

## Introduction by Terence Preston Yorks

text and images © 2009 by Terence Yorks

My father was a generally quiet man, rarely speaking of his past, but who regularly wrote quite amusing letters to his children and older friends. The project grew in part from my participating in an oral history project with Lucy Allen, while in grad school at Texas A&M, which dovetailed with my father's immanent retirement, my own curiosity about what might at any point be lost, and having heard about the potential importance as one aged of keeping busy once the prime focus and routine of paid work were set aside. Looking back, I should have asked for more, since having had only the briefest glances back, I emphasized wanting to hear about his childhood, despite knowing the country and some of the players fairly well. Now, with as much discovered from this document, I wish it could have continued into his work years, about which there remain only tantalizing glimpses, suggesting so much more. Unfortunately, I did not think of it when it could have been possible, not even knowing he'd gotten this far until I found the following typescripts in a cabinet drawer nearest his chair after his too early death.

For perspective (should this collection be separated from my own memoirs), Kenneth Yorks was born in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania in 1911, the only child of parents already in their forties. He went on to earn a depression era scholarship to Penn State, from where he was awarded both bachelors and masters degrees in chemistry. That led to being offered a job in Solvay, New York, as an analytical chemist, which he kept for the next 41 years, eventually specializing in x-ray crystallography. He married a nutrition instructor at Syracuse University, who was originally from Montana, in 1944. Three children followed.

The extant manuscript was undated, but surely was written between 1977 and 1983, in Syracuse, New York, after his retirement, mostly while I was living in Colorado. The order of the sections remains as I found them. Although some parts were done on continuous form paper, careful readers will find that the assemblage may not always represent an actual order of their composition. I have left in redundancies, which offer slight, but potentially interesting, variants in perspective.

I directly transcribed his rather quirky portable manual typewriter originals into computer formats after several prospective human readers, and even the most sophisticated scanning programs, could not recognize enough of their content. During the process, I corrected [hopefully] some spelling, capitalization, and punctuation to ease contemporary readings, but only occasionally, wanting to keep the feeling of the original. This included leaving separate words that are now commonly combined, e.g., camp ground, along with other rather fascinating spelling choices. He did not have electronic spell checking available.

I've lightly annotated his document, through footnotes and clarifying inclusions inside [brackets], adding them to his (parenthetical) comments within the original. [sic] is used with some, but no means all, of the interesting spellings or other retained usage errors, to more clearly differentiate these from mistakes surely added while transcribing what were often unclear typewritten passages, some with very difficult handwritten interspersions, being myself a well below perfect typist. Every time I read through this, I seem to find another need for correction.

A considerable number of other grammatical quirks remain herein, too, despite inner voices shrieking about his leaving out commas before 'which', and suchlike rule transgressions that fought with them from a more literary education, complemented by living with a professional copy editor. I did take my wife's gentle suggestion to capitalize generally both parts of references to street names, which he had done inconsistently. Most other usages are actually part of our heritage and inherently logical, for example, 'kerosine', being like the word *is* pronounced. Such phonetic spellings, as sounding others from among the "[sic]" precedents can underline, should bring both a smile and additional wonder about why the official way is considered more correct.

A few commas were replaced by semicolons when appropriate for ease in deducing flows as sentences got too complex; he seemed never to use them. Some of the longest paragraphs were broken apart at what seemed logical places. He did share much of my grandfather's carefulness about expenses, including use of paper, and some of his son's convoluted thought processes.

At some points, the manuscript fell into the pattern of his letters to his children, so that I, with my two sisters, will be the "you" being referenced. There should, however, be much here for others to enjoy and learn from, even when occasionally buried in not always captivating detail or repetition. For me, the active transcription was a particular treat, to feel so much of him alive again, hearing his voice inside the mind, to see the places we have visited through his eyes more clearly, to be amused by his subtle humor, and learning considerably more in other ways about the world from which I, and many others, arose.

In this version, I have added some scans from relevant photographs in his associated collection. The titles, overall and for sections, are his own.

Terence Yorks,

Smithfield, Utah, 8 April 2009,

(contact information at [www.yorksite.com](http://www.yorksite.com))

Incidentally, here I am with the muzzle loading "rifle", actually a smoothbore, that is mentioned both by my father and grandfather in their respective essays.



## Some Remembrances from the Life of Me

by Kenneth Preston Yorks

A few people claim they can remember events before they were born. I have difficulty remembering very much before I was seven. This present winter faintly brings back a memory of a winter, it must have been the winter of 1917-18, the previous coldest winter on record, when some of the village boys from Limeridge<sup>1</sup> were skating by our farm house on old route<sup>2</sup> 11 between Bloomsburg and Berwick. The road was covered with ice, and I remember my mother looking at the thermometer and saying it was below zero, but I am sure the sun was shining. I never did have skates, so I wasn't skating. It must have been that winter that my father was collecting ice from the Susquehanna River, across the road and down a bank, to put away in the barn, covered with sawdust, for use during the summer to make ice cream. Sometime about this time my father also seems to have been using the smoke house to help cure his production of hams. I recall them together, but it would seem to be rather late in the season to be smoking meat. I am sure that sometime in the fall there had been a large kettle hung over a fire, with a large hog hanging nearby, but it didn't have to be that fall.

Although I can't seem to remember any stoves or ranges, there must have been some, for I seem to remember a chimney fire at one time that caused a metal plate closing an unused chimney vent to glow very red—the house didn't burn. And there seems to have been a grass fire in the night, mostly back toward the railroad; I must have been looking out the back window of the house, assuming the house had a back window. I can give no description of the house at all, from that time. I know about how it looked, from seeing it in recent years and from a picture or two taken while we lived there.

There was an occasion when I found out that one isn't supposed to throw toy popguns at baby chicks, as I recall the gun got wrapped around a tree. And then there was a time when I was sitting on the pig pen fence and woke up inside the pen with a sore head that turned out to have a fairly good sized cut on it; apparently a stone in the pen flew up and knocked me off??<sup>3</sup>

Then one day there was an unusually severe thunderstorm, the lightning struck somewhere close along the trolley cable or some part of the trolley system, the sparks or lightning surrounded the front part of a passing trolley. I don't recall any trouble to the trolley, but my father collect a large amount of large sized trolley cable. It was Al<sup>4</sup>, large stranded. There may even be a little of it still around. I did have a piece at one time.

There may [be] some more items turn up as this story continues, but for living seven years or more in one place, it didn't make a very big impression on a youngster.

What went before me, is to large extent, still to be looked into. In those days I somehow wasn't too interested in all the reminiscing my father and mother and others were continually discussing. Their ancestors, after considerable moving around (I am sure),

---

1 In Columbia County, central Pennsylvania.

2 A U.S. highway, supplanted by Interstate 80, which runs more or less parallel to it there.

3 Double question marks assumed intentional.

4 Aluminum, with the chemist he was communicating to the chemist that I also have been, using the periodic table symbol as the most efficient notation for the material.

somehow settled in a rather remote section of central Pennsylvania, not very far from the largest town in their vicinity—Benton—which was probably larger then than it is now—a train did run to it—and a little further into the wilds, where a large tannery one time was located. Their families lived a couple of miles apart and about five miles from Benton, they went to church, and church going was the thing to do, it was the only way to meet and talk with the neighbors to the Methodist Church in Waller<sup>5</sup>. The church is still there, but is a union church now.<sup>6</sup>



My mother's home I have seen mostly from a distance—it may not even be there any more; my father's I have passed on the road, it didn't look like very much—why it passed out of the family I don't know, except that I don't think it was a very good farm. Certainly, my uncles obtained other farms nearby. My father had attended an academy (sort of a private high school, or a little beyond) and had taught school for a short while, before he was married in 1898 or so. My mother went to grammer [sic] school—I am not sure there was a high school any closer than Benton. I have seen a school that is possibly the one she went to, one room and red, leastwise the one I saw was close to where she lived.

My mother's father was in the battle of Gettysburg, where he was wounded in the shoulder. His name appears on the PA monument on the battlefield (upper left corner on the eastern side, I think). (Theodore Mendenhall, his wife Amanda). He died in the year I was born. His wife lived to be in her nineties and died about 1932, while I was in college. My mother had two sisters and three brothers, Luella (eldest), Martha (youngest), Frank, Thomas, and Isaih [sic], all of whom I knew. My father had three brothers, all older than

5 Next to which the cemetery where he is buried, among his ancestors and relatives.

6 The Kodachrome original next was made by KPY, circa 1950, and looks from closely nearby.

he, and a sister, who died while young, never heard much about her. Father's older brother, William, had a farm not far from his parents' home. I stayed with him there a couple of summers. His brother, Lundy, had the next farm. The other brother, Henry had a store<sup>7</sup> and what not (at the time, the telephone exchange) in a small town near Williamsport, either Oval or Oriole, or perhaps both. It is probable that some of his children, or grandchildren, are still available; haven't had any contact with the Yorks clan for years.

It has never been clear to me why my father didn't have a farm like his brothers, but I suspect the main reason was that there none available. Anyway, shortly after he was married he became a transfer clerk in the WilkesBarrie post office. A transfer clerk saw to it that the mail from the post office was properly placed on the trains. His starting salary was \$900 a year, of which he was saving about half. He shortly purchased a house on Gildersleeve Street in WilkesBarrie. When I saw it, it was on an alley behind Main Street, I think. The transfer clerk job was eliminated about 1910 and he became a railway mail clerk, which he didn't like. He was on a run between Scranton and somewhere beyond Binghamton, on the D&H<sup>8</sup> I think. He, at least once, tossed a mailbag under the wheels of the train. It was a common thing, as the mail for very small stations was thrown off, if the train wasn't stopping for people. The mail was picked up by an arm on the side of the car from a special pole on the side of the track. That didn't always work either.

Anyway, he didn't like the job, and soon after I was born purchased a farm, along the river (Susquehanna) between Bloomsburg and Berwick, a mile so north (upriver) from Limeridge (so named from a useful limestone deposit near the village that has only recently ceased production). The house he sold in WilkesBarrie was still paying off the mortgage while I was in college. At least one couple, the Jacob Kornes, who were friends of the folks in WilkesBarrie, used to visit the farm occasionally, and the people who bought the house (Reinharts) also used to come around. I even remember them visiting us on Lightstreet Road one summer. My father was getting progressively deaf, and didn't cater too well to visitors.

The farm had about 110 acres of good bottom land, with the main road running in front of the house, a trolley line (Bloomsburg to Berwick) on the other side of the road. Beyond that, down a steep bank and a 100 feet or so was the river, down to which I did not go. At the rear of the farm—perhaps a quarter of a mile back—were the DL&W<sup>9</sup> railroad tracks, a long way away. I don't think I ever walked there. I was only a little kid, and wasn't allowed to do much.

Sometime before the Revolution, the farm had been the site, or close to the site of a fort (Fort Jenkins). While I was in college, a monument was erected in the front yard—it should still be there. There is a small collection of arrows and such stuff<sup>10</sup> remaining from those my father picked up while plowing. The farm was good flat land, as was the farm next to it (south). The upriver farm I don't think was so good. The downriver farmer liked to leave

---

7 I remember visiting that store once when very young, especially for its dust, musty smell, and the screen door covered with flies. It very much felt to be in the boonies, surrounded by rank vegetation, but the cookie I was given was quite tasty.

8 Delaware and Hudson.

9 Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western, which had a station in Syracuse, and on which we rode occasionally, routinely referred to by my mother with a wry smile as the "Delay, Linger, and Wait".

10 Arrowheads mounted on heavy paper, and at least one stone axe head, in a rather battered "Jack Derby" cigar box of that vintage, currently kept in our bedroom curio cabinet.

his hay dry before cutting, which my father objected to. Some years after he sold the farm, some promoter came along and sold some people a bill of goods about building new Detroit on the two farms. After collecting a suitable sum of money, he dug a big ditch back to the railroad, and was called out of town, never to be seen again. My father did not invest, as far as I know.

I do seem to remember once walking with my mother to about where the ditch was subsequently dug, on the way to the next farm, and meeting a live rattlesnake somewhere in there.

There must have been traffic on the road, but there are two times that I can remember it. Once was during WWI, there was a gasless Sunday (they aren't as new as you might think), when I can recollect some people stopping a car in front of the house to find out what they were doing out. Another time, late in the war, a large convoy of army trucks went down the road from Berwick where they had been made.

Somewhere between the farm and Limeridge was a picnic ground—a large one, that used to visit by trolley after we moved to Bloom<sup>11</sup>. I don't remember it while we lived closer to it.

I started to school in the four (?) room school at Limeridge, but sometime during the term we moved to Bloomsburg, on the four acres on Lightstreet<sup>12</sup> road, below the country club. The first day at Limeridge, still comes back a little, it seems there was a small blackboard, or one of those lecturers' poster type holders next to the teacher's desk, with the alphabet on it; other than that it is mostly a blank. At Bloomsburg, I went to the teacher's college, in the training school, which at that time, also had a junior high school attached—which means that I went to Bloomsburg State for almost nine years (there are others, like Bob Hutton<sup>13</sup> that also went to college there).

The farm raised wheat, corn, and hay, I am sure. I once rode with my father with a load of corn to the mill near Berwick. Which took most of the day, riding on a wagon drawn by two horses, whose names may have been Babe and Hazel, certainly there was a Babe and a Hazel sometime. I know there were pigs, as I had met them closely, there were probably was a cow or two, and chickens, probably no pets. Two horses, they were needed for plowing and mowing and raking and stuff. I don't recall a binder being owned, but maybe. Certainly, thrashing was done by a itinerant group. They had a steam driven tractor that pulled the thrasher on the road and ran the thrasher by a long belt when thrashing. I think the barn was mostly off limits.

I am sure the things that happened to me in those years influenced my life—certainly they made me more used to being by myself, but as to the conscious memories, they certainly are a rather complete failure. I suppose part of it was due to being buried in a book most of the time, and paying little attention as to the goings on around me.

I don't recall how long we lived on Lightstreet Road as a family, but after a few years, it may not have been until I started high school, that my mother and I moved mostly to my grandmother's house on Third Street, so that my mother could take care of her mother,

---

11 A common abbreviation in writing and speech for the town by residents of and around Bloomsburg.

12 Lightstreet, weirdly enough, is the name of a small town a few miles to the northeast of Bloomsburg, along what is now Pennsylvania state route 487.

13 Bob Hutton was one of my father's peers. More on that family anon.

whose health was only medium, while Aunt Martha worked as a saleslady in the dress shop. Perhaps more on this later.

I believe there a couple of my father's diaries available<sup>14</sup>, the trouble is, they were written in a special form of shorthand that he had concocted so that no one could read them. In latter years he couldn't either. I believe they are around the years he was teaching school, so they might be of interest.

I am sure we didn't have indoor toilets until Third Street, but both Will's and Lundie's farms had running water. It ran by gravity from nearby springs (Will's was several hundred feet) at Will's into a wooden tub in an entrance way to the kitchen, it was rather long and always smelled of pine tar soap. Lundie's spring was close to the house and just under a bank over which the road ran. His water ran into a cement shallow basin, and through a long trough thru a small room, known as the spring house, very useful for keeping things more or less cool. The water running out of the pipes into the containers always made such a pleasant sound. The usual careful sanitary precautions were taken with these springs, i.e., the cows generally ate somewhere else, but I don't recall anyone getting sick, except when I ate too many huckleberry muffins. I may have eaten some huckleberries while they were being picked also.

Although my father's farm was nice and flat, I don't know how Will and Lundy made anything of theirs. I think Will had some fairly flat land on top of the hill, may Lundy had some somewhere too, but mostly they were pretty hilly places. One of Will's wheat fields was so small a binder couldn't be used in it. One used a cradle if one knew how. A cradle is a scythe with a number of wooden sticks parallel to the blade, which allows grain stalks to remain parallel for easier binding.

There are always certain special characteristics one relates to a certain person. Lundy had a peculiarity of always cleaning his plate very clean with a piece of bread, except that he would always leave one bit of something, generally meat, to indicate that he had been satisfied. He had, at one time, a genuine yellow dog. Once it was introduced to a ground hog hole. Its excavation ability was remarkable. Never did get to the ground hog, tho. They can excavate pretty good too.

There may still be Yorks living on Lundie's farm. His son, Charly, took it over, and he had a considerable number of children. Will had one son, who retired from the postal service while I was still in college. I don't know what happened to his farm, although the house is still there. It is not good farming country, certainly not like western farms. One advantage, the rainfall is generally more than sufficient.

At one time my mother's family lived in Virginia; it is not clear that she ever did. This Virginia spell may account for the many black Mendenhalls. There are several Mendenhall branches around the Benton area, even today, ad there are more than one Yorks branch. One Yorks in Bloomsburg was more than fairly well off. One of the largest houses in town (natives called it a mansion) belonged to this branch; at one time they ran a silk mill.

One summer, my mother waited table in a hotel or rooming house in Asbury Park, New Jersey. Asbury Park at that time was run as a Methodist camp ground. Asbury Park is still there, but the Methodists no longer control it. It is still a resort area. I spent several days

<sup>14</sup> These were lost, among the clutter that was thrown out when my uncle sold the Syracuse house.

there once attending an analytical conference put on by Allied<sup>15</sup>. On examining a map, it was Ocean Grove that was the camp ground for the Methodists; it is immediately next to Asbury Park. It seems to me that the same board walk runs by the two, except that the boards had suffered storm damage at the time I was there. That was almost as far away from home as my mother ever got. She loved to travel, but was never able to do any. Her husband didn't like to get away, mainly because he couldn't hear what was going on. My father ran the household. He did not like to spend money, unless there was something he particularly desired, when he might indulge a little. Most of the time I had no sense of being deprived except when my boy scout uniform wasn't quite up to the standard of the others, or some similar situation. However, they seemed to pass. For some reason, I never seemed to mind very much not having a car available, perhaps because it is generally possible to get a ride with someone else.

There is one advantage to the Benton area, it is a scenic area, nothing spectacular, but a very attractive arrangement of rolling hills, rather steep, with lots of forests and small green farm plots. Probably more than half of the land is covered with wood. Some lumbering is carried on, as many of the woods are well grown, but there is generally no very large area in one place covered with forests for about ten or more miles north, when the hills change to what are called mountains, whereon there are lots of large wooded areas.

### **Entertainment**

There were two movie theaters in Bloomsburg. The Victoria (newest and designed for movies) and the Columbia, which was on the second floor a building on Center Street, just off Main. It always seemed sort of run down, but it must have been fairly durable, for I took a couple of you to a Walt Disney picture there once (Dumbo?)<sup>16</sup>. One of the shorts accompanying had to do with bears (Bear Country). The Columbia must have been among my first theater experiences, at one time, before movies were the only thing, vaudeville shows and minstrel [sic] shows appeared there; I attended at least one of each. They also featured travel pictures, produced by a man named Lyman Howe, or some such. They tended to be, as much as possible, on the exciting side, mad dashes on trains or the like. The Victoria ran only movies; this was before talkies. One movie I didn't like was "Feet of Clay", an exceedingly boring picture to a rather small boy. The only other thing that comes to mind is one of the serials that ran in those days was particularly vivid because in episode 11 the hero was being pulled into a cabinet by a large number of very vicious looking claws, which was par for his troubles; the thing that bothered me was that the next week we went to WilkesBarrie; so far as I know, the hero is still being mauled by that cabinet. Rather frustrating.<sup>17</sup> Another notable experience occurred at the Columbia one night when talkies were first coming out. This particular picture had been done by the disc method (the sound was on discs, which were cued from the film); the projectionist happened, one night, to get the wrong disc on, creating a somewhat weird effect, and some delay in seeing the film.

<sup>15</sup> Allied Chemical company, one of the names of his long time employer

<sup>16</sup> Yes!

<sup>17</sup> Ironically, at age 11, which I can date accurately from hearing about Sputnik while waiting in line during then weekly trips to the YMCA for swimming and socialization, I thereby shared another experience with my dad, unrealized till now. One of the Y's breaks was to run early serials, the one most remembered titled "The Clutching Hand". Being printed on nitrate stock, part way through an ultimate episode the reel caught fire, leaving the imaginary hand still reaching out, albeit crumpling in the very real flames.



In those days, Harold Lloyd was perhaps the best one around. Shirley Temple and her group came later. I probably saw most of the films going around, but they didn't seem to make too much impression, just like the books. But then maybe I didn't see all the pictures, there wasn't that much money floating around. I must have seen most of that serial, tho, except for the final episode.

More people went to the movies then, there wasn't much else, radio was just starting, churches furnished most of the other entertainment. The college did put on a few things, especially lectures. Richard E. Byrd gave a lecture which I attended. He had spent part of a winter isolate, by choice, on Antarctica, almost killed him too. Troubles with a kerosene stove in this hut almost asphyxiated him.<sup>18</sup>

Later, high school football games were available on Sat. afternoons. At least one occurred at Danville, our bitterest rivals. Bloom lost that game, partially because almost the entire varsity team had been fired because they decided to take a day off from school without authorization. That must have been during my senior year.

My mother was almost completely church oriented, there were several church groups of one kind or another to keep her interest up. My grandmother like to piece quilts, and one of the church groups would get together in quilting bees to sew the patches into a quilt. One of her particular friends, was a Mrs. Sweppenhauser, whom I believe she knew even before living in Bloomsburg. Her husband was an accountant, whose ability to add columns of figures astonished me. He also owned a Blickgensdorf (my spelling) typewriter, which used the nodding head of type before IBM was invented. They had ceased being manufactured long before this, and are rather scarce nowadays [sic].

### **Events**

One September, whilst I was still going to the college, must have been Junior High, but not positively, there were some unusually hard rains, which led to the largest flood I experienced. Below Bloomsburg, on the road to Danville, actually opposite the fair grounds, at about the Magee<sup>19</sup> homestead, Fishing Creek runs along below a high bank. At the time of this flood, the water was coming over this bank and flooding the street. Some of us walked down from school to see the goings on. I have heard that more severe floods have occurred in recent years, but mostly from the river backing the creek up, or from the river water itself.

The big event of the year was the Bloomsburg Fair, which was, and is, one of the largest in the state. The Pennsylvania State Fair, if one exists, occurs in January<sup>20</sup>. This may not be totally unknwn to some of you, as pictures are available of a couple of you riding horses or something at one of them<sup>21</sup>. But a lot of a small boy's attention was devoted to the fair, and how to get in without money, and how to exist inside the same way. I don't know what it cost to get in, but it was too much. We found holes, either over or under the fences

18 Remembered vividly by his son from Byrd's written version, found in at least one textbook.

19 Bloomsburg's dominant industry during my father's days was the Magee carpet company.

20 The New York State Fair is held at the end of August in Syracuse, and was a big deal for our family while his children were growing up.

21 I vaguely remember clinging on top, with 'horses' being a bit of an exaggeration for the ponies, but more fixed in detail is a vision of a large wooden stable catching fire one year, spectacularly, and the terrified full-scale horses fighting while handlers tried to lead them away. No images of either have surfaced during my searches.

many a time. When hungry, it generally took a bit of walking to find a stand which had ten cent hotdogs, there was usually at least one, sometimes several. Hog dogs were the most important eating item, occasionally some type of ice cream, altho I remember one Sept when sheepskin jackets were in order. No ice cream then. We generally circulated the ground several times, finding the farm machinery, and the new autos, if any, the most interesting generally. There was a midway, with rides, most of which didn't make me feel very good.

The auto races were of interest, I even sat in the grandstand to watch them one year. The odor of castor oil prevailed over all. (Interesting sidelight on sitting in the grandstand. There was a woman present who was feeding her baby the natural way while sitting and watching the races. No one seemed to pay any attention. This was somewhere about 1928 or 29, I suppose.) The track was dirt, and to stand around one of the turns provided evidence that one had been there. There wasn't much dust, as calcium chloride had been liberally applied, but the cars still threw up solid ground in large amounts. The auto races took place on the last day, so that the track could be in good condition for the horse races which occupied afternoons during the week. Very boring affairs. Lots of people watched them, tho. Most of the people that attended were used to horses in those days. After all, even after we were married, the Syracuse dairies still used horse drawn carts. In the earlier days, many people still drove horses to the fair. Actually, fairs are pretty much the same all over. Maybe the most vivid memory is the height of West Street hill on the way home. Something less than Longs Peak, but not much. The hill is about one block long, but steep.

To be really appreciative of a fair, one must have a personal interest in it, which we never did. There were probably things around worth displaying, but they never did do it. Martha was a better seamstress than most, but she was too busy working at the job to make things for a fair. I don't think that most years, did she even go, some stores had pretty good business that week.

The fair was the last week of September, long after school had started, I think they just cancelled school most of that week somehow. In the earlier days, there wasn't much at night, but in the more recent years some of the bigger shows and stuff went on at night. Early on, there were various vaudeville [sic] acts between races during the day, but later they turned to various more musical type shows, with choruses and orchestras and dancing and the like. Most of those I didn't see, they cost. A few of the other acts could be seen from the other side of the track, if the crowd wasn't too big.

### **Note on writemup**

One of my father's books was one entitled "Natural Philosophy" or some variate thereof [both sic]. I can no longer remember exactly what it contained, but it had to do mostly with physics and similar material. I used to spend hours working over the book, enjoying the pictures, only they weren't pictures, they were mostly drawings, or woodcuts, but in spite of all the times I looked at it, I still can't remember any of the details. It must have been published in the 1870's, again I am not certain. I am sure that it did start my interest

in science<sup>22</sup>. Most of the rest of my father's books I ignored. He had so many that were a little more than abstruse. There were many a Bible commentary, and complete Dickens, whom I never could get interested in. And "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" all good and sturdy books but a little too sturdy for my tastes. I assume that he read them, at some time, altho I never caught him at it. He went to the library regularly, mostly for biographies and histories and things like that. No novels. There was another book, probably an agricultural yearbook that had interesting pictures. These books were perused during the early years [there is a bit more of this section through a handwritten addition, but it remains illegible even to me].

### Food

I understand that I was raised on Condensed Milk, an item of commerce that is not as popular now as it was in the past (it is a mixture of milk and sugar, evaporated to some extent). Presumably some other ingredients were also present. From then, until Lightstreet Road I must have eaten something, there is picture of me taken on the farm indicating that I once was fairly round. I have mentioned elsewhere a few of the things that were special occasions food, but for ordinary days bread was a big item, covered with peanut butter or applesauce, especially applesauce. My father liked it for about every meal, some of it may have been canned, for apples didn't keep until spring, most of the time. Certainly there was<sup>23</sup> plenty of other canned vegetables, and fruit. Occasionally, even meat. Canned pork tenderloin is particularly good, but that didn't happen very often. We must have had pork, altho ham was more likely, or sausage, the likes of which we don't find anymore—possibly because of different spices than now used, and scrapple—not one of my favorites. Beef, whenever we had it, more often on Lightstreet than elsewhere, I am sure, was always well cooked. Steaks I don't believe existed, more likely stew beef, although the one I liked best was "Canned Wiley" from WWI, (this was in the twenties) which had a very good flavor, somewhat like present chuck roast. Perhaps the most common beef was stew meat, which was the cheapest cuts, and was boiled with something or other. There was always home grown potatoes, mostly boiled or mashed, no baked potatoes, they required extra heat and a lot of trouble (coal ranges are not electric stoves). There was beans all year (dried in the winter), peas in season, and asparagras<sup>24</sup>. In fact, in season, almost any known vegetable, and some not so well known, like vegetable oysters (salsify), and lots of turnips (which I didn't like). And there were some experiments with sweet potatoes. There was a clump of horseradish down by the creek, one we went at that rather easily, preparing it made onions seem innocuous.

One of the late summer tasks was the preparation of dried corn, which then lasted thru the winter. I didn't care for cooked dried corn, but I sure liked to eat it as it was. The corn was picked, brought immediately to the house, cooked very slightly, I think, and immediately cut and scrapped [sic] off, the latter being important, to get all the juices, spread out on cotton clothed frames, and dried, sometimes in the sun, but mostly over the

<sup>22</sup> There were two of his in Syracuse that served a similar purpose for me, *The Modern Wonder Book of Knowledge* from the late 1940's (which still have, and brings those memories back when I flip through it) and Life's *The World We Live In*, from the early 1950's. Both are thoroughly illustrated.

<sup>23</sup> His choice of verb, making for an interestingly arguable choice from a formal grammatical perspective, being followed by an 'of' phrase, but also by an 'and'. The similar following choices seem to me to be even less defensible, but Word's grammar checker isn't bothered by them...

<sup>24</sup> Spelled in the typescript, and repeated here, just as he always pronounced it.

stove. The juices held the corn grains in lumps, not in individual grains, and gave the dried material an unusually rich flavor, almost as sweet as the original. Many dozen ears were required for this task.

Pitting cherries for canning was also something that required effort, and it seems that I was frequently involved in that. There were sweet Oxheart cherries, white cherries (if the birds didn't get there first), and the red sour ones (there was also a tree of wild cherries, which were purple on the outside and full of pit on the inside, I think some of them were used for jelly on occasion).

There were some quince trees on a neighboring farm, or lot, not far from where Keller<sup>25</sup> ultimately kept his wolves, which were mixed with apples to make a different kind of apple sauce. The owner of this lot (it may have been that his name was Creveling) had a daughter whose first name was Elizabeth—known as “Tin Lizzie hop toad” sometimes to her face. I am not sure that she really liked it. WE did not eat toads, so she was safe. My father, besides bread and applesauce, also required a piece of pie, preferably apple, made in twelve inch pie pans, one quarter of the pie was generally sufficient. Peanut butter went well with it.

One common dish that I didn't care for was macaroni and cheese. The cheese, in those days, seemed to be much stronger than present day cheeses. It came in large wheels, and staid around in the store until sold. NOT under refrigeration.

In the winter, it was buckwheat cakes for breakfast every morning. Those buckwheat cakes are made from a batter that raises overnight, in a special pitcher like container. The batch is staired in the fall and lasts all winter. Buckwheat cakes are thin, have a very good flavor, and are not as flannellike as ordinary pancakes. They are very good indeed, but no longer obtainable. They didn't even make them on Third Street. Present day houses are probably too warm for proper growth.

Another home mixture, that sometimes became a real adventure, was the preparation and use of home made root beer. One obtained a small bottle of the concentrated flavor (Hires), mixed it with sugar (I think) and yeast (I know that), performed some other magic on it, bottled it, and when needed opened a bottle and enjoyed. Sometimes, it was rather difficult to get everything just as it should be, so occasionally there was no fizz, and occasionally there was a little too much. My parents got pretty good, eventually, my father would stand on one side of the kitchen and open the bottle, and my mother would stand on the other side with a large pan, with very little going on the floor. I don't know if this was a regular thing, but I know that it did happen on occasion.

During prohibition, my father, who did not drink, used to perform some mysterious operations with things like dandelion blossoms, grapes, and perhaps other similar items, certainly those, to produce things that occasionally turned out quite well. I think he even tried beer sometimes. He did these things because he wasn't supposed to. I am not sure what he did with the results. They certainly weren't regular food items. And my mother was a WCTU<sup>26</sup>.

---

<sup>25</sup> George Keller, listed on the Internet by his great-granddaughter as a “college professor”, which I suppose he was, but given the dual nature of that college, had been my dad's art teacher at one point, as well as neighbor. He went on to be Ringling Brothers' circus animal trainer, and author of the engaging *Here Keller, Train This*, which is apparently still in print.

<sup>26</sup> Women's Christian Temperance Union, one of the driving forces behind Prohibition.

My seat at the table was between two tables, one of which held the drinking water pail, the water that was stored in the attic came from a cistern, whose water wasn't of drinking quality. The peanut butter jar was at my left hand, it generally required remixing at every use. Homogenized peanut butter had not yet arrived<sup>27</sup>.

Corn meal mush was used frequently, that was something else I didn't go for, back to the bread, I suppose. One thing I did like was bread and milk, bread in those days held up better in milk. That may have been used only when I was feeling lowly, which happened sometimes. Occasionally my mother baked bread, but mostly, especially in latter years it was purchased, particularly American Stores twin loaves. She was probably too busy baking pies to do bread. Cakes occurred occasionally, mostly cocanut [sic]—altho a chocolate turned up once in a while. Martha liked them, neither my mother or I was a chocolate fan. My father was.

We had no ice box<sup>28</sup>, milk was delivered daily, how other things were preserved I do not know, but they didn't sit around, they had to be eaten. The cellar provided somewhat of a cooler area than elsewhere. In the winter, a box outside the window served quite well. The ice man came every day or so, a card was placed in the front window, square, with numbers in the corners, representing the size of ice cake desired. The number placed uppermost indicated the size desired. Most ice men eyeballed the size, eventually scales were used. Very roughly, \$.25 gave a piece a foot square. Or, more likely, that size was a dime. Sometimes the ice was wrapped in newspapers to make it last longer, things didn't always keep too well with that method. There was no frozen food, and ice cream was eaten when purchased, which wasn't too often, unless home made. Light Street was a half a mile from the nearest store, by foot. Rice pudding was a common desert, aside from pie. Dinner, of course, was at noon, altho that may have changed when we went to Third Street. It didn't much matter to me.

In the spring the big item was fresh shad, a very tasty fish, but exceedingly full of bones. It has become rather rare in recent years, altho I had some in Pittsburg some years ago. It is reputed to be coming back, even in the Hudson River. It operates similar to salmon. Lots of eels were caught in the Susquehanna, but we didn't go in for them. Also there was a fresh fish market very handy at Third Street, I don't think fish was too much used. Oysters were probably more often around, mostly as stew (I ate the oyster part, not with any great enthusiasm).

Speaking of cakes, as I was above, there was one that was obtained, from a bakery, I believe, that was a ceremonial job, perhaps my grandmother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Part of this was put away in the corner cupboard for some months, the icing was of such a hard and impervious consistency that the cake kept perfectly well for all the time it was stored. It was not our favorite type of frosting.

In latter years on Third Street, I used to have to do some of the grocery shopping, not such a difficult job, but different than today. One took a list of the items to the store, handed it to a clerk, and he went around the store and picked up the items. If they happened to be a cerial [sic], he had a long pole with a grabber on the end, to remove the box from the high shelves. This particular store was an A&P just around the corner from Iron Street,

27 I do not remember him eating any once it did.

28 In the Lightstreet Road house; there must have been one at Third Street.

on Main. It was rather narrow, with only one counter, probably somewhat smaller than one aisle of a present store. There were several clerks and not too many shoppers, so there wasn't much waiting time. There was a Weiss's a few doors down Main Street and also an American Stores practically next door to the Weisses. Visible from the Third Street house was a small grocery, which we practically never patronized. The prices were distinctly higher than the chains.

Not having done any shopping hardly between 1930 and 1948 or so, I don't know exactly when the personal service feature left the stores, it certainly would be hard to do today, with so many people around. Milk, bread (alho we didn't), vegetables, meats (sometimes), were all delivered to the door by various types of salesmen. Milk wagons, at least, were all horse drawn. The horses soon learned where to stop. Most other delivery wagons were trucks. The most popular was the ice man, especially on a hot day, as there were always chips of ice as he cut the large blocks to size. The ice man, generally young, wore a leather harness on one shoulder to carry the larger chunks, smaller ones were carried with a special large scissor like gadget, still in use at ice handlers. The ice was delivered right into the ice box, the route man soon learned where everyone had theirs hidden. In winter, at least for us, most foods were kept in a box outside a window, it generally didn't get cold enough to freeze anything. There was room only for milk and the like. Most perishables were bought when needed. Pork products came from a woman who did her own butchering. They were delivered, and very good.

### **Snow**

Automobiles and cleared streets are ruining one of the better winter occupations of children. To properly enjoy sliding down hills on a sled requires a steep hill, of almost description, plus snow, not loose open stuff, but snow properly packed, and slippery. Not ice, but packed snow. Ice doesn't permit any control, but snow gives a little, enough so that the favorite of sleds, the Premier Flexible Flyer, and even some of the lesser varieties (of which I was a not too proud owner) had enough maneuvering power to permit turns enough to go around the bends and to avoid bare spots or other obstacles. Bumps were generally not obstacles, they were fun.

Sled riding, not occupying many days of winter, because snow didn't exist a large part of winter, differing from other places in the country<sup>29</sup> frequently became a community sport. Bloomsburg was blessed (?) with several steep to very steep hills, and with the cooperation of the authorities, some of the best were close to vehicular traffic and opened to sled riding, particularly in the evenings. There frequently weren't enough cars around to make that much difference to them, the streets were not plowed, and salt was something used to make food taste better, or, to make ice cream.

Main Street, at the West Street hill was blocked off for several years, and later, East Street, from Main to First Street, which was a slightly longer and steeper hill, with the advantage tat one could go around the corner at East and Main and continue on down Main as far as momentum carried. Traffic had to be stopped on Main Street again, such as it was. I don't think that many cars went up that part of East Street in winter. The West Street hill gave only a straight run, no curves, alho there was a railroad track to go (the

---

<sup>29</sup> Syracuse claims to be the "snowiest city in the world".

B&S) which supplied a good bump. The turn at East and Main was very easy, causing no problems, but it did give a more interesting ride. The game here was to see how far down Main Street one could go. I keep thinking of the Victoria Theater, which was a long block and quarter from East Street. Iron Street must have been obtainable too.

Mixed in with the sleds were bobsleds, large cumbersome affairs, seating perhaps a dozen people, not necessarily young, as a bob sled required considerable resources. May have been 20 feet long, a wide plank, mounted on large heavy iron bound wooden runners, one pair at the front were steerable, sometimes by ropes, but the larger ones by a large steering wheel, mounted on a rod which connected directly with the front runners through a hole in the plank. The rear runners were fixed, but generally had some kind of a drag brake attached. There was a long rope attached to the front of the sled, by which the participants pulled the sled up the hill, mounted, were started by a push from the last man, and down they went. As might be imagined, considerable speed could be obtained on a steep hill, with a good load of people and slippery conditions. Individual sleds had better stay out of the way. An auto horn was sometimes added to the front.

There were other places. One year, at least, there was a course, this may not have always been an official one, starting at the men's dorm at the college, and ending up somewhere about Fifth or Sixth Street east of East Street. That was a long ride, crossing several streets in the process, made it much more interesting is there was no traffic control at the time. It was also possible to start at the same place and go down the sidewalk along the college. This one had a sharp turn at the bottom, which turn should not have been made while in the air, as it caused the one runner to fold over somewhat. Another, safer place, was from the country club down a road close the Greenhouses and the property of one of our neighbors. As this road was little used, especially on the upper end, it wasn't as well packed as the town streets, hence it wasn't used too much<sup>30</sup>. Gave a nice long ride, and a long hike back up.

There were a few skiers around, but not too many. Skis were likely to be home made (lots of books had instructions) and they had the latest in bindings, a strap over the instep, which kept the skis on as long as forward pressure was on. There wasn't very much control possible. The country club grounds were about the only possible ski area, too many fences on other fields, for the few days of the year when there was sufficient snow.

By the time I was in high school my sled covered only my body, leaving my legs to float in the air, which wasn't too bad. One did not ride on a sled sitting up, very little control that way, one lay down on its stomach, generally by getting a running start, laying the sled on the ground (I mean snow), and, cushioned by one's hands and arms, lowered oneself onto it while moving as rapidly as one could run. The combination of movements allowed mounting to be accomplished with no damage, unless there happened to be a bare spot in the snow, then the graceful start wasn't so graceful. In this position, rather good control could be had of the sled, there is an Olympic sled race using a very fanciful sled similar to these. The feet were available for brakes and other control. There generally were only one or two kids killed by riding into, or under, cars about the same as now. Not enough cars. There

---

<sup>30</sup> This answered a long-standing conundrum of mine. He was clearly proud to give my a genuine Flexible Flyer early on, but I found its steering capabilities to be pretty much only theoretical, and so was more than a bit disappointed. However, it was used only on the drumlins located a block or so from our house, and these never saw enough use between their frequent snowfalls to ever get usefully packed down.

were a few toboggans around, but not many, conditions generally weren't good for them. Persons, like me, with prominent hip bones, found out about them shortly, most sleds didn't have any padding, altho after some experience, one frequently saw cushions tied on the rear part of the sled.

Syracuse, at one time, closed off some streets for riding, but that hasn't been done for many years.

Sitting up on a sled led to considerably less control, and it was much further to the ground after the almost inevitable fall. The center of gravity was all wrong, or something like that. It never did work right. And, besides that, when one's face is close to the snow, it sure looks like one is going much faster.

The runners on these sleds were ordinary steel, but with a concave bottom, which helped to give a little more control. They gave a much better ride after the rust had been worn off and they became nice and shiny. The sled was so arranged, especially in the Flexible Flyer, so that the handles could be twisted, which imparted a curve to the runners, thereby giving somewhat of a turn to the sled. On ice, this didn't work, but on snow it did, to a greater or lesser degree. There was always the feet, or the roll off, if doom looked inevitable.

The blocking off streets generally was done at night, when traffic was less, but the street lights gave plenty of light, and more people were available at night. It was never cold, it seems. Although it seems that galoshes and heavy coats were used. A sheep skin coat was the desired article, if possible. Not everyone had one, including me. The sheep skin was hidden behind a cloth covering<sup>31</sup>, not open to the air, as now. Stocking caps were the thing. Unbuckled galoshes came later, I think. They sure wouldn't have been much help in belly-busting. They weren't much help in walking either, but they were easier to put on and take off.

### **The Limeridge Homestead 1979**

On Oct. 27, 1979 I had the opportunity to revisit the home and the old Berwick Road outside Limeridge, Pa. Some changes have taken place since I lived there, like the barn has disappeared, the trolley is long gone, there is a memorial stone with a flagpole, commemorating Fort Jenkins, etc.

The first attempt to find the place ended in failure, we exited [sic] from Interstate 80 upriver from Limeridge, at the Mifflinville exit, south side of the river, there is another on the north side also, and took the first road leading to the river, along side a large factory of unknown products, then turned right towards Bloomsburg, which turned out to be in error, as the farm is in the other direction. We continued on to Bloomsburg this time, finding both sides of the road almost completely lined with houses. Did see a sign for Almedia at one time, then knew I was lost. Later in the day, I returned and turned to the left on the same street. Very soon I passed a park on the right, still in well kept condition and obviously having been used this summer, not this day, altho it was a lovely day. Continuing on for about a mile came to the house with the monument, which looked vaguely familiar, except that the front porch had been removed. Most of my recollection stems from a picture of the family in front of the house.

---

<sup>31</sup> Although he had become too dignified to try the sled that he bought me during my childhood, he did get himself one of these coats as an adult, which he wore until it disintegrated.



All the sheds that used to be in the area are gone, as is the barn, which has been replaced by a modern type house, looking rather new. I didn't look at the farm land very much, it looked rather run down, but at this season it might anyway. Talked briefly to a young man who apparently lives there, whose name I promptly forgot, but who did say the never knew there was a trolley ran by the place, altho he wished there still was one. Suspect he works at one of the numerous factories that are scattered along the roads, both ways. The river seemed closer than I had remembered, but it is still rather wild and woolly steep rough land (the man I talked to was just finished having his truck pulled up from a lane leading down the bank by a neighbor's tractor). Leon<sup>32</sup> also pointed out there had been a canal along there at one time also. It seems I vaguely remember the path the horses or mules used to walk on (tow path). Several pictures were made of the house, sign and the like.



---

<sup>32</sup> Leon Barndt, my father's closest friend from his youth, who had a radio, later television, repair business in the front part of his Bloomsburg home, and who was a lifelong regular correspondent by mail.



The house looks in very good condition, maybe even better than it used to be.



I am sure my father believed that the actual fort was further down the river by at least one house. How much information on the subject is available, I have no idea.

There would be no scenic advantage to living in this area, too flat, and too many trees between the houses and the river. It still is probably good farm land, or could be made so.

### **Farming Insert**

Somewhere I mentioned a cradle used to cut wheat, or similar grain. A cradle is simply a scythe with a number of wooden slats, parallel to the blade, on which the grain stalks

would lie after cutting. A person skilled in its use would then lay the stalks on the ground in a nice parallel row, which could easily be raked into bundles and tied into sheafs. A real expert with a scythe could do almost as well, but not quite, and the stuff would generally be in a mess hard to handle. A cradle is a heavy awkward piece of equipment. I never used one. Cradles were used to cut the first row around the edges of a field, or to cut a field too small to use a binder. Combines were almost never used, for many reasons. One, they were rather new and expensive, the fields were not large enough to make them worthwhile. Most farmers wanted to save their straw, as the wheat, or grain had to be very ripe to use a combine, it was very difficult in this area of frequent rains, to get the grain to the proper degree of ripeness while still retaining any grain, or not to have it all blown down. A binder, of course, merely cut the grain and tied it into bundles (sheaves) which were allowed to dry further in stacks, until such time as the thresher crews came along. Many farmers owned their own binders, but threshing was generally done by traveling thrashing crews, similar to the combines of the west. It was generally a local outfit, perhaps a neighborhood farmer with a larger farm, or something. I don't recall where the one came from that used to trash [sic] on the Limeridge Farm (he had a steam engine for power).

When the cradle was used, the sheaves were tied with a handful of the grain stalks. There is a special way of tying the stalks to form a band around the sheaf. I could do it at one time, and might be able to again if I had some in my hand, altho I am not entirely sure. These time consuming methods were necessary for the small fields available, and are one of the reasons there aren't too many farms left that grow their own grain as the only method of keeping alive. I suspect most of the farmers in that vicinity have other jobs now, or else run dairy cattle or something. It sure doesn't look like a Colorado field.

Near Benton there was a considerable amount (by central PA standards) of potato farming, and that may still be true. There is a considerable amount of rather flat land, or good quality. There were potato growers of the 600 bushel to the acre type—or was it 300, anyway it was a lot of potatoes. There are still good looking farms and fields in that area.

Motive power, to a large extent, was supplied by horses. Tractors were just coming in, and were a little hard to use sometimes, in these small fields, besides being too expensive. My father had two horses, named Babe and Hazel. I am almost certain one of them had some white on it, but otherwise, they were horses. I think he sat me on one of them once, but horse back riding was not done. They were not that kind of horse, anyway. They pulled the plow, the rakes, and the mowing machine (for hay), the binder, and the wagon to haul stuff in, and to take it to the mill or whatever. My father's land was flat, so he had a single plow, some farmers, with steep hilly land, used side hill plows (I have yet to see a side hill cow, altho I have heard of them). Side hill plows had two plows, mounted to turn the furrow in different directions, so that one could go to the end of the row, turn around, and come back and still throw the furrow in the same direction. Ordinarily, one plowed around and around a field, whilst striving to keep a straight furrow on the edges. There are still plowing contests for the ability to plow a straight furrow. With the advent of contour plowing, straight furrows aren't so good. Some large fields could support a gang plow, but that required a tractor or more than two horses. The work went faster, but then there was more to do.

### **Christmas Fifty Years Ago**

Christmas didn't used to get all the commercial publicity it does now. But there always was enough for a boy to catch on about it, especially when he got a little older and went to school and things like that. The anticipation was just as strong, and maybe stronger than now. Afterall, there were no Santa Clauses in every store, in fact, I don't think there were any, and the promotions weren't nearly as strong, so the desires while present, weren't satisfied as much before hand.

Christmas frequently was a chance for the family to get together for a big meal and todo. Most frequently the Callenders, they had transportation, would drive down from Berwick for the day. There may have been others. Actually, I was generally too interested in my own persuits [sic] to pay much attention as to what was going on around me, except to note that there was a lot of unusual bussle going on. Then, as now, various segments of the families would send gifts to other members. Even the Yorks exchanged gifts to some extent. I am sure Henry's family was in on this end, for Gertrude, at least, was near my age.

But, frequently, the most awaited gifts, at least for the older members, was the package from Isaih's family in New York state, somewhere around Afton. It always contained a gallon or so of maple syrup, which he had made on his farm. But one Christmas, a large package arrived, which didn't seem like maple syrup, so the family (probably Martha) put it under her bed to keep spying eyes out, after several days, however, their curiosity got the better of them, and they though maybe they better investigate, because he might have sent something that wouldn't keep too well. Hence the package was opened, not in my presence, and well they did, for therein was a suckling pig, just about the right size for our group. That was probably the best Christmas dinner I ever ate. Young pig is out of this world almost. The closest thing is properly prepared pigs knuckles, but even they don't have the delicate flavor and tenderness of the little fellows. I am sure the package under the bed would eventually have been opened, perhaps even before the time scheduled, but I think perhaps the flavor might have been a little riper, well aged, so the speak.

There was another Christmas when I had the whooping cough and lost my dinner, but I am almost certain they weren't the same year. Aside from the pig, I don't know what the menu generally was, altho there used to be scalloped oysters most every time. I never ate them, which must be when they stick in m mind. There was always enough to go around, ending up with mince meat pie, which was made from home made mince meat, about half or more meat and the rest apples, all of which had been boiled for days (it seemed) with cider. There was also apple pie, and plum pudding, which contained no plums, but was made with lots of suet (it was also called suet pudding), it was dark brown, moist, and eaten with a thin tasty lemon sauce. I payed [sic] no attention to the cooking. The main dish was probably a large stewing chicken, if roasters and frying chickens were available, we didn't have them. Along with the stewing chicken went waffles and chicken gravy. It may be that the chicken was roasted for Christmas, but I can't say for certain.

On Lightstreet we had Christmas trees at various times, generally placed in the parlor in the cool, where they would last a long long time. Presumable there were some on Third Street, but there wasn't much room to spare there. Especially when a piano was added, I believe it was more for a courtesy storage proposition for no one could play it, and I was

never required to take lessons, or perhaps even offered. One of the Trimble girls used to play sometimes when they came by. She was pretty good, altho I didn't have to compare her with. She was supposed to be practicing four hours a day.

A little note of music in my life then In high school there was once given a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, name not know now, anyway, I was considerably bothered by all that yelling interrupting the story. How things change, sometimes<sup>33</sup>.

I always made known my wants before Christmas, sometimes I got almost what I wanted. There was, at one time, even a chemistry set. And, another time, an erector set, which was lots of fun. And, at another time, there was a game board, on which all sorts of games could be played, from checkers, to a form of pool, called "Carroms". Leon used to come up sometimes and play with me. Little wooden rings were shoved around the board with small cue sticks. There was a variety of other games, but we stuck mostly to the bouncing rings, which sometimes did bounce off the table.

My grandmother had a very strong dislike of cards games in any form, perhaps some of her relatives had gamble at one time, or it was just the good old Methodist in her, anyway, any cards I knew about was obtained at other houses. One of the boys in the neighborhood had a father who invented such things, and one of those he had was a kind of "old Maid" using cards which had to match the state with its capital. I used to be able to get pretty good at know which went with whom.

Once, whether it was Christmas or not, I am not sure, we went to Berwick and to my Uncle Tom for a meal. His wife (also a Grace<sup>34</sup>) was a most excellent cook (after her husband died she was a cook at the hotel in Benton for many years). Being of Pennsylvania Dutch origin she really fed a person (she and Tom looked it too). There was always four or five vegetables and a couple of meats, and her butterscotch pie was really something, if you got thru the rest of the meal that would floor you. There was cake also, of course. They lived in a house across the street from the river, and they owned an Edison phonograph, which used very thick records and a diamond stylis. The recordings were made more like present day ones, how good they were, I don't remember, except they seemed better than the other variety.

Whether or not it was a white Christmas didn't bother me any. Snow came latter when there weren't interesting presents to play with. I never did get a Flexible Flyer sled (too expensive), which were the Cadillac of sleds, they could be steered better, but I did have a sled, and on occasion, used it. The town whenever there was decent snow (once or twice a winter) used to block off some of the streets for sleighriding. Hills like the one on Main Street at West Street, and latter, East Street hill form First to Main. A good run down that and you could coast almost all the way to the theater, a block and half away. Latter they closed off a street, I don't remember the name, that ran from the College down to Fifth Street. It was very steep, and by starting near the mens dorm, you could go six or eight blocks. It was also possible the start up in the golf course and run down the Greenhouse road for a long run. A few boys had skis, the kind with a band to hold them on, part of the time. Also prevalent, especially on the Main Street runs, were large bob sleds, holding up to a dozen people, haven't seen one of those for years and years. They were made of a long

<sup>33</sup> Saturday opera radio broadcasts from the Met became a staple, not to be missed.

<sup>34</sup> Like his favorite cousin.

plank, set on steel bound runners, stood some eighteen inches off the ground. The front set of runners (bobs) were steerable, generally with a recovered auto steering wheel. They were a large heavy item, but gave quite a ride.

### **[Living in Town]**

It wasn't until we, my mother and I, moved to the Third Street that I really got to know other children and played with them. How I came to meet them is as mysterious as most of those things are, but most of them lived within a block of the house. The house was a double house, with two floors on each side. It was very old, the beams were held together with pegs, a large chimney in the center supported the house, which may be on reason the fireplaces were blocked off. The house was owned by a childless couple named Rulong. Or something like that. My grandparents had lived there since sometime before I was born, and Martha and mother continued to live there until Mrs. Rulong (Rulon?) died, at which time she have the house to the Methodist Church, which immediately wanted to control the house themselves and raised the rent, which has been rather minimal. To the end, the electric bill came to Theo Mendenhall, who died in 1911. Martha and mother subsequently lived in a couple of places off West Street.

There were a couple of advantages to the Third Street place, it was only a block from Main Street, where all the stores were, and it set up a bit, perhaps ten feet, above the sidewalk with a nice porch with a railing. Summers I used to spend lots of time sitting on the porch with my feet on the railing, watching the traffic and people pass by. Directly across the street was the Reformed church, next to the house on the right was the Baptist church, and on the corner of Iron Street, one house to the left, was the Catholic church. Mother's church, the Methodist, was two blocks on the left, on Market and Third Streets. (The Yorks mansion was kitty cornered across Market from that church).

There was fairly large lot behind the house for garden<sup>35</sup> and play space, altho I played mostly with the neighbors, like Bob Hutton, just down the alley (behind the back lot) and over to Iron Street. And Leon Barndt lived just down on Fourth Street, but at that time it was mostly the Huttons that I played with, and another boy or two in the vicinity. Bob had been with me in school since about the beginning I think, Leon wasn't in any of my classes, being a year behind. The other special friend was Haines Knoebel, who must have been in classes from nearly the start. He lived in various places around town with his father, his mother being long dead. It was with him and his father that I saw what I did of the country around Bloomsburg, for we took many a Sunday afternoon drive, but always in directions that the driver did not face the sun, hence areas across the river got neglected, which happens to have some of the prettiest scenery in the area.

Beyond the alley behind the Third Street house was a long brick building, one story, facing Iron Street, known as the "Silk Mill". At that time was engaged in silk "throwing" or spinning the silk after it had been recovered from the cocoons—into thread. The building is still there, but it probably isn't used for silk spinning anymore. The hum, which wasn't too unpleasant permeated the entire area. At one time or another, but not more than once, I did visit the mill and saw the operations. Long lines of machines with thread running from one spool to another doing apparently nothing else. There were a few operators walking

---

<sup>35</sup> A very early memory of mine is of the roses and strawberries there.

along the isles, occasionally stopping and making mystical wavings in the air with their hands. They were supposed to be reuniting broken threads, which were almost invisible to the uninitiated eye. At one corner of the mill, on Iron Street, was a house with an enormous pine tree on the corner of the alley and Iron Street. The owner of the house, not particularly child oriented, ran a constant battle with the lighting company on how many of the tree limbs they could cut off to protect the wires. It ended up being a very symmetrical tree, except for a large cutout for the wires. The Huttons lived directly across the street from the tree.

A little further description of the houses I have lived in might be of interest, as they were not what you may be used to. The Lightstreet Road house was rather large, with very high ceilings, almost twelve feet. The first floor had a large kitchen, which occupied half of the area, plus two other rather large rooms, separated by wall plus double doors. My parents used one of the rooms for a bedroom, the other was a parlor, and only used in the summer time. Upstairs there were three bed rooms, one was used as a storage room, two others were used as bedrooms at various times. There was a large attic. The stairway was in the walls between the kitchen and the other downstairs rooms, with the attic stairway over this, and the stairway to the basement underneath. Part of the basement had a floor, and the rest was dirt. There was a large furnace, which my father never used.

There was no electricity while I lived there, my father added it while I was in college. There was no running water, altho, again my father did add a bathroom, never used to my knowledge, and some running water, obtained by pumping water to a tank in the attic, and running to a sink in the kitchen by gravity. Hot water was obtained from a connection in the range and a large storage tank in the kitchen. Water for drinking came from a well in front of the side entrance to the house. It was some 55 feet deep—I once helped him change the pipes—the water was cold and had a good flavor, but very hard, and rather high in iron. There had been an iron mine a half a mile away in the years past, much of the rock (shale) in the vicinity was red. I think the water he pumped to the attic came from a cistern at the rear of the house. Sometime while I was in college the town ran water lines along Lightstreet Road, which I believe he eventually connected with in latter years. After I moved to Syracuse, I didn't see what was going on very often. The toilet was a three holer down a path to the rear of the house.

The front entrance was on a large porch that ran the entire width of the house. We seldom used that door (the porch was about five feet from the road). One of my greatest regrets was not getting the glass from that door. It had an etching covering the glass, which filled the upper half of the door, of a deer or two in a forest. It is no longer there. Must have been an extremely rare piece.

Mostly we lived in the kitchen, which was large enough for a couple of tables, a large bookcase, a sink and a small cabinet, a sofa like thing, a phonograph (cabinet type) and a range, plus a hot water boiler, connected to the stove. The room was at least as large as the living room at 104 Ormsby<sup>36</sup>. There were two windows looking west, and a door to a small porch on the other side, for some reason we didn't use that door very much, but went around the corner to the living room door, which opened on the same porch. There was

---

36      Our house in Syracuse.

a honeysuckle vine on the porch. My father stood next to that the last time that muzzle loader<sup>37</sup> was fired (to my knowledge). You should remember that at this time, there was my father's four acres which ended up the hill in an old cemetery (no longer being used, and I think cleaned out), next to us toward Bloomsburg (about a half a mile away) was the green house property, the nearest houses on the other side of the road were a block away either way, toward town was the home of the president of the college (still is), and, at the end of the road to the golf club, were houses on either side. It wasn't nearly as populated as it is now. The houses on the road toward town were built while my father still lived there. In fact, at least one was built before he got the house wired, because he borrowed a little current on day to test his wiring and blew the man's fuse. He grounded one of the wires that shouldn't have been grounded.

The view from the kitchen windows took in the hills and valleys that included the greenhouse, the Bloomsburg hospital and the areas surrounding that. There are some old slides that have this scene on them.<sup>38</sup>



---

<sup>37</sup> Hung on the Syracuse living room wall, and featured in my grandfather's tale from 1894.

<sup>38</sup> The Kodachrome originals are from his collection, made circa 1950 and not annotated, but are from about the right altitude. The hospital is at the center of the second, which looks to the west.





The view from the porch took in the yard and the red barn, which was mostly empty, but did contain whatever wouldn't go in the house. Once, after I lived there, it contained a model T<sup>39</sup>, not in working order.

Off the kitchen and next to the porch, was a small pantry, where foodstuffs the like could be stored. Part of the basement (cellar) was equipped to store potatoes and apples. Of which there was an abundance, for most of the four acres had been planted to something or other. My father planted most known varieties of fruit trees, and some nut trees, to supplement the ones that already were there. The land sloped gradually (in part) from the road to a small creek, and I do mean small, it just barely had water most of the time, then rose gradually to the rear end. The land nearest the house had been an apple orchard, of which some pippin trees still worked. Along several sides of the lot were some old Oxheart Cherry trees, very good.

The upper part, across the creek, my father planted to apples, cherries (white, beloved by robins), strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, etc., even some gooseberries and some currants. There was a large level space just across the creek that became the garden. Which contained the usual things, and some that weren't. His sweet potatoes worked out all right, but I think the peanuts didn't do too well. He produced enough strawberries and other berries to pick and take them down town and sell them<sup>40</sup>. If he had more than a bushel, which he frequently did, he hauled them in a wheel barrow. In the fall he used to use the wheel barrow to haul ashes from the greenhouse up the road (not the one visible from the

<sup>39</sup> Ford.

<sup>40</sup> When we were taking my father's ashes through Bloomsburg to be buried in Waller, the taste of fresh raspberries being sold by individual stands, probably just like his, on the still appropriately named Market Street, remains among the most exquisite flavor experiences of my life. I didn't ask at the time, but it is far from impossible that they could have come from these plants' descendents, neatly and profoundly closing a circle through time.

window) to pack around the basement to keep the cold out. My father was a hard worker, and strong. Some tendencies are not inherited. He seemed to have a little Indian in him, for he thought nothing of standing on the top rung of a forty foot ladder to do a little painting. The ladder standing steadily on one leg, with the other propped on a box or two<sup>41</sup>. Due to the height of the ceilings and the slope of the land, the house got pretty high at the back end. Incidentally, he mixed his own paint. White lead type. The house had what was known as a tin roof (Galvanized iron sheets) that had to be painted also.

The wheel barrow wasn't the only method of taking produce downtown. I used to carry a half bushel basket on my bicycle, resting the basket on the handle bars, as it was all down hill, I didn't need to hang on to them on the way down. I used to ride most of the way with my hands in my pockets. There weren't as many cars then as now, and I didn't seem to be afraid of them. I have even been known to pass one on the way down, if he was going too slowly.

If there was no electricity, what did we do use for light? Kerosine lamps, which were not conducing to much reading at night, hence bedtime was rather early mostly. My father was an early riser, altho my mother wasn't too enthusiastic about it, I don't think.

In the winter, they put a base burner up in the bedroom, to keep a little warm. When my father lived there alone, he slept on the cot (not a sofa) in the kitchen. The range did burn coal, which was stored in a separate compartment in the basement. Again speaking of light, one of the lamps we used is still available, a new chimney for it cost some 8 or nine dollars a few years ago, my father must have rolled over.

Coal was delivered by truck, from which it would slide into some basements by means of a steel trough carried by the truck<sup>42</sup>, but some basements were too far away or too high. For them the coal was carried by means of canvas (steel reinforced) bags, hard work. But not as hard as might be expected. The bags were loaded from the truck so that the bag never got below shoulder level, either by being filled by another man from the truck while resting on the carrier's shoulder, or by resting on a ledge on the truck while being filled. The filled bag was dumped into a steel trough than ran into the house. The bag held about a bushel probably. It only cost a dollar or so to have a load (about two tons) carried in. I am not sure about the price of coal, but it was probably about ten dollars or so a ton, depending on the size. I think we used chestnut, each chunk was about the size of a chestnut, which were very common in those days. Some coal could be obtained as large as eggs. This was all anthracite, very different from the soft coal used in State College. As far as I know, everyone heated their homes with coal, or town steam. Gas was much too expensive, as it was made in town from coal, and not very efficiently, I would imagine. The ashes were taken to the valley to be removed by the ashmen, for garbage was mostly ashes, in fact we generally buried our garbage, and burned the papers, maybe there wasn't any garbage collection, in the summer, at least.

The only [basement] window at Lightstreet was too far from the road, so it had to be carried there, altho I believe the sometimes the trucks did back in, altho there were some trees to block the way. At Third Street, there were four steps up, necessitating carrying, until

---

41 Boxes at least tended to be made of wood in those days.

42 Still used by a neighbor while I was child, by Mrs. Gray, who became my piano teacher, before her Christian Science approach to cancer killed her, not entirely to my dismay at the time.

eventually some trucks could be elevated enough. There was only a small extra charge for the carrying part, in those times. One bucket held somewhere on the order of a bushel, over a hundred pounds.

Seeing I started out, two pages ago, to write about Third Street, maybe I can start now. As a double house, it was long and narrow, rather than broad. The front door opened into the living room, not as large as ours [in Syracuse], followed by a dining room, with stairs leading up by a fireplace, closed off, a water pipe, with a tap, no sink, just a bucket, next door to the kitchen, down a step, apparently an added attraction (this was next to the little lot I played catch on). In the winter the living room had a baseburner in prominent view, plus assorted chairs and a sofa, covered with one of grandmother's creations. The dining room had a table, with chairs. And, I think, a sideboard and a corner cabinet. The kitchen had kitchen cabinet, a sink, and ice box (to the right as you stepped down from the dining room). At the end was a range. In both houses the ranges were not used much in summer, kerosine stoves were used instead.

Up stairs, the two rooms were duplicates of those downstairs, there was nothing over the kitchen addition. In a very small room off the second bedroom was a toilet and lavatory, sponge baths were the order; Frank<sup>43</sup> did put a shower in the basement when he lived there. Opposite the toilet was the stairs to the attic, which latter had a bed and me. This house also had a tin roof. The sound of rain on a tin roof, when you are under it, is not quite the same as any other sound. If that didn't wake me, the Catholics used to ring their bell at seven every morning, there was a window facing in that direction, so I generally could hear it quite well, being only about three houses away. The pipe from the baseburner went up thru one bedroom into the attic, which served to heat the upper part of the house. I never remember being cold, but maybe I didn't know any better.

I do remember being cold once, I spent the night at the Callenders, after taking Grace to a dance, and slept in an unheated bedroom. I was cold that night. That may have been after Frank put a furnace in at Third Street, including a radiator in the attic.

At one time, Martha converted the front room into a shop where she did alterations on dresses. She seldom did whole dresses, she just did the alterations so that a boughten dress would fit. Kept her fairly busy, most of the time.

After my grandmother died, approx. 1932, we continued to live on Third Street, most of the time. I was in college during the winter, and spent part of the time at either place<sup>44</sup> during the summer. Sometime during this period Frank came to live there, at various times, and for various periods, depending on when and where he got a job. For some years, Frank and Martha lived in New York City, where Martha worked as an alterator [sic] for Peck and Peck, across from the library at Fifth and 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets. That was mostly during the war years, I think. Subsequently, Martha came back to take care of my mother, who spent many years in rather poor health. Perhaps more on this latter. It was in these years that they had to move to various places.

Although there was lots of garden work, there was very little snow shoveling. I don't know what the average snow fall is in Bloomsburg, but it isn't nearly what it is around here.

---

43 My great uncle.

44 His father was still living in the house on Lightstreet Road.

There was enough to go sledriding on occasion. Which is another story.

Into every life at least one character must fall. I suspect the Hutton's father was one of the better ones. As I recall, he was a rather tall, blond, sloppy man, of rather volatile temperament. He was a little good at almost anything, he professed to be a builder. The town was scattered about with his efforts. Somewhere along the line he had learned that one didn't pay taxes on an unfinished house, hence, none of the buildings he built were ever quite finished, including those just off Main Street. There may not have been much left to do, something like some clapboards left off, or a few windows missing, or some such. As you might image, they were not the most lovely buildings around.

I don't know too much about his ancestry, his wife, a rather mostly browbeaten woman, was the daughter of one of the more well to do families, part of the group that had at one time ran the iron ore recovery group, which had long since ceased. After I left for college, or perhaps before, I don't know exactly, Mr. Hutton (was his name William?) set up another household in another part of town. It is not now clear whether that house started before or after his wife died, it may well have been before. In the original family, there were six children, one, Neal, drowned in the lake near LaPorte (Lake Makoma) when he was a young man. There were three girls, and another boy Terry (as far as I know his name is Terry), whose name is partially responsible for another familiar name in this family<sup>45</sup>. Terry latter worked for PanAmerican Airways, flying mostly between Munich and Berlin. He is the only member of the family to have any children, altho most of the others eventually got married. Bob taught ninth grade social studies in his home town for many years, until he died.

The Huttons went in for all sorts of things other people didn't. He had one of the first radios in town, it was a Radiola III which had about one tube, which stuck up out of the top. I remember hearing it, on headphones, but I don't remember what. He also acquired an Apperson Jack Rabbit. That's an automobile, somewhere in the middle twenties. It didn't have an automatic transmission, but it had the closest thing to it at the time. The gears were preselected by a lever on the steering column, but the actual shifting only took place when the clutch was used, they were both vacuum operated (I think). The major blessing was that there were no levers sticking up in the middle of the floor, which, for some reason, doesn't seem to bother anyone anymore. Except maybe those of us who grew up with the darn things.

Most of you may remember Bob Hutton when he was working at the Hotel Magee as a room clerk<sup>46</sup>, and whom we used to visit when on trips to see your grandmother.

The house on Third Street had two wings in back which housed the kitchens, they may have been added as an afterthought, I don't know, [but] between these wings was a space some ten to fifteen feet wide, at the closed end of which a nice brick chimney arose, was connected to the Rulong's furnace (our side didn't have one until Frank installed one after I was at college). There is many an hour I spent bouncing a ball against that chimney, and catching it. Worked almost as well as another person. I know that I also worked, when

---

<sup>45</sup> Me.

<sup>46</sup> Supplementing his teaching income, where one of my thrills was having him rubber-stamp my hand, leaning down from his griled desk enclosure. He exuded a gentle niceness, as his noticing that he shared a birthday with my sister Pamela also explified how he found ways to establish special-feeling bonds with youths.

invited to, in the garden, one of my jobs was burying the garbage, and burning the papers. The family had a large magnifying glass which was very useful in starting the fire. If the sun was shining.

Sometime in 1925 there was a partial eclipse of the sun (if you look it up and it wasn't 1925 it was close); it was total as far as Scranton. I do recall the sun was almost extinguished, it happened to be a clear day, it got quite dark, and especially there were ice crystals in the air (it wasn't summer). It seems to me that one of the Trimble girls was going to the college at the time, and was there with us.

The Trimbles were relatives on my grandmother side. I think it may be on file somewhere, that Mrs. Trimble was my grandmother's sister (a Davis from Gasport, NY?), but don't quote me. Mr. Trimble was a Welsh coalminer, actually he was a hoist operator, but he did work in one of the WilkesBarrie area coal mines. They lived in Kingston, which is across the river from WilkesBarrie. They had a couple of daughters who became school teachers.

School must have occupied most of my time, altho I don't think it was very hard work. The fourth grade room had windows in the rear on a hall way, it seems that I spent a lot of time in that hall way watching the goings on. Less likely to cause a disturbance or something. Fifth grade was divided into two sections; my section had the training teaching, and [was where] we began to learn how to handle those poor girls. Sixth grade was in one room, with the head teacher having her office at the rear, where she could supervise the goings on. She had no computation [sic] to shake a kid like milk shake if necessary, even with a broken arm. And there was a day when a kid brought a kipperd herring to school and left it in the coat closet. He and the herring went home early that day.

It was probably about this year that my folks got me up in the night (we were on Lightstreet Road yet) to watch a big fire down city. Turned out to be the high school, which caused the high school students to be walking the streets for the next couple of years, with classes all over the down town area (the pool hall was not an official classroom). But I still had three years in junior high at the college, most of which was in the Science Hall class rooms. One of the teachers there, a Dr. Hartline (botany authority), was a fairly well respected scientist. I don't recall him teaching us any course, may have given a lecture. The chemistry teacher was reputed to believe that physical chemistry had to do with the physical effort necessary to do the work; I don't think he was quite that bad. The music teacher, one of them anyway, who possibly didn't like teaching kids, discovered rather early that my voice wasn't of the first quality and gave me a "D" for the course. Boys were allowed to take cooking which I did, altho I have never used whatever I did learn, if anything. We did make a sauce, and perhaps some rolls. As this was a teachers training school, we probably got a shot at some of the most advanced techniques going, and we did learn more and more how to train teachers.

It must have been in those years that I started the habit of spending Saturday evenings in the public library, altho it could only have been after we moved to Third Street. Certainly is mostly after the present library was built on Market Street that I spent my time there. Altho I do remember spending some time in the old library, which, I believe was on Center Street, a couple of blocks from home. It was a very cramped place, but it had books.

Lightstreet Road would have been too far to travel, just to go to the library to browse. I am always amazed when reading biographies and autobiographies of the books that were read. I went in for sterner stuff than Shakespeare, and Kant and Freud and those fellows. I used particularly Tom Swift<sup>47</sup>—who sometimes bothered me with the casual way he would come up with some very unusual composition of matter just when he needed it (dilithium crystals?). Joseph Oppenheimer used to write some pretty interesting stuff too. And there were bound copies of the “Scientific American” and lots other books to while away the hours. Then, as now, the librarians made more noise than anyone else.

In the middle to late twenties there were at least three summer events which were likely to be highlights of the year. The Waller fish supper (in order of least importance), the Farmers Picnic, and the Bloomsburg State Fair.

The fish supper was an occasion for gathering of all old and new Wallerites<sup>48</sup>, with very much remannising [sic] and the like, with good talk all around. Unfortunately, again, I didn't have a tape recorder, or much interest in most of the stories. At that time, the Waller church did not have electricity, at least enough for outdoor use, and, as the event occurred partially in the evening, extra light was desired, furnished in my time, by a Delco(?) 32 volt portable system. That was more fascinating than anything else around. Wires and bulbs were strung more or less randomly around the church, connected to a gasoline driven generator set up out of the way of most of the folks. I understand your mother grew up with one of these, but I didn't, so it was something to behold. In case I didn't mention it, the Lightstreet house didn't have electricity while I lived there, my father put some in while I was in college, but I hardly remember it, for he finished after I moved to Syracuse. I remember that large amounts of very large fish were used at the fish dinner, and that many people attended, so[me] traveling considerable distances. I don't know if it still goes on now.

The Farmers Picnic was a considerably larger affair, combining a tribute to the farmers, and a celebration of Decoration Day, with patriotic speeches (carefully avoided) baseball games (or game) and lots of exhibits of things mostly of interest to farmers, and their wives, and with some games of chance. The most interesting exhibit was a faucet, fastened to a support with a couple of wires, and with a solid stream of water pouring out all the time. Altho it was an exhibit of a plumbing supply company, it doesn't seem as tho it was or sale. Certainly it should have gone over big in the country, as most farms didn't have ready access to running water. Running ones hand thru the stream of water was frowned on.

My strongest recollection concerns [both sic] a ride hitchhiked to Bloom one night after the picnic closed. Among the exhibitors were trucks, one of which was a stripped model, chassis only, no seats, windshields or otherwise. On the gas tank, which was under where the seat should be, I rode from Benton to Bloom, some twenty miles. The seat wasn't so bad, but along the creek, in the evening, with out a windshield, was something else. I don't recall any June bugs, tho. Some sort of free entertainment was provided (and maybe some that wasn't free, I didn't patronize that). On one occasion there was a man who claimed to be able to stretch himself a foot or more. I don't know what he did, but he put on a good show, that made it look as tho he did. It seems that he stood beside a girl, showing that his outstretch[ed] arm came below her chin, then after a lot of stretching and contortions and

---

47 The hero of a popular series at the time, obviously targeted at boys.

48 Wallerites, I assume.

the like, he showed that his arm now was above her head. His arm was horizontally held away from his shoulder during the measurements. It doesn't seem to me that their feet were visible, but I don't recall that clearly.

Speaking of exhibitions, at one time or another, perhaps for several summers, the Chatauqua came to town. That played in a tent, somewhere on Market Street, I believe. They gave, plays (probably Shakespeare), lectures, musical recitals of many kinds, and other uplifting material, a good part of it of rather good quality, altho I don't think I was any judge, some of it seemed rather good. There may have even been some interesting lectures. I am afraid none of the programs are still available.

At least one summer, perhaps more than one, we spent a week at a Methodist camp meeting somewhere north of Berwick. Similar to the reunions that you are familiar with<sup>49</sup>, but with considerably more pep in the evening sermons, with lots of calls to come forward and be saved. Those calls following some really enthusiastic sermons, amplification was not needed for those ministers. I remember that my cousin Vera was in the group one summer. I don't think the camp meetings had the intellectual quality of the Chatauqua meetings. The camp grounds were more or less permanent affairs, for I recall that we slept in a cabin.

I think I have always had the ability to be present at something without taking it all in. I certainly was at these things I talk about, yet the memory of them is not very clear. And the technique still is retained. Of the trips we make, there are frequently blank spaces, like the motel we staid in the first night we travel[led] along in England<sup>50</sup>. But then, I have always had trouble memorizing things, which ability Terry<sup>51</sup> may have inherited<sup>52</sup>. It does keep ones mind open for fresh material. Which may well evaporate just as fast.

Thinking of Benton recalls the Bloomsburg and Sullivan, always known as the B&S (and a few other things)—a railroad which ran, about once a day, between Bloom and Benton, with a passenger car or two, and with some passengers. At some time or other my father had acquired a wood lot, over a hundred acres<sup>53</sup>, with one field of 11 acres, at one edge of which he built a small cabin. One summer we, my father and I, spent several days therein. We went up on the train, I taking my bicycle, from the train at Benton, I rode the bicycle and he walked to the cabin (some five miles). I think the most use he got out of the cabin was a place where he could shoot some of his guns with out hinderance [sic].

One thing my father really liked was guns. He almost never went hunting, at least when I knew him, altho he did knock off a rabbit or so now and then, but he did like to shoot at a target, which was a little difficult to do in the more populated areas, hence the big field in the backwoods. At one time or another he owned a Krag-Jorgenson (a British WWI caliber

---

49 At my mother's request, for a week in most summers, our whole family attended RLDS retreats that were held in various locations as far away as Maine, during which my father most sat outside and read, or otherwise observed the goings on from an obviously, at least to those who knew him well, amused distance. That they were called "reunions" was always curious to me, but for others they probably did involve getting back together.

50 In May 1978, which was his first trip abroad; his children paid the airfare to get him to go.

51 I changed from using the childhood sobriquet "Terry" to the more formal "Terence" when Kathleen and I got back together, in 1986, since she'd gone from Kathy in the interim, and I liked the difference it made.

52 My parents certainly struggled along with me in such instances as trying to learn French while in high school, when I could neatly remember *where* the vocabulary words were on the page, but not *what* they were.

53 A lovely place, when we visited it once; I am sad it fell out of family ownership.

.30 type), a Spanish-American war relic, of .43 caliber—bullets being hard to get, and not guaranteed to go off when fired, a muzzle loader, still available, a 30-06 presumably still available<sup>54</sup>, a .22, to which a scope was added, not by him<sup>55</sup>. I think he had a shotgun at one time. All of these guns were operational at one time and most still are. The muzzle loader would be of somewhat question [phrase sic], as it has not been fired for probably fifty years. The last time that I know of, was off the back porch at Lightstreet Road place sometime in the 20's. Nor do I recall that I was ever allowed to shoot any of the guns. It was all I could do to hold the things anyway. Late, in college ROTC I got to be a pretty fair shot, prone, or kneeling, but I was too weak to hold the gun still for upright shooting. (I could do about 98 prone, compared to about 68 standing). In the latter years, my father got to loading his own shells. All that equipment has disappeared. Not that he had very much. Just enough to do the job. I think he did most of that while I was in college.

That Spanish American war gun, I think now it was a .44 instead of .43, made, I believe by Remington, was a single shot affair. The breech was open, closed, more or less, after the shell was inserted by a metal flap, which was supposed to seal when the gun was fired, as the hammer came down on it. It always worked, altho generally some smoke came out of the sides. As many of the loads he used had been loaded for the Spanish American war, of 1898, by 1930 not all of the were very functional. Where did he get those antiques? At that time there was a store in NYC that specialized in old guns and accutraments [sic], name was Bannerman, which had a store in Manhattan and a storage place on an island in the Hudson River, upriver somewhere known as Bannerman's Island. The island still exists, but I think the store has folded, altho I am not sure. The 30-06 came from there. The barrel in that gun is the third one.

I do not know the full story of the muzzle loader, except that my father was certain that it had shot at least one deer<sup>56</sup>. The main reason I don't know its story is that he didn't either<sup>57</sup>. I think it did come from someone in the family, but I am not too sure of that; it is authentic, tho. Incidentally the gun stock on the 30-06 was hand rubbed with linseed oil for long periods of time, because I remember watching him doing it.

Back to the wood lot, many of the provisions we took on that trip were ammunition, which he got rid of. There was a path thru the woods to a little stream, in the summer it was hot walking thru there because there was no breeze. In the last year of his life<sup>58</sup> he sold the wood lot. After a few days of watching him shoot [I] rode my bicycle home, and he rode the train. Aside from a few hills at the Waller end and Lightstreet hill, it was mostly down hill from Benton to Bloom, so it wasn't any great feat riding the 20 miles or so. Leastwise I made it. This event probably took place during the summer of '29 or '30. In the cabin,

54 It was stored wrapped in a (genuine) gunny sack in the garage; the muzzle loader was in obvious view on the living room wall. There was a bunch of grandfather's WWI ammo for the Springfield 30-06 stored along with it, which taught me how much one flinches when shooting that powerful weapon, because it didn't always go off, either, when I tried it out. That was just as well, since my grandfather had gotten it cheaply through its having an inadequately strong receiver to handle more recently made, more powerful ammunition, as I found out separately.

55 It was added when in junior high school I went through a phase of hunting for small game with a childhood friend, Mark Richardson, who is now a New York State game warden, and whose father was an enthusiast.

56 I am sure that my father did not know about the newspaper story from 1894, which is an interesting sidelight on their relationship.

57 Thereby suggesting that failure to pass on information was not new within our extended family.

58 1946.



when we opened it up was an axe handle that had been chewed on by a skunk or porcupine, they are the only beasts that that chew on wooden objects handled by humans. They like the salt. There weren't any at home while we were there, altho at the Lightstreet house I can remember watching a whole family walking around near the house. I don't recall where they lived. It was at the wood lot that Lundie's yellow dog tried to dig a ground hog out. It was only a mile or so over the hills to Will's and Lundie's houses. We walked that several times. I even know the way yet, having traveled over it last fall (1978). The country really hasn't changed very much. Many of the I the wood lot were chestnuts, all of which died when the blight hit. I think he sold them for wood sometime. At one time, there was a premium on dead chestnut, probably after he sold his. Chestnut isn't supposed to rot in the ground as easily most available woods in these parts. Some years he rented the field to a neighbor to plant into wheat or some other crop, or if no crop for hay. It was a fairly good sized field as fields went in that area (by Colorado standards it would hardly be large enough for a backyard). It may have been a little larger than 11 acres, say maybe 13 or 14. Glad I didn't have to mow it.

One of my past-times during the summer vacations was to help my father mow the Lightstreet Road place with a scythe. I never did get the necessary swing part down pat, but I was doing fairly well. It is a lot of good exercise [sic], and was accompanied by a lot of scratching in the evenings, for I always got a dose of poison ivy that lasted all summer. The stuff was scattered all over the place, and impossible to miss. My father was immune to the stuff, but I wasn't. I never had a really bad case, just enough to be somewhat annoying. I always wore hightopped boots, which helped considerably. The other thing to avoid was bumble bee nests, we found some, but never really tangled with them. I understand that in England the big lawns were mowed very even with scythes, it was too early in the year when we were there<sup>59</sup> to see if they still used them, but I think not. My work didn't look quite that good anyway. There is a very different technic necessary to do a good job.

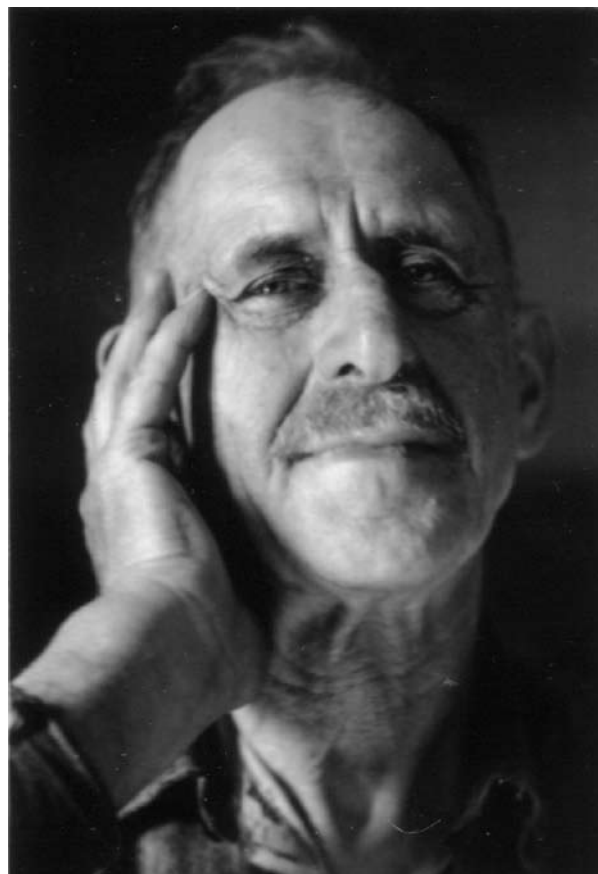
---

59 My sisters and I sent them on their first Atlantic crossing in May 1978.

*[Some additional relevant images, a portrait he made of his mother in the 1930's;*



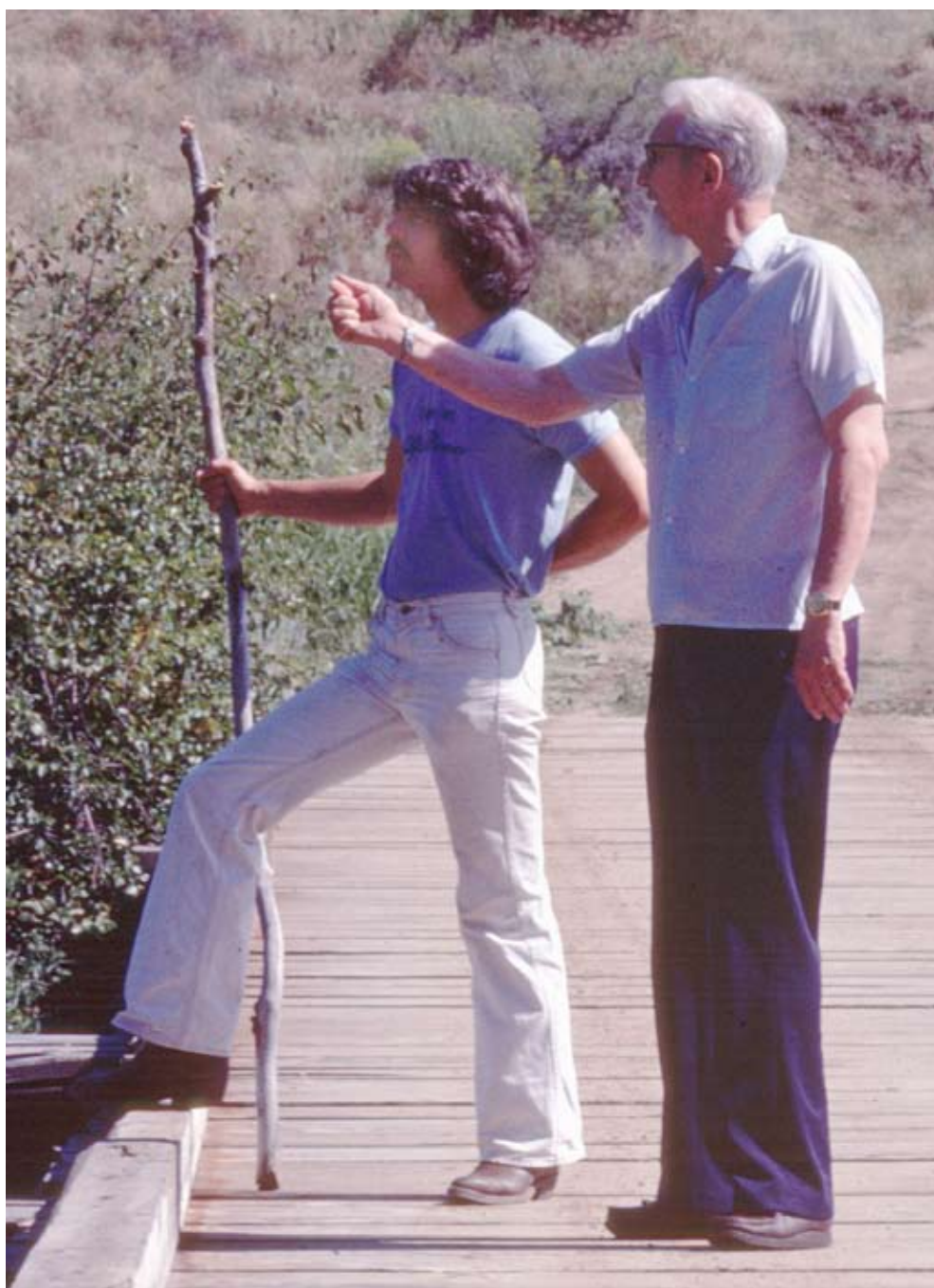
*then one of his father; Joseph Preston Yorks;*



*and one of himself, at work in the mid-1930's, either while still a student at Penn State or just after starting as a chemist for the Solvay Process Company, just outside Syracuse, New York, where he continued for the next 41 years.*



*Finally, the last known taken of father and son together, cropped from a larger image made by my Texan friend Bill McIntire, in Colorado, August 1981.]*



[As a second appendix, an essay by my grandfather, as published in the *Williamsport Sun*, dated Wednesday, December 12, 1894:]

### ATTACKED BY A WOUNDED BUCK

----

Thrilling Experience Of An Aged Hunter On North Mountain.

---

### HIS LIFE SAVED BY HIS SON

-----

The Old Gentleman Had Wounded The Deer And It Then Turned On Him.

----

### A LONG AND CERTAIN SHOT

---

The present year has not been an usually good one for game, but people will hunt, and as long as they continue to do so something new will be experienced by each hunter, either on account of the presence of game, or its absence - more frequently the later.

My experience in the woods this fall, however, during the chase I am about to relate, was in sight of game which for its size, appearance and the existing circumstances makes a thrill run through me even yet with an iciness that, woodsman that I am, I never wish again to experience or be called upon to play any part in.

Early in November, at the first snowfall, my father, who has already seen his allotted three score and ten, wished me to go along with him to the North mountain for deer. Scarcely anyone looks for deer on that mountain any more, but they go up over to the Ox Horn and beyond. I could not get him out of the notion of going on the North Mountain, for says he: "Jim an' Sam an' Wilbur, all them fellers went away up in the mountains yisterday an' they'll rack sum down, I'll bet."

Well, when it comes to a hunt it don't take much coaxing to get me in it, so to please him, as well as myself a little too, we filled the haversack, which he strapped on my back and then picked up his old muzzle-loading rifle,

which, despite the extra cleaning he had given it for this occasion, looked for all the world as if it might have been the veritable Killdeer Leatherstocking used to have.

I picked up my modern Winchester, filled it with cartridges and put an old cow bell in my pocket, so that if we should happen to find a track I could make a noise while following it through the thicket. As all hunters know deer generally have particular places to run, usually keeping the highest ground. One of us could go ahead and watch where the deer generally run, and by the noises of the bell which the other carried while following it the watchman could tell just about the exact place where the deer would pass him.

Everything ready, we started in the early morning and reached what is known as the West Creek Gap a little before sunrise.

If my father thought of finding any deer that day, I am sure I did not, but was looking for pheasants, which often "bud" here on the birch trees after snow comes. It was therefore a surprise when he called me to him and showed me a track that looked as if it had recently been made by a very large buck. That was certainly good luck to begin with. He had no doubt been chased over the mountain by the hunters, as father suggested, and our chances of capturing him were just as good as any; and more than likely, which proved to be the case, no other hunters were in the vicinity, and those that started it had remained on the mountains, where they were after others.

We never thought of danger, for there was not a crowd to shoot all at once if they became excited at seeing a deer and more than likely than not, hit a man instead of the deer. As to being afraid of any wild animals, we never thought of it, for we had not heard of any one having his life endangered by them on these mountains for several years.

True, we had heard old hunters tell some of their encounters with panthers and wounded bears or bucks maddened when chased by dogs would sometimes seek vengeance on the lives of their pursuers. We did not take the time to think of any of these things then, much less to speak of them, but immediately laid our plans for bringing down this fine buck. Father was to follow an old road around the thicket, where we supposed the deer was, while I followed his track, after giving him a chance to get his watch. He found the buck had passed before he got there and was now in what is called Schwinn thicket. That thicket extends over several hundred acres of comparatively level land covered with thick underbrush. We now found the need of more men to watch, as there were several runways - places where they usually went in and out of this thicket.

I was now to make a wide circuit without making any noise until I had got ahead of the buck and as soon as I had started it I was to ring the bell so father could tell about the direction it was coming and be as near the

runway it was on as possible. As is often the case, when near the edge of the thicket it changed its course and he only got a distant view of it, which gave him the "buck fever" so that he seemed as supple as a boy again and wanted to follow it through, while I went ahead to watch. Since I was getting tired of scrambling through the brush I readily assented, and felt sure that whatever the distance it was away from me, when it came out it would be a dead deer if I could level my Winchester. Human nature is often is often a poor judge of itself, as it proved with me. I did see it and sent several shots after it without its ever seeming to lower its flag.

Now it had started over the mountain by way of the Scotchman place, and as I had the fever pretty badly now, too, we followed as rapidly as we could. At the spring we stopped long enough to eat and drink a little, then hurried on.

Father was to go along far enough to see the direction it took in order to know about where it would cross, if I could succeed in routing it back. I left him to choose his watch while I made all the time I could to get ahead of it. After I had done so I found that it had been lying down often, which always shows they are very tired or else wounded. My hopes began to brighten, for I thought if we could keep it on this side of the mountain in its present condition the chances of getting it would be almost sure.

Every bed where I saw it had lain increased my hopes. To bring down a deer nowadays is something to be proud of, but to have a large buck with huge antlers looking like a rocking chair on his head, almost in reach, made me nervous to think about. As I followed I wondered whether I could steady up my nerves long enough to aim my gun. By fatigue and excitement I had become so tremulous that I felt satisfied in doing the chasing and letting father do the shooting.

I kept the bell ringing all the time, stopped, looked and listened often, as a tracker sometimes gets in sight of a deer, but with the exception of hearing the brush rustle once I heard nothing until I was just coming to the face of the mountain. Then I heard my name spoken in such an appealing, fainting tone that I thought it must be my father and that he was ill, for I had not heard the report of his gun.

I called his name and listened, Then I heard a noise down the mountain, and going a little further and looking down I saw such a sight as I hope never to be called on to witness again.

There about a hundred yards away by three small saplings was my father, calling with all the voice he had left for help, while the buck, which he had shot and wounded, would throw him to the ground, but luckily for him the saplings were a defense for him, around which he would crawl and help himself up.

To shoot from where I stood, when they were constantly moving, required a steadier nerve than I possessed. No time was to be lost. I must get closer

and watch a favorable opportunity.

When we feel the life of one we love is depending on us we know no fear. Hesitancy then is death. I did not wait long. My father's appeals were constant. He heard the bell and begged me to shoot.

I fired. Both fell. I ran to them and was glad to find the bullet had not hit my father and the buck was dead. Its antler had struck him and thrown him when it fell.

My father was badly bruised and very weak, but soon told his story, which is as follows: He had stood on the face of the mountain because it was warmer. The buck was close to him when he shot, and on account of the lay of the ground and the strong wind blowing from me to him I did not hear him shoot. The buck fell and he dropped the gun and ran towards it, on the way searching his pockets for his knife to cut its throat. His knife was lost. The buck suddenly arose up and being too badly wounded to escape sought to defend itself by madly trying to kill its would be slayer.

It is impossible to tell which would have held out the longer had I not interfered. I am very well pleased with the result and my father says he is the same.

As long as we live we will keep those bucks antlers as a trophy taken in mortal combat and prize them as highly as ever any has prized the scalps at his girdle.

J. Preston Yorks

Divide, Pa., Dec. 1, 1894

[Both this article and the image of my great-grandfather in my memoir proper (the father in the story above) and great-grandmother, are courtesy of my distant cousin Joseph Neale Yorks (aka Pastor Joe). I him met electronically through a suggestion by yet another cousin, Thad Yorks, whom I had contacted after noticing a publication by him in *Bioscience*. We're all related somehow. Pastor Joe has compiled 50 odd pages of just how.]