

The Life and Times
of growing up in the rural community
of Strykersville, N.Y.
as written in the

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
"Dorotha E. Kirsch"

I would like to thank all my students who made my life so enjoyable and who helped me fulfill my dream of becoming a teacher. It was because of my parents and the wonderful teachers at St. Mary's School in Strykersville, N.Y. that I learned to love to read and appreciate the riches of literature. It is my wish that by donating my books, others will be able to share in the joy these books have given me, and instill in the children a love of reading.

Introduction

This book contains the life and times of Dorotha E. Kirsch growing up in the small community of Strykersville, N.Y. Her memories start in 1917 and continue through until her retirement from teaching in 1970. As you read this document there are times when you will laugh, others that may bring a tear, but it will keep your interest as you follow the years with Dorotha through her childhood, school days and friends, and on her journey to becoming a teacher. She then describes teaching in the local rural one room school houses, especially her 26 years teaching in Sheldon #10 school in Strykersville. She finished her career working for Holland Central in the school in Strykersville. We are convinced that this booklet will remain on your bookshelf as one of your favorites.

She has generously donated her collection of over 2000 books to start a community library in Strykersville. She has read every book, and her books are embossed with a DEK seal. Her

love of reading coincides with our present First Lady, Laura Bush's agenda. She has lived a life surrounded by books. Her upstairs was decorated with walls of bookcases, as is her living room. They were a very important part of her life, and she read each and every one of them.

It is by publishing this book, Dorothea's autobiography that we hope you can learn and grow from her experiences. Each page surpasses the previous one with her spirit and courage. She gave so much to our community and touched so many lives despite obstacles she had to face.

The Town of Sheldon Historical Society

*Success is to be measured
not so much by the position one has reached in life,
as by the obstacles which one has overcome
while trying to succeed.*

*Booker T. Washington, 1856-1915
American teacher and writer*

**“WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET
BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE.”**

*Sir Winston Churchill, 1874-1965
British Statesman and Prime Minister*

I have spent many hours interviewing Dorothea Kirsch. I listened as she told stories of her childhood in this rural community of Strykersville, NY. Her days were filled with fun and laughter with friends. She often spoke of an era when money was scarce, but the good times so abundant. She was brought up not to show emotion; everything was spiritual. Her Grandma told her true happiness was when you did your job and did it well. Material things only made you happy for a while.

She was a fantastic story teller, and the aspect that made it so enjoyable was the fact that the stories were true. She will take you through the days of her early schooling in this community. Her descriptions are vivid in her mind as

she moves from grade to grade in St. Mary's School and later attended the "Academy," right here in Strykersville, N.Y.

Dorotha had a dream of becoming a teacher and was persistent in getting a college degree. She struggled with the handicap of a hearing loss, and at times was discouraged from reaching her goal. Her drive was admirable and she proved you can be what you want.

There was rarely a time when I would stop when she was not reading, even as her sight is slowly diminishing. Her home is filled with warmth, the furnishings are meager, but the wealth of the books that surround her are priceless. I have transcribed this, her autobiography, from her handwritten notes written on tablet paper soon after she retired. There are some additions mad as we talked. I have surely come to the conclusion that she is truly a remarkable woman.

Mary Ann Metzger

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Dorotha's favorite poem:

The Reading Mother

**I had a Mother who read to me
Sagas of pirates who scoured the sea,
Cutlasses clenched in their yellow teeth,
"Blackbirds" stowed in the hold beneath**

**I had a Mother who read me lays
Of ancient and gallant and golden days;
Stories of Marmion and Ivanhoe,
Which every boy has a right to know.**

**I had a Mother who read me tales
Of Celert the hound of the hills of
Wales,**

**True to his trust till his tragic death,
Faithfulness blent with his final breath.**

**I had a Mother who read me the things
That wholesome life to the boy heart brings-
Stories that stir with an upward touch,
Oh, that each mother of boys were such**

**You may have tangible wealth untold;
Caskets of jewels and coffer of gold.
Richer than I you can never be**

**I had a Mother who read to me.
--Strickland Gillian**

When I am attacked by gloomy thoughts, nothing helps me so much as running to my books.
They quickly absorb me and banish the clouds from my mind.
Michel de Montaigne, 1533-1592 French essayist and philosopher

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
Dorothea E. Kirsch

(As taken from her handwritten notes)

My first memory is sometime in November 1916. It was after the re-election of Woodrow Wilson. I remember sitting in a little chair in our hall. It was night and there were a lot of people around. My Grandma Kirsch was there. She was to stay with me. Mother took my toy drum with her when she left. She put a hole in it. I was told later they were having a Victory Parade for Wilson. My early memories seem to be about parades. I distinctly remember a parade the school children had around Armistice Day - 1918. I remember going down to school - being given a little flag, and Norman Hyman and I led a parade across the street in front of the Catholic school. The adults must have had a parade too, as I remember seeing the Kaiser in a big iron kettle, like the one Kihms, who owned the meat market in town, used when they killed pigs. I can still see Kaiser Bill with his feet sticking out on one side and head on other. They had a fire under it too. It was quite a shock to me when I was about 8 and heard (in school) that the old Kaiser was chopping wood somewhere in Holland. Of course by that time common sense told me they would not have had the real thing in a little place like Strykersville.

I remember playing Red Cross nurse, too. Mother took a strip of white paper and put a red cross on it. This I had fastened around my head. Mark Phillips was my patient. He, of course, was a doughboy. I remember seeing Jimmy Palmer in his World War I uniform - whether before he left or after he came home. He was drafted as were many young men. I guess Jimmy came to town when they put in the first state road. I am not sure but think he was a cook and cooked for the road gang. Anyhow he stayed at Phillips. He married Antoinette Metzger who had T.B. and died quite young. I remember going to her wake - those Metzgers all died young - except Grandma Metzger. I was there a lot because Luella and Pauline Metzger were the only little girls around. Their Mother had died and they came to stay with their grandmother. I guess their father worked in Hornell - later he remarried and they left to live with him but in only a year or two, he died - and they came back to Strykersville. I remember Uncle Ellsworth as I guess he was the youngest and was around more. Then there was Aunt Eva who later married Ted Musty. Eva more or less ran things. They were excellent housekeepers. There were rag rugs on the floor in the living room but the dining room and kitchen floors were bare wood. These floors were scrubbed until they were literally white. They scrubbed on their hands and knees and I think they used sand.

It was at Metzgers that I had my first taste of mayonnaise. I don't think you could buy it in those days, certainly not in Strykersville. Eva probably made this - maybe learned how in her travels. I knew she had gotten as far west as San Francisco because she told us about the Golden Gate Bridge. Mother made a boiled dressing for her potato salad which was very good and I suppose all the ladies made some kind of salad dressing but at 6 or 7 I wouldn't have known. Anyhow one summer afternoon Eva gave us a treat - crackers with mayonnaise - was that ever good!

I also remember one Sunday early in April - the weather was hot or at least my friend Luella and I thought so. She, Pauline and I went for a walk in the woods or more likely the pasture behind their house. When we came to a brook the water looked so inviting Luella, and we took our shoes and stockings off - we all wore heavy stockings in those days - heavy things that wrinkled around the ankles. Well you guessed it, we went in wading - the water was so cold we just ran in and out and warmed our feet on the hot sand or dirt on the water edge. However, Pauline told Aunt Eva. They were sure we would both get pneumonia. They put Luella to bed after soaking her feet in a mustard bath and giving her a physic. I don't remember Mother doing anything special. Neither one of us got sick and probably the experience was good for us.

I told about having crackers and mayonnaise at Metzgers. Don't get the idea from that, that we kids got to eat between meals or at the neighbors. People just didn't hand out candy and cookies to children as they do now. In fact, I was told not to eat anything except at the table. Sometimes Mother would peel apples on a winter evening passing out pieces to each of us in turn. Once in a great while Dad made popcorn in a big black kettle on the kitchen stove and later in a corn popper in the furnace. This was only on Sunday, of course. When I was older we made a pan of fudge on Sunday afternoon for something to do. We divided it up "even steven" and ate it all. Dad didn't like chocolate or candy either. He had no sweet tooth. He liked nuts though and would gather butternuts, and

crack them on a flat iron, an old fashioned iron. Butternuts are awfully hard to crack and the meat is almost impossible to get out of the shell. I always felt they weren't worth the trouble. (Although if you have a vice it is easier.)

However, food wasn't passed out between meals ordinarily. Mark Phillips was an exception. He ate whenever he found anything to eat. He used to carry a salt shaker with him for the radish or onion or tomato that he got from the garden. Everyone in town had a garden in those days. They had a small front yard and a big vegetable garden. Mowing lawns was no big problem as most of the land was put into garden. Grandma Kirsch had a push lawn mower - child power of course. I would mow her little front patch and then bring the lawn mower home. Either John or mother mowed our little patch. Dad did the garden. He'd often get up at 5 A.M. and work in the garden as well as in the evening. I think he found it relaxing as I do now. In those days I did very little in the garden. I did a little weeding no hoeing. I'm sure he wouldn't let me loose in his garden with a hoe. I picked potato bugs. With a stick we would knock the bugs into a pail, pick any leaves that had the little eggs and finally dump them all in a pail of oil. I also picked up potatoes in the fall.

One year Mark and I each had our own gardens. We grew pumpkins. I must have been seven or eight as we lived in the other house. I was raising mine for Halloween Jack O'Lanterns. Mark had other ideas. He watered his and grew one huge one. There is a picture of it somewhere with him sitting on it. I played with Mark quite a bit but when Bob Barber came around they teased me and made life miserable. At least on two occasions they chased me, and I was so frightened I fainted. Mrs. Barber and Mrs. Philips said I held my breath but I didn't. I can remember what was probably the last time it happened. We had been playing in the watering trough in front of Brasses blacksmith shop. They had a turtle a large one. The boys said it was a snapping turtle and would bite my head off. I ran for home and they ran after me. I remember trying to scream but instead keeled over at the bottom step of our house. When I came to I was soaking wet. Mother had picked me up and pumped water on me and put me on the couch. She said she was so mad she went out on the front porch and told those boys what she thought of them. Their mothers just stood there and said nothing. The boys were about nine and twelve at the time. I learned how to handle teasers though and never was bothered after that. John would tease Jimmy a lot, but I had learned to shrug it off.

John and I played with the Keem boys some when we were very young. I remember we played in a sand pile left over from some construction work. We used bricks as cars. I remember the cleanest brick was a hearse. I really didn't enjoy playing cars and was happy when Luella and Pauline Metzger came to town. Anyhow as soon as the Keems were seven and eight they had to work in the fields picking potato bugs and hoeing corn. When Bobby Keem was born the older boys wanted to know when he would be able to work and Gerald was only about six at the time. I recall telling Gerald that Grandma and God knew everything.

When I started school in Sept. 1920 my horizon widened. It must have been a difficult year, but I don't remember thinking so at the time. I expected to learn to read. I had a

book "Tale of Peter Rabbit" which I could read. I really knew all the words in it. The First reader's first page went something like this, "I see you. Who do you see? Do you see me, you do see me." To say the least I was terribly disappointed. Then, too, I found out something I had suspected for a long time. I didn't hear so well. Sister Alice would read a story every afternoon and even though I was in a front seat, I just couldn't hear. I would put my head down on the wooden desk and the sound would be louder, but I still couldn't understand. Sister thought I was tired and I wasn't about to let her or anyone else know there was something wrong with my ears.

It was in that fall, too, that my sister was born. I remember Nov. 27, 1920, a Saturday, very well. In the morning Dad put John and me, well bundled, in the old Model T and drove down to Doc McCall's. (The Peter Franz house.) We waited in the car while Dad went in. He came right back as Doc wasn't there. I learned later he was up in the country having an auction at a farm he owned. Dad took us over to Phillips's and disappeared for hours. I had been praying for a baby sister. John prayed for a baby brother. I knew the baby would be a girl because I was more experienced than he at praying. However, I sensed something was wrong. As time went on I became worried and tried to be very, very good so nothing bad would happen. My idea of being good was to sit very still. John played around but I wouldn't move. After an eternity Dad came over and went down cellar for a drink of cider. We all, (neighbors that is,) treated everyone's house as our own. Mrs. Phillips said to me "Did you hear what your father said? You have a baby sister." I guess he also told Mrs. Phillips that she weighed 9 lbs. and was going to be named Georgia Louise. I was disgusted with the name. I had picked out a name with Rose in it, Rosalyn or Rosemund. I don't remember now. I guess John had ideas about a better name too, because he eventually named her Jimmy. When Mother was sick, I, as usual, was sent over to stay with Grandma.

One reason I was so close to my Grandmother Kirsch was that I spent so much time with her. Everytime there was sickness in the family - Grandma got me. This time she had me for a whole month - Mother had almost died and did not recover quickly. Every afternoon after school I went home but just for a visit. After a short time my coat etc. were brought out and I was sent back to Grandma's - even on Saturday and Sunday. It didn't seem as if I was ever going to live at home, again. Grandma got dinner every day for an elderly Civil War veteran who was a widower. Dennis Sullivan and I were good friends and I must have confided my fears to him. I remember he gave me a coloring book. It had a picture of the American flag and a soldier on it. When I cried and told Grandma that nobody loved me any more she pointed out that Dennis had given me a coloring book and to quote her, "Dennis wasn't in the habit of giving presents to just anybody."

Grandma was a great story teller. She told me that when she was born on March 25, 1854 it was exceptionally cold. Besides a new baby girl they also had a new baby calf or ?. Anyhow the baby animal was brought in and tied to her mother's bedstead until it got warmer. At about eight years of age (1862), Grandma said she came to Strykersville with her father. She described Main St. as being a path through the woods; people were bringing grain to the grist mill on Mill St. At twelve she went out to work. She worked in

Warsaw and in Strykersville. She seems to have had a happy childhood. She recalled living in a cabin with a dirt floor. It was packed hard and brooms made of pine branches were used. The windows were covered with oiled or greased paper, and in bad weather shutters were fastened. When they finally got glass panes as a little girl, she could sit inside and watch the snowflakes. To her glass windows were a great invention. She felt rich. She also remembered a diphtheria epidemic which in some cases wiped out a whole family - almost every family lost 2 or 3 children. She told about lying in bed at night and hearing the dead being taken out and buried. She was 10 or 11 at the time.

She told about going out to the road as a small child and inviting any passersby to her home for a meal and a visit. It was in this way that people in mid 19th century learned the news of the day. There were dances that lasted 3 days -three times a year - they were also a chance for people to socialize. She told of one Wake for an elderly Irishman. It was the custom for friends to sit up all night with the corpse. On this occasion the ladies retired leaving the close friends of the dead to stay up. These men played cards and drank until they finally decided their friend looked lonely in his coffin so they sat him up - put a cigar in his mouth - a hat on his head and some cards in his hands and a bottle near by. Then satisfied that "old shawn" looked more natural, they fell asleep. Grandma never did tell me what happened when the ladies appeared in the morning.

She told how Grandpa's occupation was a nurseryman. He specialized in grafting fruit trees. At one time he traveled as far West as Oregon, practicing this trade. Grandma and Grandpa lived on Weed Hill where he raised fruit, mostly apples, which were shipped all over the country. They also dried apples for sale. They continued to belong to St. Cecilia's parish, Sheldon. To attend Church they had to ford Buffalo Creek and walk 8-10 miles. Some children took off their shoes so as not to wear out the soles of their shoes. After Mass there were stops to Hotels for a bite to eat and a drink for the men. In Nov. 1885, John and his younger son William Kirsch, my father, attended the first Mass of the new St. Mary's parish held in the Town Hall in Strykersville.

However, as much as I loved Grandma, I didn't relax until the day before Christmas and that night when Dad took me to midnight Mass - just me "My cup raneth over." For one time in my life - everything was perfect. God was in his heaven - all was right with the world. I remember nothing about that Christmas except that Midnight Mass - the scent of Christmas greens and wet wool - the oil lamps along the side walls with their reflectors. My best friend Edna wore her new mittens. It was a cold clear night, the snow crunched under foot and the sky was full of stars. I looked but didn't see Santa Claus up there. It's odd but I don't remember one present I received or anything at all about that Christmas Day.

Late that school year I developed an illness. I think now it was acute depression. I felt sad and cried a lot. When anyone asked me where it hurt I couldn't tell them. I had always been plagued with ear aches so I knew about pain. I didn't have any pain - so why should I cry. I couldn't explain. Mother took me to the Doctor who found out I was running a temperature every afternoon. They took me out of school for a few weeks and gave me a tonic for my appetite - it was a liquid and tasted like burdocks or like I thought

burdocks tasted. Once I confided in Grandma that I was not happy. She told me that material things only make you happy for a while; true happiness came when you do your job, do it well, that kind of happiness lasts.”

On May 5, 1921 I made my First Communion. It was Ascension Day. Mostly I remember putting on my new white shoes. They were slippers but had laces. In the winter we all wore high lace or high button shoes. I don't think I had ever had white shoes before. I wore a black straw hat which bothered me a little but not much - it should have been white. Before that year little girls had always worn veils. We had a new priest Father Marencovick who decreed - no veils. When Mother took me to the milliner all she had left were black straws, so black it was. Clothes never bothered me much. Mostly I worried about whether I'd do everything right. Afterward when Ruth told me Father M. had given such a nice sermon just for us, I felt guilty because I hadn't heard a word he said. There were five in our class: Harold Schiltz, Viola Victor, Merrit Davis, Irene Schiltz Redding & me.

By the time I finished first grade I could read almost anything printed in English. Sr. Alice taught phonics and I could now read the stories I couldn't hear. The only thing that stopped me from reading from then on would be lack of reading material- I read everything - Mother's old texts - Greek, Roman and English history - girls' books by L.V. Mead - mostly about English boarding schools, books by Zane Grey - and boys' books - Tom Swift, Roy Blakely, Boy Scout lent to me by Norman Hyman - even Dad's law books lent to him when he was Justice of Peace. I also had another source of supply - Gus Kreutter had a rack of books at the General Store. He bought them, read some and put them out for sale. The rack was in the front of the store. In those days - there was no self service. The foods were mostly behind the counter and one was waited on by the clerk. We kids were given a list and our mothers depended on Margaret Glaser or Mary Sloand to see that we got the right brand, size or whatever. The store was often crowded with farmers who had been to the creamery. They brought milk to the factory and then stopped at the store while their grocery orders were being filled. Sometimes we would have to wait our turn. I never minded and often gave up my place in line to someone who was in a hurry. I just got a book and propped myself up against the candy counter and read. I would remember the page I had had to leave when my turn came - and then take up where I had left off the next time I went to the store. Gus carried everything except meat - Groceries, shoes, dress goods, notions, toys, jewelry etc. etc. He sold cheese - a great round wheel of it was next to the scales & cash register. One asked for a lb. or 1/2 lb. and Margaret cut off a slab weighed and wrapped it. It took experience to cut just the right size piece. There was a roll of wrapping paper at one end of the main counter. Coffee and sugar was kept in the back, loose in barrels and bins and were weighed up in paper sacks. Coffee was ground, too I guess. While the store was my library, it was also a social center. Men, (they were mostly men) as women were home doing the work, gathered around the stove and talked. There were a couple of chairs - we kids never got to sit on them. We did listen in on the conversation though, and they were often very interesting and sometimes informative - a lot of politics (I learned all about the Teapot Dome scandal) and of course farm lore anecdotes. Some day I'll write about some of

those stories I heard at Kreutters store. I sometimes went to the store 2 or 3 times a day. However, I went to Kihms Meat Market less often perhaps 4 or 5 times a week.

When I was about 12 years old I began doing the Sister's shopping. In those days the nuns seldom left the convent. One reason would be they didn't have the time - even though they always got up at 5 A.M. and went to bed at 9 P.M. Six nuns taught the 8 grades and 4 yrs. of high school, did their cooking, and cleaning, raised a garden of vegetables and also flowers for the Church. So every day after school I went around to the convent door and Sister, the cook, gave me a list of groceries to get at Kreutters and another order for meat at Kihms. I remember shopping at Kihms better because Charlie, who drank more than was good for him, had usually locked the butcher shop and disappeared. Then I had to go over to the house and get Mayme, his wife. She was a non-stop talker but got my meat for me. Kihms was where the Kiwanis is now. The building had been the Town Hall in Strykersville's hey-dey. First Mass was celebrated there in Nov. 1885. (Dad told me he went to it.) Kihm's house was the place to the north. When I was younger, Kihms had delivered meat. I can remember Pete, Charlie's brother driving the truck. He opened up the back, hung up the scales and weighed up whatever the housewife wanted. He always gave each of us kids a wiener. Those were awfully good wieners. Pete was my first boyfriend. One got to my heart through the stomach in those days, I guess.

By 1922 the year I was eight, I was supposed to be learning the housewifely arts. I never did take to housework. I didn't mind doing dishes so much if there was a fire in the range and I had remembered to fill the reservoir. The reservoir was a tank on the stove. If one had a good fire the water would be hot. Sometimes in the winter the water froze solid. One thing, every little girl learned was to bake a cake the year she was eight. So I learned that summer. I had no trouble at all. My problem was in the actual baking. We had oil stove with an oven and that worked great. However to build a fire in the range and get the proper temperature was something else. On Mothers' birthday that year, I decided to make her a birthday cake. After school that day, Sept. 29, I came home from school to a kitchen full of dirty dishes and a Mother sick in bed with one of her migraine headaches. She had been making chili sauce all day. Of course I was prepared for this as I had been home for lunch. First I had to clean the kitchen and wash the dishes. Incidentally, I always have to have an orderly room to work in. I can sit down in the worst mess you ever saw and read but everything has to be cleaned up before I'll bake or cook. I'm always ready to walk out and leave any mess I've made after I've done my work. Well this afternoon, I think it was a Friday, I cleaned first and then made a cake. There may have been a fire in the range which I could build up. If not I could have used the oil stove although I don't know if an eight year old would be able to lift the oven onto the stove. I did make the cake however, but couldn't frost it as I had wasted so much time cleaning. When Mother got up I had supper ready, probably just sandwiches as Dad didn't have his supper at home when he was working. I think I was undoubtedly supposed to get lunches when Mother was sick, because I remember one Sunday noon when I was trying to peel potatoes. I was standing on a kitchen chair at the sink. I had an apron on, long enough to cover the legs of the chair too. I was using a butcher knife as I couldn't make the paring knife work. Well Ruth Phillips came in and told me I didn't have to peel potatoes. I could

just wash them and boil them in their skins. I still remember how it felt. "For gosh sakes why hadn't I heard about this before." I also wondered why they put the sink up so high when I was so short. Mother was just thrilled with her cake but I do think in retrospect that it was probably the clean kitchen that thrilled her more.

It was that summer too, that I went to my first Fair; the Labor Day weekend the Mortons son Don, who was my age, and a younger girl stayed with us. Mr. Morton was from Rochester and had something to do with Shin Flat Lightning Rods which Dad sold. Dad often made friends with people he came in contact with; men from all over the country. I thought the Morton's were rich and Don something of a snob. Mrs. Morton would not let her children go barefoot as that would make their feet big! They took dancing lessons too. The Saturday before Labor Day, Dad and Mr. Morton took Don and me to the South Wales Fair. Of course to anyone who had been to the Hamburg Fair, it was just nothing. But to me who had never been to a Fair or anything more than our Church picnic just the name Fair was impressive. Don, however, had been everywhere and seen everything or so he said. He rather spoiled it for me with his negative comments. I think his father finally pointed out to him that he was being less than courteous. Don was a city boy and I was finally able to show my superior knowledge when we inspected the exhibits. I remember being appalled at his ignorance but can't imagine at what! I was less than courteous myself, I guess. On Labor Day the Firemen had their picnic across the street from us. Mrs. Morton told fortunes. Mother said she was very good at it. She didn't know the people but still could tell a lot of things about them. Anyhow, she made money for the firemen. Maybe the Morton's were good sports after all.

It was that summer or the next one that I went to Buffalo, my first trip. The firemen were buying a truck and Nobert Marzolf and Dad were going to the city to make the arrangements. I was told I could go along. I think it was in August; at least we were having Forty Fours. I had to go to Mass (God forbid any little girl not attending Mass during Forty Hours in those days.) Forty Hours was once a year and the Blessed Sacrament was exposed on the altar. For those Forty Hours someone had to be in Church all the time. Well, the men couldn't wait so Norbert came in to Mass after me. I left just before the Communion. I know because Dad asked Norb and was told it was the "Agnes Dei." I was impressed that anyone but we kids knew so much about the Mass. I guess I couldn't conceive that the grownups had learned all that too.

I didn't think much of Buffalo from that experience. All I can remember is that we went to what I would now call "Used car lots;" they were vacant lots down a back street. I saw a fire engine, I wasn't at all interested in it. However, that is all the men talked about. On the way home they stopped somewhere, I think for a beer. I was very hungry. I had had nothing to eat. Remember I had fasted from midnight to receive Communion. When the fellows came out they had a bag of potato chips. I had never eaten boughten potato chips. Those were delicious, but perhaps shoe leather would have tasted delicious to me that afternoon.

It must have been that summer, too, when I went on what I called "my vacation." Mother had made me two new dresses, I suppose for school. As I never outgrew my clothes and

never seemed to wear them out, I have a good memory of the dresses I had through my school years. Well, I had been invited to go down to Wales Hollow and stay with Aunt Yetta and Aunt Kate Torge. I packed and repacked my suitcase every little while until it was time to leave. Then I was not too sure I really wanted to go on a “vacation.” However, Dad drove me down that afternoon. Aunt Kate let me pick out the bedroom I would sleep in. I also remember sitting in the kitchen listening to the clock tick. There was nothing to do, absolutely nothing. I began to feel sick, and sicker. I do not think I even stayed the night, I was homesick and dad had to come and get me.

That Fall Dad and Mother sold our house to Bill and Adeline Weidig. Dad started to build the foundation for our new house that winter. It was on the vacant lot that I had used to play in. There were some trees, plum trees I guess, that we had used. I remember Luella and I one day strung a line between two of them and hung quilts over the line. This made a house for us. I remember it because that was the day a Gypsy Caravan came to town. Luella spotted them first, and we grabbed our dolls and the quilts off the line and ran for our house, in the back door. Then we knelt down in front of the big bay window in our front room and watched. Luella was sure that the gypsies would steal little girls. I, however, could not understand why they would want to. I never felt that valuable.

Phil Merlau stayed with us that Fall while they were working on the house. He helped me with the dishes. I thought he had picked up a lot of bad habits in the army: for one thing he insisted on always washing the big iron frying pan. Mother and I just put it up in the warming oven to save the drippings which could then be used again. Phil said it had to be scoured out every time like they did in the army. I said everyone knew how wasteful the government was. I had heard all about the wasteful government from the conversations I had heard in Kreuter’ store and from Dad’s friends. I said, very sanctimoniously, that we had to be more saving as we weren’t rich like the Army. I just hated washing that heavy, greasy pan.

Grandma was much too saving, as she insisted that the dish water be used for the pigs. She put the dishes in boiling hot water with very little soap. They were washed and put in a pan of rinse water, also boiling, and kept on the stove. I had to snake the silver out to dry it or risk burns. I objected strenuously but Grandma just said I’d wind up in the Poor House with my extravagant habits. (She should see me now.) I had my own methods. I wanted the water, and plenty of it, just hot enough to make suds. Then I took the cake of soap and rubbed it with the dish rag to make lots and lots of suds. I always had a pan full of suds. I did not care how much soap cost. I saved by cutting down on the number of dishes washed. I managed to put quite a few serving dishes away with leftovers in them. I resented those helpful adults who scraped the leftovers into another dish or put two or three leftovers together- thus increasing my workload. Sometimes I would have one big bowl with one potato, the meat platter with one half piece of meat all carefully put away. Jimmy beat me at this trick though. Once in this house she put a cup of cold coffee with its saucer in the pantry. The room we used for the pantry was going to be a bathroom someday; we always insisted on calling it “bathroom.” This sometime surprised people when they would hear Mother say something like “Dot, please put the butter in the bathroom.”

Well, the men worked on the house when the weather was O.K. that winter. We were supposed to move out March 1. In January or February Grandpa Lennon, he had gone with Grandma and Charlie to Orchard Park to take care of Uncle Frank and Aunt Belle's kids, got sick. I think he had the flu and got an infection in his foot. They had to take his leg off. Mother went down to help Grandma. Dad hired Eleanor Kirsch to help take care of us. We had some very cold stormy weather. I remember Louis Phillips carrying me through the snow bank on Main St. between our house and Grandmas. The West side of Main was all vacant lots then, I don't think they had snow plows. If horses and sleighs couldn't get through, people stayed home. It must have been cold, too, because once Eleanor wouldn't let me go to Mass on Sunday. Father Marencovick always preached for 45 minutes at least. Masses were at 8 and 10. The 10 o'clock Mass was a high Mass-sung and with the sermon who knew when you would get home! Eleanor was probably right not to let me go, as the Church was always cold in those days. Sometimes you could see your breath. A little suffering was supposed to be good for the soul.

Mother got home before March 1, but as the house was not finished we moved over to Grandma Kirsches - upstairs. The big room to the West was the kitchen. A back stairs went down into Grandma's kitchen. There was a sink but all water was carried in from the outside well. We had an oil stove and kitchen table. A little closet was the pantry. The next room was our dressing room. They put the dining table in there and chairs. We needed that room because Louis Zittel and Phil and whoever else was building our house had their meals. My room was built to be a bathroom. It held a double bed pushed against the wall. The bed was about a foot from the other wall so you could almost say, if you wanted to turn around you had to go out into the hall. There were two other rooms-one was the bedroom for Mother, Dad and John. Jimmy had a crib, I guess. I don't think she was sleeping with me yet. That came later. I'll never forget the day at college when I complained about Jimmy's taking up most of the bed-Everyone's eyebrows shot up to their hairlines and I got three invitations for dates. I had forgotten that people didn't know Jimmy was a girl. Anyhow our front room in Grandma's house was the living room. Then there was a front stairs. I remember the day we moved. I got sick and Sister sent me home from school. All our furniture was in transit. I felt awful but there was no place for me to sit down much less lay down.

All that summer Mother spent every spare minute working in the new house. All the woodwork had to be sanded and then rubbed with linseed oil-at least five applications and then waxed and waxed and waxed. One day Mother sent me back to Grandma's to make some sandwiches for her and us kids. She didn't want to stop. Well I went home and fixed the food. Grandma was away in the city visiting friends. When it came time to eat we couldn't find Jimmy. Mother and I thought she was playing with John. He hadn't seen her. We hunted. Dad came home. All the neighbors were out looking too. Jimmy was a great one to visit the neighbors. Some of the men were talking about going down to search the creek when Mother went down into Grandma's part of the house. There was Jimmy in front of the window in Grandma's bedroom sound asleep. She must have followed me in to the house and then when I left closing the door, couldn't get out. She could see our house from the bedroom window. After that for the longest time she would

never stay alone in a room. I or someone always had to lay down with her until she went to sleep. I would read to her. I was keeping a diary those years and she preferred that to stories. I can't imagine why. It must have been terribly boring. Maybe that was why she called it a "dairy."

Poor Jimmy. That was the summer she got run over by a car. It was a Sunday afternoon. I had one of my earaches and had finally dropped off to sleep. So this is all hearsay. It seems John and Jimmy had been playing in the watering trough in front of the blacksmith shop. Jimmy decided to go home. When she crossed the street this man, only going about 20 mph hit her. She was so little he couldn't see her. She broke his headlight and got a sliver of glass in her earlobe. The car went right over her. Cars were built high in those days and she was right between the wheels. They said the driver was in worse shape than she was.

I can understand how he felt. I was always feeling responsible for everything that happened to John or Jimmy. When John was about 6 months old, he was in his high chair next to the kitchen stove. He saw something on the stove he wanted, reached out and fell on the stove burning his arm so badly, he probably still has the scar. I felt I should have done something to prevent it-but as I couldn't have been 4 yet-what could I have done. Later, when he was about two he pulled an oil lamp off a table. Mother smothered out the fire with a rag rug from the hall floor. As soon as he could walk he stepped on a rusty hat pin. Mother said he fell off of everything and I always thought I should have done a better job of taking care of him. She said she could always put me down-tell me to stay there and I stayed (like a well trained dog, I guess). However at age 2, I investigated the wringer on the washing machine with my finger and got it almost cut off. I still have the scar to prove it. Jimmy was easier to take care of-or maybe it was because I was older. When she cried and Mother would yell "Do something about that baby," I would shove a nipple into her mouth and blessed quiet. If that didn't work, I could read to her from whatever book I was reading at the time. She didn't know the difference but it often put her to sleep.

We moved into the new house in August 1923, I don't remember much until John got pneumonia the following January. At first he had what Dr. Faller said was "auto-intoxication." That bothered me as I knew intoxicated people were drunks and I didn't like the idea that my 6 year old brother was a drunkard! However, it turned into pneumonia. He was very, very sick, and I went to live with Grandma again. I could tell about his fight to live. His temperature soared and he was given the last rites. No antibiotics in those days. The neighbors came in to stay with him nights and finally when he began to get better; it was 2 months of recuperation. He played a lot of checkers and got so good that he beat Grandpa Lennon; a feat that really impressed me. Jimmy was being brought up by the neighbors- Mrs. Weidig, Mrs. Phillips but especially Eva Musty. They told a couple of stories about her. Once when she had asked Mother if she could stay to Metzgers for supper, Mother said "If they ask you." So as soon as Eva opened the door, Jimmy piped up, "I can stay for supper if you ask me." She had everyone charmed. Later she decided to make a friendship quilt. (I think it was a quilt.) Mrs. Weidig set it up

and started it for her. Then she went from house to house asking -“Take a ‘titch for me.” They took a lot of stitches and finally finished it. I wonder what happened to it.

In the meantime I was at Grandmas’. Grandma boarded girls who went to St. Mary’s. Usually they were High School girls but that winter it was Veronica Wnek. She was a couple years older than I, but I believe she was being prepared for First Communion. She could draw beautifully and showed me how to copy and enlarge pictures by drawing squares.

Grandma pieced in the winter. She had a quilting frame that Grandpa made her that was set up in the front room. The whole operation seemed stupid to me. First she got out her scrap box filled with pieces of cloth left over from dresses or whatever, or worn out clothes. Then we very carefully cut those pieces into small squares, diamonds, even circles. When I say carefully, I mean it. She had cardboard patterns and the pieces had to be perfect. Then we sewed those pieces together with little teeny stitches. If the stitches were uneven or not in a straight line, she pulled them out, and we or she did it over. We made squares in this way and the squares had to be sewn together. By the way, no thread was ever wasted. Always basting thread was carefully pulled out. “Don’t break it” she would shout. The thread was wound on a spool to be used over and over and over. I made up my mind that when I grew up, I’d never save basting thread; I would just rip it out and throw it away. Finally the quilt would be ready for quilting.

Quilting is awful; stitches had to be small and right on the line. I didn’t mind tying, that was rather fun and didn’t take so long. I asked Grandma once why people didn’t use the scrap pieces with out cutting all those little squares and triangles. She said people did and they called it a Crazy quilt. She gave me one. It was made with pieces of woolen cloth, old pants, coats etc. It was indestructible and I’m still using it to cover my tomato plants on frosty nights. Grandma gave us so many quilts and then we made some of our own, I’ve forgotten.

Just before we went to bed we said the rosary, the whole thing every night. Grandma did a lot of praying. She or someone told me that when they were young they didn’t own a clock so they timed their cooking and baking by saying so many Hail Marys etc. I guess I did a lot of praying too as I look back. I know I prayed that John would live and then just as he was out of danger, early in Feb, John Streicher died of a heart attack. He left a wife and nine children. Millie was only about six months old. Someone said, ‘The Lord left one John and took the other.’ Right away I began to feel guilty. It took Grandma to tell me she was sure God wasn’t running the world according to my prayers. After all, I didn’t pray that John Streicher die. She said I should give God credit for at least as much sense as I had.

It must have been that summer that a medicine show came to town. Almost every summer some kind of show came to town. This one put up a tent across the street from our old house. They put on “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” and “Ten Nights in a Barroom.” I loved shows. Before I was six, Babe Warner had movies downtown in what had been Bennions Furniture Store. I can just remember Fatty Arbuckle. My laugh could be recognized all

over the house. Comments were made about my giggle, and I became so sensitive that I tried to control it. I also remember “Mary Pickford” in something called “The Goose Girl.” Well this medicine show was special for two reasons. Before the show and between acts the players sold snake oil or some other elixir guaranteed to cure all ails. They also sold bags of very good taffy. I am not sure but think that one got a coupon with each purchase. The young lady who managed to collect most coupons won a prize. Ruth Phillips won and received a silver (at least it looked like silver) tea set. The other event was the most beautiful baby contest. We were so sure Jimmy would win and were devastated when Ruthie Johnson won. Granted Ruthie had big brown eyes and lovely hair - we felt that our baby was so much more charming, loveable and intelligent - there was just no contest. The Johnson’s had just come to town, and we decided it must have been money or politics. Ruthie’s looks didn’t improve with age but then whose does?

When I was in Fifth Grade Mother invited my grade to a surprise birthday party for me. I have mixed feelings about surprise parties. This was my initiation. At first I noticed my friends gathering at school - and whispering and laughing among themselves. I was excluded and I was hurt. My party was to be on a Saturday afternoon. Right after lunch Mother sent Jimmy and me up to Grandma Lennon’s to get something. By that time I had become suspicious. Too many people were acting queerly. When we got home my 5th grade class was all sitting around our living room acting self conscious. All were there except Margaret Stamper. Edna, Esther, Amy, Albert, Norman, Chet, Marian, Harold, Buck and Ruth were there to help entertain. However, I remember that Buck (Everett Reisdorf) took over and chose the games and appointed himself Master of Ceremonies. I remember, too a lot of running around outside. Marian and Edna stayed overnight and Dad took Marian home after Mass on Sunday. Edna went home with her folks from Mass. As far as I know none of those kids had ever been to a children’s party – only family parties, adult party’s children had to attend because there was nothing else to do with them. Usually the kids were relegated to the kitchen and amused themselves and had a very good time, too. But no one had parties just for children. I remember everyone brought me presents. I can remember a cup and saucer which I lost many years later when Mother and I took it to a Home Bureau Picnic. I also received a powder puff in a little pouch. I lost that at a dance that summer.

They had dances at the new Fire hall across the street. Edna and I went. Grandma worked in the kitchen. They always served lunches at those dances - usually sandwiches, cake and coffee, free to all fellows who had a ticket - and in 1925 girls got in free. Edna would stay with me and we were allowed to go and stay until lunch, usually at midnight. Of course Edna and I danced with each other. Who would dance with a couple of little kids, although I do remember dancing with Phil Merlau. I loved to dance and learned to do the Charleston. We used to go down in the basement at school and get someone musical to play the comb while some of us danced. Later in High School some one donated a victrola and we girls danced in the Study Hall during noon hour. We had to dance between the desks but the floor was good. During the summer the partitions between the rooms were taken down, desks were removed and the Church had its 4th of July Picnic Dance there.

Our school, St. Mary's, where I spent 12 years was dedicated to education. We were told that education came from the Latin "educio" – meaning lead out. The nuns were there to help us develop or lead out whatever talents we might have. To do this we were taught learning skills- reading, writing, etc. I remember Sr. Irmina telling us that if there was something we wanted to know or do - someone had written a book about it. All we had to do was find the book and read it. There were never more than 100 pupils at St. Mary's while I was there. There were two rooms downstairs - the little room containing grades 1 - 4 and the big room for grades 5 - 8. The school had been so constructed that the only inside way down to the basement was through these two rooms. The basement contained the toilets; by no stretch of imagination could they be called restrooms. This made for considerable disruption in bad weather. The boys always had to go outside and around to a side door, but the big girls were allowed to go through the little room in to our little entry and down a steep dark stairway. There was no door between entry and stairway and why we little kids didn't get killed on that stairs, I'll never know. Norman Hyman got cut over the eye. He had a scar for years. Gert Streicher was knocked unconscious in a fall another time. By the time I got into the big room a passage had been cut through so we could get to the basements without disrupting the little kids classes. Upstairs, or as we always said "up in high school" the large room was divided by partitions into three rooms. The largest room was called the Study Hall – and had a stage at the back. A stairs led down to the nun's residence that was on the first floor and at the back of the building. Three nuns taught 45 minute classes constantly in these three rooms. We got whatever courses were needed to get us into any college in the country. It took careful planning beginning with freshman year, but I never heard of a St. Mary's graduate who hadn't a subject needed to enter college. Our regents rating were high in N.Y. State which means that over 95% passed regents exams. Diplomas were not given unless all exams had been passed. We graduated a lot of future teachers and future nurses. The high school was in operation for about 15 years. I graduated from college in 1936 and from that time on I seldom went to any kind of conventions of teachers without seeing or hearing of a St. Mary's graduate. The schools and hospital seemed to be manned by people from our school. We had no band, athletic team, no gymnasium, and no school clubs. We did have excellent and dedicated teachers and parents who had to make great sacrifice to send us to school and we knew it. We in this area had something else going for us as children from Java and Sheldon walked six and more miles or boarded in town to attend.

I had an easy time really, compared to many of my classmates. School was not very hard for me – except for my hearing difficulty that plagued me all my life. Some of the girls poked fun. I remember they called me 'Tin Dot,' but I made believe I didn't know what they meant and they quit. Oddly the boys were good to me, even in the little room. I remember them being protective. On one occasion we were having a spell down with the multiplication tables. I guessed at what the Sister had said and was wrong. One of the boys – on the other team too, told Sister he didn't think I heard. He was right, but I wouldn't admit it and sat down. I don't know why I thought that poor hearing was such a disgrace. It may have started way back when I remember someone threatening to spank me if I said "what" one more time. However, in spite of this, I enjoyed school and I always had a couple of best friends. Early on there was Luella and Pauline Metzger, and of course, Edna, who was my very best, best friend for years.

Two or three times a year I went to Edna's home with her over night or for a weekend. Her father was a farmer. I always visited her in the spring when we got to go to the Sugar bush. Actually all of us kids had to work. We gathered sap - carrying quite heavy pails filled to the brim and dangling from a wooden yoke across our shoulders. We gathered and split wood to keep the fire going. But we thought it was fun and when we stayed up into the night watching the fire, talking and singing – that was just great. Later the almost syrup was taken to the house where it was cleansed and boiled a little longer until it was the right weight for syrup. Mrs. Suttell, Edna's Mother, always boiled some for jack wax. Some one got a big pan of clean snow. Usually in March you had to dig into a bank of snow to get clean stuff. We dribbled the boiled syrup over the snow and it formed a waxy sweet. I liked that better than the warm sugar which we stirred in a saucer until it was almost white. This always occurred during Lent, and we always fasted from candy during Lent but maple sugar didn't count.

On the farm there was always work for kids. At least we always worked on the Suttell farm. I enjoyed it all - except pulling beans. It always seemed to be cold and wet, and none of us kids was very crazy about it. But we all worked together and I was quite proud of myself when Mr. Suttell said I was the best worker. I think it was because I only had to do it once in a while, whereas his kids were stuck with the job until all the beans were in. Anyhow it was my one accomplishment!

Edna was so efficient. I remember one occasion when I was invited to stay at her house. Her Mother and Father were going to Buffalo and would not be home until late at night. Edna was around 11 at the time. Well, we walked home after school about two miles. Then she proceeded to catch and kill two chickens for supper. I am not sure she killed them - perhaps her younger brother Gerald did. But she picked them and cleaned them and cut them up and we had stewed chicken, gravy, dumplings, mashed potatoes, a couple of vegetables and pie. Her Mother had made the pie. There were six of us at the table – we five children - Edna was the oldest - and the hired man. What I admired most was her ability to start the fire. Starting fires was always my Waterloo. My system was to pile in paper and kindling wood if we had any (Usually we didn't so I would look for chips). I would pour kerosene over the wood, toss in a lighted match and pray. I never worried about burning down our house. I knew what would happen – the paper would burn up, the wood would char and the fire would go out. Usually I burned myself on that old cook stove so I always prepared myself ahead. Before I had anything to do with it, I opened the flour bin so when – notice I don't say if – I burned myself I merely pumped water on the burn and stuck it in the flour. Instant relief – Once a friend seeing me walk in the kitchen door and open the flour bin asked, "Why?" My answer, "The fire is out." She never did understand the connection.

In the little room I also had two friends – Laura and Cecelia Winch. Their father had died and they lived with their mother on Factory Rd. I think living on Factory Rd was the reason for our friendship. It was Factory Rd. and Hyman Hill that was a most popular place for gatherings of the small fry (and not so small) in the winter. If conditions were right one or more, probably two, could ride on a sled from the top of Hyman Hill down

past Kreutters Store, across Main St. down Factory Hill, past the Creamery and with luck all the way to the bridge. We didn't worry about the traffic on Main St. because in those days most people put their cars up on jacks in November and didn't get them out until Easter. The traffic was mostly horse and bob sled and was usually farmers bringing milk to the creamery. In fact most of us would ride up the hill on the bob sled of a farmer returning home, slide down and then go back to Kreutters store and wait for a ride back up. Of course we could only do this Saturday mornings or during Christmas vacation. Our evening sledding was usually just on Factory Hill. For one thing it took quite a while to drag our sleds to the top of Hyman Hill. We could get only about 2 rides all evening. Evenings were short. Father Marencovick had rosary at 7, and if we went we got out of dishes. So we went, and then we were allowed out until about 8:30. I guess that's why I was friendly with Laura and Celia. They were the only little girls around. We had a lot of boys uptown, but we three were the only girls. Their Mother however, remarried when Laura was about 10 and they moved to Curriers. I lost touch completely.

After the Winch girls moved out, the Kohel girls moved to town. From then on until I graduated we three Esther, Shirley and I were inseparable. Ed & Mrs. Lefort and their daughter Gert Kohel must have moved to town about 1924 - Dad & Ed were good friends and Dad worked on their house. John Kohel, the girls' father had died of the flu epidemic in 1918 leaving Gert with two little girls. She taught school in Strykersville for the next 10 yrs after they moved from Plants Corners. Mrs. Lefort died either that summer or the next. I remember because Grandma & I went down there to her wake. We were in the habit of walking up to the cemetery every other week all summer long to put flowers on Grandpa's grave. Grandma carried the flowers and I carried a little 2 qt pail of water. I enjoyed these jaunts because Grandma told stories about all the dead people. I felt so sad when she told of the two young Hyman children who drown in the creek. Some of these people led real "soap opera" lives - before any of us ever heard of soap operas. Well one Wednesday afternoon we went over to Esther and Shirley's to pay our respects as their grandmother had died. I knew them but they must not have been in town as we weren't best friends yet.

We always had a telephone as far back as I remember although we didn't have one in 1917 when John was born. Dad needed it for his work. Very few people had them in those days - just stores, Doctors and some of the farmers. Neighbors would come in to use the phone. Sometimes people would call us with messages for neighbors. I remember when one of the Metzger's died - Pauline came down and called the undertaker. She was about 10 and I was impressed. Our number in the old house was 72F1 - and you just jiggled the receiver up and down until you got central to say "number please." Sometimes it took a lot of jiggling. Later we had the crank style where you rang once for central - or you could ring anyone on your line. Our number was 947F4 and again sometimes you did a lot of cranking before you got attention. Those phones were well made or the handles would have been pulled off. As our number was 4 - four long rings and there was about 10 on the 947 line - and as some of the rings were 3-1; 1-3; 2-2 - there was a lot of answering the wrong calls. Later the phone company fixed it so you didn't get everyone's ring. My friends did not have phones in their homes, and I was never all that comfortable with my hearing even then so we never were addicted to them

like teenagers are today. We did not get dial phones in Strykersville until long after I was out of college. I used dial phones in the fall of 1932. I remember it because one of the girls at college told me how!

Mother was sick a lot when I was growing up. Besides the migraine headaches which laid her up for a day or two quite often she had a couple bad attacks of arthritis. One occurred the spring I was twelve. She had been doing the washing down cellar. We did have a washing machine but it was not electric. Mother sorted clothes and boiled the white things in a big copper boiler with chipped naphtha soap in water. These were put in the machine and a crank was turned 100 times - often by one of us kids. Then she put them through a wringer in two rinses - the last rinse had bluing in it. The wringers were turned by hand. She usually picked out things that hadn't got cleaned and scrubbed them by hand and then ran them through the washer again. She made starch and our cotton dresses etc. were all starched. She usually washed all day and was sick by night. In the winter she started Sunday afternoon. Remember all these clothes had to be hung out on lines to dry. In winter everything froze solid. Well, this time - it was in June just before school was out - right in the middle of the washing she got a catch in her back. She crawled around the house to the front porch. She couldn't straighten up. When I got home from school I got Mrs. Weidig to help me finish the washing. Mother was laid up for two weeks. Whenever Mother was sick I was supposed to take over. I was not at all efficient - a rotten cook, a lousy housekeeper and as for nursing ability- on a scale of 1 to 10 I would have scored 0. To me a nurse was someone who wore white and worked in a hospital. However I managed. I could make stew - beef, carrots & potatoes or ham, beans & potatoes. These were cooked in a big iron kettle and then reheated and served hopefully until Mother got better. I could also make noodle soup - homemade noodles, too. Of course I could make pie - any kind. I even made custard pie. However, I had a certain bowl which I filled with milk after I had put in eggs and sugar etc. I broke that bowl one day and couldn't make custard pie any more. Years later I found a recipe in a cook book! My cleaning was also sketchy. We had waxed oak floors covered with throw rugs braided. I picked up the rugs - shook them on front porch and then on hands & knees dusted the floor and furniture as I got to it. I could do the hall, living & dining rooms in 28 minutes. John would have made a better housekeeper but he was a boy. Boys didn't do that kind of work. Jimmy was always too young. It wasn't until I went to college that she became old enough to take over. Anyhow Jimmy had lots of friends and was someplace else when you needed her. I cooked for Dad, John ate bread and jelly and I don't think Jimmy ate - but she must have. Anyhow, the minute Mother got out of bed, I quit. When my friends tell about how hard they worked, I can't say a word. I only did what I had to do and was very good at cutting corners and saving energy.

What I learned about cooking, sewing, etc., I learned in 4H. We organized a girls 4H club in the spring of 1929. How well I remember "Mack" Allison Mackenzie who came to the schools. Sr. Jeanette thought it was a good idea and tried to get a woman to be a leader. I don't know how many people turned her down - Finally Mrs. Stamper said she would help if Mother would take over. Mother had helped start the Home Bureau and she and Mrs. S. had been nutrition leaders. We had a lot of members that first Spring - Mother taught us how to conduct a business meeting and everyone made a dress - our

first project. I learned to run a sewing machine. I cut my own pattern - bought material "a cotton print," at Kreutter's Store. It all cost something like 87 cents. We had a card party and raised money to hire a bus to take us to the 4H Rally in Warsaw. We were supposed to wear the dresses we had made. Our club, the Onawa club, put on a demonstration business meeting as part of the program. The movie theatre put on a movie for us. I think it was something like "The Message to Garcia". However, my gang and I had a great time. We weren't fussy. However, as I look back I wonder if some of the more sophisticated girls didn't turn up their noses at the whole thing. They soon dropped out of the club and we kept that enthusiastic nucleus. Angela Bardo, Marian and Lucille George, Catherine Fugle, Elzina Metz, Esther and Shirley Kohel. One thing happened at that Rally that made the news. They lined us all up to take a group pictures. We Onawans were on a platform which collapsed - no one hurt but a lot of excitement and they announced it on the radio! This all happened in the spring of 1929.

From then on all through High School the 4H was the basis of my social life. Mac told us about 4H Field Days held at Cornell University and we decided to raise money so we could go. We put on shows which required practice nights, of course. We held our meetings every two weeks - business meeting, a lesson on our projects and recreation period. Then on other evenings (meetings were in the afternoon) we practiced our plays. They were One Act Plays and a 4H Pageant. The George girls and Angela stayed overnight when necessary. Angela did board at Stampers with Catherine Fugle, John Murphy and Ray George. Lucille and Marion had rooms over Grandma Kirsch's where they did light housekeeping. We were all very serious about our schoolwork - after all it cost our parents money and this was during depression years - but we managed to have a very good time. The George girls had unbounded energy and one way or another we got to most of the public dances. Dancing was always my favorite form of recreation, followed by swimming; but I could only go swimming in the summer. Anyhow our club managed to raise enough money so each member got \$5 for the trip to Ithaca. During spring vacation that year I worked for Mrs. Weidig. She was a paper hanger and had a job in Cowlesville papering a whole house for Henry Johnson. Dad and Henry Merlau were also working for Johnson. We put in ten hour days and left here about 6 in the morning and got home after 6 at night. I had worked for Mrs. W. before on smaller jobs. I think she got 30 cents an hr - I don't know whether I got 10 cents or 20 cents. Anyhow it was this money plus the \$5 that paid my expenses to Ithaca. This was an old house with 10 and 12 ft ceilings. As assistant I cut and pasted the paper and then carried it up on to the scaffolding and held it until Mrs. W. got it on. Then back to pasting the next strip. I kept very busy and had to work fast so Mrs. W. was never kept waiting. I enjoyed it and besides I was being paid.

We were taking Latin II (Caesar) that year and Sr. Jeanette had given us the Argonauts to translate during vacation. I don't remember how many there were but I divided them up and worked about 2 hours on them every night. I know I finished them, too because the Sunday before school opened Mark came over and borrowed my translations for Norman Hyman. They wanted to play ball Sunday afternoon and Norman didn't have his finished. I often wonder how many in the class handed in complete translations.

Well, eventually a group of us girls made the trip to Ithaca. We each paid \$4 for transportation and could stay in the dormitories for free. We had to buy our own meals but carried a lot of food with us. That first time Marian, Lucille, Catherine Fugle, Angela Bardo, Adell Almeter and I went. There were girls and boys from the other side of the county, too. Clarence George, Marian & Lucille's father drove and of course Mack. A girl, I don't remember her name, also drove. In Warsaw she came up to me and asked me to ride with her in the middle of the front seat. One of the boys, Jack Grover rode with us and Mrs. Stamper and Adell and Catherine? also rode with us. We all thought Jack was real "cute" and the girls all envied me. But he had a girl from Rensaleer [sic] Co. named of all things "Marvel Markel". I met a lot of boys and girls at those Field Days & one in particular - think his name was Harold Carley. He was from Manlius N.Y. His sister worked for the Onadaga 4H. We wrote for a couple of yrs and I met him again at the 1932 Field Days and again when I won trip to the State Fair as one of 4 delegates from Wyo. Co.

My last year in H.S. was very busy. My gang was involved with 4H projects - and I was also trying to win a Regents Scholarship. In those days N.Y.S. gave Regents Scholarships, about 700 of them, to 4th yr students who got highest marks on regent's exams in Eng IV, American History - a 2nd yr of foreign language, 3rd yr Latin or Greek, Physics or Chemistry, Geometry and Int. Algebra. All exams except Geometry had to be tried in a two year period. We also had to raise money to pay for our school rings, invitations, etc. The senior class was in the habit of holding a dance for this purpose - usually during Christmas vacation. However, because we often had stormy weather during that vacation, we decided to have our dance at Easter time. Needless to say that year of 1932, we had a green Christmas - beautiful weather and no snow. In fact the winter remained snowless until March. Then it snowed and snowed until roads were all closed, and St. Mary's for the first time in its history was closed for a week. Easter was early that year - in March so we held our dance while many of the back roads were still closed. We had Fattey's orchestra - a fairly good crowd, a swell time and earned enough to pay for our very cheap invitations and rings. (They were \$5.00 I believe.)

Grandmother Kirsch died in April. She had gone to Buffalo right after Easter to visit friends and relatives. While there she came down with the flu. Uncle Nick Kirsch died, and when Grandma was notified she decided she had to come out to his funeral - to be with her only sister. She developed an ear infection. On Friday afternoon Mother stopped in and Grandma's face was very swollen. So Mother who had been on her way to a Home Bureau card party stayed with her. They hired Mrs. Burns, who had taken care of her before to come but by Sunday A.M. Grandma was dead. I remember that April Sunday morning. It was a beautiful warm day. I had gone to early Mass and had not known Grandma had died. Father must have announced it at Mass as when I went over to school Sr. Jeanette wondered if I would still go to the play at D'Youville College that afternoon. Sister had arranged for Esther and me to go to see the "The Merchant of Venice." We had cleaned the club room at school one Saturday and this was our pay. Mr. and Mrs. Louie Petri took us - all arranged by Sr. Jeanette. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful play, but I felt very sad. When we got home the wake was in progress. I tried not to think. I had gone to numerous wakes, but this was different. In 1932 most all wakes were still in

the home so Monday morning I stayed at Grandma's. Dad was in and out, but I was the "member of the family" on hand. Not too many people came. I remember a few relatives, Bob Glasner, some high school friends, etc. However the place was jammed at night. Some stayed all night as was the custom. Mon. afternoon we went to East Aurora for hats. I didn't have a decent one. I wore that hat all summer, and when I went to college in the fall. Guess it was the only hat I had and this was when every female had to wear a hat in Church.

It was Tuesday after the funeral before I could cry. It rained a little that morning. We all went back to Grandma's house for dinner which Mrs. Kate Stamper and Mrs. Dellinger had cooked. Grandma had made out the menu – told us just how to do everything. She arranged her own funeral - so it would be done right. She also insisted there be no sale of her things. Too many of her friends goods had been sold and it bothered her having strangers pawing over stuff and making remarks. So that was why early in May – Dad, Uncle Ed, Aunt Eva and I divided up everything. I was there because Mother had gotten sick right after the funeral. (Mother later admitted to me that she was glad to have gotten out of that job.) I didn't mind as all I wanted were Grandma's books and paisley shawl, and I always thought we did a very good job of dividing. Grandma had willed me her mother's wedding ring and Georgia got hers. Later I gave Sue Parker the ring as our Great Grandmother's name was also Susan. I went back to school the afternoon of the funeral. As far as I can remember that day and a half was the only time I missed School in my four years of High School.

I remember a few more things that Spring of 1932. There was a dance in late May. Although I loved to dance and up to then had never missed a chance to go to a dance, I refused to go this one. It just seemed too soon after Grandma's death. I took part in any school or 4-H activities but just didn't feel like dancing. Mother and I went to Buffalo to get my graduations dress. It was light pink chiffon, ankle length with cap sleeve. The sales clerk made the remark that I was young to be graduating from 8th grade! I was both crushed and insulted. I was over 18 by a few days.

Graduation Day finally came. I worried all day as I was valedictorian. I had written my speech; memorized it and rehearsed it, but still I was anxious. It was very warm – graduation nights usually were. The hall was full of people and flowers. Sr. Jeanette had made us learn to sing "The Star – Spangled Banner" as Father Marencovick always insisted we sing it, and Sister had made up her mind that for once it would be sung on key. We also had a class song "Sparkling Sunlight," our class colors were blue and white, and our class motto was "Aim High." I believe each member of the class, eleven of us gave some sort of speech or poem. Norman Hyman was Salutatorian. According to Mother my speech was good; couldn't prove anything by me. I was numb. However, all three priests who spoke complimented me; at least so I was told. I didn't hear as we were sitting behind them, and even back in those days my hearing was poor. However, my talk was about the value of an education and as I felt strongly about that, perhaps it was good. Anyhow, when it was over we went home. I remembered the June before I had stopped in at Grandma's and told her all about it. Other class mates who graduated with me in the class of 1932 were Margaret Stamper, Raymond Metzger, Edward Jacoby, Bessie

Carroll, Florence Marzolf, Edna Suttell, Marion George, Lucille George, and Esther Kohel. I wondered if she knew about this graduation. I went to bed as we were going to Cornell University for 4-H Field Days the next morning. No graduation parties. One girl did have a party, but she only invited couples.

I didn't care all that much as the next morning Mother and I with Elzina and Shirley left for Cornell. Helen Richardson drove. I was more active this time and entered judging contests and even won third place in one. I also met Harold Carley, a boy from Onondaga Co. – so I had a date for the final dance. It did not make much difference as everyone went to the Candle lighting ceremonies and dance and there were more boys than girls. However we wrote back and forth and met again at State Fair. The Field Days lasted four days so we just got home from them in time for the Alumni Dance and Initiation. This was a semi-formal affair and gave us a chance to wear our graduation dresses. I had two semi-formals because the year before we juniors had to be on stage with the seniors. That dress was a flowered chiffon. I later had the pink dress dyed a dark rose and wore it once more to the E.A. High School Prom, which I attended with Joe Musty and Fordy. It was at the Country Club. I had a lousy time as everything seemed so stiff and formal, and most of those boys were poor dancers. Later I shortened both dresses and wore them out.

That summer of 1932 was tension packed. I had applied to a Springville Training Class. Mark took me over. However, I had hopes of getting a scholarship and if I did I would go to Buffalo State – so I applied there too. Because of the Depression, State colleges which were free became very popular. Kids that planned and had been accepted at the more prestigious college decided to go to B.S.T. There were over 600 applicants, so there was an entrance exam to weed out all but less than 200 students. I went down with Ruth; she was taking summer school. They had gotten the exams used by Chicago Univ. and it was difficult and tiring. Luckily for me quite a few kids gave up. The teacher aptitude test, however was duck soup and must have brought my score up – for I finished 12th. As I look back now it was probably my reading ability and strong Latin foundation that helped the most. After two days of tests we had personal interviews. Wouldn't you know I drew Miss Grosen, the drama teacher? She was more interested in our voices and stage presence than anything else. She insisted on my standing at one end of the room so she could decide if my voice carried. Well I could talk O.K., but I couldn't hear! It would never do to tell a drama coach I couldn't hear her, so I would walk as nonchalantly as possible toward her as she asked a question and then back up. I hoped gracefully to answer it. I guess it worked, but I had a splitting headache when it was over. After all that, I won a Regents Scholarship and they would have had to accept me anyways.

I did not learn that I had won the scholarship until the last of August; a day after I won the trip to State Fair. Four kids, two boys and two girls were chosen from each County for an all expense trip to State Fair for a week. However, the fair was the same week the Springville Training Class opened. I called Springville to see if I could come a few days late. The answer was “no way.” I was devastated until I was notified I had a four year scholarship; \$100 a year to be paid in \$50 installments in November and March. I had saved \$30 and immediately began looking for a place to work for my board. Martha Thompson had been staying with a Mrs. Kurtz, a widow, on Colonial Circle. Martha

didn't recommend her, but I wrote and went to see her and arranged to work for her. Later, I learned that Mrs. Kurtz was impossible. Her husband had committed suicide and left her with the house on Colonial Circle and only \$40,000! She was very despondent. She had me canning tomatoes, scrubbing floors and washing windows; also waiting on her hand and foot. She was also tight with food, and the end came the night she told me to slice peaches for supper. There were only two peaches so I cut up one for her one for me. She had me serve all her meals in regal splendor in the living room. I ate in the kitchen. Okay, but this night she came out into the kitchen and took my peaches too. That was too much. I was only there two weeks.

Bill Flynn, Art Merle, Marg. Klein and I spent our week at the Fair. We girls served Mrs. Roosevelt tea, welcomed Gov. Roosevelt to the Fair with a song they made us learn. To tell the truth, most of the girls were more interested in his sons. A boy from Dutchess Co., whose bunk was near ours, claimed to know them; at least Franklin and John who were our ages. We all slept and ate in the new girls and boys building. The second floor was one huge room divided with girl's upper and lower bunks on one side. I suppose the boys was the same. For some reason, probably because of the way things were organized, we Wyoming Co. girls got acquainted with the girls from the Hudson Valley counties. I never met anyone from Erie or Genesee Counties. Marg. and I didn't have a chaperone from Wyoming Co. That didn't bother us! One day the Syracuse paper had me model a dress for their paper. I don't remember why, but the picture was in the paper with the name of the girl whose clothes I was wearing. The Saturday night I got home Kleins had a big party. Mark, Ruth and the Streicher boys were there – and the next day I went in to Buffalo to start my college career.

First week in school we freshmen took more tests in geography, history, spelling, arithmetic, music and art. Those who didn't pass had to go to remedial classes on Saturday mornings. I was worried about art and music. However, we had had a good music teacher in the grades and I had six piano lessons from Louise Bloecher who lived on Bloecher Rd. I had walked to her house, three miles, and back home. Mother paid 50 cents a lesson, but they really paid off. The only art I had was a project in 4-H; Room improvement where we made color wheels, etc. and what I learned from Mother who was always interested in Art and Artists. Anyhow, I didn't have to take remedial courses.

Ruth Phillips had insisted I sign up for Freshman Camp. She thought it would get me in with the right people. We went to Farnham on Friday and stayed until Sunday night. It was run by the Y.W.C.A. and there was only one other Catholic girl – think her name was Rowena Thomas. Actually, although I had a good enough time I don't think it helped me at college. I didn't make any real friends. I could tell that I'd have to get ahead on merit. My personality would never do it. Anyhow, I was there to get a license to teach, not to become a social butterfly. I was disappointed in college – as one of my girlfriends said, "It's just a glorified high school". Most of the teachers were no where as good as my High School teachers had been. It seems as though I spent most of my time at the library copying stuff to hand in. I read the Education Yearbooks and sensed that it would never be of any use. Sometimes I think that what I learned at B.S.T. was how not to teach. As we lived all over the city, there was little social life and not much of a chance to

form close friendships. There were clubs to join and I joined Tri S and N.R.A. The first was for regents scholarship holders and the second Non Resident Assoc. The Tri S people were too few and too poor to have parties, and the non-residents had no place to entertain. Some of the students joined a lot of organizations as they felt it would look good on their resumes. However, this backfired in the 50's during the Communist scare when many college organizations were investigated. Some teachers were really put on the spot for having belonged to a so called pink club.

After leaving Mrs. Kurz's, I went to St. Mary's on Edward St. and shared a room with Dot Klein and Eileen McCarthy. Dot and I walked to school every morning and home every night about three miles. Eileen went to Bryant– Stratton. We got along pretty well but both Dot and Eileen smoked, and since in 1932 they couldn't smoke except at a restaurant or in the ladies room at the theater, they tried to smoke in our room. It was forbidden of course, so they stuffed rugs under the door and opened the window. Nevertheless my clothes and hair smelled of smoke all that winter. Eileen and Dot also went to dances mostly at the Dellwood. I studied but Dot and I danced some evenings downstairs in the common room. We sang for music. I don't believe there was a radio in the whole place. We were on the third floor – linoleum floor, three chairs, three cots, one table and two bureaus. The bathroom served the whole floor. Usually when I took a bath, I cleaned the tub first and again after I finished. We ate in the basement. We three were at one table. Supper was at 6 and we generally were in line waiting as we were quite hungry. We ate breakfast at 7 and then spent a whole day at school: usually we had no lunch as we did not have money to buy lunch at the school cafeteria. Finally Sister let us take rolls and butter at breakfast for our lunch. Sometimes we would pool our money and buy milk, crackers and peanut butter to eat at night in our room. The food was probably good enough, but we had mutton stew every Monday night and liver and onions on Tuesday, neither of which I liked. I didn't gain any weight.

Luckily for me during Christmas vacation Mrs. Faller came up to see if I would board with her. I moved in at the beginning of the term and stayed there on Hawley St. for the rest of my college years. Dorothy Klein left college at the end of the year. Academic standards were high. I had spent most of my time at the Grosvenor Library when I was on Edward St. The Grosvenor was a very good reference library on Franklin, open until 9 o'clock and all day Saturday and Sunday. We signed for books and then stayed there some times all day working. The place was crowded during vacation when out of town students came home. On Hawley St. I had to depend on the Public Branch Library on Ferry. I did use the college library a little; the only books I remember using was Moulton's World Criticism of Literature and, of course those awful dull Education Year Books. I had put in a lot of time working; our assignments were almost impossibly heavy with not much thinking but lots of reading and writing.

Sometimes I felt as if I spent my whole four years rewriting educational theory, but I enjoyed a few classes. Sociology with Mr. Clement was fun. He had us divide up the city and take an unemployment poll. I had Germaine St., inhabited mostly by Polish and Hungarians. This, of course, was 1933 when there was very high unemployment. I took Betty Faller along, and we went from house to house asking our questions. Many could

not speak English, and as we couldn't understand anything else, we had a lot of trouble until a couple of young men offered to help by translating for us. Some people may have gotten the idea we could get them jobs. Our class was divided into sections and after the first year I was in Intermediate 1. There were six sections, two Kindergartens Primary, two Intermediate and two Grammar. I think Intermediate was Grades 4, 5, and 6. However as I was planning on teaching in the country, I felt it was the best choice and also the easiest. So Gert Himmert and I went through the four years together. I had not planned on that long. When I started one could teach after two years at State. However, by 1933 they changed that to three years and before 1935 had decided we must have a degree. It was unfair to keep changing the rules, but I managed. We learned how to manage with no money. I was lucky in that I had a home to go to and a landlady who trusted me. We hitchhiked back and forth and borrowed text books from the Public Library and just didn't spend money. The whole class was in the same boat. My four years at BST were very difficult; partly because I was losing my hearing, and also because we were marked on the curve. The theory was that in any large group of people the majority would score in the middle and earn C's. There would be as many E students as A and more but an equal number of D and B students. However, our group had already been tested and top talent skimmed off. Some of the teachers as well as we students felt the system was very unfair. So teachers gave nothing but C's, but most of them tried to use the curve so there were cases where people got an E who scored well above what would be a passing grade. When I read about Buffalo teachers today failing to pass reading and math and grammar tests, which a good 8th grader could have passed in 1932 – I am horrified. I also wonder about what these A's and B's college students seem to be able to earn today.

My courses in college were not particularly difficult. There was just so much work. I felt frustrated and by 1934, the powers had found out about my poor hearing. They began to send me to hearing specialists. The first was a woman, Dr. Rosalia Rozelle. She decided that I had to have a tonsillectomy. So the following summer after I had completed six weeks of summer school and the day after the Sheldon picnic dance, John took mother and me over to the Warsaw Hospital. Dr. Faller had arranged for me to have it done at a sort of clinic so it only cost me fifteen dollars. Mother stayed all night and John came and got us the next afternoon. This was late summer of 1935.

When I went back to school in September, I began practice teaching and it was probably one of the toughest years of my life. My hearing was worse – I began to have these dizzy spells; at the time I tried to ignore them. My first critic teacher, Miss Denecke, was an old fashioned, unimaginative person, who told me I'd never be a teacher. Surprisingly, although I lacked self confidence in every other area, I was positive I could teach if they'd all let me alone to do it. However, Miss Deneke and my next teacher, Miss Ballare and the head of the department, Miss Bacon, were convinced otherwise. Nothing I did was right. This in spite of the fact that the kids liked me – were very attentive in class and even told their parents about me – things I said, stories I told. Of course I didn't hear about that until much later.

After Thanksgiving I began teaching in a rural school – a district school – all the grades. It was the Shimerville School in town of Clarence. We, Diane Trent and I boarded at Seyfangs and walked to school; perhaps a mile every day carrying our lunches. Miss Koch, the teacher, had a group of 19 children distributed through six of the eight grades. Things were much better for me as Miss Koch allowed me to teach my own way. She even told me she couldn't understand why Miss Bacon was so negative. She wanted to give me a high mark but had to settle for a C as I had a D from Miss Ballard. I did not have a C average and had to teach at the School of Practice from February to June. As I look back I wonder how many excellent teachers were lost by the system; first in the entrance exams which culled out all but the brains, then marking on the curve, and finally this practice teaching which rewarded only the dull. (And were some of those master teachers dull!) They taught reading, but their pupils hated to read. They taught history, list of causes and results of wars, but the kids hated history. Our teacher of English Literature turned me off from reading great English Literature to this day. What saved me was the excellent teachers I had in elementary and high school; teachers who were enthusiastic, interested in their subjects and dedicated. They, I remembered and tried to emulate.

By May 1936 the school sent me to another ear specialist – Dr. Brown. This was traumatic as he told me that in five to ten years I'd be completely deaf. I might as well quit college as I'd never be able to teach. As I walked back to Hawley St. from Delaware Ave. I was at first numb, then angry and then I began to plan. I decided to just ignore the whole thing and let God take over. I didn't cry as my eyes would be red and when people asked what was the matter I might break down. The next day the nurse told me that I couldn't be dropped from school as I already had passed all necessary courses and had my 128 credits. Lucky me! Now all I had to do was get a job. Glen Swachamer took me over to Arcade and Delevan, but in 1936 there were still more teachers than jobs and most schools had the children or relatives of the members of the board. Of course in the District Schools the trustee was not allowed to hire a relative. I finally got promise of the Weed Hill School from the trustee Claude Dake. I was euphoric, but I was warned by the kids at college not to let the placement board know as they had been known to send someone else out – someone they thought better qualified. It is hard to understand how it was, but in 1936 most of my friends did not get jobs. Some of them never taught but went into something else. Later during the war years there was a great shortage of teachers and people were hired who had only high school – older women who had not taught in years. But that was later. In 1936 we were expected to teach eight grades, all subjects including music, art and science. I was supposed to start fires and clean the classroom. There was no electricity in Wales. They had a jacketed stove which would get the room warm by noon. I don't remember having too much trouble with the fires on Weed Hill, probably because my brother helped me. Also it seems as if we burned coal and fire could be kept going overnight. I do remember, however, that on cold mornings the children would come to school and first thing remove inkwells from their desks and place them on top of the stove to melt the ink. If any child inadvertently left his lunch pail in the unheated cloak room – everything would be frozen solid by noon. Generally the other children would share and be paid back when the frozen lunch thawed out. Our water came from a well outside the school and had to be pumped. The lavatories were a couple of outhouses

behind the school, one for boys and one for girls. At Wales, I had absolutely no trouble with children asking to leave the room. If this sounds rugged we didn't seem to realize it. The children enjoyed their recesses and noon hours – organized their own games - made and enforced their own rules.

The older children taught the younger, who in turn would teach the even younger. This system of children learning from children was one reason we were so successful in the one room school. The two years I taught in Wales I had only seven pupils in grades 2-8, Alice, Carlton Foss, Pat and Rita Theiss, Lyle Dake, Bobby Ehlers and Betty. I don't remember her name, but she had transferred from Arcade. I was really enjoying teaching. I could try all my ideas with no one to say nay. I remember I divided the school into two spelling teams. Then on a map of the U.S. they raced across the country moving as many miles as they could spell words. I don't know how much their spelling improved, but they certainly learned geography. Even the second grader could plot her course from city to city – and the whole district got caught up in the race. I learned a lot about how to manage a district school from the other Wales teachers. I believe there were 12 of us. The Superintendent, Mr. Buell had organized a club. We met once a month and he had instructed our President as to what he wanted us to do. We all agreed this was to save himself a lot of work. The first year we met at the different schools after school. The host teacher served coffee and donuts or cookies. We all had a great time complaining and criticizing. I usually felt pretty good as my school was a snap compared to some of the others. However, it was difficult with no electricity. I remember I carried two gal. Thermos jugs of coffee to school that May afternoon. The second year we met at our homes in the evening and served rather elaborate dinners. It was all very social. We planned Field Days when we all went to East Aurora to march in a parade etc. We also had to go in to correct regent's exams, provide Fair exhibits, etc.

The big event in the district school was the Christmas Program. We managed skits, plays and songs. With only 7 pupils, everyone had to take on numerous roles. Of course, we had a Christmas tree which the boys, armed with axes and saws, procured. This took a whole afternoon – the teacher spent the time worrying and chewing her fingernails. The girls made decorations for the tree. Prior to the big night names had been drawn so everyone would get a present. Santa arrived and passed out candy and presents the teacher had purchased. Some of the teachers in the 30's made the candy and popcorn, but I bought it. I really didn't need any more work. Those first years I borrowed a Santa Claus Costume, but finally we made one. Over the years I would renew the cotton batton. At last it wore out and about 1960 I bought one at Vidlers. We used it for my home parties too.

The other big event in the Rural School was the year end picnic. On Weed Hill one of the parents loaded us in his truck, and we spent the day at Emery Park. There was no playground equipment – not even swings at the school so the kids really enjoyed the slides at the Park. In fact Emery Park was the site of most year end district school picnics. It was usually overrun on those final June days. The merry-go-round was popular, but I never took the children to it until after lunch. It cost 15 cents a ride and most kids would have run out of money – also there were pony rides. Our school playgrounds were just

that - a yard. The boys brought balls and bats and everyone played ball from the first day of school, every recess and noon hour. The season continued until snowfall. Then they played in the snow. The older children taught the younger ones the games, rules, etc. They built snow forts and had snow ball wars. I had very little trouble with playground discipline. If they couldn't get along, everyone had to come into school and lose their playtime, so they managed. There's nothing like public opinion to enforce rules.

I boarded with John, my brother, the first year I taught. We didn't have electricity either. He had a range in the kitchen and a stove in the living room. The pipe of this stove went up through my bedroom. He slept down stairs. In the coldest weather he kept this stove going full blast. Even so I slept on a feather bed, wore pajamas, a woolen robe, and sometimes a ratty old fur coat to bed. I had so many quilts I could hardly move. The wind really whistled thru that house. We had a couple of kerosene lamps. I did the cooking and we always had plenty of potatoes and milk. Building fires was never my strong point. I would come home from school, clean ashes out of the kitchen range, put in paper, arrange the kindling and would douse the whole thing with kerosene and throw in a match. The paper would burn, wood would char and the fire would go out!

Living was truly primitive that first winter. Mother and I had gone up to the farm to paper the upstairs room I would use as a bedroom. When Mother found a nest of wasps in the outhouse she tried to burn them out. She did but also burned down the whole toilet. I managed by using the school toilets.

As we had no electricity that winter of 1936-37, we went to bed early. I spent my free time planning my school classes, and John planned rebuilding the house. We went to the movies a few times in East Aurora, and a few evenings we went up to visit Ehlers. John belonged to the Weed Hill bowling team, and I went out on a few dates. However, I soon found out that in order to have the enthusiasm and energy to teach, I needed my sleep. So I tried to date only on Friday or Saturday. Teaching was always much more important and interesting than my social life.

Sometime in 1937 we got electricity, and one of the first things we bought was a radio. Both home and school were wired for electricity. However, as neither my brother nor I had a very large income, we did not invest in any appliances. I was paid \$23 a week for 38 weeks the first year and \$25 the second year. From this they withheld a percentage for my pension. I never received \$800 a year. Expenses were low, too. I bought all the groceries including kerosene for lamps and to start fires. If I remember rightly it amounted to less than \$10 a month. I also paid back money I borrowed for my college education. When I lived at home, I paid \$4 a week board. I was so happy. Teaching school and they paid me, too!

But May 1938 the bubble burst. The district voted to close the school and send the pupils to East Aurora. I tried desperately to get another job, but schools were closing right and left and added to that my hearing had deteriorated. Helen Sloands' principal of School 78 was looking for a housekeeper. I needed to earn a living so I took the job. From September 1938 until May 1939 I spent working for Miss Pritchard on Woodward Ave.

The family consisted of her father, widowed brother Dr. Griff Pritchard, and his son 7 yr. old Griffie. It was a three story house. I was to keep it clean, do washing and cooking as well as take care of Griffie. I had never done any but simple cooking. Miss P. had a Fanny Farmer Cookbook. She ordered the food or told me what to order. I followed Fanny's directions (even including making it look like the pictures) and earned a reputation of being a great cook. All the Pritchards' loved to eat. Miss P. was overweight and Dr. P. must have weighed 300 lbs. Cooking is easy when one can use exactly what the recipe calls for. At home we were always skimping and substituting. Also they had a gas oven with a thermostat which I merely set to whatever degree the recipe said. At home our range had warm, hot, and very hot and you got the right temperature by adding wood. Grandma's oven didn't even have that. You were supposed to be able to tell how hot it was by sticking your hand in. All I could ever tell was that yes it was hot, or not it wasn't. Grandma gave up on me. Working at Pritchard's was O.K., but I wanted to teach and Miss P. advised me to take some courses and teach the deaf. I enrolled in courses: Methods of teaching the Deaf and Psychology of the Handicapped. However, the classes were sometimes at night, and then I had to miss them in order to baby-sit with Griffie. Finally the Sister told me I could never teach the deaf because I couldn't hear. Only those with perfect hearing could teach the deaf. (Later in 1960 a Professor at Geneseo told me they were wrong. Deaf teachers were preferred to teach the deaf.) Miss Joiner at the school began to give me lip reading lessons. When I left Pritchards in May, I stayed with Ruth and George Fontaine to finish the course. Miss Joiner took me down to Gibson Doty, where I bought my first hearing Aid. It was a Maico. I didn't have enough to pay for it (I think it was \$70,) so agreed to pay \$10 a month. I had a contract to teach at Plants Corners for \$23 a week. The hearing aid was in 2 parts. The Microphone was about 4 in. in diameter and 1 ½ inches thick. It was attached to a battery pack holding an A and B battery. One was quite large, 3x5x1 and lasted a month. The other battery was a flash light C battery. I wore the batteries in a case strapped to my leg. Even the earpiece was rigid and hurt, but I could hear. It took a few days, but I learned to hear fairly well. From then on I put the hearing aid on in the morning and did not turn it off or down until I took it off at night.

That school year 1939-40 at Plants corners I worked as hard as I ever did. I had only four pupils, two Barvians, Jack and Jean, Francis Lefort and Dorothy Minkel. I planned all kinds of activities so they wouldn't be bored. Jack and Jean walked to school, only five and six years old, and never missed a day. We studied Eskimos and made igloos; studied Indians and made tepees; and made a doll house, I think out of orange crates. We made Christmas presents and had a program. I had to rewrite playlets with only 3 or 4 parts. It was a very cold snowy winter, but we had virtually perfect attendance. I had the children washing their hands often, gave them orange juice at mid morning break. We all played outside every day, and of course, we all walked to school. At this time they mainly used horses, there were few cars on the road, especially on the hills as the roads were dirt and very crude in today's standards.

It was the one year and the only in my life when I had no colds, and neither did any of my pupils. In the Spring Jack and Francis went to St. Mary's to make their first Communion. I just had the two little girls.

School meeting was the first Tuesday in May. We teachers had to get our jobs that night. Most trustees hired the first one who came. John took me up to the school, and I went over to Leona Leforts, across the road. I thought she liked me, and I waited there until the meeting was over. Then John and Dad took me to Gene Kirsch's, the new trustee, but he wasn't there. Well we waited a while with Betty Kirsch and her brother, Joe. The next morning at 5 A.M., Dad and I went back and Betty said she was sorry, but her husband had hired Shirley Kohel. Shirley had been teaching at Dutch Hollow. So we went to see Mike Redding, trustee of that school. I got the job for \$22.50 a week. Well at least I had a school.

That summer mother and I went to visit Aunt Georgia in Massachusetts, and then to N.Y. City to the World's Fair. Jimmy and I had gone in Aug. of 1939. She had been working at Hogan's. We rode all night by bus. It took thirteen hours and stayed at Hotel Taft. It was the first time either of us had ever stayed in a hotel. We went to see the Yankees play, by subway, but most of our time we spent at the Fair. Mother and I also stayed at the Taft. Catherine Scriptor met us in N.Y.C., and we stayed three in a room. (\$4 a day) I went to the Fair one day but spent the rest of the time seeing N.Y. We all went to Radio City Music Hall and Catherine and I were even on T.V. We were in one room and Mother and rest of group in another, big deal! But this was 1940.

The rest of summer I worked for a family in Buffalo, the Wagner's. The mother was not well and needed help. I believe I was paid \$4.00 a week. They had 4 children and I had to sleep with one of the little boys. Mrs. Wagner was the former Marian Meyers, Helen Sloand's cousin.

In Dutch Hollow I started off with about 15 children - Merlaus, Gerhardts, Zittels, Almeters, and Heinzs. I walked to school every morning three miles, started the fire, taught until 3:50, cleaned the classroom and walked home. I dressed warm and did not get cold in the winter months, and occasionally got a ride in the road truck as Mr. Logel thought he would not see me and plow right in to me. There was just a narrow tunnel to walk through; equipment was different back then. Once I stopped to Anna Conrad's as the weather was so bad and she worried and wanted one of the boys to would walk home with me. On the last Friday of the month, I walked up to Mike Redding's for a paper to take to Phil Merlau, the collector, so I could get my pay. If the public money was in or they had collected enough school taxes, I got paid. Otherwise, I had to wait. In some cases it would be November before I got my first check or in some cases cash. I taught the Dutch Hollow School two years, and was teaching there in Dec., 1941 when we went to war. On Monday, Dec.8, I carried my little radio up to school so the children could listen to the President call Dec.7, "A day that will live in infamy." They were excited and the boys were hoping they would have a chance to fight. I remember all my talk about the stupidity of war had made no impression. The girls were a little more realistic. They didn't want anyone they knew to get hurt. I had been teaching in 7th and 8th Social Studies that wars were futile - no one really won. However, we had been attacked so what could we do. At least in WW II, the home front was involved as much as the military. In February of 1942 we went on year round Daylight Saving Time when Roosevelt was the

President. I walked the three miles to school in pitch dark. In May we teachers had to give out sugar rationing books. I asked four ladies in the District to help me, and we sat at School evenings one week in May.

The school was closed in June 1942. The District Schools were closing right and left. Parents were told the children would get a better education, have more advantages, and it would be cheaper! If the school had few pupils there was no sense keeping the school for so few. If there were many children, the argument was that one teacher could not do justice to them all.

In 1942 Charles Landphair hired me to teach in Sheldon # 10. The state mandated a minimum salary of \$1000 for 40 weeks. Actually we taught 190 days as we had before, but were paid \$100 a month for 10 months, less 6% for pension. Financially, I thought I had arrived.

The summer of '42, I went to Buffalo to take a 6 week course in typing. Buffalo was crowded with people working in defense plants and boys training. Jobs were plentiful; usherettes, movie theaters, waitresses, even short order cooks were in demand. I stayed on Edward St. at St. Mary's where I had lived 10 years before. I shared a room with a nurse and a hairdresser. One day toward the end of August, I got a call from Mother. I was to come home. Sheldon #10 was to take care of gas rationing. The ladies who had served on the Strykersville sugar rationing group were all ready. If I remember besides Mother, there was Florence Dellinger, Evalyn Landphair, Mable Franz, Mary Marzolf, Anna Marzolf, Maydie Merlau, and of course Mrs. Bardo. We gave everyone an A card, I think 4 gal. a week, and filled applications for B and C cards. We served as rationing distribution for the town, or at least this election district, for canned goods, meat and shoes. The ladies were very good and also seemed to enjoy themselves. Evalyn even wrote a poem about "Rationing." Unlike the later wars, everyone was very active. We had a first aid course given by Dr. Valente. Home Bureau had a Red Cross Course on setting up and feeding large groups of people. All of us rural teachers were supposed to take charge. In addition, Mother went from house to house selling War Bonds.

The Strykersville School was very poorly equipped and rather primitive. Whereas the schools in the smaller districts had radios, electric ranges, etc, Sheldon #10 had its original double desks, a non existent library, in fact no book shelves at all, and a single bulb hanging from the middle of the ceiling. When I questioned this seeming inequality, I was told that the state allotted more money to the small districts and made spending money worthwhile by giving them matching funds. The result was that the Plant Corners School (#6) with only a few pupils had an electric stove and a radio, whereas the Strykersville School needed maps, books, the bare essentials. That fall of 1942 we collected scrap iron, tin cans and paper for the war effort. We were paid around \$20, which we spent on library books. We had books but no book shelves. I still carry a picture in my mind of the two 8th grade boys; Neil and Lee; on the school porch using hand can openers to remove the lids and then washing the cans in a pan of water. We all tied up papers. It was hard work, but everyone was patriotic and felt he was doing his bit. We collected orange crates from Gus Kruetter, painted and made book shelves. That was

the original library. Maybe in the later 1950's some book shelves were put in. Nora Golden gave us some books; she lived on Johnson's Falls Road and taught in the city.

In February, my three eighth graders left for High School in Arcade. They had passed their regents exams in January. This left me with five Holmes children (from three families). When their randmotherg died in April, we closed the school for her funeral as she was also my cousin. The following year I got three little first graders, David Smith, Thelma Johnson, and Rhoda Steward, who lived with Mrs. Leona Parker. I thought I was doing a good job. Mr. McGureen had died, and we had a new Superintendent, Mr. Victor Blum. The first time Mr. Blum visited our school, I was sitting on the floor reading to the first graders. Mr. B. is well over 6 ft. tall, and when we looked up one of the children probably said," My, he's big." Mr. Blum burst out laughing, and so did the older children. Everyone was happy and relaxed, so the new Superintendent thought I was a good teacher. He was surprised when I lost the school that May in 1944. I was too! Charles Landphair had been my trustee, but he told me he would not run again but was sure my job was secure. The trustee hired Mrs. Bardo. My friends and relatives had been so sure he would rehire me, they had voted for him. Luckily, Eric Freyberger had been elected trustee of Java, and he came up that same Tues. night after school meeting and hired me. Some of my pride was somewhat restored. But as my father had told me it was all political, and in politics you could trust no one. It was probably the best thing that could have happened. I learned not to take things for granted. Later I heard that I had been "saucy" to the children. Perhaps they meant sarcastic although I never felt I had been sarcastic, but who knows?

Anyhow the Java school was a challenge. Mrs. Kohel had been teacher of the upper grades. She had an excellent reputation, and had been teaching for years. Nevertheless, it was said she had lost control. I immediately devised a plan in which I awarded a certain number of dollars (fake) for good work and good marks and a system of fines for misbehavior. We all kept track and at Halloween, I took in a bunch of 5 & 10 cent toys to be auctioned off for their play money. This system was very successful, and I had very few discipline problems. However, I wasn't as successful educationally. The eighth grade girls passed regents, but one of the boys did poorly. Of course, he was only in school half the time, and then he refused to exert himself. His mother told me her sister-in-law, whose daughter I had taught in Strykersville, thought I was a great teacher, but she didn't agree! Naturally failures are a teachers fault. Successes are due to superior children, on the whole, I enjoyed the year in Java.

Due to a polio epidemic, school didn't open that year until the middle of Sept., and then because of weather the Arcade School was closed almost 20 days that winter. We kept open, but I had to send the children home some days when we couldn't get the classroom up to 50 degrees. I was criticized for that. V.E. day came on a nice warm Tues. in May. I closed the school for that day too and was criticized for that. Nevertheless, I learned later that most of the parents thought I had done a great job. Mary Posthumus had taught the lower grades until Feb. 1, and then Helen Shehee took over. On the whole, I was glad to get back to Strykersville where I could count on being informed about all the problems immediately.

In retrospect, it was probably a good thing for me that I had lost the school for a year. I returned to Strykersville and taught there for the next 25 years. Anton "Pop" Johnson was my trustee, the War was over, World War II that is. Pop bought the desks etc. from the Dutch Hollow School and Sheldon #10 began to look like a school of the 20th Century. We got some maps but had the same old globe with a hole in the Pacific Ocean. I finally used my own money to buy a new globe. For me conditions were ideal. I could teach as I wished, use all my ideas for maintaining discipline and teaching the subject matter. Those ungraded rural schools had some advantages. As I taught all the grades, the children could be taught individually, i.e., a child proficient in Math but deficient in reading. I had pupils doing Math with 4th graders, reading in 2nd grade and listening in on 5 or 6th Social Studies. Listening in on upper grade classes was a favorite occupation of bright lower grade students who had finished their seatwork. Sometimes the "little kids" seemed to have learned more than the older ones. When I had over thirty pupils in eight grades, which happened in the 1950's, I set up a system of teacher helpers. Every morning I listed on the board teaching jobs; such as dictating spelling to one of the grades and the time. Children coming in the classroom early would sign up. It was very popular and often the "teacher" learned quite a bit too. Sometimes a parent would complain, but when I showed how this practice helped everyone they were satisfied. In fact, most parents just wanted the best for their offspring. When I could show that was what I wanted they were happy and cooperative.

I had a theory that children who really wanted to learn would virtually teach themselves. This idea of letting the kids teach themselves earned for me an undeserved reputation for being a great science teacher. It came about in this way; in the 1940's we were not required to teach Science in the Elementary grades. Some teachers did a little Nature Study; after all we were a rural community. I was very weak in any type of Science. It is true my regent's marks in High school Biology and Physics' had been good, but that was due to a good memory and excellent teachers. How I ever passed the required courses in college, I'll never know! So when it came to teaching, I was at a loss. However these boys were so interested, I had to do something. I talked the trustee into buying a Science Kit and more or less turned it all over to the boys. There was only one girl in the upper grades and she was as interested as I was. Well, it came to pass that one afternoon Mr. Blom the Superintendent dropped in. The boys had stayed after school to test a generator they had made with the help of their fathers. It is true that I had described how the generator should be built, and how it should work. But they had actually made one and when they turned on the tap water and actually generated enough electricity to light a flash light bulb, you would have thought they had invented electricity. Mr. Blom was impressed and my reputation was made. In fact he sent me over to Warsaw to apply for ninth grade science teaching position. Imagine! Those kids would have ruined me. Perhaps not, maybe I could have conned them into teaching themselves, too.

I loved teaching Social Studies which is really a mish-mash of the old Geography and History curriculum, mostly History. One taught units on Transportation, Food, etc. I preferred to teach History as one long story. In this way we didn't need to bother with lists of dates. The story was told in chronological order so dates were no problem. As

every one in the classroom was apt to be listening in, by the time the youngsters reached the upper grades, he or she had a good knowledge of American history, acquired painlessly. We used maps a lot. They even played map games during recess on stormy days. None of this was required. Remember I was supposed to be teaching units on Food, Transportation and Communication, etc. When the "New" math came along, I taught both "old" and "new". But all this came later. In 1945 "Pop" Johnson was trustee and bought desks, file cabinets, books, maps etc. from closed district schools. Sheldon #10 began to look like it was in the 20th Century. Frank Smith was the next trustee. This was only right as over the years I taught six of Franks' eight children and all six Johnson's. Frank was followed by Dave Poole. He was the Father of three boys all of whom I had through their elementary grades. Pauline Holden was my one and only female trustee. This was the early 50's, and I had over 30 pupils, only twenty desks; not enough of anything except kids. I brought over two tables from the "Home Bureau" room in the school house, and put three fifth grade boys at one table, and three girls at another. What a life! Actually they got along fairly well with only a few arguments when someone infringed on someone else's territory. We also shared text books. Time was at a premium too. I taught right through recesses, sending out the 1st and 2nd graders with the 7th and 8 graders while I taught the middle grades, and then dismissing 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders while I taught the others. It worked quite well. We served hot soup at noon. First I had a hot plate and a couple of kettles. Chicken noodle was served on Mon., five cents a bowl, vegetable on Tues. and Thurs. four cents, and tomato on Wed. and Fri. for three cents. I had the children push their desks together in groups of four so they formed tables. I dished up the soup and while they ate I tried to organize my afternoon classes. On some days I forgot to eat! I hired some of the older ones to clean up and wash dishes for a dollar a week. With around 30 pupils I was really busy.

It was during the late 40's and early 50's that I also had a Girls 4H club and was a counselor to C.Y.O. In fact, it was rare that a child in town did not know me as I was involved in so many functions in the community involving the children.

There were four swings in 1942. When Sherrill Holmes was trustee two more swings and a slide and teeter tauter were put up. In early 1950's the new swing set was put up. When Harold Schiltz was trustee in the early 1960's, side doors were put in the school as fire escapes. The firemen also put in a fire bell after there was a big fire in a Cheektowaga School where several children lost their lives.

The janitor kept the fire going and water running. The school was heated with steam heat. There was no hot or cold water in the class room in the beginning. The children would fill pans with water from the well to wash their hands. In about 1952 we got hot and cold water and water fountains. I would have to sweep and keep the classroom clean with the help of the children. In later years they hired help for me. I recall Thelma Johnson as one who was a great help. My job as a teacher was more than just teaching. Teachers were expected to take the Census in Aug. This was very time consuming, either stopping in or calling people. However, it was also a way to meet the people in the community. There were two rooms in the school; the room adjacent to the classroom was used for Home

Bureau. Frank Stamper built them some shelves, and Chet Streicher put a plug in. There were tables and an oil stove with an oven.

The lunch hours and recess were filled with imaginative play and games by the children. One time they hit a ball right into Doctor Valente's window. Well, I said, you have to go over and pay for the window replacement. They did it and learned a lesson in responsibility and went right on in the future playing the game and being a bit more careful. In the fall the children loved to play in the leaves. "Scatter the leaves" the children would shout before leaving school. They knew if they left them in a pile the janitor would burn them, and they wanted to play in them. At Christmas time the boys would go out back and cut a tree, and the girls and I would make cookies. I worried until I saw the boys come back safely; there was excitement in the air.

I read to the children in the afternoon books like "Tom Sawyer" and "Anne of Green Gables." They knew the stories so well that one little girl said to bring hankies for the next day because a child had died in the story. I was not one to give homework unless they did not finish their work in school. In the early 60's I taught about Abraham Lincoln, and they were to write a composition on him. One little student wrote, "A bad man shot Abraham Lincoln while sitting on a box watching Ford Theatre."

When school closed in 1970, I locked the door and turned in the key. I walked down the steps one last time as my career in teaching ended, but not the memories that I cherish. I often wondered what happened to my books and teaching supplies. I enjoyed teaching and had a good time. My pay was meager, but just to receive any pay at all and still have all the pleasure I received was amazing. The joy I received from the children was more than I could have ever imagined. My job was to teach, there were few extra curricular activities. However, the students learned reading, writing, and arithmetic very well. Of course, the pupils were allowed to play out in fresh air in free time. Through the years the life of teaching changed drastically. I went from teaching eight grades to only one Kindergarten class. I admit my greatest learning in the classroom was teaching this group. In the one room class, the teacher was the boss. The students were there for one reason, and that was to learn. I had an opportunity after college to accept a job in the city paying \$75 a week. However her love for teaching and the students bought her back to this rural community of Strykersville, N.Y. to teach in the area. I was paid \$25 a week, but never regretted my decision. When I graduated, I received a **Permanent life License** after I completed a four year course in education at the State Teachers College. It was the last year they issued them. Later teachers had to renew their licenses.

I retired on July 1, 1970, and later the law read that those who retired before that date would receive considerable more money, but I missed it by a month. However, I have enough memories to nurture me the rest of my day's, and as Grandma told me material things don't really make you happy, it is doing your job and doing it well that brings lasting happiness. I look forward to my retirement years and hope to do some traveling. My days will be different, but I am forever thankful for the life I have lived.

“Yes, Dorothea E. Kirsch, You have touched so many hearts.”

“On behalf of The Town of Sheldon Historical Society, we thank you, Dorothea E. Kirsch, for the great contribution you have made to preserve the art of reading and literature. We express our gratitude to you for sharing your lifetime memories; you have truly lived a remarkable life. “God Bless You.”

June 2005

*We will close with her seal
That is imprinted in each book.*