Mother was reluctant to make the move. I think she realized, or at least had a strong suspicion, that her end was near and wanted to stay in our own home. As for myself I had seen her rally so many times after being apparently at death's door, that it was hard for me to believe she would fail to do the same again. Still this was different.

But I did not take it very seriously till one fearful night in October, we seemed to battle the grim reaper the live-long night, in paroxysm¹ after paroxysm; not knowing whether each one would be the last. Ordinarily in such circumstances one would call in a neighbor and a doctor; but this was not much different from what we had gone through times without number except that it was more severe and threatening owing to Mother's weakened condition. So I hesitated to call Dr. Broberg from Blue Earth or either of our local doctors, and we fought through till the morning, which brought some relief along with the problem of what to do.

Mother, however, had the most important part of it all thought out. She had in readiness clean bedding and night clothes and directed me to call Dr. Broberg, then to have him call in Dr. Mills, our local [65] doctor, for consultation, and leave her under his care. This I did. I was needed and expected on my job at the school, but could not think of leaving Mother alone so phoned to the superintendent and excused myself temporarily, and phoned and went to see several of the neighbor women to get some one to come and stay for the day; finally secured Mrs. Maude Paschke whom we knew well and who was very kind and agreeable. Effaretta was expecting another baby soon and Vera was working but I phoned to them at St. Paul to see if Vera could come for a few days; and she arrived I think that same evening. The doctors seemed to be in complete agreement as to the state of the case and what could done, which consisted principally of hypodermic injections to enable her to sleep through the night. After that terrific night I think both Mother and I practically gave up the fight for her life, that had engaged us off and on for our thirty years; and she never left her bed thereafter. Still I could not rid myself entirely of the idea she would rally, up to the very last.

¹ paroxysm – “a fit, attack, or sudden increase or recurrence of symptoms”

Vera and I took care of her then for about a week; only to see her gradually losing ground. I then secured a substitute to take my job, so as to have all of my time at home as her care was getting to be too much for Vera alone. Mother of course wanted to see the rest of the family; and I was anxious to have them come if she was going to leave us; which I never felt quite sure of. But I kept them informed of the situation the best I could. Effaretta then came with Bob¹, and later in the week Alba came for a day or two and Harvard and her brother Walt² drove out from Chicago. I had sent LeVerne a telegram and received a reply by wire that he could not leave to come. Finally the outcome appeared so obvious that I sent another telegram saying: "The doctor gives no hope; Mother waits and pleads for you." That had the desired effect and he wired back he was leaving and he arrived I believe on Friday. Mother was just barely able to recognize him but that was enough. It was a great satisfaction to me that our four could all be there and I was quite reconciled to her going and prayed that she might that night while they were all present. But she lingered on into Saturday and caring for her was becoming a heavy burden and serious problem.

Effaretta was in no condition to undertake it, and Vera was pretty well tired out and would have to be back to work soon or stand the chance of losing her job; the boys likewise. So we debated that day what to do. The alternative seemed to be either a hired nurse and a house-keeper or the hospital. Either would involve a heavy expense if long continued for which we were ill-prepared; and none of us had any idea how long a siege might be ahead. In fact, as I have said, I never got rid entirely of the idea that she might rally. The hospital seemed the best and most reasonable solution as we all agreed. But I had a severe struggle that day to reconcile myself to letting her go there. I had never left her in any emergency and I wanted to stay right by her to the end. However I yielded to the force of circumstances and the judgment of the family, and I took the opportunity of one of her intervals of consciousness to tell her the conclusion we had come to; as I didn't want to make the move without her knowledge and consent. She made no objection. As a matter of fact I think she cared little about anything, at least anything earthly, after Verne's [66] arrival.

Having made arrangements for her at the hospital, Harvard left with Walt the following morning, Sunday, after handing me \$40 which he had with him, with which I paid the first week's hospital bill of \$55. Dr. Mills, I and LeVerne then removed her to the hospital, under an opiate; and LeVerne left for St. Paul and Portland that same evening. At the hospital everything of course was clean and neat, and the nurse was a charming young woman, a Miss Berry. The two girls decided to remain for a day or two, and I took up my work again at the school. I could stop in at the hospital on the way back and forth and did Sunday night and Monday. I don't think Mother was conscious or realized a great deal after going to the hospital; and my parting with her really took place on Sunday when she entered there.

¹ son Robert

² Anna's brother **Walter W. Hoare** (1884 – 1970)

Monday evening when I called in to see her, there was little change that either the doctor or I detected; and it was somewhat of a surprise when the telephone rang at about 3 A.M. Tuesday morning, the 18th¹, and Dr. Mille informed me that she was gone. I asked him to come to the hospital to make sure there was no mistake; which he did, and Vera and I went right down. The undertakers, the Bostons, were called and we brought all that was mortal back to the room in her own home before the break of day.

It was necessary now for me to get my substitute again at the school and some telegrams off as soon as possible and I phoned to Alfred who was ready to give me all his time and all the help he could, although I thought he was rather slow in getting around. However everything was attended to in due time. LeVerne I knew would be far on the way to Oregon and would not want to return at that distance; so a little later I sent a telegram to him at Portland which he received on arriving there. I wanted my sister, the girls' Aunt Ella², who had helped us out over many hard places, for company. And Alf³ took me by auto, first to Delavan to give the news to the folks there, then out to the Andersons⁴ for Ella. About a mile before we reached Andersons he ran out of gas; so I walked on while he secured some at a farm near by. Returning with Ella to Winnebago we secured a burial lot in Rose Hill cemetery and made the other necessary arrangements.

Harvard soon arrived again from Chicago, it being the fourth trip he made that summer with his car. The funeral was *schedule* for Thursday P.M. at the house; as Mother had a strong prejudice against public church funerals. Flowers began to arrive in profusion and I realized for the first time what that expression of human sympathy may mean on such an occasion. On Thursday morning Mother's sisters, Daisy from Cleveland and Nellie from Chicago arrived by train. Brother Jim and Jessie had also come. Rev. Jesse Kenderdine conducted the funeral service. As it happened he was and is my choice among all the preachers I have ever known. Music was furnished by Dr. Oliver Durgin singing "Lead Kindly Light"⁵, and one or two selections on the phonograph. I did my best to have it as I thought Mother would have wished; but I was quite dissatisfied with the result on the whole. But if we are permitted to look back from the great beyond, I suspect that the things that seem so important to us here will appear of little consequence; indeed may be cause for merriment. Such is my faith in a future life.

[67] Thus closes the second period of my life story; and while it was not all smooth sailing by any means, there is much for which I can give sincere thanks and look back upon with pleasure and satisfaction.

¹ 10/18/1927

² Ellen Anna

³ Alfred Rendall

⁴ **Frank Adelbert Anderson** (2/11/1869 – 4/13/1930) and **Samantha Anne (Lewis) Anderson** (1/28/1888 – 3/6/1943). Samantha was sister (Ellen) Ella's daughter – Ella appears to have lived with the Andersons.

⁵ A hymn with words written in 1833 by Saint John Henry Newman as a poem titled "The Pillar of the Cloud".

My Post-Married Life, Oct. 18, 1927 to - - -

At the termination of my married life, I was 61 years and 8 months old and I think in good, if not any too vigorous, physical, and mental condition. My job kept me fully employed physically, and the scope of my intellectual interests expanded rather than diminished in this phase of my experience; so that I made the transition to the status of widower without any great upset in morale. After the funeral on Thursday, Effie and Vera remained for a few days and I arranged with Dr. Hill for a single room instead of the two I had spoken for, moving what furniture and things I would need there. We went over the goods in the house, the girls taking some things back with them and some I sent up later by the drayman¹. The balance I left in the house and closed it up for the winter; and I took up my work at the school I believe, the following week.

I now took my noon meals at the restaurant, and breakfast and supper in my room. This was very satisfactory, and I was able to clear about half of my salary every month. But the doctor's bills, funeral and other expenses left me some \$300 in debt in addition to my Damon note of near \$200. However my credit appeared perfectly good locally and no one crowded me unduly for payment. I received a refund of \$25 from the hospital and returned \$20 of it to Harvard before he went back to Chicago.

Taking stock of the circumstances and my inclinations, I decided to keep on with my janitor job indefinitely if I could, and which I felt pretty sure of, and liquidate my obligations as soon as I could. It gave me a lot of satisfaction, and perhaps I may say inspiration, to be able to balance my budget and substantially reduce my indebtedness from my income. The boys were both making good money, and I asked them to help me out what they could. LeVerne seemed to have his hands full and was contemplating remarrying, but he had lent Walt Hoare \$200 a year or two previous and offered to turn that over to me if I would or could collect it. Harvard was still uncertain about getting married, so he continued sending me some money about every month, and Vera also helped out on a smaller scale. So I soon had the process of getting out of debt well under way.

About three weeks after my bereavement, Alfred's wife Hazel² died unexpectedly at the hospital leaving a baby boy which they named Donald³. Vera came to be with me at the funeral. The male quartet sang "O Love that will not let me go" and my pent up emotions found vent in a flood of tears, which seem to come more easily ever since. Alfred had been so helpful and sympathetic, that his loss which seemed so tragic, kept me in a state of emotional tension, in fact renewed it with increased intensity. Still I felt no bitterness; and under some sort of inspiration I think, I wrote a bit of poetry the [68] day after Hazel's funeral which I entitled

¹ A drayman was historically the driver of a dray, a low, flat-bed wagon without sides, pulled generally by horses.

² Hazel Lavina (Wood) Rendall (4/?/1891 – 11/10/1927)

³ Donald Leroy Rendall (11/10/1927 – 4/13/1931)

"Bereft". Hazel's sister Dora¹ remained to care for the baby and Alf proposed that I come and live with them instead of living alone. It was a tempting proposition from some standpoints, but for various reasons I decided against it which I am still satisfied was the right thing to do.

On Nov. 3rd LeVerne was married to Frances Mary Coffey at Portland, Oregon; a happy occurrence as it proved in this eventful year. In the circumstances I felt some concern about Effaretta's coming event and was relieved and thrilled to hear that my third grandchild, Ruth Jeanne, was born on Dec. 12th and all was well. This seemed to fill the vacancy in some measure, occasioned by my loss and at Christmas I went to St. Paul to see her and spend a few days with the family.

1928 All went along well in the winter of 1928. I was faced with the problem of what to do with the place. I could have let it go for the mortgage and probably have been ahead in dollars and cents if I had done so. But I had considerable goods I would have had to get rid of or store somewhere, that I hated to part with at auction, and I had a certain amount of sentiment and love for the place as a home, and decided to go on paying interest, taxes, and upkeep, and rent it; on the chance of getting my money back in the end; which apparently I never will. But I have taken a good deal of satisfaction in having it and living there. So I am not wasting any regret for what it has cost me which in cold accounting is upward of \$500. In the spring I got a chance to rent it to Frank Harris who was moving in from his farm east of town, at \$15 a month, keeping two rooms upstairs where I had my surplus furniture and things I wanted to keep, stored. I sold off the surplus as I could, at prices probably better than they would bring at auction, and kept my room in the Sharp block, and I had work most of the time during the summer at the schoolhouse.

Death seemed to be epidemic in my family circle, for following the three of the previous year Alberta More², a niece³, died during the winter and Agnes, brother Charlie's wife, that spring⁴. Mother Hoare and Blanche were still living in the old home on Harvard St., Cleveland, and I felt I should make them a visit; which I did during the summer, staying about ten days. That spring I bought a suitcase and a made-to-measure suit; the first wholly new one in many years, before and after. It cost me about \$32.

I stopped in Chicago with Harvard who had finally decided to marry that fall and felt obliged to discontinue his financial contributions, having helped out in all up to that time to the amount of \$700. Walt Hoare was hard pressed at the time and I only undertook to collect \$100 from him on Verne's account, which I nearly succeeded in doing. With the idea that by some good fortune I might be able to repay some of the financial assistance I had received, I drew a note to H.J. for \$500; allowing twenty years time at 6% compound interest: and indicating that

¹ **Dora Louise (Wood) Rendall** (10/6/1886 – 5/2/1983)

² **Alberta Luella (Moore) More** (8/23/1868 – 2/26/1928)

³ She was actually the wife of his nephew, Andrew Russell More, daughter of his sister Elizabeth.

⁴ 5/15/1928

it would be a claim against my estate, and due, in case of my decease. I also had in mind to reimburse LeVerne so as to equalize matters as between the two. When it became apparent that there was little likelihood I would ever be able to do much if [69] anything in that way, I reduced the note to \$250 where it still stands and probably will never be collectible. But I make this acknowledgment of some very substantial help I received at a time when it was sorely needed and greatly appreciated. Money was easy at the time; we were in the midst of the stock market boom and everyone, especially in the cities, was talking of stocks and investments; but I was in no position to become interested, which as it turned out was just as well.

One question that claimed my attention was whether I would consider remarrying in a reasonable time, or make any effort in that direction. My first reaction when it became a practicable possibility was favorable to it; but after further deliberation, weighing the considerations pro and con, I felt that under the circumstances, the weight of considerations was against it and in all probability would be increasingly so. And while I have repeatedly reconsidered the matter, I have so far always arrived at the same conclusion. So I have never made any advances with that in view.

On Sep. 7, his birthday, Harvard and Florence were married in Minneapolis, her home, and I got away to be present at the wedding. It was a rather elaborate ceremony at the church with a reception following at the home; and they went on a wedding trip by auto to northern Minnesota, collided with a cow, but escaped serious injury and returned to reside in Chicago. LeVerne and Frances remained at Portland, Vera at the Travelers. Alba and Effie had moved to Hurley St. beyond the city limits in Dakota county, West St. Paul. Alba was working for the Crescent Creameries driving an ice-cream truck. In October, having to give up my room in the Sharp block, I secured quarters at Supt. Wrights next door to the school; occupying the third floor or attic. This was very convenient to my work and quite satisfactory. I spent Christmas that year as usual with the family at Hurley St., W. St. Paul. Not long after, the Sharp block burned to the ground. So by having moved in October I escaped that. It happened early in the night but I stayed in bed at Wrights and did not find out there the fire was till the next morning.

1929 In 1929 I continued with my janitor job and I think it was that winter or spring that I purchased a monument for the cemetery¹, a good one costing \$325, from Bessinger of Blue Earth. This would postpone my getting out of debt for an additional year, but I did not want to put it off too long and thought better to get something that would be satisfactory for at least a generation or two. It was I think a wise decision and a good selection for the price.

Frank Harris continued on the place and was a very satisfactory renter; but the income was never enough to keep up the expenses on it. That spring Alba secured a job at the St. Paul airport and moved to 90 Isabel St., it being necessary for him to reside within the city limits. During the summer vacation I went there, getting a ride with Alfred, and from there I went for a

¹ This can be seen here: <https://rendall.com/pics/simon-robert-rendall-b1866-1.jpg>

visit to Chicago and Zion and was at St. Paul again with the folks for Christmas. It was that year that the stock market collapsed, and the great depression started.

[70] 1930 By the year 1930 I had my debts, except the mortgage, all taken care of and would be accumulating a surplus which I wanted to invest to the best advantage. I could apply it on the mortgage, but not being too sure that the mortgage would not eventually take the place, I hesitated to put any more into it than was necessary to hold it. I also decided that it was costing me too much at that and that I had better let it go unless I could get a reduction in the principal and interest. This I did in the spring, scaling down the mortgage to \$1800 and the interest to 6%. My idea then was to gradually pay off the mortgage or reduce it to a point where it would be safe from loss; and in Dec. of that year I did pay \$100 on it.

In the spring of that year Frank Anderson had bought a five acre place in the south part of Winnebago and moved there with Samantha and their family¹; sister Ella being with them. I had decided on making a trip west that summer to visit Verne and Frances at Portland, Oregon. Ella was also planning to go to stay with our niece, Elsie Hawley, in Montana for an indefinite time. So we decided to go that far together. We left Winnebago in June by train on the Milwaukee road, going by way of Wells and Mankato to St. Paul and from there to Missoula, Mont., where we were met by Elsie who came by auto from Stevensville about forty miles south. I staid over one day with them and then went on to Portland by way of Seattle.

This was a very enjoyable trip and visit and my first sight of mountains or the ocean and gave me great satisfaction. LeVerne at that time was living on E. 58th St. and we took many fine auto rides enjoying the scenery. We went up to the snow on Mt. Hood in July and to the sea-shore of the Pacific at Seaside to spend the Fourth; a distance of about 100 miles by auto-road at that time.

While at LeVerne's word came that Frank Anderson had died². This was in July and Ella at once returned and arrived home in time for the funeral. I stayed about nine weeks returning in August on the Northern Pacific road and stopping off at Jamestown, N. Dakota to visit another niece, Edith Getty³, twenty miles south from Jamestown at Montpelier. From there I came to St. Paul and home by way of Mankato, where I stopped over a day to visit at Elmer Rendall's.

That night I lay awake for hours wrestling with the problem that would confront me on returning to Winnebago. Samantha was left with limited means and a family of four, 8 to 15 years of age; and my knowledge of and relation to them and her mother, together with my own

¹ Frank and Samantha had four children ages 8-15 at that time: **Dorothy Clair (Anderson) Davis** (3/8/1915 – 5/26/1992), **Millicent Hazel (Anderson) Miller** (11/23/1916 – 8/8/1946), **Ellen Joy (Anderson) Reese** (1/12/1920 – 11/8/1994), and **Robert Andrew Anderson** (7/29/1922 – 10/23/2006). Their firstborn, **Carol Frances Anderson** (10/19/1912 – 2/6/1914), had died very young.

² The only record of his death date that I have is 4/13/1930.

³ **Marie Edith (Cook) Getty** (5/21/1876 – 7/24/1966), daughter of sister Hannah.

freedom from my family responsibility, made it appear quite obvious that I should take an interest in them and be as helpful as I could with advice and otherwise. But it is well within the truth to say that I fought against accepting that role, and went through a rather severe mental, and I may say spiritual conflict from which I emerged with some very definite convictions, to-wit: that it was my appointed job and to be accepted as such; that I could not assist them with money; that I must take an attitude that carried with it the possibility of tragic consequences and that no such consequences would result. The latter was largely a matter of faith which in the ensuing ten years has been fully vindicated. While I always felt that it was a job not [71] really of my own choosing, I was able to enjoy it fairly well and keep free from any fundamental worry. So it happens that the fortunes of that family have been interwoven with my own to a considerable extent up to the present time. They paid \$3500 for the Winnebago place, assuming a mortgage of \$1000 which would be due in two or three years, and there was some life insurance. So they remained on the place for the time being. But Samantha was not at all disposed to settle down there, and had ideas so much at variance with me or any one else, that any advice I could give was apparently wasted and there was little I could do except to be friendly.

There was a change at the school that year, Prof. Anderson succeeding J. B. Wright as superintendent. But I continued to occupy my room at the residence and keep on friendly terms with everyone. My worst trial was Nichols the engineer, but we never really quarreled. In the fall I lost my good renters, the Harris family, who moved to Amboy and I rented the house to Beryl Gustafson, at the same rate per month. Nothing else of importance occurred that summer and at Christmas I went again to Effie's at St. Paul.

1931 In February of 1931, Gustafson who proved to be not so good as a renter, left the house and moved up town without even giving me notice; but I succeeded in collecting my rent. It was a raw deal to leave in mid-winter and rather than leave the house empty I took the first chance that came along and took in a rather poor prospect, Charles Hicks, with a family of four small children and no steady job. From that time I had hard work collecting my rent; and they were unsatisfactory in other respects.

In April Alfred and Dora were called on to part with little Donald, who died¹ quite suddenly; and in May they were married and after a brief visit to Kansas, continued to reside in Winnebago.

When school closed that year, one member of the school board, Claude Babcock, indicated to me that they had decided to make a change of janitors; giving rather indifferent reasons for the move. I am satisfied that it was his own personal idea as there had been no indication of dissatisfaction from any other source. He may have been influenced by Nichols or by some one in their lodge who wanted the job. I was not ready to quit but was unwilling to make much effort to retain the job; and about that time I was asked to take charge of the work

¹ 4/13/1931

at the cemetery, and accepted that, as perhaps a good substitute; but it came far from taking the place of my \$85 a month salary. With this turn of events I moved out to the house and made myself comfortable in my upstairs rooms. I calculated too I would stand a better chance of getting my rent by living there, and as no better opportunity appeared I continued to work along with the Hicks family. At the cemetery I worked by the hour for the most part and it did not prove to be very satisfactory. It was quite a way from home and I had to go back and forth on foot and work in the hot sun with a lawn mower, etc. Grave digging, which paid the most, was hard work and uncertain, and as a matter of fact, I had but little of it to do that summer. Before the opening of school in the fall the school board reversed its decision due principally to Goe. Andrews, who was absent in [72] California when the previous action was taken. So I had the chance to take up the job there again which I did. But I decided to keep on with the cemetery job also, thinking I could employ Mr. Hicks and so get my rent. But there was very little work there that fall. After moving to my own house I bought a very good cow for \$60 of Will Merrill, and turned her over to Hicks to feed and care for, at the same time supplying myself with milk and cream. This was not very satisfactory as he was shiftless and did not make the best of it, or give the cow proper food and care.

That summer I went on a little vacation again to St. Paul and from there to Chicago and Cleveland. Sister Blanche had married¹ and gone to Florida and Mother Hoare was living with the Webers. She had passed her 90th birthday that spring and I thought I should go and see her once more. Also that summer I had the house resingled at a cost of nearly \$100. On July 19th there was another addition to the Carrell family, my third grand-daughter, Rita Maryann². In view of all the circumstances I decided to continue rooming at the home and get a cheap car to go back and forth to the school and to use in connection with the cemetery job. This was my first and only car; a model T Ford pick-up, which I purchased of Jim Gray for \$50. I got along as well as could be expected with driving the car, but I had too much on my hands and too many worries.

My connection with the Andersons didn't help any either. By this time Samantha was about at the end of her available funds and was quite unsettled, going to St. Paul for a while that summer. She had had some remodeling done on the house with the idea of renting apartments, and which resulted in a lien on the place; and there was another lien for some plumbing repair. This scheme for renting was mostly a failure. Her mother was staying with the family most of the time. They had contributed \$500 each and bought the mortgage in her mother's name and her mother foreclosed it, thus getting title to the property so that it could be sold or money borrowed on it. But the parties who had the liens had also threatened to foreclose, which would have brought about a forced sale and probably netted the family next to nothing. I considered the place worth \$2500 if it could be handled right so we satisfied the liens by assigning the rent there, and from Ella's house at Delavan, and got clear title to the place in

¹ To a Mr. Pote

² Rita Maryann Carrell (b. 7/19/1931)

Ella's name through the mortgage foreclosure. The idea now was to sell or borrow on the place for the support of the family as long as it would last. There was not much chance of selling off-hand at what I considered a reasonable price, so we resorted to borrowing on it; and I decided to loan my surplus there on Ella's notes, instead of putting it into my own place, as it appeared to me perfectly safe, both this property and the house at Delavan being in her name. I commenced loaning there as necessary in '31 and continued it from that time on. That fall Samantha signed a lease of the place to Henry Bursaw at \$10 or \$12 a month; the rent being paid by the county and going to liquidate one of the liens. She reserved the right to live upstairs through the winter or until the close of the school year. The Bursaws were rather undesirable characters and there was plenty of trouble and the family would be forced to move in the spring without knowing where.

[73] There had been another change of Superintendents at the school, M. E. Johnson taking over the office. After Christmas at St. Paul as usual, I returned to my work at the school.

1932 While away for the holiday vacation Supt. Johnson had left Nichols in charge of the furnace at his house; and one afternoon the building caught fire and before it could be extinguished the interior was gutted, destroying or damaging most of the contents. So for a second time I escaped being burned out by having moved out a short time before. I congratulated myself that it was Nichols and not I that was responsible for the fire. I will say this for Nichols though, that he was a very competent engineer and good workman and so capable in many ways that he has held his position there to the present time, a period of nearly twenty years.

I was glad to be free of debts and have my school job and salary back, but I had my hands too full. My work at the school was exacting and I was feeling the effects of my age to some extent, so I hired a student helper, Russel Gilmore, for two or three hours a day at 20 cents an hour. Mr. Hicks was getting behind on rent and there was not much doing on the cemetery job till mid-winter; but Hicks was much help to me with the car which was not easy for me to get along with after the cold weather came on. But I continued rooming at the house and got back and forth the best I could, and stayed all night at the school house a few nights, sleeping on a canvas cot in the warmest place I could find.

In the dead of winter there was a grave to be dug, and I was responsible for it. I got Mr. Hicks to do the work but the snow was knee deep and I went out there on foot to oversee it. Toward spring there were three or four more funerals and by this means I did get about \$30 back rent out of Hicks. But it was too much for me to look after so I gave up the cemetery early in the spring. I was dissatisfied with my renter and in the circumstances it looked to be the reasonable thing to offer the place to Samantha and the family as I could charge up the rent against their place and take Ella's notes for it, which I did. They moved over there about May 1st and I took care of the financing and had things very much under my control. Samantha was here and there, unsettled as to what she wanted to do, and her mother kept house for the family for a while which suited me very well. That spring I got a \$500 loan on the place for them

of old Mr. Quiggle at Blue Earth. Those transactions entailed a good deal of accounting which was a something I always enjoyed. The Hicks family moved a few blocks to another house, owing me some on rent which I tried to collect and got most of it one way or another in the course of two or three years.

One episode in connection with the Bursaws I should record: I had managed to keep on friendly terms with them, or thought I had, but shortly after the Andersons moved I went over to get something they had left, and had an altercation with Mrs. Bursaw during which she brandished a hammer and ordered me off the place. I tried to argue with her to no avail. She was alone and I was wise enough to take my leave and consider it a joke. But when I saw Bursaw up town one day [74] and mentioned it to him, he warned me to stay away from the place and has not been on speaking terms since.

On June 2 my brother Charlie died at his son's¹ home in Prescott and was buried at Blue Earth. All of the older members of the original Rendall family were now gone, leaving only the three youngest, brother Jim and I and sister Ella.

I took my usual vacation at St. Paul and Chicago, the World's Fair being on at Chicago; and I got hints of trouble between Harvard and Florence, the nature of which I could not detect nor did I try to. Alba and Effie had moved that spring from Isabel St. to 369 Stryker Ave.; a fine location near the edge of the bluff overlooking the city. I kept on at the school and that fall Samantha decided to stay with her family and let her mother go to St. Paul and stay with Effie and Alba. When the cold weather came on I moved a few things to a small room in the high-school building that was vacant, and stayed there through the winter; letting Bob Anderson² take care of the cow, and going out week-ends to look after things there. We all got along quite well in that way. At Christmas time Harvard and Florence drove through from Chicago and I went with them to the cities by way of Truman. The roads were terribly icy and treacherous but they made the trip without serious accident.

1933 All went along well in the winter of 1933. I kept my helper at the school and had better arrangements all around than I had the previous year. Bursaw had left the Anderson place without notice and that winter I let the Hicks family in there till I could get a more satisfactory renter, which I did in the spring. This was Archie Nelson, a young married man and one of the best renters I ever had. But I could only get \$12 a month after some expenses renovating the house.

The depression was on in full force, and the school board had begun to cut salaries. My own was cut from \$95 to \$75. But that was good for the times; in fact any one with a steady job was considered lucky and was. However I was getting rather tired of the routine and would have been glad to retire at any time except for giving up my salary. But my good friend George

¹ Charlie had 5 sons, so not sure which one this was, as at least 2 of them farmed in Prescott township in MN.

² This could be his sister Ellen's grandson **Robert Andrew Anderson** (7/29/1922 – 10/23/2006) who would have been 10 at the time.

Andrews, was off the school board and Claude Babcock was at the head of it and still bent on making a change. So I received my discharge at the close of the term and accepted it without any great objection. I thought I would like to keep on another year or longer, but concluded later that it was just as well that I quit then.

Samantha was bent on doing something different, getting away from Winnebago to somewhere. In May Bro. Jim's wife Jessie died¹ at Chicago. I could not very well get away to go to the funeral so got word to Ella at Effie's to see if she would go, which she did. Harvard and Florence separated that summer and he was laid off at the G. E. on account of the depression in business and he secured some work at a garage while looking for another good position. Verne and Frances came east for a visit and took in the fair which was still on at Chicago. I also made my usual visit to St. Paul and Chicago.

[75] Samantha finally decided to leave Winnebago and Ella returned from St. Paul. Her final decision was to go to Kirksville, Missouri with the three girls², and leave Bob³ with her mother and me. I had loaned them all that I safely could so got a loan of \$200 on the house at Delavan of Frank Wasgatt; which gave her \$100 to go with and was all I would promise her from the place. I had Ella's notes at the time for \$300. It looked to me like a wild idea and I tried at first to dissuade her from making the venture but without success. So she got one of the Anderson relatives to take the four of them to Kirksville by auto, with such belongings as they could load on the car, about the 1st of September. This left Ella and Bob in the house downstairs and practically all of her furniture and stuff for us to take care or dispose of. I calculated and hoped the move would be permanent so I sold some of the furniture and sent her the proceeds. Some of the things we wanted to keep and the balance we stored for the time being. I could still charge, up the rent but the arrangement now was not very economical; so when I got the chance Oct. 1st to rent the downstairs and most of the barn to Warren Gilmore for five months at \$12 I did so and had Ella and Bob live with me upstairs.

I had my cow and managed to keep busy enough and as my living expenses were not high, calculated I would be able to about make a living one way or another. But with no steady job I found it difficult and had to supplement somewhat from my savings from that time on. I went again to Effie's for Christmas.

1934 We got along fairly well through the winter of 1934 till Gilmore's moved out March 1st; and after waiting a month I then rented to Frank Severns who had a family of three small children, was a good auto mechanic, but a drinker and not good at keeping a job; and consequently was dilatory about paying rent. But I put up with him for a couple of years. His wife and family were quite agreeable.

¹ 5/8/1933

² Dorothy, Millicent and Ellen

³ Robert Andrew

Bob and his grandmother, or the two of them together, however, were becoming a trial to me and our arrangement unsatisfactory; so I decided in desperation, to send Bob to his mother in Missouri after school closed, as I felt he was primarily her responsibility and that she would have to get along with him some way as she had with the girls. That spring I succeeded in getting \$1000 in a new loan on the place of Dick More; with which I paid off the Quiggle mortgage and the \$200 mortgage on the Delavan house; also cashed one of Ella's notes and had \$100 to send Bob to Missouri with. I got a chance to send him with the drayman who was making a trip in that direction and I sent along their piano and some other things at a nominal expense which left them some extra cash to help out.

While Samantha was glad to see Bob, she found the extra burden more than she could handle; which was not surprising unless she would accept county aid, which she never would consent to. So in about a month she sent him back by bus without notice or my consent. This created a serious problem for me and was the occasion of considerable mental conflict. I resented it and yet could not blame her greatly nor bring myself to send him back or turn him out. So I finally decided to make the best of it for the time being, and await developments. Soon after, the Van Diens came along and told us of a boys school [76] near Waukegan¹ where they thought we might get him in; and following up that lead we made arrangements for him there on very favorable terms; but I had to get \$200 again on the Delavan place to finance it. Ella went with him and remained near by at Zion with Sister Eva² for a while. This left me alone with the Severns family downstairs and I went to St. Paul as usual for the holidays.

1935 It was now more to my advantage to do my visiting in the winter. So during the winter of 1935 I went again to Chicago and visited Bro. Jim who was still in his home on Laramie and had a housekeeper and her daughter living there. Harvard was staying with the Llewellyns; LeVerne and Frances were still living in Portland, Oregon; Alba and Effie at 369 Stryker Ave., Vera working at The Travelers. After returning home in February, I sold, or rather bargained the Anderson place to the Gilmores for \$2400; and they wanted immediate possession. After going to considerable inconvenience and expense to have it vacated by the Nelsons, who were still renting it at \$12, the Gilmores backed out on their bargain and wanted to rent it for a year instead. This upset me greatly but as usual turned out well, for I got a cash payment of \$400 for damages and for the year's rent; and I raised the rent to \$20 a month.

That spring and summer Ella was caring for Mrs. Hathaway of Winnebago at Zion, and came home with her. She was with me for a short time, then went to Effie's at St. Paul and later in the fall back again to Zion; where she had a chance to live with a family in the town not far from Eva's, and make her way by helping with the work. Also she wanted to be where she could see Bob once in a while. I worked along best I could on the place trying to develop some source of income that would not tax my time or energies too much, but without any great success.

¹ Waukegan, IL, north of Chicago.

² This is probably speaking of his deceased brother Ben's wife, Evangeline, who was still living in Zion.

In September the folks at St. Paul moved one door to 371 Stryker and on the 21st Vera was married to E. R. Constable at a ceremony in the home, conducted by Rev. E. M. Knehans; at which I was present, and soon after they went to live at Rushmore in the southwest part of the state. Late that fall the Gilmores wanted to move which they did. But their rent was paid till the following spring, so it was no loss or disadvantage except that it left the house vacant for the winter. Before Christmas I went again to St. Paul.

1936 I stayed in St. Paul till January 10th, 1936 and as affairs at home and with Ella's places were quite unsettled I returned to Winnebago to look after things. It was an exceptionally cold winter with plenty of snow and about January 20th my renters downstairs decided to move to Blue Earth where he had work. They left owing me \$25 or more on rent which I never did collect. They left their kitchen range for a while, and to keep everything from freezing up, including myself, I moved downstairs and lived in the kitchen, firing day and night.

While there I got a chance to rent the Anderson place to John Gorackowski, a Pole, at \$20 a month in advance. The water there had frozen up and I had some worry and expense getting it thawed out and in getting my money, and the family settled. But I finally succeeded in getting it through all right. My 70th birthday was in February¹ and [77] I wanted to go to Chicago. So after making what I considered a good bargain on the Anderson place, I decided to drain the water pipes and cover things up in the cellar, and take a chance on going for a week's celebration at Chicago and Zion. The weather was bitter cold, and stormy; and I was held up one whole day in Iowa on the way; and arrived in Chicago in the early morning with no one to meet me at the depot. However I made my way out to Herb *Clares* and got there before they were up. But Herb answered the doorbell and demanded what I wanted. As soon as I was recognized I was of course made welcome, and I phoned from there to Harvard, who came for me with the car. I had planned to go with Jim who was then rooming by himself on Dorchester Ave. on the south side, to Zion, to celebrate my birthday with Ella and Eva; and we four oldsters had a very pleasant day together.

The week there and in Chicago was one of the coldest; and I returned home in time to welcome spring and secure a renter downstairs. This was the Pettits, an agreeable young couple and all went along well for the time being. As Harvard was again single with apparently no idea of remarrying, and secured a good position with the X-Ray Corporation in Chicago, he had proposed putting some money into the place to hold it, with the idea of eventually freeing it from the mortgage and he sent me \$75 which I applied on interest. I did not bank much on his idea but as previously thought he might as well put his surplus there as anywhere.

I had planned for some time to go west that fall and spend the winter with LeVerne who had moved to a place in the country near Oswego, about ten miles south of Portland. About all the work I had done, except to take care of myself, my cow and chickens and the place, was at Bottomleys where I helped with the milking occasionally, and all of one summer quite steadily.

¹ 2/16/1936

In consequence my available funds were running low. I still held one of Ella's notes for \$100 which I considered good but which I could not very well collect until I sold the Winnebago place and did not care to. I was very well satisfied with staying on my own place through the summer and visiting around in the winter; but it began to look that I would have to do something different or I would soon run out of money and not be able to meet expenses.

Old-age assistance under the Social Security Act¹ had been made available by the state legislature through the counties, at a special session that winter. But I did not like the idea of applying for that, as many did as soon as possible that spring; and I postponed it hoping to find some way to get along without it. I could perhaps at that time have gotten a place on a farm, given up my home and let the place go for the mortgage; or have settled down to a bare existence. But with my family of four in comfortable circumstances or better, I did not feel called to do that, nor did I think they would want to. But Effie and Alba had about all they could do to support their family, which was increased that summer by the birth of another daughter, and named Rosalee². Vera and Dick had returned to St. Paul and were living on Maryland St. They were dependent mainly on getting work, which Dick never succeeded very well in doing. Vera secured a job in November with an attorney by the name of Hess. She never enjoyed her work there but kept on for several months and they moved that fall to [78] a small apartment on E. 10th St. just off of Wabasha. My boys were holding steady jobs at good salaries; but Harvard was married in July to Jess Bouret³, a widow with one son, Bob⁴, about ten years old; so they were just getting a new start in family life which happily turned out very well, but put an end to investing his money in the place.

It was one of the years of severe drought and I made little or nothing from my work on the place. So my choice appeared to me to be between asking my boys for more help or applying to the county board for the old age assistance. This was quite generally looked upon as a "pension"; instead of what it really is. It is in reality not much different from other kinds of relief for the needy, and an added burden for the taxpayers; but nearly everyone who was eligible was getting it and after duly debating the matter pro and con I decided to apply for it. I do not like the system but perhaps it is the best that can be done for the present; and I argued that my boys were being taxed to support it and could be for years to come, and in view of what they had already done, I should scrap my pride and prejudices, and so with some reluctance I put in my application that fall.

Perhaps I did not make a sufficiently urgent appeal; anyway it was two months or more before I got any results. And after balancing my accounts and going to St. Paul about Dec. 1st I found I was short of money to make my trip west; and at one point I gave up the idea. But

¹ The Social Security Act was signed into law by President Roosevelt on August 14, 1935.

² **Rosalee Carrell** (b. 1936)

³ This is how it looks like the last name is spelled, but records show that her name was **Jessie Bowett** (12/21/1902 – 6/22/1967).

⁴ **Robert Galbraith Rendall** (11/5/1925 – 12/2/2003)

Harvard sent me another \$25 and finally I heard from the welfare board with a check for \$15 which was the monthly allowance granted me. With that and an assured monthly income for the future I decided to go and arrived at LeVerne's about the 17th. I went on the N.P. and stopped off at Jamestown again to visit the Gettys, then on through to Portland. So it was at LeVerne's that I spent Christmas that year.

1937 Frances' mother, Mrs. Coffey, was staying with them when I arrived at LeVerne's and for a few weeks after, so I had the pleasure of meeting her, and my stay of about nine weeks was a very pleasant one without any disturbing incidents. Most of the time I spent quietly at home or taking hikes through the native evergreen woods. I attended church and Sunday School mostly in Oswego at the Methodist and Congregational churches; but I took in one Christian Science lecture and before returning we went one fine day to the Pacific and explored a stretch of the coast.

I was somewhat behind on interest payments and asked Verne to help me out on that and he did to the amount of \$50. I returned in February so as to reach Winnebago by Mar. 1st to look after matters there. I stopped off at Missoula to visit at Elsie's for two or three days and had a splendid visit. My renter in the Anderson place had wanted to move before his year was up, but his rent being paid in advance, he got another family to take his place, at the same \$20 a month. This was Wallace Clark and his wife, a very nice young couple, and good on paying their rent, but the house had to have considerable papering, etc. after the Polish family moved out. I also had a good renter in the house at Delavan, Robert Gibbs and wife, and I still had the Pettits downstairs. But they had bought a new car and began getting behind on rent.

[79] By this time Vera's marriage was going badly, and she separated from Dick about May 1st and went to live again with Eff and look for a satisfactory job. Alba and Effie moved again that spring to 78 W. Isabel, and Jack¹ and Jess rented an apartment at 6 Thomas St., Oak Park.

I still had my cow and I invested in 100 baby chicks on which I made a moderate profit. But with my \$15 a month I was barely able to pay interest, taxes and upkeep, and balance my budget. That fall the Clarks left the Anderson place, and I got a chance to trade it to Henry Hinz for his house and two lots on College St. one block from my own, and \$500 difference; which I did. This enabled me to pay off the \$200 mortgage on the Delavan place and reserve \$100 to cancel Ella's last note to me any time I should want the money permanently, which I resolved not to do if it could be avoided. After considerable maneuvering and worry I rented the new place to Otto Hopp, who had a couple hundred turkeys which he brought there, and several head of stock which I let him keep in my barn. This family of seven proved to be all right in some ways; not very satisfactory in others; but I got away as usual for the holidays at St. Paul.

¹ This is the first reference of "Jack" and Jess, but the author is referring to his son Harvard John, as you can see just 2 paragraphs down, where he mentions Harvard and Jess at this same address in Oak Park. There are 3 more references to Jack ahead, and many more references to Harvard.

1938 The winter of 1938 I made my usual visit in St. Paul and Chicago, staying with Harvard and Jess at 6 Thomas St., Oak Park, and with brother Jim on Dorchester Ave., Chicago. Jim had a case of what appeared to be true love on, with one Mimo Seaman, whom I had never met. But as we were always quite confidential I had an interesting time with him. This had been brewing for two or three years and my position was one of benevolent neutrality. I certainly put no stumbling blocks in his way.

That Spring Harvard and Jess bought a home on 116 Travers Ave., Wheaton; about 25 miles west of Chicago, and moved there in May, and that same month Vera landed a good job with the Lilley & Lilley Insurance Agency in St. Paul. Returning to Winnebago March 1st or before, I had some adjustments to make with my renters. The Hopp family were coming along pretty well and paying their rent. But I had sold my cow and he was using my barn; so I proposed some sort of partnership with him on cows and poultry; but found him rather difficult to make any settled arrangement with; so finally I kept two of his cows through the summer and milked one and he the other; and along in June I took a chance on 300 baby chicks about 18 days old. The Pettits downstairs were getting badly behind on rent and decided to move out about March 1st. I took some wood and their kitchen range in payment and they still owed me \$25. Later I took some rugs on their debt but they still owe me \$15 straight enough which I have little hope of ever getting. I lost another month's rent while looking for a new and better renter; but by a streak of good luck got one, the McMann's; consisting of Mr. & Mrs. and one son, Charles, 18.

Hardly able to balance my budget, I applied for an increase in my old-age assistance. I thought it should have been \$20 in the first place. After some delay I got a raise to \$18 beginning with July. In May brother Jim was married to Mimo and they continued to reside in Chicago. Early in the summer sister Ella had gone to Missouri to take some treatment at a sanitarium there and I got \$200 for her again on the [80] place at Delavan. About mid-summer she came with Ellen Anderson to Winnebago. She had left some furniture and her personal effects with me and I had told her to consider that her home; so I was uncertain whether she was coming to stay or not. I wanted her to do whichever she wished. But she had her mind pretty well made up to return to Kirksville; and after talking it over we decided she had better take her things and go there intending to make it permanent; and that she would be more contented and happy there with her family than in Winnebago. So Sydney Anderson took them back by auto and I sent most of her goods by freight.

I had good luck with my chickens and they netted me a profit of about \$40; not enough really to pay me for the work I put in with them and the risk I ran. I kept about 20 pullets over winter and let the McManns take care of them. That year my knees got to troubling me considerably and it seemed that a cane would be a help; but I refused to carry one; although I did use a stick around home a good deal; and before I went to St. Paul for the holidays, I went to Dr. Broberg for consultation and a physical examination; which disclosed nothing wrong in general, but offered no remedy for my leg trouble.

1939 I had two special reasons for going to Chicago in 1939: to see my new sister-in-law and the new home at Wheaton. Jim and Mimo were living in a six room apartment on University Ave., and had roomers; but I had my usual good visit as some of the roomers had not returned from the holiday vacation. I spent considerable time with Jack and Jess and also visited at Zion and Waukegan.

While at Harvard's I was persuaded without much difficulty to take some Chiropractic adjustments of Dr. Galbraith, Jess' father, to see if it would have any effect on my knees; and Jack got me in free where he works for X-ray photographs of my spine. I staid with the Galbraiths several days and had some nine adjustments in all, and enjoyed my visit with Dr. and Mrs. Galbraith very much. I could see no effect from the treatment but was glad to give it that much of a trial; and the Dr. very generously refused to accept pay for his services.

When I returned to St. Paul I started using a cane regularly, and more to satisfy the folks there than for any other reason went to see their family physician, Dr. Souster. I intended simply to talk with him about my knee trouble and got his advice; but he went to work and gave me another quite though examination and I took a great dislike to him. Before he got through with me it cost me \$10 or more and I was very unhappy. I submitted to two shots in the arm and I took a bottle of his medicine without any faith in *it's* doing me any good, and of course it didn't.

Before returning to Winnebago March 1st the folks got a chance to move again to 369 Stryker where the house had been greatly improved and gave them much better accommodations than they had on Isabel, at an advance of only \$5 in rent. I encouraged the move and it proved to be very satisfactory. It provided Vera a good room, and a nice little one on the first floor for me when there. There was automatic oil heating, an electric refrigerator, and a fairly good basement with laundry tubs [81] and hot and cold water; bathroom upstairs and toilet in the basement.

On arriving in Winnebago I found my renters all staying on and paying the rent. Mr. Hopp was milking three or four cows and had worked up a small milk business; so I let him have my barn, pasture and some other ground, and got my milk of him in return. I was supposed to get 15 or 20 dollars cash also but never collected but \$5 of it. But the arrangement was quite agreeable to me under the circumstances. Mr. Hopp was not very hard to get along with nor a bad sort of man, but he always caused me some worry. For one thing I considered him rather shiftless and he sometimes got behind on rent; and I generally had to ask him for it before I got it. Then I couldn't see how he could keep up expenses very long the way he was working, and that summer he was sick for a month or more with pneumonia. But Mrs. Hopp was good in the house and kept it nice inside and I liked the family; so I did not care to take the chance of making a change so long as I could get the house rent.

I had plenty to do without caring for a cow; really did quite a bit for Mr. Hopp while he was sick; and I resigned myself to using a cane whenever I had any walking to do. On May 2nd

my second grandson was born to Jack and Jess and named Steven Finley¹. That summer I set four hens and bought 60 more chicks to put with them, but lost too many and had only about 50 to market in the fall. They were a nice flock but prices were low and I made very little on chickens that year and sold them all off in the fall.

Le Verne and Frances were still living at Oswego; Ella in Missouri. But she was not settled as I had hoped for, and had to move a time or two and finally to room by herself. That summer for some reason I got to contemplating on the uncertainty of life and was seized with a strong impression that it was time to get my affairs with Ella and the Andersons straightened up and off my hands. So I bent my efforts to that end. Samantha's family was pretty well grown up and I was in hopes Ella could get somewhere and have a settled home. For myself I was not greatly concerned, but I determined to make every effort to sell one or both of her places as soon as possible and I made plans to go to Kirksville the following winter. Before going to St. Paul for Christmas I went to Delavan and did some work on the house; and received an offer of \$500 for it from Griff Harris. That was about half of what I considered it really worth; so I refused to sell for that till I had the chance to talk things over with Ella.

1940 I stayed at Effie's till the latter part of January 1940, then went to Chicago and made rather brief visits at Jims, Zion and Waukegan, and at Wheaton where the chief attraction was the new boy then nine months old, and a fine and interesting little chap. From Wheaton I went to Aurora and got the Burlington train to Kirksville where I had a good visit with Ella and all the Andersons. I had an idea that Ella might return to Winnebago and go to the old-folks Home there; but found her not disposed to do that, preferring a Baptist home in Missouri if she decided on either. While I was there she moved to room with [82] Samantha for a time, but a little later to room by herself again and consider going to the Home. She was favorable to selling the Delavan house for the \$500 if the offer still held good, and I sold it as soon as I returned to Winnebago in March, to Harris. I returned by way to Des Moines, Iowa on the Wabash road, thence to St. Paul on the Rock Island.

That summer I followed about the same program except that I junked my old Ford and depended on Mr. Hopp mostly for car service. I picked up five hens which furnished me with eggs most of the summer, and I got 100 chicks thirty days old about July 1st. The rats were thick around the barn and I had to contend with them all summer but saved most of the chickens. I sold about 80; but prices were no better and I actually had to take a loss besides donating my work with them. So I concluded there was nothing for me in raising chickens unless I changed my system.

In October Ella went into the Baptist Home at Ironton, Missouri, ninety miles south of St. Louis and nearly three hundred from Kirksville. On Armistice Day, November 11th, winter was ushered in with a very severe blizzard; the worst I think in many years. It only lasted for one day but came early and unexpectedly and there were many lives lost in the Northwest and

¹ Steven Finley Rendall (b. 5/2/1939)

thousands of turkeys and some other livestock perished around Winnebago. That month I got the chance to sell the Winnebago place for \$1250 to a family by the name of Grupe. After discharging the mortgages and other expenses there was not a great deal left and I sent the balance to the Home and to Samantha as seemed to be most fair and satisfactory. This practically concluded my ten years of handling their affairs in Minnesota; and while I was not able to do as well with it as I would have liked to, I think I did about as well as was possible under the circumstances, and was well satisfied and greatly relieved to have the job completed. The chance I got of making these two sales seemed to me as providential as anything in my experience.

I had planned for some time to go West to visit Verne and Frances and spend the following winter or most of it. I got away as soon as I could to St. Paul and took the Milwaukee train for Portland, arriving there in the early morning, Dec. 14th. Was met at the depot by LeVerne and landed safely at their home. They had moved during the summer from Oswego to a place east of Portland beyond the city limits and about nine miles from the business centre of the city. Soon after arriving there it was proposed that I have my remaining teeth out and get a new set. This was contrary to what I had decided on and we argued the matter pro and con, but although Verne intended to pay the bill I finally decided against it. They both thought I was foolish and perhaps I was but they accepted my decision with good grace and we proceeded to attack the important question of time and eternity. Christmas we spent at home with a roast turkey and everything, including a check for \$20 drawn in my favor. As I had some loose funds laying around I added \$30 to it and deposited it with LeVerne for safe keeping. I was not any more than balancing my budget but I was holding in reserve the \$100 of Ella's money to cancel her note to me, and also \$50 to pay me for my ten years of service, or use for her benefit if I saw fit. At least that is one way I figured it.

[83] 1941 The winter of 1941 in Oregon was mild, with no snow and not much frost. I was not on a sight-seeing trip, and I spent the time around the place, gathering the few eggs, feeding rabbits, splitting wood. I trapped three wild guinea hens that had been left on the place, by coaxing them into the barn, and we had some good chicken dinners. I also did considerable reading and writing as usual, and everything worked out quite to my satisfaction. I had four weeks, mostly at home with Frances, and some good visits, then she went to California for a month's stay with her mother, leaving Verne and I to ourselves till he should meet her and go in search of his own vacation for another month. His proposal was for me to go along with him to California and home from there; but that did not fit in with my plans, so I decided against it and returned to St. Paul in February.

Le Verne was rather upset at my returning so soon, but finally accepted my decision and I think felt all right about it, and it was perfectly satisfactory to me. I wanted to make some visits on the way back, and for some other reasons preferred not to be so far away from home for too long. He postponed a business trip to Seattle to accompany me that far on the way, and we left Portland on Feb. 8th, going by train and stopping over night in Seattle. Next morning I

took the bus to Port Angeles to visit Elsie Hawley. This was a very enjoyable trip and visit. The bus crossed Puget Sound on a large ferry boat, a ride of over an hour on ocean water; then by land, much of the way through dense evergreen forests to Port Angeles, a distance in all of about 100 miles. Port Angeles is on the northern shore of the Olympic peninsula at the northwestern extremity of the country.

Returning to Seattle Tuesday evening I met LeVerne there and went to a hotel for a few hours rest. My train was to leave at 9:45 and I depended on Verne to see me safely off. We got to the depot in good time for me to lunch, and Verne ordered a dish of ice-cream and we were visiting, when he suddenly looked at his watch and it was time for the train to leave. So we rushed to the gate but the train had gone and we were left, - in a pickle. To say that Verne was chagrined, and disgusted with himself, is to put it mildly; but after working on the problem with the ticket agent, who was very courteous, we found that I could get a train on another road leaving at 10:15, and catch my own train at Spokane in the morning. But we had to pay another fare of \$6.20 with a possible chance of getting a refund which up to date I haven't got.

All went well on the remainder of my trip to St. Paul, and I stopped off at Bismarck and Jamestown in Dakota, and also at Fargo, to visit a nephew and nieces; arriving in St. Paul at midnight the 20th. The previous week-end in Dakota word reached me that Alfred Rendall had died on Feb. 9th, when I was far away at Seattle. I had favorable weather for my trip both going and coming; but when I was in Dakota it turned bitter cold and continued so for a week or more; and in St. Paul where I stayed through March there was still snow and winter weather most of the month, with another severe blizzard in the Northwest on March 15 and 16, which took a heavy toll of life. This was very unusual for the time of year; and in connection with the similar storm on the previous November 11th, marked the longest and most tragic [84] winter for the Midwest in many years. But tragedy was the order of the day. The second world war was on in full force with the outcome in doubt.

And now on this 25th day of March, 1941, I am completing to date my autobiography began in 1939; and the sequel, if I am permitted added years of life and health, will take on more of the form of a diary written up year by year, to the end of my story.

Dec. 31st. (1941¹)

I returned to Winnebago on April 1st, and found everything about as I had left it, with Mr. Hopp still owing \$15 on rent. As the pasture was flooded and Mr. Hopp secured pasturage for his cows out of town, I had the place more to myself and continued to take milk of him on the rent he was owing, and he had ten or twelve hens in the barn which I let him leave there for my one egg a day for the summer. This made it unnecessary for me to bother either with a cow or chickens and I invested in neither. I had plenty of work keeping up the place and rather than let it lay idle or grow up to weeds I planted it mostly to corn, with a patch of beets and a few

¹ This year is handwritten on the document.

potatoes; not knowing what disposition I would or could make of the crop. It was a good crop year especially for corn; but I failed to get anything much out of it. I lost nothing either except my work which I needed anyway for health and enjoyment. I took a chance on feeding out the crop hoping to realize something on it but lost on that; but it did not go to waste. I made up my mind that I had better let the place go for the mortgage or dispose of it in some way inside of another year and spent most or all of my time at St. Paul with the Carrells and Vera.

The summer passed by quite pleasantly and in July (1942¹) Tom and Daisy Morgan made a visit to the folks at St. Paul and I went there for a few days to see them and the others, which was a welcome interlude in the summer's program. Along in the fall Harvard with his family came for a visit to the Cities but did not get to Winnebago nor did I get to see them. LeVerne and Frances bought and moved to a new place not far from where they were.

I had planned to make a trip to Missouri in November to visit sister Ella at the Baptist Home, and to return by way of Chicago to St. Paul for the winter, visiting as many relatives as possible on the way. This I carried out successfully, leaving Winnebago Nov. 19th and stopping at Des Moines, Iowa, Kirksville and Ironton, Mo., Wheaton and Zion, Ill., and Milwaukee, Wis., and arriving in St. Paul on Dec. 1st.

The war had been in progress with the U. S. becoming more deeply involved with every move and on Dec. 7th we were surprised and attacked by Japan and plunged into it completely; and thus the year closed with the country at war but with no very significant changes in my personal situation, or in that of any of my family.

[85] 1942.

Dec. 31st. --- The winter of 1942 was rather mild with no bad storms, and I remained in St. Paul to April 7, with nothing out of the ordinary transpiring. I was troubled quite a little with indigestion, and cut down on my eating without overcoming it entirely, but I returned to Winnebago well rested up and without much change in my lameness; and found everything about as I had left it. Mr. Hopp had bought and moved to a place of his own in town but still had his cows at my barn, and as it was very convenient for me to get my milk from him I let him keep on there through the summer, for my quart of milk a day. The pasture was flooded most of the summer so it was not of much account, and his stock plowed it up badly, so I planned to sow some grass seed when and if it got dry enough, which it did not to any great extent all summer. Mr. Hopp fed his cows mostly on the street or in the barn. I decided to raise another crop of corn and a few potatoes and not much else. The raspberries and strawberries came through the winter in good shape and I had plenty of work caring for myself and the place, and enjoyed it so well that I think I overworked.

About the first of May I got a chance to rent my chicken-yard and barn for a year to a grocery-man, Billy Leach, for \$25 cash; and in June was surprised with a raise in my old-age

¹ This year is handwritten on the document.

assistance from \$18 to \$25. This improved my finances and together with favorable arrangements I was able to make with respect to the mortgage, and the fact that I couldn't bring myself to abandon my home there entirely, or arrange things to my satisfaction otherwise, led me to decide on keeping the place in my name indefinitely and spending most of the summer there as long as I can get around and look after it and care for myself; unless or until something different turns up. It was a good crop year with plenty of rain and everything on the place did well. The raspberries were the best I ever had and we picked altogether some 250 or 300 quarts. I gave one-third for picking and sold about \$28 worth to the grocery-man besides canning 75 quarts or more. But I was hardly equal to the work I was doing and concluded I would have to cut down on my work as well as my eating. I also was made aware that my heart condition demanded that I take more rest than I was doing, and I was evidently losing weight.

So when the berries were done about August 8, I went to St. Paul for a month for a rest and change, which worked out well; and I took along 29 quarts of canned berries and jam as baggage and 17 quarts more on my trip there in November. I returned to Winnebago for most of September and till November 3rd, getting things in shape to leave for the winter. My corn crop yielded more than 40 bushels which I hired husked and sold on the market, netting me around \$20. I decided not to make any trips or visits, on account of the war and the congested transportation facilities at this time; and may not unless or until conditions change. Besides I had planned to get some new teeth at St. Paul for which LeVerne insists on paying, and am in the process at this date.

LeVerne had written me that he was going on a business trip East and planned to stop off on the way back, and he wired from New York [86] that he would spend the day, Nov. 4, in St. Paul and for me to meet him there, which I did, arriving about noon the 3rd, and he put in an appearance that same afternoon. He spent two nights and a day with us and I had a fine visit with him. Harvard as usual failed to write for several months but I heard from them through Verne, and at Christmas they sent a package and greeting with a substantial present for Dad. We had our usual bountiful Christmas here in St. Paul with the family all present and well; and the year closes auspiciously so far as my circumstances are concerned.

It has been a year of "all out" war, the first for this country; but it has not affected me adversely at all as yet in respect to living condition. But several of my nephews are in the armed services and Bob Carrell¹, my only grown-up grandson, leaves us for Army service in a few days, to be gone we know not where or for how long. However the prospect for speedy victory is much improved since the first half of the year.

1943.

Dec. 31st. --- I had hoped and predicted that the war would end before the close of the year, as I have every year since it started in Europe in 1939. But the outbreak of the war with

¹ Robert Frederic Carrell, son of his daughter Effaretta.

Japan has complicated the situation and it still is in progress. But I continue to hope, and will venture to predict that it will end before the close of another year. That seems to be the prevailing idea as regards Germany and the war in Europe, but there is more uncertainty in regard to Japan. The military situation however, has changed decidedly during the past year and is altogether more favorable for our side of the conflict; and victory, the only final outcome that has ever seemed possible to me, appears to be only a question of time. I am not one who thinks going to war is wrong under any and all circumstances, but I do think that with wiser policies this war might be shortened, or even have been prevented. Therefore I am not over-enthusiastic about it, or over-optimistic about the results; but I look for something better to follow it than existed before, though at a fearful cost.

Bob Carrell went into the army early in January and was sent first to Missouri and later to Florida, for training in the Radio Signal Corps. I got my set of false teeth and broke them in without too much difficulty, and they are doing me good service. My digestion and general health condition improved, due more I think to drinking hot water than to the teeth; and I believe I gained in weight during the summer, and have felt better than during the previous year. In March I received word that Samantha had died¹ at Kirksville. I did not go there but everything was taken care of by the family and she was buried there² at her own request.

I returned to Winnebago early in April. The winter had been cold without any break, but with no very bad storms. Mr Hopp's cows were gone, the weather was dry in April, and I got the place cleared up nicely. My renters, the McManns, were staying on and are very satisfactory. Mr. Leach gave up the chicken yard but I got another renter [87] for it in May equally as good, who kept some 400 there most of the summer and is keeping 200 or more over the winter. The rains started about the first of May, so I was unable to get my pasture seeded, but I seeded most of the north field to alfalfa and got a good stand. The berries did well again due to having plenty of rain and on the whole my operations were quite successful. I got a little Jersey cow of Mr. Hopp for the summer, and had plenty of milk and cream and made my own butter. I also raised a few potatoes, beans and some pop-corn, besides a little other garden. Feeling so much better and having the cow, I decided not to go to St. Paul in August as I did the previous year, and had planned to make a regular practice. I found too that I needed to be on the job to keep things well in hand, so have given up the idea of a summer vacation for the present. I made arrangements to pay only five percent on the mortgage and hold the place indefinitely, and have decided to spend the summers there so long so I am able to take care of it, and myself. The program with the change twice a year, suits me fine, and with my old-age check of \$25 a month, my financial difficulties have pretty well disappeared. It is necessary for me to look after keeping the place up, and I know of nothing I would rather do or that would be better for my health and happiness. I have hired some work done and will continue to do so. The past year I did considerable around the barn and with some help repainted it. The rains let up in the early

¹ 3/6/1943

² Rosehill Cemetery, Winnebago, MN

fall and October was exceptionally fine and dry, so that I got the pasture in good shape for seeding next spring.

On the 9th of October sister Ella died at the Baptist Home at Ironton, Missouri. We had all arrangements made to have the body sent to Blue Earth for burial in our family lot in Lura¹ beside her husband; and were able to carry that out. She was 81 years and 9 months old. I was over at Blue Earth most of the week of the funeral, and saw everything through to my satisfaction, except that brother Jim did not get there on account of the traveling conditions due to the war. I returned to Winnebago and was able to get everything in good shape to leave for the winter and arrive in St. Paul on the 28th. The important changes in my immediate family concern Bob Carrell who was sent to Australia about Nov. 1st, and Harvard and family who sold out at Wheaton and moved to Boulder, Colorado, the first of September, where they bought a home and he took a book-keeping job in the county court house. Bob was home on furlough for two weeks in Sept. but I did not get to see him. Neither did I see Jacks as they could not make it to come to Minnesota on account of conditions brought about by the war. And I abandoned any plans I had for visiting anywhere this year. I had a good letter from Jess and Harvard, and we are hearing from Bob frequently from Australia. The weather has been fine with no snow, except one storm early in November, and most of that is gone. Our Christmas was the same as usual here except for Bob's absence, and with no other changes of much importance, the year closes as well as can be expected, with the war on. In fact living conditions are not adversely affected much by it as yet.

[88] 1944.

Dec. 31---The winter of '44 was much like the previous one with little snow or severe weather, or storms; and I remained at St. Paul except for one short trip to Darwin, Minnesota to visit Edwin Cook and family.

Returning to Winnebago about April 1st I found my chicken yard renter leaving but secured another (Dutch) Sackett who had a team and cows and I rented him the chicken yard, pasture, barn and alfalfa field for \$25 and two quarts of milk a day through the summer. He had Jersey cows and this gave me what cream I needed, and skim milk to spare. But I got a hen and raised a brood of chickens which took most of the milk. Even made a small profit on the chickens. In April I was surprised with the news that I had another grandson², born to Harvard and Jess on the 6th. There was a few days of fine dry weather and I got the place raked and cleaned up in good shape, and then the rains set in for about the wettest spring and summer I can remember. The berries were pretty much of a failure but I had enough for my own use and that was about all. But I raised some good pop-corn again, and beans, and more potatoes, onions, pumpkins and field corn, and enjoyed the summer well on the whole.

¹ Lura Cemetery, Easton, MN

² **Thomas Rendall** (b. 4/6/1944)

In August I went to St. Paul for a week, stopping over Sunday at Meryl Rendall's for a visit with them. The rains let up in October and we had several weeks of perfect weather which I made good use of getting things in shape to leave for the winter. It became necessary for the mortgage to be foreclosed, as it had run nearly fifteen years and would outlaw at the end of that time. This will allow me to keep possession for another year with no expense, or only such as I choose to make. This is agreeable enough to me as it is what I calculated on eventually and I would just as soon make the change now. Just what the change will be I cannot tell till later in the year; but I calculate I can realize from 100 to 200 dollars out of it besides my living there for another summer. Also I will still hold the two northwest lots which are under a separate mortgage which can run another five years if desired.

I came to St. Paul about the first of November, missing my chance to vote. Roosevelt was elected for a fourth term, the war being on with increased intensity. The Allies have made great strides on all fronts during the year, against stiff resistance, and it still remains uncertain how long it will last. Bob, after most of the year in Australia and New Guinea, is now in the *Phillipines*, and we are thankful is well and safe at last reports. LeVerne was on leave of absence for three months during the summer, on *doctors* orders, and spent the time in California; but is back on his job at Portland again. No other changes in the family. In November at Thanksgiving time I went to Milwaukee and Zion to visit brother Jim and sister Eva¹ and returned by way of Madison for an overnight stay with the Clares. Christmas here as usual and the New Year in prospect with whatever it has in store.

[89] 1945--

The foreclosure on my place at Winnebago, together with the rapid progress of the war, destined this year to be an eventful one from my standpoint. My general health continued fairly good; my lameness gradually increasing but not affecting me seriously. I had planned a visit to Harvard's in Colorado for early in January, calculating that conditions for traveling would be better then than later if the war should close, which proved to be the case. Also it seemed the one trip and visit necessary for me. However circumstances were not favorable for making it till the latter part of Feb. so that I limited it to two weeks in order to get back to Winnebago by spring.

The weather was mild all winter, the month of March being exceptionally fine and springlike; and I left St. Paul by train about Feb. 28. I found the trip both ways taxed my endurance more severely than any I had made previously; but I was able to carry it through and had a very satisfactory visit, returning to St. Paul, and to Winnebago the first of April. I had plenty of money for the trip and left \$30 with Harvard for safekeeping and until it was needed and called for.

¹ As noted previously, this is probably speaking of his deceased brother Ben's wife, Evangeline.

After returning to Winnebago, the weather turned cold and wet and continued cool for most of the summer with plenty of rain; which cut the corn crop to about half but was good for my berries. I bought four hens and raised a brood of 17 chickens at a net profit of over \$15, and rented my barn and grassland to Sackett for milk which gave me just about all I needed for the summer. Also I had an extra good crop of raspberries. The price was high, 60¢ a quart, and I sold around \$30 worth and sent Harvard \$20 more to add to the thirty I previously left with him. The welfare board had cut my allowance from \$28 a month to \$13 in view of my not having to pay interest and taxes on the place; which reduced my income by \$90. But even so I reached the end of the summer with a bank account and cash of about \$100.

I had the chance early in the spring to relinquish my hold on the place, which would expire Dec. 23rd, to Russel Gilmore who was working for it through his uncle, a lawyer in Mankato, and I could probably have realized \$200 or more out of it. But I decided I wanted to retain possession through the summer and see what turned up; and also that I would keep the two lots for the time being at least; so I refused to consider making any deal on it at that time. I wanted someone to have the place who would be glad to rent me one or more of the upstairs rooms, so that I could continue living there through the summer as long as I wanted to; and I thought an older couple, with no children, possibly within the family, would suit me better; although otherwise I was very favorable to Gilmore getting the place when I was through with it. He seemed to have his mind set on it and was anxious to get possession so he could go ahead with remodeling the house, etc. He also was anxious to get title to my two lots. But I had determined to keep them and there was not much he could do about any of it till my year for redemption was up. So I let it run along till October when I was practically through with it, and as nothing else had materialized I saw the chance of making a deal with him that would be of advantage to both of us, by giving him possession 2 or 3 months sooner than he [90] could get it otherwise, in return for the lease of a room or rooms for the following year. I had considered the desirability of having a summer cabin on my 2 lots, with increasing favor; and after considerable maneuvering quit my claim on the place for the balance of my year for a lease of the building we called the wood-shed and which Gilmore proposed to move over onto my lots and fix up suitable for me to live in, in the summer time. This seems to me satisfactory and better than living in one or even two or three rooms upstairs. There were some complications on account of my renters not being able to find a place to move, which held us up for several weeks, but finally cleared up and the building was in process of being moved when I finally got away for the winter.

I made a trip to St. Paul the last of October, partly to see Bob who was home on a furlough, and partly to see about moving the best of my furniture and things there; which I planned to do by hiring a truck as soon as I could get ready; leaving only what I would need, and would have room for in my 10x16 cabin. I found pulling up and moving quite a job, but got through with it pretty well before the end of November, although the weather was terribly cold some of the time. Instead of hiring a truck Gilmore offered to get a trailer and bring what things I wanted to St. Paul, and did on the 25th. I brought along my book-case and books, my trunk,

big chair, pictures and numerous lesser things which fit nicely in my room and leave only kitchen furniture and utensils and a bed at Winnebago, which are not of much value except for my own use when there. These things I was able to leave in the house till spring or for Gilmore to move into my cabin when he got it ready, if he wanted to.

My old age allowance was restored to \$28.30 the first of November and I had my eyes tested and bought a pair of gold rim glasses in St. Paul and ordered a new suit from Montgomery Wards.

The war in Europe came to a successful conclusion for the Allies in April, and in Japan in July. My grandson, Bob Carrell, contracted polio in the Philippines in June but responded to treatment and was sent to this country on a hospital ship, arriving in San Francisco about Sept. 1st. From there he was sent to a hospital in Missouri from where he got a 30-day furlough in October, and an honorable discharge soon after. So the family, including myself, were all together once more for Christmas. Bob has arrangements made for taking some more schooling at Macalester College in electrical engineering beginning next month. There are no great changes in my immediate family otherwise, and on the whole the outlook is fairly good as the year closes.

[91] 1946.

Dec. 31st. The year opened with a tragedy in the family. On January 7, I read in the morning paper of a fire at Rochester, Minn. in which my niece, Faith (Rendall) Giles¹ and her husband² perished. They had visited me at Winnebago the previous summer and were bound for Australia to retire; and I had not heard anything more of them till faced that morning with the news. I at once made preparations and went to Meryl Rendall's at Claremont to attend the funeral at Rochester; but was taken with an upset in my digestion and unable to go. Speedily recovering, I returned to St. Paul and spent the winter there with nothing of great importance transpiring.

Bob Carrell entered Macalester College in January, and Ruth was in nurse's training in Minneapolis.

My digestion and general health continued fairly good; but I found it better and more satisfactory to confine my eating to two meals a day; a practice I have kept up throughout the year.

I returned to Winnebago on April 1st to find my cabin unfinished, but on my lots, with a good floor and windows, and my summer furniture and things moved in but covered with dust and dirt. It was also hard to heat when the cold winds blew. But I had a stove and fuel, and managed to keep warm and get cleaned up so as to live there, without any great hardship. I

¹ Faith was his brother John Fletcher's 3rd daughter.

² **Ernest Frederick Giles** (9/8/1879 – 1/6/1946). He was Faith's second husband. They died in this hotel fire while visiting Mayo Clinic. They were also missionaries in the Philippines.

also got the place and things outside in tolerable shape, and I had enough asparagus for my own use on the lots, and some pie-plant¹, and planted a little other garden stuff including pop-corn. But the spring and summer was backward and nothing did very well. About May 10 or 11 we had a hard freeze which damaged the berries, so that I had only about enough for my own use and canning.

The latter part of May I went to St. Paul for a two-weeks' rest and change; which with another two weeks in August and September, I plan to continue as a regular program. Also this year, LeVerne stopped off at St. Paul for three or four days in July, on his way East from Portland, and I went to meet him there. From there he went back to Winnebago with me for a day's visit there, and I bought at that time a new suit at the Winnebago clothing store, and ordered an electric heater, and table plate for cooking. The heater did not prove practicable and I laid it aside for a small Perfection kerosene heater which is quite satisfactory. So I discarded the stove and wood fire, and through the summer got my cabin fixed up so that it is comfortable and convenient. Also have the garden and lots in much better condition for returning there in the spring. Gilmore has thoroughly remodeled the house and barn, and is greatly improving the place; and my relations with the family are very satisfactory.

Another tragedy in the family occurred in August when Millicent (Anderson) *Miller*² was killed in an auto collision in Oregon. During the summer I had the pleasure of brief visits with several of the relatives from a distance, who were back in Minnesota on vacation [92] trips: Maurice Rendall³ and wife⁴ from Sioux City, Iowa; Pearl (Young) Hough and her husband⁵ from New Mexico; George⁶ and Maud Rendall⁷ from California; Bob Anderson and wife⁸ from Missouri, and the Will Hardings⁹ from Texas.

Returning to St. Paul for the winter November 1st, I made a week-end visit at Meryl Rendall's at Kasson¹⁰, where they had moved from Claremont, and a Thanksgiving week's visit at Brother Jim's at Milwaukee and with sister Eva at Zion, Illinois. Soon after I returned I received word that she had died¹¹, which came as something of a shock, following the two accidental deaths in the family this year.

¹ In its early years, rhubarb was primarily used for pies, earning it the nickname "pie plant" (*landolakes.com*).

² It looks like "Reese" was typewritten here, but it is crossed off and "Miller" written above it. This is referring to Millicent Hazel (Anderson) Miller, who died on 8/8/1946. She was the daughter of Samantha Anne (Lewis) Anderson, daughter of SRR's sister Ellen.

³ **Maurice Harold Rendall** (7/23/1914 – 12/8/1994), son of SRR's brother George.

⁴ **Ellen (Danielson) Rendall** (1907 - 1993)

⁵ **Jacob R. Hough** (7/15/1877 – 12/7/1956). He was Pearl's second husband.

⁶ His nephew George Ogilvie, son of Charles William.

⁷ **Maude Leona (Henton) Rendall** (1/30/1889 – 3/2/1979)

⁸ **Ruby Irene (Parks) Anderson** (1/11/1918 – 9/4/1999)

⁹ Will and Laura Harding. Will is the firstborn son of his sister Susan.

¹⁰ Kasson, MN, 13 miles west of Rochester.

¹¹ 12/10/1946

It remained to spend the Christmas Day and season happily with the family in St. Paul as usual, and close the year with no significant changes in my immediate family to record.

1947.

Dec. 31st -- After a normal winter with nothing out of the ordinary transpiring, I returned to Winnebago on April 1st, to find everything in order so that I could take up life in my cabin and garden easily. Spring arrived on time but developed into a cold and backward season with considerable wet weather, which delayed planting and growth of crops. However, most of my garden came through in fair shape, with a bumper crop of raspberries and fair yield of strawberries. I had close to 200 quarts of raspberries and sold \$60.00 worth at 60¢ quart. The balance went for getting them picked, eating and canning; the strawberries for eating and jam.

In April George and Maude Rendall, who were called from California to Rochester, Minnesota, on a false alarm, paid me a visit. But I saw few of the relatives through the summer. In May and June I took my two weeks at St. Paul, and again in August and September, returning by way of Rochester and Kasson for a visit at Meryl Rendall's with Adra, who was there on a visit from California by plane.

While I was in St. Paul, Bob Carrell was married to Theodora Reimringer¹ and went to live at 433 East Page Street.

In the early fall I deeded my two lots to Russell Gilmore in return for a life estate in the lots and cabin. I made no plans for any trips this year except between St. Paul and Winnebago, and after some fine October weather and getting everything in good shape to leave for the winter, returned to St. Paul on October 31st.

My health is good for my age, and with nothing further to record except a merry Christmas here in St. Paul with my family, I am ready for the new year. The future is all unknown; but I am anticipating some interesting and important developments in the coming year, in the world at large if not in my own.

[93] 1948.

Dec. 31st -- After an uneventful three months, during which I continued to get to and from Sunday School and church with the Spriesterbochs², I returned to Winnebago early in April to spend the summer. The season was rather backward and the berry crop not so good, but I had enough for my own use, and planted some pop-corn and a little other garden, and in May LeVerne, having resigned from the G. E. to take effect in June, came from Portland for a week's visit. I went to St. Paul and spent the week with him there, returning to Winnebago about the first of June. After taking care of the berries I went to St. Paul again for a couple of weeks in

¹ **Theodora Ann (Reimringer) Carrell**

² No idea who this is referring to, or even if it's spelled correctly here - they are also mentioned 2 paragraphs down.

August, then returned to harvest my pop-corn and get ready to leave for the year, which I did the last of September.

It was election year and I arranged to vote by mail, and voted for Dewey and Warren, the Republican candidates. It was very generally thought and predicted that their election was assured; but to nearly *everyones* surprise, President Truman was reelected. There was no great change in the situation in this country or throughout the world, during the year. From St. Paul I went by train to Milwaukee the last of September for a week's visit with Bro. Jim, his wife and Rex, returning early in October.

As the Spriesterbochs had taken to attending another church most of the time, I resorted to calling a cab to get there, and usually secured a ride home with someone, and nothing out of the ordinary occurred till November 21st, when I was taken with an acute attack of something in my right hip and left shoulder, which crippled me so severely that I have been practically confined to my room up to now. And while I seem to be recovering from it gradually, and it disappeared from my shoulder within two or three weeks, I am still so badly crippled with it in my right leg, that I can get around the house only with great difficulty; and have not attempted to get up or down the stairs. However I was able to enjoy the Christmas festivities and dinner with the family as usual. I had been to church that day and walked home the ten blocks, which may or may not have brought it on. I had the doctor and have followed his prescription without much satisfaction; and what will come of it only time can tell. But I am inclined to think it will necessitate some changes in my program for the coming year, and perhaps permanently.

Major events in the family were LeVerne's retirement in June and taking to living in a trailer-house, ending up at near San Diego, California, for the winter, and Ruth Carrell's graduation from her course in nursing and permanent employment at Ancker hospital in St. Paul. Harvard and family continued at Boulder, Colorado, and are doing well, as are the family here in St. Paul.

[94] 1949.

Dec. 31st.-- The year began of course where the previous one left off; and my condition gradually improved about getting around so that by spring I was able to get up and down stairs and outdoors with the aid of crutch and my cane. But I was in no shape to go to Winnebago as I had been doing, and considered giving up the practice. However by June I was feeling so much better that I decided to try it, which I did, getting a ride with Harvard who was here with his car and family on a visit. Verne also was here again in May coming alone by train for a good visit. I succeeded in taking care of myself at Winnebago for two or three months but found it more difficult than previously. However I enjoyed the change and my berries and I got out to S.S.¹ and church most of the time with George Andrews. Also I went with him thirty miles or more to his

¹ Probably referring to Sunday School.

farm for a ride, and with Dora Rendall to Blue Earth to visit the Mores. My worst trouble was a dizziness and sick stomach I was taken with one Sunday at the church as S.S. was opening, and had to be taken home. But I speedily recovered from it and I returned to St. Paul by bus the 1st of September. Soon thereafter I got the chance of a ride by car to Meryl Rendall's farm home at Kasson and had a couple days good visit there, returning to St. Paul by bus from Rochester.

During the summer Bob Carrell secured a good job away out in Wash. state and moved there to live. The remainder of the family including myself, celebrated Christmas with our usual festivities; and dinner here in St. Paul with no significant change in circumstances, and at this date what little snow we have had is all gone and the streets and ground are bare.

1950.

Dec. 31st.-- The first nine months of the year were rather uneventful for me and I remained in St. Paul and abandoned my program of going to Winnebago for any length of time, and turned my little place there over to Gilmore. However Verne and Frances came for a visit during the summer by car and I went with him to Winnebago one day for a few things I had left there that I wanted, and said goodbye to the old home. But the last three months of the year were destined to witness some radical changes.

The first part of October I suffered a mental collapse which put me in Ancker Hospital on October 6th, but from which I soon recovered sufficiently to care for myself in the main, provided I was furnished bed and board, which my faithful daughter, Vera B. secured for me at the Cherokee Sanitarium and Rest Home, where my two daughters can and do visit me often and attend to all my wants; and where nursing care is available if and when I need it. I entered there November 21st.

So I face the new year contentedly settled for an indefinite time, perhaps the remainder of my days, be they few or many.

(Died 1952 on his 86th birthday) 2-16-52¹

¹ This is handwritten at the bottom of the page