Reminiscences of the Past Fifty Years

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Compiled By
William T. Holliston

My father, William Holliston, was born in Scotland, August 30th, 1814. His parents emigrated to America and settled at Ogdensburg, St. Lawrence County, New York, in 1817. It was there in a settlement of Vermonters that he grew to manhood; and it was owing to these neighbors, perhaps, that his language and manners partook more of the Yankee than the Scotch.

My mother, Mary McGinnis, was born of Irish parents at Osnabrook, Canada, January 28th, 1829. Her people soon moved to West Leyden, Lewis County, New York, and there, among the same kind of people as my father, had for neighbors, in the adjoining county, she lived until they were married, on December 17th, 1852. So, though my father was Scotch and my mother Irish, their conversation always seemed like that of New Englanders to me. So much for environment and antecedents.

I was born May 23rd, 1856, and my first remembrance is of the troubled days of the Civil War. The war meetings in the school house, the loud cheering for those who enlisted, the anxiety for news from the front, and often the great sorrow when it came, all made an impression on my mind which the passing of more than fifty years has not effaced.

And indeed, it was owing to the hard times caused by the war and the difficulty in providing for the ever increasing wants of a growing family that caused my father, then a man of fifty, to sell his little farm in York State and emigrate to the far West.

I remember the scene as well as though it was yesterday, when father came home from town and announced that the farm was sold. Some neighbor women were there

visiting, and they were at supper when he arrived; and such a torrent of tears and lamentations! This was in the summer of 1864, and from then till the day we left in September, all was hurry and bustle in the little Holliston home.

It was a great trial for my parents to leave the old neighbors whom they loved as kindred, and to the time of his death thirty years afterward, my father corresponded with some of these people or their descendents. And the day we moved they all turned out with their teams and each hauled a box or trunk or some little piece of furniture, making a long procession, where a very few loads would have held all the goods we had.

We came West by the water route, took the steamboat at Ogdensburg, up the St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes and around to Chicago, from there down to Mendota by the C. B. & Q. R. R.

We were nine days on the boat and were very seasick, and extremely glad when the journey was done. The family at that time, besides my father and mother, consisted of

Helen M., born December 18th, 1853.
William T., born May 23rd, 1856.
Marion (Minnie), born April 16th, 1858.
Edward J., born July 3rd, 1863.

And a half-brother, Sherman N., who was born July 5th, 1848. He bade us goodbye at Chicago and went to live with relatives in Minnesota, and we did not see him again for many years.

The rest of us arrived in Mendota on a dark, rainy Saturday night, and we youngsters awaited with great impatience

the rising of the morrow's sun, so that we might get a glimpse of that much talked of place, seen so often in our dreams the past few months and destined so long to be our home.

My first view of Mendota was from a rear upstairs window of the house on west Sixth Street, now owned by the Jacob Fritz family, then the home of my uncle, the late James McGinnis. The hired man had met us at the depot the night before, with a lantern and umbrellas, and we splashed up Washington Street to a point opposite where the brewery now stands, and then cornerways across what seemed to be pasture lot, now the site of the Jacob Scheidenhelm and Otto Kieselbach homes. As soon as it was light the next morning, I ran to the window, pulled aside the curtain, and looked out upon dear old Mendota. I have seen it under many varying conditions since, but never when it looked drearier to me than on that Sunday morning so long ago. The first buildings that I saw were the little Presbyterian church, the Dean house north of it, and Newport's across the street east. Mr. Dean's was the only house on the north side of Fifth Street to Thirteenth Avenue and only four or five small houses on the south side of that street to the same avenue.

But soon the sun was shining, the wind dried up the mud and I was abroad exploring the great West. In a few weeks we moved out to a little house on my Uncle Tommy's farm, six miles northeast of town—and I lived there till September, 1865.

I attended school that winter at the old Meath schoolhouse, which stood right in the middle of the public road

in front of the house on the farm now owned by the Drs. McIntyre. The teacher was James W. Swisher, who afterwards filled a conspicuous place, for many years in the affairs of Colorado, serving as a member of the Legislature and Circuit Judge, dying a few years ago. The next spring my teacher was Miss Viola Harris, afterwards Mrs. O. C. Merrifield, and she too is dead. These were splendid teachers and I have remembered them with deepest gratitude throughout all these years. My first playmates were John Lewis, George French, Eugene Aldrich and Eddie Oaks.

My father rented some land of my uncle and of Mr. Lewis and the spring of '65 saw us putting in our first crop in Illinois.

When we landed in Illinois in the fall of 1864, the Armies of the Republic were engaged in the last great struggle with the Rebels. Everything we had to buy was at the highest notch; the old team cost $275, a three hundred pound hog $40, and everything else in proportion. But as soon as the war closed the following spring, the bottom dropped out of prices and our crops brought us very poor returns.

My folks had been on the lookout for a farm ever since we arrived and in September, '65, bought eighty acres of raw land four miles southwest of Mendota at $20 per acre, and moved there immediately, renting an old vacant house in the neighborhood until a new one could be built; so that it was quite late in the fall when we were finally settled in our first Illinois home. The house was 16x24x10. The attic where we children slept, was unfinished.

And there in that humble home we lived till 1873 before

the house was enlarged. I often look back to those years and think how hard they must have been for my parents, unaccustomed as they were to the ways of farming in the West.

I have thought that I would try to recall some event or events of each of these fleeting years, as they recur to me now. As soon as we were moved into the new house, we children, Helen, Minnie and I were started to school. Here we had for a teacher Mrs. Rebecca J. Day, a young war widow, and sister of Mrs. A. C. Tower. She was our teacher for several terms.

In the spring of 1866 Tom Dawson, one of the neighbor boys from the East, came out to work on a farm a few miles southwest of our place. He spent his Sundays at our house and his visits were very welcome to the family. When he went back to New York in the fall, he promised to return in the following spring and make his home in Illinois, but we never saw him again.

During that year father broke some of the land and raised a small crop, but not enough to amount to much and we saw rather hard times. We planted a few trees, fenced in a ten acre pasture and made the place look a little more like home. In 1867 we raised a little better crop, planted hedge of osage part way around the farm and some willows and cottonwoods. I was now eleven years old, and commenced to work in the field. Dragged a field alone and learned to plow corn with a one-horse plow. It was the last year I attended school in the spring and summer terms.

In the fall I went up to Uncle Michael's and earned $2.00 husking corn. It was the first money I earned working out.

Our teachers up to the close of this school year, after Mrs. Day had been Carrie M. Coles and Lucretia Kuney.

1868 was a very important and well-remembered year with me. My youngest sister, Nettie M., was born March 7th. I plowed corn every day that my father did and just as much as he did; helped in harvest, a colored boy and I keeping up a station, that is, doing a man's work.

I attended my first political meeting and saw and heard a real live Governor, Richard J. Oglesby. I remember the day General Grant was elected President. Helen and I husked corn while father went with Mr. Blanchard to Homer to vote.

That year our new schoolhouse was built and after the corn was husked we went there to school. The teacher's name was Alfred W. Flook. That year our crops were much better than they had been before and we rented some land from Mr. Blanchard. In fact this was the first year we had raised much to sell.

1869 was always remembered as the wet year. It rained nearly all the time, and our low-lying farm was a sea of mud and water.

That spring Helen and I were planting corn by hand when Uncle Oaks came out where we were at work and wanted Helen to teach their school. The teacher they had engaged had gone back on them and he said the directors had talked it over and decided to give Helen a chance to try her skill. She was then in her sixteenth year and had never attended anything but a country school and was fearful that she might fail. But I urged her to go, told her she would get rid of corn-planting and that was something to be thank-

ful for. Finally she threw down her hoe and went off with last of Helen's work in the field. She had fine success with Uncle Oaks and I went on planting alone. That was the her school, taking the examination July 3rd, after the term closed, as she had no chance to do so before. That fall she entered Blackstone school in Mendota, and in the winter I went to the country school, William G. Dickinson taught. He too, was an excellent teacher.

The summer of '69 my father bought a riding two-horse plow and I took care of the corn, about thirty or thirty-five acres, alone. I injured my knee on that old plow and it has bothered me more or less ever since. Late in the fall Robert Wilson of York State, came and stayed with us several weeks, going to Iowa from here.

The snow came very early in November and we husked corn in the sleigh for a while, but had to leave some of it in the field till in the winter. I have said before that Mr. Dickinson taught our school that winter and it was surely a wonderful school for the country; about forty scholars, many of them young men and women, and all doing their best to improve the short school term. The Friday exercises would do credit to those of the best city schools of the present day.

My sister Helen taught again in the same school in the spring of 1870, and in the fall of that year went to Rockford to attend the Forrest Hill Seminary and was there a year. She did not come home during the school year, as the expense of traveling was quite an item in the family's affairs of that day. Her absence at Rockford gave us children our first opportunity of letter-writing, and many were

the epistles that passed back and forth from September, 1870, to June, 1871. Her school, where she had been teaching the two previous summers, had been ten miles from home and she had only been home once in two or three weeks, so was somewhat used to being away from home, still her letters indicated that she was often homesick, and we at home missed her very much.

The fall of 1870 my father and I hauled several loads of hay to Peru, and I saw the Illinois river at that place. It was the first river I had seen since we left the East.

1871 lives in my memory as the first of my two short terms at Blackstone school. I had had the promise for a long time that when I was fifteen I could go to town school a while in the fall. I earned $15 from Henry Kubberman, in harvest, for binding and shocking thirteen acres of grain. I spent eight of it for clothes and seven for tuition and books and started September 1st, and went till the middle of October, when I had to stay at home and husk corn. In the winter I went to the country school again and had P. M. James for a teacher (the previous winter the teacher was F. E. Austin).

1872 was the first time I had taken much interest in politics. General Grant was up for his second term and Horace Greeley was running against him and I was for Greeley with all my heart. I read everything I could get pertaining to the campaign and went to hear every speaker that came along, and there were plenty of them. John A. Logan, I heard for the first time that year.

I harvested again for Mr. Kubberman and attended Blackstone in the fall for about the same time as the year

before, and again had Mr. James for a teacher in the winter. In 1871 Wm. F. Bromfield was Superintendent at Blackstone and A. J. Sawyer in 1872.

In 1873 my father's health had failed, and I had nearly everything to do at home. That summer we built an addition to the house and raised and put a wall under the old part. It was a summer of hard work for me; I think one of the hardest of my life.

That fall Sherman made us his first visit. We had not seen him since we parted in Chicago in 1864 and of course he had greatly changed. He only stayed a week or two and went back to Minnesota. I started in at the old country school again that winter with Maria Vincent as teacher, but had trouble with her, was expelled, and finished my education at the school house just north of the stone Catholic church, where John Klein taught. My school days ended in March, 1874, when I was not quite eighteen years old. Looking back to my school days and giving due credit to all my teachers, I think I owe more to P. M. James than to any of them. His enthusiasm and ambition and untiring energy inspired us all to do our best; and though more than forty years have come and gone since then, I think of him oftener than any of my old teachers.

The year 1874 is another well-remembered one. I bought my first horse at John Coss' sale, my father signing the note with me. I rented fifteen acres of Mr. Nidatcher and planted it to corn, and in July took my first trip away from home, going to Dysart, Iowa, to work in the harvest field. I put in fourteen and one-half days binding at $2.50 per day, helped stack at $1.50 and plowing at $1.00 a day, bring-

ing home $100 sewed up in my shirt. This paid for my horse and with what I made off my little patch of corn, gave me a start in life, and from that day to this I have never been entirely strapped and never been entirely without credit.

In the spring of '74 my brother Ed had a very severe siege of rheumatic fever brought on by going in swimming when the water was too cold. My father had been very poorly for a couple of years before this time, with the ague, but was now quite well. Sherman made us another visit that fall, his last for thirty-five years.

In 1875 I followed along the same lines as the previous years, working for my father, renting the same patch of ground and harvesting again at the Wilson's at Dysart.

About this time Helen and I bought a share in the Mendota library, for five dollars, and we were constant patrons of that institution, often getting books twice a week. We were allowed to get two books at a time. I remember the first two we got were "Oliver Twist" for Helen, and the "Life of Daniel Webster" for me. My taste for reading had now changed; before this time I had cared most for fiction and aside from the political news of the day, had read little else. Now I took to history, biography and poetry, and committed much of the latter to memory. Tennyson Whittier and Longfellow were my favorites and many of their poems, learned in those far-off days, I still retain. About this time I came into possession of a copy of the Lincoln and Douglas debates and became greatly interested in them. In politics, my sympathies were with the Democrats until I became a voter; but after that I always voted the Republican ticket.

In 1876 the wheat crop was poor in Iowa and I harvested around home, working wherever I had a chance in our neighborhood. This was the year of the Centennial Celebration at Philadelphia. It was also the year that Tilden and Hayes had their close race for the presidency.

The year 1877 was one never to be forgotten in our family. It was the year that we had the terrible scourge of typhoid fever. Minnie, who was teaching school a few miles from home, in the Deaner district, was the first to have it, and in a few weeks mother, Ed and Helen were deathly sick. For a long time they lingered between life and death, but finally all but Helen recovered. Nettie and I had a light run of the fever, but at no time were dangerously sick. Helen had over-exerted herself in caring for the others and had not the strength to rally. She died on July 18th, when all the family except father were unable to leave the house. Her death was a great blow to the whole family. It was our first great sorrow, and the old home life was never the same again. A shadow had fallen on all our lives that never entirely lifted. My father, alone, escaped the fever, and it was many months before the rest of us were well. Helen had been the main stay of the family, her earnings from teaching going freely for things needed in the home. She had had a somewhat troubled life for one so young, and many disappointments, and just as the future seemed to look brighter, was taken away:—

> "O heart sore tried, thou hast the best
> That Heaven itself could give thee, rest;
> Rest from all bitter thoughts and things;

How many a poor one's blessing went
With thee, beneath the low green tent,
Whose curtain never outward swings."

This was the year I celebrated my twenty-first birthday. I worked some land a couple of miles southwest if town that summer, now owned by Tom Brown. The roads were so bad that we had to build a crib in the field and leave the corn there till the ground froze up in the winter. In the fall of this year I spent a month in Iowa, visiting and trying to regain my health after the run of the fever.

In 1878, I rented some land about one and one-half miles from home, and as for several years previous, worked it in addition to the home work. Ed was now almost a young man and he and I had been doing the field work for some years. In the fall of '78 Ed attended Blackstone school, riding back and forth on his horse. Since he had recovered from the typhoid fever he had grown very fast and was quite an athlete, looked at least two or three years older than he was. He helped husk the corn that fall and attended the country school in the winter of '78 and '79. He was taken sick with what proved to be rheumatism of the heart, in February, 1879, and in spite of all that could be done for him. in spite of his youth and strength and courage, he grew steadily worse, and died in the early morning of April 1st. His death was the crowning sorrow of my parents' lives. Following so soon the loss of Helen, the old farm and neighborhood and the associations clustering around them, became painful to them and they determined to sell out and move to Mendota.

Ed's death also made quite a change in my own plans.

In the summer of '78 I had harvested in western Iowa and had rented a farm in Ida county and made arrangements to move there in the spring of '79. Ed's sickness and death made it necessary for me to remain at home and work the place. In the late summer of '79 my father sold out to old Mr. Sondgeroth. He got $45 per acre for his farm, the same price his farm had brought in New York, fifteen years before. Late in the fall he bought a place in the second ward of Mendota and we moved there in January, 1880.

I cannot leave this part of my life without some mention of the old friends and neighbors, who up to this time had comprised my little world. And as they recur to me now after so many years, the Blanchards, Towers and Porterfields loom the largest; and it was with sincere regret that I realized these friends and others almost as dear, had in a large measure, passed out of my life.

Many other families are gratefully remembered, but none to the extent of the three I have mentioned; and of these the Blanchards are by far the most important. For twelve years they were our nearest neighbors and most intimate friends; hardly a week in all these years that friendly calls and visits were not exchanged.

Mr. G. L. Blanchard was about forty-one years old, when in the spring of 1868 he moved his family out to the farm and became our neighbor. He was in many respects a very remarkable man, having an education far beyond that of anyone in the community, and a gift of gab that was unequalled. He was a man of many accomplishments; could preach a sermon, build a house, lead the church choir, and

doctor the sick. He had studied medicine, and practiced it whenever he had a chance, in his own family or among the neighbors, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to be called out to minister to the sick. The night was never too dark or stormy to respond to such a call. One of his greatest delights was to attend a funeral and lead the singing. No season's work was ever so busy as to keep him from a funeral if it was within reach, and he could sing, "Why Should We Mourn Departed Friends?"

But I think it was in prayer, and especially in asking a blessing, that he showed at his best. I have heard many wonderfully gifted men perform this service, but none could equal Blanchard's blessing. He commenced with something like this: "O merciful, benign, and benevolent Father, from the lowliness of our degradation we raise to Thee our supplications," and before he got through we felt that the Lord knew all about it. He was a staunch Methodist, and with him the present preacher was the best they had ever had.

In politics he was a strong Republican and always eager for a discussion and perfectly reckless in his charges against the Democrats. In his business life he was a queer mixture of the Puritan and Shyster. His crops were always the best in the country, if you believed his story. In reality, they were the poorest to be found in the neighborhood. While he was never idle, and hadn't a lazy bone in his body, he was always behind in his work. He could work harder and accomplish less than anyone I ever knew, was always in debt and always hard up, and yet he found his greatest happiness in doing favors for others, for those

who cared nothing for him and ridiculed him.

He was always happy and hopeful, looked to the future with undaunted courage,

"A practical old man, and yet a dreamer,
He thought that in some strange, unlooked-for way,
His mighty friend in heaven, the Great Redeemer,
Would honor him with wealth some golden day.
This dream he carried in a hopeful spirit,
Until in death, his patient eye grew dim,
And his Redeemer called him to inherit
The heaven of wealth, long garnered up for him."

I used to think he was the greatest liar in the world, but now I know that it was only his unbounded optimism that made him so extravagant in his talk. Take him all and in all, he was about the exact opposite of his brother-in-law and next door neighbor to the north, Mr. A. C. Tower, who next to Mr. Blanchard, was our most intimate neighbor.

Mr. Tower was about thirty-two years old when we moved into the neighborhood, and looked and acted like a man of fifty. He was of a serious and melancholy aspect, quiet and slow of speech, and very religious in the winter time. In the summer he was much interested in his crops, kept close watch of things, and was a good financier.

Though he never did much work himself, his farm was always in good condition. Along about 1870 he began to experiment with surface cultivation and kept it up until he invented the tools which bear his name. But every year when the Frost-King died up farm work and the chilling blasts kept him in the house, he turned regularly to Jeremiah and the rest of the prophets and by spring was so

saturated with Scriptural things that he could talk of nothing else. But with the coming summer it oozed out of his system and he devoted himself to his cultivators again.

In all his business dealings he was strictly honest and reliable and in many respects was an ideal neighbor and citizen. He often visited the school in the winter time and always made a speech; told us how we must improve our opportunity and pattern after Lincoln and Jackson and other poor boys who became famous.

I often worked for Mr. Blanchard and Mr. Tower, and visited their homes times without number, and saw them in all the different phases of their lives, and saw much to approve and little to condemn. Of course I got a world of enjoyment out of their mannerisms and eccentricities. Although they were related by marriage, and were both devoted church members, they had very little use for each other. They often told me in confidence just what they thought of one another. Of course I took no sides with either and so remained friendly with both.

Mr. Porterfield differed greatly from both of these men, but was a very good man and neighbor. He was a great giant in physical proportions, an awful worker and another very staunch church man. He was also a great money maker. In business affairs he was perfectly able to take care of himself, and usually got the best end of the bargain. No religious scruples ever prevented him from taking the best possible care of Number One.

Not having had any schooling himself, he was very anxious that his children should have the best educational advantages. He was another frequent visitor at the school

and always made a speech. He was about the age of Mr. Blanchard and they had many business deals in which he never came out second best. He had a threshing machine and did the threshing of the neighborhood, and the way he would roar at a man who was trying to shirk, was startling. When at work, he was a regular tyrant, but as soon as the work was done he was a boy with the rest of us. To one who knew him as I did, in the every day affairs of life, it seemed strange and grotesque to hear him pray at the revivals and prayer meetings. With the tears streaming down his face, and his whole frame aquiver with emotion, he was a very efficient worker, and made a deep impression on an audience.

These three men were the most important and best remembered of our community. They, with their delightful families, comprised our little world. They had their faults and shortcomings, but their good qualities far out-balanced their bad, and however much I may have laughed at an critized them then, I know now that they were the Lord's own people; and I feel sure that heaven must be brighter and better since they went home.

Every summer now for many years, I have ridden out to the old neighborhood and driven up and down the once familiar roads, seeking in vain for the once familiar forms and faces. But they are all gone and a new and unknown generation is there. Some of the old families are still represented; the Winters, the Beckets, the Billhorns and Hoffmans are still on deck, but the Moultons, the Towers, the Zimmermans, the Blanchards, the Barnharts, and the Hollistons are gone, and few are left who ever heard their

names. Their farms and fields and homesteads and school house remain, and old Nature smiles and frowns as of yore, but the only part of the past that I care for, the old neighbors themselves, are gone forever.

> "Henceforward, listen as we will
> The voices of those friends are still;
> Look where we may, the wide earth o'er
> Those lighted faces smile no more;
> We turn the pages that they read,
> Their written words we linger o'er,
> But in the sun they cast no shade,
> No voice is heard, no sign is made,
> No step is on the conscious floor."

As before stated, I had been doing a little farming on my own hook and also working out when I could, and constantly saving what I made, so that by this time I had nearly one thousand dollars.

In March, 1880, I went to Marshalltown, Iowa., and worked there in that vicinity till August. Had thought of buying land in Iowa, but decided to buy eighty acres three miles northeast of Mendota, that my father was very anxious I should take, and which we had looked at before I left home. Father closed the deal for me in June. The price was $3,000. I paid $600 of my own down, and borrowed the other $2,400 from father, giving him 8% interest. Consequently, in the fall of 1880, I rented the Gerahty farm about three miles northwest of Mendota, and worked it in '81. That was the year of the deep and late snow; the drifts lying along the fences and hedges when I commenced work on April 25th, 1881. An old house stood by

the railroad and there I lived alone the most of that summer. My crops turned out fine, and I got 70c for my corn, so that I made a thousand clear after paying my rent.

During the winter of '80 and '81 I hauled coal from the Duncan shaft near La Salle and sold it in Mendota, making about $3.50 a day. In May, '81, I began my service as librarian in the M. E. Sunday school, and served till March, '84.

In 1882 and '83 I worked the land I had bought northeast of town, driving back and forth every day, from home. The crops and prices were only fair, and in the two years I made about as much as in the one year of '81.

The year 1883 lives in my memory as one of the brightest and happiest of my life, as that was the year I did most of my courting; and in that I was far more successful than with my farming, for though the storms might keep me from the fields, they never prevented me from keeping my "dates." In '83 I sold the farm to John Guilfoyle for $4,800, thus clearing $1,800 above the purchase price. Of this advance I received $800, the $1,000 going to my father.

In September, '83, I bought a farm five miles southeast of Lemars, Iowa, and shipped my farm stuff and team there in March, 1884. I boarded that year with the Mahaney's, who lived in my house. I raised fine crops that year and did well, though the prices were low for grain. I had 102 acres of land that cost $31 per acre. I owed about $600 when I was married.

Minnie was married to C. D. Hazard, December 10th, 1884. Their first home was on Monroe Street about a block west of the Baptist church. It is there they were

living when I first visited them, on my return to Mendota a few years later.

The winter of '84 and '85 was fierce in Iowa, the thermometer dropping 40 degrees below zero. I started back to Mendota to be married the day Grover Cleveland was inaugurated president for the first time. No train ever ran so slow as that one seemed to, but the "cow hadn't eaten up the grindstone" and no one had run off with my girl, and we were married March 10th, 1885, and left for Lemars the same night, arriving there on the 12th and was busy at work in a few days.

The spring came on apace, the neighbors dropped in one by one and we were soon a part of the rural community. On June 14th a cyclone partly wrecked our buildings and sent us into the cellar, and Iowa never looked so good to us again. In July father and Ella came to visit us, and in September Hattie came back to Mendota and stayed a month; and so the first year of our married life ebbed away. March 29th, 1886, little Helen was born. Mrs. Johnson was with us several weeks at that time, and later in the spring Sarah came and was with us when the baby died, June 19th, 1886.

Later in the summer we decided to come back to Illinois. We rented our farm to Mr. Maturn and later sold it to Mr. Kleinschnitz for $34.50 per acre. We moved back to Mendota about the last of November, 1886, and in March, 1887, moved onto the old Moller farm, a mile and a half north of town. We had been quite successful in a business way in Iowa. We were raising good crops and making money, but the old friends were calling us and we were only too eager to respond.

1887 was a very dry, hot season, and the crops were not very good. Old Herman Hazelman worked for us in the spring. Hattie's health was poor that summer and Sarah came up to help her. 1888, on April 7th, Miss Alice Viola came to live with us. That spring Dave Miller worked for us and Nettie helped in the house. That was the year the negroes helped husk corn and ate so many chickens. Laura Walters was the hired girl. In 1889 Jim Bagley worked for us in the spring and Laura part of the time. I planted all of the work-land to corn, and Jim and I worked it alone; 115 acres. In the fall Pat Hagerty helped me husk. He and I husked about 100 acres alone.

In 1890 I rented out all but forty acres, which I planted in corn. It was almost impossible to get help in the house. Arthur was born April 20th of that year.

In 1891 Walter Moore was our hired man, and for a while we had Alice O'Toole to help in the house. Mother's health had been failing for some time and she died on a beautiful spring day, April 26th, 1891. Father then went to live with Minnie and my old home was broken up.

After I came back from Iowa, I had bought the eighty acres east of town from J. A. Powell, in 1887. In 1891 I traded it to Mr. Johnson for one eighty of the land where we lived, and he gave the other eighty to Hattie, so that we now owned the 160 acre farm. In August I went with father and Uncle Michael to Iowa on a visit; left them at Lone Tree and went to Solon, Dysart and Clarion to see the old friends of my youth. In the fall of this year, the Bowmans visited us on their wedding trip.

In 1892 Everett was born, February 24th. The roads were just one floating sea of mud. It took a good team to haul a buggy through them. Robert Tanksley worked for us till the crops were in and then I handled them alone; 50 acres of corn and about the same of oats. It rained constantly till July, and a great drought followed. My father was very sick that summer and I had a poor spell myself, and was so poorly in the spring of 1893 that I rented most of the land to Pat Hagerty, only working a piece of corn myself.

Edith was born March 25th, 1893. This was the World's Fair year at Chicago. Mrs. Aird came from Lemars in May, and Hattie went with her to Chicago. I attended one day in the fall, October 19th.

In the spring of 1894 I bought forty acres adjoining us on the south from Mr. Maus, at $90.00 per acre. I had thirty-five acres of corn and twenty-five of oats, renting the rest to Pat Hagerty. Little Florence was born June 26th. My father was taken sick in July and died August 3rd, 1894. His health had been pretty good for the last two years, but the great heat of that summer affected him more than usual. He died at Minnie's where he had lived since mother's death, three years before.

1895 was another very eventful year with us, for it was then we decided to leave the farm and move to town. Alice was now old enough to go to school, and started at the East Side school in the spring of that year. We thought of renting, but finally decided to buy the Curtis place and moved to the city on November 21st. This was the year that little Florence died. She had grown to be a big, strong

baby, but was taken sick in August and died on the 23rd of that month. Soon after, we sold the farm to Pat Guilfoyle, at $100 per acre, only keeping the south forty. 1896 found us full-fledged citizens of Mendota, with Alice and Arthur attending school, and me working the forty which I planted to corn. This was the year of the Free-Silver-Sixteen to One campaign of McKinley and Bryan. My health failed that fall and I was obliged to hire my corn husked. As I was no better the next spring, 1897, I sold my team and farm machinery and rented the land to Pat Guilfoyle. I kept one horse and drove around with the children when I was able, and up to Pat Hagerty's on the Wallace McGinnis farm, which I bought when we sold the old place.

I was elected a member of the school board that spring and served continuously for the next sixteen years. In 1898 the Spanish American War furnished us with plenty of excitement for a while, and before that was over Neil came to keep us busy. He was born August 23rd, 1898. The winter of '98 was very cold, killing the hedges and clover. In the spring of 1898, I bought Harry McGinnis' driving mare and let Pat have old Doll. Hazard's' folks moved to Dixon that spring. In 1900 I sold the forty to Nick Brazil, and bought the eighty east of town. I also bought the Edwards lots and two from Charles Lathrop. We bought a cow that fall. In 1901 Clyde Boslough worked the eighty and the boys and I spent most of the summer there. I sold the McGinnis farm that year and bought the Maus farm near Henkel. 1902 was the year it rained all summer and fall. Clyde still worked the eighty.

Mr. Johnson died May 1st of that year, and Sarah was married the following August.

Herman Pohl worked the eighty in 1903 and I rented the Maus farm to John Jones. That was the year we built the barn at the eighty, and it was also the year famous in Mendota's history as the year of the cyclone. It occurred on July 17th, and was very destructive to the northern part of the city.

In 1904 Herman still worked the eighty. Arthur and Everett rigged up the pony team and hauled manure from town all summer. They did the same again in 1905 when the Hohner boys sowed most of the eighty to oats. We had eight acres of corn. In 1906 Everett and I worked the eighty ourselves. Alice graduated from High School that year. In 1907 Everett helped me again till June, when Arthur graduated. Then Arthur helped me, and Everett went to work for Mr. Elliott on the Tapper farm. That fall Alice went to college at Evanston, and Arthur taught school in the Frey district, north of town, and near Triumph in winter, helping me husk corn between times.

In 1908 Arthur and I worked the eighty till fall, when he went to Galesburg to attend Knox College. Alice started at the DeKalb Normal, at the same time. Everett worked for Elliott again that summer and also for a while at Dan Reder's.

In 1909 Everett and I worked the eighty again and Alice and Arthur again attended college. Sherman came to see us that summer; his first visit since 1874. That was the year we had the furnace put in the house.

In 1910 Everett rented thirty-six acres from Setchell and

helped me at the eighty. Alice graduated from DeKalb in June. This was the year the school districts in Mendota were united. Arthur started at the State University that fall, but his eyes troubling him, he came home in December. Sherman visited us again that winter. Everett rented forty acres from Setchell again in 1911 and helped me as in the year before. Arthur worked for Will Brown till September, when he did the fall work on the Maus farm. Edith graduated at Blackstone in June.

In the fall of this year, Hattie and I revisited Lamars, after an absence of twenty-five years. Everything was greatly changed and very few of the old neighbors left. We also visited the Hazards at Rock Island, the cousins at Lone Tree, and the Bowmans at Solon. Nettie was married to L. B. Neighbor of Dixon, Thanksgiving Day, 1911.

In 1912 Everett worked the eighty, boarding at home. I went up and helped Arthur at the Maus farm. I had thirty acres of corn and Arthur the rest of the farm. Hattie and the girls went up occasionally and kept house for us, but most of the time we were alone and Arthur did the cooking. That summer we built the double corn crib and tool shed. That fall I sold my horses and tools to the boys, and for the second time, retired from farming.

In 1913 Arthur worked the Maus farm alone, and Everett the eighty and Rogers' farm, each of them having a married man to help them. That year Neil graduated from the eighth grade, and in the summer Edith attended DeKalb Normal. Alice commenced teaching in Oak Park in September, 1910, and is now finishing her fourth year at that place.

Everett's marriage to Faye Keeler, January 20th, 1914, brings my narrative to a close. It has merely been a bare record of the more important facts of my father's family up to the time that I left home, and of my own family life since. In a later chapter, I may touch on some of the other phases of our family life; of the neighborhood parties, the spelling schools and lyceums, and all the different pastimes that went to make up our social and intellectual life; and also of the personal traits of some of the more interesting characters that moulded and influenced our lives, people who were once so much to us and whose names are but a memory.

> "Where are they now? What lands and skies
> Paint pictures on their loving eyes?
> What hope deludes, what promise cheers,
> What friendly voices fill their ears?"

W. T. H., February, 1914.