Reminiscences

Not Memoirs

Richard C. Knopf
Miriam F. Near

2nd ed., 1988

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

When Miriam and I put together the "Reminiscences" now nearly four years ago, we could not imagine how much interest would be shown. Though it was prepared only for family members and old neighbourhood friends, copies got a much wider circulation than was originally intended. Some extracts even were published in the Clintonville Community Directory.

Because of this greater than intended (or anticipated) interest, this new version has been prepared. However, it is somewhat abridged. The narrative portion remains unchanged, but the illustrations, in the interest of economy, have been omitted.

For a time, it was thought that, perhaps, some personal references and judgments should be expurgated in this subsequent edition. However, it is the story of our youth and therefore must include our youthful feelings, whether or not they were justified. Children have strong prejudices and often make harsh judgments. To have characterized us otherwise would have been unfair and untrue. That is just the way we were.

We hope that you will enjoy our story and trust that you will understand us better knowing from what roots we have sprung.

Richard C. Knopf,
Columbus, Ohio,
February 16, 1988.

REMINISCENCES, NOT MEMOIRS
Foreword to Ed

I am entitling this tour de force "Reminescences" rather than memoirs for two reasons: first, when one reminisces, he includes his times, friends, and foes as he is not apt to make himself the pivot around which all else moves and, secondly, memoirs not only is a salve for ego, but always is suspect when truth is hoped for. Therefore, in the miscellany which follows, one must look at us all, as we were, as we grew up.

This "Reminiscence," Ed, is especially for you as you seem to be a strange one among your generation; rather than preferring to be rootless -- as most of your contemporaries are -- you seem intently interested in my generation, perhaps how, even, it has affected yours. Of course, you must also realize that you play on the egos of your forebearers, asking, as you do, "how it was."

What follows is, indeed, a miscellany, with only the barest of structure or organization. The stories related will always be incomplete and, I am sure, each of us can -- and will -- add to what is presented here. For my generation, it will whet the memory; for yours, it will fill in the blank spaces of your father's youth and time (and mine as well).

Read carefully; you might find more of yourself in these garnerings from the past than you might have imagined!

Richard C. Knopf,
September, 1984

CHAPTER I---DRAMATIS PERSONAE

For a small, rather homogenous group that we undoubtedly were -- and still are -- it is best to get acquainted with us by name and family association. In toto, this might seem to be a large group, especially for kids raised in the country, but one must realize that what follows was the whole group, varying in age from oldest to youngest about ten years. Perhaps one of the most amazing attributes of our young lives was that, despite the disparity of age, for a long time we all kept together -- the older ones as leaders, protectors, and, at times, devils to the younger.

At the center of our young lives was the Fowle family -- papa, momma (or "mom"), and the three kids.

Arthur Wade Fowle, Sr., the patriarch of the family, was, essentially, a week-end warrior as far as we kids were concerned. From Monday morning until Friday afternoon, he was "on the road," huckstering for Standard Oil of Ohio. The appearance of his black Plymouth company car in the driveway announced that he was "in residence." A short, spare man with squinty eyes behind octagonal spectacles, he loved children and, often when he returned from his sales forays, he brought us mementoes -- some yellow popcorn, fresh-picked apples, butternuts -- things he had picked up on his travels which he thought we would enjoy. On the summer evenings, when he was home, he sat for hours in the front yard, hose in hand, watering the grass and entertaining us kids. He was "dad" to his kids, "Skeet" to his wife and friends, but always "Mr. Fowle" to us youngsters, a sure sign of our respect.

"Skeet's" wife, Ruth, was "Mom" not only to her own brood of three, but friend, confidant, and, really a contemporary of all us kids. When we used the term "Mrs. Fowle," it not only showed our respect, but, much more, our true and tender love for this most remarkable woman.

I suppose, today, psychologists would classify Ruth Fowle as a mystical romantic. A woman of con-

siderable intellect and artistic talent)both an artist and musician), she literally buried herself in self-effacement to give support to all of us kids -- hew own and those of the neighbourhood. She was truly the most unselfish individual I have ever met. Her own trials and tribulations -- and I'm sure there were many -- she kept inside herself lest they might disturb others. She had few adult friends, but, quite frankly, giving of herself as she did for us, she would have had little time for the older folks anyway. She was kind, forgiving, and, to a fault, charitable. But, most of all, for those of us growing up in the '30's, she was a rock, a pillar,and a kind heart.

The Fowles had three children: Art, Bob, and Miriam, judiciously spaced four years apart.

Art, the oldest, belied the Fowle bloodline; tall, blond, blue-eyed, he was a Nordic, perhaps a throwback to much older interminglings. Because he was older -- considerably -- than most of us, we recall him as a friend and compatriot only in our earliest years together. True, we often followed him and his friends around,but our association with him was transitory. Yet he must be in our reminiscence as, you will see, he played a significant role in our early growing up.

But the middle one, Bob, was our real leader. Wirey, a Fowle through and through, he was imaginative and intelligent, a skinny kid bubbling with nervous energy. He was a goal-setter, both for himself and the rest of us; failure was not a part of his vocabulary.

The youngest of the Fowle tribe was Miriam, an arch-typical tomboy with straight brown hair and bangs. Thrust as she was in a male world, she not only competed with the boys, but often excelled them.

At right angles from the Fowles was a Spanish-type house facing on Rosemary Parkway, built and lived in by the Noelps in our early days; a family of three - Mr. and Mrs. and daughter, Nettie-- this latter young lady too old to interest any of us, except, perhaps, Art. They had little impact on

the neighbourhood of our youth. Later Mrs. Noelp, widow of her husband contractor, built a number of fine homes in the area, a tradition carried on by Nettie and her husband.

Sometime in the mid-thirties, the Noelps sold the Rosemary Parkway house to the Oscar Thompsons. That family consisted of Mr. Thompson (Superintendent of the Mails for Columbus), his cranky wife, their two children (Marc and Tommy); Mr. Thompson's sister and her daughter, Olive Jane (who had been adopted by the Thompsons).

Olive Janes was the oldest, approximately Art's age. We had little to do with her, not only because she was much more mature, but, also, because she fancied herself a "young lady." (Later she did become a "lady" of sorts.)

Tommy, the older of the two boys, was about the same age as Miriam and I, a friendly kid who joined in our escapades despite his mother's doubts about our sanity and desireability.

Marc, the younger, was a couple of years junior to Tommy. Afflicted by a serious case of eczema, he was usually a greasy mess of salves and scales. Rather, unkindly, we kids referred to him as "itcher," but it is to his credit that he was a personable and outgoing kid who, at least to outward appearances, ignored our childish jibes and jabs.

Next door and across the alley from the Thompsons lived the Olivers: Glenn Sr., Lucille, and children, Newis (Glenn Jr.) and Suzy. Newis was a few months younger than I and Suzy was about two years younger than Newie.

Mr. Oliver was a school-book salesman for the Allyn-Bacon Company; he was on the road most of the time, hawking his wares to depression-distressed school systems. Considerably older than the fathers of the rest of us (with the exception of Mr. Thompson), we had little to do with him.

On the other hand, Mrs. Oliver was a bouncy, friendly woman (somewhat younger than our mothers), who could take about anything in stride. The daughter of a wealthy coal-mine owner, she was used to the "good life" (though not ostentaciously) and saw

that her children got the best of everything. A big event was Christmas morning when the neighbourhood kids gathered at 4425 Rosemary Parkway to see what Santa (Daddy Ben, Mrs. Oliver's father) had brought Newie and Suzy. However, we weren't the least bit jealous of their good fortune as they were generous and we all joined in play together.

The two Oliver children, Glenn Jr. (Newie as we knew him) and Suzy, were just about the same age as the rest of us. Both were friendly, sociable kids who were very much a part of our group. Much like their mother in temperment, they were pleasant, outgoing friends.

Still on thw west side of Rosemary Parkway, but south of Schreyer lived the Woods' family. Both Mr. and Mrs. Woods had been in the Regular Army, having served from the beginning of the Spanish-American War until their retirment in 1923. For a number of years after his return to civilian life, Mr. Woods had been the building superintendent for the F & R Lazarus Company, but, by the time we were growing up, he spent his time gardening, running his household like a military post, and keeping up his magnificent physique. He was a devotee to efficiency and order. His huge Reo sedan, which he kept in perfect condition, was the envy of all of us. Likewise, too, he regaled us by the hour with his war stories of the Philippines and Russia and, over and over again, showed us his list of military citations and awards, which he had typed on a long white ribbon and always carried with him.

Mrs. Woods was a perfect complement for her husband. A fine housekeeper and excellent cook, she occasionally treated us to her homemade candy and cookies.

There were two Woods' children: Norman and Harriet, both about our ages, but, insofar as their parents were concerned, results of post-army life. (Mr. & Mrs. Woods were considerably older than the parents of the rest of us.)

Norman, the older of the two children, took after his parents in size; compared to the rest of

us gangly kids, he was huge. Also, he was quiet and slow-moving. Much of his reticence undoubtedly stemmed from his parents' raising him under a sort of military rule. Quite frankly, any original spark of individuality he might have had was doused by his parents' discipline. Thus, insofar as our group was concerned, he was always on the periphery, never a full participant.

Harriet, the younger Woods' child, was the opposite of Norman. A bubbling personality, bursting with energy, she was her parents' obvious delight and favorite. Though not oretty by any standard and petite rather than large like the rest of her family, she worked hard to make up in academic and artistic ways what she lacked in physical endowment. She was what, today, we would call an "achiever" and, because she worked so hard achieving, she had little in common with us of the average clay.

On Henderson Road, at the south end of the "Parkway," lived the Werner family: father, mother, and two kids -- John, better known as "Junior;" and Mary Lou. A discussion of the Werner family must begin with Mrs. Werner, for she was the key to the whole clan. Today, I suppose, we'd say that Mrs. Werner's semi-hysterical nature was rooted in a two-sided defensiveness.

First, she was an Italian, who, through rigid dieting, kept her physique petite. Ashamed (though she and God only knew why) of her Italian lineage, she passed herself off as French, though, when her more amply endowed sisters came to visit, there was no doubt of her background. (I suppose, living in a WASP neighbourhood -- though none of us thought it as such -- no such term then -- put her on the defensive.)

Secondly, the Werners were Roman Catholics. Now there were a number of R.C. families around at that time and, I must admit, Catholicism then was not widely accepted in such environs as ours. However, unlike the Martins, Schnetzers, and Clarks, the Werners made much of their religious difference. And we retaliated in kind. (We particularly in-

furiated them, as children are apt to do, by referring to them as "Jews," an acronym of Mr. Werner's initials: John Edward Werner.)

Suffice it to say, we added to Mrs. Werner's natural hysteria by baiting her -- and her children. We always got the response we intended!

Mr. Werner -- Jack -- was the opposite from his wife. Mild-mannered, polite, and gracious, he was a living martyr to his wife and kids. Had he not been a Casper Milktoast, he could not have survived his wife and children. Sales manager of the old Prentice Lumber Company, it was he who was constantly called upon to pour oil on troubled waters. Son of Austrian immigrants, he had none of the defensiveness of his wife.

The children, Junior and Mary Lou, unfortunately, were influenced more by their mother than by their father. Junior, the older of the two (a few months older than I), was a born trouble-maker. He was never really one of us, as he was a master of dirty tricks. However, we did associate with him, usually on the basis of finding ways "to get even" -- which we did -- in spades. But more of this later.

Mary Lou, too, was on the outside. As children growing up, we were sexless; that is, boys and girls played and fought each other as equals. Mary Lou, however, never forgot that she was a girl -- a God-fearing, superstitious one at that. (She collected enough pieces of the "true cross" to build a house.) In some ways, this rather reclusive child was a curiosity for those of us with less tender sentiments, but we really found little time in our packed schedules to pay much attention to her.

In the big house at the northeast corner of the Parkway and Henderson lived the Runyeons. They really had nothing in common with any of us except geography. While Mr. Runyeon was seldom in evidence, Mrs. Runyeon and Howard, Jr. (again, another "Junior") whetted our curiosity. (They had an older son, George, long since married and departed.)

Their large, fenced-in yard encompassing at least four city lots, was guarded by two dogs --

one a vicious, black German shepherd; the other a huge St. Bernard. We particularly envied Junior; a small brick building on the grounds housed his fantastic collection of electric trains. However, Mrs. Runyeon -- perhaps for good reason, considering our normal behaviour -- called us "uncouth" (the first time I'd ever heard the word) and thus unfit companions for her "Junior." Now and then they would go riding in their big Hudson, their chauffeur at the wheel, or, or, accompanied by their dogs, take walks around the neighbourhood. For some reason (perhaps because I attended the Maple Grove Methodist Sunday School -- of which they were the patron "saints"), periodically I was allowed inside the fence to engage in supervised play with Junior and to admire -- though not touch -- his electric trains. Later, when the Runyeon fortunes were wiped out by the depression, no tears were shed.

At the other end of the Parkway --- on the southeast corner of Rosemary and Dominion, lived the Spikers: father, mother, and four sons.

Mr. Spiker was the Executive Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. and a rather formidable character to us kids. However, his wife, a petite, grandmotherly "old" lady, was much in evidence. In the summer months, when the family was not at Camp Wilson, the Y.M.C.A. camp near Bellefontaine, she spent the daylight hours on their large front porch hooking rugs, a sedentary pastime which seemed to suit her quiet nature.

Of the four boys: Mitchell, Paul, Harry, and Hugh, only Hugh was young enough to be part of our coterie of vagabonds. Harry, of Art Fowle's age, occasionally participated, but the other two were far too old for us. Hugh, himself, because so much of the summer was spent away from Columbus, was only a part-time comrade.

The Abbotts lived on Dominion at the north end of the Parkway, but their two boys were too old to participate in our "fun and games."

On West Schreyer lived the rest of the Rosemary group. On the south side of the street, east of the

Parkway, lived the Shoemakers -- father, mother, Jack, and Donny.

The elder Shoemakers were pretty much unknown to us kids. Father was the head of the Curtis Lumber Company. The mother was rather stand-offish. However, the kids made up for the reticence of the parents.

Jack, the elder of the two boys -- a bit older than I, but younger than Bob Fowle -- was a constant curiosity to us. A big, burly kid, he suffered (and still does) from acute asthma. As kids, we never realized the hell he went through during his periodic attacks; we just couldn't fathom how one of our own could get so sick so fast. But he was a genial guy who fitted in well with our group.

Donny, I recall for two reasons: first, he was so dammed little in comparison to the rest of us -- even to those of his own age. And, secondly, he seemed always to have a runny nose. What a hell of a way to remember an old friend. His trademark was a leather, motorcycle helmet, which he never seemed to buckle or take off.

Both Jack and Donny were very much a part of our group.

Finally a note or two about my own family.

It is always difficult to judge one's own parents and siblings -- and certainly I shan't try to do so -- will leave that to others.

My father was in the advertising business, not exactly a lucrative one in those depression days and I suppose I admire him most for his tenacity, for hanging on even in those dark hours. As a father, he was kind, loving, and a stodgy German, sure in his own mind that to do anything well, one had to work at it, look for no shortcuts. Frankly, I often didn't get along too well with him. I rebelled against his authority, knowing full well he would have the final word. It wasn't until many years later that I really understood and appreciated him.

My mother, on the other hand, was quick, efficient, highly intelligent, and protective of her family. There is no doubt that she "ruled the roost,"

a situation I think my father welcomed. She was an indefatigable worker who demanded much of herself and expected others to follow her lead. She was short on patience and her judgments, though usually right, came swiftly and unalterably. She was generous to a fault with her family, but her independence kept her from spreading that same generousity outside of the family circle. She was far ahead of her time -- at least in our neighbourhood -- as a liberated woman. She was the first to bob her hair, early became a chain smoker, gave up her sewing circle for cut-throat bridge, and, at a time when mothers stayed at home, she went to work at the university, eventually becoming Assistant Chairman of the Department of Zoology and, in so doing, getting a university-wide reputation as being the most efficient person on campus. Meanwhile, she was a meticulous housekeeper (with our organized aid), a good cook, an avid reader, a concert-goer, and a needlework whiz.

At the time, both my sister and I resented and sometimes rebelled against our highly organized life. Schoolwork always came first: we suffered through piano lessons, were dragged to concerts, and often forced to read books of our parents' choosing. I think our was the only household in the neighbourhood which was filled with books, music, and enforced achievement. It wasn't until many years later that I fully appreciated the sacrifices of time and scarce money my parents made to broaden our horizons and stimulate our interests. Though mother was the leader, father was a willing follower in these activities. Their united front kept my sister and I grubbing away, though I think in the long run and though I'm sure we often disappointed them, we turned out pretty much to their satisfaction.

As the older of the two children, I came in for the initial discipline and training. I also was the first, periodically, to rebel against it. However, my rebellions were few and seldom successful -- for which, in the long run, I am thankful.

My sister, Virginia, on the other hand, not only did not rebel openly (she was a pouter), but didn't have to. By the time she came along, my parents had lost some of their drive. However, neither of us escaped entirely and neither, later, had any room for real complaint.

However, if our "in house" life was different from that of our peers, it never held us back from being active participants in neighbourhood activities. We quickly learned that we could enjoy two different life-styles equally well--and we did.

The foregoing sketches only touch the tough core of our neighbourhood group. On the periphery were such kids as Terry Martin, Bob Schnetzer, Bob Rundell, Jack and Bill Clark, Clayton and Barbara Rose, and the Wilsons. They came and went from our group, but were never regulars.

The period covered, though it seemed an eternity to us at the time, actually was from about 1927 to the mid-1930's, from our infancy to early junior high. By the time we were in our teens, the cohesiveness of our young years was breaking down. We were in different schools, our circle of acquaintances transcended the isolation of our childhood, and we went our different ways. Yet, over a half century later, we still feel the bonding of our "age of innocence;" it is more than nostalgia; rather a way of life which molded us into a different -- and we life to think richer pattern from our peers elsewhere.

We were different not only because it was a different age, but because we enjoyed a luxury of freedom, imagination, and action no longer really possible. Radio, though we enjoyed it, was never as intrusive in our lives as television; sidewalk bikes and scooters, roller skates and orange crate racers were more challenging than mopeds; a crowded schoolroom with a pot-bellied stove in the corner was more conducive to learning than modern rooms with opaque projectors and computers.

In all, ours was a challenging environment and we rushed to meet the challenges, to fit ourselves

into our little cosmos. We were never bored with life. Our days began with Bradley Kincaid in the early morning and ended with hide-and-seek in the Parkways as darkness fell. The hours in between were never long enough, the days never numerous enough. Perhaps, because we were not very sophisticated, we lived lives in continuous excitement and curiosity. In summer we were nature's children, barefoot and ragged, playing along the river, getting up a game of two-o-cat or monkey move-up, building our huts, swiping Mr. Stewart's corn, riding the horses that pulled the mowing machines. We chewed fresh tar, a kind of substitute for licorice; followed the ice wagon, begging for small chunks to cool us off on a hot summer's day; trapped moles and muskrats; learned to play poker and Black Jack for match sticks; collected whiskey bottles (after prohibition was out); read and exchanged Big-Little Books by the dozen; had our share of bubble-gum baseball cards; climbed trees.

Winter months were no less activity filled. Our sleds rushed down the hills of I"dian Springs Golf Course; February found us tapping maple trees and boiling sap for maple syrup; our football teams needed not eleven on a side, but just an even number on each side. We ice-skated on the river and warmed ourselves around bonfires. Our feet were seldom dry; our noses always dripped; our snowmen and igloos and forts were creations to behold.

Byt more of this later. All I know, Ed, is that we were -- and are -- a unique group, both as youngsters and now approaching old age. Our nostalgia is really part of us - an integral part of our being. Those might have been the dark days of the depression, but we didn't know it. As Sara Teasdale said: "our world stood out on either side" -- and we made the most of it.

CHAPTER II -- THE LAY OF THE LAND

A child's world, geographically at least, is a miniscule one, adapted to his age and size. For him, it is as large as the universe, yet a dot on the landscape.

Today, when I take my dogs on their nightly walk, I cover in less than half an hour the world of my youth. On the surface it seems to be an entirely different world than the one of my childhood. There are no open fields now, just rows of houses touching elbows like soldiers on review. The corn fields, through which we used to run and hide, have long since disappeared. A new house stands over the ruins of the old Schreyer homestead, its inhabitants ignorant that they live not on virgin soil. The dense tangles of vines, elderberry bushes, and scrub trees which used to lay along the river have been replaced by grassey lawns and stately homes. The Unitarians now frolic where once Mr. Stewart slopped his hogs and their parking lot covers the roots of the old mulberry tree which we climbed to claim its succulent fruit. The old Weisheimer mill dam has been, finally, washed away by the periodic floods of the Olentangy, though in the one-time field which paralleled its eastern bank there still, undoubtedly, lie hidden the arrowheads and spear points of an Indian camp which once stood there. The drainage ditches which used to line Henderson Road have long since been filled in and the road itself widened to handle urban traffic; it is no more the quiet country road which terminated at High Street.

Come to think of it, even the river, south of the bridge, has been moved, its once natural curves straightened by bull-dozers. The bridge, under which we fished for sunfish and bluegills, is gone, replaced by a less rustic, but more efficient modern structure.

At the other boundary of our childhood world, High Street, little remains to remind us of its interesting past. Maple Grove Church and Williams'

Sohio still guard the High Street-Henderson Road intersection after a fashion, but the ersatz, modern English country style church is a far cry from the old school house which served as the center for religious celebration for so many years. And the porcelain palace, with its modern gas pumps and hydraulic lifts, is a millenium removed from the old sheet metal station, surrounded by huge trees and green lawns, an outside grease rack half hidden in the far corner of the property.

Of course, COTA busses still pick up passengers on the corner of Henderson and High, but the roar of their engines and the blue of their diesel exhaust give no hint that they are but replacements of the old Worthington-Steelton streetcars which, with the regularity of clockwork, appeared each and every forty-five minutes during the daylight hours.

Just across High Street, where the Huntington Bank Building now stands, was Grace Buck's large, square house, set among towering oaks and maples. To the south was the Seibert home, a turn-or-the-century frame structure, located where now East Henderson begins.

To the east and south of these homes stretched the Indian Springs Golf Course, a huge expanse of grass and trees and hills, bordered by Cooke Road on the south, Indianola Avenue on the east, and East Schreyer on the north. Along High Street was a long, stable-like building which maked the Indian Springs Driving Range.

Moving along the east side of High Street northward from Grace Buck's was the small, frame Ashing house, for a while occupied by the Barton's, and on the southeast corner of East Schreyer and High was a two-storey, frame building. The lower floor was Clarence Buck's grocery, an old-fashioned place where one found salt, onions, potatoes, and flour stored in barrels, the walls with shelves from floor to ceiling piled with canned goods. Long counters ran along each side of a center aisle, flanking a large, pot-bellied stove. In the rear was the meat counter and large, glassed-faced meat coolers.

Clarence Buck ran this store with the assistance of a single clerk, Esther Fellows. He provided both credit and delivery service; just call in your order in the morning; it was delivered to your door in the afternoon. (Clarence lived in an apartment on the upper storey above the store.)

On the east side of High between East Schreyer and East Dominion were the Shields and Patterson homes, set back behind iron fences among groves of ancient trees. These old homes are still there, though many of the trees have been cut down, the iron fences gone, and the houses used for other purposes than private residences.

From East Dominion to Garden Road along High Street were two roadside stands, both selling home-grown vegetables and orange crush -- not the modern drink, but freshly squeezed orange juice. Mr. Whipps owned the southerly of the two; his home was behind his stand.

Directly across High Street were Horn's Poultry Farm and a temporary stand which sold fireworks during the 4th of July season.

The Horn homestead (later lived in by the Wilsons) was a large, frame house, with porches on the east and south sides. The poultry, which they raised for eggs and meat, ran wild, not only around their house, but throughout much of the neighbourhood. No effort was made to pen up these feathered friends; they were just game for our dogs who practiced their hunting skills among them.

The fireworks stand, just north of the intersection of West Dominion and High, was a mecca for us kids just before the Fourth of July. Sold there were all sorts of items, from sparklers (for the really little kids), to lady fingers, 2 and 4 inchers, cherry bombs, torpedoes, and sky rockets. Ed, what a real joy your generation has missed having no fireworks, no means of blowing mailboxes off their posts, or shooting tin cans into the air!

There was no East Weisheimer cut through to High Street in those days, just Mr. Whipps' truck farm.

Though the northern boundary of our infant world was Weisheimer Road, we often ventured a block northward on High Street to have a soda or sundae at Schob's Drug Store. The building is still there and part of it still a pharmacy. However, in our day, there were two storerooms on the first floor of the main building. The southerly of the two was the local post office (later Buck's grocery), while Schob's occupied the other.

One had to pause a moment to describe these old-time drug stores for their have long since given way to modern merchandising marts.

Schob's was quite typical. Just inside the front door was the soda fountain, its counter lined with low stools. Three or four marble-topped tables with fancy, twisted steel chairs also accomodated fountain patrons. In the mid section were shelves and counters laden with penny candies, tobacco products, and patent medicines. Behind a partition at the rear of the store with a single aperture like a ticket window at a bus terminal worked Mr. Schob, the durggist. (He and his buddies now and then played poker back there and, once in a while, the police raided the games.)

At the rear of the building, a one-storey wing housed an automobile mechanic's garage. If you visit the Beechwold Hardware Store today, the lower level to the south was the old garage and, if you look closely at the floor, you can see traces of its former useage.

On the southwest corner of Weisheimer and High, behind a white wooden fence with monogramed gates, stood the Kaufmann House. We knew little of the family who lived there except that Mr. Kaufmann had built two houses just to the west of his own to house the families of his children. Later the main house became the first home of the Clintonville Woman's Club. Though it has long since been town down, the two children's 1920's bungalows still exist.

For the rest of the extent of Weisheimer, there were only four houses. Jackson's, a large red brick structure was next door to the Kaufmann houses --

it still stands -- and next door to Jackson's was Mr. Stewart's large farm house and barn, now the site of the Unitarian Church and manse. (See earlier notes.) At the west end of the road was a white stucco house belonging to the young Weisheimers and, near the river's bank on the north side of the road, stood, as it still does, the brick, Victorian residence of the senior Weisheimers. When we were kids, part of the old mill still stood along the river and the mill dam across the river still backed up enough water for us to swim and dive from its top.

Downstream, about half way along Starret Road, in the middle of the river was (and still is) a long, narrow shoal, alive with small trees and underbrush. This we called Jackson's Island for some reason or other, now long forgotten. And along the bank, among other fine trees, stood a huge, hollow sycamore in whose upper branches we built a tree house.

These, then, were the confines of our world, our universe, the cosmos of our infancy. I suppose that the main things that survive it are the natural ones. The river, once the center of much of our summertime activity, still flows, the maples along Weisheimer which we once tapped for sap, mostly are still there. And, as I write, I look across the street at the trees which once supported our chinning bar. Along the Parkway, the large walnut trees still spill their fruit into the street in the autumn and the curb stones along the north side of Dominion still bear the scars of our shot-put throws. Of course, our old playing fields are gone, "the huts" have been replaced by more permanent structures, and the clopping of the milkman's horses no longer are heard. But one can still walk the streets, listen to the wind through the rustling leaves, and, for a moment or two, recapture in one's mind's eye the world of our youth.

THE FOUR SEASONS

Fall

Winter

Spring

Summer

THE FOUR SEASONS: FALL-WINTER-SPRING-SUMMER

Though in many respects our day-to-day lives -- activities, games, etc. -- did not vary much throughout the year, each particular season brought with it different emphases and different focuses. While we played along the river and in the open fields the year 'round, our time was divided up one way in winter, another in summer. In the fall we vied with the squirrels to collect walnuts from the trees in the Parkway; in the spring, we picked wild flowers which grew prolifically in the fields and woods. While the summer beckoned us to fish or swim in the river, its iced-over surface in winter challenged us to clamp on our ice skates, to hazard life and limb.

But no matter what the season, we found life full, interesting, and challenging. Our curiosity never took a holiday. We never knew boredom and we fell into bed each night exhausted from our enthusiasms of the day.

CHAPTER III - THE FALL

Though, generally speaking, our "world" lay within the confines of Henderson, High Street, Weisheimer, and the river, for nearly nine months of each year, it was widened to include the island of Glenmont School. It was a place we went to and came from -- definitely a part of our lives -- but it never became either the center or focus of our world -- not even during our school year. For children who lived in the vicinity of the school, Glenmont undoubtedly played a major role. But for those of us "out in the sticks," it was a place we knew, on the whole enjoyed, but with which we never fully identified.*

Quite frankly, we knew little -- and cared less -- for a world other than our own. Age and sex orientation meant little or nothing to us. From the oldest to youngest there was as much as a ten-year span and we weren't the least sexist in our

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*This "out in the sticks" and lack of personal identification was to follow us throughout our school lives. From the time we first had left our Taylor Tots and playpens, ours had been a small, tightly cohesive group. We were isolated from the ordinary populous neighbourhoods with their throngs of kids and streets with row after row of 1920's houses. Their playgrounds were specifically defined areas equipped with swings, slides, baseball fields, and, here and there, a tennis court. Our playgrounds were the empty fields and woods. We built our own swings of a rope and auto tire. Our "jungle gym" was a discarded water pipe nailed between adjacent trees. We had no need for swimming pools because the river was ours.

activities. (Of course, we had done some anatomical comparisons, but as youngsters growing up, those observable differences did not serve as means of discrimination or segregation.)

It was also true that, on many Saturday afternoons, we did go as a group to the Clinton Theatre (ten cents for a double feature of Tom Mix and Dracula) and, on very especial occasions, made excursions "downtown" to Lazarus, the Kresge's at State and High, and vaudeville and a movies at the Ohio Theatre (15¢ for "kids).

But these worlds of movies, city playgrounds, and swimming pools were as foreign to us as a far-off star or a National Geographic African village. Home was still open fields, quiet woods, and the river. Buck's corner grocery was more familiar than Clintonville's new Kroger's (now Palmer's electronic store) and "the church" at Henderson and High more significant than the imposing religious structures on East Broad. As a matter of fact, our own dramatic productions in Oliver's basement (or garage in good weather) were more important to us than Gene Autry or Jean Harlow.

I suppose by today's standards, social psychologists would have classified us as socially deprived -- because we were not surrounded with a man-made environment and inundated by numerous peers. And it is true we were isolated; our environment was certainly circumscribed; and "our peers" we could count on the fingers of both hands. But deprived we were not, except by the fact that we shaped our world while others were shaped by theirs. Ours was a world constantly challenging our ingenuity and resourcefulness. Our city "peers" had a well-spaced, ordered world handed to them. Looking back now over a half century, I think, without doubt, that ours was the better world. Free of real prejudice, of class, of social standing and prestige, we were able to build and keep building more interesting and fruitful lives. It is not surprising then that, now in our second half century of life, we are still pretty much as we have always been: enterprising,

challenging, free spirits. We grow, but do not grow old. Our world began as an interesting place and it still is. We began by exploring it and we still do.

Now what I am leading up to is our association with school and the permeating fact that our fields-woods-river environment set us apart from our peers throughout our school life.

In the first place, as heretofore pointed out, our "home world" was vastly different from that of our school mates.

Secondly, we had been geographically (and remained so) isolated from the other kids who attended Glenmont; we lived "out in the sticks."

And, finally, age and sex -- social standards of our school compatriots -- had never been part of our experience. Just because a kid was four or five years older (or younger) or of a different sex made no difference to us. Thus it was a surprise to us to discover that "little girls" were expected to behave thus and so and play lady-like games, while "little boys" were supposed to "act like little men."

This came as a great shock to us and, I am happy to relate, never was taken seriously. We played the school charade, but, once back home, we discarded "acceptable society's" social baggage. Miriam continued as a good footballer until well into her teens and we "little men" picked wild flowers for Mother's Day bouquets without qualm. School, for us, was one more challenge to meet and meet it we did. But it was never the center of our lives; just a part of the composite. True, we were never accepted and, at most, only tolerated by our city compatriots; we were not "social desireables;" but I don't think we ever gave a damn. Insofar as we were concerned, school was a place for formal learning -- and this we accomplished with a vengeance. We might not have had the "social polish," but our academic records attest to the fact that we led the "sociables" in the classroom -- a lead we never relinquished all the way through high school.

By the time our formal schooling began --

kindergarten -- we had come to expect a good deal of ourselves and our world. School, we had been told, was a place to learn to read and write. And how disappointed we were. I still remember coming home from my first day of kindergarten, swearing that I would never go back for I hadn't learned a thing. Now, fifty-five years later, I'm not surprised that I recall little of those days -- except that I played the rear end of an elephant in a pageant -- for so little occurred which was new or challenging. Banging wood blocks together and napping on a blue bathroom rug were returns to infancy, not steps to adulthood. Forced socialization was as repugnant then as it is now.*

However, Glenmont School was different. Physically it consisted of three, poorly-built wooden buildings of two rooms each. (Portables, they were called as it was expected that a new, permanent building would be constructed soon; they were used for over twenty years.) The front building, nearest to Glenmonth Avenue, also contained the boys' and girls' toilets and janitor's room. Each of the six classrooms was heated by a pot-bellied coal stove, surrounded by a metal shield. The hall which separated the rooms and the bathrooms were unheated.

Because this was depression time, there were only five teachers (Miss Freeman, Mrs. Jones /head teacher/, Miss Cloud, Mrs. Hanger, and Mrs. Block). Each of the six grades was divided into two parts: i.e., 1B, 1A, 2B, 2A, etc. Each year was divided into two semesters. The first began in September, the second in February. Depending upon birth dates, students were admitted in either September or February. Thus there were really twelve grades.

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*The nearest kindergarten was at Clinton Elementary School. Here we were entirely out of our element. The school was not only a long way from our homes, but the kids who attended were much different from us -- products of "socially acceptable" back grounds.

Each teacher had three grades: i.e., 1B, 1A, and 2B. If a particular grade had a good many students -- say a dozen or so -- the grade was divided. Thus there might be two 1A's or two 6B's.

The mornings -- from 8 to 12, and the first part of the afternoon, from 1 to 2 -- were given over to recitations by the various classes. As one class recited, the other two worked on their lessons or listened to the other class perform. Primitive though this might seem, it was educatinnally sound. The young ones learned from the older ones and the older ones persevered so as not to look "dumb" to the younger.

Discipline, either for unbecoming behavior (chewing gum, talking, etc.) or academic failure, was simply carried out. A special stool up in front of the class or a designated corner in which to stand awaited the offender. (How well I remember the day my mother paid a visit to our class when her young son spent the afternoon standing in the corner, face to the wall. I hated it then, but give credit to the teacher, Mrs. Jones, for making the punishment stick. Suffice it to say, it was the last time I stood in the corner or sat on the "dunce's" stool.)

The last hour of the day was given to "whole class" activities. Often the teacher read a chapter from a book; a good idea as it stimulated us to read books on our own; or we sang or learned the rudiments of art. In good weather, it might mean a hike into the woods which bordered the north and east of the school grounds. There, in a kind of fundamental way, we learned the looks and ways of nature.

The school day was punctuated three times with two recesses -- one in the morning and one in the afternoon -- and a lunch break.

At first, our school playground was nothing more than an open field. Between and along side the buildings were packed cinders, which, while they were a cheap pavement, were hard on shoes and knees. Eventually we did get playground equipment -- swings and a slide --, but thar was the whole of it. The recesses and lunch break came to en end

when Mrs. Jones rang a hand bell to call us back to the classroom.

Most of the time we carried our lunches. Some packed their peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in paper bags, but the more affluent had metal lunch boxes, divided so that sandwiches were in one compartment and a small thermos bottle in another. Eventually, the extra classroom in the second building was turned into a lunch room. Here soup and a daily "hot dish" were served -- a nickle apiece. Usually we only got soup or the "hot dish;" these were depression days and nickles were hard to come by. The paper bag and lunch box remained the mainstay. (Mrs. Hespenthal, who lived across the street from the school, was the cook.)

Here we must pause a moment and remember Mr. Donelly, the janitor. He was a very especial person to us. Kind, generous, a jack of all trades, he not only kept the school going, from starting the fires on the cold mornings to thawing out plumbing in winter, but was our friend, confidant, and compatriot. He dried the tears of many a child who had fallen on the playground and took delight in rubbing his whiskery face on ours. He continued to be the major domo of Glenmont School until he retired many years later.

Here is as good a place as any to mention clothing.

Today, when kids are dressed pretty much as miniature men and women, it is difficult to visualize the type of clothes we wore, much less describe them.

However, here it goes. First the boys:

In warm weather -- late spring, summer, and early fall -- when we weren't in shorts or one-piece bathing suits (usually itchy woolen ones), we wore -- from the inside out -- one-piece, light weight BVD's. They buttoned down the front with a three-button "trap-door" behind. Some of them were equpped with extra buttons on the lower front on which we could fasten long elastic garters to hold up our over-the-knee length stockings (short socks were worn in hot weather). The outer garments were

a shirt, square-cut on the bottom with two buttons each, front and rear. To these were attached short pants. Thus the shirt was called a panty waist (and thus cowardly older kids were sometimes called "panty waists" in derision).

As heretofore noted, stockings were long, ribbed, cotton ones attached to garters. Shoes (not worn except on special occasions during the summer) were usually strapped moccasin types. They had both the advantage of being cool and didn't have to be replaced so often as they could be loosened to accomodate growing feet.

When the weather turned cold, our clothing changed as well. The one-piece summer BVD's were replaced by heavier ones for winter and shirt waists and shorts were exchanged for corduroy knickers and regular shirts. The knickers were held in place by a 3-4 inch elastic cuff which fitted snugly just below the knee (some fancy ones used buckles, but these were not very efficient at keeping the pants in place). These were not the light weight corduroy we know today, but quite heavy material which seemed to last forever. Usually, when purchased, they were draped nearly to the ankle. However, they lasted so long that, by the time they were worn out, the elastic cuff was being pulled over the knee.

Speaking of knees, the cinder playground at Glenmont School played havoc not only with the knickers, but the knees underneath. Leather patches fixed up the knickers, but few were the kids who didn't have scabby knees.

Long, heavy cotton or wool stockings were tucked under the elastic cuffs and, until real winter set in, thick soled, leather oxfords clothed our feet.

However, once cold weather came, the oxfords were traded off for "high tops" -- high,laced leather boots which came up to the knee. All of us kids wanted ones that had knife pockets in the side, in which we carried our Boy Scout, all-purpose knives.

On our heads we wore either woolen "stocking caps" or leather helmets. Sheepskin-lined leather jackets and mittens completed our winter apparel.

Girls, both summer and winter, wore dresses and, as your Aunt Miriam reminds me, bloomers, those oversized, billowing "panties" which carefully concealed the girlish figure from the waist down. Named after Amelia Bloomer, a women's libber of the mid-19th century -- and considered daring apparel then -- they were horribly out-of-date for the young tom-boy of the 1930's.

Like the boys, the girls wore long, above-the-knee, cotton, ribbed stockings held in place by garters or rings of elastic, the latter often cutting off circulation to the lower legs and feet.

In winter, girls were enshrouded in "snow suits," two-piece woolen garments topped by a hood. They worked quite well to keep one warm, just so long as they remained dry, but once wet they became soggy, saggy, and cold. However, if they froze -- which they often did in cold weather -- the ice provided a layer of insulation. Girls, being "young ladies," seldom wore "high tops;" rather their shoes were covered with snap-fastened galoushes -- what today are generally called "artics." These, big and bulky (they were usually bought in large sizes to take care of the growth of youthful feet), were clumsy and difficult to walk in; one seldom tried to run.

Girls' hair was kept in place by ribbons or berets. Often is was curled or braided, thecurling accomplished,usually, by a hot, smelly curling iron, heated over the gas flame of the kitchen stove.

So much for clothing; now back to the clothed!

Modern educators seem surprised that we ever learned to read and write; the methods by which we were taught would not receive approval by contemporary "experts."

Granted, ours was basic, rote learning. Vocabulary and spelling were learned from large flash-cards, which, when not in use, were stored in bushel baskets in a corner of the classroom. As each card was displayed, we called out -- often shouted -- the word in unison. Later, in weekly class spelling bees, we competed individually. Thus we developed

both vocabulary and spelling skills.

The Elson Primer, published by Bobbs-Merrill, was our first reading book. How well I remember my personal feeling of triumph when I could read the first lesson. I still recall it:

"I am a Gingerbread man,
I am, I am,
I can run,
I can, I can."

Not of great literary merit, it was a fine beginning.

Fortunately most all of us wanted to read. In the pre-television days, reading was a source of much pleasure and enjoyment. We started with the newspaper comics and, as our skills increased, "graduated" to such time-honored children's series as the Bobbsey Twins, Tom Swift, Frank Merriwell, Horatio Alger, Mancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, etc. Perhaps our most treasured reading materials of those young years were the big-little books. These were about five inches square and a couple of inches thick. A text was printed on the left-hand page and an illustration on the right. Selling for five or ten cents each, we bought and traded them until they finally wore out. (Later, in our 'teens, we boys somehow got hold of a scurrilous series entitled "Pete, the Tramp." Similarly composed of text and illustration, these books, carefully hidden from our parents, were often our first introduction to the "intracies" of sex.)

Though difficult to realize today, we vied with one another on how many books we could read -- and read we did -- throughout the year, summer vacations included.

Admittedly much of this voracious reading was repetitious and scarcely good literature, but it gave us a love and appreciation for the printed word which, I daresay, has never left us.

Of course, we were also introduced to children's classics such as "Tom, the Water Baby," David Copperfield, Uncle Remus, the Little Colonel, Stevenson's A Child's Garden of Verses, and scores of other novels and short stories. Many of our homes

included the 12-volume set of Journeys Through Book-land, a graded series of children's prose and poetry.

If reading early became an important part of our lives, writing took on an equal status.

We did not learn to letter (or print, as it is erroneously called now-a-days), but to write in script, using Palmer penmanship books as our guides, a kind of simplified Spencerian script. The idea was to achieve a kind of rounded, pointed, flowing writing, which would not only be legible, but a work of art as well. Frankly, few of us ever achieved the desired results, but, throughout our elementary school years, we kept trying first with heavy pencils and, later, with steel-pointed pens (the points of which we learned to lick so as to pick up more ink from the ink wells imbedded in the upper right hand corners of our desks.) This was a messy process and our papers were graded on the multitude of or lack of smudges.

However,if most of us never achieved the sought=after goals of fine penmanship,we early became writers of imagination and "style." Encouraged from the outset to write poems and stories of our own,our old scrapbooks contain the results of our literary efforts. While always fanciful and often bizarre, we took great pride in the individuality of our compositions. No plagarism for us!

Learning arithmetic followed the same pattern as reading: that is, flash cards, unison recitation, followed by the individual working of problems. Here, again, we took pride in our accomplishment, competing with one another in learning our basic math functions and reciting our multiplicatinn tables. Though never as interesting or challenging as reading and writing, we early learned how much we could spend on how many penny candies at Buck's grocery and how far our weekly allowance of a dime would stretch.

Aside from the basic three "R's," we learned bits and pieces of the "arts" (Music and graphic), geography, history,and some fundamental science. However, looking back, I suppose most of our learn-

ing could be ascribed to inspiring and innovative teachers, competition from our schoolmates, and pure hard work through rote memory. Granted, some teachers had special strengths. Miss Freeman, our first grade teacher, made our flash card learning into a boisterous game; Miss Cloud, a young gal who, I fear, often suffered from hang-overs, emphasized painting and drawing (3rd grade); Mrs. Hanger (4th and 5th grades) was a music and nature "nut;" and Mrs. Block (6th grade) interested us in good literature. Mrs. Jones (2nd grade and "head teacher') took us on our first walks in the woods and supervised our recess and noon games. All of these teachers were "special;" without "teaching aids," considered essential today, they encouraged us, whetted our appetites for knowledge, and both led and pushed us on our educational ways, The academic success we were to have in later years (and it was considerable) we owed in no small measure to this dedicated group.*

Today the "professional educators" put a great emphasis upon the "socialization" of the kids. All sorts of "educational toys and games" are devised for this purpose. We had no need for such crutches!

Perhaps we were deprived, seeing as we had little more than a sack of marbles, a battered baseball, a split bat, and a deck of cards, but, ne'ertheless, with these fundamental tools, we did wonders.

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*Years later, when the former Miss Cloud -- Mrs. Swank, her married name -- retired, it was noted what a popular teacher she had always been. Whoever wrote her academic obituary obviously had not known her as a young woman, a holy terror in the classroom. When we got into our mid-20's ourselves (some years later) we could appreciate how difficult it was to raise hell all night and hold down a job all day. As kids we were not so sympathetic to her plight.

As mentioned elsewhere, when we started at Glenmont, there was not so much as a swing available for our "recreation." Eventually we did have a set of swings (4) and a slide (1). However, none of these ever took the place of games of our own devising or, as often happened, standard games, such as baseball, for which we used our own local rules.

I suppose all kids are real gamblers at heart. (I learned to play Black Jack for match sticks in Bob Jackson's basement -- a fact we all kept secret from our parents, not wanting them to know of our evil activity.) Playing marbles, for some reason, was considered an acceptable game.

The marbles, themselves, were fairly cheap: a net sack of fifty for a dime at Kresge's or Woolworth's. While the varying beauties of these colorful glass spheres was one inducement for "playing for keeps," the main object always was to win the most from our opponents. Sometimes we invented special rules for special circumstances. For instance, unless we all had "steelies" -- actually ball bearings -- such were outlawed on the ground that they hit harder than glass marbles, thus giving an advantage to the "steelie" owner and, sometimes, actually cracked or shattered the ordinary glass marbles. Likewise, one was not allowed to "hunch" or use "aggies" -- oversized glass marbles -- unless all could do the same.

These days the thought of elementary school children carrying knives to school evokes visions of maiming and death. Not so a half century ago! As a matter of fact, in an age when kids, boys and girls both, commonly carried knives, I frankly don't remember one ever being used on a human adversary and, when there was bloodshed, it was the knife's owner pricking himself.

Knives were very much a part of our lives. While most were of the "Boy Scout" variety, which fitted neatly into the knife pockets on our high tops, hunting knives, with five or six inch blades, were not uncommon, dangling as they did from sheaths hung from our belts.

Knives were extremely important and useful: for cutting elderberry stalks into lengths convenient for smoking; for skinning muskrats, rabbits, and possums; for carving whistles or walking stocks. However, as instruments of socialization, they were particularly valuable -- and useful -- and necessary for mumbly-peg, a magnificent game of knife-handling skill which we played for hours at a time. I haven't seen it played for years and I would guess it has been forgotten or is unknown to the generations of kids who succeeded ours. Poor no-knife kids! Mumbly-peg was a game of real skill (I won't describe it here, but will demonstrate upon request) for success depended upon the player's ability to deal with knives of varying lengths, widths, and weights. Each knife had its own, unique, challenging qualities.

And, finally, a good deal of our out-of-classroom time during our school days was spent in the woods and along the Indian Springs "crick" which bordered the school grounds. Here we learned to collect leaves and wild flowers, poked at crawdads in the stream, and irritated bees' nests. In the fall and spring, when the weather was warm we often walked home from school, following the meandering path of the creeek. (Imagine today allowing little kids, six to twelve years old, walking and wading along and in a stream with no adult supervision!) Even the drowning of one of our fellows -- a mean, little kid named Leroy Spiedel -- did not dampen our fascination for the rippling water. Perhaps after Leroy's demise we were a bit more cautious for a while -- though I don't remember being so -- but our enjoyment of the water never flagged.

The big event of the school year was May Day, held shortly before the summer vacation. It was really a community celebration. The best of our year's schoolwork was displayed for our parents to see in the classrooms while the schoolyard, filled with booths selling wares made by the P.T.A., was dominated by a huge May Pole.

Dancing around the May Pole, intertwining its ribbons as we tripped along, was the climax of the

evening's entertainment. How well I recall how long we practiced to assure a perfect performance for our families and friends.

If May Day was the highlight of our school year, the real relief set in when the school finally closed about the middle of June.

"School's out, school's out,
The teacher let the mules out."

was on all our lips as we handed in our books and cleaned out our drawers and desks. With both a sense of relief and accomplishment, we ended the school year, telling ourselves how glad we were that it was all over. Yet, interestingly enough, our summers were filled with reading, writing, and "playing school."

Before I leave the school year, however, just a couple more miscellaneous noted:

Paper sales were then one of the best ways to earn money. Twice a year we combed our neighbourhoods for newspapers and magazines, carefully dividing the two and neatly fastening the bundles with string. Each of the five classrooms vied with the others to bring in the most weight. The proceeds, small by today's inflated currency, were enough to buy that first playground equipment and replace maps and charts for our classrooms. Plus it was a hell of a lot of fun!

Another activity, reserved for fifth and sixth graders, was that of guarding the school crossing of Glenmont Avenue. No paid or volunteer parent crossing guards in those days; just a couple of kids swinging long, bamboo poles to which red cloth "Stop" signs were attached. Kids selected for this duty took it seriously and competed for the honor of serving for a week at a time.

Finally, going to and from school was an excitement sometimes in itself.

Father took us to school first in his old 1929 Dodge and, later, in his fancy 1933 Graham-Paige. It was thislatter car which backfired and caught fire one cold morning as he was trying to get it started.

Miriam, looking through the floorboards (they were boards in those days), first noticed the flames by remarking: "Look at the sunshine on the engine."

Thank God for coal furnaces in those days. A deftly dumped can of ashes on the motor put out the fire and, within three days, the damage was repaired. (My father gave me that car in 1941, when he bought a new Hudson and I kept it until the spring of 1943, when I went into the army.)

Mrs. Fowle brought us home in her Essex, except on those fine fall and spring days when we elected to walk along Indian Springs. But more of the Essex later.

But if school took up most of our waking hours on those fall days, we had plenty to do otherwise.

For one thing, we still played our summer games in the fields around the house. Baseball was somewhat replaced by our brand of football (Miriam was an excellent linesman) and, in the early hours right after dinner, we played hide-and-seek in the Parkways. The seeker used the walnut tree at the north end of the Parkway in front of Oliver's as "home." (I had a lump of nostalgia this past summer when I saw children using that same tree for the same purpose.) Oliver's privet hedge (still growing) was a fine place to hide. However, as dusk began to fall, the call went out: "All-ee, all-ee, in free," which marked the end of the game. In those days, kids were put to bed by seven or seven-thirty. Tired out, we trudged home, having put in another full day.

The fall was also the time for fruit picking. On the south side of Aldrich Road, in the first block west of High, were the remains of the old Aldrich orchard. Every year the apple and pear trees were loaded with fruit which we picked and hauled home. (The hard, Kiefer pears we stored in our basements for later use.) The apples were particularly taste. I have no idea what variety they were, only that they had very red skins and white insides and were sweet and juicy. Out of some of them we made cider by putting them through a hand

operated meat grinder and catching the juice in a bucket.

About the time that the apple crop was harvested, we began to collect walnuts from the trees in the Parkways. This line of trees, planted many years before the addition was laid out, stretched from Schreyer nearly to Weisheimer (to Mr. Stewart's farm) -- the trees are still there. Every fall, we gathered the nuts in gunny sacks and bushel baskets, spending many an afternoon and week-end removing the outer shells, a messy process which left little hands brown-stained. After the nuts had been given a chance to dry (and had escaped theft by the squirrels), we laboriously cracked them with hammer and stone, extracting the delicious meats. Looking back now, I marvel at our patience and our endurance of smashed fingers from misdirected hammer blows!

Encouraged by our teachers, we also collected bright, autumn colored leaves. These we pressed in books to dry and sometimes made salt and flour copies of them on cardboard backs. It was surprising how much natural lore we learned, picking up and identifying these beautiful leaves.

By Thanksgiving, we had begun to move most of our activities indoors. Fowle's house became our center of operations. (Unlike today, Christmas preparations did not begin until Thanksgiving was over.)

Radio played a big part in our young lives, though it never was as dominating as TV is today. However, a series of weekday programs, each fifteen minutes in length, caught our fairly regular attention. Among them I remember were (though I've forgotten most of the scheduled times): the Singing Lady, who told short fairy tales; Little Orphan Annie; and Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy. (This latter program was sponsored by Wheaties and, out of a sense of loyalty to our hero, I tried to eat the "Breakfast of Champions." Unfortunately, it was as unpalatable then as it is now.) In the early evenings, we listened to Amos & Andy and Lum and Abner. On weekends, longer programs, such as "Let's Pretend" and Walter Damrosch's children's

music hour domimated Saturday mornings while "The Shadow" the Mercury Theatre, and a variety of other, usually scarey, programs absorbed us.

Even though the calendar didn't say so, Thanksgiving pretty much ended our fall season. In school, we constructed the Plymouth settlement in our sandboxes in the corner of the classroom, made high Pilgrim hats out of construction paper, and were told how the first Thanksgiving came about. At home, we followed the preparations for the holiday feast with considerable interest and, even though this was in the middle of the depression, our festive boards were loaded with "goodies" and surrounded by family and friends. This was the first real holiday of our year and ranked a very close second to Christmas. We ate until we often were actually sick and I can recall lying across a footstool to ease my abdominal pains from a surfeit of turkey and dressing.

It had been a good fall. By now the leaves were all down, the fields dry, the air crisp, and winter in the wings for its entrance. The river, a major center for our summer activities, had been bypassed in the fall - the water too cold for our enjoyment. Already darkness fell early and we arose on chilly mornings long before the hazy autumn sun rose. Coal bins in our houses were filled and the damp air had become acrid with the fumes of burning furnaces. Real sheepskin coats, still smelling of moth balls, had been taken out of storage and winter weight BVD's had been put on. Heavy breakfasts of buckwheat cakes, oatmeal, and sausage had replaced the lighter fare of summer -- cold cereal and toast -- and cans of coal ashes stood in the backyards waiting collection by the rubbish man. Autumn was over; winter about to begin!

One cannot deal with our youth without at least a short commentary on the 1930's depression and how it affected us. While it is no doubt true that we, at the time, did not fully comprehend the extent of the economic disaster around us (but neither did our

parents), we certainly lived with some of its effects.

Though "panics" had been a part of American history since our country's inception, none ever was so deep or long lasting as that which gripped the United States in the '30's. Historians still debate the details of that economic chaos and, for our purposes here, we'll leave that discussion to the more erudite of scholars. Our view shall be the one as seen through our eyes as children.

First, I suppose as far as we were concerned, we were not nearly so distressed as the on-ethird of the nation whom President Roosevelt referred to as "ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed." Throughout the '30's of our infancy and youth, we had roofs over our heads, clothes on our backs, and food on the table. True, none of these were munificent by any standards -- certainly paltry by today's scale of living - but our lot could not compare with the destitution of those hundreds of souls who lived in tin and cardboard shacks on the city dump (now the site of the Jai Lai) or, nearer home, in the Chaseland area, huddled in unheated garages and cottages, dependent for their very existence upon the charity of their neighbours. I am still haunted by the nighmarish visions of those poor unfortunates who picked through the city's garbage for a few scraps of holdy bread, spoiled vegetables, and maggoty meat to survive. I still recall riding along the old, two-lane river road looking down over the shacks of the desolate which were the most primitive shelters for those poor folk, huddled in rags to stave off the worst of the cold. I still recall with a sort of horror going on charitable missions for the delivery of food and cast-off clothing into the homes of those in Chaseland -- people who depended almost solely on the meagre largess of Maple Grove Church for their scant livelihoods. Even to a child, those were heart rending experiences, never to be forgotten.

Almost daily, even out in our "sticks," beggars stopped at our doors. What little we had we shared with them and it was not unusual to have complete strangers sitting at our tables, breaking bread with us.

Ed, your generation, for all of its difficulties, has never (and hopefully never will) lived in such times. It is really impossible for you even to imagine a time when there was no public assistance, when a sizeable portion of the American people depended fully upon private benefactors: the churches, Salvation Army, Volunteers of America, and, as importantly, their neighbours just to survive. It is beyond your understanding, I am sure, that, by the mid-1930's, when government assistance of sorts began to supplement private charity, pride led to the actual death of literally thousands of people from starvation and exposure; many of these were members of our own community. It can only be partially understood by you that, though five dollars would buy enough groceries to fill your car at the Big Bear (pork chops, 7¢ per lb.; eggs, 5¢ a dozen; tomatoes, 25¢ a bushel), a great many people didn't even have the 7¢, 5¢, or 25¢. A good house rented for from $15 to $25 per month, but still many could not pay the rent. Coal sold for $3 a ton, but homes went heatl4ss. Clothes were handed from one individual to another until they were worn down to rags. Our leather, sheepskin-lined coats were, at most, $5; yet many could not afford them. Children's lunches, too often, consisted only of a couple of slices of bread spread with lard. As I noted, our own lives, fortunately, never reached such depths, but those of many of our friends and neighbours did. Looking back, how truly fortunate we were!

Yet, we, too, lived in a world of hand-me downs, simple diets, and sometimes uncomfortably cool homes. I recall vividly my shoe soles wearing out. We couldn't afford the 15¢ to half-sole them and tried to line the bottoms of our shoes with cardboard. Dampness and a cinder school yard rendered this makeshift solution short-lived and, for a good many years, our socks and stockings wore out, not at the toes or heels, but on the bottoms. We wore clothes which were outgrown by family members and friends and, if there was some wear still in them when we were finished, they were handed down to others.

(Throughout elementary school I can remember that most of my clothes came from my older cousins and that, later, in junior and senior high school, I wore my great uncle's gabardine suits -- my, what a shine they had! New clothes were seldom mine.)

Though I never remember going hungry, our diet, by today's standards, was simple and unvaried. Only in recent years have I been able to relish oatmeal, apple dumplings, and pancakes because, for so long in my youth, they were the staples of our diets. And I still recall the closing up of most of our house to save coal, spending cold days in our kitchen, heated with an open oven door on our old Tappan range, often plagued with headaches from the fumes of the burning gas. We slept on featherbeds and covered with comforters so heavy that they made our bones ache in unheated bedrooms.

Yet, for all of this, we were still among the more fortunate. By good fortune and luck, our homes escaped the sheriff's sale, though I can still recall my parents' sleepless nights as they worried over how the next mortgage payment would be met or the week's groceries purchased. Perhaps the real good fortune for us really lay in the fact that we had always lived lives of simple pleasures which, on the whole, cost no money. We had learned to entertain ourselves, to enjoy the fields and streams, to whet our imaginations listening to the radio, and, in the ways known only to children, realize that, though times were hard, we were comparatively well off. We never knew the intricacies of the depression, but we sensed, as only children can, the difficulties of the world about us.

I must admit that, in recent years, when I have heard complaints of bad economic times (and I don't deprecate them), I have often thought that a taste of the '30's might not be amiss. And, yet, while thinking such thoughts, would not seriously wish a return of such distress on anyone. The vision of the tin and cardboard shacks on the city dump, the garage dwellers in Chaseland still haunt me too much.

One cannot leave the fall without at least a quick mention of us and Halloween. Today when Beggars' Night consists of collections of sample candy bars and donations to the United Nations' Children's Fund, there seems little left of the particular kids' celebration. Gone are the home-made (and sometimes store-bought) costumes, the "tons" of confetti, the soaped windows, swiped lawn benches, and a myriad of other "tricks" which were part and parcel of our "wicked" deeds. (For good reason, despite the fact that the statute of limitations has long since run out, I will omit a few of the "pranks" we pulled when we grew up a bit and concentrate on our activities as little kids. Perhaps in a separate "recollection" at some other time and place, I will make note of our more sophisticated "tricks.")

For us little kids, Halloween meant parties at school, home, and church -- plenty of cider, bobbing for apples, and eating string upon which was mounted a marshmellow. It meant literally bushels of confetti spread over lawns, soaped windows, and ringing of doorbells. It meant the making of rattles and noisemakers "to scare" the adults, and the wearing of grotesque falsefaces or face make-up.

Halloween parties were great fun and, though the refreshments and entertainment never varied, our masks and costumes were the results of our ingenuity. The main purpose was to be so disguised that our friends would not recognize us and, I think it is to our credit, that they seldom did. We never said a word to each other lest we be recognized. Then, one by one, our friends guessed who we were. Quite often it became only a process of elimination.

Adding to the hilarity of these parties were scores of decorations, often homemade, depicting witches and goblins. Corn shocks adorned corners of the room and the smells of burning candles and cooking carved pumpkins permeated the air. Candy corn melted in our sticky little hands.

"Halloweening," however, was something else. For weeks before that fateful night we prepared. I recall my grandfather giving us his wallpaper sample books, which we quickly cut into bright colored confetti. Ivory soap was collected from neighbourhood bathrooms for soaping windows and screens. (We also used Bob Fowle's rosin from his violin case for use on screens; and, believe it or not, some of those rosined screens were still in evidence forty years later.) We made "knockers" out of wooden thread spools and even collected tomatoes and other soft fruit to throw on yards and at houses.

The preliminary to "trick" night --- Halloween -- was Beggars' Night. Unlike the formalities which hedge it in today, it was always the night before Halloween. Theoretically, if we were "treated" -- usually an apple, a popcorn ball, or a bit of homemade candy -- we would not "trick" the following night. However, I have to admit that our youthful enthusiasm often outran the theory and we tricked those who had treated. Of course, some were tricked more than others. I recall, for instance, helping plaster Mr. Holler's brick house with tomatoes from his own garden. Of course, he deserved such treatment as he not only failed to "treat" us, but on one occasion made Miriam and I clean up a whole bushel of confetti we had thrown on his yard. (We had failed to take the precaution of waiting until after dark and had dumped our shredded paper on his lawn in the middle of the afternoon.)

Also, we always removed the ornamental bench from the Thompson yard. (We pulled a few other, less savory, stunts there too as we enjoyed raising the ire of the hysterical Mrs. T.) The bench always came back and, since we've grown up, hasn't been moved from the yard; it's still there.

In a way, we kids kind of psyched ourselves up, believing that there just might be (were) ghosts and goblins. I remember one time my father suspended a sheet on a string out of a second storey window

and dropped it down on us as we passed. We were terrified and I'm sure some of us lost our bladder control.

But, all in all, Halloween was for and by us kids. The adults, on the whole, met it with patience, a few laughs, and forebearance.

So much for the fall of our year!

CHAPTER IV - THE WINTER

No matter what the calendar said, winter for us began right after Thanksgiving. I suppose that we associated the harvest feast with autumn and, too, by then the leaves were all down, our light-weight clothes were stored away, and morning frosts were common. The air hung with the mixed scent of burning leaves and burning coal. The cornfields, in which we had played in summer and early fall, were cleared except for huge shocks of corn wherein field mice had taken up their winter residence. On cold mornings, a lacey fringe of ice attached itself to the river banks.

I don't know whether we had more snow then than we do now; I suppose not, though, looking back, it seems we always had snow during our youthful winters. One thing is for sure: no flake of snow that fell when we were kids did we fail to enjoy. Snow men, snow forts, and an igloo or two were common pursuits for us. How well I recall how we struggled to roll the largest snowball or build the biggest snowman. By adult standards, they were not outsized, but old photographs attest to the fact that these snow monsters were often larger than ourselves.

Our snow forts, with walls high enough that they sometimes collapsed, were bastions which gave us protection from incoming snowballs. We did have some rules for snowball fights: no ice or rocks in our ammunition. As far as I can recall "Junior" Werner was the only one to disregard the rules. (In summer, he also put rocks in mud balls.) However, there was no law against packing the snow as hard as we could and, once in a while, a particularly well formed and well thrown snowball would send us from the field of combat in tears.

We got our ideas for building ignloos from studies of eskimos in school. Once in a while we could complete one successfully, but, despite our dogged determination, they usually caved in before we could finish the top. Our blocks of snow were too soft and our weather too changeable.

A fall of snow also meant the hauling out of sleds (Flexible Flyers) from their storage places atop rafters in the garage. The slopes of both Dominion and Schreyer provided us with excellent sled runs. There was no traffic and there were no parked cars to worry about and the time between getting home from school and dinner was filled with sliding down the hill and, then, dragging the sleds back up again for another run.

On Saturdays and Sundays, when there was a good depth of snow, we moved our sledding operations to Indian Springs Golf Course, onto the hills which sloped down to the creek. It was a long walk for us little kids through the snow to where Ingham Avenue now is, but it was worth the effort. The hills were steep and we could fly down them at phenomenal speeds. Sometimes when we skidded our sleds over the greens, the caretaker of the golk course would chase us off, but, ordinarily, he was patient and probably enjoyed a break in his normal winter isolation.

One of the mysteries I haven't yet solved is what happened to the Abbott's eight-man sled.

This monstrous affair was given to us kids years ago. It was passed from one to the other, mostly to whomever had storage space for it. The last I saw of it was in the top of our garage when I left for the service in the spring of 1943. Inquiries have never led to its whereabout.

At any rate, this was a real monster of a sled, a gigantic Flexible Flyer. Its steering mechanism had to be activated by the feet for only a professional wrestler could have moved it with his arms. Obviously it was too large for us to drag about as we did our one-man (one-kid) sleds, so it got little use. However, when tied to the rear bumper of Art Fowle's Model A Ford, we sailed around the neighbourhood streets and got some real thrills going up and down the hills of East Cooke Road. There was nothing like it! The cold breeze bit our ears and we laughed and screamed to our hearts'

content on that natural roller coaster. Every time I come across that road today, I fondly recall those wild rides on that huge sled.

Miriam also reminds me that, sometimes in the depths of winter, we literally "iced" the Dominion hill and ran all of our sleds, including the "Monster," wildly down the incline and around the bend into Rosemont.

(As a note here, I should add that Art liked to perform by himself in that old ModelA. Coming up Henderson full tilt, he used to spin the car at the intersection of Henderson and High, while we kids cheered him on from the lawn in front of the old Sohio station. Just try that one today with all the traffic and congestinn. Miriam also reminds me that Art, in his father's car, once tried the same spinning trick at the intersection of Schreyer and the Parkway, lsoing a front wheel in the effort. "Skeet" was not amused.)

By January, the weather was cold enough that ice would freeze thick enough on the river and on ponds in low places for us to skate; or, more correctly, try to skate.

You probably have never seen, except in a museum, the old clamp-on type of ice skates we had. Like roller skates, we used in summer, these skates simply were clamped onto the soles of our shoes or high-tops. How anyone really ever ice skated on them remains a puzzle to me -- perhaps no one ever did. But we tried -- diligently -- our ankles bent at right angles, flopping about like chickens with their heads cut off. Many a shoe was ruined as soles came off. It's a wonder we didn't do irreparable damage to ourselves, but I guess we were elastic enough to stand the bending and twisting. (I recall many years later, when I had my first pair of shoe skates, racing along the frozen surface of the river. That is, until I hit an air pocket in the ice which sent me flying through the air and landing on my face. No twisted ankle this time; just a bloody, broken nose!)

Now and then, we made our own skating rink by

flooding the street, particularly the Parkway in front of Olivers. Though this made for a smoother skating surface than the ponds or river, our clamp-ons served us no better. Ankles still bent and skates still fell off, but, God, were we persistent!

The cold winter days also were ones we spent indoors reading, listening to the radio, or playing cards. It still amazes me how much of each we did. Old Maid, Rummy, Black Jack (with Black Bros. bottle caps for chips), Go Fish, Crazy Aces, and 52 pick Up were the most popular of our card games.

About the only non card games we played were dominoes and checkers. In the case of the latter, we had tournaments, Bob Fowle usually being the winner. Dominoes were ordinarily hosted by the Olivers.

Reading encompassed nearly everything we could get our hands on. In addition to the books already mentioned, we subscribed to magazines, such as Child's Life, Boy's Life, and My Weekly Reader. These we devoured, then traded around.

One bit of our reading, however, deserves especial mention. Mrs. Fowle, a devotee of good health practices, long before such was the vogue, squirreled away enough money from her household budget to buy, on time, a set of Bernarr MacFadden's health books. These profusely illustrated volumes (with pop up figures of the human body) intrigued us. Though she kept them hidden in a large closet off the front bedroom lest they be discovered by a husband who might not understand such an expenditure of money, we knew they were there. Evening after evening, we pulled them out, fascinated by the mysteries of the human composition.

But the high point of the winter season was Christmas.

Unlike today when Christmas is little more than a mercantile marathon, those depression Christmases were family and neighbourhood affairs. From Thanksgiving untkl Christmas Day we were on our best behaviour; Santa Claus was watching. Both at

school and at home, we busied ourselves making gifts for our family members. We had little money to spend and thus fathers and mothers were deluged with home-made pot holders, pen wipers, note pads, and colored vases made from fancy envelop linings, cut into small pieces and pasted on mason jars.*

Christmas was a very secretive time and we kept our objets d'art hidden so that there would be a joyful surprise come Christmas morning. And there always was!. Grandmothers gushed over hand-hemmed handkerchiefs, mothers just couldn't wait to use our pot holders, and fathers prominently displayed our note pads and pen wipers on their desks. Some of those colorful vases still exist in attics and basement storage rooms.

The center of Christmas celebration was the teee. I won't tell you that we strung popcorn and cranberries to decorate it. We did try, it is true, but our popcorn crumbled and our cranberries got smashed. They made better eating than festooning. However, our trees were wonders to behold. Christmas tree decorations then were much more imaginative than they are now. Many were handed down from generation to generation, fragile ornaments with hand painted designs, beautiful birds, lacey angels, bubbling and twinkling lights. Even today, the most beautiful ornament I remember (and it is still used) was a large, plain, green ball on the Fowle's tree.

However, it is still a wonder to me that we didn't have serious Christmas tree fires. This was the time before there were cool tree lights available. They got so hot that the needles of the drying trees became singed and, I must admit, a good deal of the pine odor which we so much enjoyed, came from the heated sap of the trees themselves.

*In those days, most greeting card envelopes were lined with brilliant colored tissue paper. These linings, cut in small pieces, were affixed to ordinary canning jars and then varnished.

Of course, Santa always brought the tree. True, he provided for its delivery before Christmas Day, but our eager eyes saw it in its colorful glory only when we awoke on Christmas morning. He was not only a jolly, old elf, but, obviously, a busy one as well!

Though depression Christmases were not as munificent in gift-giving and receiving as they are today, they were no less happy and joyous occasions. Too, if our gifts to friends and relatives were hand-made, those we received, on the whole, were functional and useful -- socks, shirts, sweaters, etc. Toys, with few exceptions, were inexpensive and few -- though I have to note more durable than those of plastic today. Interestingly, we were no less appreciative of Santa's leaving us a pair of gloves or mittens than if he had done otherwise. We trusted to his good judgment.

Of course, this doesn't mean we had a toyless Christmas. Erector sets, tinker toys, small mechanical trains (electric ones would come later), BB guns, picket knives, dolls for the girls, carpenter sets for the boys were pretty much our lot. And books. These were not our usual day-to-day type, but often large colorful ones. These we loaned --- after we had read them --- but never traded.*

After a frenzy of package opening at home, we began our round of friends' houses to ascertain what Santa had left there. The Olivers, thanks to "Daddy" Ben, always had the biggest Christmas, but, believe it or not, we were never jealous. How well I remember one Christmas getting a living room rug

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*And candy! There seemed to be tons of it around. We pulled mints until our arms tired, dipped chocolates, and cut fudge. Sugar and butter were cheap then, about 5¢ a pound each. In the days before Christmas, our house was loaded with all sorts of sweets and the windows frosted over from the steam from cooking such delicious messes.

soaking wet helping Newie to start his miniature steam engine.

By noon, we had made our visits and were back home to have Christmas dinner, really a replay of Thanksgiving -- a bountiful feast which gave us kids bellyaches, while the "old" folks ate themselves into a kind of stupor. By late afternoon, we were all tired and, often, out of sorts.

Looking backwards, I wonder how our folks were able to do it all. On Christmas Eve, they had to watch us perform in Christmas pageants at the church, directed by Grace Buck. The "kings" always appeared in I"dian blanket designed bathrobes, while the girls played the parts of angels or the Virgin Mary. We sang the old Christmas carols and always ended the evening holding lighted, dripping candles as we crooned "Silent Night."

By the time we got back home it was 9:30, long past our bedtime and it was probably just as well for we were too tired out to do anything, but go straight to bed. It was after this that parents and grandparents decorated the tree, put out the gifts, made last minute preparations for Christmas dinner, and finished off their work by eating the cookies and drinking the milk we had put out for Santa. How they accomplished so much in a few cramped hours, I'll never know.

Of course, for each of us Christmas had its own joys and customs. To attempt here to describe these would be pure folly. Suffice it to say that, from Christmas Day until New Year's, when the tree came down, we kept working at keeping the Christmas spirit alive.

By the time we removed the trees, they were just skeletons of their former selves. With the exception of the Oliver's, they were short-needled ones which, as they dried out, deposited those needles in unruly piles all over the floor. However, Christmas finally ended when we gathered the discarded trees together and ignited them into a most magnificent bonfire.

New Year's itself was the adults' holiday. I

can remember some of their raucuous parties, but for us it meant permission to stay up until midnight New Year's Eve and beat on pans, whistle (those of us who could), and yell as we ushered in the New Year. Factory and locomotive whistles and fire sirens could be heard from the city to the south.

After the first of the year, our lives settled into a kind of routine. The major holidays, with their anticipation and excitement, were over. The weather remained cold, though often too slushy for outside play, and school occupied us for the most of the day. Now we were on our own.

At the outset of this reminiscence, I noted that we were never bored; we never knew the word let alone use it. For us there were never enough hours in the day. While the Singing Lady, Jack Armstrong, the Shadow, Amos & Andy, Lum & Abner, Let's Pretend, Chandu the Magician, and Little Orphan Annie remained our radio staples* and books and card games continued to occupy much of our valuable time, we were always on the lookout for new ventures.

Among these was the periodic publication of the "Rosemary News." Some copies of our journalistic effort still exist. Our stories covered the gamut of our lives from affairs of the heart to our sporting activities. Advertisements were designed to help our fathers' businesses and columns were devoted to topics of wider, general interest.

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*Just a note on our early radios. Unlike our modern instruments, these were often wet cell, batter powered ones, with many dials for tuning and other necessary adjustments. Holes in the floors of our older homes attest to the time when long antenna wires were strung between house and garage and electric cables connected the "set" with a 12-volt, wet cell battery in the basement.

Even now, better than a half century later, the writing is pretty good and the spark of our youthful imagination apparent. Copies of the "Rosemary News" were pounded out a letter at a time on my father's old Royal typewriter, a long, tedious process, especially when one considers that we made enough copies for all of the families in the neighbourhood. However, our spirits never flagged nor our patience become exhausted. It was with justifiable pride that we delivered the babe of our concerted efforts.

By early February, we were beginning to look forward to the last special day of winter -- Valentine's Day.

Today beautiful cards, heartshaped boxes of chocolates, and bright flowers mark the coming of Valentine's Day. There are not new, except that they are commercialized versions of items which we made at school and home for exchange.

For at least two weeks prior to "the" day, we busied ourselves putting together our lacey, beautiful cards. Hard lettered with our personal sentiments, they were fanciful creations representing our feelings of love and affection for family and friends. In every living room, it seemed, card tables were set up, their tops covered with the raw materials for our artistic abilities. Central to the store-bought hearts and paper laces was the paste pot, a round jar with a paste brush built into the top. Even not, I recall how good that paste tasted; we probably ate as much of it as wel applied to the valentines. It was a kind of fresh taste, much like the Ski-Doo which we also ate (Ski-doo was a paste cleanser for procellain). My what appetites we had!

At school, every classroom boasted of a large, highly decorated Valentine Box into which we slipped our valentines prior to "the" day. Ordinarily we made a valentine for everyone in the class. However, I must admit that for those who might not be so popular, we purchased (for about 1¢ each) ornery ones, full sheet cartoons with nasty (though not scurrilous) captions.

On the afternoon of Valentine's Day the box was opened, the Valentines distributed one by one, following which we had a classroom party of cookies, candy in the shape of hearts (with kind words on them), and cider. In the evening, at home, we repeated the process within the confines of our own families.

Too bad that the contemporary Valentine's Day lacks the warmth and sincerity of our youth!

Winter ended with maple syrup making. In late February and early March, we began to tap the maple trees in the neighbourhood from Schreyer to Weis=heimer. Using a hand drill, we bored the tree trunks and inserted the taps, most of which were made from hollowed out elderberry stalks. Oldfashioned canning jars with the wire clamps caught the running sap. Twice a day, morning and evening, we collected the sap and dumped it into a large, five gallon lard can for boiling over an open fire.

Our maple syrup camp was set up at the "huts" near the southeast corner of Dominion and Zeller. The lard can (supplied by the Columbus Packing Company through my father who did its advertising) was suspended from a large wooden arch, probably once used to hold up a canvas top on a truck bed. The fire was kept going 'round the clock. Thus when we were not collecting sap, we were collecting firewood. My, how we labored! Day after day, we watched the sap boil, tasted it for the right consistency and, finally, divided the product among the workers. Our hot cakes never tasted so good!

While we didn't object to a bit of wood ash mixed with our syrup - it added to the flavor -- we objected to other foreign ingredients. Here, again, "Junior" Werner, one year, played one of his nasty tricks. Just about the time we were ready to divide the syrup, "Junior" threw handfulls of mud into our carefully tended product. Never one to cooperate in our activities, he was always on hand -- in this case literally -- to spoil the pot. We beat the hell out of him, but he was a wirey little devil who never seemed to learn. Suffice it to say, our syrup that year was not so

so choice and delicious. It is any wonder that, fifty years after the fact, memories of "Junior" still raise the blood pressure.

Soon after our maple syrup making, the trees began to leaf out, the wild flowers bloom, and the fields toss off their winter brown to turn spring green. The ice and snow were gone. Another winter had passed by. The outside world beckoned with new excitement and we were part of the renewal.

CHAPTER V - THE SPRING

Spring comes early to central Ohio. Not long after we had collected our sap and boiled it down to luscious maple syrup, the trees leafed out, the wildflowers bloomed, and the ice on the river melted away. In the fields which lined Weisheimer and Starret Roads, farmers followed their teams of horses as the plows bit into the moist earth. The corn was planted by hand in long, north south rows and the smell of new life tantalized our nostrils. In that same field, we spent many happy hours searching out arrowheads and spear points, turned up by the plow; it had once been the site of an Indian camp.

Spring really began with Easter. Though it is trus that some Easter mornings found fields covered with thick frost or even a light dusting of snow, we sensed the change of seasons and thus activities. For the oldsters, Easter might mean getting up early to attend a sunrise service along the Scioto River; for us it meant Easter egg hunts.

For days preceding Easter Sunday, we boiled and colored eggs, retrieved fancy Easter baskets lined with paper "grass" from their storage places in attics, and bought jelly beans at the "five and ten cent" store. At school, we duplicated the Easter preparations, making our own baskets out of construction paper.

Our artistic Easter egg creations often were wonders to behold. Using our water color paints, we made all sorts of colorful designs on the egg shells. However, the climax of our holiday celebration came Easter morning. Fathers and mothers hid baskets of "goodies" and single eggs around the yard. At the appointed time, we were loosed on our hunt. The object was to get the most baskets and eggs. (Sometimes we didn't find them all and, in the ensuing months, eggs, the worse for wear, were discovered in nooks and crannies around the outside of the house or under the hedges.)

Once the hunt was completed, we "divided up" the spoils among brothers and sisters and began eating the candies until, sometimes, we became literally sick. Granted, most of the hard coiled eggs, carefully prepared and decorated, ended up back in the kitchen where mothers deviled them, put them in potato salad, or sliced them over spinach. Though fancy, store-bought chocolate eggs and rabbits were unusual, each of us got at least one of these delicacies. Chocolate covered marshmellow eggs were more common and we ate them until we gagged.

With Easter behind us, we could get to work on our more important spring projects.

Among these was hut building.

I don't know from whence came the original idea (though probably from Art Fowle as he was the oldest I remember to build one); they became the center of our spring and summer activities. Likewise, I don't recall any other kids building anything like them.

The site of our "huts" was always the southeast corner of Dominion and Zeller. I have no idea why this spot was chosen, but it remained the center of our activities throughout our youth.

The "huts" were pyraminal-shaped, constructed of long poles notched together at the top of the cone. About ten feet in diameter and six or seven feet high, smaller branches were placed horisontally between the poles and then covered with a thick blanket of grass.

The poles and sticks for the framework were easy to come by. However, the grass covering usually had to await the mowing of the fields or, when that didn't occur, the use of sickle and rake*

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*After the first few years, the fields were no longer mowed by horse drawn mowing machines and we cut the hay by hand. Our first close encounters with horses came when we were allowed to ride these huge beasts of burden. We loved these horses and begged our fathers for horses; we said that we could keep them in the garages. However, fathers being exceptionally wise, turned down our entreaties by pointing out that horses could not live on cement floors!

Each year the covering was replaced as winter caused the hay to mat and rot. However, the hay thatching was thick enough to turn away water from all but the heaviest of rains and many were the rainy days that we spend sitting in them or nights when we slept out.*

The "huts" were placed in a circle in the center of which was our camp fire, a round pit surrounded with limestone rocks. Here, even on the hottest days of summer, we kept our fire burning.

The most ambitious project we undertook at "the huts" -- and one never completed -- was the construction of a "lodge" on the south side of the circle. It was built of a heavy log frame, rectangular in shape. Our plan called for stone walls and a hay-thatched roof. We did build the frame and cover the roof, but our stone walls, "cemented" together with mud, never got up very far; they kept collapsing. For years the frame of the "lodge" stood as mute evidence of our unfulfilled ambition.

For a while, we even had a "spring" at the site of "the huts." We had dug a "well" about five feet deep at the northwest corner of our camp and, "lo and behold," we hit a spring - or thought we had. The water flowed in such abundance that we had to dig a trench to carry it off. For all of one summer, we enjoyed its gurgling purity. Finally, our well went dry. Someone (I still don't know who) reported our "spring" and the city chut off the flow. By accident, we had dug right into a water main!

While the huts were the center of our activities during spring, summer, and fall, we laid out playing fields in the open spaces elsewhere. These fields, upon which we played baseball (our special kind) and football were built in different places;

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*Bob Fowle actually had a old mattress in his hut -- what comfort! That is, until it got wet and buggy.

sometimes we moved them a couple of gimes a year. The three usual spots were at the southeast corner of Schreyer and the Parkways, the field on the north side of Dominion in the second block, and just east of the "huts" and south of Fowles. Of the three, the last was the most popular for both its sixe and convenince. The Schreyer and Parkways lot, though used now and then, proved to be too small for our purposes. Eventually, because of Bob Fowle's interest in track and field events, a pole-vaulting jump and short track were laid out.*

But our construction activities didn't stop there. Just east of the Knopfs, west of the Olivers, the open field was lined with north-south running mounds of earth, dumped there when the streets of the Rosemary Addition were scraped out. Behind these, we dug holes and trenches in the spring when the dirt was moist. Here we played "war," hurling mud balls at each other from trench to trench. The rule was that only packed mud could be used, but devious "Junior" Werner, as usual, broke the rule by enclosing stones in his mud balls. How well I remember chasing him home with a hoe after having been hit by one of his illegal missiles. If he had not outrun me, he probably would not be around today!

I recall that on the east side of this field the old boys -- Art Fowle and his pals -- had dug a deep hole, perhaps five or six feet deep and about five feet in diameter. I particularly remember that hole because the bigger kids often dumped us little ones into it. We were too small to climb out and sometimes panicked. Eventually that hole and some of the trenches were roofed over and fireplaces built into the walls.**

*Our shot-put course was the width of Dominion, located just west of Fowles. Even to this day, the curb on the north side of the street bears the scars of our short throws.

**Olivers had a dog run built through this field, about fifty feet long, from the west side of their garage in which they ran their Dobermans --

Planting our own vegetable gardens was part of our spring routine. Although Bob Fowle's plot just west of his home was the largest and most varied, the rest of us put in our own smaller versions. Not content with the ordinary crops of peas (which we planted on St. Patrick's Day), corn, beans, and tomatoes, we experimented, from time to time, with such exotic plants as cotton and peanuts. Though the harvests of the latter two were not large, we did prove to ourselves that, given careful attention -- and seasonal luck -- we could grow what were usually thought of as southern crops. We really weren't too bad as gardeners -- weeding, hoeing, and catching potato bugs and tomato worms. True, we often lacked the patience to wait for the fruits of the soil to mature and thus often ate half-ripe tomatoes and under-sized radishes and carrots. (I recall one year I planted 20 lbs. of onion sets; thank God, my friends were not squeemish about breath odors!)

Early in the spring, accompanying heavy rainfalls, the river rose and overflowed its banks. Quite often Starret Road was under water and the low-lying fields to the east, from the foot of Schreyer to the river, became one vast lake. Today all of that area has been filled in, but fifty years ago, much of it was five or six feet lower than Starret Road. However, aside from a corn field across from the Weisheimer house, the rest of the area was a tangled mass of wild grape vines and scrub trees. Though obviously we didn't play there when it was under water, during the late spring and summer we explored our private jungle for hours on end. Perhaps because it was a haven for wildlife (aside from our own), we called it the "Bunny House." Even in summer, natural drainage from the hill kept it veined with small streams in which we liked to slop around and dam.

When the flood waters went down, the river banks were piled with debris, washed downstream from the animals which we greatly feared.

upper reaches of the river. Large trees often became lodged against the Henderson Road bridge and, when "Jackson's Island" reappeared above the water's surface, it was little more than a muddy mound.

By early May (and sometimes even earlier in case of a warm spring), the fields and woods abounded in wild flowers, particularly Violets, Bachelor's Buttons, Jack-in-the-Pulpits, Spring Beauties, and May Apples. They seemed to bloom just in time for Mother's Day. For this event we picked literally hundrends of these fragile flowers and presented them, often squeezed and wilting, to the objects of our parental esteem. (Later daisies and dandelions decorated our tables and mantels, proudly shown off in their Mason jar vases.)

By the end of May, things had begun to dry out, the trees were in full leaf, and the fields were high with grass and weeds.

In the early '30's, farmers were hired to mow the fields, making them look more presentable to potential lot buyers. However, as the depression deepened, the real estate entrepremeurs not only could not find buyers for building sites, but also could not afford to pay farmers to mow.

As a result, we residents, young and older, took matters into our own hands. At least once in the spring or summer and sometimes twice, we burned the fields. Armed with shovels, brooms, and gunny sacks, we set about setting and controlling these field fires. Ordinarily we chose a dry day with calm winds. At such times, field burning was a good deal of fun. However, once in a while, winds came up, fanning the flames to an intensity and fierceness which were difficult to control. I recall once when Judge Rose started a field fire innocently enough, but suddenly a stiff breeze moved the fire along so fast that it quickly got out of hand. Fortunately it was a Saturday afternoon when everyone was home. Within minutes of the Judge's cries for help, we were all on the fire line, hosing down the flames as they got too near to our houses, setting back fires, and beating mightily with our brooms, shovels, and gunny sacks. The fire was finally put

out and, through we continued to set field fires, ever after we practiced a great amount of care in keeping them under control.

For us, the firefighters, it was an exhiliarating experience. When all was over, our faces blackened and only a long, leisurely bath eliminated the soot and heady burning odors from our bodies.

For a few days after the burnings, the fields were blackened with the burnt grass. However, within a couple of weeks, they were green and beautiful again, like spreading lawns.

In most respects, spring was a transitional period in our annual activities. We laid out our playing fields, refurbished "the huts," began to enjoy the longer daylight hours, playing in the fields or engaging in a game of hide and seek in the Parkways. We were moving our activities out-of-doors again.

But spring was really only a beginning of new activities. With school still in session, we could not develop a full-time outside schedule. We exchanged our ice skates for roller skates, our sleds for scooters and sidewalk bikes, and watched carefully the sign on the tower at Olentangy Park which showed how many days were left until it opened.

"School's out, school's out,
The teacher let the mules out;
No more pencils, no more books,
No more teacher's dirty looks"

The end of school, which came during the second week of June, marked the beginning of our summer - the best season of the year. Now we could really get to work. It was not only the best season; it was the busiest. Panty waists were in, knickers out; high tops were stored away; bare feet the norm. No more trouble getting out of bed in the mornings -- the early bird gets the worm. Bradley Kincaid, you're our friend! Spring got our juices flowing; in summer they gushed, firing us with unlimited energy!

CHAPTER VI - THE SUMMER

Even as the composition of this section begins, I am overwhelmed with the task before me. Fall, winter, and spring were but small rehearsals for the summer which lay ahead. Certainly none of us ever viewed -- or experienced -- summer as a time of leisure. There was not an open moment in our overburdened schedules; we knew not what the word "boredom" meant, let alone use it.

I suppose the thing that baffles me more about the succeeding generations to ours is their inability to fill their hours. I hear them ask: "What can I do now" or exclaim: "There's nothing to do."

Our existence, in every season, was so different. Our problem was with options; we had so many of them and thus so many choices to make on how to use our valued time. We dropped into bed at night exhausted from our round of activities, deliciously worn out enjoying and making the most of every waking moment. We had no time-killer called television -- thank God -- and used radio imaginatively and judiciously.

But on to summer, begging your pardon for what will appear to be a lack of organization -- a literary hodge-podge. There really is no other way to relate it.

Perhaps the best way to start is at the beginning.

By the time school was out for the year -- about the middle of June - a great many of our summer-type activities had already begun, albeit on a constricted scale because of the hours we spent in class. The "huts" had been rebuilt, playing fields laid out, hide-and-seek games begun in the early evenings after supper, fishing expeditions taken under the Henderson Road bridge on Saturdays; our especial baseball games fitted in whenever possible. These activities we continued and enlarged upon during the weeks from the middle of June until the Wednesday after Labor Day in September. Our track and field events began as soon as the weather warmed and lasted until the

first dustings of snow in the fall. Too, by the time school was over, we had already begun to migrate back to the waters of the Olentangy, building rafts that often came apart or sunk (or both), catching crawdads and opening clams looking for pearls.

But some things we associated primarily with the summer "vacation."

A typical summer day began about 6:00 (sometimes as early as 5:30) in the morning when we tuned into Bradley Kinkaid singing his "hill-billy" songs -- now euphemistically called "country." Even though our folks were still abed, we listened, wrapt in what was then our favorite typie of music.

By the time Bradley had crooned his last note, breakfast was on the table. The heavy breakfasts of winter had been replaced by corn flakes and toast washed down by real gen-u-wine milk -- not the 2% watered down or homogenized stuff you use today -- but real cow's milk in solid glass bottles, the thick cream rising to the top. Some, like the Fowle's, used "Black Bros." (As your Aunt Miriam to pronounce this name for you). But we and the Olivers bought our milk from the Glen Crest Jersey Farm -- a place we often saw on our rides up the Olentangy River Road. We took especial note of the light brown Jersey cows in the pastures which supplied the milk and butter for our tables. How well I remember those horsedrawn milk wagons as they passed along the street, the horses keeping the wagon moving at a slow pace while the milkman, his bottles jangling in a metal rack, ran up to the house to deliver his wares. Though I'm sure they did, I don't remember any of those drivers ever holding the reins of the horses. Eventually, the horsedrawn wagons yielded to progress -- gasoline engined trucks. The romance was taken out of milk delivery.

As a matter of fact, there was a good deal of delivery service in those days. The ice man and baker had trucks, not horses. Originally few of our houses had electric refrigerators and most of the older homes still have holes drilled in kitchen floors through which a pipe was drawn to carry off

the water from the melting uce to catch basins or drains in the basement. The Olivers had the first electric refrigerator (I think it was an Electrolux), a "side-by-side," two door job, the motor for which was located in the cellar. The Fowle's first electric refrigerator was a noisy Frigidaire and we had the first monitor top G.E. Granted these, though sturdy and generally maintenance free miracles of American technology, cannot compare with their contemporary descendants (you couldn't keep ice cream solid in them), they were vast improvements over the ice boxes, whose interior temperatures varied with outside temperatures and the current state of inside ice. One could not expect to keep anything in them for more than a couple of days lest spoilage on a large scale would occur. In the summer, the ice-order signs in our front windows were always turned to the 50 lb. point.

However, if the ice did not really do the job of cooling our ice-boxes, that ice man's truck drew us like a magnet. Following it along on hot summer days, we "swipted" chunks of ice, biting off pieces and chewing them up, the melting stream refrigerating our "innards." There were always plenty of these fist-sized chunks available on the truck floor, having been broken off from the 25-50-100 lb. blocks by the ice man's pick, as he separated the blocks of ice, or his tongs as he loaded them for delivery.

Another daily visitor was the bakery man, delivering his fresh baked bread, cakes, and rolls. Though we got not samples from him, a few entreaties to our mothers often were enough to persuade them to buy us a cup cake or pan of cinnamon rolls in addition to the daily loaf of bread, There were two bread companies which served us, Donaldson's and the Omar Bakery. (You might be interested to know that Joe Holbrook, the WBNS-TV Weatherman, began his career as the "Omar Man" on radio.)

We've already mentioned Buck's Grocery delivery service, but there were other door-to-door peddlars as well.

One of the most colorful of these was the fish man, a tall, stringy creature, smelling heavily of fish oil, who made his rounds about once a week. His fresh fish, which he himself had caught in local streams, he carried in a peck basket lined and covered with newspaper. He would arrive at the back door, exhibit his catch to the lady of the house and, when she had selected the ones she wanted, clean them then and there, throwing the entrails and heads to interested and hungry cats. (Mrs. Fowle was his constant customer.)

Another rather regular visitor was the "Paper Lady." She collected rather than sold. We kept our magazines and newspapers for her (except when we were getting ready for a paper sale at school). She was a large, rather coarse lady whom I remember particularly as she liked to pet Fowle's tom cat. The cat wasn't particularly taken with her and she had to pull it by the tail to get Tommy into her lap. I always thought that this was a rather cruel way to treat the cat. I can still see her sitting on the top of the basement stairs at 111 West Dominion, her large bulk taking up the whole stair, waiting on Mrs. Fowle to get the papers and magazines together.

The Clifford boys, who lived far away on Garden Road, also peddled produce fresh from their own garden, a couple of cents for a bunch of carrots or onions, perhaps a nickle for a head of lettuce or cabbage.

On our own gardens we worked diligently. Before the heat of the day, we hoed and weeded and picked off bugs. And what harvests we had! As a matter of fact, a good deal of the fresh produce we consumed we grew on our own plots. Peas came first, followed by beans, tomatoes, radishes (red and icicle), limas, onions, corn, and potatoes. We took great pride in ourselves as gardeners and some of us were serious enough about such activities as to dream of eventually becoming farmers.

Speaking of farmers, there was only one active in the neighbourhood, Mr. Stewart, whose large,

white, frame house stood where the Unitarian Church on Weisheimer now is. His fields, usually planted with corn, lay just to the west of his house along Weisheimer Road. His barn and hog pen were south of his house and just north of Abbott's. Roaming about his yard were scores of chickens. At one time his farm had encompassed the northern part of the Rosemary Addition and a good deal of land north of Weisheimer. However, real estate developers in the '20's had bought most of his land and platted it into building lots. As the depression had curtailed sales of these, most of the old farm was just open fields. Our own acquaintance with Mr. Stewart was pretty much limited to three activities: In mid-summer, he allowed us to pick mulberries from his tree which stood just to the southwest of his house. In the late summer, laden with gunny sacks, we stole his horse corn for our annual corn roast. And, particularly, our mothers sent us to him to buy freshly killed chickens.

This latter was a frightening experience for us little kids and we never enjoyed going on this errand.

In front of the barn door, Mr. Stewart kept a large diameter chunk of wood. This he used as a chopping block to lop off the chickens' heads. When we went to buy a fresh chicken (about 15¢), he would catch one as it pecked its way around the yard. With a great amount of cackling, the chicken's head was placed sideways on the block. Holding the poor bird with one hand, he delivered a well-directed blow on the animal's neck with his hatchet. Then, with devious glee, he would throw the headless chicken at us. We were scared to death as this bloody bird thrashed its way around the barnyard. After such experiences, I often wonder how we could later eat such a poor bird with so much relish. (I also remember Mrs. Spiker scaring the hell out of me as she killed a number of chickens one day, one after another, in her back yard. With all of these headless creatures flopping about, plus my own terror, there was momentary pandemonium. However, unlike Mr. Stewart, Mrs. Spiker was a kindly soul and the

scare she gave me was inadvertant.) I might add that my grandmother was a bit neater when she killed chickens and turkeys, which, once in a while, we bought live. She tied their feet to the clothes line in the backyard and then, with a single swipe of a large butcher knife, severed their heads. While this was somewhat of a gorey mess, at least we didn't get chased by these headless monsters.

I must pause here to describe two weekly events in our lives, not because we really, actively participated in them, but because we have come such a long way in modern household technology.

Monday and Tuesday of each week were reserved, respectively, for washing and ironing. In our time, with automatic washers and no-iron fabrics, one cannot imagine the labor that went into these chores. They were, quite literally, all-day affairs.

On wash days --Mondays -- our mothers got up an hour or so earlier than usual for washing clothes was a tedious, heavy task. In every basement was a two-burner gas hot plate on which was placed a large, cooper clothes boiler, an oblong tub about 30 gallons capacity. Into the water, heated to the boiling point and sprinkled with shaved Fels Naptha soap, were dumped the white clothes. They were quite literally boiled for a half an hour or so, at the end of which time they were lifted out with a wooden stick and into the bowels of the washer. Particularly difficult spots were removed by rubbing clothes vigorously on a washboard. For another half hour or so, they were slopped about in, what today, would be classed as primitive electric washers.* This accomplished, they were lifted out of the washer,

*Some of these early washers only rocked the clothes back and forth. Others had blades which swished about the clothes. We finally got an Easy washer, which was the "last word" in washers at the time. It had a set of three cups which pounded the clothes up and down. Also, it had a spin dryer rather than a wringer. The only trouble was that, when the spin dryer was working, mother had to hold on to the washer to keep it from walking around the basement.

put through the wringer, and then rinsed in cold water. The rinses - two of them - were done by hand in stationary tubs of concrete or metal, the clothes being put through the wringer piece by piece each time.

After the last rinse, they were hung outside on clothes lines to dry or, in bad weather, hung on lines strung in the basement.

While it is true that clothes dried outside smelled better, towels and wash cloths were never fluffy and soft as we now like them.

Colored clothes, washed separately, were never boiled and put in the washer only after the water was cooled. Dyes were not very good in those days and colors usually faded after a few washings. By the same token, mothers always boiled starch with which they treated shirt cuffs and collars.* Too, blueing was put in the rinse water of white clothes to get rid of what one washing soap manufacturer called "tattle take gray."

As you might imagine, washing in those days was nearly an all-day job which left mothers both wet and exhausted. No need for aerobic exercises then.

When the dried clothes were taken down, those to be ironed (including sheets, pillow cases, towels, handkerchiefs, shirts, and dresses) were dampened for the next day's toil at the ironing board.

It wash days left mothers wet and sore, ironing was no field day either. Though by the time of our youth the old cast iron irons which were heated on the stove were pretty much relegated to be door stops, the electric ones had no thermostats and had to be constantly tested for the proper heat. An

*Men's shirts had detachable collars. These were sent out to the commercial laundry and returned in small pasteboard collar boxes. Heavily starched, most men's necks were a permanent red from the chafing of these immaculate collars.

iron too cold failed to press out the wrinkles, but one too hot scorched the cloth, particulrly cloth that had been starched. And even the most careful mothers now and then ruined a shirt or dress by applying too hot an iron.* Women literally sweated over this chore, miserable task that is was. However, looking back, one had to admit that, though the washing and ironing were arduous jobs, clothes were cleaner and more presentable then than they are now. Still one can ask whether it was worth the effort. Evidently our mothers thought so.

If Mondays around the house smelled of Fels Naptha soap, every day had the odor of Lifebuoy insofar as we kids were concerned. Those were the days before deodorant soaps and anti-perspirants. Much of the time in warm weather, we all, young and old, stank of stale sweat. Quite frankly, the only way to overcome B.O. (the advertiser's abbreviation for "body odor") was to find a more potent fragrance to overcome it.

For us kids that meant Lifebuoy soap, a reddish, octagonal shaped bar which, quite literally, reeked of carbolic acid. Whether we got really clean was not the question; whether we smelled of Lifebuoy was -- and, boy, how we did.

For most of us, being attuned to summer meant the ability to walk barefoot over the cinders in the alley between Schreyer and Dominion. Though Bob's feet were always the first to be calloused enough to take the stroll in stride, eventually all

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*My mother had a bit easier task. In 1922, when she was married, she had bought a large, gas-fired mangle, a "1900." It would take a whole sheet at a time. Interestingly, I still use it; it works fine, well over sixty years later. How's that for quality!

of us overcame the ordeal. (The flint rocks in Fowle's driveway were another matter and none of us, including Bob, ever conquered that obstacle course.)

A great deal of our summer activities were centered on sports, particularly baseball. Actually our season began on April 17th, which date signalled two important, but oddly connected events. Mrs. Fowle's birthday and the opening game of the Columbus Red Birds, as the local professional team was then known, came on the same day.

The connection between the two was that on that day, Mrs. Fowle always loaded us into her car and took us to the Red Bird Stadium. We were loyal supporters of our "Bords," not only attending many of the games as Knot Hole Club members,* but spending numberless afternoons listening to the games on the radio as we sprawled on the Fowle's living room floor. We had large collections of baseball cards, which came with bubble gum, depicting not only our local heroes of the diamond, but big leaguers as well.

With such a small contingent of kids -- and of widely varying ages at that -- we never could play a "real" baseball game with a full complement of players. Thus we designed our own versions of baseball: two-o-cat and monkey-move up. That way every one who wanted could play and enjoy the excitement of a good hit or even a home run.

Again, mostly because of Bob Fowle's interest and leadership, we got involved in track and field events. We ran races on specially laid out tracks, had our high jump, and pole vaulting events, plus the broad jump. No soft landing sites for us -- just spaded up earth.

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*The Knot Hole Club was Jimmy Rhodes idea -- a good political move as many of his later supporters began as kids in the club. For a dollar, plus a nickle for each game attended, we could see the Red Birds play most any time.

For the gymnasts among us, an old water pipe nailed between two still standing maples across from the Knofs on Schreyer served our purposes well. We did chin-ups, skinned the at, and performed dozens of other variations of bodily contortions.

Putting the shot, earlier referred to, was a real test of our strength. We used a 12 lb. shot and eventually demolished some of the curb along Dominion. (The street was 24 ft. wide, curb to curb.) People living along the north side of the street today probably wonder how their limestone curb became so badly battered.

One of our most interesting body-building activities was weight-lifting. Bob Fowle, a wirey, little devil, had ambitions of becoming another Charles Atlas. Without funds tobuy a weight set, undaunted, he made his own out of an automobile axle rod and assorted items to be used as weights. These latter varied from solid steel car wheels to broken electric irons. Each item to be suspended from the rod was carefully weighed and then attached. Quite frankly, it looked like a contemporary sculptor's collection of dangling junk.

Makeshift though it was, it served its purpose and how we struggled to lift this ever-increasing assortment of weights. It never turned any of us, including Bob, into anything approaching Charles Atlas, but many were the pinched hands, when the load shifted from one side to the other, or bruised toes when we dropped the bar. (Quite a number of us can trace our learning to swear effectively from this activity.)

All kids seem to like to climb trees; we were no exception. Hoisting ourselves to the tops of some of the taller maples, we could even see the A.I.U. tower downtown. Likewise, we were greatly influenced by the Tarzan of the comics, Big-Little Books, and moview and tried to ape Johnny Weismuller by swinging from limbs and grapevines.

One of our favorite climbing trees was a large willow which stood on the northeast corner of Schreyer and Qlentangy Blvd. We spent many joyous

hours swinging ourselves among the limbs of that huge tree.

On one occasion, Miriam, Newie, and I were having a ball playing Tarzan in that willow. The branches were close enough together that we could swing from one to another like monkeys. Newie, however, was incautious enough to try to swing from a dead limb. It broke and he went hurtling down, bashing his head on a large branch below. The fall knocked him out, but Miriam and I, always ready for any emergency, loaded him, still unconscious, into our wagon, pulled it up the hill, and deposited him in his own front yard. He didn't "come to" until we called his mother to take care of him. There was no excitement; accidents do happen. Frankly, Miriam and I were much more concerned about having had to pull the wagon with Newie in it up the hill than we were with his state of health.

Throughout this reminiscence, I have emphasized the place of the river in our lives; we played along its banks, waded in its shoals, swam in its waters. We fished, caught crawdads, and scooped up clams by the score. We built tree houses in the sycamores which grew along its banks. Where the storm sewer creek (I know not what else to call it), which runs through Beechwold, empties into the river was one of our favorite spots. Here there was a kind of gravel beach where we could sit and build fires, hopefully over which to cook our clams. Along the river's currents, we floated Bob's home-made, canvas covered canoe. It was probably the only seaworthy vessel to ply those waters during our childhood. Efforts to produce other floatable craft proved fruitless.

While the river was to remain an important part of our growing up lives -- we were fascinated by its constantly moods from rushing torrents to barely moving stream -- eventually our swimming activities, at least, were transferred to more civilized haunts.

For several years we made almost daily treks in the old Essex to the Mt. Air swimming pool. It still exists pretty much now as it did then. However,

its setting has been altered considerably. Once situated out in the country, it now is in the center of suburban sprawl. Though its water was crystal clear and it never was crowded except on week-ends, the bottom was as rough, or perhaps rougher, than the cinder alley. However, with Mrs. Fowle's help, we learned to swim, even to take a belly-smacker or two.

As we got older, perhaps ten or so, we moved our formal swimming activities to Glenbary Pool on the old Three C's highway, just south of Westerville. This was not only a considerable improvement over Mt. Air, but greatly different as well. Rather than being an ordinary rectangular pool with deep water at one end and shallow at the other, Glengary was round. The periphery was about three feet deep. In the center was a large diving platform in the middle of the deep water.

The great challenge of Glengary for us little kids was to get up enough nerve to swim out to the diving platform. The distance wasn't great -- we could all swim much farther -- but we feared going out in water over our heads.

I don't know how others made that first swim to the platform, but I sure recall how -- and why -- I did: Bob got behind me and forced me to swim out. I was scared nearly to death, but, once I had made it, I never needed Bob's prodding again.

Two other things I recall about Glengary were picnics we had there once in a while and, most particularly, the frozen Powerhouse candy bars and R.C. Cobas.

Unlike Mt. Air, Glengary lost out to "progress," its site longsince filled in and built over. This past summer I drove out the old Three C's highway in search of some landmark which would guide me to the pool site, but I found none. Time can erase the structure, but not the happy memories.

If our winter ice-skating was somewhat less than a success, roller skating in good weather was one of our real joys. We didn't have shoe skates (didn't even know they existed), but rather had the

clamp on types which could be adjusted to our growing feet. I'm not boasting that we were of professional calibre -- we had our share of scabby knees and bruised behinds -- but we had great fun coasting around the ¼arkways and down the Schreyer and Dominion hills.

Eventually our roller skating fun came to a halt, not because we tired of it, but because the city, for some reason, still unfathomable, decided to repave the streets. The result was that the old, smooth surface, just perfect for roller skating, was ruined when an uneven layer of tar, sand, and gravel was dumped on our streets. After this, roller skating became passe.*

However, our infatuation with wheels was not limited to our skates.

For instance, we made both what would today be called "skate boards" and orange crate racers out of our old roller skates. By removing the length adjustment screw, our roller skate came apart into two pieces. These we nailed, respectively, on the ends of a 2" x 4". If we used just a short 2" x 4", we could sit or squat on it and roll down the hill. If the skate parts were attached to a longer 2" x 4", an orange crate was nailed to one end and we had a home made scooter or, as we liked to call them, racer.**

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*One side experience of this paving of the streets was our introduction to tar as a kind of cross between licorice and chewing gum. Cutting off chunks of tar, we enjoyed its heady flavor. Nothing like a kid with tarry teeth and gums!

**Later we constructed what were called "Soap Box Racers," which were much more complicated devices, with steering mechanisms and large, bicycle wheels. Though they were outgrowths of the orange crate racers, they required a good deal more ingenuity and better workmanship to build. So popular did they become that, for a number of years, Chevrolet sponsored soap box races around the country.

Which brings me to scooters. I haven't seen one in years and doubt if they are still made. Such a pity for these two-wheeled contraptions were our first introduction to balance and speed, the mark of our graduation from tricycles to bicycles. I won't describe one here except to note that they were truly learning devices. A turn, executed too quickly, would send us flying, but how good it felt, the breeze blwoing through our hair, as we rolled down the Schreyer hill, both feet on the platform suspended between the two wheels.

As noted, it was the scooter which prepared us for bicycles; we got our sense of balance and movement on the scooters. Thus when we "graduated" to bicycles, it was no big deal.

Our first bikes were called "side-walk bikes." Actually built much along the lines of the scooter, they were chain propelled and had coaster brakes just like full-sized bicycles. Their solid-tired wheels were about ten inches in diameter, the rear one providing the motive force through pedals and chain. There was no seat-high frame bar as on full-sized boys' bikes, thus the scooter appearance. The reason for omitting this particular structural feature was simple: in case the rider lost his balance (which now and then he did), he could easily step off the bike and avoid serious injury.

Quite frankly, comparing those sidewalk bikes with today's small-sized bicycles with training wheels, we had the real advantage.

Our final move in the bicycle world came when we grew big enough to manage a full-sized 26" or 28" bike. Usually we got them when we were still too small to sit on the seats when we peddled, but, eventually, we grew into them. (My first bike I got when I was about ten years old; one dollar at a police auction.)

These first bikes had penumatic tires, but no tubes; tires just a little larger than on today's bikes. Flats, which unfortunately were common, we fixed by pushing plugs of rubber bands and rubber cement into the holes. (This seldom completely

fixed the lead, but it did slow the escape of air so as to keep the bike serviceable.) Needless to say, we kept hand tire pumps handy and a small, leather pouch hanging on the back of the bicycle seat was always filled with rubber bands, a tube of rubber cement, the tire punch, and a small wrench the size to tighten wheel bolts and the coaster brake.

On modern bikes, I think I miss the coaster brake most of all. Granted with rear axles a mass of gears and moving chains, the old-fashioned brake just wouldn't fit, but any of us old bike riders will attest to the fact that the coaster brake was much more effective than today's hand brakes.

Just as we were outgrowing our childhood, a new type of bike came on the market -- the one with so-called "balloon" tires with inner tubes. I mention this development, not because we had them (Jack Shoemaker was the first and only kid in our neighbourhood to own one), but because they marked a revolution in the comfort and convenience of cycling. The larger tires not only were easier to repair (just put patches on the inner tubes), but were inflated only to the point where they were semi-soft. Our old bikes required -- as most modern ones do -- inflation to the point of solidity, which often made for a bone-jarring ride. The new balloon tires made cycling like riding on a cloud. Boy, how we envied Jack his "modern" bike. (Interestingly, I note that the old, balloon, soft tires are coming back into vogue. Riders are getting tired of having their derriers pounded into insensibility.)

Though one might expect that the possession of bicycles would increase not only our mobility, but our geographic world, such was only partially the case. True, it was now easier to get to Beechwold or to the barbershop at Westwood and High, but, on the whole, we stayed in our familiar environs. Perhaps because of the fear of flat tires, we wanted to stay within walking distance of home. Bicycles quickened our movements, but only in a small way widened our world.—One thing was for sure, though.

With little or no traffic on any streets (High St. and Henderson included), bike riding was safe and what accidents we had were limited to bike and rider.

Games of one sort or another filled in the interstices of our summer days. Hide-and-Sekk, Mumbley-Peg, King-of-the-Hill, Jacks, Hop-Scotch, and Simon Says were among those more active ones. (King-of-the-Hill could get downright mean.) As earlier noted, we were great on card games, especially those which involved gambling. In addition, however, we were gun-toting bandits. While it is true, as little kids, both then and now, we had our toy six-shooters in belt holsters, by the time we were eight or nine years old, we had our real BB guns. These, most of them spring-driven, would fire a BB twenty to thirty feet. We were taught to be careful in using them and usually fired them at trees or other hon-human targets. (We also learned that they would fire stick matches. When such were aimed at the street or sidewalk, they would ignite.)

One very sad event, thanks to a BB gun, did take place when Jack Clark fired through a key hole in the garage door, right into the eye of his brother, Bill, blinding him in that eye. We all learned a serious lesson in gun safety from this.

While most BB guns lacked power and thus had limited range and impact, Bob, being older and thus more careful, got an air-powered pump BB gun. Though I don't remember him ever killing (or even stunning) any small bird or beastie, it was a powerful and accurate instrument which all of us took turns firing at targets. (Speaking of targets, the west side of my garage is still filled with BB's embedded in the wood from our target-shooting days.)

As kids we were always fascinated with tattoos. I don't know why,but we were. In those days, it seemed, magazines and comics featured pictures of ladies and gentlemen who were tattooed. We did know that it was a painful process to have it done with ink and needles, but we found a suitable,

non-painful process by using, first, India ink (from Mrs. Fowle's writing desk in the sun room) and, later, transfers.

The India ink allowed us to make our own designs on chest, legs, and arms. However, with the expenditure of a few pennies, we could buy whole sheets of fancy, multi-colored transfers. Placed on a selected portion of our anatomy, then dampened with water, these exotic pictures adhered to our skin. Thus we got the same effect (plus color) as the real tattoo without the accompanying discomfort. Too, with a vigorously applied scrub brush, we could wash them off, ready to redecorate ourselves with new art work.

One of the great events of our young lives was the repeal of the 18th Amendment (Prohibition), not that we became habitues of the local bars (that would come much later), but we did become addicted to the bottle.

Let me explain.

After being, at least legally, dry as dust for well over a decade, our countrymen wanted to "wet their whistles" in a grand fashion. By the same token, scores of distilleries, domestic and foreign, competed for this new business. A great part of this competition one could see in the wide variety of designs of whiskey bottles. True, some were plain, such as is the case now, but most were distinctive in terms of bottle shape, mold, color, and sufface pattern. Some were quite beautiful creations.

At any rate, the distillery industry, in its race to oblige the thirsty Americans, produced this nearly infinite variety of glass containers. And we, as lovers of the fine and decorative arts, began collecting them; that is, the empty ones.

We were fortunate as collectors to have in our neighbourhood two major contributors. One was Terry Martin's dad, who, as Ohio's first Commissioner of Liquor Control, had access to practically every legally produced whiskey. He must have sampled most of the "spirits" he controlled for, through him, we got some of our most outstanding items.

The other major contributor to our collection

was Judge Rose. He, too, must have enjoyed sniffing a variety of corks and shared with us an appreciation of bottle art. His trash can (in those days our trash cans were 100 gallon oil drums with the tops cut out) was atreasure-trove of the collectors' artifacts. I suppose because of his position on the Bench and as an election year Methodist, he had to deny association with the"demon rum." I still remember how indignant he became when we stopped at his door and asked him to save his spirits' bottles for us rather than throwing them in the trash barrel where, often, they were broken. He claimed that he never used the stuff and that someone else put the bottles in his rubbish.

For us collectors, this innocent move of implicating the judge in the liquor trade proved to be a major mistake. From that time forward, no whiskey bottles were ever found in his trash. We can only surmise that either he "went on the wagon" or deposited his empties elsewhere.

Though eventually we lost our two best suppliers Martins moved and the judge went "dry"), we were not deterred from a regular inspection of the neighbourhood trash cans and our collection continued to grow until it took up about half of the floor space in the attic of Fowle's garage. Had we kept that cache intact for a few years, undoubtedly we could have sold it for a king's ransom. As it was, it was destroyed some time later along with the rest of the interior of that garage by a disastrous fire.

One thing, though, in all honesty, I must add about our whiskey bottle collection.

Though we never found a bottle with mich liquid left in it, we did put together a rather rare blend by pouring the few drops left in the bottles into a single container. This concoction we sampled from time to time, but I can attest to the fact that such tasting never influenced us to become alcoholics.

Among other things, we considered ourselves great jokesters and pranksters. Some of our

humorous activities we shared with most other kids of our ages elsewhere. Some were uniquely ours.

Some few years ago an era ended in Columbus when one of the targets of our childish jokes died after having lived a long life helping to entertain us.

We never knew Mrs. Pancake personally. We did know she could take a joke well and, like literally scores of other kids, we called her on the telephone and told her: "It's time to turn over." She always laughed and I was glad that, when she died at a ripe old age, her obituary in the Dispatch noted how much simple joy she had brought to hundreds of Columbus' kids over a succession of at least three generations.

The other target of our jokestering was the local druggist. In those days pipe tobacco was packed in small metal cans with hinged lids -- about the size of two packs of cigarettes. One brans of tobacco so packed was called Prince Albert. (I think it's still sold; it had a picture of Victoria's consort on the side.) With great glee, we would call Mr. Schob and tell him either to: "Let Prince Albert out of the can" or "get Prince Albert off the can." Boy, how hilarious we thought this was!

Once in a while we were the butts of jokes. One in particular was played on us constantly. We were told we could catch birds if we put salt on their tails. Theoretically this is probably true for, if we could get a bird to stay still long enough for us to pour salt on his tail, we could surely catch him. However, we never could get the birds to cooperate. How ludicrous it must have looked for us kids to be chasing our feathered friends, salt shakers in our hands. Hope springs eternal -- or at least until we realized the impossibility of the chase.

Though as we grew older, we devised new and different pranks -- we never were purposely destructive -- two I recall participating in as a youngster.

One I rather think was a common joke. In the evenings, just before dark, we would stand on both sides of the road and pretend we were holding a wire across it. As a car came close to us, we

would pull hard on the "wire." It is surprising now many cars we stopped.

Once in a while we kept cars from getting started by jamming a potato over the exhaust pipe.

And, finally, one other car trick which I don't advise you to try. How we came by it, I have no idea. What I do know is that, at the time, it seemed great fun, even though it was extremely dangerous to all involved.

The prank itself was quite simple: We would put gasoline in a sprinkling can, sprinkle a path of gasoline across the street, and, when a car approached, throw a match into the sprinkled gasoline. A wall of flame would spring up from the street; there would be a squeal of brakes from the car; and a gleeful laugh from us over our joke. I don't think we ever realized the potnetial danger in this "trick," but on one occasion we saw the results of carelessly performing it.

Once again the culprit was "Junior." Though a mean little kid, he sometimes exhibited a lethargy between the ears. One time while in the execution of the sprinkling can trick across Schreyer in front of the Johns' house (now Allen's on the southeast corner of Zeller and Schreyer), he failed to stop sprinkling the gasoline when he ran up the hill and hid behind the evergreen at the corner of the Johns' house. Fortunately for him, he escaped being burned, but when he ignited the gasoline, it not only sent up a sheet of flame in the street, but up the hill, into the evergreen and onto the house. Again, fortunately, the corner of the house was only scorched. But, as I said, "Junior" wasn't too swift.

The only occasion I recall when we were really vandals came about inadvertently; that is, our actions were destructive, but we had not intended them to be so.

Once in a while when we were growing up, a new house would be constructed in our neighbourhood -- not many until 1939 and after. Unlike the mass-pro-

duced boxes so common today, these houses were constructed of real wood and genuine brick. There was a good deal of scraps of both and we used such scraps to build our own structures.

At any rate, Mr. Hanf, a local contractor, who lived on the southwest corner of Aldrich Place and Henderson, was building a house on the south side of Weisheimer, just a little east of Zeller. As we did with all new construction, we daily examined the work that had been done after the carpenters and masons had left for the day. Like monkeys, we climbed up the walls and jumped from one to the other of the floorless joists. Amazingly none of us ever got hurt, despite the fact that, over the years, we used these houses-in-the-making as jungle gyms.

However, in this particular case (your Aunt Miriam claims she wasn't with us on this occasion) we discovered that the brick mason had built the chimney to just a little above the second storey floor level. Having finished his day's work and gone home, he had left a large stack of bricks on his work platform ready for tomorrow's labor. I don't know who tossed the first brick down the clumney's flue (it might have been me), but, as it hit the bottom in the basement, it made the most interesting "ker-chunk" sound. Suffice it to say, we began hurling bricks down the flues until they were all gone -- what a glorious chorus of "ker-chunks" they made.

What we didn't realize was that we had completely ruined the chimney. The falling bricks had demolished the flue liner. As a result, the whole chimney had to be torn down and rebuilt. Fortunately for us, one of the brick hurlers was Jack Hanf, son of the contractor. We all got chewed out for the deed and I guarantee you, we never went near that construction site again. Nor did we ever repeat our brick wielding. By, my, that "ker-chunk" sound still excites me in the memory.

While later a small section of this reminiscence will be devoted to our domestic animals -- really members of our childhood gang, a few notes on our

experiences with local fauna (wildlife) are in order.

As our life in the 'sticks" was really rural in character, there were many more animals roaming the fields and woods than us. Rabbits abounded; mice and muskrats, raccoons and 'possums were common; chipmunks lived under our doorsteps like pets. Black and garter snakes took our fancy. Moles burrowed just beneath the survace of our yards. Birds of nearly every species flew through our skies and built nests in our trees.

All of this wildlife about us generated a continuous curiosity. Abandoned bunnies we unsuccessfully tried to wean to adulthood by administering milk out of an eye-dropper. Periodically, using box traps, we captured moles, muskrats, and raccoons, and attempted to tame them. Bob, for a while, had a pet hawk which would follow him around and perch on his shoulder. Once a tame crow became our friend, coming when we called or watching us play from the second storey railing of the Fowle's back porch.

Now and then, using leg-hold traps, we caught a variety of small animals.* Bob would skin them, stretch their pelts on a board, and then salt cure the fur. At one time, he had enough pelts to make a sort of fur jacket.** Snake skins, too, were collected, some becoming stringy belts around our middles.

But hunting was not our alone. Our dogs were great rabbit hunters, and, on occasion, brought home a chicken or two from Horn's Poultry Farm. Once in a while, when rats got too numerous going after the chicken feed stored in Fowle's garage, we would close the garage doors and turn our dogs loose on those rats. The excited rodents would run up the brick walls and then jump at the dogs. Eventually,

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*Most of the trapping was done along the bank on the east side of Zeller, along the river, and at the foot of Schreyer.

**Once Bob even fried and ate a mouse; the rest of us desisted from trying this delicacy.

our doggies would get a rat and shake it to death. I had never realized how noisey rats could get when they were in desperate straits. Their screams were ear piercing.

Chipmunks, probably were our favorite wild animals. For years a family of them lived under our back steps. We fed them, talked to them, and, now and then, were able to hold them in our hands. They seemed to be such affectionate, innocent little creatures.

In putting together these few notes on wild life, I must mention fish. As kids we became acquainted with two kinds: indoor and outdoor.

At one time or another, all of us kept "indoor" fish, those golden colorec carp we bought for a nickle apiece at Woolworth's. We put them in small fish bowls which we loaded with colored gravel and ceramic castles. However, despite their idyllic surroundings, these goldfish had short life spans. W overfed them, never changed the water until it was a milky hue, generally, after a couple of weeks, after having made them a bit active by pouring salt on them, flushed them down the toilet.

The Fowles were more successful with indoor fish -- or I should say that Mr. Fowle was, for his large aquarium in the sun room was a microcosm of the sea. In it were scores of angel fish and guppies. Sea plants abounded and a small aerator bubbled the water. It was a wonder to behold and we spent many hours fascinated by these creatures of the deep.

Aside from the river, our acquaintance with outdoor fish was a fish pond built behind Fowle's garage. At first it was a shallow afdair, so shallow in fact that, because it froze solid in the winter, its stock of large goldfish had to be kept in a wash tub in Fowle's basement.

Eventually this pond was rebuilt and considerably deepened thus allowing the fish to be kept in it your 'round. It was drained and cleaned about once a year. This was accomplished by syphoning the water through a garden hose into Fowle's basement.

One thing more should be noted about this fish

pond. On its north side, Mr. Fowle had built a beautiful rock garden, dominated by a large piece of petrified wood. Over the whole grew an Oriental Tamarack, its graceful branches and fern-like leaves casting soft shadows over the pond.

Quite a number of years later, the pond was filled in and the rock garden demolished. I have often wondered what happened to that magnificent piece of petrified wood. However, until just a couple of years ago, a child of that graceful Oriental Tamarack grew in my backyard, a constant reminder of Fowle's fish pond.

In late July and early August raspberries, dew berries, black berries, and elder berries ripened in profusion and, quite literally, we picked bushels of them.

Elder berries abounded in our immediate neighbourhood. One clump grew in the corner of Fowle's backyard, sheltered by the Fowle and Noelp garages. Another elderberry patch was located at what today is the western end of the alley near Zeller (no alley there then), and, along the river, the banks were crowded with this large-stalked plant with its sprays of BB-sized berries.

Black raspberries, dew berries, and blackberries were generally scattered about. However, the greatest concentration of them were found at the eastern ends of Beaumont, Wetmore, Beechwold Blvd., and Jeffrey Place. Early in the mornings we rode our bicycles to these fields of berry bushes, returning a couple of hours later with our quarter-bushel baskets full of this delicious fruit.

Of course, once the building boom hit this area, the berrying days were over though I note that some black and raspberry bushes still grow along the railroad tracks and are harvested by pickers each year.*

*On the east side of the railroad tracks, just south of Morse (then Rathbone) Road lived Bill Moose, who claimed that he was the last of the Wyandot Indians. He raised a few chickens around his shack and, once in a while, walked around the community with an

From these berries our mothers made jellies, jams, and pies, but there was no better way to eat them than from a bowl with milk and sugar.

As we rested from our weekly labors, there was no better time than we spent on Sunday mornings after Sunday School. With the Sunday comics spread out on the living room floor, we followed the antics of Jiggs and Maggie (Bringing Up Father), Mutt and Jeff, Little Orphan Annie, the Katzenjammer Kids, Buck Rogers, Tarzan, Gasoline Alley, Major Hoople (Our Boarding House), Out Our Way, and several others now long forgotten. Sometimes, too, we found ourselves featured in the cartoon or rotogravure sections , heralding our work as sap boilers and hut builders. We were celebrities.

Each season of our year included certain especial events. Just as fall brought Thanksgiving, winter Christmas, and spring Easter, so the summer embraced a series of occurrences unique to us and the season.

Though your generation might fail to appreciate it, one of the things we looked forward to were evening rides in the old Essex. They were always the same -- up the Olentangy River Road to Stratford and back.

In those pre-Rt. 315 days, the River Road was a country lane which followed the meanders of the river. There was little or no traffic and, as dusk turned into dark, we rode quietly listening to the croaking of frogs, the chirping of crickets, and other night sounds punctuated now and then by the lonely howl of an owl. These were the peaceful moments which ended an otherwise active day. And, by the time Mrs. Fowle wheeled the purring Essex into the drive at 111 West Dominion, we were sleepy and ready for bed. Sometimes, still, I drive up that road late at night trying to recapture, at least in

Indian blanket over his shoulders and a 22-rifle in his hands. Years later he died in the Franklin County Poor House of tuberculosis and was buried with great pomp in a public ceremony along the Scioto River, south of Henderson. As kids we were frightened to death of him.

my mind's eye, those blissful minutes of my youth. But a four-lane highway is not a country road and the contemporary traffic keeps one's mind away from soft thoughts of long past.

Beginning about the middle of summer and lasting well into the fall was the canning season.

Though our gardens stocked our tables with fresh vegetables throughout the summer, generally there was no surplus to be held over for fall and winter. Even had there been, there were no such things as freezers.

Yet one of the major tasks of most households was to can vegetables for the winter ahead. Every basement had a "fruit cellar," a special closet or space, lined with shelves heavy with the fruits of the summer and fall harvests.

Because the various vegetables and fruits to be preserved matured at different times, the canning process stretched out for a period of several months. First came green, wax, and lima beans, to be followed by jellies and jams. In late summer and early fall, tomatoes and corn found their way into our kitchens and onto fruit cellar shelves.

Canning was a messy, hot, time-consuming business. Fruits and vegetables had to be cleaned and cooked. The Mason and jelly jars had to be boiled and sterilized. Vegetables had to be "cold packed" -- a strange term inasmuch as this meant to boil filled cans in our laundry boilers for hours on end to make sure that they would not spoil. Though some mothers used Certo, most jellies and jams were simply cooked -- and cooked -- and cooked -- until they reached the right consistency.

Though one could buy canned goods at the grocery, the home canned fruits and vegetables not only tasted better, but, for all of the labor and fuel, were much less expensive. Practically every farm in the country had its own fruit and vegetable stand where one could buy tomatoes for 30¢-50¢ per bushel, beans for just a fraction more, and beautiful Hale Haven peaches for a dollar. By November the fruit cellar shelves were filled with rows of

carefully canned fruits and vegetables. I still remember the very special taste of home-canned corn and of pears "put up" with a stick of cinnamon in each jar.

In all honesty, we kids had little to do but to observe the labor of this canning process though, from time to time, we were allowed to take the strings out of the string beans (green beans had "strings" in them then) or to sample the cooking jams and jellies.

A more lively activity was root beer making. This generally was done under the supervision of our fathers. For weeks before the actual preparation of the root beer, we collected, washed, and stored dozens of empty pop bottles. When the day of actual beer-making arrived (usually a Saturday when fathers were home), we stirred the mix with water in a large wash tub, then carefully poured the mixture through a funnel into the narrow-necked bottle. Every household had its own bottle capper and, though we were too small to operate it, we placed the new caps on the tops of the filled bottles.

Our home-made root beer was a heady drink; once in a while the natural effervescence blew off a cap, with much resulting mess and noise. But, oh, it was worth the effort; no store-bought root beer, then or now, had the flavor of our own concoction!

However, four special events were highlights of our summers.

One was the neighbourhood picnic at York Temple Country Club. This usually took place in late July or early August. The fathers played golf, the mothers gossiped on the spreading porches of the club house, and we kids romped on the playground. The main thing I recall of these outings (aside from having a good time and enjoying a bounteous picnic dinner) was the well water at York Temple which was heavily laden with sulphur. It smelled awful and tasted even worse. All in all, though this was an adults' event, the one time in the year when they got together as a group to enjoy a day of leisure.

On the other hand, a visit to Olentangy Park was

another matter entirely.

Beginning in mid-spring, we began to watch the sign on the tower at the park which showed how many days there were left until it opened (on Memorial Day, I think).

Olentangy Park was a fabulous place and when it became a victim to the depression in the mid-1930's, it was a sad occasion for all of us. Few are left today who realize that those high, iron fences around Olentangy Village once marked the boundaries of what was once one of the largest and best amusement parks in the country. Aside from those fences and a much-reduced-in-size swimming pool, there is nothing left to indicate that such a fine park once existed there.

Time and space does not permit a full description of the attractions there. Suffice it to say we rode the roller-coaster which ran around the whole park, dashed down the chutes-d-chutes, spun round on the merr-go-round, splashed in the enormous pool, were duly scared in the House of Horrors, laughed at ourselves reflected in the "magic" mirrors, and enjoyed the scores of other things which enticed us. We ate tons of salt water taffy, got cotton candy in our hair, and fed peanuts to the monkeys. A trip to Olentangy Park out-did any contemporary State Fair carnival.

In late August, we kids hosted the annual corn roast. "Swiping" gunny sacks full of Mr. Stewart's horse corn (before it matured), we roasted it over our open fire at "the huts." (I'm sure Mr. Stewart knew of our nefarious theft, but never let on.) To this "feast," we invited all of our friends and relatives. Corn never tasted so good and we ate until we were surfeited.

Finally, there was the Fourth of July. Of all the annual events your generation has been denied, certainly this is the most important one. Great as are the fireworks displays at Whetstone Park, none can compare with the "Fourths" we celebrated as kids.

For weeks before that great day, we saved our

pennies to buy a stock of fireworks. About a week prior to the Fourth, the fireworks stand, draped in red, white, and blue bunting and located on the west side of High just north of Dominion, opened. And we were there on hand to make our selection of firecrackers (Lady Fingers, 2-inchers, 4-inchers, and torpedoes), sparklers, sky rockets, and pin wheels. As early as possible on the morning of the Fourth, we were up blowing off our firecrackers (we vied to be the first to do so). All day long, we set off the noise-makers, blowing cans high into the air, even blowing mailboxes in the Parkway off their posts, and putting torpedoes in the street car tracks to be exploded by the impact of the cars passing over them.

When night fell, the neighbourhood was ablaze with rockets, pin wheels, and sparklers. It, too, was a time for family picnics in our backyards; hot doygs, charred marshmellows, and potato salad.

No day in the year could compare in excitement and activity -- not even Christmas. How much I miss those old Fourths of July and how I wish you could have enjoyed them, too.

Well, this was our year -- fall, winter, spring, and summer. What we have recorded is but the tip of our childhood iceberg. Admittedly it is incomplete, but, hopefully, it has conveyed to you the flavor of our youth.

CHAPTER VII - OUR ANIMAL FRIENDS & COMPATRIOTS

No record of our youth would be complete without at least a few notes about our animals: dogs, cats, rabbits, and chickens.

In a day when cats are kept in the house and dogs on chains or in fenced-in yards, it it difficult to realize that,when we were growing up, these "furry friends" were our constant companions who wandered with us over the fields and along the river.

Practically all of us had dogs. The Fowles had Blackie, an all black mix whose coat resembled caracul fur, a gift from Vivian Sager; the Olivers had a Doberman named Gipsy, a foul-tempered beast with all but her masters; Thompsons had a Heinz 57-Variety hound named Clumsey; Shoemakers had a blond Cocker Spaniel named Shoey; and I had a border collie called Queenie (I have have her successor, Queenie VI). These were our friends and playmates. They hunted rabbits in the fields, slept with us in "the huts," accompanied us when we swam in the river. We treated them as people and regarded them as valued family members.

Both Fowles and Knopfs had cats, though I must admit that we had to get rid of our two wild ones; they had been farm cats and never adapted to our life style; we gave them to the Bucks for their farm on Kenny Road.

The Fowles' cats, a gray, tiger female; and a larger yellow tom were quite domesticated.

In addition, the Fowles had rabbits and Bantam chickens. The rabbit hutches were built against the south wall of the garage and remained there until the fish pond was put in. The chickens were kept in a pen constructed just west of the Fowles' lot and north of the alley.

I suppose that there are as many stories to be told about our animals as there are about us, but, just so you will get the "flavor" of our animal life, I relate only a few.

As aforesaid, the dogs accompanied us everywhere

we went -- or nearly so.

I recall once when we had Gipsy with us in our living room. For some reason, we decided to leave her there. We tied her to the coffee table and left the house. Gipsy followed, as might be expected. Over went the coffee table and with it my mother's cherished Bavarian demitasse cups. God, what a mess!

Periodically, too, we had rabies scares. During one of these, both my mother and Mrs. Thompson decided it was too dangerous to have the dogs around and so, while we were in school, Queenie and Clumsey were taken off to the dog pound. When we got home, nothing could console us. The fathers had to retrieve our friends. They stayed our companions until their deaths of old age (Queenie was 18) many years later.

The cats were something else. Though independent by nature, we loved them and they usually returned the affection.

How well I remember watching the birth of a litter of Fowles' "momma" cat. She was a protective mother, who hid her litters of kittens in closets, behind storage bins, and, once, even in the bowels of the furnace. Somehow, though, her kittens were never allowed to reach maturity. Though we never knew what happened to them, Mr. Fowle used to carry a gunny sack to the river now and then.

Old Tommy, the Fowles' large male cat was not only a good mouser, but could keep the dogs in line. Periodically, he would jump on their backs, dig in his claws, and ride them, howling, the length of the backyard. Suffice it to say, the dogs never bothered him.

Usually one would not think of a chicken as a pet, but "Roostie," the lord of a harem of Bantam hens, was very much a personality in his own right. He followed us around like a dog, got wildly excited when he saw his reflection in the chrome headlights of Mr. Fowle's Plymouth or in Mrs. Penn's windows. Once he deflated a football thrown at him by driving a spur into it. "Roostie" lived to a ripe old age,

king of his yard until the last.

Finally, there was Fowles' angora rabbit. While we liked rabbits, both domestic and wild, this huge one with its great mounds of white fur was our favorite. It actually followed us around the yard and was only caged when we weren't there.

There are many more animal tales to be told, but not here. Here we only give you a taste.

Well, kids, that was the way it was. Too bad you weren't around to enjoy it with us, but, perhaps, this has given you a bit of vicarious pleasure. We certainly hope so.

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