

MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS

I don't know any stories about my great-grandparents except what has been written in the Eckles and Burnham genealogies and in the material regarding the Prall and Smith families.

Marmaduke Eckles¹ was the father of Robert Eckles, my paternal grandfather. He was born in Gilberdike, England. He operated a brick yard near Hull, England. He immigrated to America in 1850 in the sailing ship *Allen Brown*, an American built ship. It took eight weeks for the family to make the voyage to New York. The family went at once to Illinois and settled near Dixon. After unsuccessful brick manufacturing because of unsuitable clay, he became a successful farmer and stock raiser. He died in 1855 and is buried in Prairieville, near Sterling, Illinois.

Hannah Levitt Eckles² was the mother of Robert Eckles, my paternal grandfather. She was born in Bilton, Yorkshire, England. She was a Dissenter.³ In her youth she was employed as a maid on an estate in England. She and her husband had twelve children; the eleventh was born just before they sailed for America. The last child was born in 1854, just a year before Marmaduke died. At that time her oldest son was twenty-one. Soon after Marmaduke's death their house burned down. Her daughter, Hannah, wrote a story about the Eckles family.⁴ It tells how Hannah and her children were able to carry on after these twin tragedies. Two of the boys ran the farm, several of the boys worked on other farms and their two older sisters worked away from home.

The area where they settled in Illinois was mostly composed of eastern people who were eager to have good schools for their children. For this reason the family was very fortunate in school opportunities though their farm work allowed some of them to attend school only during the winter months. Hannah's children, Mary, Marmaduke Jr. and Thomas Eckles, went to Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa.⁵

Later most of the family came on west to Marshall County, Iowa and got established. In later life Hannah moved to Marshall County and lived with her son, Marmaduke and daughter, Sarah. I don't know how they got established or why they picked Marshalltown. Obviously the land was good because they became successful farmers. Do you inherit the ambition? or the incentive? I have no idea.

Isaac Wilmuth Randall⁶ was the father of Susan Randall, my paternal grandmother. His wife was **Emily Bruce**. They farmed near Tuttle, Wisconsin and Conrad, Iowa. They are buried in the Conrad cemetery.

Almon Sanford Burnham⁷ was the father of J. J. Burnham, my maternal grandfather. He was the great great-grandson of Thomas Burnham who was born in England in 1617. Almon was born in Lincoln, Vermont. He had four children with his first wife, Mehetable M. Stearns. None of these married. He had five children with his second wife, Angeline Cowles. They all married.

¹ Marmaduke Eckles, born 7/11/1811, married Hannah Levitt, died 4/1855. Hare, pp. 37-38. See photograph on p. 6.

² Hannah Levitt Eckles, born 6/1/1810, married Marmaduke Eckles, died 6/17/1894. Hare, pp. 37-38. See photograph on p. 6.

³ Dissenters were basically all Protestant groups who had dissented from the Anglican Church, primarily in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Prior to 1662 they were called Puritans. They formed independent (usually Presbyterian) churches.

⁴ Hare, pp. 20-27.

⁵ Hare, pp. 24-25, 39, 67.

⁶ The Randall information was found in the Mormon Genealogy Library in Salt Lake City, UT. The family representative was Alfred Randall, a sixth cousin. The person submitting the sheet was David E. Randall, North Ogden, UT.

⁷ Almon S. Burnham, born 9/18/1796, married Mehetable M. Stearns on 9/30/1819, married Angeline Cowles on 8/6/1833, died 1/27/1867. Burnham, p. 204. See photograph on p. 6.

Angeline Cowles⁸ was the mother of J. J. Burnham, my maternal grandfather.

George Bevin (Bevan) Smith⁹ was the father of Mary Prall Burnham, my maternal grandmother. He was born in Portskewett in Monmouthshire, England, the son of Thomas and Maria Smith. "The family was prominent in Portskewett from 1804 to 1828. Thomas was an innkeeper, overseer of the poor and the church warden. He rented quite extensive acreage of land and apparently farmed. The home farm seemed to be at Black Rock on the Severn Channel. What happened in 1828 we do not know because we find no trace of the family in Portskewett after that year. The first evidence of George B. Smith in the United States was a land transaction in Hunterdon County, New Jersey in 1833."¹⁰

G. B. Smith came to this country at the age of twenty and taught school in New Jersey, Wisconsin and Illinois. His declaration of intention to become a United States citizen was found in the basement of the Hall of Records in Flemington, New Jersey. By 1833 he was making real estate deals. He had studied medicine in England and then in this country where bleeding with leeches was in vogue. He didn't believe in it. Dr. Smith, his wife, five daughters and one son moved from New Jersey to Dane County, Wisconsin and then to Rochelle, Illinois. The children may have gone to school in Wisconsin and Illinois, but as I recall, G.B. helped educate his children.

In 1867 the family moved to Aplington, Iowa so that he could teach and practice homeopathic medicine though he never hung out his shingle or advertised. The family lived on a farm on the south edge of Aplington across from where the school house is now located. My daughter-in-law, Janelle Willis, checked the census records in Clarksville. She found that in 1870 G. B. Smith's and Sheridan's occupations were listed as "farmer." Eliza's occupation was listed as "housekeeper." The girls' occupations were listed as "teacher." G. B.'s real estate worth was \$4500 and his personal estate was \$500. The 1880 census listed his occupation as "Notary Public", all of the children were gone and the worth of his estate was not given. An article in the *Parkersburg Eclipse* mentions that G. B. Smith was the Monroe Township Clerk in 1877¹¹

While they were living on this farm, there was a grass fire. It had been a hot, dry summer and it was early fall. They smelled smoke and saw smoke coming from the south. The grass was on fire. G. B. Smith hurriedly hooked the team of horses to the plow and plowed several furrows so that their buildings did not catch fire. Unfortunately the fire destroyed their hay fields and pasture so there was no feed for the horses, and horses were their only power and transportation at that time.

G. B. Smith and his wife, Eliza, were among the thirteen charter members of The First Presbyterian Church in Aplington which was founded on July 25, 1869. He was the first elder in the church. I really don't know much about the founding of the Aplington Presbyterian Church but five of the thirteen charter members were my relatives. I don't remember hearing much about that. There were stories about the Methodist congregation using the same building as the Presbyterian. That didn't work out; at least that is the way it is in the minutes of the session of our church. There is a story about someone going to the wrong church hour. It became a problem.

⁸ Angeline Cowles, born 9/2/1810, married Almon S. Burnham on 8/6/1833, died 2/26/1824. Burnham, p. 204. See photograph on p. 6.

⁹ George Bevin Smith, born 11/25/1804, married Eliza Prall on 6/30/1836, died 11/3/1887. See *Eliza Prall* in the Appendix; *Aplington History*, pp. 104, 338. See photograph on p. 7.

¹⁰ Quote taken from a letter written by Lewis and Esther Austin, December 1976.

¹¹ *Short History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 6, the *Parkersburg Eclipse* and the 1870 and 1880 U. S. census.

An obituary or some document said that G. B. Smith was living with his daughters before his death. I would assume that this meant after the daughters were married.¹² I have a copy of G. B. Smith's will. There is no date on it but probably it was written shortly before his death in 1887. It refers to his sister, Mary Trist, who at that time was living in Hull, England. He had six brothers and sisters. Albert and two other brothers, names not known, died in young manhood. He had three sisters who married. Elizabeth married Edward Thomas of Liverpool, England. Fannie married Stephen West, the Lord Mayor of Hull England. Mary married Robert Trist, from near Hull, England. Apparently she was the only one living at the time G. B. Smith wrote his will.¹³

Elizabeth (Eliza) Prall¹⁴ was the mother of Mary Prall Burnham, my maternal grandmother. Her great great great-grandfather was Arendt Jansen Praal, who was born in Nardy, France. Eliza was born in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. I have the sampler that she made. It came to me, folded up in a box in Grandma's drawer. It had raw edges and not enough margin, so I mounted it on Osnaburg first. Then I took it to Waterloo and had it framed. Osnaburg is a heavy coarse cotton in a plain weave used for grain sacks and sport's wear.

¹² Eliza Prall Smith died in 1882. George Bevin Smith died in 1887. Three of his daughters were married in 1871, one in 1872 and one in 1891.

¹³ See p. 4 for a copy of G. B. Smith's will and p. 5 for a transcription.

¹⁴ Eliza Prall, born 8/9/1809, married George Bevin Smith on 6/30/1836, died 6/3/1882. See *Eliza Prall* in the Appendix for pedigree charts and family genealogy. See photograph on p. 7.

G. B. Smith's will - copy

G. B. Smith's will - transcription

Marmaduke Eckles,
7/11/1811 - 4/ /1855

Hannah Levitt Eckles,
6/1/1810 - 6/17/1894

Almon Sanford Burnham,
9/18/1796 - 1/27/1867

Angeline Cowles,
9/2/1810 - 2/26/1884

George Bevin Smith
11/25/1804 - 11/3/1887

Elizabeth (Eliza) Prall,
8/9/1809-6/3/1882

Eliza Prall's Sampler

Real Estate Ad and Business Card
George B. Smith

MY GRANDPARENTS

Robert Eckles¹ was my paternal grandfather. He was born in Eastholm, Yorkshire, England, the sixth child born to Marmaduke and Hannah Eckles. He was educated in common schools in England and public schools in Illinois after coming to America in 1850. He was a frail child but worked on the farm, and after the death of his father, he and his brother Charles carried on the farm work for their mother. Due to his physical disability, he did not serve in the Civil War. After the Civil War ended, he, Charles and some friends drove their teams west as far as Marshall County in Iowa. They bought a small tract of timber land near Quarry in 1866 and lived there two years. Later Robert purchased prairie land north of Marshalltown where he brought up his family. He had three sons and a daughter, Florence, who died in her first year. Dad looked a lot like Grandpa.

Grandpa Eckles had cancer and was ill several months before he died on March 13, 1915. I don't know if he was still living on the farm at that time or if he had moved in to town. The Eckles graves are near the north-west corner of the Conrad Cemetery, which is west of Conrad. The tombstones are tall enough so that they can be seen easily. There are also graves of two infant sons.

Susan Randall Eckles² was my paternal grandmother. She was born in Wisconsin, the daughter of Isaac Wilmuth Randall and Emily Bruce Randall. Her father was a farmer, first in Wisconsin and then in Iowa. They farmed between Marshalltown and Conrad, somewhere in that area. She had a brother, Charles, and three sisters named Minnie, Rozina and Dora.³ Usually when we went to Conrad it was just to see Grandma, but I remember hearing about Aunt Minnie and Aunt Dora. Rozina married a Cleaves and Dora married a Stewart. I don't think that Minnie was married. Minnie and Dora are buried in the Conrad cemetery.

I have memories of visiting Grandma Eckles in Conrad. She was living in town before she died. I think she died of a stroke. Dad seemed to know an awful lot about strokes. My Uncle Howard was farming on the home farm at that time and would come in to Grandma Eckles' place sometimes when we would go there to visit her.

My maternal grandfather, **Julius James Burnham**⁴, was born and educated in Vermont. After attending the district school, he advanced his education at the academy of Mankton Ridge and spent one term at Barre Academy. When he was seventeen years old he began teaching. Later he came west, first to Wisconsin where he taught school, and then he came on to Aplington in 1870. Before he was married he was in business in a hardware and furniture store and was also farming. His brother, Alfred S. Burnham⁵, had also come from Wisconsin and they were in business together. They kept 40 to 50 cows and started a cheese factory in Aplington. In 1871 he traded the cows for land on section 26, Washington Township, which is what we know now as the Bierman farm (Van Loh farm) on the southwest corner, 2 miles west of Aplington. In the spring of that year he moved there and taught school for two winters.⁶

When Grandpa decided to get married in 1872, he thought it would be better if the brothers divided the businesses and one did one thing and one did the other. He asked his brother if he wanted the farm or the hardware store. Thinking he was the better business man, he thought he should have the hardware store. Well, his brother said he would take the hardware store and that left Grandpa with the farm.

¹ Robert Eckles, born 7/2/1842, married Susan Amoret Randall on 1/14/1875, died 3/15/1915 in Marshall County, IA. See Hare, p. 59. See photograph on p. 14.

² Susan Amoret Randall, born 4/5/1853, married Robert Eckles on 1/14/1875, died 8/10/1922. See Hare, p. 59. See photograph on p. 14.

³ See photograph on p. 15.

⁴ Julius James Burnham, born 3/30/1845, married Mary Prall Smith on 6/10/1872, died 2/15/1915. See Burnham, p. 204. See photograph on p. 15.

⁵ Alfred S. Burnham, born 7/29/1841, married Dotha Foote on 11/7/1864, death date not known. See Burnham, p. 204.

⁶ *Butler County Centennial Fair, 1856-1956*, pp. 43-44.

Grandpa and Grandma Burnham farmed there a few years, I don't know how many. Mother went to the country school across the road to the east. She was probably about fourteen years old when they moved. Grandpa was town clerk for six years and secretary of the school board for seven years. He also was a member of the Butler County Board of Supervisors in 1879.

Grandpa decided that he really didn't prefer farming. He would rather be in business. He had the opportunity to sell the farm to Jans Van Loh⁷. He sold the farm and put the money from the farm into the bank in Cedar Falls which was paying a little better interest at that time than the local bank, which was all right. Then a real estate man took them up to Dakota to look at a hardware store which was for sale.

To entertain him that night the real estate people said that there would be a Populist parade that night on the street. They suggested that Grandpa watch for awhile. It was a torch-light parade with burning reeds, I suppose. They would carry those around and make a lot of noise. The Populist party was quite popular at that time there in Dakota. Grandpa thought about it that night and he said, "That Populist party is so popular. I wonder if they will have a divided election, and Grover Cleveland will be re-elected." Cleveland was a Democrat. Grandpa said to himself, "If Cleveland is elected we will have a depression," so he came home and looked around Aplington and found a farm that was for sale one mile west of Aplington and bought it. He came home and told Grandma about it. Grandma said, "Oh, that Caldwell farm is so run down. They haven't taken care of it. They are Catholics who have done a poor job of farming." Grandpa said, "Yes, the farm is run down but I will hire some men to haul the manure out of the barns in town and build the land up." And that is what he did. He had a man full-time hauling manure from the barns in town. Anybody who was somebody in town had a team, or at least one horse. It isn't like now when once in a while someone has a horse for amusement. Horses were their only means of transportation. There was plenty of manure so he eventually built up the land and it's been taken care of ever since. Grandpa was educated in Vermont. Whether they knew about using manure to fertilize fields in Vermont or he learned it with the farming that he had done, I don't know.

I don't know just what time of the year they moved, but he had put the money in the new farm instead of in that bank in Cedar Falls. Cleveland was re-elected in 1892, there was a depression and the bank went broke. The money would have been gone if he hadn't bought that new farm. Grandpa had good business sense. However, he ended up being a farmer instead of a town businessman anyway. That is the farm where Mary and Lee Meyer live, a little less than a mile west of Aplington.

The four-room house on the farm had been moved from south of Austinville. In 1898 Grandpa and Grandma began a major remodeling of the house. A large addition of seven rooms was added⁸ in preparation for the wedding in June 1900 of Ena Burnham and R. B. Eckles. About the same time that they remodeled the house, a new barn was built also. Grandma cooked for the carpenters in the summer kitchen which was located in the woodshed. She had quite a time cooking for all of those carpenters out there. Washing dishes was a big project too. She apparently did a lot of wringing the dishrag and at night her hands would cramp. I don't know how many men there were, but she often talked about cooking for the carpenters. The house is where Mary and Lee Meyer lived until recently when they took it down and built a new house.

I don't remember Grandpa Burnham. However, I was told that they delayed my baptism because he was so sick that he couldn't get to church. He had some kind of kidney problem. He died at home. He is buried in Pleasant View Cemetery.

Mary Prall Smith Burnham⁹, my maternal grandmother, was a native of Pennsylvania. She came with her family to Aplington in 1865. The family lived in the south part of town across from where the school house is located. She married J. J. Burnham. Two sons were born and died before my mother, Ena, was born. Their names were Julius Homer¹⁰ and Almon Frederick.¹¹ Also they adopted a young boy named

⁷ The Van Lohs bought the farm in 1893. It was 160 acres and they paid \$50 an acre. See *Aplington History*, p. 349. Also see p. 68 for an article and picture of this farm.

⁸ See *Aplington History*, p 170 for a picture and article about this house. See the Appendix for other stories regarding this house.

⁹ Mary Prall Smith, born 6/28/1846, married Julius James Burnham 6/10/1872, died 2/22/1941. See *Eliza Prall* in the Appendix. See photograph on p. 15.

¹⁰ Julius Homer Burnham, born 2/17/1874, died 2/17/1874.

Forest Delos Burnham, who came to them by way of one of the "orphan trains" which came from out East. It was expected that these young "orphan" boys and girls would become the extra hands needed by farmers and others who did not have a large family. No family genealogy or obituary refers to Forest, but a family album shows pictures of Forest and Ena, taken on Ena's birthday in 1882.¹² Forest was a year younger than Ena. Grandpa Burnham's will does mention him, however. Here is a copy of it.

THIRD: I give, devise and bequeath to Forest D. Burnham, my adopted son, the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS, to be paid to him by my executrix as soon as the same can be done from the funds of my estate and within the year after my decease.

No. 17. INVENTORY filed July 7, 1915, lists as heirs, -

Mary P. Burnham, Widow, age 68, Aplington, Iowa;

Ena B. Eckles, Daughter, 37, Aplington, Iowa;

Forest D. Burnham, adopted son, age 36, Seattle, Washington

After Grandma's father, G. B. Smith, was gone, she had his two medicine kits and she must have tried to use them or did use some of the medicine. Anyway, one day Forest was down at the road, and a neighbor was going by east in a horse and buggy (that was the transportation you know) and then they came back. He said, "You weren't gone long." They said, "The doctor wasn't in. I wanted the doctor." "What do you want the doctor for?" Well, their mother, who was my grandma's sister, was sick. "Oh," Forest said, "Mother can cure her. She's got some medicine." So she took the medicine kits over to see her sister. That is the only story that I can remember about using the medicine kits.¹³

No one knows exactly how long Forest lived with the Burnhams but at some time Grandma demanded that he leave. To my knowledge, he left as he had come, on a train. Family tradition has said that Grandma accused Forest of taking a red cherry table when he left, which he was not entitled to. Mother stayed out of the disagreement. She received a few letters from him when I was in my early teens, which would be about in 1925 or 1926.

Grandma made butter which she sold along with fresh eggs. She took the buggy to Cedar Falls to get better prices than if she had sold them in Aplington. They had a surrey with two seats and two buggies, a good buggy for going places and an older one for taking eggs to town, etc. It wasn't in as good of shape. Gordon and I took the surrey to school for a year or two. The first car I remember is the Overland roadster.

When my folks were married, they moved in with Grandpa and Grandma. He died when I was young but we lived with her the entire time that I was home. She had her own bedroom, the south bedroom, and used the back stairway. I don't know whether she looked after us or not, but I was conscious of her telling us to pick up our stuff, don't run in the house and that sort of thing. Mother didn't have to say it because Grandma had already said it. Mother was always busy with something else, and Grandma was always right there telling me what to do and what not to do. It was Grandma who said, "Don't put your elbows on the table, don't talk with your mouth full." However, Mother always combed my hair. Grandma never touched my hair.

I would wash the separator and the dishes while Grandma would sit there by the cook stove or she would stand with her back to the hot water reservoir getting warm. She read a lot; she would read things to me or just talk, sometimes about stories that she remembered. She talked to me, rather than visited with me. I don't remember asking her any questions, I just listened. For a while she took the *Kansas City Star*. She liked the editorials. She either read the editorials to me or told me about them. It was while I was a freshman in high school. When the teacher talked about current events, I knew some of the names. Dad took the *Waterloo Courier*.

Grandma had been well educated. She would always correct my grammar. She would say, "Don't murder the King's English!" She had a quotation or Bible verse to fit every occasion. The one that I remember the best was what she would quote from The Song of Solomon on a nice early spring morning. "The winter is past, the rains are over and gone, the flowers appear on our land,

¹¹ Almon Frederick Burnham was born 1/8/1876, died 3/31/1878. See p. 15 for photograph taken on May 30, 1876 when he was 5 months old.

¹² See photograph on p. 16 of Forest (3 years) taken on 4/20/1882.

¹³ See p. 16 for pictures of the medicine kits.

the time of the singing of birds has come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." We had a school teacher boarding with us and she would always say when I gave that verse. "Ha! The turtle has no voice!" When the salt was flat, she would say "the salt has lost its savour, fit only to be trodden under the foot of men." I heard lots of quotations but I don't have the memory that she had. I can't quote them.

At some time Grandma wrote several stories about things that the boys or I said. I don't know if she was planning to have them published. There was no date on them so I don't know if the boy she referred to was Lester or Gordon. Here are four of the stories that I have saved over the years, that were in her own handwriting.

Our little three year old was of a very investigative bent of mind, hence, his propensity for getting into mischief. It very frequently fell to the lot of his Grandma to rescue him, under vigorous protest from him by kicking her shins, when he was promptly told that he was a "naughty boy." One day on finding a picture in a paper of a battle where horses and men were strewn around he ran to his Grandpa and said, "Please tell 'Baba' all 'bout it." His grandpa, fearing he might be frightened, simply told him they were naughty, naughty men. After studying the picture very intently for a few moments he said, "What they did do naughty, Baba Grampa, did they kick Gramma's shins?"

Grandma had just returned from a drive and her horse had been given his freedom by being turned into the dooryard and had lain down to roll. Our little 'girlie', seeing the performance ran to her grandma in great perturbation and said, "Gramma, Gramma, tum twick! Your 'horsie' is all tipped over!!"

Our little four year old, playing out in the yard where an old duck with her brood was foraging, heard the quacking of some migratory ducks overhead. Looking up he was heard to say, "Ducks on the ground and ducks up in Heaven!"

Our young 'hopeful' of four and a half summers had been to Sunday School and his teacher had tried to impress the class with the reality of a God up in Heaven. On reaching home he went out and stood gazing up at the sky for some time and then came in with an air of disappointment and said, "Momma, I can't see any board up in Heaven for God to stand on!"

I have more stories from Grandma than from Mother, things that she did and things that she said. Grandma used to tell a story about Indians coming to the house and wanting some food or something. In the winter they would be over in the woods trapping beaver by the creek, which was called Beaver Creek. That was early enough that she was kind of afraid of Indians. I don't remember too much about it. The Indians were probably from the Tama Reservation. The Beaver Creek runs from the west, along the railroad, through Aplington and on until it joins the West Fork of the Cedar River near New Hartford.

Grandma enjoyed telling the story about somebody coming to the farm and wanting to talk to Grandpa Burnham. This is still when they lived up on the corner two miles west of Aplington, where Van Loh's later lived. Grandpa wasn't in, of course, and the farmer said he would like to borrow "your gentleman cow." "Tis the bull you want?" she said. He wouldn't come right out and say it.

Once I heard a Vermont folk tale on a radio program. Grandma used to tell a similar story. This is the way she told it: "A family had a good rabbit dog. Tom used to hunt rabbits with this dog, which was fast and good at catching rabbits. Well, there was a scythe down in the grass and the dog ran into the razor sharp blade which cut the dog in two. Tom was so sorry; he picked the two halves up, clapped them together and wrapped them in his coat. He took the dog home and put him behind the stove. He looked at the dog every so often and it would move a little so Tom knew there was life. One day the dog yipped, so Tom took the coat off. Low and behold, two legs were up and two legs were down. But it was still a good rabbit dog. When it got tired, it just flopped over and ran on the other two legs." When I was growing up, I heard this story every time we had company. Grandma said Grandpa Burnham would laugh when the story was told, with his mouth open, but he never made a sound.

Grandma was 65 years old when I was born. I remember that when I was small she was quite active. Once she was out trimming an apple tree beside the black raspberries. The tree shaded the clothes line (an umbrella-type line) and Grandma was up in the tree cutting the limbs and she told me her age. She was in her seventies when she was doing this. My mother would never have done something like climbing a tree. I remember that I was with her when there was a grapevine that she climbed, to cut the grapes or something. She was whistling away. She could really whistle. She could carry a tune. I'd be down there and she would be

whistling. I tried to whistle and no noise would come. It never did. I would be washing the separator and ask her "How do you whistle?" I still couldn't make a noise. I don't know why. She surely liked to whistle.

When I was big enough to help in the kitchen, I would call her early to a meal. She would be upstairs in her room at the head of the back stairway. I would say "Grandma, dinner is ready; come to dinner." And whether she could hear that we weren't really ready or what, I don't know, but she would never come down to meals on time. After we were all done, she would come down to the table. We probably had to start the fire up again and let it die down enough that she could make a piece of toast and get the water boiling. It had to be boiled or it didn't taste right to her. Then she would pick at whatever we had had for dinner. We couldn't do dishes right away because she wasn't through eating. We never waited for her though. Dad liked to have his meals on time, because the hired man would come after dinner and Dad wanted to be ready when he came. He wanted to be ready to tell the hired man what to do. I don't know why she was always late for meals. It was such a nuisance.

Some times I would come home after school, and there would be the dinner left-overs and dishes on the table. Grandma would be done by then, but Mother would have gone on to do something else. We would have to clear the table before we could think about supper. It was hard to store left-overs. We'd put the milk and butter in a granite pail with a good lid on it and let it down the well. It was a lot of work to do dishes. You had to put the dishpan on the stove to get the water hot and then you had to have hot water to rinse the dishes. You didn't just stick them under the hot water faucet.

Grandma never seemed to eat much. I don't know what she lived on. And if we had tomatoes, she would line the tomato seeds up around the edge of her plate. Mother did that some; she did it with the hulls off the kernels of corn. Their teeth didn't fit, of course, and they couldn't swallow anything that they couldn't chew.¹⁴

When Mother, Dad and I were in Des Moines, while Dad was in the Legislature, Grandma went to Lester's. He was already married and living in Michigan. She got erysipelas, a skin disease, while she was there. Dad had the same thing while he was in Des Moines. We didn't think it was contagious but she had the same thing. Lester put her in the hospital and she got over it faster than Dad did. That was the only time that she didn't live with our family in Aplington. Well, she did take trips. She had souvenirs from all over. She went to Worlds' Fairs. If there was a World's Fair, she went. She went by herself. That was before I was born or when I was little. She would tell about things she had seen and would marvel at it. Mary (Meyer) has a whole postcard album which Grandma filled with pictures.

Grandma had a stroke during my sophomore year of college. I came home for Christmas and Mother was just worn out from taking care of Grandma so I stayed home for the next two quarters. Mother had Grandma on the davenport that she had made up into a bed in the sewing room. Mother had pulled out a cot from the parlor and she was sleeping on that. How Mother could take care of her, I don't know. Grandma thought her nerves were bothering her and started taking nerve medicine. She didn't die until years later. I wasn't even dating George when Grandma had the stroke.

I stayed home until the next fall. I was ready to quit school that Christmas anyway because of an algebra course and a higher chemistry course that I was taking. By the time I went back to school, Grandma¹⁵ was walking around, but all humped over and using a stick for a cane. Grandma could go up the steps to her bedroom. It was a treacherous stairway, very steep, with a curve at the top and the bottom. At the end, she put a rope along the wall so that she had something to hang onto.¹⁶

After we were married and living down in Sheridan we had come to Aplington for a visit. We were ready to start supper and were hurrying to head back home. She asked, "Why do you have to go?" I told her George had to be at his job in the morning. She said, "Ziggity Pooch the job!" Well, it was like "Damn the job." George said she might as well have sworn as to say Ziggity Pooch. She

¹⁴ Note from Mary Meyer: I remember once when Grandma Eckles was eating at our house. She asked Dad if she could afford a set of new teeth. He told her she could afford all the teeth she wanted.

¹⁵ See p. 16 for photograph of Mary Burnham not long before her death.

¹⁶ Note from Mary Meyer: When I moved into the Burnham house there was a piece of twine in the back stairway from the top to the bottom. I am sure that is what Grandma Burnham used in place of a handrail.

thought it was foolish to start out so late; it may have been dark and in the winter, I don't remember.

Later when George and I were living in Waterloo, Grandma had a bad fall at home and fractured her hip. She was 94 years old. She would always be fixing the fire and putting cobs on the fire. Mother was used to hearing the stove rattling because of the grates, but this one time there was more noise. Grandma had grabbed the bar that was across the front of the stove, and when she fell the bar went with her. We never knew what happened. It could have been her kidneys were giving out or just age. We have no idea. Mother called Doc Fred (Rolf) and he put her in the hospital in Waterloo. Grandma wasn't in the hospital very long. Mother tried to stay with her, though they sent her home once. Alice Patterson¹⁷, her cousin, stayed with Mother some. Gordon came down and stayed with my kids. It wasn't much staying except he kept them from leaving the house or whatever. Then I could go to the hospital for a while. Grandma failed quickly and it was getting towards Washington's Birthday. Mother was afraid that the stores would be closed and Grandma would die and we wouldn't have a decent dress for her. She hadn't been out much and Mother hadn't made any clothes for her except everyday outfits. Anyway Alice Patterson and I went to the dress shop to find a dress that would be suitable. We found something. It wasn't what I was thinking of but we got something anyway. She died on Washington's Birthday.

Robert Eckles,
7/2/1842 - 3/15/1915

Susan Bruce Randall
4/5/1853 - 8/10/1922

¹⁷ Alice's mother was Sarah Maria Smith and Ena's mother was Mary Prall Smith, Sarah's sister. See photograph of Ena Burnham and her cousin Alice Austin on p. 16.

Julius James Burnham
3/30/1845 - 2/15/1915

Mary Prall Smith
6/28/1846- 2/22/1941

Randall Sisters

Almon Frederick Burnham
1/8/1876 - 3/31/1878

Forest Delos Burnham
3 years old - taken 4/20/1882

G. B. Smith's Medicine Kit

Mary Prall Smith Burnham

Ena Burnham and Alice Austin, cousins

Burnham house with Raymond, Lester, Ena,
Mary Burnham (in window), Gordon and Julius Burnham

Burnham Barn

THE ECKLES BROTHERS AND COUSINS

My father was Raymond Bruce Eckles but he was known as R.B. He had two brothers, Howard and Ward.

Howard Levitt Eckles¹ (H.L.) received a B.S. from Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, in 1899. He was a left tackle on the football team, winning many honors as a star player. After he finished college, he came back and farmed on his father's old homestead near Conrad. He married Katherine Olmstead² who died twelve years later of complications following an operation for appendicitis. They had a daughter, Marion. Two years later he married Della Whinery³. She grew up in Marshalltown, and was the principal of a Marshalltown grade school for thirteen years. Howard and Della had no children.

Howard was killed as a result of a hay rope accident. He was retired and had rented out the farm, but he was helping the tenant with hay. He was on the hayrack, punching the hayfork in. While trying to pull the fork back, the trip rope broke and he fell off the hayrack, falling on his head, killing him instantly. Della and Marion continued to live on the farm for a few years. I don't know how long. They eventually had a sale and Della moved in to town with her sister. I tried to find the farm once but there was a correction line corner (with a bridge) and everything was all different.

Marion Eckles⁴ took nursing in Chicago and married a man from there. When they came home they both smoked a lot. That is about all I remember about them. Marion was Gordon's age. I've lost track of them.

Dad had a younger brother besides Howard. His name was Ward Lester Eckles⁵. His eyesight was poor right from the start. Grandma Eckles and Dad used to read his lessons to him so he could get through high school. Ward did not go to Iowa State because he had that poor eye sight. He married Henrietta Olmstead⁶ and they had a son, Elvis⁷ who was born in 1916. For about ten years Ward farmed the farm north of Conrad that George and I later farmed. He died there in 1917, of pneumonia, I think. He had been sick but after he was better he was working in the haymow. He got over-heated, his health deteriorated and he died. His wife inherited some land somehow, part of the Eckles' farm or something. She wanted that sold so that she could have some money. She went East somewhere with Elvis.

Once we stopped at the cemetery in Conrad when we were coming home from there, when Eric Nielson was ordained or installed in the Presbyterian Church. Mary (Meyer) and Dorothy (Eckles) were in the car. Raymond was driving. Anyway, I said, "Have you ever seen the Eckles' graves here in Conrad?" Well, they hadn't. I kind of knew what part of the cemetery they were in and after looking a little we saw my grandparents' graves. Then we saw that there were also graves for Henrietta, Ward's wife, and also for Elvis and his wife. We didn't know anything about it. As far as we knew they had gone out East and stayed there. Evidently they wanted to be brought back, or it was cheaper. I have no idea why. Elvis

¹ Howard Levitt Eckles, born 8/26/1878, married Katherine Olmstead on 2/17/1904, married Della Whinery on 9/29/1918, died 6/29/1925. See Hare, pp. 59, 64. See a photograph of Raymond and Howard on p. 22.

² Katherine Olmstead, born 7/2/1880, married Howard Levitt Eckles on 2/17/1904, died 1/20/1916.

³ Della Whinery, born 6/27/1875, married Howard Levitt Eckles on 9/29/1918, date of death unknown.

⁴ Marion C. Eckles, born 11/21/1907, married Robert W. W. Phillips, 3/29/1935, date of death unknown.

⁵ Ward Lester Eckles, born 4/4/1888, married Henrietta M. Olmstead, sister of Katherine Olmstead, first wife of Howard L. Eckles, on 2/21/1912, died 3/21/1917. See Hare, pp. 59, 65.

⁶ Henrietta Olmstead, born 1/27/1891, married Ward Lester Eckles on 2/21/1912, date of death unknown. She was the sister of Katherine Olmstead, the first wife of Howard Eckles.

⁷ Elvis Luverne Eckles, born 11/6/1916, married Barbara Jean White on 6/22/1951.

would have been my cousin. I don't remember much about him when he was young. It seems that when we went to Conrad, we always went to see Grandma Eckles and not the others.

Besides Dad and Howard, there were two cousins who attended Iowa State College. Clarence Henry Eckles (C.H.)⁸ and Herbert Charles Eckles⁹ were sons of Charles and Elvira Eckles. They were both born on the family farm near Marshalltown. Clarence graduated in 1895 and Herbert graduated in 1901.

Howard L. Eckles and his cousin, C.H. Eckles, both played football at Iowa State College. Dad (Class of 1896) was on the squad also, but I think he may have been a substitute. That's the way that Mother always told it. There was a write-up in the Chicago Tribune on September 29, 1895 about the Ames school, at that time known as the Iowa Agricultural College, playing Northwestern University whose team was known as "The Kickers." Perhaps this was the first time that the Iowa team was referred to as "The Cyclones". Neither C.H. nor R.B. Eckles are listed in the starting eleven nor as either of the two subs. They aren't pictured in the article but they were on the team that year. Here is a copy of the clipping about that game.¹⁰

STRUCK BY A CYCLONE.

It Comes From Iowa and Devastates Evanston Town

Team of Eleven Husky Footballers from the Iowa Agricultural College Descends Upon the Northwestern University Kickers and Leaves Nothing but Touchdowns and Goals in its Wake - Surprising Result of the Opening Game at the Evanston Grounds - Score 36 to 0.

Northwestern might as well have tried to play football with an Iowa Cyclone as with the Iowa team it met yesterday. At the end of fifty minutes' play the big husky farmers from Iowa's Agricultural College had rolled up 36 points, while the 15-yard line was the nearest Northwestern got to Iowa's goal.

A large crowd was present at the contest, which was the opening game of the season on the Evanston grounds. Half a hundred followers of the Iowa team were present and their vocal organs got lots of exercise. A cold wind swept the field which chilled the spectators, but put life into the players. The outcome of the game was a great surprise to both sides, as the Iowa fellows said they only hoped to score, while the Evanston team's ambition was to pile up as great a score as possible without letting their opponents see the back of their goal.

The Iowa line is one of the heaviest in the West, running all the way from 220 pounds to 170. The interference of the team was almost perfect, and the Northwestern men were hurled aside at will and great holes made, through which the Iowa backs poured. The Iowa line was so heavy it would sometimes push the Northwesterns before it right down the field. Many times when the Evanston line got so low it could not be pushed, the Iowa backs would vault right over it.

Ben Wilson, Meyers and Parsons were the bright particular stars of the Iowa team. Wilson was in every play. He broke up plays around his end, he guarded many a runner, and he always hit the Evanston line like a catapult. Meyers made many of the long Iowa runs. Once he scored a touchdown after a run of 70 yards. Allen, Hoyne and Potter did fine work for Northwestern. Their tackling was especially noticeable. Mowry, who played left guard, was no match at all for Hammer, who flung him about at will.

⁸ Clarence Henry Eckles, born 4/14/1875, married Alice Lloyd Smith on 12/14/1898, died 2/13/1933. Hare, pp. 32-36, 51-52. See photograph on p. 22.

⁹ Herbert Charles Eckles, born 12/2/1880, married Elizabeth Friend on 2/11/1903, date of death unknown. Hare, pp. 55-57.

¹⁰ See *1895 Bomb*, pp. 125-130.

Both C.H. and R.B. Eckles were on the I.A.C. Track Team in 1895.¹¹ The records say that Eckles made the 440 yd. dash in 58 seconds, but does not designate which Eckles it was.

In 1895 C.H., R.B. and H.L. Eckles were all in the Phileleutheroi Literary Society.¹² C.H. was an Honorary Member, being an assistant faculty member, R.B. was a Senior and H.L. was a Freshman. C.H. and R.B. were also both in the I.A.C. Cadet Corps

After graduation, Clarence Eckles taught first at Iowa State College¹³, next at the University of Missouri¹⁴ and then at the University of Minnesota¹⁵. He wrote a text book on dairy farming¹⁶ which was still in use in the 1930's.

His brother, Herbert, started farming on his father's farm in Marshall County after graduation. Herbert had 2 lots of pigs and one lot was fed white corn and the other lot was fed yellow corn. And he noticed that the pigs that were in the lot with yellow corn seemed to be doing better. He told his brother, Clarence who was at that time a professor in Missouri, about it and he said, "Well, we will do some experimenting with it. Maybe that's right." You see at that period, white corn was the accepted feed, especially for humans because of the color; they seemed to prefer white corn and yellow corn was seldom used.

Well, Clarence did some experimenting with controlling the feed and they found out that the yellow corn really was better feed for the pigs. Vitamin A was just being recognized and that was the reason that the yellow corn was better than the white corn. And because of what he noticed, that is what farmers grow today. He stimulated research in it. The extension department in Missouri went on with the experiment and I suppose it was picked up by other colleges.

Grandma Eckles was pretty proud of the part that the Eckles' name carried with that experiment on corn. Now we find this company down in Eddyville, Iowa is making so many things out of corn that includes vitamins, stock feed, and a whole list of things that I hear about on the radio.

It is interesting how parents can influence their children to go to college. The Eckles were educated enough to start out with, and they knew that their children should have an education. Three of the first generation in America went to college. Then in the next generation Dad, his brother and three cousins went to Iowa State. Some other cousins went to Cornell and Grinnell. Walter, another brother of C.H. and Herbert Eckles, received his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1894. Even in the preceding generation, Thomas Eckles, one of the younger children of Marmaduke and Hannah, received

¹¹ See *1895 Bomb*, pp. 130-132. See p. 22 for photograph.

¹² See *History and Reminiscences*, pp. 181-183.

¹³ "He graduated from the Iowa State College in 1895 with the degree of Bachelor of Science and was at once appointed assistant in dairy husbandry and dairy bacteriology at the same institution. In 1896 he continued his studies in dairy bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin, but returned to Iowa State College where he received the Master of Science degree in 1897. The same university conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, in 1916." Quoted by Hare, p. 32.

¹⁴ "The longest chapter in Dr. Eckles' career began with his appointment as assistant professor in charge of dairy husbandry at the University of Missouri in 1901, both the position and department having been created by the appointment. . . By 1906, when Dr. Eckles was advanced to the professorship, he was able to assert to the dairy interests of Missouri that 'Missouri is more than a mule and apple state'. . . By 1919 when Dr. Eckles left Missouri, one-third of the departments of dairy husbandry in other states were headed by his former students." Quoted by Hare, p. 33.

¹⁵ "The final chapter in Dr. Eckles' career began in 1919 when he accepted the position of Chief of the Division of Dairy Husbandry at the University of Minnesota." Quoted by Hare, p. 34.

¹⁶ *Dairy Cattle and Milk Production, Prepared for the Use of Agricultural College Students and Dairy Farmers*, by Clarence H. Eckles, B.S.A., M. Sc., Professor of Dairy Husbandry, University of Missouri, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920.

his M.D. degree from Hahnemann Medical College in Chicago. It is kind of like that today. Parents keep talking about college and children grow up thinking that I can go, too. I can go to college. This is what I'm going to do when I get out of high school. I always knew that I was going to go to college.

Howard and Raymond Eckles

C. H. Eckles

Iowa Agriculture College Track Team - 1896

BURNHAM AND SMITH RELATIVES

Julia Jane Burnham,¹ was the twin sister of my grandfather, Julius James. She was born on March 30 and he was born on April 1st. They didn't know what was wrong with the mother, why she wasn't recovering from having a baby and here she had another birth. Julia married **Franklin Burnham**,² her second cousin, therefore she didn't change her last name. I guess you would say her name was Julia Burnham Burnham. They lived in Richland Center, Wisconsin, and that is where she was buried.

When Aunt Julia was no longer able to take care of herself, she moved to our house so that Mother and Grandma could take care of her. She slept in the seamstress' room which was just across the hall from Mother and Dad's room. This room did not have any heat so she may have been there in the summertime. One night Grandma woke up and Aunt Julia was standing over her with a knife. I don't know what she had, maybe hardening of the arteries; anyway she didn't know what she was doing. I don't know where Julia went after that.

I am named after **Dotha Foote Burnham**,³ the wife of **Alfred S. Burnham**,⁴ my great-uncle. They were among the thirteen charter members of the Aplington Presbyterian Church. Alfred and my great-grandfather came to Iowa from Wisconsin. They owned a hardware and furniture store and also a farm. Before Julius was married, they divided the businesses and Alfred became the owner of the hardware and furniture store. There was another Dotha Foote. She was the grandchild of Anson Burnham,⁵ cousin of Alfred S. Burnham. Her mother was Hattie S. Burnham who married Sheldon A. Foote in 1871. This Dotha married Harry H. Reeder. She is mentioned in some of Mother's letters and she and Dad went to her wedding in 1901. Maybe she was named after Dotha Foote Burnham also. I don't know who the Foote family was but Hattie and Sheldon Foote lived in Parkersburg as did Dotha and Alfred S. Burnham.

The first year that I was married, before Roberta was born, I took Mother to Richland Center, Wisconsin. She had a letter to provide perpetual care of the grave site of Dotha Burnham, but we couldn't find the right cemetery. Mother did some inquiring at a bank and then she paid money for this perpetual care. In 1987 or 1988 Elaine and I went to Richland Center. We looked for Dotha Foote Burnham's grave but didn't find it. We found the Julia and Franklin Burnham grave sites. They have a great big monument in a cemetery close to a country church. We spent some time there, looking, and found a number of Burnham graves. We also checked the court house records but found no death record for Dotha Foote Burnham.

My great-grandparents, George and Eliza Smith, came to Aplington in 1867.⁶ They had one son,

¹ Julia Jane Burnham, born 3/30/1845, married Franklin J. Burnham on 2/22/1865, died 12/26/1913. See Burnham pp. 204, 235. See photograph on p. 25.

² Franklin J. Burnham, born 2/22/1834, married first wife, Melissa Allen on 4/21/1854, married second wife Julia Jane Burnham on 1/12/1865, date of death unknown. Franklin was the son of Oliver W. Burnham, the grandson of Wolcott Burnham. Julia was the daughter of Almon S. Burnham, the granddaughter of Wolcott Burnham. Franklin was from Lone Rock, WI. See Burnham, pp. 204, 235. See photograph on p. 25.

³ Dotha Foote, date of birth unknown, married Alfred S. Burnham on 11/7/1864, died 1/11/1871. See Burnham, p. 204.

⁴ Alfred S. Burnham, born 7/29/1841, married Dotha Foote on 11/7/1864, death date not known. See Burnham, p. 204.

⁵ Anson G. Burnham, born 4/3/1821, married Romelia M. Johnson of Lincoln, VT on 12/19/1844, died 12/12/1874. See Burnham, p. 234. Anson and Franklin J. Burnham were brothers, the sons of Oliver W. Burnham. See Burnham, pp. 203-204. Oliver and Almon were the sons of Wolcott Burnham. See Burnham, p. 172.

⁶ See *Eliza Prall* in the Appendix for a chart of this family. See Clara Austin Dunlap Knott's Story in the Appendix for additional information regarding the Austin brothers, Henry and William. See pp. 26-28 for photographs of the Smith children and

Sheridan Prall Smith. He farmed first near Aplington and then near Traer, Iowa. In 1875 he and Luther H. Edwards bought the dry goods store in Traer. Once my brother, Gordon, and Grandma went to Traer to see him. Gordon remembered calling him Uncle Sherd.

Sheridan married Jean Lusk Wilson, who was a member of a well-known Traer family. She was born in Scotland in 1840, the daughter of John Wilson and Jean McCosh. Her grandmother's brother was Lord Mayor of London and one of her mother's cousins was at one time president of Princeton University. The family came to America when she was eleven years old. They settled first in Connecticut and then moved to Iowa in 1855. Jean was a graduate of the first class at Grinnell College and met Sheridan while she was teaching in New Hartford. She was a well-known teacher in Iowa, especially for her work with the blind at the State School for the Blind in Vinton. The State Board of Education gave the couple a wedding banquet and also presented them with a complete set of silver and china. One of Jean's brothers, James "Tama Jim" Wilson, spent sixteen years in Washington, D.C. as Secretary of Agriculture in the early 1900's.⁷

Sheridan and Jean Smith retired in 1916 and a year later moved to Waterloo where they lived with their daughter, Theodosia. Six years before he died he was stricken with apoplexy and lighter strokes followed later. The August before he died, he fell and broke a hip. Both of them are buried in the Buckingham Cemetery in Traer, Iowa. Their obituaries can be found in the *Traer Star Clipper*.

Theodosia worked in Waterloo in a dress shop, selling dresses and making alterations. I think her married name was Carpenter. Once Mother and I stopped to see her while we were in Waterloo. This was the first time I had ever heard about hair permanents. It had started to sprinkle and Mother said, "You'll get your hair wet." She said, "That doesn't matter. I have a permanent."

The Smiths had six daughters. **Ann Eliza** died when she was 6 years old. **Sarah Maria** married Henry Austin. **Jane Hull** married Alvin Whaley. He was a captain of Company K 17th New York Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War and came to Aplington in 1869. He was elected to represent Butler County in the Iowa State Legislature from 1877 to 1880. Then he was elected Senator from the 46th District which included Butler, Floyd and Mitchell counties.⁸ **Mary Prall** was my grandmother. **Lydia Francis**⁹ married Charles J. Stockdale.¹⁰ **Charlotte Amelia** (Lottie) married William Austin.

Grandma used to tell the story about when she and her sisters were to be in a Fourth of July program in Aplington. It was a big occasion. All of the sisters were to be dressed in white. It was kind of cool that morning but they didn't bother with their coats since it was July. The program went off fine. They had a picnic dinner afterwards and it was getting cooler and cooler. By the time they were to go home, they had to borrow comforters to wrap the girls in to travel in their horse-drawn buggy. That night the corn froze on the Fourth of July. Some farmers plowed up their corn, thinking it was entirely gone but some left it. The ones that left it got nubbins but those who plowed it up and planted buckwheat got

spouses.

⁷ From *They Came to North Tama* by Janette Stevenson Murray, first edition 1953, later edition 1973.

⁸ See *Aplington History*, pp. 9, 11, 14, 55, 70, 73, 106, 197, 221 for articles regarding Captain Whaley.

⁹ Lydia was one of the thirteen charter members of the Aplington Presbyterian Church. *Aplington History*, p. 30.

¹⁰ C. J. Stockdale's second wife was Louise Keller, who he married in 1890. They had seven children: Ray, Neva, Robert, Hazel, William, Glenn and Howard. Louise died in 1954. *Aplington History*, pp. 30, 105, 138, 199, 340.

nothing because it was too dry by then.

At least four of these girls were school teachers before they were married. Country schools were every two miles or so and they taught around Aplington and Austinville. Grandma was a seamstress for the other girls. She sat sewing clothes by hand.

Grandma told the story about substituting once during the winter for one of her sisters who was sick. The students treated the substitutes like they are treated now. The boys got most of their education during the winter months when they didn't need to be in the fields. There were two boys in the class, both bigger than she was, by far. She was small. They thought they could take advantage of her, of course. I don't know what they did, but the two of them were acting up. She never told what they did. But they were unruly (that is probably the word that she would have used). She pushed one of them back into his seat and he managed to slip, lose his balance and hit his nose. His nose began to bleed. And it bled and it bled. She told the other big fellow, "Get the water pail and the dipper and take him out and get it stopped." After that they behaved for her. I don't know which school that was in.

All of these sisters married local people. One story Grandma used to tell was about Cap Whaley, who Jane Smith married. He was a captain in the army. When he came home from the Civil War he had a silver plate in his head which was an unusual surgery at that time. He is buried out at the Aplington Cemetery. Their tombstone is tall. Cap Whaley's son was Grant who sometimes visited Mother. Both Grant and Cap Whaley had some of their things stored in Mother's shed. Grant was a postmaster for years. He did a lot of reading, even at the post office, and accumulated many books. They were stored at Mother's house. That is the reason for the stuff that Mary (Meyer) has found . . . a lot of books with the Whaley name. He and his wife were divorced and that was a disgrace as far as Grandma was concerned.

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Julia Jane Burnham
3/30/2845 - 12/26/1913

Franklin J. Burnham
2/22/1834 - date of death unknown

Sheridan P. Smith (with Allan Carpenter)
taken about 1919
4/20/1837 - 4/9/1922

Jean Lusk Wilson Smith
6/30/1840 - 7/9/1919

Sarah Maria Smith
5/26/1839 - 12/21/1904

Henry Austin
10/27/1843 - 2/25/1911

Jane Hull Smith
3/28/1844 - 7/27/1910

Alvin Whaley
5/14/1838 - 10/29/1911

Lydia Francis Smith
1/4/1849 - 3/28/1888

Charles J. Stockdale
6/22/1846 - 7/8/1917

Charlotte Amelia Smith
1/20/1852 - 4/5/1891

William Austin
2/6/1846 - 3/19/1917

MY PARENTS¹

The family album has many portraits of Mother, taken almost every other year on her birthday.² On her fourth birthday there is a photograph of her alone, one of Forest and one of the two of them together. He must have been three at the time. In the picture she has a little muff and a pretty hat that matches it, and pretty little boots and a long buttoned-down coat. Those photos look like they were taken in a studio. In all of the portraits Mother is wearing really pretty clothes, very fancy. Anything that Grandma bought was fancy. Evidently Grandpa was a pretty good farmer. He knew enough about marketing and therefore got along pretty well. Grandma seemed to be able to spend money wherever she wanted to.

When my mother went to grade school, the school was across the road, east of their house, two miles west of Aplington. She used to tell about the time when they were playing tag or pom-pom-pull-away or something like that and somebody grabbed her skirt and pulled. She apparently had on a full, gathered skirt and it was hand-sewn. The thread came loose and her skirt started to come loose from the waist. All she had to do was go across the road and change or have her skirt fixed. I wonder when they got their sewing machine.

When Mother was little her little finger was caught in a hay pulley. They wrapped her little finger up with her ring finger and they healed together. When she was about 15 years old, her parents took her to Chicago to a surgeon to separate those fingers. Her little finger was never quite right; it was noticeable, but being the little finger it didn't matter so much. Grandma left her in Chicago alone, probably for a week or two, until they had finished the surgery and saw that it was going to heal. When Mother would tell me about it she emphasized how young she was to be left alone.

Mother didn't go to high school. I guess Aplington didn't have a high school then. However she went to Lennox College which was Presbyterian-related, somehow. It was in Hopkinton, Iowa, near Dubuque. It was like an academy but was called a college. That's where she did her preparatory work getting ready for going to college. It was more or less equivalent to a high school degree. At that time, if you did any schooling more than grade school you had to go to an academy. I think she didn't spend as many years getting ready to go to college as we do now, maybe one year or two. Hopkinton was on the Illinois Central railroad. She stayed there and didn't come home very often. However, with the train going straight through, all she would have to do is get the right train and she would be home in Aplington. At that time the trains stopped everywhere, even in Aplington. Her parents chose that school because it was Presbyterian and because of the train connections.

Gene Siekmann, who was our pastor in the 50's, said she was a good student at Lennox. He had seen the records somehow. He was the Vice President in charge of getting money for the University of Dubuque. They were trying to find a place for the records of Lennox College and offered them to the University of Dubuque. It seemed that no one wanted them and they weren't needed anymore for establishing qualifications. Mother went from Lennox College to Ames. She was only seventeen when she started there.

I have her herbarium from Lennox. She took a course in Botany and they went out in the woods and got samples of flowers and plants and then pressed them. It is a nice collection. I hope it is still in good condition. It is up on the top shelf. I used to look at it to see what different plants were named. She had the Latin name and the common name and where she had gotten the specimen. She was very

¹ Raymond Bruce Eckles, born 8/6/1876, married Ena Mabel Angeline Burnham on 6/20/1900, died 1/8/1933. Ena Mabel Angeline Burnham, born 4/20/1878, died 2/23/1959. See *Aplington History*, p. 262 for an article about the R.B. and Ena Eckles family.

² See p. 38 for some of these photographs.

good at that kind of thing, keeping a notebook, etc.³ But unfortunately she was too slow doing her housework and other things that had to be done, so she never had time to do anything else like this.

I don't know much about my mother's childhood, but I know even less about my Dad's. Dad didn't talk much about growing up or tell stories about his boyhood. He was outdoors a lot, in the fields or doing chores. He was from Conrad, in Marshall County. There aren't many pictures of him as a boy, either. As he grew older he looked a lot like his father. Many of the Eckles wore their hair parted in the middle especially after they got to college - Dad, his cousin C.H. and my brother Gordon all wore their hair parted in the middle.

One fall before Dad went to college, Grandpa Eckles was ill and wasn't able to travel around the country to buy calves for feeding. So he sent Dad (I don't know why he wasn't in school). I don't know if they had a wagon so that Dad could haul the calves home or whether he bought them and they would send the calves later. Grandpa would sign a check that wasn't filled out for Dad to take and buy the calves from the neighbors. Mother would comment how Grandpa trusted this teenage boy with those signed blank checks. Grandpa Eckles was ill quite a bit. People were often ill in those times. You didn't buy medicine that would stop the high blood pressure or whatever.

Mother and Dad both went to Iowa Agricultural College in Ames, Iowa. That is where they met. Dad graduated in 1896.⁴ Mother was two years younger. She graduated in 1898.⁵ Mother and Dad were both in literary societies in college.⁶ These societies were kind of social clubs. That may be where they met, though I'm not sure. Mother and Dad didn't refer to the college by name. They just referred to it as "Ames", such as, "When I was at Ames . . ."

When Mother came home from Ames, she came by train, changing trains somewhere west of here. It was an all day trip. Once Will Austin (her cousin) rode his bike to go visit Mother. That would have been from near Austinville all the way to Ames (or maybe it was when she was going to the Lennox Academy). When Gordon and I went to Ames, we came by bus as far as Iowa Falls and then someone would come and get us. Today you can drive it in an hour and a half.

Iowa State was not very old when they went there.⁷ There weren't very many buildings at that time. Central was there. It is called Beardshear now. The campanile was built about the time the folks were

³ Note from Doreen Duba: I don't remember ever seeing this collection but I do remember helping Grandma with her gardening. She knew the names of all the weeds, such as shepherd's purse, henbane, spurge, etc.

⁴ The class of '96 was known as the 'Ishkoodahs'. It was by far one of the largest classes that had ever entered the college. There were 187 in 1893." *History of I.A.C.*, pp. 91-94; *1895 Bomb*, pp. 32-37.

⁵ The Class of '98 was known as the 'Pygmies' on account of their diminutive size. Ena Burnham was the Secretary of the class. *History of I.A.C.*, p. 98-102; *1895 Bomb*, pp. 14-23. She wrote the senior class song, see p. 42.

⁶ Ena Burnham belonged to the Cliolian Literary Society. They were "sisters" of the Bachelor Debating Society. Ena represented the Clios in the Music Club. *History of I.A.C.*, pp. 170-173; *1895 Bomb*, pp. 71-72, 96. R.B., C.H. and H.L. Eckles were all members of the Phileleutheroi Society. At the beginning of each year each of the seven literary societies elected three members as its representation in the Lecture Association. R.B. represented the Phileleutheroi in 1895. *History of I.A.C.*, pp. 180-182; *1895 Bomb*, pp. 88-89 and 91-92.

⁷ Iowa Agricultural College was founded in 1858. President A. S. Welch was elected on May 11, 1868 and was formally inaugurated as president on March 17, 1869. A preliminary term was held for seventy students from October 21, 1868 to January 7, 1869. The school was formally dedicated on March 18, 1869. Although there was no graduating class during the first three years of the college, commencement exercises were held at the close of each year. The Class of '72 was the first graduating class. See The Founding of the College, *History of I.A.C.*, pp. 11-33.

in college. It has been there for a long time. The Stanton family donated the money for it.⁸ Curtiss Hall was also one of the originals. Morrill Hall and Margaret Hall were the same type of building, both made of brick.

Dad's course of study was Agriculture.⁹ Mother always said that Dad was on the squad (the football team) but he wasn't one of the starters. He was one of the substitutes and went along with the team. They needed someone when they practiced. He got his letter, his "A" for Ames, in track.¹⁰ Mother always said it broke his wind; it was hard on his body. I never knew if it affected his health or not, but she always said it broke his wind. Each year, because Dad had received his "A" letter, he received an envelope with complimentary tickets and a letter saying he had free admittance to football games. We put this envelope on the mantle, on the little shelf, in case we wanted to use those tickets. One year Mother and Dad got in free to a football game because Dad was serving in the legislature. Grandma and I went too, using the complimentary tickets. Gordon was probably down at Ames at that time. We sat in different areas. It was very cold and there were a few flakes of snow. Grandma wore her fur coat and I snuggled up next to her.

Dad was in ROTC.¹¹ The statue that Milo (Eckles) has now is an award that Dad got for having the best squad. The men in the statue are in the uniforms that the ROTC wore at the time Dad was in college.

Mother was a freshmen in 1894-5. In the fall term the women lived on the second floor of Main Building. At that time, both men and women lived in that building. The girls would make fudge and other goodies. The men would lower a container down from their floor by means of a string. The girls would fill it with candy. After Christmas vacation the women moved into Margaret Hall which had just been completed.¹² I don't know if Dad lived in Main Building or not, nor do I know where Dad ate either. I do know that the girls who lived in Margaret Hall ate there.

Margaret Hall isn't there now, but was still there when I went to Ames. I don't know if it burned or they took it down. It was near the center of campus, not far from Morrill Hall. Morrill Hall is still there, near Beardshear Hall which is the Administration Building. Margaret Hall was on the other side of the street, east of the library. When I was at Ames the women's gym was in Margaret Hall. That is where we played volleyball. There was a swimming pool in the basement. When I was there, it was still a women's dorm, but mostly for graduate students. There were also classrooms in the building. There was a dining room also.

⁸ The bell tower, built after 1896, was a gift of professor Stanton (mathematics and political economy) to the college in memory of his wife, Mrs. Margaret McDonald Stanton.

⁹ R.B. Eckles was a member of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society as was his cousin C.H. Eckles. *1895 Bomb*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁰ In the season of '95 one of the Eckles set a record for the 440 yard dash at 58 seconds. The *1895 Bomb* article does not say if it was C.H. Eckles or R.B. Eckles. Both cousins were on the team. *1895 Bomb*, pp. 131-132. See photograph of the track team on p. 22.

¹¹ R.B. Eckles was a 1st Lieutenant in Company A of the First Battalion when he was a junior. *History of I.A.C.*, pp. 302-304; *1895 Bomb*, pp. 135-139. See p. 39 for photograph of Captain R.B. Eckles.

¹² After the women left Main Building, the old dining room was made into recitation rooms and laboratories. The second floor was occupied by the professors and students. Margaret Hall was named in honor of Mrs. Margaret McDonald Stanton, the first preceptress at I.A.C. and teacher of French and English. The steward's department was transferred to this building, so that all the students who boarded at the college got their meals in the large new dining room. *History of I.A.C.*, pp. 101-102.

At first Mother was taking a chemistry course and she liked that. However, somebody had an accident in the labs there at the college. Grandma heard about it and she wrote the authorities. She said that Mother didn't need to take chemistry because there might be an accident. So she was taken out of that chemistry course. She took Domestic Economy, as they called it then, and graduated with a degree of Bachelor in Letters. She could have taught home economics. I don't think it was so specific back then. I think she could even have taught English. She often said, "I always wanted to teach." She never found out whether she could have or not. Grandpa wouldn't let her teach.

Mother had samples of sewing, real nice hand-sewn buttonholes and samples of how to mend a linen tablecloth by weaving very fine darning threads. Anyway, they learned stuff that we would laugh at now, like darning and making samples. I don't think they made samples using a sewing machine, but she surely learned how to sew with a machine, whether it was there or somewhere else.

Both my mother and my father were Presbyterians before they went to college. Dad had grown up in the Presbyterian Church in Conrad, Iowa and, of course, Mother grew up in the Aplington church. There wasn't a Presbyterian Church connected with the campus like there is now. Rather they had chapel on the campus in Morrill Hall.¹³ I don't know if they had it every day or maybe just on Sundays.¹⁴ The chapel had a nice organ.

Mother stayed in college for two years after Dad graduated in 1896. She graduated in 1898. They were to be married soon afterwards. I don't know what Dad did from 1896 to 1899, the year he got a teaching job in Doylestown, Pennsylvania just outside of Philadelphia. He probably farmed on his father's farm which was near Conrad. His brother, Howard, would have been at Ames during that time. Dad taught at National Farm School in Doylestown for one year before they were married and then continued to teach there two years after they were married in 1900. They were married in the Burnham house which was newly remodeled. It was a fair-sized wedding. They probably had some kind of outdoor reception. This is before they used to make a big thing out of weddings. I think I have a clipping about the wedding.

Wedding Bells

On Wednesday evening, June 20, at the home of the bride's parents west of town, in the presence of a large number of relatives and invited friends occurred the marriage of Miss Ena Burnham and Mr. R. B. Eckles. Rev. Tourtelot officiated. The young people left Thursday for the home of the groom's parents near Marshalltown, where a reception will be given in their honor this evening. The bride is one of the bright young ladies of the community whose many friends now wish her all happiness in her new relation. The groom is employed in an agricultural institution at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, where the young people will make their home. May joy and success attend them all through life.

There is a picture of Mother and Dad, when Dad had a beard. It may have been their wedding picture or maybe was taken in Doylestown after they were married. Dad grew a beard so he would look older. He wasn't much older than his students.¹⁵

¹³ Morrill Hall, built in 1890, was named in honor of Justin S. Morrill, the originator of the land grant for agricultural colleges. It was of deep red brick. In it was a chapel with a capacity of 650, a library with a capacity for 50,000 volumes, a museum, lecture rooms and laboratories for the department of natural history and geology.

¹⁴ "Chapel was not 'compulsory' but attendance was 'regular'. The members of each class were seated alphabetically and one of the students kept a roll-book. An absence from chapel, if not excused, was punished by a demerit mark of three." *History of I.A.C.*, p. 32.

¹⁵ Note from Doreen Duba: Pete Luppen, a neighbor younger than Grandma Eckles, remembers looking in the window of the house during the wedding and Grandpa was wearing a beard. Pete used to say that he thought R.B. wore a beard because he was teaching in a Jewish school.

The National Farm School took Jewish boys from the poor ghettos. They didn't have any future; therefore they tried to teach those Jewish boys agriculture so that they could go out into the country and get jobs. Dad's degree was in agriculture so he was equipped to teach them farming. How many boys managed to farm, I have no idea. I think Dad always expected to farm, but he taught until he had saved up \$1000. Mother always said that wasn't enough, especially if he had to buy new equipment right away.

Mother used to tell about something Dad did while at this school. The folks had a chafing dish, a fancy dish with a little alcohol burner under it. Dad would get fresh oysters at the street market, have them shelled and bring them home. He would get milk from the school's dairy barn and then would make oyster stew. Most of the time the folks ate with the boys in their dormitory.

Mother didn't have a job after she graduated. She used to say, "I wanted to teach but my father said I didn't need to." He could support her, so she helped with the housework and sewed instead. She became a fine seamstress, really. She made these white clothes with fine tucks and darts that we have stored in the cedar chest. They are stained but are ready to be bleached. She made such a wonderful trousseau ahead of time but they were such nice things that she couldn't wear them for everyday and those clothes are still around.

Mother and Dad came back from Pennsylvania when Grandpa Burnham got sick. Also Grandpa thought that it was damp in the East and he was afraid that Mother would get sick and get pneumonia, so she had better come back and live on the farm. Grandpa also told Dad that he was sick enough that he wanted Dad to take over the farm. That was the beginning of Dad's farming. Basically, Dad and Mother moved in with Grandpa and Grandma Burnham, about the time that my oldest brother, Lester, was born in 1902. Gordon was born five years later and I was born in 1911.

Mother saved a number of clippings from the *Aplington News*. Here are several of them. A clipping from November 5, 1908 tells about a close call that Mother had. "Mrs. R.B. Eckles had a runaway Monday morning that might have cost her life. Her horse became frightened just as she turned off to the Whaley residence running north to the railroad track. She managed to turn west between the small pasture and track, and struck a telegraph pole when the horse broke loose from the buggy throwing her headlong over the dashboard to the ground. She got off with but few scratches about the face and the horse was unhurt." I am guessing this happened near the area where the sale barn is located.

Two clippings refer to Grandma Eckles who lived in Conrad. "Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Eckles were called to Conrad Friday by the illness of Mr. Eckles' mother who suffered a stroke of paralysis. William Dreyer took the family over in an hour and ten minutes, a distance of thirty miles (February 12, 1913)." Apparently he had a car and could go faster than a horse and buggy! "R. B. Eckles was in Marshalltown Monday to see his mother, who has recovered to such an extent that she is able to walk. A complete recovery is hoped for by the members of her family and her many friends (April 2, 1913)."

Grandpa was sick most of the time. He died when I was four years old. Dad's father was sick in Conrad also. He had a cancer but I think Grandpa Burnham had kidney trouble. He was an invalid and had to be taken care of. He knew he was going to die. Grandpa Burnham made Dad promise that he wouldn't leave to go down to see his own father until after Grandpa Burnham died. He didn't want Dad to leave those two women alone there. Grandpa Burnham died February 15, 1915 and Grandpa Eckles died March 13, 1915. I don't know what would have happened if Grandpa Eckles had died first. I don't remember either one of my grandfathers.

When Grandpa died the farm was left to Mother with the provision that Grandma was to be paid and taken care of. Grandma used to say something like "What's yours is mine and mine's my own." She

could say the worst things about Dad. Dad took care of the farm, of course, and when she didn't like something that was happening she was quick to tell him. For one thing there was a board fence between the barn and the pasture lot to the east. That got in kind of disrepair and it was patched up with wire and she didn't like the looks of it. She wanted him to build a new board fence so that the manure piles wouldn't show. Grandma Burnham could make life miserable for Dad.

Dad did much the same type of farming as his father, feeding beef cattle and growing corn, oats and hay. He tried to take the cattle by train to Chicago. It took a crew to drive them on foot to Aplington to the stock yard. One time the train did not leave the car in the right place and the crew had to pry the railroad car down the track so they could load the cattle. Dad thought he had to ride along in the caboose to see that the animals got enough water. Dad didn't think he got enough money for the expense of hauling the cows by rail to Chicago so this ended.

Mother had asthma and bronchitis much of the time. When I was in fifth grade the doctor said, "Get her to a warmer climate for the winter so she doesn't get these colds all the time." Grandma, Mother and I went to Clearwater, Florida.¹⁶ Someone had recommended Clearwater and we had a name that we wrote to and they found us an apartment. We left after Christmas and when we came home the violets were blooming. The doctor said it would be good for me, too, because I had had a lot of colds. I supposedly studied in the morning with books that I had taken along. The teacher had made out plans for me. I passed the year, not necessarily because I knew the stuff, but I passed it. We could walk to the beach in Clearwater. They took me once or twice and I came home with shells. Adeline Schuck (now Meyer) says she still has one of the shells that I brought her. Mary found my shells on a shelf in the sleeping porch. First Dorothy (Eckles) made a wall arrangement with them and now Mary's granddaughter, Julia, has some of them.

The atmosphere in Florida seemed to make Mother worse. Maybe she caught a cold or something. She got so bad that she couldn't walk or anything. Grandma would go out and get a loaf of bread. I don't know what we lived on, maybe canned soup. Grandma found a grapefruit packing house and talked to someone there. She found out that on a certain day we could get scrap fruit, so we had to go on that day to find it. Usually it was just bruised. I can remember going with her to pick up this fruit. I'm sure we had enough money but we were trying to cut expenses as much as possible. Grandma didn't eat meat to speak of and Mother never did cook meat well. Eventually I learned how. The meals weren't choice. Mother never seemed to be able to plan ahead for meals.

The landlady knew Mother was sick and called the hospital. We went to St. Petersburg and they put her in the hospital there. They started giving her adrenaline there and got her back on her feet again. The doctor there recommended we get to a higher climate and we went to North Carolina. We traveled by train. Dad didn't know where we were because we hadn't telephoned him. Mother got better after we went up to North Carolina. That was the only time that Mother went to Florida for her asthma.

Later, after I was married, she went down to Oklahoma City for treatments. Some doctor down there was trying to find out what the allergy was. He was giving skin tests. Then he would try to make something to fit that allergy and it seemed to help. They decided it was her bronchitis. She was allergic to her own sputum. She got asthma that continued after every cold. Now they doctor for asthma differently than they did then.

¹⁶ Note from Doreen Duba: Daddy told about the winter that Grandma and Dotha went to Florida for Grandma's health. He and Grandpa "batched it" during that time. Grandpa did some of the cooking, but Daddy bragged about the baking powder biscuits that he made. He said he got pretty good at it, though to my knowledge he never made any after my parents were married.

Dad was on the Aplington School Board for twenty years and was the president for much of that time. He was a charter member of the Farm Bureau and helped to organize it in Butler County. Also he and Mother were both active in the Aplington Presbyterian Church. Dad was an elder, a trustee and he served as Sunday School superintendent for many years. Mother and Dad both sang in the church choir but Mother had to quit because of her asthma. Dad also took part in a community production at the high school in 1926 called "The Womanless Wedding," where he played the bride's grandfather. I still have the dress coat he wore in it. In the pocket are the words to the solo he sang, "When You and I Were Young, Maggie." About half of the men played the parts of women and dressed accordingly.

There was music in the house that looked like college lessons. I imagine that Grandma saw to it that Mother had her culture. The piano I have in my house used to be Mother's. She could play really well, but I don't think Grandma played. Mother played in church occasionally when the regular pianist wasn't there. When she got older she said her glasses weren't right to see the music. We kept the piano in the parlor. Sometimes Mother played while our family stood around singing, just for fun. She always played my part for me alone when I needed it, so I could hear it better. When I was young I took piano lessons (under pressure) and I think my brothers may have taken lessons also.

Mother taught a Sunday school class for years and years. She taught the Older Women's Class for a while and ended up as the adult teacher. At that time they used the Graded Series and they would go into detail about the kings and she could recite that Bible history. Of course, now no one pays attention to that. You just talk about an era and not the specific names like Rehoboam and Jeroboam. She would talk about them in her Sunday school class, who they were, their characteristics, how they disobeyed, etc. She got a lot of material from the *Wallace's Farmer* magazine. The first Wallace was a Bible student, and he would put an article in his magazine about the Graded Series. It was a monthly paper but he would have an article for each week of the Bible study as set out in the Graded Series. We would be driving to church and she would sit there with that *Wallace's Farmer* in her lap, finishing getting ready for her Sunday school class. She would even have it folded on her lap during church, still reading her Sunday school lesson.

Besides the *Wallace's Farmer*, we sometimes subscribed to the *Successful Farmer*. We always took a woman's magazine, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Christian Herald* and a Presbyterian magazine. We took the *Deliniator* for a while. It had pictures of clothing styles which we would look at before we cut something out to sew. At times we'd take the *Reader's Digest*. They'd have a special reason to subscribe and we'd take that for a while. *Youth's Companion* was the magazine that I always looked forward to. It had one continued story, as well as other stories and also directions on how to make something.

I don't know when Mother learned to drive a car, but she drove for quite awhile. Her last car was a 1938 Ford. After we moved to Aplington, we picked her up to go to church during the wintertime. After she moved to our house she continued to go to church with us until about a month before she died.

Besides farming, Dad was also in the Iowa State Legislature in 1925, 1927 and 1929. It was held during January, February and March. In 1927 there was also a special session. It was also held during the winter. Hopefully he was home for planting. One winter the legislature ran longer than usual. When spring came on, the hired man and whoever was at home started the planting.

I don't know why Dad decided to run for the legislature. He went over to Allison and saw whoever was chairman of the Republican Party at that time and talked to him about being a state representative. They didn't know of anybody else who was going to run. Dad decided to run and was voted in the first time. I don't think there was opposition in the Republican Party. I think that the fellow who ran the *Parkersburg Eclipse* was a Democrat and that was his opposition. In 1932 Dad was the Republican candidate for State Senator for the 39th district (Butler and Bremer Counties). He lost in the

Republican primary election to John Ramsey of Clarksville who in turn lost to L. H. Meyer a Democrat from Readlyn in the main election. That year Roosevelt (FDR) ran for president and was elected. That was a grand-slam, you know. The mood of the people was , "we've got to have a change." FDR came out with Social Security, for one thing. All the county officers were changed and no one was really qualified. They just had their name on the ticket and when people voted for Roosevelt they just marked their ballot "Democratic" and it was a landslide election. People who didn't expect to get elected, were elected because of that.

I think Dad liked being in the legislature, at least he didn't dislike it. He disliked their smoking, though. They would cancel a certain rule or pass a motion and then they would all light up.

Dad was chair of the Claims Committee and served on the following committees: Motor Vehicle and Transportation, Public Schools, Fish and Game, Dairy and Food, County and Township Organization, Public Utilities, Public Health and Appropriations. Dad would read everything in the newspapers¹⁷ and any other background material that he could get his hands on about what was being considered that session. When he finished his term, his books and everything, including paper clips, were put into boxes and shipped home. Each representative had a desk and there was one secretary for two representatives. She had a desk with a typewriter and a place to work. When Arnoldene Eckles, (Bob Eckles' first wife) was a secretary in the capitol she met Mary Davis, who had been Dad's secretary.

Dad had to find a place in Des Moines to live each winter and pay for it. During the winter that I was a sophomore in high school Mother and I went down to Des Moines with Dad. Lester was already married and Gordon was in college. We lived in an apartment, actually part of a house, with privileges to cook. Dad could walk to the capitol building from where we lived. He had to be absent off and on and I had to go to the legislature and ask a certain person if they would please excuse Dad again for that day or those days. I knew where that person's desk was.

That winter Dad came down with erysipelas which is a skin disease. It is kind of like shingles. It was hard to cure. I'm not sure if it was caused by nerves or what, but it was terrible. He only had erysipelas that one year. His hair came out and when it eventually came back in it was quite dark and curly. He would have been in his fifties at that time. But then he turned gray again and it got over being curly. Because he was busy and also sick, we didn't go to the theater or anything.

That same winter Gordon had to have a mastoid operation. This mastoid was infected and carried over into the ear. It had to be lanced behind the ear to drain it. That was done in Ames all of the sudden, but after it he came home. That was at the time that Dad was sick too. Except for that winter that Mother and I went with him, Dad just stayed in Des Moines by himself.

Iowa farmland sold at record high prices after World War I and many farmers had to take out large mortgages to buy new land. As early as 1920, many farmers had gone deeply into debt. By 1929 when the Great Depression began, many had lost their land through failure to pay their mortgages. Fortunately Mother had inherited the farm from her father, and Mother and Dad did not have as bad a time as some of the other farmers in Aplington. One time during the depression Dad came home from selling hogs. Mother said, "How much did you get? " He said, "I gave it to the preacher." She said, "What are we going to live on?" He said, " The preacher hasn't had anything for a long time." When Gordon was first married, he was in town when there was a fire. He helped pull the hose cart with his car to the fire. He got a dollar and gave it to Dorothy. They needed gas soon and she pulled out that dollar to pay for it.

¹⁷ Note from Mary Meyer: When we remodeled Grandma's house in 1960 we found stacks of different newspapers, from Dubuque, Des Moines, Chicago and New York as well as from the small towns around Aplington.

I was in college during the depression. Mother made my clothes from used clothing. She did a nice job, but they were not new clothes. It cost \$35 each quarter for board and room and \$32 each quarter for tuition. After Dad died I worked for my board and room by living with a family and working for them.

Dad died of a stroke in January of 1933. He was sawing wood across the road when it happened. Gordon was helping him with the wood and took him home. Dad died early the next morning. I was a junior at Ames at the time. I had been home for Christmas vacation and had just returned to the dorm. Classes hadn't started yet. Walter Austin (Mother's cousin) and Sam Patterson came to Ames to get me. It was early morning. I went out to their car and they told me that Dad had died. Then I had to go back into the dorm and pack my suitcase before they could take me back to Aplington for the funeral. I was taking biology that quarter and was supposed to dissect a frog. I had to fill in the diagrams without having done it.

When Dad died Mother didn't have cash for his funeral and burial so Mother borrowed money from Gordon. Gordon and Dorothy had saved \$2000 to start farming so he had some cash.

After Grandma died in 1941, Mother continued to live in her house until she wasn't able to anymore. Several winters she stayed with our family or with Gordon's. In January of 1952 our house burned and our family lived with Mother while we were rebuilding. We moved into our new house in the fall of 1952. Mother stayed in her house until Christmas. She got the flu in December. I took meals down to her and she just laid on the davenport in the sewing room all the time. When school started again after Christmas vacation, I brought Mother to our house. I had to keep going back for more of her personal things. We brought up the three-quarter bed from her house, her walnut rocker and a reddish round wooden card table. She never did go back to her house again. She just stayed; it was easier for her. When she moved to our house I still had to paint the room she was staying in, which I did when she was in the hospital once. When she got home she kept complaining that she could smell the paint. She lived with our family for six years. She used to sit and listen to records from the Commission for the Blind. I'd listen, too, as I ironed. She helped some - she could make a good pie crust.

In February of 1959, I knew she wasn't feeling well. In fact she had what Doc Fred (Rolf's) called a deep faint a couple of times. She just wasn't all there. I'd prop her up but she'd droop over. She didn't respond well. I had a hair appointment for her one day when Erwin and Roberta were coming from Ames. She had had one of the deep faints. I got dinner for them, then took her to her hair appointment. She wasn't very talkative but did well to sit up while her hair was being washed, etc. A few days later, I got her up, helped her out to the breakfast table and was trying to give her something to drink when she had another spell. I sent Elaine to find Gordon and Dorothy. I sent someone else to find George. We were able to get Mother back in bed but she never came out of it. She was gone before the kids got on the school bus. She died peacefully; she just quit breathing. She died on February 23, 1959.

Roberta's wedding was set for February 28. We went ahead with her wedding because there really wasn't another time to hold it. Hof (Roberta's husband, Erwin Neal Hafenstein) was graduating from Iowa State that week and was leaving for a job with the National Forest Service in Oregon. Roberta was planning to return to Iowa State for her final quarter. Elaine remembers sitting around the dining room table during calling and visitation hours, making favors for Roberta's bridal dinner. Dorothy was there also. Visitation was at our house and the casket was put across the end of the living room, down by the fireplace. Mother's funeral was held at the Presbyterian Church and she was buried at the Aplington Cemetery.

Her house was not lived in from 1952 until my niece, Mary Eckles, and Lee Meyer were married in 1960. At that time they did some major remodeling before they moved in.

Ena taken 4/20/1882 - 4th birthday

Ena taken 4/20/1884 - 6th birthday

Ena taken 4/20/1888 - 10th birthday

Ena with fan, Class of 1898

Raymond Eckles as young boy

Raymond Eckles as young man

Raymond Eckles - Cadet

Raymond Eckles, Class of 1896

Raymond Bruce and Ena Burnham Eckles

Lester, Raymond, Ena, Doha, Gordon - 1914?

Gordon, Doha, Ena and Raymond Eckles - 1928?

Ena Eckles and Mary Burnham

R.B. Eckles - Legislature picture

Ena B. Eckles - same era

Primary Campaign Card - 1932

Ena Burnham Eckles, age 78 years

Senior Class Song - The Pygmies
by Miss Ena Burnham

MY BROTHERS

Lester Burnham Eckles¹ graduated from Aplington High School in 1919 and then went to Iowa State College where he received a degree in electrical engineering. He was a very good student. After graduation he went to Schenectady, New York for training with General Electric. He first worked as an engineer in Michigan and later he worked for the Rural Electrification Administration in Des Moines, Iowa. His task was to determine whether there were enough farms and houses on a mile section to warrant electricity. He helped plan the wiring grid for reaching as many farms as possible within the government requirements. This job required a lot of driving. He also owned a farm between Elkhart and Ankeny, north of Des Moines, which he and his sons, Bob and Oliver, farmed.

Lester married Dora Shaw in Des Moines, Iowa.² They met at Ames. I think she had 2 years at Ames and then took nurse's training in Des Moines. She didn't finish that. She got married instead. After Lester died, Gordon said that if she had had a degree she could have worked in a hospital. Instead she had a job as a receptionist in a men's dorm and later as a receptionist in the Student Union at Drake University in Des Moines.

Gordon Bruce Eckles³ attended Aplington High School. While there his classmates started calling him Bruce, but our family has always called him Gordon. He was president of his class for his junior and senior years. He played both baseball⁴ and basketball⁵ and sang in the high school chorus. He also sang in a quartet with Harm Sherman, Paul Elliott and someone else (whose name I can't remember). He graduated in 1925. He went to Iowa State College and graduated with a degree in Animal Husbandry in 1929. He was also in ROTC like Dad and also was the Drum Major. After graduation, Gordon managed Mother's farm, buying additional adjacent land as it became available. Besides raising beef cattle and growing crops, he had a dairy herd and raised hogs. Dorothy raised chickens and sold eggs. Having been in college during the Depression, she saved the egg money for her children's college education, however by the 1950's when they started college, money was not a problem.

Gordon married Dorothy Allen⁶ who also went to Ames. They were married at the Collegiate Presbyterian Church in Ames on June 15, 1931, the day that Dorothy graduated. I signed the license when they were married. I was at the wedding and I think her brother, Don, was the other person who signed the license. I don't think that they had attendants. Gordon wasn't in college at the same time that I was. Dorothy was there when I was a freshman and she finished college at the end of the year when I stayed out for the winter and spring term. That would have been my second year. Dorothy lived in a

¹ Lester Burnham Eckles, born 1/2/1902, married Dora May Shaw on 6/10/1924, died 2/21/1955. See pp. 74-75 for genealogical chart of his family. See p. 95-96 for a biographical sketch.

² Dora May Shaw, born 8/8/1901, married Lester Burnham Eckles on 6/10/1924, died 4/20/1988.

³ Gordon Bruce Eckles, born 3/25/1907, married Dorothy Pauline Allen on 6/15/1931, died 6/8/1980. See the Appendix for a genealogical chart of his family and for his obituary. See *Aplington History*, p. 262-263 for an article about the G.B. and Dorothy Eckles family.

⁴ From the *Peerless*, '25: "Gordon B. Eckles - better known as 'Bruce' - another outfielder, had a keen eye for flies. His wing was perfect. In batting - two baggers and walks were most common for Bruce."

⁵ From the *Peerless*, '25: "Bruce always made them under the basket and was considered the best free-throw man on the team. His ability to jump was also another big factor in his playing, and he was a great hand at breaking up passes."

⁶ Dorothy Pauline Allen, born 12/22/1905, married Gordon Bruce Eckles on 6/15/1931.

different dormitory.⁷ She and Gordon had been dating and she came to our house once or twice, before the year she finished school.

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Gordon Bruce and Lester Burnham Eckles - 1908

Dora, Lester, Bob and Oliver Eckles

⁷ Note from Doreen Duba: During the first three years of college Mother lived with Byron and Nora Hamilton in Ames. Nora Hamilton was a Hosler from near Richland, Iowa. The Hoslers and Allens had adjoining farms. Byron was a photographer. Mother helped with their children and also helped in the photo lab for her board and room. After her third year of college, Mother taught home economics for two years in Lake Park, IA. In that way she was able to save enough money to finish her last year of college. In Lake Park she stayed with Vivian and Cora Byers. He was on the school board. The Byers were Mother's aunt and uncle, Cora being W. O. Allen's sister.

Gordon Bruce Eckles - about 1909
Bruce Eckles - H.S. graduation - 1925

Dorothy Pauline and Donald Paul Allen -
11/29/1909
Dorothy Allen - H.S. graduation - 1925

Gordon Bruce Eckles in ROTC - I.S.C.

Gordon Bruce Eckles - Drum Major - I.S.C.

Dorothy Pauline Allen - Gordon Bruce Eckles
June 15, 1931

Back Row: Margaret Bailey (Roommate), Wesley Stukenburg (Organist), Dr. Barlow, Gilbert Flieg, Miss Lane (Secretary), Dr. Boozer (Minister), R.B. Eckles, Donald Allen

Second Row: Dortha Eckles, Faye Flieg, Edith Smith, Nora Hamilton

Third Row: Mary Burnham, Ena Eckles, Effie Allen, W.O. Allen, Dorothy Allen, Bruce Eckles

Children: Milford Flieg, Marian Flieg, Margaret Flieg

REMEMBRANCES ABOUT FARMING AND HOUSEWORK

When I was a kid, farmers helped each other with silo filling, threshing and butchering. They didn't help with the butchering at our house though. Mother was too particular. She did her own. She didn't even like the way my husband, George, did it. George took the dining room table and stretched it out and had a place to work. When Mother was canning meat they brought up one of the tables we kept in the basement and used that for a meat table. It was too small, especially because she tried to fasten the grinder on the table too. Dad would cut off chunks of meat. She would sit at the other end of the table and would cut them in smaller pieces and put them in the jar just so, so that it was packed just right. Then she would put a little piece of fat on top. After that the jars would go into a copper boiler, probably all at once. Keeping the fire going for the butchering was quite a job. We butchered in the winter, of course. She would keep on until she had the right number of jars that would fit into the boiler. They had to be all the same height and everything. She never got ready ahead of time, to have the jars washed. We had to wash the jars that same day. They would do it on Saturday when I was home to help. Later on, we were the first ones to have a pressure cooker; that is the one that Dorothy used for a planter. Of course that would only hold three jars. Jesse Stockdales, who lived just east of us on the north side of the road, would trade fresh meat with us when they butchered. We would come home from their farm with a piece of tenderloin or something. They didn't butcher at the same time we did. When we butchered we would send them some fresh meat.

I can remember cooking for the silo fillers and threshing crews. There was a lot of preparing for those men. We always had a big roast that Mother cooked in the pressure cooker. Then we had a vegetable and potatoes. I suppose she made gravy. I don't remember that part. We probably had pickles on the table also. We had the hired man's wife come in, hopefully, to help. The hired man's wife always did the tea and the coffee. Then there was pie for dessert. Mother wasn't very good at planning ahead. She had to make those pies the same morning of course, and often we would have to iron the tablecloth that morning. She did bake the bread the day before. That she did get done ahead of time.

We took lunch out to the men, both morning and afternoon.. We had a big basket to put the lunch in. We made sandwiches. Dad would come home with lunch meat. Mother didn't like that. Sometimes we would also use cheese. Then we put the hot coffee in one of those big blue, enamelled coffee pots. It was always sugared and creamed in the kitchen. The men had to drink it the way it was. First we had matching enamelled cups, the ones with handles that wouldn't stack. Then we got some new cups that would stack together. Serving lunch at threshing time was easy. We would take it out to the machine, out of the wind, and let them help themselves. It seemed that with threshing they would all be there at once. With silo filling, it was more difficult. The men came in to the silo at different times.

For threshing it was quite a crew. It included Gus Stukenburg, I remember. Ackerman owned the threshing machine, a steam one. Our neighbors, Glen and Ray Stockdale, had their own machine which was smaller and was run with a tractor. It was called a grain separator.

For silo filling there weren't as many men. Ray Stockdale, Frank Lindaman and the Ostercamps from north of town all had silos and we worked together. The first negro I ever had very much contact with, if you would call it contact, was serving coffee and pie to this hired man of Frank Lindamans. He was with them for awhile. Ivan Lindaman's wife could tell about him. He came as part of a railroad crew which had its own cook car and dormitory car. They would stay all season. It seemed they stayed a long time, changing the rails or ties for quite a length of the railroad bed. For some reason when it came time for the crew to leave, he stayed and worked for Frank Lindaman. There was a negro at the table and they all got along the way I remember. Here in Iowa, as far as we knew, it was all right to have them at the same table.

We had hired men who helped on the farm. They lived in the tenant house across the road, west of the feed lot. There was a lot of work to do on the farm. It was a bad business if a hired man quit all of a sudden.

One hired man who I remember was Jacob Ploeger. He, his wife Harmina, and family came from Holland. Mother used to say he was the best hired man we ever had. He had come here to learn. A lot of families around Aplington came from Germany and Holland and most of them were farmers. The Ploegers had three boys when they came to America. One of the boys, who was only two, died soon

after they came to America because of improper use of ether. Later more children were born; they had eight children in all. After the Ploegers no longer worked on our farm, they moved to a place between Austinville and Ackley. Dad used to go and see them. When I was in junior high school I went to Ackley to have my teeth straightened. If Dad took me, he would always stop and visit with them a while.

Once we had a cow that wouldn't stand to be milked unless she was standing on the milker's foot. Dad and Gordon bought some shoes on sale, maybe from Army surplus, which had pointed toes which were not in style. They wore them for farming, especially for milking. With those shoes they would let the cow stand on the pointed toe and she would be quiet.

The Beaver Creek ran from west to east along the railroad north of the highway. There was a mill down by the creek. The mill race went south, under a railroad bridge. It stayed north of the highway but was very near the road by the time it got to our lane. The current drive-in cafe located on the west end of Aplington was built near the former mill race. It has been filled in using top soil off of Glen Stockdale's gravel pits, some of them just west of Paul Willis' farm. The mill itself was east of "Fern Hill," in the bottom land. Pilings, footings and parts of a roadway were still visible in the 1950's. Townspeople and farmers brought corn, wheat and oats to the mill for grinding.

The railroad owned the wooded land adjoining the railroad which it divided and sold for woodlots. Townspeople purchased these woodlots when wood was still used for fuel. Then coal began to be shipped in by train; people liked it better than hiring someone to cut wood for them. Grandpa Burnham started to buy the woodlots as the townspeople began to sell them. They weren't productive but Grandpa thought he should own them. C. J. Stockdale bought one or two of these lots, up the hill, east of where George and I farmed. As late as the 1940's his son, Glenn Stockdale, got firewood off of these lots. For a while he pastured a horse there. At first it wasn't fenced; we kind of knew where the fence would be though. Glenn got awfully tired of taking care of fence for one horse. When Mrs. C. J. Stockdale's estate was settled, the Eckles bought these woodlots.

Over the years these woods provided recreation for several generations of our family as well as townspeople. The boy scouts used to have camp outs there. There were several good hills for sledding, including Fern Hill. The sledding hill between the highway and the railroad tracks northwest of the tenant house at Gordon's had the added advantage of the frozen creek bed at the bottom. Youth groups from the church had Sunday afternoon sledding there with hot chocolate at Gordon's afterwards. The Mariner's group from our church used to have picnics in the woods. Gordon provided horses for them to ride.

Definitely housework was different from what it is now. Everything took longer to do even when we had electricity. I sometimes wonder how we got it all done.

Before we had a refrigerator, it was difficult to keep food from spoiling. In the summer, we put milk and butter down in the well. We put the milk in that same blue enamelled pail and we would put the butter in another container that was tight. We had a stone or something at the bottom of the well that was flat to set things on. We hoped that they would keep, that the milk would stay sweet until supper time. There would be someone pumping water often and the water would run over the containers and keep them cool. We saved left-overs and ate them the next meal. When we had threshers and enough of them didn't show up, we would have to re-cook the food. The dumb-waiter in the kitchen was supposed to be used to keep things cool in the basement, but I never knew it to be used. It was a mousey place. It seemed we were always trapping mice there.

Most of what I remember about ironing, was with an electric iron. We had a hired girl one time. Before Mother, Grandma and I went to Florida, Dad tried to get somebody to stay with him and Gordon while we women were gone. We tried this woman out but she didn't last long. She was from Waterloo but stayed in Austinville; she walked from her house to our house. We wanted to take the electric iron with us to Florida, so she had to do the ironing with the flat irons, there in the kitchen. We had to keep the fire going to keep the irons hot. It was probably in the fall because we didn't leave for Florida until the winter.

Washing was a problem. In the summer time, we used that old stove (that Mary Meyer got) that was in the woodshed to heat the water and boil the clothes. We had to heat the water first, and then we heated

another batch of water to boil the white clothes in. Boiling them makes them whiter. Now people use bleach. Mother mixed up a solution of lye and something else that foamed terribly when she mixed them. She did it outdoors because of the fumes. You put half a cup of this solution, or some amount, in with the wash water. We had soap in the boiler when we boiled the white clothes. In the summer the washing machine was in the woodshed. In the winter we always had to move the washing machine from the back porch into the dining room and we washed there. It was an electric machine. I don't remember it too well. Anyway, it had a dolly (agitator) that was run with the motor. Then we rinsed with two waters which were in two washtubs. The wringer would swivel around, 90° each time, and then the final wringing would go into the clothes basket. We hung the clothes outside to dry. Drying in the sun helped keep the clothes white. It seemed that washing would often start up Mother's asthma again because of going in and out of doors or from the steam from boiling the clothes.

There was a wooden tub in the woodshed which was used with a plunger, before my time. It had a separate wringer with a handle, which my niece, Doreen Duba, has now. I would use that plunger on really dirty clothes, clothes with manure and mud. I would go to the well and get another pail of water and pre-wash them in the wooden tub before they went into the washing machine. The plunger worked better than using a washboard, I guess. The wooden tub had to be soaked so that it wouldn't leak. You could soak clothes overnight in a wooden tub and they wouldn't get rusty like they would in a metal tub.

We wore wool clothes quite a bit because folks didn't think they had to be washed. Mother thought that I should have a wool challis summer dress and it wouldn't have to be washed, because wool sheds dirt.

I don't remember ever cooking in the woodshed. Grandma Burnham had cooked out there when they were putting the addition on the house. We had a kerosene stove in the porch that we used some in the summer, but it always stunk so, as far as I was concerned. I remember having a sore throat and I blamed it on that smelly kerosene stove. We always had a cookstove in the kitchen. Grandma usually kept the fire going, feeding it wood or cobs. She'd bring in the wood sometimes. She had one elaborate dessert she would make called "floating island." It was a custard with the egg whites beat up and cooked on top of the hot milk (rather than baked as a meringue). She turned the egg whites over to cook both sides. When it was ready to serve, she would take off the egg whites and set them aside while the custard was put into the dishes. Then she would top each dish of custard with the egg whites. She would put red sugar on the meringue. We had a shaker that looked like an ear of corn that was filled with red sugar.

Mother mainly cooked meat and potatoes. We had a vegetable most of the time. She tried canning corn, but it never tasted right; we called it "flat sour." We went to a lot of work to wash everything but that didn't help. We ate a lot of canned peas, the tiny, baby sweet peas. They were much sweeter and more tender. We stored carrots and beets, but they took too much time to get ready. Therefore we often ended up throwing them out in the spring because they weren't used. Unlike the canned peas, carrots and beets couldn't wait until the last minute to be cooked. Mother always made her own bread. Grandma didn't like store-bought bread. Mother mostly made white bread, but sometimes she made whole wheat.

We had several old utensils that I remember. There was a pancake turner⁸ which was a wedding present to Eliza Prall. She was married in 1836 and came to Iowa from out east. Grandma always told how old it was when she washed it. I used this pancake turner often when I was a girl. It was so nice because it was flat and slid right under the pancakes. I had to learn how to use something else after I left home. We used a big round griddle, about 2 feet in diameter that went right on top of the cookstove. We took the stove lid off and without a lot of fire we could cook one pancake at a time. One of the things I got when Mother's things were divided was this old pancake turner.

Then we had an old wooden potato masher. It was narrow at one end. Grandma would say, "Where's my potato masher?" when she wanted to pound cracker crumbs. We never used it for potatoes, just for dry foods. We also had a rolling pin which was about a foot long. It didn't have handles but had tapered ends which were carved. The center part was smooth. It could have come from Grandma's mother. It was always in the storage bin. We had two bins under the cupboard. One was for flour and the other was where the rolling pin was kept, along with flour sacks we used over the bread dough when it was ready to rise.

⁸ See p. 52 for a picture of the pancake turner.

Mother spent a lot of time sewing and patching. She was very particular with both her sewing and her patching. She would rip a patch off entirely and do it over again, instead of taking a tuck in it. At first she had a treadle machine. One year at the State Fair, Singer was demonstrating one with a motor and Grandma bought it. She said Mother would get rheumatism peddling the old machine. Mother always complained that there were some things which she couldn't do as well with the electric machine. I think one thing was button holes.

We had a telephone ever since I can remember. We had to yell into it for long distances telephone calls. It often was out of order whenever we had storms. The phone was on the wall in the sewing room, to the north of the sewing machine. Mary has some of the old telephone directories from 1921 and 1928. Our telephone number was 2116. Later our telephone number was 22F11. That was Line 22, 1 long ring and 1 short ring. I'm not sure what the "F" stood for, but it was a party line. Anyone on Line 22 could pick up their telephone and listen to our conversation.

I hardly remember what it was like before we had electricity. I know the men had to take up the floor boards upstairs, to put in the wiring. When I was little it seemed the electricity would be off for a day or two with every storm. Then we would use the hanging kerosene lamp in the kitchen. It made a pretty good light considering the type of fixture; at least it was better than having the lamp on the table. In the attic of the house were some old gas lights. Originally they were attached to the wall, quite elaborate, each with a round globe. They came out about a foot from the wall and could swing in different positions. There were three of them. Mary gave them to the Parkersburg Historical Society.

I remember when they redid the water system in the house. They got an electric water pump and it seemed the lightning was always hitting that and then we wouldn't have water. We would call Heiko Brouwer out to fix that pump, to get it going. Then the men got so they could just change a fuse or something and that would take care of it. They had running water in the house before they had electricity. There was a tin-lined water tank in a wooden box up in the attic. I don't know how they got the water up there, whether they pumped it by hand or what. From the tank the water flowed by gravity. On the first floor there was a stool with a water closet up by the ceiling and there was a full bathroom on the second floor. There had always been pipes across the ceiling of the kitchen as long as I can remember. They added more when they got the water pump. Grandma had to have fresh water. She couldn't drink the water that sat in the tank. The faucet on the west side of the sink was fresh water. Whenever you opened that faucet, it started the pump. It was fresh water for Grandma to drink but it started the pump and they didn't like to run the pump too much, so they never used it. We had a water pail instead, for drinking water. After all the expense of putting in that extra faucet and extra piping, and then they didn't use it!

We always used the dry sink in the kitchen to wash dishes, even after we had the other sink with running water. There were always dishes waiting to be washed. If we had put them in the other sink, we wouldn't have been able to wash our hands. After washing the dishes, we would take them out and rinse them in hot water and then put them in the rack to dry. There was a big enamelled cake pan with a rack on top that we used for a drainer. Grandma usually was the one who washed dishes. It seemed that washing dishes was always a problem. Another problem we had was when somebody else would wash dishes. They didn't know what a dry sink was. They would dump the dirty water down into the sink but there was no drain. The water would run down in the pans below! The top of the dry sink was zinc. The salt box was above it, under the clock shelf. We would take salt out with our fingers and it would dribble a little. The zinc top was pitted because of that salt.

I always thought that Mother could change the color of the kitchen, but she always wanted it gray, because it matched the stove. I painted the kitchen once after I was married. I came up and stayed a week or so and did it. I had to wash the ceiling before I painted it. Roberta was little. Mother tried to take care of her. She was no good at baby-sitting. Maybe she never had to take care of a baby, because Grandma Burnham was there. The worse thing was that she couldn't smell. I don't know when that started.

The iron fence out in front of the house, by the highway and along the lane, had been there as long as I can remember. The lane gate, east of the house, always had the decorative top off of it. It was always down in the grass, next to the gate. On the west side of the house there was woven wire. Usually the car would be in the lane, but when we were dressed up Dad would drive the car up close to the house so we wouldn't get our shoes dirty. Then he would go back out, around the windmill. There was kind of a

path where the grass didn't grow.

We didn't mow the yard. The men brought in a hay mower once in a while. The yard on the west side of the house had sheep in it and often the fence had to be fixed. That's where the clothesline was, too. Sometimes when I hung up clothes I got bunted.

We had a large garden, both vegetable and berries. We also had an orchard with apple trees. Mother wore denim clothes when she gardened especially when she would trim the raspberries. Grandma had a tool which she called a spud. It had a long handle with a little blade. It had two edges. She would push that spud under the weeds with the long handle. She could reach way under the raspberries with that spud and cut off the weeds. When the blackberries were almost ripe Grandma would go out and clean the ragweed out of the berries with that spud. She always had to have the spud sharpened. Dad would take it on the grindstone and have it sharpened on that edge. It took another person to hold that long handle while Dad sharpened it. We all got new straw hats each year to protect us from the sun. That was part of going outdoors - to get your straw hat.

Mother never did chores outside except to bring in cobs and wood. Once when Gordon was raising chickens, maybe for a school or 4-H project, she did gather eggs for him so they wouldn't freeze.

There was a row of box elder trees, west of the kitchen. There was room for extra wood between those trees. They put some down in the basement so that it would stay dry. We heated the house with a big wood furnace which had a big firebox. The chains to open and close the draft on the furnace were in the sewing room by the door. After Dad died, Mother couldn't handle the wood-burning furnace. Gordon would come in and fix the fire, probably the rest of that winter after Dad died. He soon had it changed to an oil-burning furnace. That was after I left home.

There is a picture of Dorothy (Eckles) hauling a load of firewood, pulled by a team of mules. That would have been, Jennie and Jack. We had them for quite awhile and they were raised from our horses, I think. I don't know where they got the donkey semen from to do it. Maybe someone kept a donkey or something, I don't remember.

Picture of pancake turner -
Wedding gift to Eliza Prall Smith- Married in 1836

Dorothy Eckles with team of mules hauling wood

STORIES ABOUT MY LIFE¹

My brother, Lester was 9 years older than I was and Gordon, was four years older. Gordon was always bossing me because I was the baby and he was used to telling me what to do.

When I was young, I mostly played by myself. We had a rope swing for awhile, until it rotted out. It was a rope swing with a board to sit on, not a gunnysack swing or a tire swing. I remember one time I wanted Mother to swing me. Mother said she had to go do something else and she left me. Anyway, she said I used to spend a lot of time swinging when I was a little girl because there wasn't anyone else to play with. I learned to "work up," by pulling on the ropes and swinging my legs to get the swing moving.

I remember some of the toys which we had. One was a set of toy chimes, enclosed in a small box. I think it was Lester's. Mary has a photograph of our Christmas tree and these chimes are shown under the tree. Then there was a miniature, metal cookstove, with two miniature pans in the oven. I was told that a store which sold stoves used them as a promotion. It was always in the toy box which was the big drawer of the desk in the sewing room. We had puzzles, marbles and blocks also. I had two very nice, miniature tea sets, one Japanese and the other American. They were still in their original boxes. Mother had a doll with a porcelain head. Her name was Isabel. I still have that doll to this day. It is in very good condition. When Mother's things were divided among the family members, the puzzles, marbles and blocks were among the things that they chose.²

Mother didn't make a big deal out of Christmas. We didn't have a tree very often. We hung our stockings by the fireplace though. We put a weight on top of them, so they wouldn't fall. Our presents were always on the table anyway, not in the stockings, on Christmas morning. Mother made some things for us. Mainly we got things we would have had to buy anyway. I got a pair of gloves one year. It was all the rage to have long gloves to the elbows and then we carefully folded them down to the wrist. Mine were black and white and I wore them for a long time. Adeline Schuck (Meyer) remembers that they used candles on the Christmas tree at church. Sam Patterson stood there with a pail of water and a dipper in case a fire started.

In 1915 the Aplington community voted to consolidate the school.³ This meant a much larger enrollment. They added three teachers to the staff and they went from four school buses to nine. Some students didn't go to school by bus. For instance Mildred Patterson, and probably others from Austinville, went by train. There was an 8:00 a.m. train which went east and a 5:00 p.m. train which was the last train which went west. Those students got their homework done at school before it was time to go to the depot and catch that last train. In 1917 a three story brick building was begun on the present school site. Before it was finished they had moved in a country school for the first grade and another was used for manual training. It was new to have manual training for the high school. Before the new building was finished, all the rest of the students had to crowd into the old two story wooden building. The double school benches that were on the porch in our house came out of the old school when they tore it down.

I went to school my first four months, until Christmas, in an old school house to the west of the new school house, before it was ready. We had a long Christmas vacation and the school was supposed to be finished when we came back in January. As I remember, the plumbing wasn't finished and we had to go outdoors to the toilets. There were several toilets, maybe three. I was scared stiff. There were these great big girls going in there and I was a little thing, a first grader, standing out there in the cold. I always went to school on a school bus. It was horse drawn and the benches were on either side facing

¹ Dotha Maryena Eckles, born 9/2/1911, married George McKinley Willis on 10/16/1935.

² See p. 62-63 for photographs of some of these toys.

³ The measure to consolidate passed in 1915 by a large vote of the community. *Aplington History*, pp 109-113.

each other.⁴ John Koppendreyer was the driver. The bus picked up George Van Loh, the Freys (who lived where Jim Willis lives), George Koppendreyer's children (who lived where Russ Meyer lives) and the three of us along this road. I think they picked up the DeBoers south of here. We could look out the kitchen window and see the bus coming down the south road. C. J. Stockdale's children always drove by themselves. The Frey boys were big and had long legs. I was one of the last to get in and one of the littlest. They would always move me along to sit opposite those long-legged boys. That gave them room for their feet when I sat across from them. The bus may not have been very big but it seemed big to me trying to climb up there. I remember once when it was muddy, I had my valentines for Valentine's Day and I dropped them. There was no handle to get hold of to get on the bus. I started to cry. Lester said, "Well, pick them up."

Muddy roads were too much for the bus. It would get stuck. One time, when I was a little bigger, John Koppendreyer had his horses pull a bobsled for a "school bus." As he turned down the south road the big boys got together and put the weight on the one side and the sled tipped over into the ditch. The boys were big enough to right the sled so that everyone could get back in.

Later, when the school bus was too full, Gordon drove the surrey for the two of us and the Jesse Stockdale children, who lived just east of us and across the road. That would have been after Lester was out of school. The surrey was two-seated. He parked over behind the school, near where the Valentine's used to live, northwest of the school. He put the team of horses in a barn there that wasn't being used. When Lydia Stockdale rode with us, she was always late. Also she insisted on being picked up after school at the schoolhouse like all the students who took buses, so Gordon had to run over to the Valentines where the horses were kept and then come back over to the school to pick her up.

When Gordon was driving the surrey he thought I could help hitch it up, but I didn't know how. Once in a while I tried to harness the horses, but I didn't really do it. It wasn't my job. I can remember when Grandma Burnham wanted to go to the bank on a certain day and she wanted the horse hitched up to her buggy, so she could go to the bank. I didn't do it. Someone else did. I didn't need to learn to do anything outdoors, except to carry in wood and cobs and that sort of thing. I did help in the house and in the garden. It was my job to wash the separator. It wasn't until I was married that I learned to drive a tractor. I began driving a car when I could only see between the spokes on the steering wheel. Later, in 1929, I got my driver's license for 50¢. By that time having a license had become a law.

When I was in school, I was always trying to find something to read. That's all I did as I remember it. After supper we basically sat and read. We had one light bulb which hung in the middle of the living room. The table was under that, with the papers stacked up on it. This was one of the marble-topped, walnut tables; I think it is the one Elaine has. You could get three chairs around it. We would try to see to read. Dad tried to read the paper some, and then he would go to sleep. Eventually I would go off to bed.

When I was small I slept in the room with my parents. Later my bedroom was what was called the "corn room" (because that is where they used to dry seed corn). It was the smallest of the bedrooms. In it was a three-quarter bed and a washstand which had been a commode, only we put a bottom in it. This is where I kept my shoes, since I had so many - a good pair, an old pair and one with high tops which I used with ice skates. These high-topped shoes didn't fit very well so they never wore out. My bedroom was at the back of the house, near the back stairway. The attic steps came down into the room. That became my closet. We fixed a pole across the corner somehow to hang my clothes on. Grandma Burnham's room was right across the hall and hers was a good-sized room.

Sometimes Grant Whaley, Mother's cousin, would stay for a month at a time, supposedly to work, but he wasn't much help. He wasn't put in the guest bedroom because he smoked cigars and that might make the mattress smell. Instead he was put in my bedroom and I had to move into the guest room. It

⁴ See *Aplington History*, p. 144 for a picture of this bus and its occupants taken in 1917.

was cold there because it was a long way from the furnace and had only one register. When he left I moved back where it was warm. The guest room had a bird's-eye maple bed and dresser, which was a two-layered thing, a cedar chest, and a wash stand which had a commode in it. The lid of that commode had a knitted cap on it; I supposed it was for dulling the sound when you closed it. The room had a big window over the parlor window and just one west window for air.

I was in Camp Fire Girls for a few years when I was in elementary school. A sixth grade teacher was the sponsor. We met in homes in the evenings. Dad had to come and pick me up after the meetings. We worked on different projects to earn beads for our Indian outfits, which were brown Indian maiden dresses. One time we met at my house for a special daytime meeting. The other girls walked out from town. We roasted marshmallows in our fireplace using long hatpins. I went to camp several times in Cedar Falls with the Camp Fire Girls.

Chautauqua programs were popular when I was in school. They were our entertainment before movies and radio arrived. There were speakers, musical numbers and dramatic presentations that were very exciting for us since we rarely saw entertainment. The programs were held in large tents. Local people guaranteed enough receipts to cover the costs before the shows were booked. I remember that one night, after we were all in bed, a man came to our house and stood yelling under the window. He wanted Dad to be a local sponsor for the next Chautauqua program. A clipping from the May 29, 1913 *Aplington News* tells about one program. "The Aplington Chautauqua opens next Wednesday, June 4th at 2:30. Season tickets are only one dollar for 12 numbers or 8 cents a number. You can't afford to stay at home for that price. Six days of instruction and amusement, twelve programs, with change of program each day except Sunday."

We went to the State Fair in Des Moines several times. Grandma went with us. She wanted to use a folding canvas seat to rest on when she got tired. I lugged it around until she needed it. Mother and Dad were entertained elsewhere on the grounds because Dad was in Legislature. We camped out one time. Grandma slept in the back seat of the car and I think the rest of us slept in a tent. Other times we just went for one day.

Other than that it seemed to me that we never went anywhere except to church. When I was small, Mother and Dad went to choir practice, and when they got home Mother had to wake me up so that she could put my hair up on rags so that it would look nice for Sunday. Mother wore her hair on top of her head. I never knew it to be any other way.

Once when I was in junior high school I went to Ames to Veishea. This was a special student-sponsored event held each spring. The word VEISHEA stands for the various programs at Ames (V for Veterinary, E for Engineering, IS for Industrial Science, HE for Home Economics and A for Agriculture.) I stayed in Margaret Hall with Ann Austin who was in college at that time. She later married B. F. Lindeman, which made them double cousins. The folks went with me to Ames. We went to an entertainment one night. There was music and dancing in a play. I was enthralled. This was before television and I had never seen anything like it. It might have been when Lester was at Ames. I know we went to his commencement. Carry Chapman Catt spoke at it. She was a leader of the woman's suffrage movement and founded the League of Women Voters in 1919. She was a member of the class of 1880.

I was a high school sophomore the winter Mother and I went to Des Moines with Dad while he was in the legislature. I tried to go to school there, probably starting right after the beginning of January. That was a scary experience for me. I was a stranger and didn't know how a big school was run. The folks had someone's daughter take me around and introduce me. She didn't tell me all the details though. I think I went just half days, not full-time, somehow. I remember tearing into the building one day, to go to my locker. They had these proctors and they said, "You can't go there." I was headed where I shouldn't have been at that hour. Of course, I didn't have a watch. I don't know how I managed. I

wasn't able to take agriculture there, I remember. I did write a paper though, probably in English class. I didn't know how they did their outlining. I thought I knew some things from high school in Aplington, but it didn't carry over. I wasn't too good anyway. From a magazine that we took, I read an article about Land Grant Colleges and wrote a good article about that, I thought. But I didn't outline it correctly or there were other details I didn't pay attention to. I hadn't done any research at all; it was just taken from the magazine. After a while I got used to the routine, but I didn't like it. It was a big high school and I was a country girl.

The school and the capitol were both within walking distance of where we lived that winter. We could see both the capitol and the high school from there. I guess that was North High School. I was only in Des Moines my sophomore year. Other years, if Mother was in Des Moines, I stayed at Adeline Schuck's (now Mrs. Alfred Meyer), but Mother stayed home most of the time.

While I was in high school I played basketball, especially my senior year. Mother didn't approve of me going far away and riding with others. Sometimes Dad would come to the games, but usually after the half time so that he wouldn't have to pay the admission! Then he would take me home. Also Dad would come to the high school to pick me up after practice. We played six on a team, but used three courts. One was for the forwards, one in the center for passing and one on the opposite side where guards played against the other team's forwards. I played guard. I didn't sing in the chorus like Gordon and Lester did because I never could carry a tune.

I graduated from Aplington High School in 1929 and went to Iowa State College in Ames. I got several "I" pins, "I" for Iowa, for various intermural sports, volleyball, hockey, basketball, whatever was in season. I enjoyed the sports more than going to the library and doing the reading that I was supposed to do.

I met George (Willis)⁵ at the Collegiate Presbyterian Church in Ames, Iowa. We were both students at Iowa State College. He proposed to me under the Campanile. I knew he was going to propose sometime. His proposal was a happy time for me.

George had to work his way through college. Before starting college, he worked for the railroad in Missouri, probably the Rock Island line. He got that job because his dad, who lived in Mitchellville, Iowa, was on the section crew which did daily repairs and inspections. A couple of summers he worked for the Iowa State Highway Commission. One summer he went to Kansas for ROTC training. He didn't start college until he had some money saved up. He always said he had a high school teacher who had inspired him to go on to college. His mother said, "I'll do your laundry," and it was sent home every week and returned a few days later. That was before the days of laundromats.

I finished college in the spring of 1934 with a degree in Home Economics. George graduated from Iowa State in March of 1935 with a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering. We weren't married until George was through school and I had worked 15 months. We were married in the Collegiate Presbyterian Church on October 16, 1935. Doreen was the ring bearer. She was four years old.

I didn't start working right away after graduation. It was in the summer of 1934 and I had talked Mother into getting wallpaper for the sewing room. I remember that as we were working at that, I got a telephone call asking if I would be interested in a job in Audubon and Guthrie Counties as an Extension Home Demonstration Agent. I went for the interview and got the job. I left Mother with the wallpapering. I think we had gotten the ceiling papered though. The people at the extension office wanted me to start within a few days. I said, "I can't. I don't have a car." They asked me what I was driving. I told them, "I'm driving my mother's car. She has to have it." So I went out to buy a used car.

⁵ George McKinley Willis, born 5/19/1907, married Dortha Maryena Eckles on 10/16/1935, died 2/7/1986.

They brought one out for us to see and I bought it but I had to borrow some money from Sam Patterson. George didn't had a car. He used his folk's car and it wasn't much of a car. The first time he tried to come to see me, he had car trouble. I remember he had to call and say he couldn't make it. At some point his dad took that car all apart. I don't know if he thought he could fix it up or not, but that was the end of the car. Therefore, I was the one with the car and within ten days I started my new job.

By the time we were married I had a new car. I sold that old one for \$100 even though the block was cracked and the starter was stuck. I had gone to Mitchellville to see George. He thought we ought to drain the radiator and save the anti-freeze. George figured he could put just plain water in the radiator. Well, the wind began to blow out of the northwest that night and it froze. The car was sitting outside and probably that's when the block cracked. I started to drive to Guthrie Center the next morning. By the time I got to Altoona the car was getting hot. What a trip I had! I put in water and then the starter began to stick. I got back and parked the car in front of the house I was staying at and there it sat until I bought a new car. I said to the mechanic, "It is out there. You can look at it. The starter is stuck. I can't shake it loose." I called George to say they had offered me \$100 for the old car. He said, "Go ahead, I can help with it." I managed to get my \$100 and bought a new car. It was 1935 and it was one of the first V8's. You had to fold the back seats down to get into the trunk. There wasn't any opening to the trunk from the outside.

After I had the new car, I took a group of Farm Bureau women to a state meeting in Des Moines and it got icy. As we got closer to Des Moines, there was a hill that no one was getting up. I said, "I've got chains back in the trunk." These women had to get out of the back seat to get the chains out. Somebody helped to get the chains on the car and we got up the hill. Then it thawed and I had to get somebody to take the chains off so we could go home. I was just a kid but it was part of my job to take these Farm Bureau women from Audubon to the meeting in Des Moines and I made it!

After we were married we tried to go to one home or the other for the holidays. Sometimes we would try to make both of them. There was always a problem about which home to go to and how to do it. George didn't milk at that time but he had to be at work on Monday morning. We usually stayed overnight when we went to visit our parents. I remember when George's father was sick, we would try to go to Mitchellville to see him for at least part of a Sunday. That was when we were at Sheridan or Albia or Oskaloosa, one of those different places where we used to live.

When we were first married we lived in Sheridan and George was with the Highway Commission. I wasn't working then. I had to quit because the state wouldn't hire two people from the same family. When he was working, I wasn't, and his wages were \$5 less than mine were. I had been making \$105 a month; he was making \$100 a month. That is what we were married on. He had graduated with a degree in civil engineering but he wasn't licensed. He was a rodman with a surveying crew.

We went from Sheridan to Oskaloosa. There he was a bridge inspector one summer. One of the bridges he was responsible for was between Pella and Oskaloosa where a new dam was being built to make Lake Red Rock. That bridge is long gone. His mother used to say, "They're taking down your bridge now." When they built the dam they cut all the trees where the lake was going to be. They didn't leave them standing to die. They cut them and just left them there. It didn't look right to me but after the water came up, it was all right, I guess.

In Oskaloosa we had an apartment that was right by the railroad tracks. I got tired of that apartment before the summer was over. I would hang my laundry on the clothesline outdoors and the steam engines let out the smoke all over my clean clothes. It was so bad that I would have to wash them over again. That was a dirty summer as far as I was concerned. After Oskaloosa, we went back to Sheridan where George was in the district office of the highway department all that year.

We lived in each town for a short time and lived in whatever was available. Once we lived in a tourist cabin behind a gasoline station. That is when Roberta was little, maybe 9 months old - and it just had board walls. It wasn't insulated or anything. It had a heating stove which would keep the main room warm. We put Roberta's crib near the stove to keep her warm. When it was time for bed we would open the bedroom door and we would sleep in there. The person who ran the station said, "I've got a house here. When it gets a little warmer, I will put a heating stove in that and you can live there." It was a full house but did not have much in the way of furniture - no more than the cabin had. When we moved into that house we bought a refrigerator to keep Roberta's milk sweet. Up to that time we only had ice boxes. We moved that refrigerator from there and it finally ended up in Aplington where we moved in 1947.

I don't remember where we were when George lost his job, not actually lost his job, but they just cut him off. He knew he wasn't going to have any work that winter so we came to the folks in Aplington for awhile while he looked for a job. He couldn't get a yes or a no from different places where he applied. Then he got on as an assistant county engineer at Black Hawk County. We lived in two different places while he had that job. First we moved to Cedar Falls in an upstairs apartment. We moved the refrigerator up all those steps. First there were steps up to the house from the sidewalk and then there was a long flight of steps up to the apartment. We lived there less than a year. I remember it was getting cold when we moved in. After that we lived in a house in Waterloo.

By November 1941 we had three children, Roberta, Raymond and Elaine. Raymond and Elaine, as well as Jim and Paul, were all born at the DeBuhr Maternity Home in Aplington, as were most babies born in the community. The home was run by two sisters, Johanna DeBuhr, who was a nurse with midwifery training from a school in Minneapolis, and Lanie who was the chief cook and housekeeper. The babies were delivered by the local doctor, Dr. F. A. Rolfs, known as Doc Fred.⁶ The maternity home was a transition between home deliveries and hospital deliveries.

Soon after Elaine was born, World War II started. George escaped the draft when President Roosevelt decided that 35 was too old to be in the draft. George was 35 at the time. The assistant engineer in Black Hawk, the one who was just over George, was in the Reserves in ROTC. When he was called to the service, George was able to step into that job. We lived in Waterloo on 7th Street all during the war. We paid \$25 a month for the house because rents were frozen during the war. I don't know what George was making then, but more than \$100 a month for sure. As far as I know George liked his work in Waterloo. After we were living on the farm and we would go to Waterloo, he would go back and see his old secretary who was still in the office. The Black Hawk County Courthouse was an old building at that time which had statues on the roof and Roberta would call them dolls. That building was downtown and has since been taken down. I could walk to the courthouse with the baby carriage.

We were there when Elaine had her radium treatments on her blood vessels. She had a birth mark right under her knee. It was a whole collection of blood vessels. It was red and we decided to have something done to take it off. They put radium on that area. They took a picture when we first went in and then later they took another picture to show the difference. It was always scaly afterwards. It was easy for her to scratch it and it would open up and bleed. I think she still has the roughness there. If she wore shorts it would still show, though it's not too conspicuous.

After the war was over George's supervisor came back. We knew he was coming back ahead of time so

⁶ The DeBuhr Maternity Home was run by the DeBuhr sisters from 1938 to 1950. During that time 499 babies were born. *Aplington History*, pp. 106-108.

we had to make other plans. George had wanted to try farming and I was tired of trying to raise a family in Waterloo. The neighbor kids were playing war games, shooting at everything; I got tired of that.

Anyway, in 1945 we started farming in Grundy County, north of Conrad, on the west side of a north/south road. There's a new house there now. We moved there in the spring. The farm we moved to was a part of the Eckles' family farm, land which had been rented for quite a number of years. The rent went to Mother. It wasn't in my name until after Dad's estate was settled. I was underage when I got it so it was kept in the estate for quite some time. Finally some judge said that it should be divided up since I was of legal age. Lester came up and we talked. Anyway I ended up with part of that farm and Mother got one-third, I guess. Mother only got one-third of Dad's estate and the children two-thirds because Dad died without a will. Anyway as a result, I got that farm. I think it was 160 acres.

We had saved enough that we thought we could start farming. We bought a tractor and a planter. The tractor didn't come when it was supposed to, of course. Machinery was hard to get after the war. One of the neighbors loaned George an old John Deere "D" and I tried to plow with that tractor. It had no hydraulic steering or anything. It was awful, so hard to steer. I had never done that before. I always had stayed in the house. I hadn't been brought up doing any farm work. We always had a hired man and I had 2 older brothers.

Finally the tractor arrived but it couldn't be delivered to Conrad. It was delivered to Eldora, instead. There weren't enough mechanics back from the war to help out and the tractor didn't come complete. George had to put the battery in and anything else that was missing. I sat there with three kids, waiting for him to get that tractor. He didn't want me to go on home because he wanted me to follow him home with the car. I remember that day well! That was the year that if the tractor started, the car didn't. If the car started, the tractor didn't. We took turns pulling one or the other!

We were on that farm only a couple of years. In March of 1947 we kind of traded the farm in Conrad for the Frey farm west of Aplington on the north side of U.S. Highway 20.⁷ We moved on March 1 and Jim was born on March 7. In 1949 Paul was born. We later purchased forty acres from George Van Loh that was directly east of his farm and was possibly part of the original Burnham farm. We also bought two hundred acres from D. U. Harken that was just north across the tracks and had a house on it where several of our hired men lived. Later Paul and Norleen built a house there. Another eighty acres was purchased from the Frey family. It is located northwest of Paul's farm.

While we were on the farm near Conrad we milked two cows by hand. When we got to the farm near Aplington we purchased more cows. By that time we were milking with a Surge milking machine. The milk was cooled in cans set in a large cooler with ice in the bottom and water sprayed on top. Later we added a bulk cooling tank. From 1949 until Roberta left for college, Ray and Roberta did the evening milking. Then Ray and Elaine took over. Milking was hard work. The milking machines weighed approximately 25 pounds and often contained 25 or more pounds of milk. The milking parlor was built in 1949. In 1960, the year after Elaine started college, the pipeline was installed. The pipeline transported milk directly from the milking machine to the bulk cooling tank, saving us from carrying the heavy milking machines back and forth from the cows in the milking parlor, to the tank in the milkroom. It was untouched by human hands.

When we moved into the house on the farm near Aplington, there was no toilet in the bathroom even though the house already had running water. Three weeks after we moved into the house we installed

⁷ See *Aplington History*, p. 178 for a picture and article about the house.

the toilet. Soon steam heat was changed to a hot air heating system. In 1951 we remodeled and installed an upstairs bathroom. The house had a gas cook stove and a kitchen stove that burned corn cobs and wood.

Once Mother came to stay with the children. We had gone to a funeral or something and we weren't to be gone too long. Elaine was big enough to feed the baby, I think it was Paul. That was at the time I was trying to prevent thumb sucking. When the baby was hungry I put a nipple with small holes on the baby bottle which they really had to suck. But when they got fussy or tired (or I wanted to get done with the feeding) I would change the nipple to a bigger one. Elaine knew all of that. Mother saw this dirty nipple. She thought it had to be sterilized and she put it in water and turned on the gas stove. We had gotten the new poly-gas stove by that time. Well, it wasn't like her cookstove. It didn't go out. When we got home that kitchen stunk so of that burned rubber. She had no sense of smell, so she didn't realize that the rubber was burning.

On January 5, 1952, David was born. I remember Doc Fred said, "Dotha, you don't have a baby. You've got half a hired man." While I was in the hospital in Waterloo, there was a fire in our house. The volunteer fire department was unable to put out the fire and save the house because they ran out of water and didn't have enough hose to use the water from the creek east of the house. They had to send to town for a "pumper."

Many people came from the community and helped move furniture and things from the house while it was burning. Even a large freezer filled with food was removed from the basement. People took great care in cleaning the smoke and soot off of items and getting them returned to the family. Bess Rolfs, Doc Fred's wife, took the new baby blanket that was in the hallway upstairs near the start of the fire. She told of washing it by hand and drying it, with a fan blowing on it, to keep it nice and fluffy. The coal bin, filled with a winter's supply of coal, continued to burn for six weeks.

The people took the things they were able to save down to Mother's house in pickups and on hay wagons. Our furniture was put on top of Mother's furniture and the house was full everywhere. Our family moved in also; by that time there were eight of us. George and I slept in Grandma's room and we had the baby bed in there. George would try to go up those back stairs but it was so full of boxes, oatmeal boxes, butter boxes, every kind of box, that he just couldn't get through! So when Mother was gone somewhere after we moved in, I just burned a lot of those boxes so that the stairway would be passable. Well, I sure heard about it. "I won't be able to find a box when I need one," she said. Well, I had left one of every kind. I hadn't completely cleaned the steps but I had gotten them passable.

During this time we were building a new house on the farm. By August we moved back there. At first we lived in the basement while the upstairs was being finished. I laid the hall tile on Thanksgiving Day and by the end of November we were able to move upstairs to the main floor. Mother moved in with us after Christmas because she wasn't able to live alone.

Having experienced one fire, we wanted to be certain it would never happen again. The new house was of concrete block construction. Two inner walls were also of concrete to prevent a fire from spreading. The basement floor, main floor and the roof were of poured concrete. Townspeople were skeptical that the roof wouldn't be strong enough but George reassured them that it was strong enough for the whole town to stand on. Leonard Willike and his crew constructed the house. They built an elevator on site to carry things up to the roof. The Portland Cement Association put out a booklet which showed a picture of our house under construction with a caption saying, "With Concrete It Can't Happen Again."⁸

⁸ Bulletin of the Portland Cement Association, Number 2 (Winter 1953-4). Text and photograph on p. 65.

This house had a crank phone and for a while George used two phones -one in our bedroom and one in a room downstairs where the hired man slept. George would use the phone to wake him up. Our telephone number was 12F4, line 12, with 4 short rings. We had hired men until the children were old enough to take over most of the chores. Orville Harms was the last one. He called Elaine, "Twinkle Toes."

One of the chores the children did was gathering eggs. I remember once when it was "egg day," the day Marlin Lindaman, the egg man, was due to pick up our eggs. I needed enough more eggs to fill up the last layer in the egg crate. It was Roberta's job to go out to the west side of the may mow and gather eggs. There were certain holes (chutes) in the floor used to put hay down for the cows below. Roberta fell down one of these chutes. She came in with eggs dripping down her hair. I had hay balers coming for dinner . . . at least three extra. We had to leave right after dinner for a 4-H Rally Day over at Allison. Paul was a little fellow. I took his clothes along and picked up Dorothy and Mary (or maybe it was Donna). Dorothy dressed Paul on the way to Allison. I hate to think what that kitchen looked like when we came back!

Both Roberta and Elaine were in 4-H. Besides sewing and cooking, they did quite a bit of furniture refurbishing. Roberta and Mary demonstrated at the State Fair. They repaired, refinished and upholstered a folding chair for their demonstration. The judge commented on Roberta's being able to sew, without looking, as she demonstrated. I was so pleased that the judge was really impressed. Roberta and Elaine were in boy's 4-H as well as our boys. They all showed dairy calves.

David drove the power wagon when he was five. Both Ray and Roberta also helped load hay when they were very young. They would drive the tractor and George was on the wagon behind the tractor. The kids could do the steering all right but he didn't trust them to pull the clutch at just the right time so he tied a rope to the clutch, strung it back to the wagon and he could pull the clutch himself, if necessary. Roberta was already doing this when she was in the second, third and fourth grades in Conrad. George didn't have a combine until Paul got a self-propelled one after he was married and living on the farm northwest of us.

I remember the time we had two cars and a tractor stuck over on the sand hill north of the Beaver Creek, near where David Muller lives. I thought the wild plum trees might be blooming and wanted to see if there were some to put into flower arrangements for the church. It was early spring but I thought the ground was firm enough to drive on. The car got stuck though. I walked to Paul's house and Norleen first took me to town so that I could mail my letter to Jim who was in Viet Nam. I knew he would miss his weekly letter so I had to get it mailed. Afterwards Norleen drove over to the hill to see how badly my car was stuck, but to be safe she stayed farther up the hill. She got stuck too. So we both walked back to Norleen's. George was doing Paul's chores because Paul was on a National Guard weekend. When he got done with the chores, he took the little Ford tractor to pull us out, and he got stuck. Now we all had to walk back to Paul's and George walked to our place. It was almost Saturday evening and chores needed to be done. Sunday morning he took the John Deere tractor and a long, heavy steel cable he had salvaged from somewhere and pulled out all three vehicles.

We continued to live there on our farm until 1977 when George and I retired and moved to town.

George and I were both active in the Aplington Presbyterian Church. He was an elder and was the Clerk of Session for over twenty years. Of course I had gone to that church as a youth and had become a member in 1924. After I moved back to Aplington, I joined the church again. In all I have been a member for 62 years. I was a Sunday school teacher, active in the women's groups and served on various committees in the church.

George was a member of the Butler County Farm Bureau, the Lions Club and served for 17 years as Washington Township Clerk. I was active in 4-H and Farm Bureau and was chairman of Washington Homemakers for many years.

Besides having six children, I kept busy with sewing, needle work, and making braided rugs. I guess you would say that my avocation was repairing, refinishing and re-upholstering old furniture. I would buy furniture at Wessels' Auction House in Aplington because I could get it cheap. I bought mostly walnut or oak furniture which needed repair. George had a "Shop Smith" which was a band saw, circular saw, sanding plate, drill press - great flexibility. It was very useful. I used these to shape the parts that I needed to repair the furniture. By the time I was done with the project, the furniture was beautiful.

I have always had a garden and enjoyed raising flowers and making flower arrangements especially for church. For a number of years I raised African violets (and gave them away). Even though my vision is limited now, I still enjoy growing geraniums from cuttings. I have always enjoyed reading, but after losing much of my eyesight in 1991, I've kept my mind alert by listening intently to educational radio programs.

All six of our children graduated from Iowa State University. I guess you would say they are third generation graduates of ISU. Several of them met their spouses at Ames. Roberta and Erwin Hafenstein met at Iowa State. Elaine met Dave Lace while on a summer job in Ohio. They were married at Collegiate Presbyterian at the end of her senior year. Jim and Janelle were both Iowa State students. They met at a dormitory mixer. Both of their sons are currently students at Iowa State University. Their son, Jason, met his wife Brenda at Iowa State also. They are the fourth continual generation in our family to have met their spouses at Iowa State. When Jason and Jared graduate they will be fourth generation Iowa State graduates.

Roberta Hafenstein is a teacher in Portland, Oregon. Raymond and his wife Emily live in Hamden, Connecticut where Ray is an analytic chemist with the U.S. Forest Service. He received his B.S. and Ph.D. degree from ISU. Elaine and her husband Al Forry live outside Galion, Ohio. After thirty years of teaching in public schools, Elaine is retired. She now works part time as a church secretary. Jim and his wife Janelle run the dairy farm on the home place west of Aplington. Janelle teaches first grade in Ackley. Paul and his wife Noreen recently rented out their farm northwest of Aplington and became over-the-road truckers. David and his wife Ila live in Grinnell, Iowa. Dave is employed at Donaldson's, a company that makes mufflers. At the beginning of 1999 I had fifteen grandchildren and eighteen great-grandchildren.

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Miniature Cookstove

Set of Toy Chimes

Ena Burnham's Doll - Isabel

Dotha Maryena Eckles - 4 years old

High school graduation - 1929

Raymond, Paul, James , Elaine
David, Dotha and George Willis - 1965
(Missing from picture - Roberta)

Dotha in the 1960's

Dotha with her flowers

Willis Home - which burned in January 1952

New Willis Home - Constructed in 1952

Austin, Henry	24, 26	Meyer, Lee	10, 37
Austin, Sarah Smith.....	24, 26	Meyer, Mary Eckles	10, 12, 13, 19, 24, 35, 37, 48, 60
Austin, Will	30	Patterson, Alice	13, 16
Austin, William	24, 28, 36	Patterson, Alice Austin	16
Burnham, Alfred	23	Patterson, Sam	36, 56
Burnham, Almon F.	10, 16	Phillips, Marion Eckles.....	19
Burnham, Almon S.	1, 6	Prall, Arendt	3
Burnham, Dotha Foote	23	Prall, Eliza	6, 7
Burnham, Forest	10, 11, 15, 29	Randall, Charles.....	9
Burnham, Franklin	23, 25	Randall, Dora	9
Burnham, Julia Burnham.....	23, 25	Randall, Emily Bruce.....	1
Burnham, Julius	9–11	Randall, Isaac	1
Burnham, Julius H.	10	Randall, Minnie.....	9, 15
Burnham, Julius J.	23, 29, 48	Randall, Rozina	9, 15
Burnham, Mary Smith.....	9, 11, 10–13, 16, 23, 24, 40, 46, 48, 49	Randall, Susan Bruce	13, 14, 15
Burnham, Thomas	1	Smith, Ann	24
Carpenter, Theodosia Smith.....	24	Smith, Eliza Prall.....	3, 7, 23
Cowles, Angeline	2, 6	Smith, Eliza Pril.....	49
Cross, Mildred Patterson.....	53	Smith, G B	5
Duba, Doreen Eckles.....	29, 32, 33, 44	Smith, G. B.	2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 23
Eckles, Arnoldene Yarn	35	Smith, Jean Wilson	23, 26
Eckles, Bob	35, 43, 44	Smith, Maria	2
Eckles, Charles.....	20	Smith, Sheridan	23, 26
Eckles, Clarence.....	19, 20, 30	Smith, Thomas.....	2
Eckles, Della Whinery.....	19	Stockdale, C. J.	24, 27, 48
Eckles, Dora Shaw	43, 44	Stockdale, Lydia Smith.....	24, 27, 48
Eckles, Dorothy Allen.....	19, 34, 36, 37, 43–44, 46, 47, 51, 52, 60	Ukena, Donna Eckles	60
Eckles, Elvira Powers.....	20	Wetherbee, Hannah Eckles.....	21
Eckles, Elvis.....	19	Whaley, Alvin.....	24
Eckles, Era Burnham.....	10, 11, 15, 16, 28–38, 40, 41, 43, 46, 47, 48, 53, 55, 56, 58, 59	Whaley, Jane Smith	24
Eckles, Florence	9	Whaley, Benjamin	61
Eckles, Gordon Bruce.....	1, 13, 19, 23, 30, 31, 35, 36, 40, 43–44, 46, 48, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59	Willis, Brenda	61
Eckles, Hannah Levitt	1, 6	Willis, David	60, 61, 62
Eckles, Henrietta Olmstead	19	Willis, Dotha Eckles.....	46
Eckles, Herbert.....	20	Willis, Emily MacLeod	62
Eckles, Howard.....	19–21, 19–21	Willis, George.....	13, 19, 37, 47, 48, 56–62
Eckles, Katerhine Olmstead	19	Willis, Ila Landt.....	62
Eckles, Lester I, 1, 13, 33, 35, 40, 43, 44, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58		Willis, James.....	58, 62
Eckles, Marmaduke.....	1, 6	Willis, Janelle Patton.....	62
Eckles, Marmaduke Jr.	1, 21	Willis, Jared.....	61
Eckles, Milo	31	Willis, Jason	61
Eckles, Oliver.....	43, 44	Willis, Norleen Avery.....	59, 61, 62
Eckles, Raymond.....	10, 19–21, 19–21, 39, 40, 41, 43, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59	Willis, Pamela	61
Eckles, Robert	9, 13, 14, 30, 33	Willis, Raymond	19, 58, 59, 61, 62
Eckles, Sarah	1		
Eckles, Susan Randall	9, 33		
Eckles, Thomas	1, 21		
Eckles, Walter	21		
Eckles, Ward	19		
Forry, Alan	62		
Forry, Elaine Willis.....	23, 54, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62		
Hafenstein, Erwin.....	37, 61		
Hafenstein, Roberta Willis	23, 37, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61		
Lace, David	61		
Meyer, Julia.....	34		

