

# BACK IN THOSE DAYS

Reminiscences and Stories of Indiana

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INDIANA WRITES

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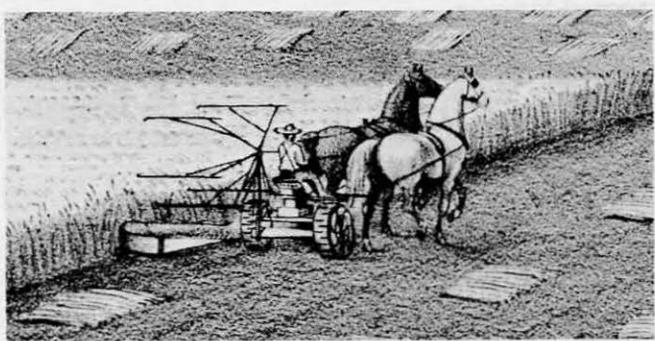
# BACK IN THOSE DAYS

*Reminiscences and Stories of Indiana*

Edited by

Carol Burke and Martin Light

With Photographs by Jackie Ullman



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"Tell Us Your Stories:  
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## FOREWORD

**houses along a road stand waiting  
like old women knitting, breathless  
to tell their tales.**

**Adrienne Rich**

*from *Necessities of Life**

Everyone selects incidents from the past to tell family and friends. The repetition of these events, elaborated in narrative, accumulated in tradition, makes up the body of a culture's life stories. The individuals, couples, and groups we interviewed generously shared their stories with us, stories that had been waiting for an invitation, an eager ear. Often the more stories they'd tell, the more they'd remember to tell.

On the road past Hickman Heights Revival Church at the gothic Warren County Home, at the Delphi Masonic Temple, in the beauty shop of the Indiana Veterans' Home, in the Lafayette

Senior Center at 6th and Main, in fine city houses and on farms, we listened to stories from the older residents of our four county region. Sometimes shyly they'd come: one of our best storytellers passed the village library five times before she "worked up the nerve" to come in for the interview. They told about musseling in the creeks near Pittsburg, Indiana, about the interurban linking their towns, about the easy pranks they'd pulled and the hard work they'd done.

This project was first imagined as a way of involving young writers with senior citizens. Not since the WPA programs of the 1930's have writers been employed in the collecting of local folklore. Especially now, in a time of escalating cultural homogenization, many writers feel the need for a sense of place, of region. If it is true that writing is a process of self-discovery, it is no less true that discovering one's self means the discovery of others, participating in the vitality of the community which continually renews itself in the telling of stories and the sharing of lore.

We, the writers who participated in this project as collectors, found in the process an excitement to match the stimulus of invention — discovered, indeed, that the sharing of folklore is, in a fundamental way, the culture's means of reinventing itself; recreating the past is a way of telling the future. Of course collectors of folklore, even novices, risk the danger of appropriating the stories of their sources. Sometimes the lore of the people becomes lost in the academy, the property of scholars. This collection not only celebrates the stories of our tellers; it aims to *return* to them *their* literature. This project has given all of us involved a sense of the rich region in which we live and a respect and affection for those who people that place.

—CB

## INTRODUCTION

The reminiscences, anecdotes, and tales in this collection have been drawn from tape-recorded interviews with 130 people who live in west-central Indiana. For them, telling the stories was an opportunity to give shape and substance to memories and to preserve, evaluate, and celebrate the past. Here genealogy and local history acquire life and drama. Storytelling is a creative activity. In an instant the teller begins sifting through old ideas, then establishes a mood, combines traditional and personal imagery, selects character, idiom, and attitude, recreates dialogue, and moves toward a climactic point or message, all the while putting the stamp of individuality upon inherited material. Well-told stories are works of art to be proud of. We are pleased to publish such stories for a large number of readers, even though we can print but a small part of the totality of the hundred tapes and many pages of transcription that represent the stories recalled and recorded by the participants.

Most of the participants talked for about an hour, speaking of the great events of life: a journey, an initiation, success, death, renewal. They recalled experiences of earlier days, when their parents or grandparents arrived in America or found their way to Indiana, got an education, established a farm, landed a job. They spoke of school and church, of parties and pranks. They told anecdotes of eccentrics, wayward peddlers, rebels, and Indians. They gave accounts of courtship, marriage, and work. They described memorable holidays, local disasters, and the Great Depression. And they told some jokes and tall tales.

As the contributors spoke of home and school and job, their reminiscences took several different forms. Sometimes they recounted an activity step by step. Sometimes they exchanged memories casually in conversation with other participants. Often they developed a unified "story," with setting, characters, and dialogue. We have selected examples of each of these interesting and valuable forms. Central to them is the notion of the function of folklore. By means of its stories, the family and the community define their identities, certify their accomplishments, and come to terms with their misfortunes — in effect, their stories organize experience and give it an artistic expression.

We have transcribed these stories just as they can be heard on the tapes that record them. That is why you will read not only the words of the narrators, but also the interjections, questions, and responses of an audience. Our headings note that each storyteller was talking to one of our interviewers and thus remind you of the oral circumstance of this art. Like most transcribers of folklore texts, we have elected to silently omit a few "uh's" and an occasional repetition of a word. We use a dash to show where a speaker breaks off a thought; three dots will indicate an omission of any length. Interviewers' remarks appear in italic type. We value word-for-word transcriptions because we respect the narrators as authors in their own right. We believe that it would be a disservice to them to edit, alter, or rearrange the texts.

You will therefore notice the self-corrections and re-starts which are characteristic of the natural speech of all of us. In the excitement and apprehension of telling about an encounter with a ghost, for instance, one feels the need for a liberation from school-bookish grammar. While the story takes its course — anxious, hesitant, and relieved in turn — grammar, sentence pattern, timing, and rhythm serve as the memory of the encounter dictates and as creative effect demands. Though they appear here in print, these are, after all, originally oral stories, not written ones. Print deprives us of the exact tone of voice, length of pause, and motion of gesture that enhanced the telling. Yet these stories are told in a beautifully open, emotive, exact, and figurative language. In truth, here you will find the expression of dozens of varied, witty, and energetic voices, each differing from the others in its manner of plotting a story and choosing the words in which to tell it.

Nonetheless, readers may recognize some of the stories. The themes and occasions are universal, and sometimes the tellers specifically incorporate floating legends and anecdotes into their sagas — a practice that has a long endorsement in custom. Excited by variants or eager to establish the traditional credentials of a belief or a tale, the scholar reaches for reference works. (The results of such a search can be seen in the notes at the back of this book.) For several years the Family Folklore Program at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington has been collecting stories like these, publishing them in a book called *Family Folklore*, with a bibliography and a set of questions for anyone who wishes to explore his or her family history. At Purdue University we offer courses in family folklore and community traditions; in fact, from such courses came half a dozen stories included here.

Our region consists of four counties of west-central Indiana: Boone, Carroll, Tippecanoe, and Warren. It stretches outward from a line running between Chicago and Indianapolis. The area includes flat land planted in soybeans and corn. Through it flows a great river, the Wabash. Much of the history and culture of the region will be self-evident in the stories — diverse religious and national backgrounds, industry, and prosperous farms still maintained by families, though with the help of machinery rather than a number of hired men. Our placenames have an engaging variety: Wildcat Creek, Battle Ground, Lebanon, Sugar Creek, Delphi, Mudlavia, Ouitatenon, Williamsport, Lafayette, Pine Village, Ockley, Buck Creek, Pence, Thorntown, Wabash.

*Back in Those Days* reflects the interests of three sponsoring agencies. One is the Indiana Arts Commission, which (along with the National Endowment for the Arts) chose to support a program of storytelling that would give an outlet to creative expression. Another is the magazine INDIANA WRITES, which, aided by the Commission and by Indiana University, regularly publishes fiction and poetry by local writers, and which has provided editorial assistance for and will issue the book. The third is the Department of English at Purdue University, which maintains a program of uncovering and preserving our folklore and oral history; the Department generously lent office space and met other costs. The book, then, represents the cooperative efforts of many people: the four interviewers (all of them Indiana writers; one also a photographer); a writer-coordinator, who made appointments and arrangements and in addition was an enterprising interviewer; a professor, the project director, who conducted workshops in folklore for the group and who annotated the texts; several graduate students from English 596A at Purdue; and the staff of the magazine. All of the interviewers transcribed tapes; the transcriptions were verified by the editors, who then made the final selection of material. Nevertheless, we are happy to acknowledge that it is the sixty storytellers we were able to include who are the real authors of the book you are about to read.

One of the interviewers, George Packard, recalls that while the stories were being told “eyes grew deep and bright with memory, inviting me to share what they had seen, and in fact could still see.” Driving home from a session, he could envision “the turn-of-the-century landscape of Indiana superimposed on 1978: smaller fields, larger forests, hub-deep mud, horse-wagons, buggies, the

coaches of the Interurban, Model T Fords filled with teenagers — not romanticizing the differences but simply seeing them, as though the memories of the elders of Indiana preserve, in a web of recollection, the facets of a way of life that has almost disappeared.”

Like George, we all gained new perspectives and understanding from hearing the stories. We wish this book to be an encouragement to others to tell — and to record — the stories they remember. You can begin by turning some of our section headings into questions and asking yourself and your family to answer them: “What was it like going to school back in those days?” “How did you meet and court your wife or your husband?” “What do you remember of great events, like the Depression?” “Were there any traditions of ghosts or of eerie happenings in your community?” Good stories will surely follow.

—ML

# **BACK IN THOSE DAYS**

*Reminiscences and Stories of Indiana*

# GROWING UP

## PILING BRUSH

**Roy Litton**

*talking to George Packard*

When I was just a youngster, we'd get a tree cut down, and Daddy'd start lopping off limbs, and I'd sit down on a stump to rest. And he'd say, "Pile that brush over there while you're resting!" And I'm still piling brush today. If there's anything to be done, I'm right at it. That was the early training that I had — good training.

## MOVING TO INDIANA

**Roy Litton**

*talking to George Packard*

*Tell me about the drought first. Was that the reason you left [the Ozarks]?*

Oh, yes. I'll tell you about it. It was so dry, and so hot, and the winds were hot. And you'd get on the shady side, and it was just as hot there. It'd burn you just as bad there, as it did out in the sun.

*How long did it last?*

It lasted the whole — well, till we left there in September — we left there September the tenth, nineteen and one. The wells went dry, most of them. And we had — we were poor people. We didn't know we were, but we were. And after my daddy came to Indiana — the way he got here, one of the wealthy farmers there had a lot of cattle and he wanted to get them to pasture. And he sent three carloads of cattle to Indiana. And my daddy come with 'em to take care of the cattle on the way. And of course when they arrived here Grandpa lived out west of Lebanon. And he got a job on the farm, and he got enough money to send for us. He sent for Mother and my two sisters and a brother at that time.

*What was the journey like from your old place to Indiana? How did you come?*

Oh, from the old place down there? Well, we went to Westline, Missouri, from the south part of Missouri.

*Did you have your own wagon with your own belongings?*

No, we went on the train. We went on the train. My daddy was already up there. Mother's brother lived there, and that's how we happened to go. And he left money enough together up there to send for us. I know our Uncle Isaac, mother's brother, took us in a big wagon to Boone and put us on the train. And it was one of those wood coach trains, you know, the kind with the kerosene lamps overhead. So we lived in Westline then for three years. And Daddy was a good shoe cobbler and harness-maker. And he had a shop. And later he put in meat; he had a butcher shop.

*You had just started to tell me how it was, coming to Indiana in the rain. That must have been a fantastic feeling for you to see the —*

The strange thing about this — the day that we left Westline, Missouri, believe it or not, it *rained*.

*No kidding.*

It did. Everything was parched. Now, really truly, there was no vegetation. Corn got about eighteen inches high, shriveled up, dried up, blowed away.

*What did you do for drinking water?*

Went down to Little Pony Creek, they called it, near this little burg where we lived, pushed back the green scum, off of the puddles, and dipped that water, took it to the house, boiled it, time and time and again. And hung it down in the cistern until it got cool enough that we could drink it. Well, we didn't have much to eat. Mother baked her own bread. We didn't have any butter, didn't have any milk. We sprinkled salt on the bread in the place of butter. But we did live. And when we came here, that was the best move that they ever made. 'Cause our daddy got a good job on a farm out west of Lebanon here after we came out here. And I went to my first school, old Number 14 out west of town. . . .

[LATER] *Rain makes me think — what you told about the drought, that was pretty severe weather and then — then coming to Indiana. Everything was green?*

It was when we landed here. It was green, and I know I said to Mother as we went out to 32 West; it was a gravel road, then, just over the viaduct, there. I can remember what I said. I said, "Mommy, if there ever was a paradise, *this must be it.*"

# THE FIRST CAR

**Roy Litton**

*talking to George Packard*

I saw my first automobile. And I can go within twenty feet of it, I believe, today, where I was standing when I saw it. I was cutting weeds out of the corn. I heard something come down the road, chuggety-chuggety-chuggety. And I wondered what in the world was it. So I got over to the fence, and I stood there, and my mouth spread wide open and gapped at that thing comin' down the road. And there was an old fella in there. He had on goggles, linen duster, cap. And it was a Brush Runabout — red car, Brush Runabout — that you guided with a stick. And I suspect he was doin' ten or twelve miles an hour, and this long sandy beard flowing out past his head. And I watched him as far as I could see him, and I *still* didn't know what the bloomin' thing was.

# SEARCHING FOR FATHER

**Clarence Bear**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*Did your father die —*

No.

*when you were young, or did they get a divorce, or —*

No. As I understand it, well — Grandpa was farmin' — then, 'n he, well — there was a young fella from down Kentucky, Louisville. He came up there 'n, and he shucked corn for Grandpa. 'N he got cold 'n pneumonia which in those days was kind of — kind of a bad thing to have.

So Grandma and my mother (was around, I reckon between fourteen and fifteen) why, they took care of 'im an' managed to bring him, keep 'im going. An' so that summer he stayed there an' worked on the farm an' then in the fall when he left, why — found out he'd left me for a souvenir.

And so — but you know things did happen back then, back in those days. Now I don't think they happen that way any more.

*And you never heard anything else from him?*

I never heard directly from him in a way. In fact, I never did

see him. I guess he came to see me once. But anyhow, I was stationed down at Louisville. He, his father — that'd be my grandfather — he was, he was a M.D., so I decided I's gonna hunt him up. So I hunted him up 'n talked to him, went to his office 'n talked to him. I said, "Now I think I'm a relation to you, but I'm not tryin' to horn in on any your money'r anything. I just stopped in here to see." An' he said, "Well, lookin' at you," he said, "I wanna show ya something." Says, "I wanna show you a picture." So he had a picture that was taken of him when he was about my age, and he said, "Now you two boys look enough alike to be brothers." So. . .

*He was pretty sure.*

Yeah, he was pretty sure. But then — Well, then I never, I never bothered to, about tryin' to find my father. Why should I bother about huntin' him up? He'd never done anything for me!

## FATHER GOES IN CIRCLES

**John McKee**

*talking to Sally McKinney*

It was when we lived up in Elkhart County on the farm. We decided maybe to take a trip down to Southern Indiana. And we thought Turkey Run was way, way, way down in those days. I remember we came down the Jackson Highway, which was entirely all gravel, and you were lucky to travel a hundred miles without a flat tire, back in those days. That was back in 1920, I think, '21. No, excuse me, it was back in 1917, in the summer. Well, anyhow, the most interesting thing was — I remember was, we started out on one — on one gloomy morning; we was going to be gone three or four days. I know my mother fixed a fried chicken, food to take along, you know. We was going — and camping equipment — we was going to stop at different places and camp.

The day being gloomy and misty rain, we started down the Jackson Highway, I recall. And of course there was no road signs in those days, and the quality of highways was somewhat crooked, more crooked than now. And we came to a small town, and we came on through, and my father thought he knew the way. And so he went through the town, and in about a half hour or a little bit later, we began to recognize some things. And here we were, we came back through the same town.

And my mother urged him to stop and ask somebody, but he didn't, and, "You know, I — I think I can remember where I've been, so I'll try to, you know, get out on the right road," so he tried again, and went out, and about an hour later he came back through the same town again. He just drove in circles. And the town — that was Rome City. I'll always remember Rome City.

## I LEARN MY WORTH

**Kenneth White**

*talking to Carol Burke*

These mountains usually come down to a valley where the little village is along the valley, and where my home was was in the Black River Valley [of Vermont], a little river road down there, and the mountains up on each side in all directions. Now, four miles up on one of those mountains my folks had a little farm. I don't remember how many acres they had, maybe a hundred. I doubt if they had that much. We made a living up there. There was very little cash in existence in those days in that particular part of the country, but they were very conservative, very thrifty. We never knew we were poor. I remember one time when I was just a young boy, I asked my dad, "Dad, are we poor?" "No," he says, "we're not poor. We don't have any money, but we got a boy. You can't be poor if you got a boy."

Now we don't express sentiment up there openly, you know. But I don't know how you come much closer to it than that. That made a profound impression on me. I didn't know I was important until then.

## STARTING OVER

**Kenneth White**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I had all of these possessions, little gadgets that didn't mean anything to anybody but me, see. We went to town one day, and we came back the whole thing had burned down. There was nothing but a bed of coals. Uhm, boy! Well, you don't cry — boys don't cry, you know, up there where anyone can see 'em. Make a sissy out of

'im. I went up in the woods and sat on a stump, and I cried my eyes out. And I went back. Dad put his arm around Mother's shoulders, and he said, "Well, Mother, we'll build it back up." Which he did. They built a very nice place much like the other one.

## AFTER THE FIRE

**Carl Tuttle**

*talking to Martin Light*

The house in which I was born, up by Oswego, near Shoe Lake, I can still remember — Mother had us out in the driveway and there was the house a-burnin', and my brother tells me that all I could think of, it was burnin' up my new overcoat, and I was just a-stormin' because it was, it was burning up my new overcoat. Now my brother tells me that. But I can remember the fire, and I can remember that the neighbors came in and they saved one part of the house, that was the woodshed at that time. And that winter following that we lived in that woodshed, and we children slept out in the corncrib —

*My goodness, in the cold?*

Yeah, it was wintertime. We slept out there in the corncrib (they'd bring us out). And there's still the one other lingering memory (these are peculiar things) — Father had a side of beef that he killed a-hanging up out there and we slept in there, and that smell from that beef I can remember as long as I live.

## BRAND NAME

**Robert Coomey**

*talking to Carol Burke*

The story I'm about to tell happened when I was a boy about twelve or thirteen years old, and we lived in an apartment above the tin shop that my dad owned on the west side of the square in Delphi. And after the Saturday night bath, why, we always got behind the heating stove to change our underclothes (and they happened to be the long heavy kind).

The name of our stove was FLORENCE HOT BLAST, and

the name appeared on the back of the stove. And while changing, I fell and slipped and fell against the stove. It kind of burned my side a little bit, and I looked down and there was the letters, HOT BLAST, branded on my side.

## THE DYING HORSE

**Fairy Butler**

*talking to Jackie Ullman*

The only story I can think of involves a horse that was dying. It's a kid's story, but it's true. I had a cousin just about the same age as I was. At that time their parents they had taken us to Little Holiness Church. That's at Whitestown, you know, that's Lebanon. They'd taken us to this sort of church. We didn't know the difference. So we went out to Grampa's one day, and they had a horse there that was dying. You know, that takes a long time for them to die. Well, my cousin and I, we were sitting on a rail fence where the horse was. And we felt sorry for that horse because nobody could do anything for it, so we said we'd sing him some songs. And we sung them songs, oh half a day, and we was sincere in helping that horse.

## WINTER PLAYHOUSE

**Catherine Keeton**

*talking to Carol Burke*

In Wisconsin during the wintertime, why, it snowed terribly, terribly hard — deep, you know — and the wind was terrible. So when my father bought the place that we lived in the rest of our lives, practically, he built the barn up closer to the house, and closer to the street. And the wind came along one night and had blew a great big snowbank right in between the house and barn. Well, my father had to tunnel through that snowbank to get t' the barn to feed that — to feed the stock.

So us kids decided that it'd be a dandy place for a playhouse, and it was. And we dug it out as far as we could, you know, to make more room, and it froze, you know, the snow froze 'n made a dandy place for us to play in. So my mother gave us an old red rug she had for the floor, and we had boxes and so forth for tables and chairs. And [we] went back to the gooseberry bushes and got the little thorns for silverware. [Laughs] So we was havin' a good time. We forgot about, about it thawing. So one day, lo and behold, we was — we was havin' tea as it happened, and it thawed and buried us all in the snow.

*Oh no. What happened? How did you get out?*

Dad had to dig us up!

*Were you frightened?*

Was scared — scared stiff!

## CHRISTMAS TRADITION I

**Bertha Fleming**

*talking to Sally McKinney*

We never had a tree. We always had — each one, each child set out a plate on a chair. We had a chair — had a string of chairs, and each child set a plate on a chair, and then in the morning we had an orange and a banana on our plate. Now that was about the extension of our Santa Claus distribution. We never hung up our stockings or anything of that sort. We just set out our plates; and then in the morning that's what we had on our plate.

## CHRISTMAS TRADITION II

**Vistol Louks**

*talking to George Packard*

I'll tell you about the first, the only Christmas that I ever remember and I ever remember enjoying. It was after my dad died, and it was down there where we lived. And I wanted to hang up my stocking. People used to hang up their stockings. And they really had stockings in them days! They was black, you know — you washed 'em till they turned green. And they'd stretch a mile. And I

figured if I got one of these big stretchy stockings, if I got that full, I really got something. And old Tom McKern, I know that he done it now. Why, he told my mom, says, "A shame to have two kids down there and nothing." And he said, "I'll see that they get something in their stockings." And so, boy, I was really hurrying to get up on Christmas morning to look, and it had two knots in it. And then there was some other bulges, and it was an apple and an orange and some hard tack candy. Well, Lord, I thought I got the world right there by the tail, sure enough.

## THE PINK CAKE

**Vistol Louks**

*talking with George Packard*

*You were about to say, about the first money you ever earned. . .*

My sister had a baby. Her man said if I'd come and take care of her for a week, why, he'd give me a silver dollar.

*How old were you at the time?*

Seven. And I know I was a lot of help! Well, 'course I could have packed diapers back and forth, I reckon, and bottles. Well, maybe it wasn't bottles, but I could do a little something, I reckon. So on Saturday I got the dollar. And I walked around the square and around the square and around the square. And they had a pink cake in the window up there where Billy Pulliam had the store —

*A pink cake?*

Uh-huh, a great big cake. Oh, it'd cost you a ten dollar bill nowadays. Oh, it was so pretty. And I looked at that. It was ninety-eight cents. Oh boy, it was a huge one, you know. I thought, "Oh boy, I want that cake." And so I said, "Mom, I want that cake." "Well," she said, "you're spending all your money in one place," said, "better spend it in more places than one because you'll get the cake and you'll only have two pennies." I wanted it. I got it and took it home. And they had put old strong homemade butter in it, and it was so strong that if it had said "Good Morning" to the coffee the coffee would have walked right off the table. That's how strong the cake was.

And I had two cents, and I right then and there made up my mind never to spend all my money in one place. And to this day I'll tie it up in all four corners of my handkerchief and spend a nickel here and a nickel there and a nickel someplace else.

## SNEAKING A SMOKE

**Viola Taylor**

*talking to George Packard*

We lived with my Grandmother Peavey; that was my mother's mother. She smoked a pipe. And I was a little girl, and I used to get her to let me start her pipe occasionally. And she had an old chest of drawers, and she always kept her tobacco in the top drawer. Well, she was gone visiting. It was in the summer. And so one day I thought — well, my father had gone to the Lodge, and they had given him a corncob pipe as souvenir. He laid it on top of the cupboard in the kitchen. Well, I thought, well, why not get that pipe and have a little smoke. And Dad wouldn't know it, and Grandma was gone. I went in her drawer and got a little tobacco. And I went out in the wood house. And there was one of those old stoves in there that they set hens in. And I puffed on that a little bit, and then I put the fire out and put it in the stove. Well, I got by that day all right, and the next day I tried it again right after dinner. And my father caught me. And somehow they always happened to be a barrel stay layin' around. And I got it with a barrel stay.

## SNEAKING A DRINK

**Louis Newman**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Boy, my old daddy, he chewed tobacco, he smoked, he drank beer, and he drank whiskey. And when he got through chewin' he'd take that plug out there and put it behind the heatin' stove, the tobacco, and smoke it in his pipe. He had one of them big pipes, you know. Everybody knows about them pipes.

And I'll tell you the best part about the old German people, though. I'm not afraid to tell my stories; they're true stories. And one day Mom went to the store and Bill and I and Eddie (the kids was gone, three girls, three sisters) — And I hit the old man's jug, big gallon jug for them days. I took it, it tasted pretty good. Bill took it, Eddie took it; he spit it out. Then there was Bill and myself, see.

So then finally one morning he got up. He said, "Mom, who's drinkin' my whiskey?" My mother, she says, "I don't drink your

stuff." Then I said to Bill (him and I was the only ones drinkin', of course, Eddie couldn't take it), so I said, "Boys, I'm gonna fix him." So I took a big glass of water, shook it up good, and I couldn't hardly wait till he come home from work. Then my pa spit that out! He said, "Who put water in there?" Mom said, "I didn't." I said, "Pa, I did." He said, "What'd you do that for?" I said, "Well, I was put out, Pa." And I was carrying the German paper every morning at 4:00 and the *Commercial News* at 5:00, and I had a little money, and I pulled it out. And he said, "Now," he said, "whenever you want a drink, drink it." He said, "You got my permission! Same with chewin' tobacco!"

## HAIR CUTTING

**Esther Miller**

*talking to Carol Burke*

We wanted our hair cut. You know when short hair first come in. You don't know, it was before your time. But anyhow, my brother was still home. We was living in Danville, and he wanted my younger sister and I, he wanted to cut our hair. And mother didn't want him to. "No," she said, "Daddy don't believe in that." "Well," he said, "I'll take the blame."

Well, I had the mumps and I was in bed. But he cut my youngest sister, he cut her hair. It was Sunday, and Dad had to work that Sunday. Mother said to him, "Now Charlie, you're going to be here when your father gets home this evening." So he had to work overtime or something. He was late getting home. So my brother, he decided he would go to the show. He was still a single guy and he started to the show. He got down the sidewalk aways and here come Dad. My brother, he come back and he set down there in the front room. My Daddy come in. My mother was getting supper and sister was there at the sink working or helping or something. He walked around quite a few times, eyed her. Mom said, "Now don't you think she look better?" "Well," he said, "I guess she does." So he give in that I could have my hair cut.

## FIRST MUSIC LESSONS

**Snyder Campbell**

*talking to George Packard*

He [Karl Kraft] brought over a tenor sax for me to start in with. And he said, "I'm gonna sell you this." And I said, "How much is it?" And he said, "Well, it sells for 400 dollars." Now that's ridiculous, in the beginning, and it was — in the Depression years it was like a million. "I couldn't buy it if it was 40 dollars," which I couldn't have. He said, "No, I'll tell you. This instrument cost me 175 dollars wholesale. I can't sell it. It's too high, and especially the way things are," he said, "I couldn't give it away, hardly. I'm gonna let you take that, and I'll charge you 50 cents a week for it because I know you'll take care of it. And then after a period of whatever it takes — six months or whatever — and you see that you're going to like this instrument and everything, I will credit you with all you have paid me at that time and then you can buy it for the 175 dollars wholesale, and I'll bring you the bill. And —"

O.K. So I started out taking it. I go along for some six or seven weeks, you know, and I was getting along pretty good. I learned the scales, this and that. So you play the "Dance of the Fairies," and all those — little stuff. That was not interesting to me. I practiced in the basement of the store up there. And all I was doing was sitting down here fiddling with the saxophone till I learned to play, oh, "Wabash Blues," and several real good pop tunes. And I — you know, it was all trial and error, because I still — I know music, I guess, but it's still in there, I guess because it hasn't come out yet. But anyhow, they were real passable. I worked on them hard instead of trying — . . .

I go down one day to take my 11 o'clock music — weekly music from Karl Kraft. He said, "Well, are you all ready?" He had finished his last student. "Are you ready?" I come in, put my music up on the rack, you know. I said, "Yep." It was something, we'll say "Dance of the Fairies," put something about like that, opened it up there, you know. I said, "Before we start, Mr. Kraft —." (Now he was a good friend of mine, I considered him and he really was) — "I've got something I want you to hear." And he said, "OK, what is it?" So I started down there and started playing the "Wabash Blues," and I had a pretty good thing worked up. I got through one chorus, and I could see him: the longer I played the redder his face

got. Until it was livid red, and I started into the second chorus; and I got through it, and he was about ready to explode. Because he was Dutch, and he had a temper that wouldn't quit. And I quit right in the middle of the second chorus. I thought I'd got an A. And he said, "Are you finished?" And I said, "Yes, I'm finished." He said, "You're damn right you are." And he reached over and slapped the book closed like that. He pointed his finger right in my face like that. And he said, "Whenever you learn to play what I set before you, I'll give you another lesson, and not until." Like he was a total stranger.

That cut me clear down to the quick. Here was a good friend of mine, and he meant it. And I knew it. He said, "Furthermore, you'll leave *thathorn* right where it is." [Claps once] And I did. . . . And like a pup with his tail between his legs I went back uptown. I hated to tell my dad what had happened, but I did.

## MEMORIES OF THE FLOOD

Dorothy Pearlman  
talking to Martin Light

The floods were so terrible. It rained the whole year [1913], and the Main Street Bridge went out, the Brown Street Bridge went out, and the only thing left was the railroad bridge.

*What do you mean by "went out"? Actually collapsed?*

Oh, yes. Floated away.

*You went down to take a look?*

Yes, of course, everyone went down. We had no electricity, we had no gas, we had nothing — for days we made do. I was about sixteen, seventeen. They piled all these railroad cars on the railroad bridge to keep it from washing away because the weight of the coal-filled cars they thought would keep it. So the thing to do to show their bravery and their guts, if a young man at Purdue wanted to have a date with a girl on the east side, they walked over those coal cars to get over to the east side.

*Across the top of them!*

Yeah. They just walked across the top of the railroad cars — full of coal —

*In the rain?*

— in the rain. That was to show — I don't know what — how much they thought of a date with a girl in Lafayette.

## THE DRUNK SPECIAL

**Ray Foresman**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

[There was an interurban called] the "Drunk Special". One went to Fort Wayne (it was the Fort Wayne route), and one went to Indianapolis. And those conductors on those interurbans knew those fellows, you know; they knew them and knew where to put them off.

*Where had they been drinking? There must have been taverns.*

Oh, in saloons, yes.

*Were there a lot of taverns?*

A hundred and ten.

*Oh!*

Yes, sir.

*Really a hundred and ten?*

A hundred and ten. You take the downtown district. The downtown district from I'd say, from the Wabash River on up with the exception of the Square (Lafayette) — from the Wabash River on up to Third Street I don't know how many saloons there was in there, but nearly every other door. And the same way when got you got up past, when you got up past Fifth Street — no, Fourth Street — there were saloons galore on both sides of the street.

*And there really were a hundred and ten?*

A hundred and ten. And —.

*Well, now, so they got on the interurban downtown and then came out past your house.*

See, they had a station down there.

*Was there also a "Drunk Special" going to Indianapolis?*

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, they didn't go that far with them 'cause they didn't live that far, but they knew where to put them off along the way.

*And they'd been drinking so much they couldn't get off?*

Well, they were pretty tight. Some of them were whiskey drinkers, some got tight on beer. But I'd say most of them who were really tight, they'd drink liquor, you know.

*What time of night would this be? Late? Late Saturday night?*

Yeah, yeah. Around eleven, something like that it'd leave. And then besides those saloons downtown, they had out around the outside of the city area there'd be saloons, say, "First and Last Chance."

# SCHOOL

## GETTING TO SCHOOL

**Margaret Wagner**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I loved school. And rain or shine or however —. They was a creek (a little branch, not a creek 'cause it wasn't water in it only just when it rained) that we had to cross. And a snow, say like this, my dad would get one of the horses out and harness it. He had a big log, and he threwed a log-chain around that log and he'd pull it along and make us a path to walk in. That's the way we got to school.

*Oh, that's interesting. He didn't take you back and forth on a horse or anything, but he made you a path —.*

No. They was four of us, you see. That'd been five of us — too many. We only had two horses. And then lots of times it would rain — rain up the east, and the water would be in this branch we had to cross till we couldn't get across. So we had an old neighbor there, old Uncle Pete Sanner, and he had an old horse, and he would get that horse and bring us — and set us across the creek. He would just have us — took two of us to get on it, and he'd have us turn the horse —. He'd say, "Now, when you get off the other side, turn the horse loose and tell it to come back." And it'd come back till it'd get the — take us all over and then bring us back. And he'd take us home.

## THE WHISTLE

**Georgia Hass**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I just happened to remember it today when I looked out at the snow that the only other time when I remember it snowed so hard was when I was a little girl [in Sidney, Ohio] and I had a mile to walk to school down a country road. And school was out for a week until the county could get the roads cleared. And the drifts were way, way-way-way over my head, and Grandma was so afraid that I'd be walking along the road, and along would come a car skidding from

side to side 'cause it was going too fast and it was dangerous. So she gave me a whistle to blow [laughs] to warn the people that were coming that there was someone on the other side of the snowdrift. Those snowdrifts were there, some of them, at the beginning of May; they were so big and so heavy and so deep.

## APPLES IN THE SNOW

**Mary Shepherd**  
*talking to Carol Burke*

My folks had a real big apple orchard. I always remembered that because we'd take apples to school 'n we'd bury 'em along in the snowbanks, along the road. 'N we'd take enough one day to last maybe a whole week. An' then we'd eat them darned apples, 'n after they been in the snowbank there for — you know, all week like that. It was really good!

*Kept refrigerated?*

Yeah, they just kept nice in there.

*Did you have a special place to put them?*

Oh yes, o'course. We always tried to remember what snowbank we were gettin'.

## PENNY PENCILS

**Carl Tuttle**  
*talking to Martin Light*

Oh, another little incident that I remember — when I was going to this first school. I suppose I was in third grade and somebody up there had come to school with a lead pencil that was red. All the lead pencils we had was — no paint on them or anything, and folks would cut them — my father would cut them in two and give us just a half of them at a time because he was afraid we would lose it. We called them penny pencils; they cost a penny.

Well, here was somebody come with a pencil that was red. Well, that set me thinking, and I knew down there in the marsh there was some bushes that were red, so I went down there and cut me a lead pencil like that, a piece of that red willow, or I guess it was willow — I don't know what it was. And I didn't do anything else but take and split open my good lead pencil and try to ram it up into

there. I wanted a red lead pencil. [Laughs]

*And did it work?*

No. It didn't work, and I wasn't very welcome when I got home.

## RUNNING THE TEACHER OFF

**Catherine Keeton**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I remember one man that, one teacher we had that — his name was Gould. I never will forget him in this, in this world. He was kind of a short, fat guy, an' a big tummy. We used to have more fun pokin' his tummy than anything. And we run him off, that's all, that's all there was to it; we just run him off! But we'd congregated at night, when he'd dismiss us, around the school house in a semi-circle like that, far enough away that he couldn't, that he couldn't throw anything at us and hit us. We'd say — and we'd sing at him:

“Goodbye teacher, goodbye school,

Goodbye — goodbye —.”

Let me see:

“Goodbye scholars, goodbye school,

Goodbye teacher, you damned old fool!”

## PAPERWADS AND MARIGOLDS

**Louise Thurman**

*talking to Martin Light*

You know, you asked me if the children behaved pretty well. I don't remember a single time when any of the youngsters here, when I was a kid, being paddled. I just haven't the faintest recollection of it. But I moved to Danville, and we had some problems in that grade. And I particularly remember one in the fifth grade where the boy had —.

Back in those days we had seats — well, it came down off the front of the desk and made a seat under the next desk, you know. And they were made out of, oh, boards about so wide. And this boy had gotten one of them out and was flipping paperwads with it. Now this was in the fifth grade at Danville, and the teacher was

quite a tall woman, pretty strong. And she slipped up behind him when he didn't realize she was coming, and she got him down — I can remember so well. She got her knee on his neck and shoulders, and held his head down, and he was practically helpless that way. She took the board away from him, and she used it, vigorously.

The next morning he came to school with I don't know how many marigold plants. He and his mother had dug them out of the garden, and he brought them to school all wrapped up for her to set out. And she had to send kids in town home to bring flower pots or buckets or anything. Why, every window in that room was filled with blooming marigold plants. [Laughter] I don't know which made the most impression on me — the paddling or the fact that he brought her the marigolds.

## IF YOU CHEW TOBACCO. . .

**Louis Newman**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Same way with the Mail Pouch chewin' tobacco, the same way on that. I said, "Mom gone, I'm gonna take Dad's chew." So [I] said, "Bill, you want to take it?" He said, "Well, I'm gonna try it." Give it to him. He didn't like it. He swallowed the darn juice, you know. I got along fine.

When I was goin' to school we had all one building in Danville there, houses you know; front door, back door, and toilet around the outside. And when we had arithmetic, why I'd go ahead and I'd take a chew, about an hour, you see. So one day somebody squealed on me. And boy, he [teacher] come to me and I was about ready to run. And I wasn't gonna swallow that mouthful. I went out the back door and he after. He said, "Shouldn't do that, shouldn't do that." And I said, "Well my daddy said I could." "Well," he said, "your daddy nothin'!"

School board come over there to him, and the preacher, and they started tellin' Dad what. And my daddy was tough just like I was, and he hit that preacher side of the mouth, and he fell down on the floor. And the school board said, "We gonna throw you out of the church" (all in German of course). He said, "I was the second man to sign the roster for Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Danville, Illinois." And my daddy was carried outa that church when he got buried.

## IT WAS BEATEN INTO YOU

Harry Ulrey

*talking to Carol Burke*

I'll tell ya. That business about sparing the rod. They didn't know anything about that then at all.

*Oh, there was a lot of discipline?*

Oh, heaven sakes! Discipline was tough even then yet. That was back, let's see 189-, let's see, 1897. That's about the turn of the century, you don't forget. It was a pretty primitive educational process then, I'll tell ya. I think for the most part teachers were not well qualified. About that time probably they begin to be better. I had a few teachers that were, oh one or two of them was outstanding. Some more of them was outstanding the other way! I don't know, it wasn't good. It wasn't good. I suppose my grammar school education was above the average for the time, but it would be for now. I know it would be, because it was really pretty thorough. I was about to say, it was pretty well beaten into you, it was.

About that time — just about that time — the old time teachers, especially the men, were being retired one after the other. I know about three or four old-timers. They shouldn't of even been allowed to teach. Old brutes, a couple of 'em was. I do recall my half brother, half brother of mine, he was a little feller too and crippled, crippled badly. And he had a brute of a teacher (I won't name him), but he beat that kid up something shameful.

Well, he had a little different disposition from mine. Bill'd scrap. As long as he lived he'd fight, and he usually got licked because he was little. But he'd fight at the drop of your hat. Well, this teacher beat him up and beat him up shamefully. And he met the teacher out on the road that evening when he started home. And he had a pair of skates with a strap on 'em. You know how you used to tie them together? He had that, and he walked up to him with that and he said, "Now just open your face, and I'm going to lay these skates over your head." And he'd a done it! He mighta killed the old cuss. It was like him. He was mad. He said, "Now you ever touch me again," he said, "I'm gonna hand it to ya. Don't ya ever touch me again." He never did either.

## SPELLING BEE I

**Clarence Bear**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*What was your grandmother like?*

She was just an ordinary person and she didn't have much education. Grandpa, though, he — I don't know how much education formally he had, but I do know they used to have oh spelling, spelling bees over there lot of times 'n Grandpa — and there was a man that made his home at our house part of the time. He'd known Grandpa 'n Grandma for years, 'n he — and they'd always attend those spelling bees. Well when, — They'd always do pretty good. But one time — I remember that well, they came — they started in, and they began to give words out o' the back o' the geography. So Grandpa was the first one they give to. Happened he knew how to spell the word. 'N then they give it to Bill, one to Bill, 'n he said, "Now I'll tell you," he said, "I 'n Mr. Bear here," says, "we both been out o' school for more'n forty years." He says, "We come here without expectation of standin' up as long's some of you younger people, but," said, "I don't think it's a very fair deal when you take proper names that — that we've never even heard of," and said, "maybe you've studied it 'n maybe you haven't, but don't make any difference. You, at least you know of 'em," he said. "We don't even know of 'em!" So they said — Do you know that's the last time they ever had a spelling bee there?

## SPELLING BEE II

**Cordelia Stultz**

*talking to Martin Light*

They chose two people who chose the people they wanted on their side of their line and then there — it was competitive, to see who could out-spell the other side. And we started out, everybody had the same number of people on either side, and then as they went along, if you missed a word you had to take your seat. And that developed into knowing which side would win. And did you want to hear about the word? And I always had been a very good

speller — wasn't much else but I *was* a good speller. And one day we were having a spelling bee and they gave the word "senior." Everybody spelled it the way they knew it; but I remembered in my spelling book that I had seen it spelled s-e-i-g-n-i-o-r, and so when it came to me, I was just utterly boil — bubbling over. I spelled it, and I spelled down the whole — both sides. And that was a sort of a triumph for me. [Laughs]

## SCHOOL DAYS IN VERMONT

**Kenneth White**

*talking to Carol Burke and  
group at Senior Citizens' Center*

An' then I remember when I first started in at the academy. Now up in that country in those times they had what they call academies. They were a little different than our high schools. They were very conservative, and they really didn't brook any foolishness of any kind. I was sitting in the front row and I had been down to the Post Office; this was a class that occurred right after one o'clock. I got a letter, and I had it in my hip pocket 'cause I had a pullover sweater and no other pocket. I felt that letter sliding out of my pocket. I looked back, and sure enough there's this kid back of me and just stealin' my letter. So I just put my hand up like that and asked the teacher if "May I get my letter?" "Yeah —" Went right on with what she was doing. So I got up, walked around. These kids passed that letter up into the corner of the room. Well, there was a pretty well-rounded little girl sitting up there. She stuck my letter right down in the front of her dress, y'know. Well, I was at an advantage. I was standing up and she was sitting down, so I reached down there, y'know, and I got m'letter. Well, she hollered bloody murder. Teacher was really scandalized so she sent me up to see the principal. And I had to sit out there quite a while until she finally came up 'n talked to 'im first.

He called me in. Now ol' Isaiah Bowden he, he didn't know any sense of humor whatsoever. He never heard of anything so bad in all his life as the crime I committed. He says, "Kenneth White, you're suspended! Till further notice!" Well a-course that was about two o'clock in the afternoon, 'n golly, I went home, but I was in hopes Dad wouldn't be there. But he was right out in the

dooryard. He met me. "Well, what are you doing home so early?" Well, I told him just exactly what happened. "Well," he says, "I'll go see the man, but —" So he hitched up the buggy and went down see him. Came back after a while 'n he said, "Well, Kenneth, you can go back to school tomorrow morning. But," he says, "y'know, I wouldn't rummage around much in the front of these girls' dresses — they don't like it!"

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I remember when I went to school in first grade. My mother was very anxious that I always be neatly dressed, and that was really kinda — your clothes were in good shape and all. Well, I had a little suit with short white pants. Come recess time, was out playing in the brook, and I slipped, of course, and fell down and sat right down in a big puddle of mud. Well, I was in a bad way. One of the older boys says to me, "Well, Kenneth, you've got nothing to worry about. You go up and see Miss Livingston" (this was an old maid schoolteacher we had up there). "Now she's got some pants just like those you've got on, and I think if you ask her for 'em she'll sell 'em." I asked her, but she didn't seem to understand what I meant. Face got kinda red, and give me in no uncertain terms that I was out of order. I didn't know why — didn't find out until three years afterward.



# PRANKS

## GETTING EVEN

**Nellie Jones**

*talking to George Packard  
and Vistol Louks*

That makes me think of something I done at a thrashing dinner one time, too. Did I get a lickin' — didn't get a lickin', but I got an awful scoldin'. I'd rather got a lickin'.

Oh, I was living with my uncle at the time and we had (his youngest daughter and I were the same age) and we had to sleep upstairs. And, oh, I was an awful coward. I was about fifteen then. We slept in the same bed. It was just a straw tick on slats that had a featherbed on top of it. She beat me to bed that night. She crawled under the bed and got on her hands and knees, and just as I got in bed she raised up and it scared me to death, and I thought it was the Old Devil himself. And I jumped up and I ran downstairs to Aunt Millie and Uncle Bill's room, and I [was] just crying and going on. And I said, "Something's upstairs under my bed; I don't know whether it's a bear or what it is." But they made me go back upstairs and go to bed. Said there wasn't nothing up there. Went back up there and Emmy got out from under the bed, and she got in bed, and she laughed and she laughed and she laughed. Made me mad. I said, "I'll get even with you."

Well, the next day was a thrashing day. And Aunt Millie told Emmy, said, "You make pies for dinner, Emmy." Well, she was a pretty good cook. She was young, but they always made their kids work. And they knew what to do. Well, she was gonna make green grape pies. Seemed like Uncle Bill always loved green grape pies. Well, she'd run out of shortening, so she went down to the basement to get more lard to make more dough. While she was down there she had two pies already out, ready to put the sugar on them. Well, I just reached over and got a handful of salt and put it in each pie. And I turned around, and I left.

Uncle Bill was the first one to get a piece of pie. And he said, "Mother, come here!" He said, "Who made these pies?" She said, "Well, Emma did." He said, "Emma, come 'ere!" Emma went in there and she said — he said, "What did you put in these pies?" She

told him. He says, "Well, they're full of salt. Did you make a mistake?" And she said, "No." And he turned around and looked at me, and I'd slid behind the door. I hid. [Laughter]

*Vistol: That'd give you away right there.*

Well, I'll never forget it. He said, "Nellie, come here!" I went there to him. He sat there and looked at me. Put his arm around my waist. He said, "Look up here at me." He said, "Did you put salt in them pies?" And I looked at him, and I wouldn't tell him at first. He said, "Did you put salt in them pies?" I said, "Yes, I guess I did." He said, "You *guess* you did. You *know* you did!" He said, "I want to talk to you tonight after supper before you go to bed." And I did get a talkin' to.

*Vistol: Ain't that awful.*

I'd rather get a whippin' any day.

## ASHES AND EGGS

Viola Taylor

*talking to George Packard*

And then another time my mother and grandmother set two hens in this same woodhouse.

*What do you mean "set two hens"?*

Set two hens to hatch chickens. And they hadn't been settin' but a day or so, and they used to, Mother used to make lye soap. And they'd put the ashes in the barrel and put straw in that, and then run water over that, and then lye would run, and they'd boil that down and make lye soap. Now, that's new to you; you don't know that. . . .

So my brother and I, we was playin' house, so I decided to make corn bread out of those ashes. Had an old dishpan: we didn't have anything to play with, only just old broken things that we could pick up. So we got a dishpan, an old dishpan of ashes and went in the woodhouse, and we got all the eggs, about twenty-six eggs, and we broke that up and stirred that all up in those ashes. And that was our corn bread. And we got by.

And the neighbors had an old dog they called Old Sport. So my mother and my grandmother, they laid it on Old Sport: he got the eggs. And I never said a word. If they'd asked me, I'd a owned to it. But they didn't ask me. And I didn't say a word. So next they re-set

the hens. And the next day, I think, or two anyway, we did the same thing over. And my dad caught me. And there was another barrel stay there. And I got another whippin’.

## FEEDING THE PIG

**Vistol Louks**

*talking to George Packard*

I used to have a pig running around the house. And you know, back in them times they never had no screens on the doors. I had a pet pig. It was a sow, but its name was Jim. And I thought it’d be funny to let the pig in the house. My job was to keep it outdoors. And it happened that very same place [my brother-in-law’s house] and he was so persnickety, so I thought well, one thing I’ll get that pig in under the table. You could feed it and it’d keep quiet, it wouldn’t grunt. But you *quit* feeding it and it would — so I would feed that pig under the table. Dinner was there, he was sayin’ the blessing, and I forgot to feed the pig. OIOINNNKK! went that old pig. O merciful heavens! I got a whippin’ for that one, too.

## OLE MOTHER DEAR

**Darrell Moore**

*talking to Jackie Ullman*

We had a cat called Ole Mother Dear. She was about ready to ‘find’ kittens, and Dad said he wouldn’t have that cat in the house ‘cause it had to go to the barn. So when that ole cat was gettin’ about ready to ‘find’ her kittens one day, Doub and I (nobody was home) Doug and I took her upstairs and put her in my two sisters’ wardrobe. Got their coats clear. We didn’t think anything about it, laid them on the floor. Ole Mother Dear was alaying on it, you know. She had about six, seven kittens I think. Oh boy, did Janie and Eva blow their top. Dad give us an awful whippin’ — right there.

## HALLOWEEN PRANK

**Minor Baker**

*talking to George Packard*

One time in Paragon the millinery store was operated by a lady, and she didn't like we boys. And one Halloween we determined that we were going to have some fun. So we got out in front of her house and started making noise, and she sent her husband out after us. And we went around behind the house, and he (trying to hide from us) hid in the toilet, the outdoor toilet. So we found a long piece of wire, and we wrapped that wire around the door, so he couldn't get out. And then we turned it over, with the door side down. And she came out, and began to yell and try to get help. 'Course we were Good Samaritans, and we went to her aid and we actually lifted back this toilet and unwound the wire, so her husband could get out. And he never did know that we were the ones that did it.

## THE TICK-TACK

**Minor Baker**

*talking to George Packard*

We used to put [a] tick-tack on a window.

*What's a tick-tack?*

We'd drive a nail right down next to the pane of glass, and tie a string onto it, and run that string way out here, someplace. And take rosin and pull on that string. And that made the nail vibrate, and it made the most terrible noise inside the house. And one night we put a tick-tack on a man, and he came out, and he said, "You boys do that again, I'll shoot you." And he went back in the house, and he hadn't no more got in when away went the tick-tack again. He came out and had his shotgun. He came up — BOOM — and two old hens fell out of the sycamore tree. He'd shot two of his own hens. And then, believe it or not, he turned the gun on us. And it didn't feel very pleasant to hear those shots hitting all around us.

## SNIPE HUNTING

**Minor Baker**

*talking to George Packard*

I want to tell you about another episode that was quite common in those days, and that was to go snipe hunting. And one night we were at Paragon, and we all gathered at that little restaurant there. And my cousin and I were there. And the boys — some of the older boys — started telling us about snipe hunting. Well, I punched my cousin, 'cause I knew all about it. And we played innocent. And they took us out about four miles out in the country. They told us to get to one end of a stubble field and hold up big burlap bags, and they'd go to the other end and drive snipes down to us. And we'd catch 'em in the bag. So they took us to the end of the field away from the road. And as soon as they started back, I told my cousin the story. So we hurried and we got to the road before they did. And they had a Model T Ford, and the switch key was a thing you could easily duplicate. And we had a duplicate. So we started the car before they could get there. And we drove back to town. And *they* had to walk the four miles. And when they got back, we were sitting there in the restaurant, and that was the most sheepish group of fellows you ever saw. We certainly turned the tables on them.

*And they caught the snipes.*

*They caught the snipes. Ah, those were the days.*

## A MEAL IN A RITZY PLACE

**Esther Gregg**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

That was our first date — was going down to Turkey Run State Park. And I'll never forget that, because the only food available there was just a hamburger stand at that time. The inn hadn't been built or anything of that sort. And we did trails all day and had a hamburger at noon. Well then, by evening we were pretty hungry. And the Fowler Hotel in Lafayette had just opened up, and it had a dining room open to the public. And it was *the* ritzy place to eat. And so this girl that we went with wanted to eat at the Fowler Hotel. And so we stopped there in the evening. Well, the man that

she later married just loved to kid her, and he thought she made too much of an issue over being socially correct. So at that dinner he stirred his coffee with his soup spoon. He ate his meat with his salad fork. He just had a ball doing things. And she was just embarrassed to death in that fashionable place.

## THE MEDICS TRICK A LAWYER

**Marjorie Higbee**

*talking to George Packard*

[My Dad's] other way of earning a living closer at home was being night watchman at the medical school at I.U. The medical school was one building; the law school was one building, and you could imagine the feeling between the medical students and the law students. And so when the medical students discovered they had a law student as a night watchman on certain nights, they interfered with one of his activities, which was to sweep out certain rooms. And he kept the implements in a long box of a shape that you can imagine. And when he opened the box to get his brooms, the medics had added something that just fit in the box, that they used in their work, which he had to remove before he could get his brooms. I don't know whether it was a skeleton or at another stage, but at any rate that's what he found looking up at him when he opened the box.

## TEASING OUR AUNTIES

**Marjorie Higbee**

*talking to George Packard*

We had neighbors whose parents lived in Brown County, and on occasion, if we were in that area, we would visit them, to stop and see them, and maybe they'd invite us for a meal. And so this time, when this was a planned trip with two aunts extra, we did ask this family if we might — and of course Dad always paid — if we might come to their house for dinner in the middle of our trip. And they were so sorry, they were going to be away that day. But they said, "Now, you just go on and come to our house, and out in the spring house," which — Do you know what that is?

*Yeah.*

Well, their refrigerator. Out in the spring house they'd have milk and pies, and we were to eat the pies and drink the milk. So we included this in our plans, but we didn't tell the two aunties that we even *knew* the people that lived at this house. And we came upon this house and said this'd be a good time to stop; maybe they'd share some food with us. And we went up and knocked and were surprised there was no one at home. But we looked the place over. We said we'll see them coming if they come, and we'll just tell them that we were interested in their house. And all of this was satisfactory until we found the spring house. Well, Aunties were rather surprised that we would investigate the spring house, but we did, and we found food: pies and milk. And Dad and Mother suggested that we just sit down and *have* some. And Aunties were shocked, both of them. Terribly. But one of them went along with it. The other one marched to the end of the porch and sat with her back to her family that was disgracing her completely, and she would have none of it, and couldn't understand — she wouldn't have *dreamed* that Mother and Dad would do such a thing. So she had to be told before she'd eat a piece of pie.

## STALE FISH

**Harold Goyer**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

We also caught a bucketful of fish one time when we were out on an ice fishing trip. Nobody wanted 'em. So this one fellow who had the Santa Claus house and went ice fishing with us and we gave so much trouble to, we decided that he oughta have 'em. So we didn't advertise it or anything, but we took 'em up and put 'em in his garage, so that he would be sure when spring come to know that they was there. But for some unforeseen reason he found 'em ahead of time; somebody evidently let the cat out of the bag. Because I went home for lunch one day; and just ahead of me set the mail delivery — parcel post truck, you know, to deliver parcel post mail. And the mail man had run up on the porch and left a package and took off. So I picked it up and started in the house, and I knew what it was. It was those fish. And by this time they were three months old. And they had worked up a deal with the postal department down here to deliver them back to me.

# CHURCH

## RELIGIOUS RIVALRIES

**Mildred Buckles**

*talking to Patricia Yost*

*Did you ever have any conflicts between the Catholic kids and the Protestant kids?*

Yeah, we always —. We had to pass their school or pass close to their school if we —. We had two ways to come home from school. One, we had to go right past the front of their school. The other way we just passed within a couple blocks of it. But the kids would be getting down there in that area of the neighborhood when we would. See, we got out first. And by the time we got to Linn — to the public school, Linnwood School in those days, they'd be getting out. Well, they always called us "Cat-lickers" and we called them "Pot-lickers." And we'd always have a big fight. We'd either have to hurry up and get past that school, or you knew we were going to have a fight. Now, I don't know why we fought, what there was to fight about, but we always called each other "Pot-lickers" and "Cat-lickers," and whoever got in the first call, then, you know, would take off running. If we were already past the school, we'd shout back at them because then we could, you know, we was almost home. We'd run real fast. But if you still had to go past the school, you didn't say anything, and then they would be the ones that would call us "Cat-lickers," see, 'cause they were going to catch us and chase us.

## GRAPE JUICE FOR CHURCH

**Mabel Schilling**

*talking to Jean Hubbard*

In the very beginning of her life my mother made the wine for the church. And when I grew old enough, she figured that I could do it because she didn't see well. She told me how. I'd pick the grapes very carefully, you don't bruise them. And we had a special arbor in the back with our grapes that were Concord grapes, and

they're nice great big blue grapes. And I'd pick them very carefully and wash them carefully and put them in a fruit jar. And then I'd fill the fruit jar up with cold water from the well and seal it. And then I'd take it upstairs and put it in a pie cabinet that we had at the top of the stairs that we kept all of the fruit in. It was cold, but it would not freeze. And we turned it upside-down. Then when it came time to have communion at church, we'd take one of those jars down and open it real carefully and pour the liquid into our pitcher for our communion at church. That's the wine that we had for church. There was nothing in it but just the grapes and the cold water.

*You were talking about when you got a little older — what the boys said to you.*

Oh yes, when I got older some of my older — my boy friends would say, "Mae, what did you do with that wine?" And I said, "What do you think I did with it? I poured it down the—down—." We didn't have a sink then. Oh yes we did! We had a little old iron sink in the corner of our kitchen, and there we had rain water that we pumped up into the kitchen, and we could pour anything, any fluids like your dishwater and things like that you poured into that sink. Oh yes, my mother watched me very carefully, and if she didn't, my father did. And really it had — it just tasted like you put a grape in your mouth and melted.

*You didn't use yeast or anything?*

Oh no, no, no. Oh indeed not. It was just the pure juice from the Concord grape. There was nothing else.

## ONE PRIEST OR THE OTHER

**Mildred Buckles**

*talking to Patricia Yost*

*Could you tell us some of your impressions of confession when you were a little kid?*

Yeah. I was going to this one priest. I went to him all the time, every week. We went every Friday. And I didn't think he recogn —. I knew he knew me outside, but I didn't know he'd know me in the confessional. 'Cause it was dark in there. And one week I got finished, and at the end of the confession, he said — called me right by name; he said, "Would you go to the house and get me a

fresh handkerchief?" I thought, "Boy, I'm not going to him anymore. [Laughter] He knows me." So I started going to the other one (there was just two priests and I started going to the other one), and I went to him for a while. And then what'd he say? He said to me, *by name*, "Don't you ever try to be any better? You tell me the same thing every week." [Laughter]

*So then what did you do? You ran out of priests.*

Well, I just had to go back to the first one again. I thought maybe he wouldn't remember me anymore, I guess.

## DRILLS IN CHURCH

**Louise Thurman**

*talking to Martin Light*

*As you were talking you mentioned the term "doll drill." I had not heard that. What is that?*

In those days, I suppose, it was a march. We marched around to music. But they always called them "drills" in those days. We'd have flag drills, where you carried the flag a certain way and waved it a certain time and so on. But the doll drill you all had to carry dolls. And you'd hold them up this way, sometimes against your shoulder or you might hold them and stand and swing them as if it were a lullaby. The music they played accounted for what you did.

*Was this in school or at the church?*

No, it was at church.

*And boys too?*

Boys usually had the flag drill. A lot of them, they had b-b guns. And you wouldn't think of using that in a church today. You'd deplore the violence. But I've seen that — little boys carrying b-b guns. Oh, they'd have a picnic, up on one knee and aim at the ceiling, you know. And that was gun drill. And then the doll drill — we'd just carried dolls and did various things with them.

## TOO MANY SERMONS

**Louise Thurman**

*talking to Martin Light*

The Methodist meeting they had: it lasted — it started on Sunday and lasted all week and the next Sunday. So they got eight days of it. And you had a morning meeting, and then you broke for lunch; then you had an afternoon meeting, and then you broke for supper; and then you had a night meeting. And I don't know whether everyone was as strict as my grandfather was, but my father always said he never missed a meeting, not because he didn't want to, but he had to be there every meeting. Grandfather called the roll, and woe be any one of them that wasn't there. And so he always said he had enough meetings, enough sermons when he was a boy; he thought he'd heard all of them; he didn't need to hear any more. I don't know. I think most of us might get a little tired, if we were sixteen, seventeen, something like that — get a little tired of three meetings a day for eight days.

## THE LITTLE HEATHENS

**Harry Ulrey**

*talking to Carol Burke*

There was a church out in the south end of Carroll County there, a church there that [was] oh very, what do I want to say, emotional. There was two or three different denominations that used that church. Honest to heaven, it was a holy show to the un-initiated, the unsaved. Well, enough said.

But they got pretty — I tell you those Lutherans and Dunkards and other, they were pretty tolerant of 'em. They reached people that we can't touch. Yes sir, they reached people that we can't touch. And it was just this kind of mixture that we didn't care to have anything to do with anyhow. There's no doubt about it, some of them were devout, were really religious people. But over-emotional people are apt to be; they're not very stable.

Well, heaven sake here, there was a bunch of boys. I was one of 'em. Oh, they was a little too young to be called adults and a little too old to be called kids. They were just, I don't know what you'd call 'em, just a bunch of little excrescences! We used to, we never missed

of us, except that one that threw the rock, "Oh I don't know. I don't know anything about it. I saw the rock go. I don't know who did it a-tall. I don't know anything about it." Well, they couldn't prove that he did.

## WINTER BAPTISM

**Nellie Jones**

*talking to George Packard*

I was baptized in the Baptist Church when I was eighteen years old. My husband was twenty-four. On Easter morning, down here under Sugar Creek bridge. The old bridge. They had to break the ice to baptize me. Well, we got up that morning, and Mom told me, says, "You're gonna be baptized and there's ice on the creek." And she told me, "Nobody ever died or took pneumonia being baptized even in cold weather." Well, sure enough I thought I'd die with pneumonia, but I didn't even take a cold. Went down, rode down there in a buggy, and we had to go to the church and put on our white robes. Go down there, and I thought freeze I would. And I thought sure I'd froze to death by the time I got back to the church and changed out of that wet garment. But I never took a cold.



# COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

## A CONVERSATION ABOUT STRICT FATHERS

Essie Applegate and Susie Belle Kanable

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

Essie: My mother died when I was three years old. My sister and I were the youngest of the family. After my mother died, why, my father thought he had a double job with my sister and I. The boys, they were all older, and they went and come when they'd please, you know. Then they got married, but my sister and I, my dad wanted us right there by him all the time. And that made — made you unhappy. He didn't want you to go away or do anything. As long as you was there he was happy.

*And he was home most of the time?*

Essie: He was home *all* the time; just always there. As I said, I've never been alone, because when — before I was married, why, he was always there when I'd get home from school. I've never been alone.

*What about when you started having beaux? What did your father think then?*

Essie: Nobody was good enough for us. Either one of us. No one was quite good enough.

Susie: That's right. Mine was very strict.

Essie: If he couldn't find out anything else, it was the wrong politics or the wrong religion or something.

Susie: That's right. Dad was such a politician.

Essie: Oh, mine, too.

Susie: Oh, he was really radical. If somebody was a Republican, he just wouldn't have anything to do with them. Was yours like that, Essie?

Essie: Well, my *dad* was a Republican. And then, if anybody belonged to the Republican party, why that was it; they were perfect. But if you were a Democrat, boy oh boy, you were just — next to a devil, that was all.

*Would your father let you go out?*

Essie: No, not very much.

Susie: They didn't in those days, did they?

Essie: No, and you couldn't go across the street. . . [unless] you told him — asked him if it was all right to go, and if he said, "No," boy, you better stay home. That's the way it was. In fact, he was too strict, he was too strict for anybody's good. But he was a good man, and he was very honest, and what he believed he believed. You couldn't change him with a team of mules. He was — everything was just all right if he said it was all right. But — and he didn't enjoy himself either, and he didn't let anybody else enjoy themselves, you know. All my life I've guarded against being that way. And I'm not that way at all. I'm not like him at all. I don't want to be. He was a good man, very good. But —.

*Now with all this, how in the world did you ever meet and get acquainted with your husband?*

Essie: Well, I finally found a man that he couldn't find any fault with. [Laughter] And then, too, I had stayed home and taught school and kept house for he and my brothers. And I think he began to think that he had imposed on me too much. So when — and then — so this guy come along, my —. As I say he couldn't find anything wrong with him. And he was the type of person that didn't doubt him or question him; whatever he said he just went along and let him talk, you know. And that helped out a lot. [Laughter] If he'd opposed him in anything, well, he'd have been against *him*, but he didn't. And then, too, the war come along.

## GETTING CAUGHT

**Bertha Fleming**

*talking to Sally McKinney*

*How did you meet your husband?*

In school. We were brought up together. He was a grade ahead of me in school, and of course, I've known him all my life. And so when we were in high school, he sat just across the aisle from me, and he used to kinda tease me about that. But when we were about that age, we always went to revival meetings. And his brother had a big crush on a roommate — a schoolmate of mine that we always run together. So when we went to church, that was our meeting

place, you see. And if they could see us home, why, that was a date.

And so his brother Joe said to his — to my husband, said, “Fuzz” — he always called him “Fuzz” — says, “I want you to take Bertha home tonight because she’s outrun every other person that I’ve ever gotten to take her home.” He’d always get some other guy, you know, to take me, while he took his girl, and if I didn’t like ’em I’d run off from ’em. So he told Ray, he said, now he said, “She’ll try to outrun you, I expect, but you hang on.” Well, I didn’t try to outrun him. He was the one I wanted. So he walked me home that night, and then from that [time] on, we had dates. So he got so that he wouldn’t date anybody else.

And we had a swing on our porch that we would sit in after we got home. So one time Mother said to me, “You don’t treat your beau as good as I treated my — your dad. I always give him refreshments when he come.” So the next time Ray came I had a plate, you know, piece of pie or lemonade or something like that. So always after that we would have refreshments. Well, one time, when we had a date, he was late, he didn’t come. So I went on to church by myself, you know, and so he come and he said, “What was your hurry? How’s come you didn’t wait on me?” I said, “Time and tide waits for no man. Neither do I.” So he never was late after that. [Laughter]

## ON A PUBLIC ROAD

**Lennie Smith**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*How did you and your husband meet?*

On a public road. I had some friends out here north. I was working in Attica and I came out (I think over the train) and I got out — and walked part of time — out to where Goldie Wren lives now. And her parents were living there. She wasn’t home nor her sisters weren’t home, but I ate dinner with ’em and then I was gonna start out to Attica again. I met Mr. Smith on the road. He was in a horse and buggy. Most girls wouldn’t have anything to do with a horse and buggy. But of course, I was older. I was twenty-seven, and I’d never had very much company. I was working, I went to church, and that was about the only social life I had.

And he picked me up, and then he said something about going

by his sister's or his brother's. He was gonna go by there, and he'd either let me out or I could go with him. So I went out around in case they'd take me on to Attica. And so I guess he didn't even know my name. If I told him, he didn't remember. Then about five weeks we went together and got married.

## UNEXPECTED GUESTS I

**Esther Gregg**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

Our marriage was quite interesting. It was right after the war; Roy had been in the Service, a dollar-a-day man. And I was out of nurse's training and had been at considerable expense of that and was just getting it paid back. So we were very short of funds, and we decided that, instead of being married at home where our families would feel like they had to give us a wedding and reception and gifts and all that sort of thing, that he'd come up to Chicago and we would just go to the minister's. My sister, who was in training when I was, and a classmate had been married quietly there. So we went to the Second Presbyterian Church in Chicago. It was just two blocks from the hospital nurses' home, and we arranged to go down there at 4 o'clock in the evening. Then we thought we'd stay all night in Chicago and come down on the morning train and just quietly slip out to the farm.

Well, when we got to this church, all the women's organizations (it must have been about 40 officers) were having a meeting. And the minister told them, when they scheduled it for that afternoon, that he'd have to be excused a few minutes — he had a wedding. And so, when we went to be married, and expected just to be married in his study with my sister, he led us down in the main sanctuary of this big church. And he asked the women if they wouldn't like to take a break and come in and attend the wedding; they'd been sitting there all afternoon in committee meetings. So our quiet wedding turned out to have 40 very wealthy and prominent socialites in Chicago as invited guests. Invited by the minister, not by us.

## UNEXPECTED GUESTS II

**Mildred Curts**

*talking to Sally McKinney*

We was married the 28th day of April in 1928. We went to Danville to get married. Everything was closed. Had to go to Covington. Rode down to Covington, and the only place we could get married there was the poultry house.

*In the poultry house?*

In the poultry house. That's where we had to go to get married. But we had to get — we was goin' — wanted to get married right away, soon as we could, so that's where we got married. And the old roosters were crowin' and the hens cacklin'.

## LOVE FINDS A WAY

**Dorothy Pearlman**

*talking to Martin Light*

Now, nobody sat and listened to my father-in-law but me, and I think this is what makes me mad 'cause there's so many — really — stories, like O. Henry stories and the circumstances under which they came here. He was married to a girl whose parents owned a big — an inn right on the border between Poland and Russia. And they were very well-to-do, and he was the book-keeper for this inn. And it was the custom in those days when it came time for his military service, he hired a young boy from the village to take his place for his two year service, which was not unheard-of. And they came to him in the middle of the night one night and said, "Jacob, you're in terrible trouble. The man with your name shot an officer in the back. You've got to get out of town immediately." Well, he had cousins — Pearlman — and he thought this would blow over. So he came here to Lafayette (couldn't speak a word of English) thinking this would blow over and she would join him, but she was very reluctant. They already had a son, and she had sisters and brothers and all, and she would not come over, and there was — it was almost ten years later that the family lost the inn and her parents died and she came here to Lafayette to join him. So I mean all of these stories I think are very interesting.

## SEPARATION

Gertha Peters

*talking to Carol Burke*

Well, he [my husband] told me to get the pig off of the place or he's gonna kill 'em. He said, "They have to be off by morning." So when I got to carryin' 'em off down puttin' 'em in the hen house down there, when I took one pig down (you know, one pig was all I could carry at a time) I took 'em down to a house that lived on the same — it was part of the farm that we lost. He said, "You carry 'em off down there, you never *will* get any good out of 'em." Said, "They'll keep 'em if you get 'em down there. See, that's the kinda people they are down there!" They might've done it, but I wasn't gonna let him kill 'em.

Well, when I come up he said I wasn't gonna take another one of them "God Damn Pigs down there!" Well, I just stopped right there. I went and put on my sweater, and I walked four miles to Marble, North Carolina. I went to the Justice of the Peace's residence, and I swore out an insanity warrant for him because I just done all I's gonna do. I worked all summer and canned stuff for everybody and cut my own wood and everything like that until I was just nearly crazy. And I just made up my mind I'd had all I's gonna take. So I put him in jail.

*And then what happened?*

Well, he just stayed in jail. So then I was in town and then they —

*How long was he in there?*

Oh, I don't know, about five days, but he wasn't even askin' to get out. I think he liked it. So I told my lawyer, I said, "I want this straightened up right now." I said, "I left him." He said, "Don't you know you can't put your husband in the jail on an insanity warrant?" I said, "Listen, he's in jail."

And so then, we had a little justice trial. And that wasn't anything, only just a farce.

*Why?*

Well, because they read off to him all of the things that he done to me, you know. He *did* hit me on the arm with a stick of wood. And he said, "Not guilty. But if she does it, I'll do it again." You know, he didn't know enough to protect himself.

They read off to him the things he'd done. He hit me, and he

ordered the hogs off of the place. Then he wouldn't let me take 'em off. They was five things that he done to me, but they ain't no tellin' what — I don't know what they were now. But anyhow they read 'em off to him. And then, to counteract some of that, well, you know, he claimed I worked all the time, see.

*And you were a bad woman because you worked all the time?*

And then, you know, he accused me of kissin' the pig.

*Did people laugh?*

Well, they laughed, and the main argument was that the world would be better off if more people *did* work.

*And did kiss their pigs!*

Yes, he did say I kissed a pig, but really, I never thought of it. They said, "Well, that shows a loving disposition." And of course, everybody just roared!

## THE OUTLAW WEDDING

**Harry Ulrey**

*talking to Carol Burke*

My dad and his wife moved to Missouri just after the war. It was '66 I believe they moved out there. Childless they were then, they'd just been married I think a year or so. But they moved into the Sac River valley. They called it "The Second Bottom." It was not a river bank. It was higher than that a little, and he had a farm in there that they had bought before the war. Somebody had bought. I don't know whether he had.

And down, down the river from there was a deep gully run up away from the river in there, and high banks on each side of it. And back in there was a considerable flat with about thirty acres, I believe he said. Well, his farm was down river from there, but there was a gang moved in there. Oh, nobody knew anything about 'em a-tall. They moved in there and just squatted and put 'em up some cabins and planted some corn patches and one thing and another.

"Pretty rough lookin' gang," Dad said. They didn't bother anybody. Nobody bothered them. People didn't ordinarily nose into other people's business then. He told me that he — him and his wife was a-sittin' in their cabin, no lights except the light of the fireplace. He says somebody come and knocked at the door. And he said that it was very out of the ordinary for anyone to be out

a-prowling during the night. He went and opened the door, and it was a young man from the holler. Well, he said the feller was armed to the teeth! He said he had the pistols hung on to him and a short-barreled Henry rifle, and he said he knew who he was. And so he asked him, he said, "Aren't you Mr. Ulrey?" "Yes," he said, "I'm Mr. Ulrey." Said, "We understand that you're a minister." "Yes," he said, he was a preacher. He said, "We'd like to have you come down to the holler tonight here and perform a marriage ceremony."

Well, Dad, he said that he'd sooner taken a kickin' from a goat. Frankly, he was scared. He was scared! He said the people down there definitely were outlaws, and they was probably on the lam. He told the boy, "Boy," he says, "I don't believe I know the way down there, down through the bush." The boy said, "I'll go along with you." Said, "I'll go along with you. You go saddle your horse, and I'll go with you."

Well, he did. He couldn't hardly turn 'em down, he said. He said the boy waited, and he said that they started down. And the boy got down at the holler there, went back in. He said, he asked the boy — he said he had that heavy Henry rifle; he carried that in front of his saddle, a big heavy brass-barreled horse pistol on his side. He asked him, he said, "Why in the world are you going armed like that?" "Oh," he says, "I'll tell you." He says, "This dog-gone country's just full of outlaws." He says, "I don't know what we're gonna meet in there." He said, "We just don't dare to go not armed." Well, Dad wasn't armed, of course.

Well, he went back in there, and he said there *was* a wedding party back in there. And he said a nice lookin' young woman as he ever saw, and a real dog-gone brawny lookin', husky lookin' boy, nice lookin' feller. And he performed a marriage ceremony. He said there was no license they had, but he made out a paper sayin' that they were married, that he'd performed the ceremony and the date.

Well, the feller'd promised him, "I'll go back with you. I'll go back with you up through there." And he said that he was never treated nicer in his life. He said they offered him a five dollar gold piece. I never knew my father to take a penny for performing a marriage ceremony! He didn't believe in it. He didn't like it or he wouldn't do it anyhow. He said he turned that down.

Well, he said they got a jug of whiskey [laughs] and poured him

out a cup full, and he said he did drink that. Whiskey was a way of life then. That was all there was to it. He said it was good whiskey, too. He said it was all right. There was nothing bad about it. He said he drank it. They went back down, and the feller took him home then.

*And it wasn't a shotgun wedding?*

It was not a shotgun wedding. It was not, although there was plenty of shotguns in evidence all right.

He said that the name of the people that witnessed that wedding there — well, what do you think? Younger! “Well,” he said, “the name then didn’t mean anything to me a-tall.” He said, “The name Younger didn’t mean anything, but in a few years it did.”

## THE LONG DELAY

**Dorothy Pearlman**

*talking to Martin Light*

On my mother’s side four rabbis came to this country who were eighth in a direct line of rabbis from Germany, and that’s my history.

*How did he [your grandfather] find his way to Indianapolis?*

I’ll tell you. When the Franco-Prussian war was over and the Germans annexed Alsace-Lorraine, they decided that all the people there should speak German. So they sent my grandfather down there to teach German to these French girls. Well, he fell desperately in love with her [my grandmother] and she wouldn’t marry him because he was a German. So he went back to Berlin, and he was reading, and he read an advertisement in the Berlin “Tagenblatter” — or whatever — where they wanted a German-speaking rabbi in Indianapolis, Indiana. And he answered the ad. And eventually, his three brothers, who were also rabbis — one settled in Chicago and one in Indianapolis, one in St. Louis and one in San Francisco.

*And she was willing to come?*

She didn’t come with him, no, no. He came. He was a rabbi in Indianapolis, and later her two brothers opened up an importing linen factory — store, in New York. So she decided that she would come and visit her brothers, but she let the word get around to my grandfather that she would be in New York, and she always told us

kids (she had seven grandchildren) the only reason she married him was that the trip over was so terrible she couldn't bear the thought of going back by boat.



# FOOD

## WE ALWAYS HAD PIE

**Mabel Schilling**

*talking to Jean Hubbard*

My mother was blind, and she couldn't see. And she made pies by feeling, and she knew that to put her hand in the lard was a cup of lard. And the shaker that we used to shake the flour out of, it held five cups of flour. And if she put her finger in the salt, that was a pinch of salt. And she could tell by the feelings of that how it was. And then I'd get water from the well because even then we used cold water, and she'd mix it up with her fingers. She didn't use a fork and all like the girls do now. She just did mix it up. And then she could roll it out to fit the pie pan. How she did it I don't know, but she rolled it out to fit the pie pan, and then I put the filling in and I put the top crust on. And then I handed it back to her because I couldn't make the rope top, and she knew exactly how to do that. And then I went ahead and did the filling and did the baking of it. And then, if we had some of those crumbs over that we didn't need, then we stored them and used them for — like the girls now get out a frozen pie — we just put the crumbs together and made a hot pie.

*Could you explain again what the crumbs were?*

The crumbs are nothing but just the flour and your lard. 'Course we used country lard, fresh country lard, and a pinch of salt.

*How many pies did your mother make?*

We always made four fruit pies. We always made four fruit pies, whatever was in season, outside of that — the wintertime. In the wintertime we used what we had canned. We'd make gooseberry pie with a pork roast, and we had pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving or with chicken, and we'd have cherry pie with ham, and we always had raspberry pie when we had beef, because that was just the way that my grandmother had cooked and that's the way my mother cooked. And then we had a little crumbs left and then we'd make a crust and make a custard pie or an old fashioned sugar pie where you use the cream out of the separator, and just put the cream in it and put a little bit of sugar in it and a little bit of nothing but nutmeg, and stir it up real good and bake it real slow just like

you bake a custard in a cup. And we always had that warm on Saturday for dinner because that was the warm pie. And the other pie we had during the week.

*So you had pie every day?*

Oh yes! Twice a day! We always had pie for lunch and had a pie for the evening meal. And then if you was hungry before you went to bed you had a piece of pie. Yes, and none of this little tiny pieces that are only an inch and a half across! You had a fourth of a pie about, or a sixth if you had a big nine inch pie.

*You were talking about one of your boyfriends, too, who came to visit.*

Well, I had a boyfriend come to visit me that had never eaten sugar cured ham, and I guess the girls that he — I was always taught that you had a guest in your house, you fed them. Now they'll say, "Do you want a drink? What can I get you to drink?" but we didn't say that. We said, "What would you like to eat?" Of course we always had pie, so I fixed a custard pie, just a half — just put a half of the custard pie out — and I put a slice of sugar cured ham. And he said to me, "Why are you giving me so much?" And I said, "Well, you can have all you want." To my surprise, at the end of his eating it was all gone. So after that he always expected for him to have — for me to have pie and meat. Sometimes I would have country sausage that we had smoked, or other times I'd have a slice of shoulder, or I'd have some roast beef that was left over. We always ate meat with our pie. Now why, I don't know.

*You didn't really have it as dessert? You had it right along with your —*

Yeah, we just always had. If we'd have a piece of pie in the evening, why, my brother'd say, "Mom, you got any pie, any meat left from dinner?" And my father was a man that didn't have a lot of money, BUT we always had plenty of food. He always would say, "Be sure and make plenty so we have some left." He said, "I never want to see an empty plate of our meat, or our vegetables, or our potatoes, or our dessert." And that's just the way we grew up. And my brother went to visit my mother's family up around Rensselaer, and he asked for a piece of pie for breakfast. And our cousin said, she said, "We don't eat pie for breakfast, what do you mean by asking for pie for breakfast?" And he looked at my mother and he said, "What did you born me for if you didn't want me to eat pie for breakfast?" [Laughs] To his dying day we'd kid him and say, "Why did you born me for if you didn't want me to eat pie?" He loved pie.

## LEARNING TO BAKE

**Cora Churchill**

*talking with Ruth Ann Miller*

Mother'd never let me bake. That's one thing — she was always afraid I was gonna waste somethin'. My folks were very savin'. And she'd always say, "Oh, you'll spoil it." One time she went away, and I tried to bake bread. Boy, did I get it when she come home!

*Was it good?*

No, [laughs] Grandpa was the only one said it was good.

*What did you do wrong?*

I don't know. And then when I got married I tried to bake pies. And my granddaddy, he'd take the crust and he'd soak it in his coffee. He'd say, "Pretty good, Ma, pretty good!" 'Cause it'd be so tough he'd have to soak it to eat it.

## GET-TOGETHERS

**Bernice Baker**

*talking to George Packard*

We'd have oyster soup suppers. That'd be just like for the neighborhood. And everybody in the neighborhood would come. And you'd have — make big pots of oyster soup. And that's what you'd have, oyster soup and crackers. And usually something for dessert. And we'd have taffy pulls.

*Tell me about a taffy pull.*

Well, it'd be another one of these get-togethers of the community. And, 'course you didn't have thickly settled communities then like you do now. So everybody — and this was from the babies on up — everybody came and was there. 'Course the next day, whoever's home it was, why you found taffy all over everywhere.

*Did several generations of people get together, like kids and parents and grandparents?*

Oh, yes, all of them. There was no set age or anything like that.

*How did you make the taffy? Would everybody get together on it —?*

Usually there was certain ones of the women that had recipes that they always used, and that's all it amounted to, really. But everybody pulled taffy. The whole group — men, women, young and old, everybody. Every age. You'd have to be two of you, and

one pulling one way and the other the other so that — and you'd keep stretching it farther and farther and farther, and I don't know if it was good or not.

*Do you ever remember anybody getting tangled up in it?*

Oh, yes, yes. Everybody'd have taffy all over 'em. Those poor homes. I've thought of that so many times. Ugh. I'd hate to 've had that in my home.

*They did it indoors, of course.*

Oh, yes. But of course Mother always had that mess, and we always had to clean it up. All over the doors, and everytime you go to sit down someplace, there was some.

## NOODLES

**Nora Connely**

*talking to Carol Burke  
and Jackie Ullman*

I put myself through school making noodles.

*Noodles? Who did you make noodles for?*

Just anybody that wanted them in Terre Haute. I just sold 'em. I had more than I could deliver lots of times.

*You didn't live in a dormitory then?*

No, I didn't.

*You lived in a regular house?*

I lived with an aunt, and I did these noodles when I'd go back home on weekends. See we weren't very far from Terre Haute, and I could go home every weekend. So I'd get my supply of noodles and go back and do the next week.

*How many would you sell in a week, for example?*

Well, I don't know. I just remember that I made 'em in 5 ounce packages, and I sold 'em for 35 cents. That's about the only thing I remember about it. I don't remember just identically how many, but I kept myself pretty well. I stayed with an aunt and helped her and that did my board.

*But you didn't make your noodles there?*

No, I, I went back home for that.

*Did you, did you have a special recipe?*

No, I didn't — I didn't know it if it was. It was just the way I made 'em, all my life. I just never put any baking powder in 'em.

Never put anything for rising in 'em, and I always cut 'em fine. That's why they sold so good I guess. They were just paper fine, and I did it just with a knife.

*Then you rolled them out just with a rolling pin? You didn't have a —*

No, I rolled 'em with a rolling pin, and let 'em dry, and then I would cut 'em.

*That's hard work.*

It is, but they're awful good. They followed me all the way through.

*How did you come up with the idea?*

Well, I just took some with me one weekend, and some friends said, "Why don't you sell those?" Said, "I wouldn't give those away." And so it just put the idea in my head, and I just made 'em.

## APPLEBUTTER-MAKING

**Nora Connely**

*talking to Carol Burke*

We always went back to Grandpa Coopriders, that's my grandparents on my father's side. They had a big apple orchard. And all the family would gather and peel apples, and they'd make cider. They had their own cider press. And they'd make cider, and they'd boil that down. They called [it] "boiling it down." It was a big 25 gallon copper kettle, and they would boil that, make cider and boil all day. And the women would — that was the men's job — and the women would be peeling apples. And we'd just have every vessel you can imagine full of cored apples. And then next morning they'd start. And it took two days to make a batch of applebutter. And they'd get that cider boiled down, and then they would put some kind of cover over it. I wouldn't think it was very clean now, but they had a cover that they'd put over it (that kettle) and next morning we'd start by daylight to cook those apples down. It would cook all day to cook it down.

*And that's all that goes into applebutter? Just plain cooking?*

Apples and sugar and cinnamon. They would make as much applebutter as they had different seasons of apples so we just made applebutter all summer.

*How did you divide it up?*

Well, we canned it in stone jars. Half gallon mostly, half gallon, sometimes gallon. And we'd seal it with sealing wax, and we'd do the whole operation right there. And I don't know how, I didn't hear any quarreling around so I guess it was done satisfactorily. But everybody had all the applebutter they could eat.

*And what did you use the applebutter for? besides toast and bread?*

Applebutter cookies. And they're good. And I can't think — Oh, we made applebutter cake.

*Did you?*

Yes. We made applebutter cake. And so it was just something you had on the table every meal, and you just learned to like it. It's hard to do without. I like applebutter now.

*Did you have a lot of cider and applesauce?*

We canned applesauce. And we canned cider, and then we'd drink it through the winter. You put it in a barrel and keep it through the winter.

*Did it ever get hard? . . .*

If you keep it tight, it doesn't ferment. And the — it was a great big hundred gallon barrel, and we had it setting up on some kind of frame, and all we had to do was go down cellar and turn that faucet, and we'd get a pitcher full for supper any time we wanted it.

## APPLE HILLS

**Ralph Goodwin**

*talking to Carol Burke*

We'd divide the apples up according to the quality of the apples. Now, there were certain apples that didn't get ripe until way late, just in time — just to beat the frost or the first freeze. Well, we'd go down here in the orchard and haul out a place, oh, maybe four feet across, depending on how many apples you were gonna put in — you were gonna bury. And so you dig out a place, round it all out, and then you fill that with straw. And then you take these apples that were still not mature yet — completely — wasn't ripe, see, but then they'd grown all they were gonna grow, but then they weren't ripened yet. So you put those apples in this rounded out place in the ground. Then you'd cover them all with straw. Just pile on the straw. Then you'd start diggin' right around this pile of

apples, and you'd throw that dirt right up on top of that straw, see —

*Helen Goodwin: Make a mound.*

— and so when you got through you had a ditch thrown around them that was lower than the apples. So any water that would collect there, see, would go down in the ditch and wouldn't be on the apples, see. So after you got that all covered up like that, why, then you put some brush or something over that straw so they — and the dirt so they — keep the same thickness over all the apples so they wouldn't freeze. And you never opened that apple hill until the next spring. See, those apples would — would mature in there. And talk about flavor, they had it! You know you hear of people talking of Virginia hams and all that kind of stuff, see. Well, that's what happened to the apples. They were cured by this old method, see.

## HOW TO KILL A CHICKEN

**Carl Tuttle**

*talking to Martin Light*

One customer we had was the blacksmith over in Leesburg, and she had a chicken yard in the back of her yard there, and one time when I took her butter up to her she was out and she grabbed a chicken. She was going to have chicken for dinner. And to kill the chicken she'd push its head through the netting in the wire fence and there she was sawing with a butcher knife, you know, and trying to kill that chicken, and she wasn't havin' much luck. And there I was a kid about twelve, thirteen years old, and I took the chicken and give it a couple of whirls like that and wrung its neck, you know, but she never seen anything like that. . . . You know, it's odd, those things stick in your mind, little incidents like that of no particular importance —

*Well, something about the way of life, don't you think?*

Oh, it is.

*Is that what — that's what wringing a chicken's neck meant — or swinging it?*

[Laughs]: You take a chicken by the head; don't twirl it like that [large circles with arm outstretched overhead]. Just like that [small circles with wrist, like cranking a small engine] and you'll just twist its neck right off; that's the way you always killed a chicken, except

unless you'd go and be real humane, why, then we had a wooden block out there with an ax — a hatchet — and we chopped their heads off, but then most of us just wring their heads off.

## CAPONIZING

**Gertha Peters**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Well, my husband and I decided we wanted to have some capons instead of just havin' roosters to eat because the capons have such nice breasts and everything and the meat is so sweet. Well, Mr. Brooks over on the mountain [near Marble, North Carolina] they said that he did this caponizing. So on Sunday we took our chickens and we went over to Mr. Brooks' house.

And the house is just a box house — like the boards are put on up and down attached to the baseboard in the bottom and a board at the top. And they're really just sort of a shed, but those people been livin' in those kinda houses a long time. Probably not right now because the place's built up.

But maybe just for the steps, maybe go into the kitchen, it'd be just maybe two little boards laid down. And also the house wasn't equipped much: like maybe a tin washpan, a tin pail, or maybe a tin dipper, or things like that — something just to get along with. And so, he came out with a washpan with a little water on it, and he put his knife in there to swish it around. I don't know if it was to get dirt off or what, but anyway he took it out of there, and he put his foot up and begin to take the knife and go back and forth on his boot to sharpen his knife to do this work. You know, it really should have been something nice like a doctor would use. Then he took the chicken and put the wings underneath so the chicken can't move or anything.

Then he turned the chicken on the side and made a slit and takes out the organ and then pushes the flesh sort of together and turns him over and does the same thing again. And he undoes the wings and sets the chicken down with some feed on the ground. If the chicken eats, why he's all right and you don't pay any more attention to him till you're ready to take him home. If he don't eat, you cut his head off, and you eat him.

in. And it'll eat the fat up, you know.

*The lye eats the fat up –*

And that helps to make your soap.

*I see. And then you just stir it until it turns rofy and then you –*

And it's kind of a tan color.

*And then you would cut it up into cakes or –*

Well, we never made it that stiff. Mother always put it in jars.

*So it was in liquid form –*

Then she always had a little jar that she'd bring in the house to wash dishes and things that way.

## FEEDING THE BOYS

**Lona Orr**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

I took tickets in a little theater up home [at Delphi], and all of the boys of course knew the other girl and I. When they were going to go away to war the next day, they'd stop in to see us the night before and tell us, "Goodbye now. We're going tomorrow; leave." And of course we always felt sad to see them go, and there was several that came that never came back. And 'course we lived close, but not very far from the railroad tracks. 'N' we all knew the troop train whistle. We could tell it far off; we knew it was a troop train coming.

*What was the difference?*

I don't know. It was just a different sound to it.

*You just knew –*

Whether it was our imagination, but we could always tell. And if we had baked a pie or a cake or had something — there was always one came through around suppertime. And all the whole neighborhood — everybody — whatever they had, somebody baked a cake (I think some of them baked a cake a-purpose). And then they'd grab it and we'd run, and magazines or papers or reading material, anything we had, we'd go to the railroad track and if the train would slow down enough that we could reach it up to 'em, oh they'd gladly reach out and get it, you know.

And they was just young boys, you know, like you always see go, and here I lived through World War Two and had one of my own go. Then when I lived out in Fort Wayne, near the railroad

tracks again, I was out with my dog, and one day a troop train came through (that was World War Two now, this is all these years later), and it slowed down and one of the boys saw me over there and he hollered, "Hi, Mom. Whatcha gonna have good for supper?" It made me feel bad.

*Reminded you of the –*

Yeah, so I reminded him of a mom, 'cause my hair was gray. "Mom. Whatcha gonna have good for supper?" And so I said, "I hope they don't have any more war."



# REMEDIES

## POISON IVY

**Ralph Goodwin**

Back in those times there were a lot of family remedies still in existence. Now you take, for instance, ivy poison. It was quite a thing because there was so much of it. Now, you take the leaves off a milkweed, or off of a ragweed, and mash 'em all up. You just mash it all up, see, to make a real thick juice, you know, with cream and ragweed leaves. And you mix that all up together, and it'd make kind of a salve, you see, to put on this poison ivy. It'd work, too. Yes, it would. And that came from the Indians.

## SORE LEG

**Louis Newman**

My old daddy, he got hurt. And them days, they didn't know what diabetes was. And he had a sore on here, on his leg. Wouldn't heal up, and what it was, was diabetes. Them days they didn't know what. And there was an old lady, Mrs. Hank, lived about a block and a half from where we lived and she told my Mom' she said, "When the cow does his duties, you know, you have the boys run out when it's steamin' and you make a sack and put it on there." And sure as God in heaven, it drew out everything, and that sore never did break up.

## SORE THROAT

**Louis Newman**

Listen, you talk about when you're a kid — I had a sore throat once, and I said, "Pa, Pa, my throat's so sore and I can't hardly cough, it hurt my throat." He never said a word. He goes out to the chicken coop, comes in with a feather off the old rooster's tail, and he put that in coal oil and, buddy, he put that in my throat. And I never did have no more sore throat, swabbed my throat with that!

## INFLAMMATION

**Louis Newman**

I was oh so sick, and Mr. Bails said, "Lou boy, you don't call no doctor, Mom'll take care of ya." "Honey" (he always called her Honey). And I said, "OK." So she said, "Now get in bed, I'm your nurse. Do as I say." I said, "OK, Momma." Well, she come in. She had onion poultice. Have you ever heard of that? They put it on the chest and then the onions get just as black as the ace of spades, draw all the inflammation out.

**“PNEUMONY”****Margaret Wagner**

They was a woman had pneumony, and she was just awful bad. They didn't think she was gonna live the night through. Well, I went and took some onions, and I fried them onions. And then I took bran and mixed it all up, and I made two of them poultices. And I'd keep one hot and the other one on her. And just as quick as that one would cool off, I'd put the other one on her. And I just kept that up the whole night long. And after I'd done it awhile she said, "Don't stop! I can feel a little relief." And by morning she was a-spittin' up, and she got over it. And they had give her up for dead.

**CUT****Nellie Jones and Marjorie Ottinger**

Marjorie: When you used to go to Grampa Reagan, if one of the kids stepped on an old nail, how did they treat it? Now tell.

Nellie: Put — soak their foot in kerosene, and put a chunk of fat meat on it, more than likely.

Marjorie: I remember one worse than that.

Nellie: Or tobacco.

Marjorie: No.

Nellie: Oh. Roll — warm cow manure.

Marjorie: Yes. And then send one of the kids out to get a piece of sheep wool, and they would burn that, char it, put that on, and then tie an old rag around it. What kept them from getting lockjaw, do you suppose?

**CUT****Harold Goyer**

If you run a nail in your foot or something like that, why, Dad would chew up a big wad of tobacco and put it on there and bandage it up.

**BOILS****Harold Goyer**

For boils, take a potato and take a spoon and just scrape it till it was just a mushy mess. Put it on that boil and bandage it up and it would just pull that core right out of there.

**COLD****Robert Coomey**

They used to eat onion sandwiches for a cold, too. They claim that if you've got a cold, you just leave onions setting around that they'll help you.

**SWELLING****Gertha Peters**

There is one thing, and I have used that and that's mullein and vinegar for swelling. You soak the mullein. You know what mullein is, don't you? It's kind of a frosty lookin' thickeaved thing. Well, you just put it in the vinegar and soak it till it takes up some of that. Then just put it on, bind it on.

**BOILS****Nora Kesson**

If you had boils or anything, why, she'd put mustard poultice on that, and that'd draw it to a head.

**WARTS****Ralph and Helen Goodwin**

Ralph: Just to show you what people get in mind. There's an old saying — if you had a wart there was two or three remedies. One in particular I remember was — You'd go out there and get some bean leaves, and you'd mash 'em on that wart. 'N roll that bean leaf up, pick up a clod, put in underneath the clod, and lay the clod right down again, and not say anything to anybody about it. That wart would go away. That just gives you an idea.

Helen: And did it? Did you know anybody that tried that and it worked?

Ralph: Well, that I'm not a-gonna say. Because *I* did it.

Helen: And did it work

Ralph: It worked, but I never did tell it to anybody, for the simple reason that just on the face of it, well, that's silly.



# INDIANS, GYPSIES, AND PEDDLERS

## THE INTRUDERS

**Vistol Louks**

*talking to George Packard*

My grandmother was from South Carolina. And she said that she would remember when Indians just walked in the house. . . . And she said you had to be real quiet or they'd get mad, you know. And they'd look in everything, and you'd just be real still, and let 'em go on, and they wouldn't bother anything. But once in a while they got cantankerous; and one time, down in there, the neighbors next to 'em — there was an old crippled man and his wife that lived (this is one that they've always told) — and the Indians come there, but they wanted to take more than them old people wanted to give 'em. And so they locked the door on 'em. And the Indians chopped a hole in the door, and they started going in. And the woman, when they'd go in, would pull 'em in and the old man would knock 'em in the head. And about four of them went in there before they discovered that they was something wrong. And they left. So after they left they got to thinking they must have made a mistake there, so they come back and burnt 'em out. So she said that her grandmother — her mother always said that anytime the Indians come, no matter what they wanted, if you was making bread or anything, and they picked it up and took it, you didn't say nothing about it; you just let 'em have it.

## INDIAN BURIAL

**Vistol Louks**

*talking to George Packard*

They claim a long time ago that they [the Indians] left lots of babies in the trees down here, that some of the time cutting in the trees that they found little babies in the trunks of the trees, 'cause the Miami Indians buried their dead up high. Because — on ac-

count of water. And they've cut trees and found little babies' bodies or anything in the holler of the tree.

## INDIAN RAID IN WEST VIRGINIA

**Edna Hardin McDaniel**

*talking to Martin Light*

My grandmother had spun some wool — carded some wool — I don't know which they call it — and she was taking it to a family by the name of Bowes. And she and the hired girl got their horses and bridled them and started off to the house. And when they got about half way there they stopped to water the horses in the stream, and she sat there and said, "I have a feeling the Indians will be there." And the girl said, "Oh yes, you're just a 'fraidy-cat." [Laughs] And so she said, "Well, you can go on if you want to, but I'm going back." So she turned her horse around, and they went back home. And they found out later that the Indians had been there at that very time and had killed the whole family except one boy which — his mind wasn't too good, and they took him along with them.

## A VISIT FROM THE REBELS

**Edna Hardin McDaniel**

*talking to Martin Light*

When my grandmother and grandfather lived in a place [during] the Civil War, there were — I don't know whether you call them a troop — came through, right up through the bottom of our land. And they got word that the soldiers were coming and they were robbing the houses and killing people. They were the southern soldiers (we call them the democrats now), and so she took her money — all they had in the house — and took it down and buried it, in the very place where they went through, in her nightcap and left the string hang out so she could find it.

So they went through, but they didn't find the money. But he came up to my grandfather, and he asked, "Are you a rebel or a union man?" And he said, "I'm a union: soul, body and britches." So the captain left and ordered his men on. And my grandmother fixed dinner for the rest of them.

## STEALING CHICKENS

**Pearl Stockard**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*Do you ever remember people coming, like people passing by farms, people like gypsies, hoboes, and that —?*

Oh, yes. I remember that. We used to be afraid of them. They'd say, you know, they'd steal kids. They would, I know they would steal other things, but I don't know much about anything like that one way —.

I remember that there were gypsies that camped down south of us when my husband and I lived on the place where we live now — or lived — I still own it. And they camped down the road a little ways from us, and I had a lot of young chickens, and do you know that they would come up there in the field right south of us and throw corn up there that had a string to it? And the chickens would come down there to get that corn, and they'd pull in on that string and get that chicken.

## “PROBABLY” THE PEDDLER

**Bernice Stewart**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*You mentioned, too, before, that you had a peddler who came by. Can you tell me something about him?*

Oh, yes, and this was one that we called “Probably” because he always came in and propped his wares which he carried. What his name was I don't know. Probably his home base was Fort Wayne, and he just walked up through the country carrying his wares with him, as I remember: needles and thread and must have been small yardage of oh, probably lace and various items that tempted the ladies, mainly. And he got the name “Probably” from our family because of the fact that he always started his conversation with, “Probably you want some-t'ing today.” And one memory I have of him that he possibly — I know from his reaction he didn't enjoy at all: he sat down in a rocker that wasn't very well balanced when he came in, and as he “Probably you want some-t'ing today” he rocked back rather hard and the rocker tipped over and he sprawled on the floor. And of course we weren't very well trained, and we

laughed and gaffawed and he was disturbed by it. And as I say, I don't know that that was his last trip, but it may have been, because he might have felt that we had planned it.

## VISIT OF A CON-MAN

**Nellie Jones**

*talking to George Packard*

[Note: Mrs. Jones, whose parents were deaf, can use sign language.]

There was a knock on the door on Sunday morning. And I went to the door and opened it and there was a man standing there, and he handed me a little frame with some writing on it. And I read it, and it said that he was a deaf-mute, he was selling needles, would I please buy a needle from him. My daughter was sitting on the davenport, just inside the door. And she said, "Mom, you talk to him." And so I started to talk on my hands. And he grabbed that frame out of my hands, and he went tearing down the street. So I called the marshal, which was Mose Brown. And I told him what had happened. He said, "I'll be right down." So he come on down, and I told him what had happened. He said, "Well, I'll see if I can find him. I'll get him out of town." He said, "We don't want that kind of a guy around here."

## A PEDDLER TRIES FARM WORK

**C. R. Miller**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Oh, they were pack peddlers to start with, and they came to our door one night when it was raining. Wanted to stay all night. Dad let 'em in. He didn't even have to ask Mother if it was all right, he just let 'em in. And they went an' flopped down behind the stove! Was gonna stay there all night, but he got 'em up, made 'em get off the wet coat and get in bed. And I don't know what happened to one of 'em, but the other one come back to get a horse and wagon, and every time he, he made his regular rounds, you know — every time he'd get in that part of the country he'd come to our place to stay all night 'cause he knew he could stay there. And he was a — and he

turned out to be a pretty doggoned decent Syrian.

*You were telling me about — something about corn shucking.*

Oh, he thought corn shucking was big money, gettin' three cents a bushel for it then. So he wanted a team and wagon so he could try it. My older brother rigged 'im up a team and wagon, and he went out and he get in behind Bill, and he's keepin' right up to 'im. My old brother — older brother was a good corn husker, and he knew that that Syrian couldn't keep up to 'im. He went back to see what he's doin' and he's leavin' 'bout every other ear! Just so he could keep up. So Bill made 'im cut it out and shuck it clean as he went — and then come in at noon, and that Syrian peddler says, "Bill, he shucked corn like six men." [Laughs] That — that ended it. He didn't shuck no more corn.



# ECCENTRICS

## THE MONEY-SAVERS

**Vistol Louks**

*talking to George Packard*

When electricity first come in, they lived in a double house, and there wasn't neither one of 'em too smart — with another lady. And they both had electricity, you see; they were supposed to pay half on their side and that — . Well, of course they didn't really understand how *that half* was supposed to be. So the other lady she went someplace in the evening, and she come back and her lights was all on on her side of the house. And there was this old lady and her daughter just a-shellin' beans, gettin' ready to can beans. And she said, "What are you doing over here?" "Well," they said, "we thought we'd save our electricity [laughs], and come over here and use some of yours." When they was paying half the bill.

## JESUS CHRIST'S A-COMIN'

**James Carson**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I had a neighbor over there who was named Letitia Smith, and there was Joe Smith. And every time anything'd happen she'd come over to tell my grandmother about it. One time she come over there and said, "Miss Beer," said, "you heard about it?" And Grandma said, "Heard about what?" Said, "Jesus Christ's a-comin'," said, "he's in Colorado now." Said, "Well, how do you know he is?" Said, "Well, I read it in the paper."

## THE FIRE CHIEF

**Robert Coomey**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

We had a barber in Delphi by the name of John Delany. He was a kind of a amateur prizefighter, and he was fire chief. And he run this barber shop; it didn't make any difference if he had a fellow in there, shaving him or haircut or anything, when the whistle blew he'd leave him. And one day I saw him running from the barber shop (right across the street over there; they tore the building down now). He ran up this way, the fire truck pulled out, he rounded the corner here chugging and leaning over, and he made the corner here and caught the fire truck out of the air. He saw it was Old Settler's Day — and he fell off the fire truck. So he said falling off the fire truck cost him \$80 that day in barber business.

## THE ANIMAL-KEEPER

**Walter Galloway**

*talking to Sally McKinney*

I do have one particular case that I'll relate about. There was an old bachelor who lived close to West Point. . . . And he was a great cattleman. He had a big herd of Angus cattle, and he did oil paintings, and he had a great knowledge of Indian lore. . . . That's up around West Point there, and he had Indian darts and beads and paintings — Indian lore — it was wonderful.

Well, he called me one evening. It was long, late in the Fall, and it was getting pretty chilly and cold, to deliver a calf, and I drove up there, and he had this Black Angus cow in the basement of a barn where they had no electricity. So our work had to be done by the old coal-oil lantern. And if you can imagine catchin' the — and restraining a Black Angus cow in a dark basement of the barn. We couldn't get anything any blacker hardly. So we — we finally got the calf, and the calf was a freak. It was a freak calf in that he had developed wrong side out.

So when I got the calf, he wanted me to come in and warm up. Well, he lived in this old frame home, and when I went in the home, I noticed he had quite a menagerie of chickens, cats, and dogs in his home. And in the middle of the floor was an old black cast-iron

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So when I got the calf, he wanted me to come in and warm up. Well, he lived in this old frame home, and when I went in the home, I noticed he had quite a menagerie of chickens, cats, and dogs in his home. And in the middle of the floor was an old black cast-iron

skillet, about half full of milk. On one side was a black cat lappin' milk, and on the other side was an old Rock hen, just scoldin' that cat something terrible, you know. And the old hen had a — she was just as healthy lookin' as she could be, and yet she was scoldin' this cat. And then over on the other side here was an overstuffed chair on which an old banty hen was tryin' to get a baby chick (who had just feathered out good) to get up on the arm of the chair and fly from there on up on the head of a — of a deer that had horns, you know, and that's where they roosted.

That was — it was, like I say, it was better than a five-ring circus. And he had so many cats, I think there was — he kept his dresser drawers all open, so that, he said, they liked to get in there and sleep, in those dresser drawers. Well, he was quite a character. And he finally got so many dogs that he'd go and buy bags of dog food and he'd just bring 'em out and put 'em on the floor and cut the bag open, and they all come and eat as they wanted, see. So he was good. He was a very kind-hearted fella and very concerned about God's creatures.

## THE COLLECTOR

**Snyder Campbell**

*talking to George Packard  
and group at Thorntown*

Everybody in town knew that he was, like you talked about, the peculiar type, the eccentric person. And when he passed away, I think there were some distant-like relatives in around the Darlington area or someplace, but in order to settle his estate they walked into his house. It was so unbelievable! . . . When this gentleman died in there, this house had newspapers, rooms full of newspapers stacked from floor to ceiling. And they had about ten-twelve foot ceilings in there. And there were cartons, big cardboard cartons of breakfast cereal. You wouldn't believe —. You know, the breakfast cereal, the dry cereal, comes in boxes of different types. These were cartons of them. Carton after carton. There was Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Post Bran and Shredded Wheat Biscuits and all. These were the big —. He bought it by the carton, not by the — by the case, not by the box. I don't know, I would say that there were probably forty or fifty cartons of that in

that house someplace. The rats, the mice all knew about it. And that place was full of cats.

But he had some of the most remarkable things I've ever seen. He had boxes — and having been in the clothing business I know what they were. They were cases about that big, and square. They were hat boxes, and they were packed six to a carton. And he had top hats, not only derbies: he had top hats, the silk top hats. That had never been on anyone. Brand new, had been there for years. Derbies? He must have had twenty-four or -five derbies in there. Most of 'em were never been on a head! And these top hats! He had felt hats. He had celluloid collars. You remember the celluloid collars you used to wear, of the different points? Can you remember ever seeing any of those?

*Listeners: Yes, I remember.*

He had box after box of those that had never been used. They were in their original —. Little bow ties. He had white dress shirts. Oh, golly, I don't know how many. Most of them were collarless, 'cause they used a stud here and a pin back there and fastened them under. They were in their original boxes. They were packed three, some of them four to a box. You wouldn't believe —. You could barely get in and out of that house, and there was about what? — six to eight rooms in that house. It was jammed full clear to the ceiling. Gee, it was a monumental mess, that's all!

## LADIES AT THE HEALTH SPA

**Charlie Story**

*talking to Carol Burke*

My brother, he used to work down there [Mudlavia]. If he was livin' he'd tell you what it was. . . . All I know, he hopped bells there. He used to go up with water. Somebody wanted somethin' up in their room, so he'd take it up to 'em, water or somethin', up on the elevator. Said he went up there one time, and old Mrs. Cramer, she wanted ice water or somethin' and he took it up there. And he went in there and everybody was playing cards, all the women. Every doggone woman had her clothes off, playin' cards!

## I REMEMBER WASH FINNEY

Harry Ulrey

*talking to Carol Burke*

He was an old good-for-nothing. They said in his younger days old Wash had been a stone mason, said he was good, too. But so far as I know, I never knew him to do a lick a work in my life that amounted to anything. He was a good gardener. He lived in one of those little towns, a ghost town pretty near on the Monon there, and his garden backed up to the railroad right-of-way, the railroad fence there, oh a sixteen inch fence between there. And he was on good terms with the section men there. And they'd take ties out of the railroad, out of the road, and most of them weren't rotten; they were just beaten up and cut by the rails and spiked till they just wouldn't have anything to attach the spike to anymore.

They'd been there — they had a trailer on the back of their motor car there, and they'd take those ties out and pile them on the car there. They'd take 'em down, lying there, and come up there to old Wash's garden, and they'd throw them over into the garden. And old Wash'd saw them up into wood, made good wood. Most of them were impregnated with creosote, a lot of them were. Burn like fury! That's how Wash got his fuel in winter, and I think in the summer he lived for most of the part out of his garden. He was a good gardener. And other than that I think maybe the township trustee might of known how —. But other than that, I think, Lord only knows, only knew how he lived.

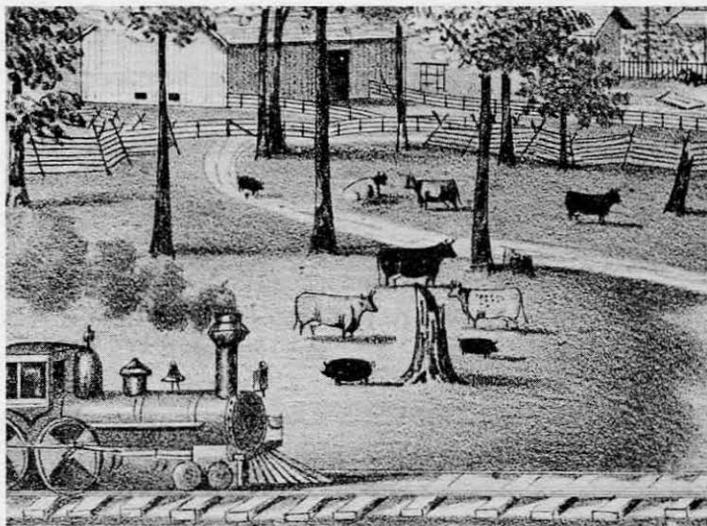
But you know what happened? The unheard-of happened. Old Wash went out and got married. I don't know where he resurrected that woman from. She musta come down the river. She certainly was no beauty queen. But they did say that old Wash was uncommonly polite and nice with her. Says old Wash, "Mrs. Finney."

Well, they said that old Wash was out in the garden one day there, and the section men, just exactly at noon, just exactly at noon hour, the section men come down with the motor car and stopped right in front of his house. And they had three or four ties on the trailer there, and they threw 'em over the fence. Old Wash was out there at the fence — hangin' over the fence there gabbin'. And it was just exactly at noon, and they carried their lunch with 'em, and they set down on the brim of the road there and set down there and eat their lunch. And old Wash, old Wash started to shootin' off.

Well, he was there shootin' off at the mouth, and his new bride come to the back door, "Wash, come on and eat your dinner." He's hard a-hearing, pretty hard a-hearing. He didn't hear 'em, and he kept on shootin' off, shootin' off. And pretty soon, she come out again, "Wash, come on in and get your dinner, it's gettin' cold." He didn't hear, and he kept on shootin' off. Pretty soon she come out again after a bit, "WASH, YOU OLD DAMN SON OF A BITCH, COME IN AND GET YOUR DINNER. DAMNED IF I DON'T THROW IT OUT TO THE CHICKENS! NOW I MEAN IT!" He stepped back, "Well, by God, boys, I believe Mrs. Finney's callin' me."

*Did you ever go there where he lived?*

Oh, Lord, he died there while I was at the lumber yard, and they stuck the lumber yard for the lumber to line his grave with. He was a character if there ever was one.



# WORK

## GETTING A JOB

**Esther Miller**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Well, you had to be sixteen years old to work there, and I was just fifteen. So my grandmother told me to take a sixteen number and put it in my shoe. "And," she said, "when they ask you how old you are, Esther, you won't be telling a lie. You'll be over sixteen."

## LAND OF PLENTY

**Hendrik Van Doorn**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I want to quote you an old lady over there [in Holland]. I did some work for her in her yard, and I told her that I was planning to go to the United States. "Well," she told me, "you get buckwheat pancakes for breakfast, for one thing." And she said, "Well, now you have made your bread and butter here, but when you get to the United States you will probably be able to put some meat on it."

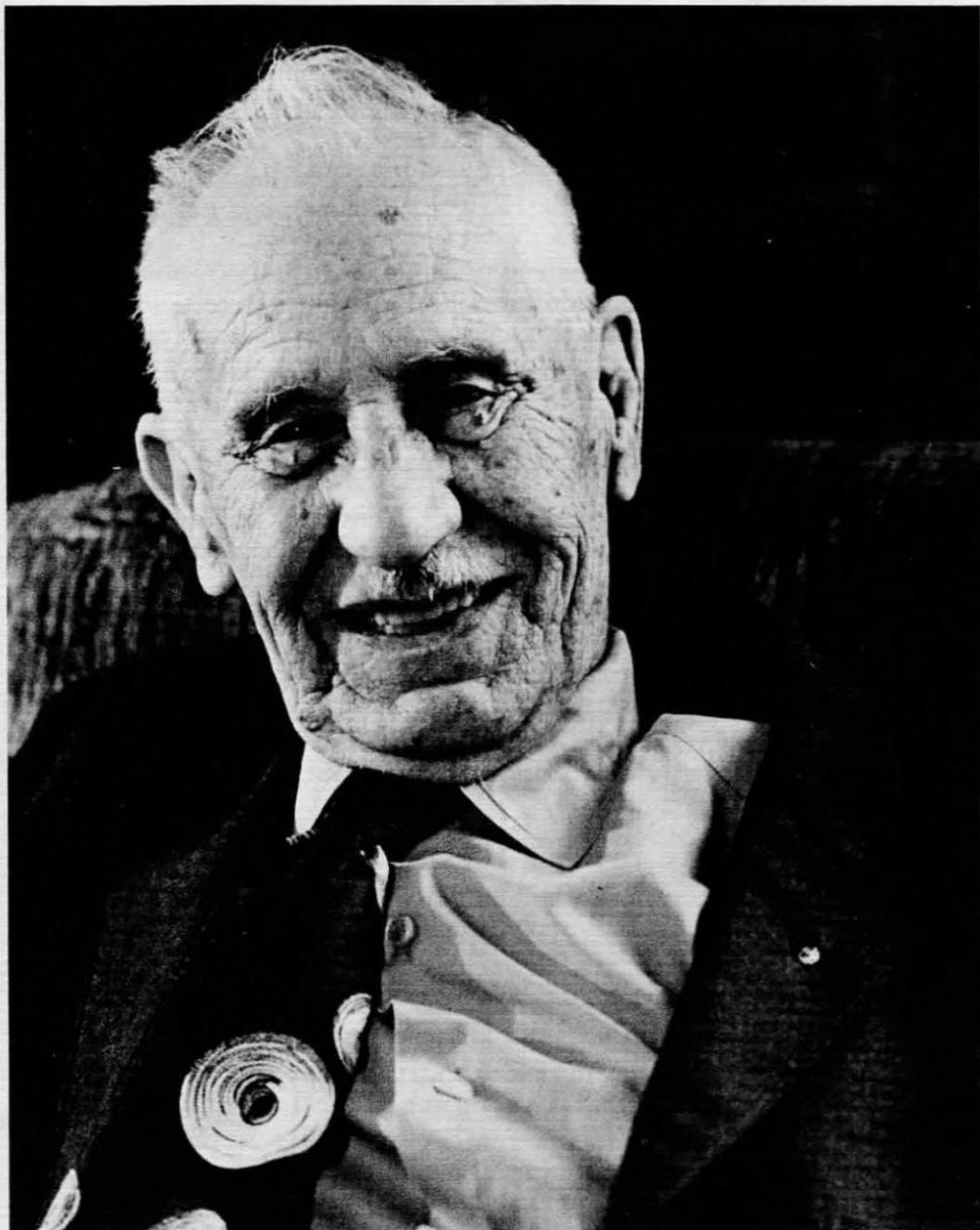
## STRIKE

**Marie Dunk**

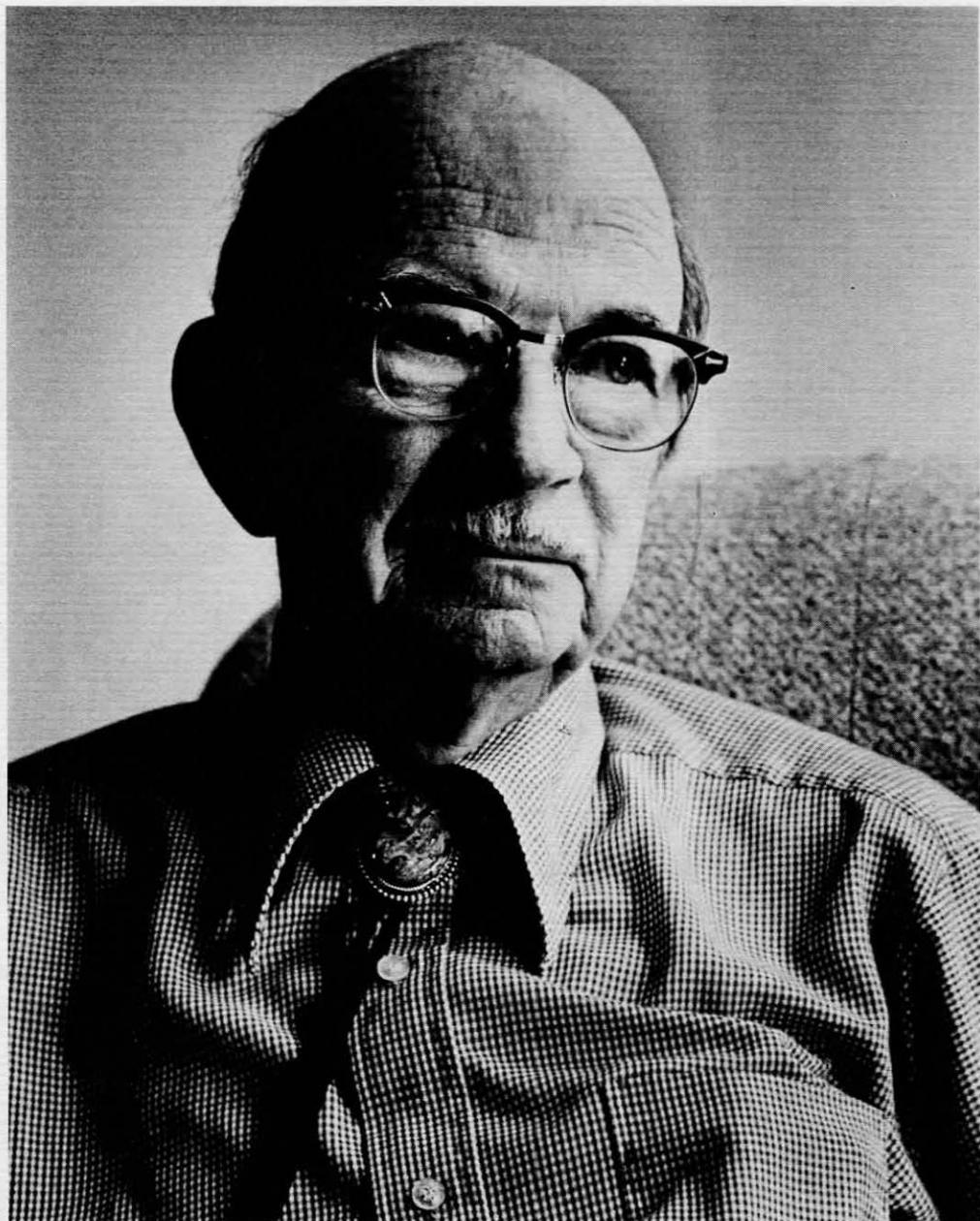
*talking to Carol Burke*

*Did they ever tell you what it was like to first come here?*

At first they were lost, you know, you might know, but there was other people from the old country, too, and so that's where they went. And then Dad got a job at a steel company, unloading steel, and he — and they knew he couldn't talk — he didn't know what they were talking about, he just listened. And so they said, "We're going on a strike." They said, "Now when the boss comes, don't go to work, sit down and say, 'Strike.'" Well, when the boss come, Dad didn't get up. He sit there, he says, "Strike." And everytime the boss would say something he says, "Strike." The other guys jumped up and went to work. But he set there: "Strike," he says. But Dad got a raise anyway.



Harry F. Ulrey



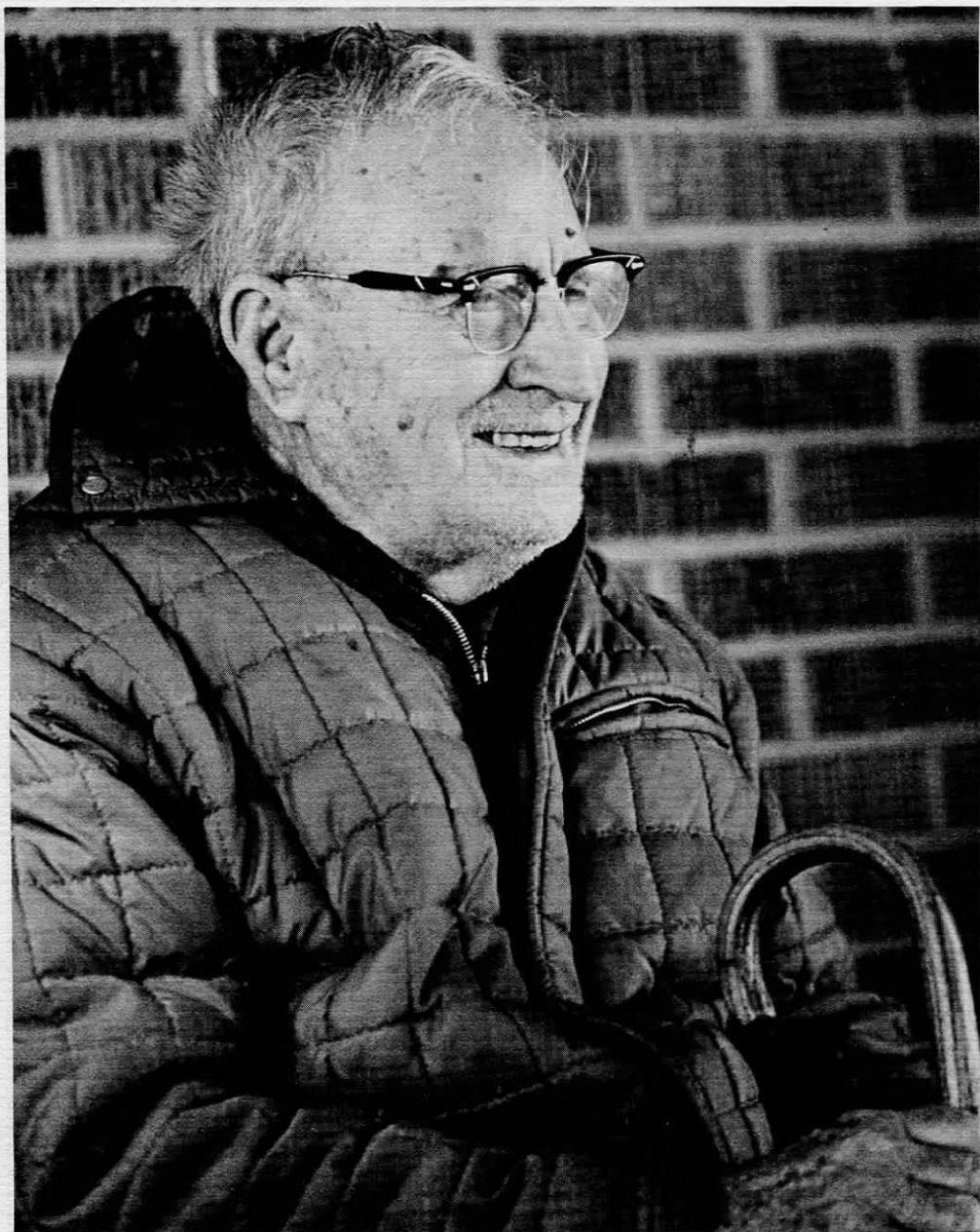
Kenneth H. White



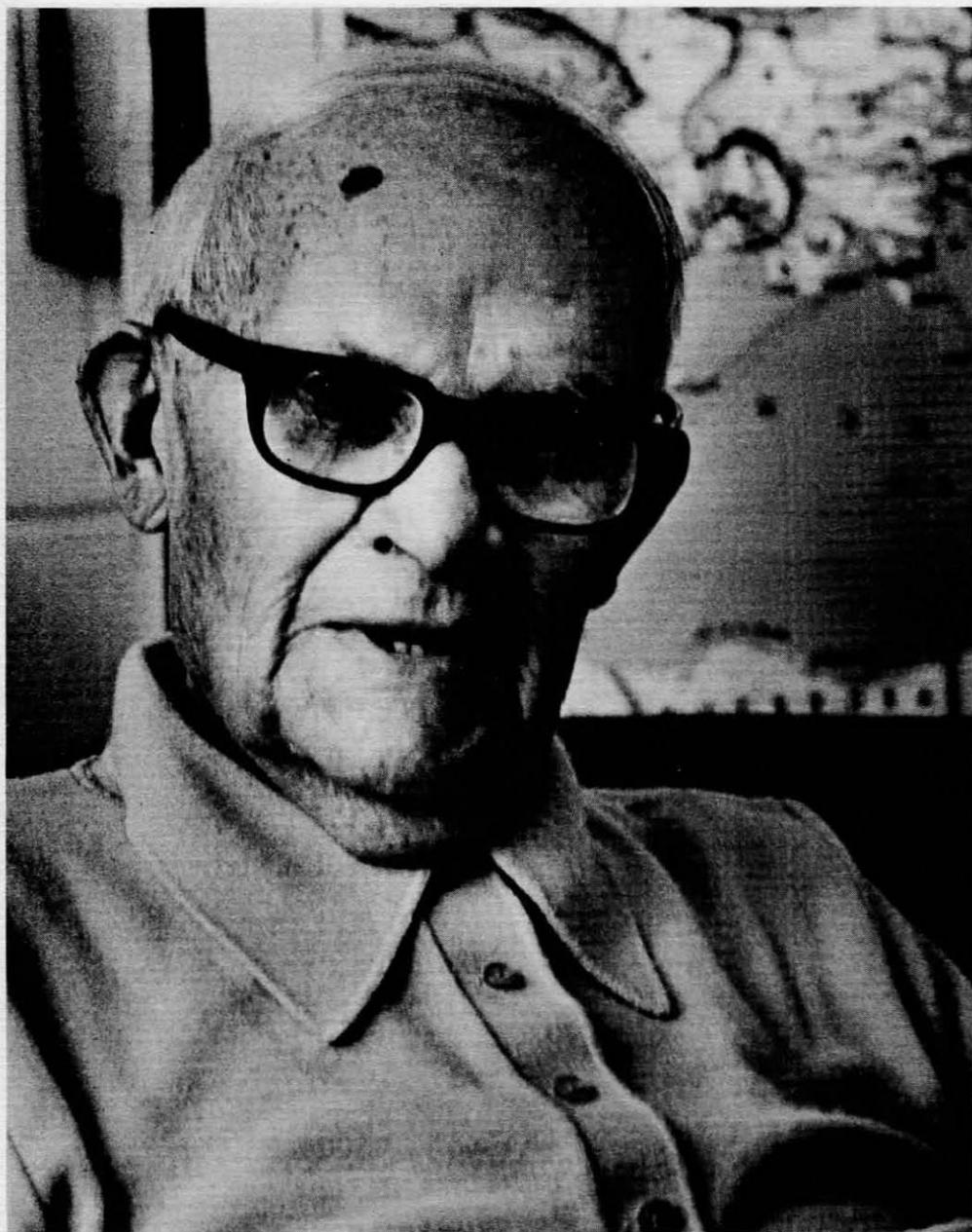
Vistol Louks



Nora M. Connely



Clarence Bear



Carl Tuttle



Mabel Schilling

## MARRIED TEACHERS

**Marjorie Higbee**

*talking to George Packard*

In the mid-1920's it was just understood that your teaching career was finished when you married. And I was married in 1926, so my three years of teaching — I collected what I had in the retirement fund, forty-five dollars for three years of teaching, and gave up teaching from then on, I thought. That same year, or the next year, a Crawfordsville teacher married in the middle of the summer, after she had signed her contract at the end of the school year, in May or June. And the first of September she appeared at school ready to teach in the Crawfordsville schools. And the principal and the powers that be were amazed at her temerity. And she said, "Well, I signed the contract; I'm ready to teach." And they said, "But you're *married*." And she said, "So I'm married. I'm a teacher." And every day she appeared at school, and she brought a suit to have her contract honored. And finally they told her she didn't need to come to school every day, that if she won the suit they would do what was necessary. . . . So she just waited it out, and she won her case. From then on, there probably were teachers afraid, but that broke the back of the practice.

## TEACHING AND TRAPPING

**Minor Baker**

*talking to George Packard*

Now I'm a retired teacher. . . and I started teaching in 1924 in a one-room country school. The teacher the year before had failed to get her primary class ready for the first grade. So I could — had nine grades. I had thirty-three pupils in nine grades.

*Wow. All in one room?*

All in one room.

*How did you manage that?*

Well, we had to let the older children take care of the younger ones most of the time. Now in nine grades actually that meant ten minutes for each class per subject. So we had to let — start one of the primary classes, and let the older children take over, while I went on with some of the middle grades.

And I lived about eight miles from school. And the roads were so bad that I had to walk. And I walked up a creek, and I set traps, and I actually made more with selling fur than I did teaching school.

## AT A SAWMILL IN CANADA

**Frank Wagner**

*talking to Carol Burke*

He said, "Come over when you wanna make another move." He says, "I know the fellow, and I'll get you acquainted." So come the Fourth of July, by golly, I said, "Now, I'm gonna go." And I did that day; I got in there in the evening. He told me — he give me his number, where to call, and I called up at the boardin' house where he boarded. "Well," she said, "he ain't here now, but he's gonna be here, for he's got a meetin' tonight, and he'll have to get here." She said, "Who is this?" And I told her who I was and told her why. "He told us about you," she says.

So I looked him up. I went — they had a good hotel and a kind of a bum one. And I went to the best, of course. He laughed when he come. I was standing out in front. He was a jolly old preacher. He wasn't old either. And he said, "By golly. Frank, you're puttin' up at the best hotel in town!" I said, "I just went in, Reverend, to use the telephone." [Laughs] And he said, "Well, you come on up to the house. I'll talk to the lady, and you can board and room up there." And he had the foreman with him. He introduced me to him. He says, "You come out in the morning. I'll let you pick your job." I thought, "Well, by golly."

So I stayed all night, and I went out next morning to the factory and seen him and blowed the whistle and rarin' to go. Well, he motioned for me to come, and I went out.

Where the saw would come out, them big slabs, some of them, *that* thick on one end — pick them up and carry 'em just a little piece and throw 'em on the conveyor to take 'em outside, see. And I throwed two or three of them, and he looked up. And I says, "Not this." And he said, "Come on." I went on. He showed me another job. "Ah," I said, "I wouldn't like that. I don't know how to work that one." "Well," he said, "now, Frank, how would you like to be a helper a-loadin' the cars?" Well, that was all nice smooth lumber,

you know, and the other fella would be the boss and I's just the helper. And I says, "I'd like that." Well, he took me over and away we went. Me and the fellas talked awhile, and he had to go to the office. I didn't have to do nothin' but sit down in the shade till he get back. So we got along fine.

We was passin' a car, unloadin' it to take it over to the planing mill. And then, you know, just smart alecks, 'n they pulled a great big piece of timber to run down the slides. And then they wired the top to hold the lumber in. He threwed one of them at me. And I just turned right around, and I grabbed that up, and I put it right back up there. I got it back on top of the car, but it was too heavy to throw to him. I'd a liked to knock him off.

My boss turned around and said, "What did he do?" I said, "He throwed that *at* me, and damn him," I said, "I throwed her back at him, too." Never done it again. Just tryin' me out, that's the way they do. You got to fight for yourself. I was always told that, and that's what I always done. I never had no trouble. Just a little thing like that — never 'mounted to anything. Never come to nothing.

*And you got along OK with them afterwards?*

Oh yeah, yeah. I worked there till I wanted to go to shuckin' corn, and I wanted to get back to Indiana for that.

## FALSE TEETH

**David Anderson**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I also worked for a junk yard and tire store that's here in Lebanon. At that time I could buy a bunch of rags. Had an old hand-powered elevator that took 'em up there. And they had three floors — yeah two floors. Those rags had different bins. The fact of the case, we had fourteen different bins. I had to sort them rags and drop 'em in the bins and then go down and run 'em through a big hand baler. . . . The woolen rags at that time was a high, high-priced rag. And the next came a wiper rag, which was — some rags was clean, and so they were clean wipers for machine shops and things, you know, wiped the oil off with 'em. Some of 'em sold as clean, and the other was used wipers.

One time I dumped out a set there — rolled out a perfectly good set of false teeth. And of course I could always think of

somethin'. We had a girl workin' in the office that I'd call very squeamish. So I stuck these teeth in my pocket. The office had a fireplace with a mantle over it. When she was gone to dinner while I happen to be in the office, so I sets the teeth up facin' out. I was pretty sure she could see 'em. And yeah, she saw 'em. She blamed me for it, but she let out an awful scream, you know. I claimed I didn't know nothin' about it.

About that time the boss come in, said, "What's the matter?" and I said, "Well, Cecile's accusin' me of settin' that set of false teeth up there to torment her." He went over and looked at it, and he said, "Them's good," and he stuck 'em in his pocket.

Long about in the middle of the afternoon he come around where I was workin', and he said, "Just show you how come you don't amount to nothing and maybe never will." I said, "Now what?" "Well," he said, "there's two dollars," said, "that dentist was glad to give me two dollars for that set of false teeth." "Well," I said, "they wouldn't fit nobody." "No," he said, "he takes them all out. They was good teeth. And he'd put them in a plate for somebody." He said, "It's what you've got to learn, so you know money when you see it."

## FIRST BATH

**Georgia Hass**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*What was nursing like in those days?*

Well, it was rugged. It was really very rugged. We stayed on duty about twelve hours. At the end of eight hours, if we really wanted to, we could leave, but they never had enough nurses, so we always stayed on. It was really awfully hard work.

[There was] this man I gave a bath to. I thought I would die. I opened the door and went in, and there he was, taking up most of the bed. He was a truck driver. He drove these great enormous trucks around, and his muscles bulged and rippled. So I washed his face and I got down to his chest and I [laughs] thought that I'd never get across. And finally he says, "Am I the first man you ever bathed?" and I says, "Oh, no, I've bathed dozens of them." And after that I found if I didn't ring my washcloth out so hard I could cover more territory [laughs]. So I got him bathed, and I went out

to see the sisters, and I said, "Don't give me a man like that until I have a bit more practice." Oh, he was enormous!

## DOC FINNEY, THE VET

C. R. Miller

*talking to Carol Burke*

It must have been about twenty years ago. I lived on a farm out at Sloan. I bought a team of western mares. I brought 'em home. I fed 'em corn. They had never eaten corn before, so they ate cob and all. One of them choked. I called Doctor Ford at Pence to come down at night. He gave it a bunch of stuff to make it slobber, and says, "She'll be all right in the morning," and he went home.

In the morning that mare was still choked. I called for Ford, and he'd gone to Florida. So I called old Doc Finney. He used to be a veterinarian in West Lebanon, but he was a cattle inspector for the State of Illinois, lived at Georgetown, Illinois. Saturday noon I called him up 'cause I knew he'd be home. I said, "Doc, I got a horse choked up here. Can you come up and unchoke her?" He says, "Well, I don't know, Ray, whether I can unchoke her or not, but I'll come up and see you." And I says, "Fine."

So he loaded his wife in a touring car they had there, and they had the whole back seat filled with stuff to unchoke that colt. We were neighbors before he moved to Illinois, so he wanted to come in to visit a while, and he did.

After about a half an hour, he says, "Ray, I want to see that colt." I take him out to the barn, and he gets 'er like this and says, "Hmmm, it's way down there, isn't it?" I says, "All I know is she's choked." He says, "Go to the house 'n get me some soda." I went to the house and got him a box of soda. He had a drenching bottle. (That's where you pour the medicine down the horse's neck, you know.) He filled that about half full of water and two tablespoonfuls of soda in that.

*Just regular baking soda?*

Yes. Now he said, "Just get her head up." So I threw the collar up over a rafter sill and got her head up. And he started pouring down. And that horse just rared up, just going like that, you know. I let her down. He says, "Now lead her out; see if she'll drink." I led her out, and that horse — I thought she was going to

drink that tank dry. She hadn't had anything to drink, you know, since the day before. And he says, "Now, remember, Ray, some of the simplest remedies will do the most good." I said, "What did that do?" And he said, "That soda — she'd been choked so long it was irritated in there, you know. That soda down there began to bubble and expand, and expanded her throat, and let that slip down." That sounds reasonable. That actually happened.

## THE THRASHING RING

**Ralph Goodwin**

*talking with Carol Burke  
and Helen Goodwin*

People from all round here for a mile around would all come together, and they'd have what they called a thrashing ring, meeting. Well, of course, what they needed, they needed bundle wagons, which was to haul the grain from the field into the thrashing machine, and they had to have somebody to take care of the thrashed grain as it came out and put it in the bins or in the — or haul it to the market or whatever they did with their grain. And they had to have pitchers, which was thrown up with a fork, and he was on the ground, walkin' along, you know. He'd come to a shock of wheat or oats or barley or whatever it was, and he'd pick them bundle by bundle and throw it up on the wagon. And the fella up there would raise 'em, you know, and load 'em up. Everybody had a certain job to do. Now that's what they called a thrashing ring. And we had those.

Well, when noon came they all went to the house where they was thrashing, to eat. And my mother — I've seen her kill three and four chickens at a time, see, when they was going to have —

*Helen: And the women in the neighborhood, they'd all help each other, too.*

And the women would come in, you know, and they'd all help pitch in, you see. And they didn't have screens in those days, you know, to keep out the flies. And be some woman with a fly broom, they called it. And it was a lot of paper cut in long strips about that long [1½'] tied to the end of a stick, you know, and she'd just wave that around over the table to keep the flies from gettin' into the

food. No screens, you see, in those times. People just takes a lot of things for granted now that used to be a luxury.

## GOOD AND BAD FOOD AT THRASHING TIME

**Louise Thurman**

*talking to Martin Light*

I don't think there's anything you can think of that they didn't have for dinner — three or four or maybe five kinds of vegetables. We always had beef of some kind and always ham and chicken. We always had that many kinds of meat and always had noodles and potato salad was a standard. All of those things. And usually by the time they thrashed we had fresh tomatoes sliced. And Mother used to worry. Well, they'd had so many green beans she'd just be afraid they wouldn't eat green beans, or they'd had so many sliced tomatoes she didn't believe they'd eat sliced tomatoes anymore. And I think when it came time for noon the men were all so tired and so hungry they just *ate*. I think they'd have eaten anything now, I think — anything that was set before them they would have thought was good.

And there was a house or two — one especially — in the neighborhood that was not rated as especially clean. And Dad, of course, raised his own horses, and he always managed to have one brood mare and a little colt when they thrashed. He seldom used that mare except that particular day, and he always drove her, used her that day, and he had to go home at noon in order for the colt to nurse. And that way he could eat dinner at home. [Laughter] He wasn't the only one that did it either.

## MUSSEL SHELLS

**Agnes Rider**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

*You never swam in the creek?*

No, I waded in it to get them mussel shells. I used to help pick — get them. That wasn't no easy job either.

*What did you do with your mussel shells?*

Sold 'em. They had a buyer to come past after we got a certain amount, big amount. . . . I found a pearl that was shaped like a button, flat on the bottom and rounded up, and it was a beet-reddish color right in the center there where I call the eye of the button. And it was all shaped off and kept a circle around, going around. And as each circle, it seemed like, went around, why, it got a different color, and oh!

And I had 'em in with what they call the slugs. They was called pearls, but they wasn't only just slugs, that's all you could get out of 'em. And I found that'un that night, and 'fore I went to bed I looked at the shell, you know, the meat out of the shells. That's where they was embedded, you know, in the meat. And oh, I was just hollerin'. My husband came up to see what was the matter. And I said, "Well, I got something awful pretty I want to show you, and I want something made out of it for me." He went — when he took the shells (what do you call it?) to sell 'em, the fellow got a glimpse of that there pearl, and he just kept after Art and kept after Art till finally he offered him I think it was \$77 for it. Well, I said, "He'd a-paid a heck of a lot more than that for it if I'd been along, 'cause he would never have got to see it in the first place." 'Cause I didn't have very much faith in them-there travelling men.

## LOCAL INVENTION

**Robert Coomey**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

They had a button factory in Pittsburg. Pittsburg then was bigger than Delphi, and all the people in Pittsburg (I suppose some of Delphi, too) made their living off from the river off of musselin' they called it. They would pick these mussel shells along there. They was so much a ton, and they would sell 'em and they would make a livin' in those days. And one fella came in the shop (where my dad was runnin' the tin shop) and he had a plan [for] a "mussel looker" made with two joints of pipe about twelve or fourteen inches at the bottom and it would taper down to about six inches at the top. It was about four to five foot long, maybe four foot long. And they put rubber — they took a rubber tube around the top of the pipe at the small end and that was where they put their face down to it. Well, at the bottom of this pipe they put a piece of thick

glass, windshield glass, and cut it round and put it in there. Well, at first they put putty in there. They put putty in, and then put a piece down over it and then my dad would solder it all around solid. And that was called a "mussel looker."

## THE DOWSER

C. R. Miller

*talking to Carol Burke*

*You're a Dowsler, right?*

Oh, [laughing] I suppose so.

*When did you first start doing that?*

When I's thirty-five years old.

*When you were married, right?*

Oh yeah. I'd married and lived in a little cottage at Pence. One day I saw my neighbor goin' around and round his house a-holdin' that peach stick. I said, "What in the hell are you doin'?" He says, "I'm tryin' to find me water — a well." I says, "Aw." He says, "Come over an' try it." An' I went over an' tried it. Boy! that thing — I just couldn't start to hold it. That, that started me out. That's — I's thirty-five years old 'fore I ever knew I could do it.

*What did you think when you found out you could?*

I thought: Boy, I wasted a lot of time.

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At Pence one time they wanted a well in the Catholic cemetery, and the trustee lived right beside of me, and he says, "We'll get Ray to go out with us and tell us where to dig." Priest says, "What does he know about it?" This Chet Umholts that's who it was, says, "You'll find out." Went out there and I had to cut three sticks — one for each trustee, y'know, and I give 'em, one to each of 'em. I give the trustees one to each of 'em, made three and mine was four, and I says, "Where d'you want the well?" And they says, "Oh, on the south side of the cemetery some place." And I went over there — right in the middle an' I started east.

Well, I's in the lead an' I found four or five veins a-goin' around. Ask a fellow if they ever felt anything comin' over there, and says, "No, not a thing." I says, "Well, it's just not in you then." So we went back, and I says, "You try it with me." One got ahold of one

side and I took ahold the other side, and I just laid my hand on the back his neck and I started across there. And the priest was watchin' it, and the stick go down and that fella tryin' to hold it and he couldn't hold it, see? And the Priest, see, he's having' a lot of fun. Elmo says, "You try it with 'im." So the Priest got ahold of it with me, and I had just cut the peach-stick. I didn't trim it very good and it was sharp — edges of the limbs I'd cut off y'know. And the Priest held it just as hard as he could hold it, finally let loose and said, "Gee whiz, that'd cut your hand off!" So that night we had a meeting of the Legion in Earl Park, and he's tellin' the boys then how — what, what we did. He says, "I don't know what he's got that the rest of us hasn't got," says, "it might be oil or it might be water or it might be diamonds or whatever it is." Says, "I'm gonna go and live with him two weeks and," he says, "I'd like to see how he lives!"

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I'll tell you one thing, whenever I witch a well I'm tired.

*Are you really?*

Yes.

*It must exhaust you.*

Something — I don't know what it is. But I can witch a well and I'm just as tired as if I'd worked all day. Now, you're the first one I ever told that to. I — I didn't want people to think that I's puttin' myself out for 'em, y'know it; I's just a-helpin' 'em as far's I could. But I really put myself out because — it does make you tired somehow — something goes out of you into that stick. I don't know.

## THE DEPRESSION

**Vernie Frank**

*talking to Carol Burke*

One woman came in [the bank]. She said, "Well, if you close your doors, I'm gonna come in and hunt around till I find my money." I said, "Well, your money was loaned out." "I didn't put my money in here to be loaned out." I said, "Well, didn't you ever see our ads in the paper that we lend money on real estate?" We didn't lend on personal loans or anything like that. It was always on real

estate. Well, she didn't put her money in there to be loaned out. "Well," I said, "whose money do you think we loaned on these properties?" "Well, I supposed you loaned your own." Well, it was a several million dollar organization at that time, and I said, "Well, none of us have that kind of money."

## IT WAS A TERRIBLE THING

**Kenneth White**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*What were conditions like in Indianapolis during the Depression?*

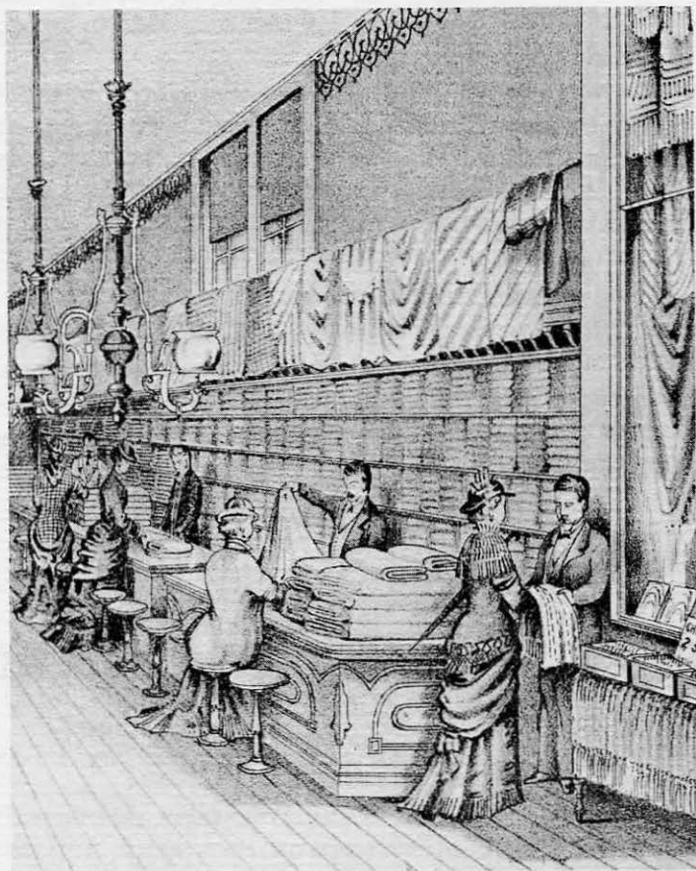
Just the same as they were anywhere else. If you had any job at all you were lucky. Pay was minimal. But you felt lucky if you had any job at all that paid enough that you could eat once in a while. Are you a little too young to remember the Depression vividly? It was a terrible thing.

I was selling printer's ink, among other things. I called on a printer, pretty well known, up on the top floor of a building, and I had a [new] product, you know, had a certain talking-point, and I was telling him about this ink I had. I thought he ought to buy a pound, try it. "Well, how much is it?" I said, "Three dollars." He said, "If I had three dollars, I wouldn't jump outa that window." So I left; I says, "Well, all right." Pretty well-known fellow. I knew that that wasn't the reason that he didn't buy the ink.

So I left, got down on the elevator, saw [near] the building a crowd of people down there on the base — on the support. I inquired, "What goes on there?" "Some fellow jumped outa the window." And it was that fellow. He jumped out of that eighth floor window. Right on the sidewalk. He was a mess. Well, it turned out that he was bankrupt. The Depression had caused him you see. Couldn't meet his obligations, and he had a lion by the tail, he had that overhead and no way of getting out of it, nobody to buy it. We even had a fellow jump off the top of the monument down there. And he came down and he hit one of those wreaths that one of those statues was holding up and knocked the end of that wreath right off — stone.

People were hungry. It was the most corroding thing. Now I made just enough money that I could get by. Because if you had a job it didn't pay you much because there were twenty-five, thirty

people that would like to have that job for less money than you were being paid. It was a terrible thing. People that went through it acknowledged that it made a mark on them.



# THE UNCANNY

## OLD DAN'S GHOST

**Lester and Cordelia Strawmyer**  
*talking to Carol Burke*

Lester: The first night we lived in our house after we was married you'd almost think they's ghosts — ghosts or something. *Why did you? Were there noises?*

Lester: Well, I guess there's a man that killed himself there a few years before that. And my dad, of course — we went to leavin' to go down there to our home. We'd been up to Dad's that evening, and he said, "Wonder old Dan'll come out tonight." Well, somebody before us had left an ice box in the back part of the house, and, why, that ice box fell over.

Cordelia: Wasn't broken or nothin'.

Lester: It fell over. Of course, I laid there like I was asleep, and the wind blew out there whooooooooo! You'd think the old devil really had us! And she punched me a little bit, Cordelia punched me a little bit. She said [whispers], "Did you hear that, Lester?" I said, "Yes." But I don't know, did we ever have nerve enough to go find out what it was?

Cordelia: I wanted to light a lamp, and you said, "No," so we just laid there and shivered.

## THE GHOSTLY POT OF LARD

**James Carson**  
*talking to Carol Burke*

The farmhouse they moved into, you know, was one with those old stairs, you know, about two steps up, then go up. And there was a pot of lard settin' there, and the window was opened, and the wind blowed that pot of lard, dropped down off of them two steps.

My grandmother was, my grandmother was so superstitious, she believed all kinds of ghost stories and things. And she thought that pot of lard got up and walked down those steps. And that night her and the kids and her brother-in-law set up all night. And the next day she loaded up all the furniture and headed back for

Danville, and they met my grandfather comin' along and told him he could go out there and stay if he wanted but she wasn't goin' back there.

## ANGELS WILL CARE FOR HER

**Mabel Schilling**

*talking to Jean Hubbard*

When I was a little girl just ten years old, I had a teacher, a Sunday School teacher that we girls adored. She was a lovely thing. She had a little girl two years old. And that little thing choked on a bite of meat. And she carried it a mile down the road to a neighbor to get help. But when she got there, the little thing was dead.

So she asked my mother if my mother thought that I would help carry the casket of that baby. And I think that was one of my first introductions to death. I was — I grew up with people dying in the community, but that was it, but this, this was something else. This was a very dear friend of mine and a very precious little girl. We had seen her from the time she was three weeks old in church, and we would sit and try to entertain her during the church service and all.

And there was four little girls, and we were all ten years old, and we carried that baby. And I — we took it to Colburn, which is a little town close to us; we didn't have a cemetery in Ockley. And we took it to Colburn, and I was so disturbed when I got home at night, I didn't sleep good that night. And my mother heard me, and she called and she said, "What's the matter?" And I said, "I can see Christine" (that was the little girl's name) "I can see Christine, and I feel like the flowers are just smothering her. She's just so covered with flowers she can't get her breath." And my mother said, "Well," she said, "the angels are going to take care of her, and don't worry." Well, I was taught if the angels took care of you that was good enough. That was as good as a doctor any day of my life. So that was the way she quieted me and made me so I could sleep.

## GRANDFATHER'S BEDROOM

**Mildred Buckles**

*talking to Patricia Yost*

I was about eight or nine years old, I guess. And I would go down and spend the summers with my grandmother and grandfather. And he had a bedroom in the upstairs of the house. And after he died — I was never afraid of him when he was livin' — but after he died, why, they brought him home. At that time they didn't leave them at the funeral homes; they'd bring them home and show them. Well, grandmother looked at him, and she decided that he just didn't look right to her. The funeral home hadn't fixed his hair to suit her, she said. He always wore this hair oil on it and slicked it down. Well, it was kinda soft and fluffy looking, and she thought he should have that hair oil on there so it would look more natural.

So I had an older cousin, and she tried to get him to go up there into Grandpa's bedroom to get Grandpa's hair oil. And he wasn't about to go up there. He was afraid to go up there. So she asked me to go, and I said No, I wouldn't go either; I was afraid to go. So we decided that both of us — we would go together. We weren't afraid to go together. So we went up to the top of the stairs, and we opened up that door and looked in there, and we saw that hair oil sitting over there on the dresser. And we looked all around the room to see if anybody was in there, and there wasn't. And, boy, we shot over there and got that hair oil and turned around and run back out and slammed the door and went downstairs. I don't know what we were afraid of, but that was his bedroom. And I never was afraid of him when he was livin', but we were afraid of him after he died. I guess we thought his ghost was up there or something.

## THE STONE CORPSES

**Nora Connely**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I can remember one time that in — back in those times they — every once in a while when a family left a community they would go back for their corpses, whatever had happened in the locale that they left from. And I can remember some of those things that just scared me to death. They took up a couple of children.

They must have been, I would say they might have been thirteen or fourteen years old, and they had — their bodies had hardened, had turned to stone. And their hair had grown. The girl's hair had grown clear down around the casket. It was all around the casket. And I know those things made me — I was afraid to go home and go to bed at night when that would happen. But — those things I remember so well. And they took those corpses and buried them in — wherever they lived. And that was quite a common practice.

*So they didn't just remove the coffin —*

No.

*— they opened it up and inspected it?*

They took the whole thing, yeah. I know I finally touched those hard bodies.

*Oh, you saw them?*

Oh, yeah, I saw them. And I touched those hard bodies 'cause I just couldn't think what they said was true. And they kept coaxing. Dad said, "Now you'll, you'll be sorry you didn't touch those if you don't go ahead." And so I did touch them, and they were hard. But every bit of their body was just like it was when they were buried, even to the clothing. And they'd been buried for about I would maybe say ten or twelve years.

*In what kind of coffin?*

It was a wood coffin. It was a wood coffin. I was real interested in knowing what they'd died with that they turned to stone. And they had had a high fever. It had been some kind of a fever that went through that part of the country at that time, and that's why they hardened like that.

But that happens yet. When we were in Washington, D.C., I had a real good friend that her sister-in-law turned to stone. But she just lived and lived and lived. And I know at that time I thought it was a terrible amount of money. But when they got through, when that lady died and they settled their bill, it was \$10,000. And they were well-to-do or they couldn't a paid it. I couldn't a paid that much —

But she, she hardened by degrees, and it seemed to get up to her chest last. And she was just stone, and they never did any embalming or anything. They couldn't. She was just hardened, completely. And I remember that; it was such a strange thing. And I wondered if it had an influence, if what she died with was caused from her life. She had three sons, and they were all retarded.

## THE TOKENS

**Elsie Ohl and**

**Emma Sisk**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Elsie: Oh, I'll tell you. One night I and my husband, we had been down to my mother and father-in-law's and when we started away from the house, why, Mother she always kissed us both and we started away. And we barely got out to the car and there's a great big light. Oh, it just looked like it was *real* big. And right away it started, and it started right where the grandpa — the grandpa had a scale house there, and Uncle Jim and the rest of 'em — right where the scale house was. That's where this big light started.

Well, we got down the road a piece and I said (and I's scared to death) and I said, "Why don't you let that feller around? He's been following us all this time." "Well," he said, "he's got enough room to go 'round. I'll give him enough room." So he did, but, no, the light always stayed like that. And you could just see us in the car just as plain as day, pretty near. And all at once we got down the road for three, four miles and pretty soon there was a man, and he was comin' across the field swingin' a lantern — like this. And I thought, "Well, now he's crossed the ditch already and he wants something." And I said, "You better stop and see what that man wants." And bless your life, all at onc't he's gone when we got there. And [we] never seen him. And we come on home the rest of the way, and it followed us all the way home.

And after we got home, I said, "Let me out quick in front of the house," and he let me out and I went in the house, and I watched and that thing just danced around — like this — all the time; that ball was round! "Well," I thought, "what in the world could that ever be?" I thought, "Well then I'll —" and he was in the garage. And I hurried up —

*Your husband was in the garage?*

— and he hurried up. I hurried him up in the house and had the door open for him to come in. And he said, "What in the world could that be?" I said, "I don't know." Well, then when I told his mother she says, "It's a token," she said.

Well, then a long time after that, why, we lived with some people, and he (the man) was sick, and one night, why, there was a knock — just like that — on the door. And he told my husband to

go (we used to help take care of him, see, this man and woman) and he told him to go there and see if it wasn't our neighbor man with the lantern. "Why," he said, "he ain't out there." Well, by the time he come back it knocked again at the very same place, and he said, "Now you go, go out there and you get him in here." Well, he went out there and looked all over the porch and that — and nothing. And pretty soon it knocked just the way it knocked outside. It knocked right by his chair. And, say, I'm tellin' you he begin to think something and said, "What IS that? That was right by my chair. Is there anything there?" And we said, "No," and then it wasn't long till he passed away. And see, *that* time down there *that* wasn't long till Uncle Jim passed away, see?

*With the lantern you mean?*

The relation, he was a brother to this here, to my father-in-law, and he passed away. And I said, "Oh my, that was enough for me." I was scared pink. Oh, I was. I was scared pink. I didn't know what was comin' 'cause when you saw this big ball of fire —

Well, then, we had a neighbor lady, and she was sick. And she just lived over from our house. And one evening I's standin' at the window a-lookin' out the glass door and here I saw the big light, just like I saw then, right goin' over their house. And I thought, "Oh goodness sake," I thought, "and here I've never been over to see her, not onc't." "I'd better hurry up and get my clothes on," I said to my husband, "and get over there."

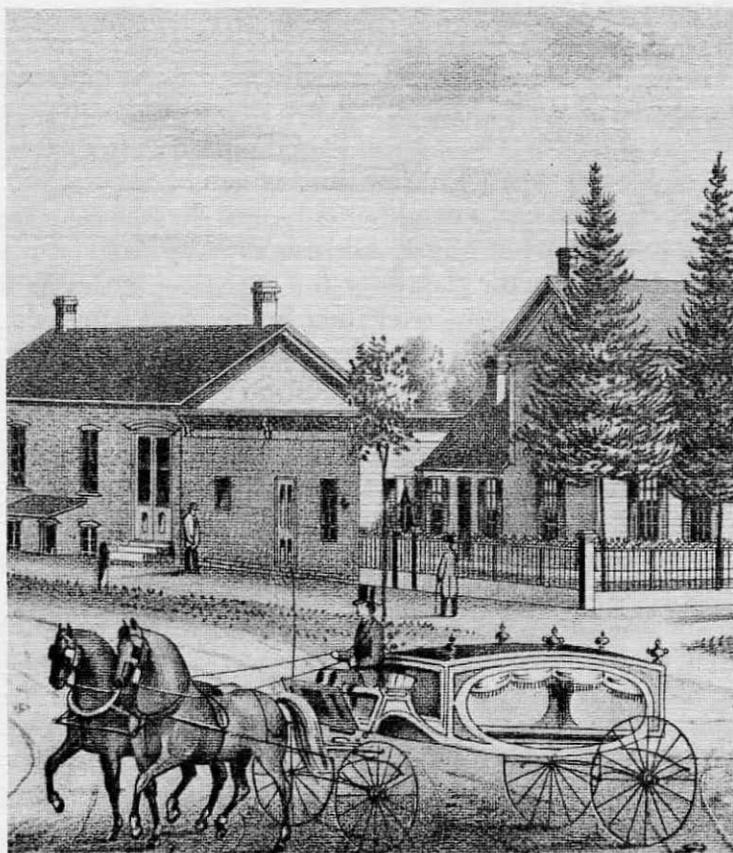
Well, when I went over there, there was a neighbor lady that I knew from Warren County way down there by home. And she said, "Oh, I'm so glad you come," she said. And she was holdin' her up. Well, then I asked her — I told her — would she give me time to go home to get my husband's bucket kinda straightened up, and that, you know, for him to get ready if I wouldn't get back so he'd know and that, where I was. And don't you know, I went back. And when I went back, why, she passed away that night at midnight. And if I hadn't a-went over, I woulda never gotten to see her. But, oh, when I saw that, oh, I just, I told him, I said to my man, "Now come here and see." "Yes," he said. And it just went around like this all the time.

Emma: Daddy always talked about that place where we lived in the country. You'd see "the damp" or whatever they called it — like a fog, and this man'd be a-walkin' with a lantern through

there. They said you'd think he was just comin' up to the house, but he never did. He just circled and went back, kept a-goin' back and forth in the pasture. That's what Daddy always said.

*And what did they think, who did they think this man was?*

Elsie: Well, they don't know either unless it was just a token for somebody that was passed away.



# BELIEFS AND TALES

## BORROWING

**Fanny Swatt**

*talking to Carol Burke*

The only thing she was superstitious about, she would not loan salt and she would not loan a needle. She would trade you sugar for salt or vice versa, whichever it was. If you wanted to borrow salt, you had to give her a little tiny bit of sugar for that salt. And if you wanted a needle you had to give her a straight pin for it. Now I remember her being superstitious about those two things because I more or less have been the same way myself all my life because she was very much that way.

I found it to be true. Once that I did loan a needle to a neighbor, and she got angry at me about something. I never — it was something over the kids. And you can't take up kids as fight. And she never spoke to me again, and I never got over that. And I remember my grandmother sayin', "Don't never loan a needle or salt."

## HOW TO FORETELL YOUR LOVE

**Vistol Louks**

*talking to George Packard*

The old custom was that if you put your handkerchief out on May Day, I mean on the first day of May, in the grass, and the dew — whatever initial that it made in that, that'd be the initial of the man you'd marry. And everybody put their handkerchief out for sure and imagined that whatever initial that they wanted on there anyhow, they thought it was one anyhow — the one they wanted.

## A SIGN OF DEATH

**Ralph Goodwin**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Now another thing I remember distinctly, and I heard my mother mention several times. Someplace along the line somebody went in the house and took a big shovel with 'im for some reason. And they had a death in the family, see, right after that, and they couldn't attribute what was wrong with that person to die like that. Somebody came up and said, "Well, why, so and so was in the house with that shovel. Maybe that had something to do with it." Well, of course, in hunting for some reason that sounded plausible to them, you know, why, they associated those two things together. And I know my mother told me when I was a little squir — fella, I remember very well, said, "Don't *ever* bring one of those big scoop shovels in the house."

## THE HOE HANDLE

**James Carson**

*talking to Carol Burke*

There used to be, when we first moved over there, there was quite a few Civil War veterans there, and they'd get together and talk over. And had one there, his name was Conrad Boyle. He was always tellin' 'em big snake stories. My dad got tired of it. He said, "Conrad, you know," he said, "I was out hoeing corn one time," he said, "come a big hoop snake rollin' right down the row." And he said, "I stuck my hoe up there and stepped aside and the hoop snake took that." And said, "In less than two minutes that hoe handle swelled up bigger around than my leg!" [Laughs] Conrad never told 'im any more snake stories.

## WARM IN BED

**James Carson**

*talking to Carol Burke*

I remember my grandma tellin' about when my mother and her and her twin brother was six, seven weeks old. She was goin'

from Penfield to Danville, and she stopped, had to stop over night at a place. And this woman that owned the place — she went and had to go through her room to get a dishpan full of water to give the kids a bath. They went through this woman's room and this woman was in bed with two men.

Next morning this woman said to my grandma, said, "Miss Beer, would you know," said, "I was in bed with two men last night." Grandmother said, "You was? What'd you do that for?" Said, "Why I was cold and afraid."

## WHEN CHASED BY PANTHERS

**Vistol Louks**

*talking to George Packard*

She could remember when panthers used to follow people. And she said like she had a horse she liked real good, and she'd go out riding, and they told her not to go towards the woods, and she did. And they'll stop and smell everything —.

*The horse will.*

Yeah — no, the panthers.

*Oh, the panthers.*

And if you don't want them to — if you're in a stretch where that you want to get home, you'd have to take off your clothes, start taking off your clothes one piece at a time. And then he'd stop and smell. And then whip your horse so that you could get on towards home.

## RABBIT HUNTING

**Harold Goyer**

*talking to Ruth Ann Miller*

When I first started hunting I was thirteen years old. And I can remember the day before Thanksgiving we had a big snow. And it was almost, well, to the top of your boots. Well, the rabbits hadn't moved, but you could walk along and you could see this little tiny hole in the snow where it'd melted from them a-breathing, I suppose.

Well, the first one that I come to [laughs] — going to be a good

sport and all that — I give him a kick you know, and he take off! And I had an old double barrel shot gun that belonged to my dad that had black powder shells in it. I don't know whether you ever saw one of them things go off, but the awfulest pile of smoke comes out of that you ever saw.

And I fired at him with one barrel, and that rabbit [was] something else! He went up and down and got in deep snow and he's not going very fast. And I missed him both times. So I just stuck the gun down in the snow and took off and run him down. And when I went in after hunting that day I fired just two shots (is all the shells I used) but when I went home I had seventeen rabbits.

## THE FISH THAT GOT AWAY

**Harold Goyer**

*talking to Carol Burke*

Out here in this pond there was an old junk car that had been dumped in there. So many people had hooked this big fish and never could get him out. So this one fella hooked him, and he called the sheriff's office and had one of the divers come out to go down and look and see what he had a-hold of.

Well, what happened, all these people hooked this big fish. This big fish would run in the car and roll the windows up and they couldn't pull him out.

## OLD DOOLEY AND THE HAIRRICANE

**Harry Ulrey**

*talking to Carol Burke*

*I want to ask you about Old Dooley. . .*

He was the biggest liar this side of hell, that's all there is to it.

*Where did he live?*

He lived over pretty near Cutler. He lived over in that neighborhood in there. Old Dool, I won't tell you his name.

*That's OK, you don't have to. What kinds of things did he tell?*

He — I don't know whether Old Dool was ever married. I guess he was. I know he was. He had a redheaded wife, but he could

tell some of the awfulest tales that ever was. Everybody knew he was a liar, but they just figured that anybody that talked as much as old Dool did was pretty near sure to tell a lie once in awhile.

He was going to Kansas after the war, after the Civil War. He was out there in some of the awfulest jails that ever was. I don't know that I oughta tell about the hairricane that he shot, a hairricane, he shot a hairricane out there.

*He shot a hurricane?*

Yeah, a hairricane! Somebody asked him if when he was out there if he saw any of them Kansas hairricanes. "Oh yes," he says, "there was a few of them left around there." He said most of them been killed off, though, but he said he had a yellow dog, that good huntin' dog, part — mostly bulldog. And he said that dog run, run a hairricane under the house one night. He said he was barkin' out there, barkin', barkin', but he wouldn't run under there, wouldn't run under after it. He was afraid to, the dog was afraid. But he said he got up a little lantern, went out there and held the lantern up there and looked under there, and he said he see some eyes back in there. And he went back in the house and got his old rifle. He had an old Henry rifle, he said. And he said he held the light just right and shot that beast right between the eyes. He said the dog still wouldn't run under there. But he said, the next morning he crawled under there and got it, and he said, "I believe that hairricane's as big as my dog."

## DOOLEY AND THE TRAIN HOLD-UP

**Harry Ulrey**

*talking to Carol Burke*

He was on a train. I don't know where he was going, going out there or not.

*Out to Kansas?*

Yeah, out there, yeah, He was goin' out there. "Goin' on up a grade," he said. "They just come up river; and going on a pretty steep upgrade, the engine just a chug, chug, chug, just barely could make it." He said, "Here come a bunch of horsemen out of the brush, yelling out there, shootin' their revolvers up in the air. They, the horses was faster than the train. The train just couldn't hardly

move. They piled on the engine, they loaded on there, and then made the engineer stop."

He said he was on the train there along in his car. He said, "What do you know! Jesse James and his gang, Jesse James and his Younger gang!" He said they shut the doors there and they wouldn't let anybody off. He said, "The first thing you know, here come Jesse himself down through this car. Big revolver," he said, "'Now give me your pocketbook and you ain't gonna get hurt. Just give me your pocketbooks and you ain't gonna get hurt at all.'" And he said that everybody's just scared to death of him. He said they begin pullin' out their wallets and givin' it to him. He said, "You know, I just got down behind the seat, and I pulled out my old, my old 45. I laid it over the top of the seat in front of me. Jesse come down there to me, and he says — I told him, I just told him, 'Now Jesse, I ain't never had no trouble with you. I don't want no trouble with you, but I got a cancer on my liver and I'd just as soon live as die anyhow! Now, if you want any trouble, just start something, just start something.'" He says, "You know, he just ducked his head down, turned around and walked out."

## OLD DOOLEY'S BEES

Harry Ulrey

*talking to Carol Burke*

Bees was wild. They'll swarm, and a whole doggone swarm'll leave the hives, and out and gone. You can't find 'em. They will finally bunch up into a big — just a bundle. They can be handled then, too. They don't sting readily when they're swarmin'. That way old Dool would — he had, oh I don't know, I imagine he musta had, at least eight, maybe ten out there in his garden. And he got a good bit a honey off of them, too. He was a pretty good beekeeper.

*What kind did he have?*

What kind of bee? Well, he had a few, they call them Italian bees. They were yellow, big. I think that's what most people propogate now. But he had a little — a couple of hives with little black devils, just vicious. You can't come close around those hives you don't get hurt. He said they wasn't much good, but wasn't much good for honey, making honey, but he had 'em anyhow. I don't know where they come from. What did he call them? Oh, I forgot, somethin' Dutch probably. He was a Dutchman.

*Did he ever tell you any stories about his bees?*

Oh no, no, he — They wouldn't sting him, no, no. They wouldn't sting me. They knew me. He'd sit out there in the garden and talk to those bees by the hour. Out there and talk, talk, talk, talk.

*What would he say?*

Oh, I don't know. Dutch. He talked Dutch to them. They was all Dutch bees. But he sat there and talked to 'em. They did, though, doggonit. I seen — One day I seen a bunch of those little black 'eyepoppers' run him in the house. He wasn't very long gettin' in back of the screen door either, to the kitchen. Back by there.

He was a pretty good gardener. He was a good gardener. He raised a nice garden. He set those bee hives right down in the middle of his melon patch. He said, "Boys, don't bother my melons." He said, "They never steal my melons." He says, "They're afraid my bugs'll bite 'em." I thought it was a dirty trick to play on the boys.



## NOTES

In the process of narrating traditional stories about family and community, tellers will frequently adapt old tales in whole or in part, consciously or unconsciously. It is an accepted practice; the stories are enriched by such adaptation. In addition, it confirms them as folklore. We are delighted to see that they are part of tradition and that elements of them have a wide distribution. Over the years, folklorists have brought beliefs and stories together in important reference works and have indexed them for the sake of study. Three indispensable books are Aarne-Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*; Thompson, *Motif Index of Folk Literature*; and Baughman, *Type and Motif-Index of the Folktales of England and North America*. A type-index identifies and groups whole plots of stories and tales ("Cinderella" is Type 510A, for instance). A motif-index lists individual narrative elements, items within a tale, such as a magic wand, a giant, a test (the slipper test in "Cinderella").

Important books on beliefs are *Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, Volumes 6 and 7*, and Ray B. Browne, editor, *Beliefs and Practices of Alabama*. There are of course many other important studies in books and journals. References here will show something of the range and variation in our Indiana re-tellings.

**Snipe Hunting:** Baughman Motif J2349.6\*. "Snipe hunt."

**The Medics Trick a Lawyer:** Baughman Motif N384.0.1.1. A resemblance to the prank in which medical students suspend a cadaver arm or leg from the light cord in a person's room.

**Getting Caught:** This echoes the Atalanta myth and Baughman Motif H331.5.1. "Race with princess for her hand."

**Remedies:** (1) Poison Ivy: Browne, *Alabama*, #1470 notes a cure with goldenrod leaves rubbed in cold water and used to wash the hands and face and other affected parts. (2) Sore Leg: *Brown North Carolina*, #1738 "Cow manure is used to prevent infection." (3) Sore Throat: *Brown North Carolina*, #2191 "If you have sore throat, rub it with a chicken feather," and Hyatt, *Adams County, Illinois*, #4925 "Take teaspoon of coal oil." (4) Chest Inflammation and Pneumony: Browne *Alabama*, #1454 "For pneumonia cut or chop

several onions fine, put in a cloth and saturate it with camphorated oil. Heat it. . . and place it between the shoulders and on the chest." (5) Infection: see above #1738. (6) Cut: *Brown North Carolina*, #944 "Chewed tobacco is used as an application to boils." (7) Boils: *Brown North Carolina*, #936 A variant calls for a scraped Irish potato, raw. (8) Cold: *Brown North Carolina*, #1112 "For a cold, eat onions, preferably roasted ones." (9) Warts: *Brown North Carolina*, #2484 "To cure warts, get some snap bean (string bean) leaves and rub them on the wart. Then walk backwards five steps, dig a hole, and bury the leaves. Never look at the spot again, and the warts will go away." Also see Violetta Halpert, "Indiana Wart Cures," *Hoosier Folklore* 8 (June-Sept. 1949), 37-43.

**Indian Raid in West Virginia:** Baughman Motif D1812.4.3\* notes presentiments of impending danger.

**Stealing Chickens:** A report of an Ohio practice of boys' using string to bait chickens occurs in John Baskin's *New Burlington: The Life and Death of an American Village* (New York: New American Library, 1976), p. 100.

**The Money-Savers:** Baughman Motif J2214(h), wherein foolish wives "tell how they save money. . . .One saves meat by drinking ale; one visits others to save coal. . . ."

**Jesus Christ's A-Comin':** This seems a variant on Baughman Motif J1738.4. "Traveling minister asks backwoodswoman if she is aware that Christ has died for her sins. 'No, we don't take the paper way out here.'"

**The Thrashing Ring:** Also spelled and pronounced "threshing."

**The Dowser:** See Hilda E. Webb, "Water Witching as Part of Folklife in Southern Indiana." *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 3 (June 1966), 10-29.

**Old Dan's Ghost:** Baughman Motif F473.1(g). "Spirits throw furniture and crockery about, often destructively."

**The Ghostly Pot of Lard:** The same. See Richard M. Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 165 (a mortar throws itself around a room).

**The Stone Corpses:** Baughman Motif 2500\* may be applicable: "Horror stories. . . with emphasis on the grisly or strange."

**The Tokens:** Baughman Motif E530.1.0.1\*, "Ghost light as ball of fire." E530.1.6(c). "Lights seen on or near property of person about to die."

**How to Foretell Your Love:** Vance Randolph, *Ozark Magic and Folklore* (New York: Dover Press, 1964), p.176, reports a similar practice: "On the last night of April, a girl may wet a handkerchief and hang it out in a cornfield. Next morning the May sun dries it, and the wrinkles are supposed to show the initial of the man she is to marry." Also *Brown North Carolina*, vol. 6, #4540.

**A Sign of Death:** Violetta Halpert reports that a spade, hoe, or shovel carried into the house may cause death. "Death Beliefs from Indiana," *Midwest Folklore* 2 (Winter 1952), 217-18. See *Brown North Carolina*, vol. 7, #5399: "If you bring a spade in the house, you soon will see a friend buried."

**The Hoe Handle:** Baughman Tale Type 1889M Snakebite Causes Object to Swell. Motif X1205.1(b). "Snake strikes handle of tool, causes it to swell." Collected frequently, as in *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin* 1 (June 1942), 18.

**When Chased by Panthers. . . :** Thompson Motif R231. "Obstacle flight — Atalanta type. Objects are thrown back which the pursuer stops to pick up while the fugitive escapes." Baughman Motif K671: "Captive throws hat to lions who fight over it while he escapes." See Mody Boatright, "The Family Saga as a Form of Folklore" in Boatright, et. al., *The Family Saga and Other Phases of American Folklore* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), p. 9; stories are told in Texas of a woman in flight from a panther; she drops items of clothing, which the panther pauses to smell.

**Rabbit Hunting:** Baughman Motif X962\*(d). "Person runs

down rabbits." See Vance Randolph, *We Always Lie to Strangers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), pp.177-178.

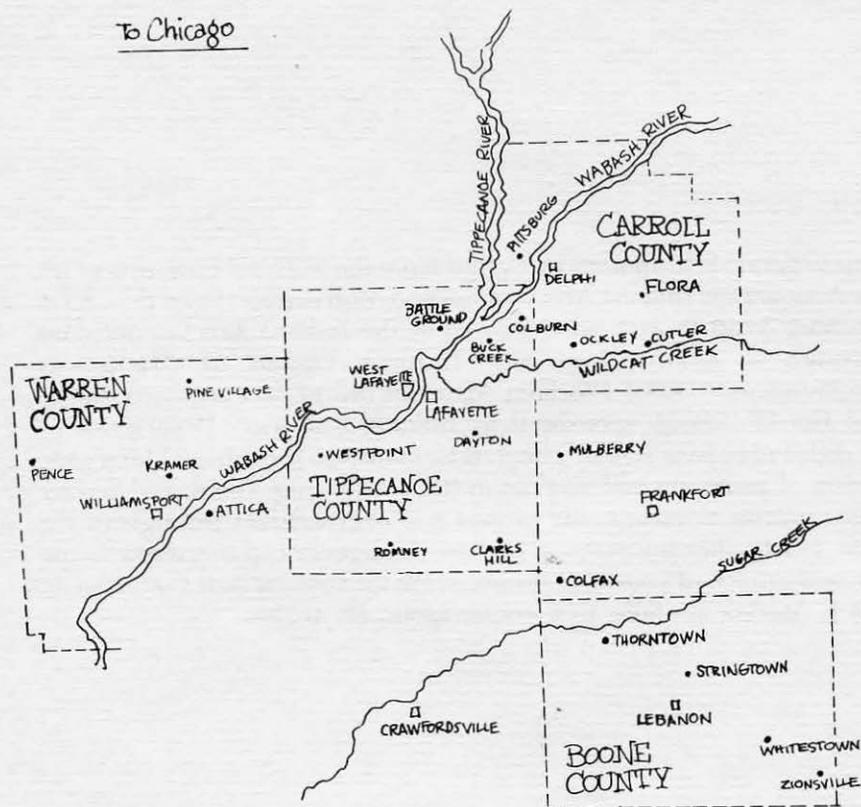
**The Fish That Got Away:** Baughman Motif X1311. "Intelligent fish." See Roger Welsch, *Shingling the Fog and Other Plains Lies* (Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1972), pp. 98-99.

**Old Dooley and the Hairricane:** Applicable motifs might be Baughman X1215 "Lies about dogs."

**Old Dooley's Bees:** Baughman Motif X1282, an entry for tales about bees.

— ML

To Chicago



To Indianapolis

FOUR COUNTIES IN WEST-CENTRAL INDIANA

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