

"We are just married"

From the diary of Buena Vista Crowell Atkinson

I met Wallace four years ago this very month Nov. But I am a married woman now, we were married Wed. Oct 11-1905, one month ago today. I can hardly realize it but it is true, too true. The latter part of Sept and 1st of Oct was a very busy time for me. Dress makers, sewing and plan, plan all the time. But my boy did his part bravely, he "faced" papa, (which wasn't in the least dangerous) to ask for me and how smart he felt afterward. Then there was the license and the preacher. He didn't mind the license but O you preacher. I had always wanted a big wedding, but mama not being

in good health could not stand the nervous strain of such an undertaking and my hubby-to-be preferred a small wedding so quiet it was. The wedding was a quiet home affair with only our immediate relatives and a few near friends. Mrs Zorn was so kind to help mama and Nellie Brown & Mauvee Wherry so kind in decorating the house with autumn leaves, red & white flowers. The ceremony took place in our parlor which was tastefully decorated with a bower of autumn foliage in the corner under which we stood with a large bell hanging overhead. Wallace met me at the foot of the stairs at 10:A.M. We were unattended, the wedding march being played by Mauvee Wherry. The guests were standing in line around the parlor and sittingroom with our immediate relatives, Father, mother etc. nearest the Autumn Bower where we stood. Then the strains of Mendelsson's wedding march changed into a

low love ballad the music continuing during the whole ceremony congratulations etc. That was certainly a straining time, with everyone sniffing and crying, like a funeral. What on earth do people want to cry at a wedding for? Rev Carr can certainly make a service impressive, and it made W & I feel like a funeral. Wallace was so broken up by the seriousness of it all that he did not kiss me for fear of blubbering.

Mother was the first to congratulate then papa who was almost blubbering and the rest of the relatives, followed by our friends.

After congratulations we were ushered to the sittingroom, (which was larger than the dining room) where we were served daintily, by Nellie & Mauvee to our wedding breakfast.

We took the 1 o'clock train to Independence Oelwein & Waterloo where we stayed for a few weeks just to get away from town

After Buena Vista Crowell, 21, married Wallace Atkinson, 24, she described the wedding in a lengthy diary entry, which appears here. (Inconsistent spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have not been altered from the original.) Left: An undated photo of the couple, who played in Storm Lake's Owl Orchestra. Wallace also played in traveling musical groups.

"The ministers wife said I was the sweetest bride she ever saw. . . . Well, my boy is the handsomest on earth."

for awhile. We were sure a couple of happy kids.

The younger people all went to the train with us, well supplied with rice. Our trunk was bedecked with strips of white muslin & old shoes of all sizes, including baby shoes, of course.

The folks put us up a nice lunch to eat on the train, & which we never opened until we reached our destination and found then that they had packed a baby shoe on top of the lunch—the jokers. We were pretty well swamped in rice at the station and there was a young travelling man standing on the platform of our coach smiling down at us & enjoying our embarrassment. As we entered I remarked, "Isn't this fun and he said "Yes, I just went thro' it myself last week."

Our brother-in-law, Leon, tried to get us to sit in the front of the train so he could pin a placard to the back of the seat, upon which was printed in large letters, "We are just married." But he couldn't work us that way, for we took a back seat & destroyed the card.

After the train was well on its way the young travelling man came back and talked to us until he reached his destination. Seemed to be a very nice young man.

I did not have a white wedding gown as I have always wanted but was married in my blue Taffetta going away suit. Mrs Carr, the ministers wife said I was the

sweetest bride she ever saw. Taffy [such flattery]. Said we were a dandy fine looking little couple. More taffy. Well, my boy is the handsomest on earth thats true.

Our relatives at Independence could not meet us, grandpa & grandma being too old and Aunt Maude tied at home with the baby, so we took the one dinky street car, [that] the town afforded, as far as it went our way then got off and walked the rest of the way which was about 9 blocks. What a beautiful night it was, and how I enjoyed that walk with "my husband." Have always enjoyed walking with him, he is the finest companion imaginable.

Aunt Maud was watching for us when we reached her home & soon after we arrived Uncle Harry came home from the Hospital where he worked. We took dinner with Frank & Eva Crowell on Saturday Oct 14 and Eva gave us a sugar & creamer for wedding gift. . . .

We arrived home on Monday and in the evening attended the reception given us by Owl Orchestra of which we were both members. The reception was at Nellie Brown's and was very dainty & nice. Nellie always entertains so gracefully.

First we had a game as follows: Each had to sew or knit something

with the left hand (if right handed) which caused a great deal of inconvenience and was very funny. Later in the evening Nellie & Viola served a very dainty lunch on small tables. The refreshments were Chocolate coffee, sandwiches, fruit salad, cake & olives.

After we were all seated at the tables August Hoch made a little speech & presented us with a set of pearl handled fruit knives as a token of regards from the Owls. I had to get up & in a "bunglesome way" thank the Owls for their thoughtfulness and say we appreciated it so much. It almost got my goat. I think the cat ran away with Wallace's tongue. . . .

The Church gave us a reception about three weeks later. It was a swell reception at the parsonage, guess the whole church attended. We were presented with a large golden Oak Rocker. Once again I had to try to express our appreciation in my "scared way" to that big crowd. Horrors. ❖

The diary is part of the Buena and Wallace Atkinson Papers in Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City center).