



JUDGE SAMUEL MURDOCK
AND FAMILY

First Judge of Tenth Iowa Judicial District

Left to Right—seated, Mrs. Louisa Patch Murdock and Judge Murdock;
standing, daughters—the Rev. Marion Murdock and Mrs. Amelia Murdock Wing.
Photograph taken at Dubuque, Iowa, in 1876.

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EARLY DAYS IN CLAYTON COUNTY

By AMELIA MURDOCK WING¹

When I turn my thoughts to Clayton county, Iowa, and particularly Garnavillo and vicinity, the names of many of the earliest pioneers come to me; for it has been almost an hundred years since my father, Samuel Murdock, brought his bride, Louisa Patch, to the log cabin which he had built for her.

To relate the westward movement of my father is to give a picture typical of the pioneers of that day. So, I may be pardoned for telling something about his life at the very beginning of my story. While living with his parents in Ohio, he studied law in the office of Folsom and Company. Spurred by the spirit of the time, he decided to try his fortune in the still sparsely settled region of Wisconsin territory. He went directly to Iowa City, the territorial capital after Iowa separated from Wisconsin territory. Here, he continued the study of law. After finishing his course, he and a young physician, who also was ready to practice his profession, started out to find a location. They walked almost directly north through the timber which was mostly unsettled

¹Amelia Murdock Wing, born in May, 1852, a daughter of Judge Samuel Murdock and Louisa Patch Murdock, of Garnavillo, Clayton county, Iowa, now residing at 943 Fourteenth street, Santa Monica, California. Ms. was dictated and typed from notes and data in 1942-1944. The author said:

"When one has reached the age of ninety-two, however clear her pictures of the past may be, she meets extreme difficulties in getting them put into words and transferred to paper. As I am unable to hold a pen and, further, have poor eyesight, I must depend upon dictation. In these war days when men, women and children are serving in the interest of their country, it is difficult to find someone who has time to take dictation. Since, in my case, it has been done by friends and necessarily small portions at a time, I fear my story may seem somewhat disconnected. Also the spelling of the names of people, whom I knew so many decades ago, may not always be correct."

until they came to a small settlement on open land, which was called Jacksonville. When, later, many persons wished to see a change in the name, my father was in the Iowa legislature² and was asked to make the suggestion of a name. He proposed the name of Garnavillo³, which he knew from an old Irish song, "Pretty Kate of Garnavillo."

The first view of what my father always called the "open prairie" charmed him and Dr. Andros, and they soon staked land for farms which they purchased from the United States government. My father chose a place one mile and a half from the village and Dr. Andros took land north of him, on which he continued to live until his two charming daughters, Eugenia and Lily, were married.

At a Fourth of July celebration, Samuel Murdock, being the orator of the day, sat at one end of the long picnic table, and at the other end sat a young lady, Louisa Patch. As he looked at her he said to himself, "I'm going to have that girl for my wife." Louisa also was talking to herself about the fine looking young man. She said, "He's a mighty smart looking fellow." After dinner their acquaintance began.

To show what trifles may go to shaping one's life, Louisa Patch came very near to staying away from that celebration. She was living with her parents at McGregor's Landing, and a young man who was very much attracted to her asked her to accompany him to the celebration. She was afraid he would propose to her on the trip, and, since she did not care for him, she wanted to forestall that and said she would accompany him if she might take her younger sister, Marion, with her. He consented; she went; and she met Samuel Murdock, her future husband.

²Samuel Murdock served as a member of the House of Representatives from Clayton county in the Thirteenth General Assembly.

³Garnavillo is located in one of the real garden prairie areas of eastern Iowa, north of Guttenberg in Clayton county, on U. S. Highway 52, which continues north through Monona and Decorah into Minnesota.

The origin of my mother's family in America was an interesting one. In the closing days of the Revolutionary war, a young British officer who had his family here in America with him (as many officers did) feared capture by the Continentals. So he fled to Canada, taking with him his two little girls. His wife was in bed with a young babe and would be free from any harm from the Continentals. So he told her to follow him to Canada as soon as she was able to ride her horse.

The wife was living in a neighborhood of Hollanders, who could not speak English; neither could she speak Dutch. But she knew what good kind of people those were on the farm next to her; so, when she was at last well enough to sit upon her horse, but feared the difficult trip would be too much for the baby, she put him on their doorstep, asking them to take care of him until the war was over and she and her husband could return for him. Nothing was ever learned about what became of the parents, for they never came back.

The child grew up in the Dutch family, spoke their language, and married a Dutch girl. Their daughter, Elizabeth Hatter, married Capt. Luther Patch, and they became the parents of my mother.

THE PRAIRIE HOMES ESTABLISHED

Samuel Murdock and Louisa Patch were married on September 11, 1845. As the years went by, my father improved the farm with evergreen trees which he dug from the timber in great number and planted about his home. The farm became known as "Evergreen Farm." Although my father later had his law office for a time in McGregor, the town from which my mother came, and where Mr. Stoneman was his partner, he looked on the farm as his home until 1876. He was much interested in the cultivation of this place and planted many rare trees and shrubs. Among the native growth were Tamarack, the American black larch, and the sumac which the Indians used as tobacco and which they called kinnikinic.

Previous to the Homestead Act of 1852, settlers bought land from the government at \$5.00 an acre. The term "pre-empted land" was applied to it. The first farm south of Garnavillo to be thus pre-empted was the farm of Reuben Noble, who came there with his bride, Harriet Noble. After many years, this farm was sold to one of the Kuenzels, still later became the home of the Messinghams, and then the home of Helmuth Brandt.

In the neighborhood of Evergreen farm—just about a mile south—was the Stillman place. This, too, had been government land. A home that seemed very palatial in that day was built here, which it gave me great delight to visit, especially because it had both a front and back stairway. My ambition at that time was to live sometime in a house with two stairways. The Stillmans adopted a baby, Lottie. Although they later had ten children of their own, Lottie was always the delight of Mrs. Stillman, for the girl had an ideal character. The Stillmans eventually moved to Missouri after selling the farm to the Splies family.

About a half-mile below Stillmans' was the Kilham place, also government land. One of the daughters, Lizzie, was a great favorite of our family. This farm was sold to some people named Brooker. My recollection is that there were two or more Brooker brothers and that one of them was named Goodloff.

Another government land home nearby was owned by the A. S. Cooley family. They reared seventeen children, one of whom, Clara, married Sheriff Cook of Clayton county. Near the Cooley place stood the little country school house, dear to the memory of so many who received their first schooling there. Also nearby were the Stickford family, the Bacchus farm, and the Jimmy Ryan home. The Ryans were a most genial family. Close by was the little settlement of Ceres (It sounds as though we were delving into Greek mythology), where a group of settlers came and all lived together in one long cabin, which had been built for them and was in

readiness when they arrived. Near this settlement, Judge Eliphalet Price made a fine farm, where he reared his children, five boys and two girls. He had hoped to develop a flourishing village, but this plan failed. His five sons were given almost unbelievable names: Rialto XYZ, using the last three letters of the alphabet; Alonzo Jersey; Treverius Glorian; Eliphalet In The, using the first two words of the Bible; and Alpine Where In, using the first two words of the Declaration of Independence. I cannot say how these children bore up under such burdens!

A FAITHFUL FAMILY FRIEND

John Murphy, who lived close to Jimmy Ryan, worked faithfully for my father and was such a friendly soul that he endeared himself to our family. He was especially kind to us children, ever ready to harness the horses or do anything that we desired. Once after my sister, Marion, became an Unitarian minister, she was invited to fill the pulpit in a little town in Minnesota. As she stood there speaking, she suddenly spied an elderly man sitting in the congregation gazing up at her. Although she had not seen him since she was a child, she recognized him as John Murphy. She was so overcome at the thought that because of their old friendship he, a strong Catholic, had come to a Protestant church to listen to a woman and an Unitarian, that she could scarcely go on with her speaking. Her meeting with him after church was quite affecting.

Down in the timber back of Evergreen farm was the pretty little home of Dennis McCarthy, a charming bit of cultivation, the garden gay with beautiful flowers raised by the mother of the family. Although I did not know Mrs. McCarthy, I was convinced that she was a devoted home-maker, whenever I saw her two little girls playing about the garden, dressed so neatly, or when they started off to school, dressed as if for church with starched frocks so immaculate and crisp.

One of our neighbors whom I remember particularly on account of her extreme industry was Mrs. Derby, who lived on a farm belonging to my father, situated across the road east from Evergreen farm. The house was a half or three-quarters of a mile from ours. Mrs. Derby was a tall, slim woman, always neatly dressed in a freshly-ironed calico. When she would come to spend an afternoon visiting us, which she frequently did because she was lonely on the farm, she knitted all the way over and all the way back and also every minute of the time she was there. She was adverse to losing a minute of valuable time. I believe it was socks for the soldiers that she was knitting.

Further back in the deep timber, lived the Vedo family. Although they were in a most attractive spot on Cedar creek, they were far distant from neighbors as well as from town. But, if one felt sympathy for them as being so isolated, he need only recall that they had eighteen children. (People had families in those days!) At one time they all had the small-pox and four of them died of it. The children never went to school. No compulsory education law to touch them!

On the west of Garnavillo lived a Mr. Kilham, who was a brother of the Kilham who lived near the Stillman and Cooley places. He sold his farm to one of the Juenzels. Also on that side of town Billie Schultz built his farmhouse on pre-empted land, where Mrs. Schultz continued to live through her long life. She was a very heavy woman and never was known to leave home.

On the east of town lived Mr. Ben Schroeder with his large family. One daughter, Lucy, married one of the interesting Beckman boys. Her sister, Mahala, always lived with her, as they were devoted to one another. They were buried on the same day, having passed on in the prime of life. The Beckman boy was one of three brothers, whose mother was one of the most industrious housewives and devoted mothers in the vicinity. As the boys would trudge along to the German school, they were always dressed so immaculately that one would

think that it was Sunday school instead of day school to which they were going.

A USEFUL LIFE ENDS

Another who chose a fine location on government land east of town was the lawyer, J. O. Crosby. He was a highly respected man and much admired. When the Congregational church was first established, Mr. Crosby took charge of a Sunday school class of boys. He remained the teacher until these boys grew to manhood. They all could attest to the great influence he exerted upon them, especially in saving them from the liquor habit, for the town had a great many saloons.

Some sorrows came to Mr. Crosby in connection with his own sons. Jimmie, who was very bright, became a teacher and was also studying law, but he died as a young man. He was engaged to Nellie Walliser, and she carried flowers to his grave for many long years. He had been a great favorite in the community.

Another son, Will, was a mischievous lad, spoiled by his mother, many people said, and since his father was very strict, they had frequent altercations. One day, when Will knew his father intended to punish him, he disappeared. His father started out with his horse and buggy, feeling sure that Will must have gone to Clayton. It was found afterward that the boy had hidden himself under a little foot bridge when he saw his father coming. The father went over the bridge without detecting the presence of his son. After a few years, so it was believed, Will let his mother know where he was, but the father did not know, and this loss was a life-long grief. Not until his death-bed did he see him again.

The third son, Freddie, who had been attending school in McGregor, came once for a few days' vacation. He went for a ride on his horse, and, when he returned and was about to take it back to pasture, he remarked to his mother, "Well, mother, I've got to go for that little swim in the mill-pond which I've promised myself while I'm home. When I take the horse to the pasture, I'll go

on to the mill and have it." The charming, promising boy, although he had long been accustomed to swimming in that pond, was in some way drowned. The entire community was stunned with grief, to say nothing of his mother and, most of all, his father who had been such a devoted pal of Freddie, his last boy to be lost.

When Mrs. Crosby knew that she was about to pass on, she requested their housekeeper, Maggie, who had been with them for a great many years, to stay with Mr. Crosby and keep up the home. Jessie Brown, of whom I shall speak later, was his niece. With no sons or wife, Mr. Crosby made a will bequeathing his property to this niece and his housekeeper, with a small amount going to his brother, I believe. When Mrs. Crosby had been gone for some years and Mr. Crosby was becoming very elderly, his housekeeper died just when he needed her most. In a short time his niece and then his brother also died and he was left alone. He managed to do his cooking and continued to walk back and forth to his office day after day. When he suddenly became ill, his neighbors looked after him. He had bought a new law book in which he found a paragraph regarding wills. It stated, I believe, that a child could not be entirely cut off from his father's estate. Since he was too ill to make a new will, he just marked the paragraph and left the book open to show, it was supposed, that he wanted Will to have the property in case he was still alive.

When Mr. Crosby became very sick, he kept muttering, "I want my son, I want my son." The neighbors thought he was delirious and paid no attention to his calls, but when Mr. Fred Williams and son, long-time friends of Mr. Crosby, came down from Postville to see him and were told what he had been calling, Mr. Williams telegraphed for Will to come. Since he was living in Wisconsin, he soon arrived. He hurried upstairs immediately and had a visit of about ten minutes with his father, and then remarked, "Father, I'll go and clean up and then come back to you." The joy of Mr. Crosby on seeing

his boy again after almost a lifetime separation proved too exciting, and, when Will returned to him in a few minutes, the old man had passed from this life. When Will found that he was to have the property, he said, "Well, I do not need it." He had become a successful business man.

One of the honors that had come to Mr. Crosby late in life was being invited to take the Iowa exhibit to the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. He and my father had been close friends since pioneer days and were to each other "Jim" and "Sam." My parents had entertained Mr. Crosby and his bride in our home until they could get settled in a home of their own. So, Jim asked Sam to accompany him to the Fair in Chicago with all expenses paid; but my father had had a stroke of paralysis and it was not deemed safe for him to go.

At the time of the Paris Exposition, Mr. Crosby was sent there with the Iowa exhibit. An amusing incident occurred during this voyage. A number of gentlemen were conversing when one made the comment, "You can't make a whistle out of a pig's tail." Another disputed the remark, saying, "Gentlemen, this is not a fact, for I own a whistle made out of a pig's tail." Quickly Mr. Crosby questioned, "My dear sir, where did you get that whistle?" The stranger replied, "A young lady in Fredonia, N. Y., gave it to me when I was a young man." "Well, sir," said Mr. Crosby, "I gave that whistle to that young lady myself many years ago, when I was a young man."

ESCAPED VIA LIBERTY POLE

On the east side of town were three pretty two-story houses just alike, called the "associate" houses. In one of these lived a family by the name of Engler. I remember distinctly an incident which happened in connection with their boy, Bob, when he was about ten years old. He was a quite a scamp but a favorite among the townspeople. His father was rather severe in punishing him for his mischievous tricks; so, one night, the lad escaped

his parent by running to the liberty pole and climbing it. There he remained all night, and in the morning twilight climbed down and ran away, never to be heard of again. Having been a great favorite because of his liveliness, the school children missed him exceedingly. The liberty pole mentioned was situated in the center of what was called the public square which, as it happened, was not square but circular in shape.

The first farm north of Garnavillo was pre-empted by the Rev. Samuel Porter, who built a fine residence. He came from Connecticut and was the first pastor in the Congregational church. Some young people came once a week from as far away as McGregor to take Latin lessons from him. His brother, Noah Porter, D.D., L.L.D., of Yale college, became famed as the reviser of Webster's dictionary. About a mile north of town, Ben Fox and his wife with their large family settled on a large farm. Mrs. Fox was greatly admired for her literary ability, and consequently was an agreeable neighbor of the Porters. At times she wrote for the county papers. Other congenial neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Sackett and a well-to-do family named Dawson, who built a lovely home. I used to go horseback riding with their charming daughter.

Let us turn our attention within the town of Garnavillo. In the early days, the two-story schoolhouse had but two grades, one on the first and one on the second floor. These accomodated all the pupils. There is one teacher I remember very vividly—a Miss Sarah Prince—for there seemed to be some mystery about her. Although the pupils were more or less fond of her, we felt this mystery. She left Garnavillo, and some years afterward some girls from the town were in Dubuque. They went to consult a fortune teller. Although she was partially disguised, they recognized Miss Prince. We never heard of her again.

There was no high school in Garnavillo. Students who wished to continue their education beyond the lower

grades attended the private school of Prof. Jonathan Briggs. This rather eccentric bachelor was a deep thinker, high respected, and highly educated. The school he built also contained his own living quarters, which we young people called "Bachelor's Hall." No one—not even his most intimate friends—was admitted to these living quarters. Since Prof. Briggs and my father were both interested in scientific and historical subjects, they were fast friends and he was a frequent visitor at our home. He was a very timid man and did not like to meet strangers. He would come in without knocking and, if he saw none of the family, he would just sit down and begin to read; but if he heard company in the parlor, he would immediately leave without speaking to any of us. Once I saw him in the dining room and started in to greet him, but he had become startled and went running out of the back door, through the barnyard, and down into the timber. He usually dropped in just about the right time to get a good dinner, but never remained if there were others there. One of my recollections of student days with him was the clever tricks the pupils would play on him if they had not learned their lessons. Some boy would ask him a question on a theme in which he knew the professor was intensely interested, and that would start him to talking; since he then became oblivious of the passage of time, he would consume all the recitation period and the pupils would save themselves from discovery of their illy-learned lessons. My sister, Marion, had her first experience in teaching as an assistant of Prof. Briggs.

ESCAPADES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Speaking of schools, Mr. Alonzo Brown, a lawyer, was the first county superintendent of schools in Clayton county. He was followed by S. H. Smart, of whom I shall speak later. Mr. Brown married Maria Crosby, a sister of J. O. Crosby, and their two children were named Emmett and Jessie, the latter of whom I have already mentioned. After Emmet was grown, he took me

out to visit the new cemetery which he had just surveyed. He said, "This cemetery is the result of my work, and I intend to be buried here." But it not happen so, for Emmett Brown passed away in Canada and was buried there.

Jessie Brown and I were chums from early childhood. She was a frolicsome girl and always wanting some new adventure. Since we were inseparable and she was at our house a great deal, we had many escapades. As little girls, we rode upon the same horse—our dear old Jennie—and explored the timber thereabout, always seeking for new roads. Jennie seemed almost human as proven by one incident which happenend when we were riding on the highway. A load of young men passed, driving from Guttenberg to some place northward. They had been imbibing too freely of intoxicants and so, as they passed us, they gave our horse a quick lash with a whip. I tried to keep my seat by holding to the horse's mane, but I slipped down in front of her legs. Instead of being fractious, our dear Jennie stood perfectly still and tried to caress me with her soft nose.

One day when Jessie was visiting me, she exclaimed, "Let's hitch up and go to town." I replied, "The buggy box is off, so we can't go." She said, "Oh, never mind the box. We can go without that." We did, and whom should we encounter but her uncle, Mr. Crosby! The honorable gentleman was much shocked and said, "You girls go right home. Jessie, I am ashamed of you for riding in that ridiculous looking vehicle!"

My mother was never worried about us girls no matter how long we were gone, for there were no wild animals about and tramps had not yet made their appearance. One day, Jessie and I went for a long walk in the timber to the east of our farm. When we became a little hungry, we ate May-apples which happened to be ripe. We wandered farther and farther and at last became completely confused as to which way we should go to get home. As our hunger increased, we ate more May-apples,

until I became so satiated with them that I never wanted to see another afterward. At last, to our amazement, we found ourselves in Garnavillo, a mile and a half from Evergreen farm. We were very tired little girls when we got home.

An example of my father's kindness is that once when some girls came for me to go horseback riding with them, I told them I could not go because the horse, Jennie, was being used in the field. They told my father what they wanted, and he went to the field and told the man who was plowing to let me have the horse, and he could go and do some work in the garden.

Previous to the opening of the new cemetery, which I mentioned as being surveyed by Emmett Brown, the only cemetery in Garnavillo was just west of the Lutheran church. Under a large pine tree there, is the plot of the Murdock family, where lie the remains of my father, his parents, three of my sisters, and a brother who died when a baby. So, that spot has ever been sacred to me, one which I always loved to visit. At the time my father passed away at Elkader, January 26, 1897, his remains were taken to Garnavillo for burial. Although it was extremely cold—the thermometer was 20 degrees below zero—a long procession of friends accompanied Marion and me and followed the hearse the distance of ten miles. It was Mr. Crosby who entertained eighteen of us with a fine, hot dinner at the hotel. Such courtesies are appreciated at a time of bereavement. As I have said, Mr. Crosby and father had been pals for many years.

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS BUILT

The Lutheran church and its schoolhouse were built before my recollection. Helmuth Brandt, a tall, fine looking man, was teacher of German for many years. Before we ever attended the English school, my sister, Marion, and I were sent by our father to this German school. We had many German neighbors and father was anxious to get us started early in that language. To

this day, I can remember the long pointer used by Mr. Brandt when he had us repeat the a-b-ab's in concert. Our walk to school was a mile and a half, but the trip home we made a pleasant one, stopping to play in the corners of the old rail fences.

The Methodist church was the first one in Garnavillo for Americans. My principal recollection of it, in addition to the fact that we attended its Sunday school, is the socials to which our mother used to take us. She was considered an expert in making rice pudding, for plenty of rich cream, many eggs, and plump raisins went into the making. So, she always took a large milk pan of this toothsome dessert.

An outstanding man in Garnavillo was Dr. Linton. He built a large two-story building with his office on the first floor, which served also as the town's drug store. He remained a bachelor until late in life, when he married Mrs. Mary McCraney. This union was of short duration. After his death, Dr. Charles Hamilton occupied the building with his family.

One of the very old buildings was the carpenter shop of old man Barnes at the east end of town. I shall diverge to say that in those days, elderly people had the appellation "old" or "grandpa" or "grandma" or "grannie" attached to their names. These were sometimes applied even to people who had no children. So, Mr. Barnes was called "old" although he was strong and well and went faithfully to his carpenter shop to work every week day. Further illustrating the use of the word "old," there was the mother of "old lady Weber" to distinguish her from Mr. Weber's wife. Then there was "old lady Rudsell" or "grandma Rudsell," and "old lady Scudder," an English woman who had a flower garden which she was spry enough to keep in beautiful order and which gave us children great delight.

There were reasons for the word "old" seeming applicable in those days. People had teeth pulled and had no artificial ones to replace them, and so cheeks sank in

and mouths became wrinkled. Since then, the study of foods from a scientific viewpoint and the discovery of vitamins have helped to keep people young looking though old in years. Then, the older women were expected to dress old and to sit in the chimney corner knitting or making patch-work. Many of them who were so relegated were no older than a great many women of this day, who are constantly active, going to bridge parties, indulging in other amusements, or helping at Red Cross center.

But, to return to Mr. Barnes, he was such a quiet man that, although I was at their home often, I never heard the sound of his voice. He had lost his two oldest sons in the Civil war. His fine wife died early, leaving five daughters and one son. Maria, the oldest of the daughters, married my mother's brother, Wallace Patch. Eugene, the son, married Minnie Maurer. He died young, leaving his wife and two small daughters. After a time, she married Helmuth Brandt, the German teacher. She proved herself a devoted mother to his large family of children.

Jake Maurer, the brother of Minnie Maurer Barnes Brandt, and one of those boys who had got training in the Sunday school class of Mr. Crosby, was head of the public schools at one time and was also postmaster. He was a genial man and beloved by his pupils. He and his wife had three sons and a daughter. The two oldest sons, while yet in school, started a little newspaper which was called the *Garnavillo Sentinel*, and which is still published. They were most studious and both became Congregational ministers. One, Irving, was called to be president of Beloit college, of which school the state of Wisconsin is very proud; and there he remained until his recent demise. The other, Oscar, became pastor of the Congregational church in Hartford, Connecticut, located near Yale college. The third son became a physician and the daughter married a physician.

An interesting incident happened after my sister, Marion, had become an Unitarian minister. Yale college

gave the use of its buildings for an Unitarian conference which lasted for a week, and she was one of the speakers. What was her delight to find that the Rev. Oscar Maurer had been one of her interested listeners, and her further delight in being entertained in his home after the meeting. They had not seen each other since Oscar was a lad.

PRE-HISTORIC RELICS UNEARTHED

My father used to take great pleasure in discussing scientific subjects with Prof. Briggs, head of the private school, Mr. Crosby, the lawyer, and Dr. Linton. Dr. Linton and my father were greatly interested in research into pre-historic lore. They excavated mounds in Clayton county that had been made by the Mound Builders, and they were successful in assembling the complete skeleton of a man. They found a great many of the Mound Builders' axes, which were considered great trophies. My father sent a quantity of them to a museum in the east.

Another man much interested in these early relics was S. H. Smart, whom I mentioned earlier as superintendent of schools in Clayton county. In his later life he lived in Minnesota, with his daughter, Emma. I was invited to visit his family there, and another guest at the time was Alma Rodgers. One day Mr. Smart said, "Amelia, I want to take you out to see a Mound Builders' mound. I want you to be able to tell your father about it." Accordingly, quite a group of us started to walk out to the spot, which was some distance from town. A part of us loitered behind the rest to look into a deserted, dry well, located on vacant land which we had to cross. Kneeling down, we gazed into the well, and to our horror we saw a mass of writhing rattlesnakes. Needless to say, the wonderful mound was forgotten as we fled through the deep grass back to the road, fearing at every step that we would meet a venomous snake. The other groups went on and paid a placid visit to the mound, knowing nothing about the nearness of the rep-

tiles until we told them later. I never got to describe that mound to my father!

To place the Alma Rodgers I mentioned, I will say that there were three Rodgers brothers who settled at Garnavillo. One, Alva, had two sons, Frank and Mack. Frank married one of the Messingham girls. Another brother, Anson, was the father of Alma, who married Will Jones of Farmersburg. The third brother was David. His daughters were Eda and Fanny. Since Alma had been one of my favorite playmates as a child, it was a great delight when my sister, Marion, and I came to California, to find that Alma, a widow, and her cousin, Fanny, who had married a man named Brainerd, were living in Los Angeles. They entertained us at a sumptuous dinner shortly before Alma passed on. Fanny, much younger, being a child when we were grown, is still living in Los Angeles.

When I summon to my mind all of my old friends in Clayton county, my own life seems to unroll before me like a panorama, starting with my early childhood and continuing until my recent visits with old friends now living in California.

In the days of my early childhood, people did not send their children to school as young as they do now, and the children in the country did not attend school as early as those in town. Our mother taught, Ellen, Marion, and me at home until we were old enough to go to town to school. Carrie and Laura both died at six years, just about the time their studies should have begun. Mother used to enjoy telling us, later, of these experiences. My older sisters, Ellen and Marion, would stand and spell, and so keen was the competition between them that sometimes one of the girls would cry if she missed a word.

Marion always loved books and was never inclined to what was known as "woman's work." Indeed, she preferred weaning the calves and breaking the colts to any kind of housework. One of her particular detesta-

tions was sewing, and she decided she simply *would not* learn to sew. After she started to school, her teacher had a class for sewing and the girls were told to bring some article on which to practice. Mother cut out a garment and had it ready for Marion. She started with it all right, but on the way to school hid the package in a corner of the rail fence. The teacher finally became completely discouraged about teaching her to sew and said, "You may take a book and go over there in the corner and read." Of course, this was no punishment, for nothing could please her more.

Marion was always ready with her tongue. Since we lived a mile and a half from town, we were glad to catch a ride as we went back and forth. One day as Marion, still a little girl, was walking to school, a man gave her a ride. He expressed admiration for a half-mile of beautifully shaped trees along the road. My sister said, "They are my father's trees." He inquired the name of the trees and she replied that they were ash. He then asked what kind of ash, and she answered glibly, "I'm not *exactly* sure of the name, but I think they are potash." She had an answer!

HAZARDS OF LANGUAGE STUDY

One of the studies of our early childhood was, as I have said before, German. We had so much German help both in the house and in the field, that we children began to pick up the language. It was not always words which were fitting for us to use. I well remember once when I was still small enough to sit in a high chair, I was eating a belated breakfast at the dining room table while the German hired girl was ironing at the same table, and she taught me the words of a song. I, of course, did not know why she laughed so much when she heard me say them and had me repeat them for all the German help that came around the house. When I was older I found out that they were vulgar words. I could see a good reason why my father thought it best that we should learn German at Helmuth Brandt's school.

One of the immigrants about our home was a young Austrian, who was a "man-of-all-work" for my father. He became very fond of us five little girls, and decided to give us a Merry Christmas at Yuletide. The custom of Christmas trees, which was imported to America from Austria, had not become common at that time. The young man went to the woods, brought back a little evergreen tree, and hid it in the granary so that even our father and mother would not know about it until Christmas. He bought and made various little trinkets with which to decorate it and fastened on candles to light it up. About daybreak, Christmas morning, our parents saw a light that startled them, and when they found what it was, they were as much surprised and delighted as were we children.

Other foreigners that we saw at least yearly were the Hungarian peddlers. They were about the countryside with big packs on their backs filled with trinkets, ornaments for dressing, and household utensils. We children got a real thrill when the pack would be opened and we saw all the gay and exotic things.

Something else in the way of personal adornment that my mother got was some real cameos. She bought quite a number of books and with each one came one of these pins. They were very beautiful and some of them are still treasured by relatives to whom they were handed down.

It was not such a delight to see the gypsies come as it was the peddlers, for we were much afraid of them. Their errand was not to sell, but to beg; and because we feared what they might do if we displeased them, we saved every old garment that we no longer wished to wear, hanging it in the attic ready for the day when the gypsies would come.

One of the pleasant pictures of my childhood is patriotic rallies held at the public square in the center of Garnavillo. My mother would dress her five little girls in their freshly laundered frocks and stiff white sunbonnets and would take us to hear the stirring music.

To this day at ninety-two, on hearing marital music, my thought reverts always to those happy days. The value of patriotic music to children can hardly be over estimated. Brave soldiers were made of the little boys who listen and keep time to this music and to the beloved old-time songs.

When an epidemic of diphtheria came to do its deadly work and in its course reached Evergreen farm, the five little daughters of Judge and Mrs. Murdock were all stricken at the same time. All recovered except Carry. She was my constant companion and our devotion was intense. One night when she was very low, they left her just long enough to get her a drink. She jumped out of her bed, ran to my bed, and when they came back we were in each other's embrace. They took her arms from about me and carried her back to her room. The next morning, they told me she was gone. At that moment my life seemed blighted; I felt no longer a carefree child.

My mother felt that she could no longer remain on the farm after losing this little girl, who had seemed such a remarkable child for her brief six years. So, the family moved to McGregor where my father had his law office—the firm of Murdock and Stoneman. I was about nine years of age and my youngest sister, Laura, was four. My oldest sister, Ellen, joined the Baptist church and we all attended that Sunday school, including Laura. She had such a captivating manner and was so beloved that many gifts had been put on the Christmas tree for her when the school had its annual observance. I can still picture her as she joyfully marched up the aisle to get them. She was concerned lest Amelia would not get so many as she did. She whispered to me, "Never mind, Melie! Your name will soon be called."

TWO YEARS IN MCGREGOR

Two years were spent by the family in this pleasant town. It was a new experience to live by the Mississippi river and watch the large steamboats go up and down.

The town was named for the McGregor family. There were two brothers, James and Alexander, between whom there was a lifetime feud. Although James, at that time, was an old man, he was a much admired figure in the town. Gregor McGregor, Alexander's son, was a rich bachelor and also a striking figure. There were very few amusements to occupy his time, so his favorite sport was driving his spirited horse up and down through the streets of the town. The two principal streets were Main and Ann. Going up the hollows there were some short streets (for this reason the town was called the "pocket city"), where, for the most part, the aristocracy of the town lived.

The Killingers lived near us on Ann street. Rosetta Killinger was a playmate of mine. At one of the Iowa picnics here in California in recent years, I met her and we renewed our acquaintance that had been interrupted about seventy-five years before. Libby Bass was another of my little friends. We afterward chummed together in Chicago when we were both attending Kindergarten college. Georgia Bowers was an intimate of Ellen and Marion. She was the sister of Dr. Bowers. After Georgia lost her sister by death, her brother-in-law wished to marry her, but, although she returned his affection, she refused, for she was a Catholic. She remained unmarried.

One of my constant playmates was Lina Burlingame, who lived next to a large lumber yard. We played house in the rooms made by the piles of lumber. One of our sports was climbing up high on the lumber and then dropping down to the ground. In later years, I obtained a position for Lina in the Elkader public school where I was then teaching. Lina had a sister, Jennie, who passed away suddenly while she was mailing a letter to her parents. She had filed on a homestead in Dakota and was living there.

The Merrills lived in McGregor before Samuel Merrill became governor in 1868. When I was attending school

in Des Moines, the Merrills invited me to the executive mansion.

Others who stand out in my memories of McGregor are Maggie Stoneman and Melba Aber, both of whom were much admired. Dorothy Daniels was a favorite friend of ours, as were the Dripps girls. There were three of them named Martha, Mary, and Ida, and they had a brother, Bob. Some years ago, I visited Martha Dripps in Milwaukee. I recall that the best store in town was operated by E. R. Barron.

Those two years in McGregor were pleasant ones, but alas, our little Laura became ill with scarlet fever and after long weeks of illness passed away. Needless to say, the family were disconsolate and my father especially seemed broken-hearted. A short time later small pox broke out in the house next to ours. That settled it! The next day we began moving back to the farm. I might say here that our house in McGregor was burned to the ground in a few years after we left there.

My mother was glad to get back to the farm work to help her throw off her grief at losing her little girls. There was plenty of work—the making of butter, cheese, soft soap, candles, and the canning of fruit. My older sisters, Ellen and Marion, were away at school and I was the only child at home, but I too tried to drown my grief for my little sister by occupying myself with the chickens, my dog, Mungo, my horse, Jennie, and my swing under the pine trees. I loved the roses and other flowers and the shrubbery. There were strawberries, raspberries, currants, and other small fruits, and there were two large orchards.

At one time there were sixty-seven varieties of apples in our two orchards. We also had many kinds of grapes, and yearly my father exhibited his apples and grapes at the county fair, which was one of the great gatherings of people in that day. It used to be my duty to take charge of his exhibit. My father developed a new variety of grape from the Delaware and Concord grapes. Once

father noticed a bunch of grapes hanging on the trellis, which had the size of the Concordes but the color of the Delawares. Now, the Delawares were small and red, and the Concordes were large and blue. He took the seeds from this bunch and propagated them and then sent samples of them to various horticulturists, asking what was the name of them. The answer came back each time that no variety of that kind had ever been known. My father was honored by having them named the "Murdock" grapes.

One thing was a great drawback to me when I went among the fruit and flowers, and that was the fact that I was allergic to bees. They would light on me, and I would run wildly and stick my head in the lilac bushes. Father had many hives and we were well supplied with honey which we all loved, including myself. I recall at one time some cousins from Minneapolis were planning a visit to us. In every letter they urged us to have plenty of honey on hand. On the night of their arrival, my mother told father there was no honey in the house. He was always ready to comply with any request made of him, so he took a lantern and went out and got a few cards of honey. He said, "I will bring more in tomorrow." But, alas, some passing thief had spied the lantern light and been attracted to the spot, and when morning came, there was no honey left.

MAKING CANDLES AND SOFT SOAP

One of the domestic jobs that pleased us children was mother's candle making. Sometimes in an emergency, when she ran out of candles, she would use some moulds which made just six at a time; but once a year she made a large supply. She filled the wash boiler with tallow; then, she put wicks over some little round sticks and dipped them in the hot tallow and hung them in a row above the boiler. By the time the last stick was hung up, the first sticks were cool enough to dip again. Thus the work proceeded until the candles were of the right size. We thought it great fun to help with this work,

and then view the result of such a fine supply of candles ready for use.

Making of soft soap was another process we enjoyed. Into an immense iron kettle, which was kept in the back yard, mother put lye, made from ashes, and to this she added waste grease which had been carefully saved for the purpose. This concoction was boiled over a fire in the yard. The soap was put away in kegs.

Cellars, in those days, were storehouses in themselves. A barrel of kraut was made in the fall; chunks of pork were salted down; fruit was canned and kept in long, heavy wooden boxes; many kinds of vegetables could be kept there throughout the winter (canning of vegetables had not yet begun); apples were stored away. The apples that looked perfect we would wrap in pieces of newspaper and pack away. Cared for thus, they would last into July without decaying. In our cellar there was a floor of rock, always cleanly scrubbed. There was a long table for use in handling the milk and butter, and a wooden dash-churn stood beside it. We children used to like to help make the butter and then enjoy the fresh buttermilk. I always wanted to take out some of the butter before it was salted, as this seemed to me a tempting morsel. There was a large cupboard whose tin doors had holes for ventilation, and this was where the milk, cream and butter were kept. No one had ice in those days, but our cellar was cool.

Another one of the labors for the adults and joys for the children in those days was the making of maple sugar. We had some friends who had a maple sugar camp and used to invite us to come when the "sugaring-off" was going on. I recall them saying once when we arrived, "Now, you children may help yourselves and eat all the syrup and sugar you want." They were safe in saying this, for they knew we would soon get satiated. I, like the other children, soon had to stop, but afterward I could not help wishing I had eaten just a little bit more, for it seemed to me that the sugar at the camp

was someway so much better than the syrup and the sugar we had at home.

But life was not all work even for mother. She used to take us children down to Cedar creek about a mile in the woods back of Evergreen farm, and there we would enjoy wading in the pretty, rocky stream. Marion, being a born orator, would run up onto the bluff and speak pieces to us below. "Barbara Frietchie" was one of her favorites.

Another pastime was to go exploring in the deep woods. In our childhood, no timber had been cut west of the road south of Garnavillo. I can recall a day when my oldest sister, Ellen, took some of us into a seldom seen part of the woods which was a fairyland of lovely wild flowers at that time. We were thrilled with the yellow lady's slipper, that exquisite orchidaceous flower, the Indian candlestick, and the quaint Jack-in-the-pulpit, which were in a riot of abundance. Sometimes on Sunday afternoons, my father would at my request go off with me into the woods to hunt for the lovely lady's slipper or other flowers that were in season. I never saw any of the pink and white lady's slipper in Iowa, but they were profuse in Minnesota timber. I recall once, while traveling on the train there, a change of cars was made at a station located in timberland. The station agent was a woman, and she had the windows full of Indian candlesticks and those fragile pink and white orchids. We were thrilled by the charming picture. "The train is not due for some time, and you will have plenty of chance to go get some," she said. Into the timber we hurried and found that the patches of flowers were so thick that we could not walk without stepping on them.

Children show their trends of thought very early in life, and Ellen and Marion showed their independence of thought when yet very young. That characteristic remained with them their whole lives. Now, in those days, a woman who had very decided opinions of her own was

frequently sneeringly called by some men "a strong-minded woman." Once a man, talking to Marion about a certain woman, remarked in a derogatory tone, "Oh, she's a strong-minded woman." My sister replied, "Well, I am afraid she would not return that compliment to you."

RESENTED THE DICTATES OF FASHION

Ellen and Marion even had the bravery to disapprove of the fashions, which most most women never question, but meekly conform to. They thought hoops were an abomination, even though our mother did wear them. At last hoops were put on the market for little girls. They, of course, refused to wear them, but since they liked to play jokes and especially on me, their younger sister, they bought some for me, although they knew I would not want to be bothered with them.

One day, father invited me to drive with him to Guttenberg. My sisters urged, "Now is your chance to wear your hoops," but I remonstrated. "But you must not go unless you wear the hoops," they said. "What would the people in that town think of you, if you were not dressed in the style?" I said no more and let them put the hoops on me. But after we had driven about a mile, I said to father, "I do not want to wear these hoops." He replied, "Just stand up and I'll help you take them off." Off they came, and I went to Guttenberg comfortable, if not stylish.

By the time I was in my teens, hoops were so universally worn that all of us—mother, sisters, and I—had succumbed to the dictate of Madame Fashion. To be seen without hoops endangered a woman's standing and she was liable to be called eccentric.

Another fashion which we had to adopt eventually was the bustle. Men of that day never ceased to rave against the hoops and the bustle. Men of today seem to take the eccentricities of women's styles much more meekly. Even the adoption by women of man's distinctive garment—pants—does not seem to arouse them.

Even pastors say nothing against it; and this despite the fact that the scriptures strongly admonish women not to put on men's attire.

In connection with the bustle, I remember an incident that happened at a teachers' institute, where each one was expected to answer roll call in the morning with some quotation or sentiment. A young man by the name of John Bagley had a black mustache of the latest fashion, of which he seemed extremely proud. One morning, this spruce young man answered roll call with a verse which quite offended the girls. He said:

Mary had a little lamb;
When it began to rustle,
She cut the wool from off its back,
And made herself a bustle.

When the girls were sputtering about this, I said, "Never mind. We shall get even!" The next morning my response to roll call was this:

Johnnie had a little lamb;
Its fleece was like the ash;
He cut it off and colored it,
And made a fine mustache.

There were no more slurs on bustles by him.

For a female to be seen in pants was considered a disgrace. When girls clandestinely purloined a boy's suit, they tried to be careful not to be seen by the other sex. My sister, Marion, enjoyed donning a suit belonging to Glen, a boy who lived with us. This he resented, but still was good natured about it. Marion liked to ride horseback astride, which was considered quite a breach of etiquette. The rest of us, of course, rode sidewise on side-saddles, but some became expert enough to ride sidewise without a saddle. Riding astride was safer than riding sidewise, and Marion did not see why she could not choose that way.

When I mention girls wearing pants, I recall an incident that happened after our family sold Evergreen farm in 1876 and moved to Elkader, the county seat,

where my father now had his law office. A group of us girls were together for a jolly evening in the home of Dr. Chase, where we frequently congregated. The Chases' lovely home was near the bridge over the Turkey river. Someone suggested that half of us should dress in boy's clothes and go out walking in the town in company with the other half in their feminine attire, and we would make the boys of the town think that the girls were accompanied by out-of-town boys. Although it would be quite a disgrace if the girls so dressed should be recognized, it was evening and rather dark, and the girls thought they would take the chance. So half of the girls went to their homes and managed to slip out with boys' suits. When all were dressed, we marched over the bridge into the other part of town. But some of the young men who saw us were suspicious and began to follow us. We all got panic stricken and started to run, never stopping until we got back into the Chase home. It would appear laughable to a girl of today that any female should be so fearful of being seen in pants, but it can be understood when one remembers that women, with their full skirts over wide hoops showed no more of their lower appendages than the toes of their shoes. In fact the proper term was "lower limbs," and it was even in better taste to act as if women were made in one piece from the waist down!

SOUGHT A PARDON FROM LINCOLN

Discussion of the fashions has carried me far ahead, chronologically, of my story. I want to record an incident which happened in the early 60's. My father, Judge Samuel Murdock, on the supplication of a man distantly related to us, went to Washington, D. C., to see President Lincoln and attempt to get him to pardon this man. The facts were these: the man had a store in the south which was entered by soldiers who proceeded to take anything and everything they wanted without any payment. The man remonstrated with them, and a violent altercation took place, culminating finally in physical

violence on the part of the soldiers toward the storekeeper. The latter, fearing for his safety, shot, and one of the soldiers was killed. Accused of murder and convicted, the man lay in prison awaiting execution.

Father outlined his view of the case to the president and asked a pardon. Lincoln heard him through and then picked up a paper outlining a case which resembled the one in which my father was interested. Lincoln said, "Here is a paper I want you to read. You are a lawyer and a judge. Now, what would be *your* decision in *this* case?" My father looked through the paper, then said, "Well, Mr. President, I could scarcely presume to insist that you should decide as I would, but if I were the judge in this case I would consider myself *unjust* if I did not release the man." Lincoln said, "Well, do you think I would be less just than you would be? The man, for whom you plea, is pardoned."

When I was at the age of sixteen, we three sisters attended Fayette university. "University" was a misnomer, for it was really only a small college. Prof. Brush was the president of the institution. It was through his influence and that of Dr. Parker, a personal friend of my father, that father was induced to let us enter this college. My pleasurable days there stand out in my memory. My chum was Mary Parsons, who later married Val Scrayner. My friendship with her has been kept up through all the years by letter, although we never met again.

Dr. Parker had two sons, the older of whom was Daniel N. Parker, who became a Methodist minister. The friendship between him and myself has been kept up ever since those early days. He happened to be pastor of the Methodist church in Lansing, Iowa, when I was there studying German. It was very pleasant to renew our intimacy of school days. The principal of the high school in Lansing was Prof. Eugene Merritt.

Once when my mother visited me there, Rev. Parker and Prof. Merritt, with the latter's girl friend, invited

my mother and me to take a ride in a skiff on the Mississippi river. Mother was always ready for sports and quickly accepted. As we were floating down the river, a raft passed us and we all transferred from our skiff to the raft, towing our skiff along with us. The raft seemed to be going very slowly, but was really going faster than we realized. When we transferred to our skiff again and started upstream, the young men had to row against the strong current, which they found very difficult. We soon realized that we had gone much farther than we imagined. It was midnight when we again landed in Lansing.

BEAUTIFUL SCENERY ABOUT LANSING

Lansing was a picturesque town nestled among the bluffs. No buildings were allowed on the river front, but instead a very broad sidewalk was laid along beside the river road, and this was a promenade for the citizens. Every evening in mild weather, people strolled upon this walk to enjoy the scenery and breezes from the river and, incidentally to meet friends. The walk extended for about a mile. It was unfortunate that a bitter struggle marred the peacefulness of the town; it was in the days when local option had been adopted, and the town was split by a terrible division between the temperance people and the liquor element. The latter element was always very strong where there were many Germans.

As I had gone to the town to continue my advanced work in German under Prof. J. J. Rhomberg, I desired to live in a German family in order to perfect myself in conversation. Some of my friends disapproved of my being on such intimate terms with the Germans. But I followed my own inclination and secured board with a Mr. and Mrs. Nachtway. Mr. Nachtway had a drug store. He was highly educated and had in his home a large library of German books to which I had access. Further, I was invited to join a club of German young people which had been started by Prof. Rohmberg and

which was called "Lese-kreischen," meaning "little reading circle." There were eighteen members and we read eighteen German plays that school year. Another training I had was through reading to Mrs. Nachtway, which I did at her request. She was a typical German hausfrau, keeping her home immaculate, getting up excellent meals, milking the cow, caring for the horse, and doing numerous other duties. Since she had a taste for literature and had little time to read, she had me to read plays to her while she was sewing. She, in turn, would explain the meanings of words I did not know and correct my pronunciation. This was a great advantage to me.

There was an outdoor location where I loved to study. It was high on the bluff overlooking the river. There I would sit on a rock and enjoy both my books and the view of the Mississippi with the big steamboats plying up and down. One day, glancing up from my book, I was horrified to see coiled by my side a very large rattlesnake. Anyone can imagine my terror and the speed with which I scampered down from that bluff. That was my favorite spot no longer!

One day, after I had been in Lansing about a year, I received a letter from my father telling me that I had been offered the position of teaching German in the public schools of Elkader, the county seat, which was then our home. We had removed there from Evergreen farm in 1876, as I have mentioned before. When I read the letter, I went weeping to my teacher and told him that I could not presume to take that position for I was not capable of filling it. However, he said that I could do it, and must accept. So I did, and, after I got started, it became a real pleasure, although the teaching was very heavy. The children came to me as soon as they were in the first reader, and I had them through all the grades into the high school, using the conversational method. For three years I did this strenuous work, in the third year having eighty pupils each day. As salary I received \$40.00 a month, which was about the same paid the teachers in the grades.

Although I hesitated to give up the work and leave my father and mother, I at last decided to make a change. My sister had graduated from Meadville, Pennsylvania, Unitarian Theological Seminary and had taken her first pastorate in Humboldt, Iowa. She requested me to come and live with her and assist in the parish work. This was a pleasant period of my life. My sister started literary clubs and other cultural activities which were both enjoyable and educational. The people became our loyal friends.

Since I had always been attracted toward the idea of doing kindergarten work, after three years in Humboldt, I went to Chicago and entered Miss Elizabeth Harrison's Kindergarten college. There, I received broad training, for we were required to practice teaching in the various kindergartens of the city, now in those of the most aristocratic people, and again among the people of the slums. The latter appealed to me very much, for in teaching those forlorn little tots, I felt as if I was doing work especially needed. I recall one kindergarten in the vicinity of Armour's meat-packing plant where three of us girls had charge for a time. The neighborhood was considered such a dangerous one for nice young women that the windows had bars. We taught there in the morning, but never ventured to eat our lunch in that neighborhood, but delayed it until we could get back to the college vicinity, where we had classes in the afternoon. The class of children in that school can be well illustrated by a conversation which was overheard between two of the pupils. A little boy exclaimed in a rather boastful voice, "My dad came home drunk last night!" The small girl to whom he said it was not to be outdone and announced in an equally boastful tone, "So did mine!" As yet, there were no public kindergartens and these schools were all private, either pay schools or charity schools, designed for pupils from three to six years.

When I finished my two years' course, I was offered, through the recommendation of Miss Harrison, the posi-

tion of teacher of the kindergarten at Hull House. This appeared a most attractive offer as the whole country looked upon the work of Jane Addams at Hull House as one of the greatest philanthropies of the day. But I had had two years of strenuous study and practice teaching without a vacation and was greatly in need of a rest. Needless to say, the position at Hull House would not be a restful one. My parents felt I should come to them and have a vacation before going on with my teaching, and I acceded to their desires.

EXPERIENCES AS A TEACHER

Many interesting amusing incidents happened during my teaching in private kindergartens in various places. Small children are as a rule, alert and active and want to try new things that come to their attention. Once in my teaching in Elkader, I was talking to the children on kindness to animals. One of the things I mentioned was that they could do kindnesses to birds, and among these would be the putting out of material with which the birds could build their nests. I pointed out that the birds used bits of string, cotton, and cloth in making the nests. A mother of one of my pupils, returning home from an afternoon out, found the front lawn strewn with rags. She said to her little daughter, "My dear Blanche, why did you scatter rags all over the grass?" The child answered, "Teacher told us that we should put out things for the birds to use in making their nests." Well, her work was not entirely wasted, for, amusing to relate, in the fall when the leaves had fallen from the deciduous tree in the front yard, there was seen a bird's nest with quite a goodsized piece of cloth hanging from it.

Later I became a teacher of the primary grade in the public schools of Elkader. One summer I decided to teach a term of school in the country. In those days, country children went to school in the summer time so that they could help with the farm work in the spring

and fall. During that country teaching in Highland township, I was once a guest in the home of some of my pupils. Between the house and the barnyard was a little stream crossed by a bridge. As I walked over this and looked down into the water, I discovered, to my delight, that there was a bed of white clay in it, just such as we had bought at a large price for our kindergarten work in Chicago. I had enjoyed that clay modeling so much and was proud that some of our pieces had been at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893.

So, I dug out a quantity of the clay and took it to the country school. Of course, at that time I would never have dared introduce handwork as is done in progressive education projects of today, but I did take the time at recess and noon to teach the children to make articles from the clay. Seeing the work of their children, even some of the mothers became interested enough to take clay modeling as a pastime. The school room had a wainscoting about four feet high with a ledge at the top of it, and it was there that we set up the finished figures, making a decoration all around the room. Some of the children showed great skill and we put on an exhibit at the county fair, which attracted much favorable comment.

At another country school where I taught through the summer, I found the school grounds perfectly barren. I made my project there the beautifying of those grounds. There were woods nearby and at the close of school in the afternoons we would make excursions to them and bring back plants and shrubs, which we planted about the school building. The children entered into this heartily, and it is to be hoped that they kept up their interest after my departure and that other schools followed their example.

Speaking of the clay reminds me of other peculiarities of soil in our community. Pictured Rocks cave was the pride of McGregor. Many years ago a young man in McGregor, a deaf-mute with an artistic talent, began

scraping different colored sands from the sides of the cave and filling bottles with them all arranged in patterns—emblems, flags, and even words. It appeared like an almost impossible feat, and these bottles were in such demand that he made considerable profit from his labor. A small cave similar to the Pictured Rocks was located several miles east of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. It was called Batavia cave. When a party of us picnicked there, I brought home a red rock of sandstone so heavy that it was a task for a man to lift it.

On the West Union road a few miles west of Elkader was another curious cave that was worth a trip to see and was much frequented by picnickers. Among the other natural curiosities near Elkader was Table Rock, a granite formation. One could imagine it was made for a giant's table, for it was too high for ordinary people to sit at it. However, it made a platform onto which four people could climb with their picnic baskets and there enjoy their lunch. Of benefit to picnickers in Humboldt county was a spring situated in the woods by the Des Moines river, which was peculiar in that it gushed from the top of a rock about five feet high. It seemed to have been put there by old Mother Nature just for our benefit.

The recreations and amusements of those days were all very simple ones, and frequently were an outgrowth of our work. I recall a trip one summer to Strawberry Point for teachers' institute. A number of us made the trip of twenty miles or so in a big wagon. In those days farmers had great crops of melons in their fields and passersby were welcome to help themselves. Some of the boys in our crowd climbed the rail fences and brought out to us luscious melons on which we feasted during the rest of the drive. When we arrived in Strawberry Point, the girls of our party wanted to find a boarding place all together. A family had built a new house but the upper floor was not quite ready for occupancy. The lady of the house kindly put up beds for us there, and

we had a week of fun together, permeated with the frolicsome spirit of a girls' boarding school. It was at that institute where the war of the bustle and mustache verses took place.

SOCIAL VISITS EXTENDED FOR DAYS

Since there was no speedy transportation that permitted of people going many miles and staying for only a few hours, as is possible today, visits usually covered several days. Once when Marion was home on a vacation from the Boston School of Oratory, where she had been studying, we received a letter from gentlemen friends that they would like to come and spend the week-end before my sister's return to Boston. Miss Maggie Vaupel, who later became Dr. Margaret Clark of Humboldt, Iowa, and still later of Long Beach, California, was at the farm spending a few days before she too would go with my sister to Boston. We assured the young men that they would be most welcome and at once set about planning entertainment for them. But on Saturday morning, the day on which they were to arrive I felt so ill that I could not get up for breakfast. Later I managed to get dressed and went down to where father, mother, Maggie, and Marion were playing croquet. After watching them for awhile, I told them that I felt ill, and so they helped me into the house and put me to bed. The young men arrived as scheduled, but I did not see them, for I had picked up a typhoid germ and was unable to raise my head from my pillow for ten weeks and was confined to the house for seventeen weeks. This was disastrous to the plans of Marion and Maggie, for they were compelled to postpone their departure for Boston for many weeks.

When I was quite well again but did not dare venture outdoors because of the severity of the cold weather, Kate Vaupel, Maggie's sister, came to spend a week with me. Kate later became the wife of Prof. Hossfeld,⁴ of

⁴Frederic W. Hossfeld was secretary to Governor Wm. Larrabee from 1886 to 1889. He had been on the faculty of Upper Iowa University at Fayette, and had been United States consul at Trieste.

Fayette, who was appointed by Governor Merrill as consul at Trieste. One day Kate said, "Amelia, let us have a party." Accordingly, we wrote to my cousin, Will Gilbert, of Elkader, to bring over a load of young people. Mother made a dishpan full of doughnuts containing rich cream, and prepared other tempting foods. When in the evening we heard sleigh bells ring, Kate ran out to greet our friends, but it was not the crowd she had expected. Instead, it was a surprise party from Garnavillo. Soon we heard sleigh bells again, and now Kate ran out with assurance that it was the Elkader party. But no, it was another surprise party from National, about six miles distant. The Elkader friends never did arrive, for they had not received the letter in time to arrange the trip. Of course, mother's doughnuts were eaten.

A sequel to this incident happened more than sixty-five years later. After Marion and I had taken up our residence in Santa Monica, California, I was standing in the hall one day when a feeble old man came up the stairs to our apartment. I hesitated about inviting him in and asked him if there was anything he wanted. He replied, "Well, let me in and I will tell you who I am." After coming in, he said, "I want you to try to guess who I am first." There was not the slightest resemblance to anyone I had even seen and I could not guess. He then said, "Do you remember when in in 1874 you had two surprise parties on one evening at your home on the farm? I was in that crowd from National, and I remember every detail about it, and how you let me go down cellar with you to get apples." He was Ransom J. Bixby, of Edgewood, who at one time served in the Iowa legislature.⁵

ENJOYED IMMUNITY FROM INJURY

I presume it is an almost unheard of thing for anyone to reach my age—ninety-two—and be able to say she had never been injured. But that has been my good

⁵R. J. Bixby served as a member of the House of Representatives from Delaware county in the Thirtieth, Thirty-first and Thirty-second General Assemblies.

fortune, despite the fact that I have had many experiences which might so easily have resulted in a serious accident.

Once when, as a little girl, I was visiting my mother's sister, Mrs. Marion Patch Russell, in Minneapolis, I was riding to school in a sleigh with my little cousins. The snow was four feet deep and there was only half the road opened. When the boy who was driving met a team, he turned out into the deep snow and we all thought we were going to be tipped over. One of the girls cried, "Hop out, hop out!" I was the only one who hopped. The driver went on some distance before he realized that anyone had jumped out. This seemed to me, as a child, a very serious experience, for I seemed to be sinking down in the snow to the point of suffocation. Indeed, it cannot be said what the result might have been if he had not soon returned for me.

We had many terrific thunder storms and wind storms in Iowa. One of my early experiences was to see a large tree near our front gate and only a few rods from the house struck by lightning and completely shattered. After that I was much terrified whenever a storm threatened.

I had not realized how terrible a sandstorm could be until I once went through one in Lyon county, Iowa. I had been invited to supper at the home of Ed Parch, formerly of Elkader, and when I started to walk to their home a most violent sandstorm was raging. I did not wish to forego the pleasure of visiting these old-time friends, so I struggled forward in the face of a force almost devastating. It was the faculty of perseverance habitual to the Murdock family that helped me to succeed in reaching the home of my friends.

Once I was driving with an elderly lady who drove a very spirited horse. There were three of us women on the seat of the carriage and a little girl was seated on a box at our feet. Suddenly the top of the carriage began to come down slowly and would soon have crushed

us. Instantly, I wrapped my long skirts about my ankles tightly, lifted my heels close to my body, and jumped over the wheel without being injured. I ran to the horse's head and caught his bridle to stop him so that the others could get out. Fortunately, a man drove by at that instant and helped us and adjusted whatever was wrong about the carriage top.

At another time I was driving with an elderly woman, when to my horror she suddenly drove the buggy up on an embankment at the side of the road. My first impulse was to grab the lines and turn the horse back into the road; but I did not, and on that instant I realized her purpose, for I had my first disconcerting view of an automobile, as one filled with intoxicated young men sped by us on the road. How lucky that I did not turn the horse back into the road.

Sometimes rather amusing things happen in the midst of disasters. When the bad earthquake of 1933 shook southern California, my sister, Marion, and I were living in Santa Monica. It happened late in the afternoon, and a friend had just brought in to my sister a very beautiful rose in a delicate vase. We were standing looking at the rose in my sister's hand when the terrific earthquake shock occurred. We hurried down the rather precarious back stairs and when we were safely seated on a bench in the garden, we observed that my sister still held the vase and rose safely in her hand. Friends who were concerned about us gathered about and we sat there most of the night, for the bad shock was followed by many other lesser shocks. A great many people were killed and injured and much damage was done all over southern California; and in Santa Monica, as in other places, the school buildings had to be torn down and rebuilt as one story buildings and as nearly earthquake proof as builders knew how to make them.

It may not be unfitting to close these wandering memories with a view of Marion with the beautiful rose in her hand. Her little figure always stood so erect and

alert, her smile was so bright, and her eyes so keen. Left the only two of our family, we spent so many years together in pleasant companionship. Marion passed from this life in January, 1942, at the age of ninety-four. Now, the visits of dear friends must keep me company.

As I sit at the wide west window of my apartment with the sun pouring in its warmth and golden color, making beautiful the days I walk the sunset trail, my thoughts flit back to all the many scenes and activities that have been crowded into my ninety-two years. And they have been so many! In this story, I have included, for the most part, only those that center about the early Iowa home. "Nearly an hundred years! So they not seem long?" you ask. No, they seem short.

The prevailing influences in my life have been those bequeathed me by my pioneer parents: energy, thrift, perseverance, and upright living. Seeming to prove the accusation that all old people harp upon "the good old days," I close with the opinion that no modern slant on life, based on loose and easy living, can equal the spirit I saw demonstrated daily in my pioneer family.

CATTLE TWENTY-SIX DAYS ON ROAD

William H. Gurney sold 106 head of cattle, fed by Pierson & Clapp, near Burlington, Iowa. These are native breed, pretty well fed, have come into market, considering the distance in fine condition; twenty-six days from home; on foot 120 miles, then by the Rock Island road to Chicago, Michigan Central to Detroit, Great Western through Canada to the suspension bridge, and by Central and Hudson here at about \$20 per head expense. They are fair average medium quality, and will sell for about \$68 per head or 9½ to 10c per pound. —*New York Tribune*, April 28, 1854.

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