

# Tales

No. 3 Spring 1982 \$1

from the general store



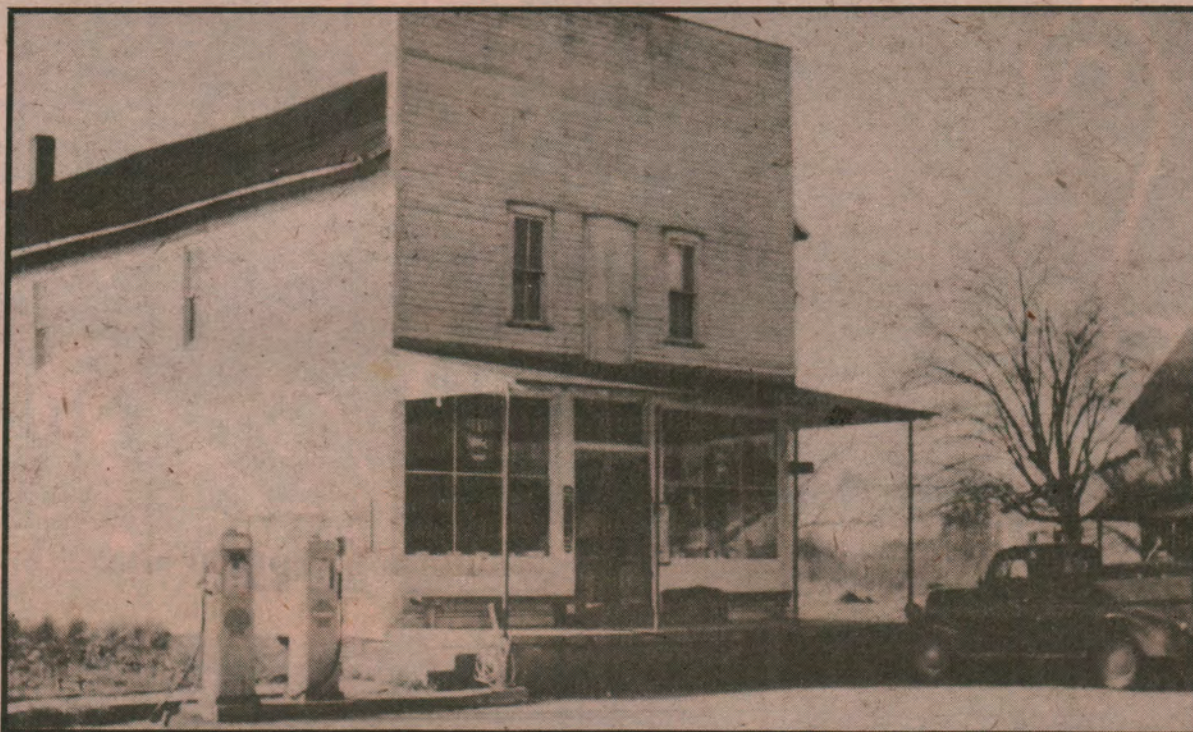
Burl Ives Interview Page 10



# NOTICE

Remember the old time barn raisings?  
They used to have 'em all the time.  
Remember hearin' about them?

HELP CLEAN  
AND REVIVE  
BELLAIR  
JULY 19 - 25  
(TIMES)



## The Bellair General Store

an old store that operated in Bellair from the 1890's through the early 1970's

Come to an old time building raisin' in Bellair and help begin the reconstruction of the Bellair General Store, an old store that operated in Bellair from the late 1890's through the early 1970's.

That's the 19th through the 25th of July. Bring your tools or your favorite settin' chair. We've already got a foreman, the idea and the lumber. All we need is a little help from our friends to put it together.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

July 19-8 a.m. Organization Day-Begin work week

July 20-8 a.m. Workday

July 21-8 a.m. Workday

July 22-8 a.m. Workday

July 23-8 a.m. Workday

6 p.m. Ice Cream Social

Dusk - Ennis and the Outlaws (Rain Date July 24)

July 24-8 a.m. Workday

July 25-2 p.m. Church Services at Bellair EUB Church

Collection will be turned over to the EUB Board of Trustees to be used for building upkeep.

Dinner for the workers served daily by the "Tales Foundation.  
Carry-in contributions are welcomed.

JOIN IN WITH FRIENDS AND  
NEIGHBORS AND HELP REVIVE BELLAIR



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Cover photo of Burl Ives taken by Fox Studio in Charleston when Ives was a student at Eastern Illinois State Teachers' College. The photo, given to his mother, was loaned to "Tales" by Mrs. Opal Ives, Newton, a sister-in-law of Burl Ives.

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Ray Elliott

## Memories of Old Moonshine still here

Before the present Moonshine store was built in 1912, two other Moonshine stores sat a quarter of a mile north of today's store. According to an old store notice, William St. Martz was running one of them in 1889. Bill Blankenbaker built another one on the same location in the late 1890's or early 1900 and ran it for several years.

While they don't remember the earlier store run by St. Martz, sisters Lulu Huddleston, 88, rural Yale (Advance) and Effie Barker, 81, rural West Union (York), do remember the one Blankenbaker, their maternal grandfather, ran until he rented it to his son, Elias, shortly before it burned in June 1909.

As she remembered the store and a little about life at the time, Effie pointed to a picture (page 5) of an old general store with a porch full of people staring out at an unseen photographer.

I imagined him with his head under a black cloth as he squinted through the old box camera resting on a tripod, his left hand held outstretched behind and above him, waiting for his subjects to be properly posed before he snapped the picture and a puff of smoke arose and everyone breathed a sigh of relief and laughed and kidded one another about breaking the camera.

Holding the result loosely in her hand, Effie occasionally pointed to someone and remembered a story or pointed to the building connected to the store and explained that her grandfather also ran the Moonshine post office in the store and had the first switchboard in his house.

Most of what Effie remembers is from visits to her grandfather's store when she was small. She was two years old when the picture was taken. Her father died when she was four, and the family moved farther away from Moonshine, a few miles north and east to Needmore where Bill Downey ran the general store and post office and visits to her grandfather's were less frequent.

When she was 17, her grandfather died and the family moved to the home place. Lawrence Chapman was running the present Moonshine store by then.

"Oh, I remember they had that Long Tom chewin' gum 'bout that long," she said, holding her hands apart about eight inches and recalling her early visits to her grandfather's store. "Paraffin and wax, that's all it was. Paraffin flavor and sweetened a little. Grandpa always gave us a stick of that when we were there. We thought that chewin' gum was wonderful. If you chewed it and wanted to lay it up and rest it awhile and then chew it again, it wouldn't go together. It'd just crumble."

Still holding the faded picture in her hand, Effie told about playing behind the counter with the dolls while her family searched the store. But she didn't actually remember the incident.

"I don't remember playin' with the dolls," she said. "They told me about it, and I think I remember."

After her Uncle Elias took the store over, Effie doesn't remember being in it. But she does remember her mother, her sister, Frankie, and her taking over the Moonshine switchboard in 1917 and running it for several years.

Explaining that the switchboard was "just a big thing with a whole lot of holes you had to plug these things in" when people asked for a certain number, Effie remembered listening to conversations while she was working.

"You could eavesdrop then if you had time," she said. "John Walter Elliott and Henry Buckner, oh, they had the best conversations you ever heard. And John Walter would sing to him."

By the time Effie was listening to those conversations, Lulu, who lives near the site of the old Advance store run by John Ault, had grown up and moved away from home. But she remembered her grandfather running the store and post office when "they carried the mail by horseback from Moonshine to Martinsville."

"I stayed at Grandpa's a lot after our father died," Lulu said. "And I was lookin' forward to workin' in the store. I was countin' on it. Then Grandpa let Uncle Elias take the store in March, and it burned in June."

She said she would have liked to work in the store because she "just kind of liked to wait on people and help Grandpa gather up things fer people." But she helped out on the farm instead of working in the store.

"I helped farm til I got up to pretty good size," she said. "Floyd (an older brother) was just a couple years older 'n me, and I had to help him out some. I rode the cultivator and drove the horses while he plowed."

She didn't "particularly like workin' outdoors," but she said she "'bout had to cause I was the oldest." At 18, Lulu started "workin' out" for other people.

"I worked fer people, doin' housework, cleanin' house and washin' an' ironin', you know," she said, explaining what she meant by working out. "I started out at \$2 a week and room and board. But I finally got \$3."

Both sisters look back on the days when they were growing up and their grandfather was running the old Moonshine store as good times but different times. And while she wouldn't want to go back to those times, Lulu does think people enjoyed themselves.

"I mean just agoin' like they went in big wagons 'n surreys 'n buggies like they went and all," she said, laughing a bit, "don't you think they would have had a good time?"



# Letters, Letters

## 'Tales' reader works on family tree

Someone sent me a clipping from a newspaper concerning the restoration of Bellair. It was written by a Lena Graham in Casey. She writes about a John Ryan who was born Oct. 1799 in Ohio.

I would like to know if he was related to Louis Smith Ryan who lived in Yale, Illinois for many years and died around 1918. He was my grandfather. He had a big family, too.

Two of his sons are still living. Rev. H. Ivan Ryan lives near Spokane, Washington and is about 85 years old. I visited him about two years ago and he told me about when his father had a store in Yale.

My daughter and I are working on a family tree and would like to get in touch with anyone who would have information about the Ryan and Land families. The Lands lived in Rosehill.

I was born and raised in Jasper County and have made my home in Chicago for the last fifty years. I would appreciate hearing from anyone down around Casey, Yale, Rosehill or Hidalgo.

MRS. MABEL SANBORN  
Chicago, Illinois

## Grandmother fed Dalton gang

I enjoy your paper so much and thought I would send this article to you. I lived with my grandmother, Mrs. Cassie Ferguson, and learned quilt making from her.

She died in 1962 at the age of 98. She often told me about going to Oklahoma when they opened the Cherokee strip. They cooked on an open fire.

The Dalton gang was out there at that time and would stop and eat with my grandparents. She said they were as nice and mannerly men as you'd ever want to meet and always left a silver dollar under their plates.

Grandma said someone jumped their claim on the land. The Daltons asked who it was, but they didn't tell them. They were ready to come back to Illinois. I believe she met Jesse James at that time also, but I don't remember hearing very much about him.

MRS. CASSIE PINKSTON  
West Union, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: The article is reprinted on page 19.

## Grandfather helps catch horsethief

Both of my grandfathers came from Ohio. They both wore the Blue in the War of the States, and they both came west after the War.

My grandfather, Andrew Francis LeFever, located northwest of Oblong. My grandfather, Willinar Edgar Maple, located north of Merom, Indiana.

In your fall issue of "Tales" you had an item about the horse thief. My grandfather Maple helped round up the thief and told me the man was buried on the west bank of the river somewhere.

One morning my grandfather Maple found his team with their bridles and collars on. Something had scared the thief away.

People first became aware of this man when he would come down to Merom and buy a lot of bread. They found out he was feeding it to his stolen horses.

I really enjoyed your paper. I am 83 and can remember a lot of the things you wrote about.

ANDREW FRANCIS LEFEVER  
Oblong, Illinois

## Schoolteacher cites history in Oblong

Three cheers to all who are involved in putting together each issue of "Tales." I enjoyed each one.

Many names and locations are familiar to me, as I taught several years in the one-room schools of Crawford County. If you ever run out of material, there's lots of "history" in the area southwest of Oblong called "The Dark Bend."

GERTRUDE PHILLIPS  
Sumner, Illinois

## Recipe proven through 'Tales'

All our family has really enjoyed "Tales." Every word is read and it brings back memories of days gone by.

Our daughter in Wood River has been telling people out there that a jelly can be made from corn cobs. Of course they wouldn't believe it. Now she has the proof (with the recipe from the last issue of "Tales").

LEE & EILEEN STANZ  
Oblong, Illinois

## Bellair store long ago

We have had both issues of the "Tales from the general store" and enjoyed them very much.

My mother, Maude (Harris) Huddleston, who is 91 years of age, lived over in that vicinity during her childhood days. She has a picture postcard of the Sorghum Mill on the Levi Biggs place, and can name all the people (12) in the picture. This was approximately in 1910.

Also her husband (my dad), Marvin Huddleston, was owner of the Bellair Store with his brother-in-law, Joe Ault. They operated the store 1913-1916, buying it in 1913 from Mick Harris. In 1916 they sold it to H. W. Harris. My mother says the building looks the same.

CAROL STANLEY  
Newton, Illinois

## Palestine history

I am sending you a copy of a factual historical article "Palestine, the Paris of the Prairies." This first appeared in print in the late twenties in a small magazine called "Midwest Story Magazine."

Near 1970 it appeared again in the Robinson Argus. If you feel this fits into your format, you may use it.

LOLA M. ARMSTRONG  
Lawrenceville, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: The article is reprinted on page 18.

## Couple remembers WPA days in Bellair

Just a line to say we really enjoyed receiving and reading the Winter Issue of "Tales" which Gerald and Pauline Martin of Robinson sent us.

Reminds us of years gone by when Ray and I ran a little grocery in the north end of town (Bellair). My dad, Fred Ayers, ran it first and we bought it from him.

We had it during W.P.A. days. Oh boy!

We have many memories of Bellair and we come there when we're back there as my parents and one brother are buried there.

RAY & LOIS (AYERS) KIMBERLIN  
Mesa, Arizona

## Store drawing brings back memories

This drawing of the Bellair Store looks so much like the store my father-in-law owned years ago. It brought back fond memories.

MRS. DELORES CLARK  
St. Francisville, Illinois

## Notes to 'Tales'

We enjoy reading the paper "Tales." We especially enjoy it because we have owned and operated (and still do) a Country General Store south of Sumner for almost 48 years. We're trying to make it 50 years.

MR. & MRS. HUGH WHITE  
Sumner, Illinois

The story about Tom Phipps in the fall issue of "Tales" is of special interest to us. Please start our subscription with that issue.

PEGGY DEHL  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Would you please send me one copy of your most recent issue of "Tales"? I am interested in starting a similar publication in our school.

DELBERT WAX, JR.  
Prairie Grove, Arkansas

I am very pleased with your movement about the general store and the publication. I was in the old store building many times in my youth.

I used to "spark" a girl out there in the long ago. It was a long drive from Hutsonville in what I drove. It got muddy around there in '34.

Your article about hog butchering was very factual; however, there were other types of "racks" to hang hogs on that wasn't nearly so much work and were just as strong.

I have always been interested in the old things and ways. Am more interested in Indians of this locality.

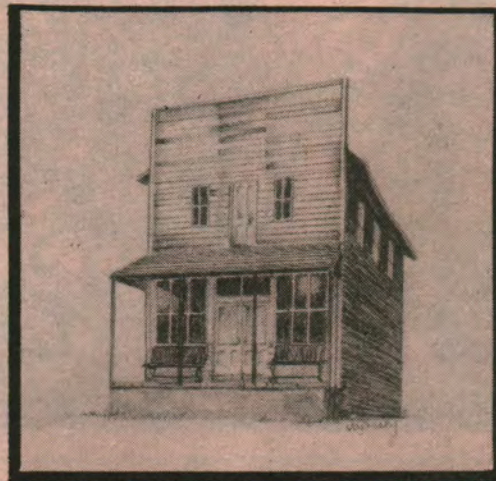
STANLEY NEWLIN  
Hutsonville, Illinois

It is refreshing to read "Tales" after reading the many depressing things in the daily paper. I enjoy reading about the history of the town and people, the recipes and remedies.

LAURALEE FOERTSCH  
Oak Lawn, Illinois

# Tales

from the general store



is published quarterly  
by  
Tales from the general store, inc.

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Tales from the general store, inc., is a nonprofit foundation established as an educational and charitable organization to preserve the history and culture of the Wabash Valley region of Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana from the days of the general store era. The foundation will conduct a two-week summer workshop and three 3-day seasonal workshops in cultural journalism for area residents, both students and non-students, who are interested in journalism and history.

Throughout the school year, grade school, high school and college students will also be given the opportunity to learn about their history and culture by talking with people who have experienced them. These students may also have the opportunity to participate in or observe such activities as hunting, trapping, fishing, butchering, furniture making, soap making and other customs from the past.

From these experiences, the workshop participants and students will record oral history, write stories, take pictures and collect tales, recipes and remedies that portray the rural life of long ago and a bit of what remains today. "Tales from the general store," printed and distributed as an insert to the Robinson "Daily News" and the Lawrenceville "Daily Record," will contain these stories. The program will be experiential and community related, in the tradition of educator John Dewey, where students learn by doing.

Workshops for the publication will be held at the Tales from the general store, inc., headquarters in Bellair where the foundation is engaged in the restoration of that village which dates back to 1844. Initial funding for the program will come from tax-deductible donations. Future funding will include donations, grants, subscriptions, syndication, book sales and other sources from services or merchandise provided by Tales from the general store, inc.

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Anyone may submit articles, photographs or drawings for publication in "Tales from the general store." If published, all material becomes the property of Tales from the general store, inc. No responsibility for returning unused submissions can be assumed; however, every effort will be made to return all submissions.

Subscribers to the Robinson "Daily News" and the Lawrenceville "Daily Record" will receive the magazine as part of their subscriptions as long as the Robinson "Daily News" prints and distributes it. Non-subscribers to the two newspapers may purchase individual copies for \$1 each.

Address all correspondence to: Tales from the general store, inc., Rural Route 2, Oblong, Illinois 62449 or phone 618-569-5171.





Moonshine store around 1902. Pictured left to right: Lula (Cox) Huddleston, Effie (Cox) Barker, Frankie Cox, unknown, Perry Cox, Ellen Blankenkemper, Floyd Cox, Elias Blankenkemper, William Blankenkemper, Pete Blankenkemper, unknown, unknown, Jeffie Blankenkemper, Elizabeth Blankenkemper, Lindsey Cox, Tillie (Blankenkemper) Cox and Effie (Blankenkemper) Weir. (photo courtesy of Effie Barker)

## Did you know. . .

### Market Quotations

Chicago—Cattle, common to prime, \$3.75 to 5.50; hogs, shipping grades, \$3 to 4; shipping fair to choice, \$2.50 to 3.75; wheat, #2 red, 59¢ to 60; corn #2, 29¢ to 30; oats, #2, 17¢ to 18; rye, #2, 39¢ to 40; butter, choice creamery, 21¢ to 23; eggs, fresh, 16¢ to 18; potatoes, per bushel, 20¢ to 25; broom corn, common growth to choice green hurl, 2½¢ to 4½¢ per pound.

—researched from  
Robinson Argus  
October 30, 1895

### Palestine Land Office Desk

Made of walnut, it's a peculiar looking desk in comparison with the present office desks. It's seven feet high, four feet and three inches wide and twenty-six inches deep. It has numerous pigeon-holes, shelves and drawers; also two sliding shelves, which serve as writing desks.

—researched from  
Palestine Reporter  
March 27, 1902

### 'Gentlemen of color' wins freedom in 1786

One of the first bits of legal business recorded in Palestine when it was the county seat for Crawford County in 1818 was about a "gentlemen of color."

One Abram Camp presented, his certificate of freedom, which had been granted in 1786, to be recorded here.

It appears he had been able to prove his mother was a Mohawk Indian and so a judge in Bat-telora County, Virginia had ordered his freedom.

Some of his descendants lived for years on the Crawford-Lawrence County line and may do so yet to this day.

—researched by  
Kay Young

### Land Office Safe

The safe was a wooden box about two feet square, the wood being near two inches thick. The six wood sides were riveted

through and through.

The heads of the rivets were about the size of a silver quarter, and were so close together that their edges touched, thus hiding every particle of wood.

The sides were bound together with straps. On each end of the box were hasps and staples, which closed with pad-locks.

When the receiver has collected \$25,000 or \$30,000 in gold, he shipped it in this safe down the Wabash to its destination. The land office safe was fortunate in never being broken open—its record is indeed very fair.

—researched from  
Palestine Reporter  
March 27, 1902

### Social Customs

One characteristic peculiar to Palestine alone is its social customs. From the beginning of its history up to the present, there has been but two classes of society—the good and the bad.

Position, presence, rank nor blood does not place its owner above the worthy working man or woman socially. True worth, ambition, energy, honesty and industry are the acknowledged requisites for admission into the town's best circle, while lack of these traits debar them.

Yet, never has there been a people more charitable to the erring, more ready to forgive and lend a helping hand to those who show a willingness to start on the upward way.

This trait of character should stamp its possessors as most memorable people, and place the town foremost as an example for others to follow.

—researched from  
Palestine Reporter  
March 27, 1902

### Old mill built near Annapolis

In 1853 a stream flowing mill was built about one mile west of the village of Annapolis, Illinois, by Holmes & Doty. Later a saw was attached. It was burned down in 1858 after changing

hands from Holmes & Doty to George Dixon.

—researched by  
Marsha Miller

### Illinois rich with Indian history

Many Indian tribes lived in Illinois as the Europeans were entering this area. Some of the tribes had been driven here by the Iroquois and by other activities in the East. Tribes in and around the Crawford County area were of the Algonquian linguistic family.

One such tribe was known as the Kickapoo of the Vermilion as they lived on the Vermilion River which flows into the Wabash. (There are two Vermilion rivers in Illinois. The other flows into the Illinois River through both have their headwaters in Ford or Livingston County.)

Associated with these Kickapoo were the Mascouten. Both of these tribes had a strong dislike for white men and would seldom allow whites to visit their villages.

In 1703 a small band of Mascouten, all there were left from a bout with smallpox, moved from the mouth of the Ohio to the Wabash above Vincennes.

In 1750 about 1,500 Kickapoo and Mascouten were living and hunting on both sides of the Wabash. Jasper and Crawford Counties were the southern limits of their hunting ground by the 1790's with Danville being the site of their most important town.

The Piankeshaw by 1717 had moved to the Wabash and were living on its tributaries from the Vermilion to the Ohio Rivers. When the French built their post at Vincennes in 1731-32, the Piankeshaw's main village was Chippenkawkay, located just above Vincennes.

During the French and Indian War the Piankeshaw fought first on one side and then on the other, but it was they that finally influenced the Vermilion Kickapoo to allow the British to take over the French posts in 1765. (Some Delaware Indians

began living with the Piankeshaw after 1765 and until 1803.)

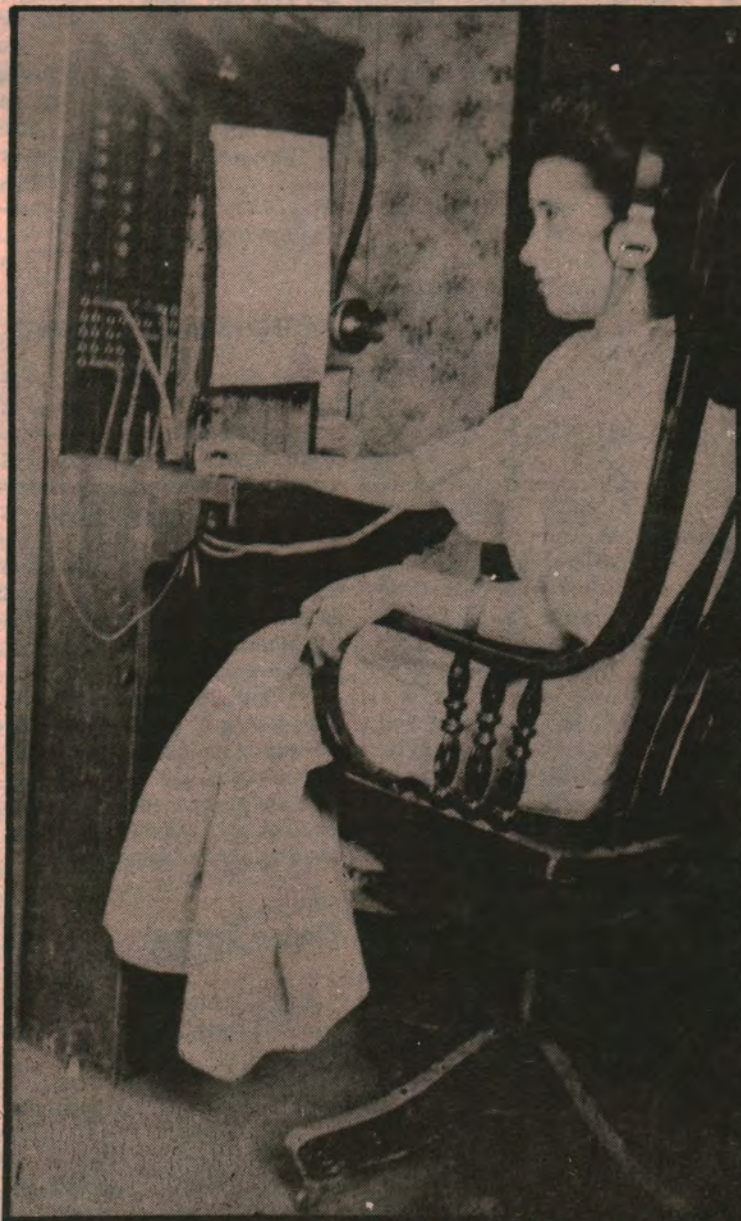
George Rogers Clark worked out a treaty with the Piankeshaw which they, though not some of the other tribes, honored throughout the rest of the 1700's.

As more whites began moving into Illinois, some Piankeshaw had moved across the Mississippi River by 1800. In 1803 and again in 1805, the Piankeshaw along the Wabash signed

treaties with the young United States ceding their claims to Illinois. They were allowed to remain living on the land until 1828 at which time most, if not all, moved to Missouri.

Gradually they were joined to the Wea and Peoria tribes and moved to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in 1867. This new grouping was called the Confederated Peoria and numbered 413 in 1945.

—researched by  
Kay Young



Annapolis, Illinois area switchboard operator thought to be May Coleman, circa 1910. (photo courtesy of Delno Stanfield)



# Recipes and Remedies

Send your favorite old recipe or remedy for publication in a future issue of "Tales" to Tales from the general store, inc., Rural Route 2, Oblong, IL 62449.

## Recipes

### Rye Meal Bread

One quart rye meal, two quarts flour, one-half cup sugar, one tablespoon shortening, one tablespoon salt, one yeast cake dissolved in one quart lukewarm water or scalded milk.

Stir the white flour, salt and sugar and add the rye meal. Melt the shortening and pour into the water or milk in which the yeast has been dissolved. Form into a dough and knead. Place in a warm spot to rise.

When light, form into small loaves and let rise again. Have the oven hot and when ready to bake brush lightly over the top of each loaf with melted butter. After the first fifteen minutes, reduce the heat of the oven.

It requires about an hour to make and should then be buttered and placed on a rack where there is a current of air to cool.

### English Muffins

Into a pint of scalding milk stir a heaping teaspoonful of lard or butter. When the shortening is melted, set the liquid aside until lukewarm. Then stir in a pint of flour that has been sifted with a teaspoonful of salt and a gill (one fourth pint) of warm water in which half a yeast cake has been dissolved.

Beat hard and set in a warm room overnight. In the morning work into the dough a cup of sifted flour. Tear bits of the dough about the size of a duck's egg from the mass and mold them lightly with the hands into muffins.

Set to rise for twenty minutes more. Transfer lightly to a heated griddle and bake slowly until swollen to double their size and browned on one side. Then turn and brown on the other side.

### Pineapple Pie

Strain the liquor from a can of minced pineapple. Put the liquor in a bowl and add to it two heaping tablespoonsfuls of flour, a cup and a half of sugar, three eggs (the yolks only, beaten light), two cups of boiling water and last of all, the chopped or minced pineapple.

Pour into an open crust and bake. Make a meringue for the top of the pie with the whites of the eggs beaten light with a little powdered sugar.

### Pork Cake

Grind a pound of salt pork fine and pour over it a pint of boiling coffee. Stir until the pork is well blended with the coffee.

Then add two cups of brown sugar, two cups of New Orleans molasses, a teaspoonful each of cinnamon, cloves and allspice (all ground), one grated nutmeg, two heaping teas-

poonsful of baking soda, a pound each of seedless raisins and cleaned currants and a half a pound of shredded citron (the fruit mixed and well dredged with flour and eight cups of sifted flour.

Mix well and bake slowly for an hour and a half.

### Freezing Corn

1 gallon corn  
1 quart water or milk  
1 cup sugar  
4 teaspoons salt

Boil slow for 10 minutes. Let cool and freeze.

—Fannie Johnson

### Irish Stew

Cut two pounds of lean beef from the round into squares of uniform size. Cover with cold water and stew gently for an hour.

At the end of that time season to taste and add four peeled and sliced onions, four peeled and sliced carrots and three stalks of celery cut small.

A half hour before serving the dish add to the stew four potatoes diced and boil until these are tender. If you wish the gravy thickened, add to it a heaping tablespoonful of browned flour wet with a little cold water and stir until the gravy is smooth and brown.

Serve meat, vegetables and gravy on a large and deep platter.

### Chocolate Pie

Put into a pan a rounded tablespoon of butter, melt it and stir into it a rounded tablespoonful of flour and add one half a cup of sugar. When the mixture is blended, push it to one side of the pan and melt on the other side a half of one square of unsweetened chocolate.

Then pour in two cups of warm water, and last, add the beaten yolk of one egg. Stir the entire mixture well together, then pour into an open pie crust and bake. When done cover with a meringue and brown lightly.

### Lentils a la Creole

Soak overnight one can of lentils, drain, cover with warm water, bring to a boil slowly, drain again, cover with hot water and simmer until tender (when they mash easily between the fingers).

Melt in a frying pan one tablespoon of butter or meat drippings, add two sliced onions cut small; a slice or so of red pepper or pinch of red pepper.

Fry until light brown; add two tablespoons of tomato paste or one cup of canned tomato, a little hot water, one-half teaspoon salt and the drained lentils; cook together until thick and serve as you would baked beans.

### Cake Icing

1 stick of butter  
8 tablespoons Crisco  
1 cup sugar  
3 heaping tablespoons flour  
2/3 cup milk—room temperature

Cream together and beat. Do not cook.

—Joyce Smith

### Boston Brown Bread

One pint rye meal, one pint corn meal, two tablespoons flour, one cup molasses, one teaspoon soda. Cold water to make a stiff batter.

To the flour, rye and corn meal, add the molasses after the soda has been stirred into it. Use sufficient cold water to make a stiff batter.

If a plum loaf is desired, add one cup seeded raisins that have been well floured. Steam three or four hours.

### Aunt Sue's Fudge

Into a large bowl put  
2 cups nutmeats  
1/2 lb. butter (2 sticks)  
3 packages of chocolate chips  
3 tablespoons of vanilla

In a large pan put:  
4 1/2 cups of sugar  
1 tall can of evaporated milk

Boil sugar and milk six minutes. Start counting from rolling boil stage. Pour over ingredients in bowl. Mix thoroughly and put in buttered pans about 1 inch thick. (Makes about 5 lbs.)

—Nellie Brown

### Maple sugar

Boil the maple sap from sugar maples into syrup. It will be very thick.

Stir and boil until mixture spins a thread. Then beat it to make it into cakes.

Pour mixture into tins and let set. Then pop out.

—Fannie Johnson

## Remedies

### Helpful household hints

#### Sparkling glassware

Glassware can be made to sparkle if washed in water to which has been added a heaping teaspoonful of borax. The borax dissolves the film that soap forms on glassware, and gives the same effect upon china and silverware and is not injurious to the latter.

#### Cleaning house

In cleaning house it is a good plan to clean out all drawers, closets, trunks, boxes and shelves first, getting rid of all things that are useless. Magazines and old clothes go to those who can make use of them. Clean one room thoroughly at a time, in this way the work can be done in periods and the housewife is not so worn out each day after her work is accomplished for that day.

#### No-stick custards

If a pan in which milk, custards and salad dressings are to be boiled is first wiped inside with a cloth greased with

lard, the contents will not stick or scorch. If the custard has been cooked too much, strain through a piece of cheese cloth that has been rung out of warm water and the custard will be rid of lumps.

#### Scarfs from muslin

Inexpensive and very pretty scarfs for bureaus and tables may be evolved from a firm quality of unbleached muslin and striped cretonne, the cut stripes to be employed for the borders. Window draperies may be made in the same way.

#### Milk is fire extinguisher

If it desired to extinguish gasoline or kerosene flames quickly, pour milk upon them at once. It forms an emulsion with the oil, while water only causes the gasoline flames to spread.

#### Duck plucking

In picking a duck, remove the longest and heaviest feathers first. When down to the small fuzzy feathers and pin feathers dip the body into a pan of melted paraffin and let it remain until the paraffin hardens. Then scrape the duck with a dull knife and the feathers will be removed readily with paraffin coating.

#### Canna plants

Cannas are pretty and imposing plants to view on the lawn, and with the exception of attentive watering, are not hard to grow. Plant them in a sunny place. It is hard to give the roots too much water.

#### Gasoline as cleaner

Gasoline will remove wagon grease, oil from the gasoline engine, milk and cream stains from clothes. The gasoline will not injure the color or texture of the cloth and will not shrink it. Do not use the gasoline as a cleaner near a fire or open blaze for fear of an explosion.

#### Strong buttonholes

Stitching around completed buttonholes with the machine several times will prevent their pulling out. In children's play clothes and work garments this method saves the housewife much labor later when she may be busy.

#### Ink removal

Dip a fresh ink spot on linen in pure melted tallow and the ink is said to come out with the tallow.

#### Leftovers

The little scraps of meal trimmings and the odds and ends of vegetables may all be turned to some account by the practical housekeeper if she will take the pains to think up some use for them among her recipes.

#### Shirtwaist hanger

To make a shirtwaist hanger, use a barrel hoop about 18 inches long, fastening securely in the middle a hook made of wire and bent to the angle desired to slip over the clothes hooks in the closet. The piece of hoop can be covered with cloth, and, if desired, can be decorated with fancy ribbon to make it more attractive.

#### Utensil drying

The quickest way to dry metal cooking utensils is to place them bottom-side up on the range for a short time while washing the other dishes. Even if the fire in the stove has gone out, the heat from the metal will be intense enough to dry the pans and pots unless the stove has had time to cool entirely.

#### Celery tops

Save the celery tops when you clean the stalks, cut and wash the leaves and after tying them in a bundle, hang them up to dry for future use as a seasoning for soups, dressings and salads.

#### Save food from spoiling

Watch the contents of the refrigerator and the pantry to see that there is nothing about ready to become stale that can be used before it is wasted. The economical housewife understands the value of edible scraps, which can be used in many ways to advantage.

#### Damp cloths under cakes

It is claimed that a damp cloth, placed on the bottom of a pan when a cake has stuck to the pan, will cause the cake to steam loose in a short time.

#### Wine cleans leather

A piece of cloth dipped in spirits of wine and rubbed on soiled leather will remove spots.

#### Save sewing time

It will be found quite handy to glue a tape measure across the front edge of a sewing machine, thereby saving much time when sewing.

#### Sun power

Sunning milk vessels and cooking utensils every opportunity should not be forgotten. It will keep them fresh and sweet smelling.

#### Cleaning granite

Rub dirty or greasy graniteware with a little woolen rag and a very little kerosene and the granite will appear as new.

All recipes and remedies (unless otherwise noted) were taken from the May 10, 1912 issue of the St. Louis Weekly Globe-Democrat.



The

# Tales Spring Fair

1982

Dear Folks,  
Well, the old Bellair general store was alive with people again after being closed for more'n ten years. That Tales from the general store outfit held their first annual Spring Fair, the 16th and 17th of April. They had that store full of old crafts and arts from the local people. Some you may remember.

But to kick off the Spring Fair, they had one of them old-fashioned horsedrawn hayrides. "Big" Bob Martin—he grew up down the road from Bellair but I think he lives in Trimble now—well, he played his guitar and sang some old songs while Grendal Staley—he's from over around Annapolis—drove his team of horses down a muddy lane that wound around along North Fork.

Then on Saturday they had the big doin's. That old store had more stuff in it than it's had for years—even had stuff settin' out in the yard 'cause there wasn't no place to put it inside.

Antique tables settin' outside on the grass; all kinds of 'em, too. Man from Oblong, Homer Smith, brought 'em in his pickup. He had some old toys, glassware, chairs and even an old cowbell. You don't see many of them around any more.

A big Civil War cannon was parked right next to the old tables. Imagine that, a real cannon. Feller from Flat Rock hauled it up to Bellair. Richard Wesley—he's Wilbur's boy—brought it and he said it'd work, too. Said he could probably hit something a half a mile away.

Wesley brought along a few more of his antiques. He just about loaded down one of them eight foot tables in the store with old guns, powder horns, swords and the like. They were all in workin' order, too, he said. People was just comin' and goin' all afternoon. Might have been as many as three to four hundred of 'em. There was a pot of coffee goin' on the old stove. And all them people ate sausage and pancakes. Even had homemade butter.

You know they had two churns goin' just about all afternoon, makin' that butter. Mariellen Mehler and Barbara Russell churned for 'em. They're both country girls moved to Oblong. They probably churned four, or maybe five, gallons of cream that day, for land's sake. Remember I told you my grandmother used to tat? Well, Harriette Shonk was settin' in the store tatting. She was raised over around Porterville, but lives in Oblong now.

Well, anyway, her grandmother taught her how to tat. That's makin' delicate lace work that the women used to fancy up their dresses and stuff with, in case you didn't know. Put it on lots of things, handkerchiefs, pillow cases, tablecloths and what have you. Oh, I saw the most intricate wood carvings. This wood carver from Oblong, he learned carving after he retired just to have somethin' to do. Homer Settlemeyer—that's his name, but they call him Bud—even brought his tools and was showin' people how to shave a little here and there to make it turn out just right. He says one of his carvings is going to hang in that Tarble Art Center that they're buildin' at Eastern Illinois University.

Helen Graham had some of her paintings there. She's from south of Bellair, and lots of people know her work. Well, my land, she had pictures of old barns, farm buildings and outhouses hung on a couple of old doors fastened together somehow.

Then some people from Robinson, Sheila and Dan Davis, I think they said their names was, had some more old pictures. Pictures of nice lookin' old cars with pretty ladies. They also had ladies' jewelry, crocks, a cast-iron kettle, a nice collection of old tins and other pretty things. They even had one of them old beaded lady's handbags. They had a little bit of everything, I reckon. Even had somebody makin' pottery. Randy Cook, a boy that goes to school in Robinson, was at teachin' people how to pack the clay on the wheel, how much water to use and just how to hold their hands.

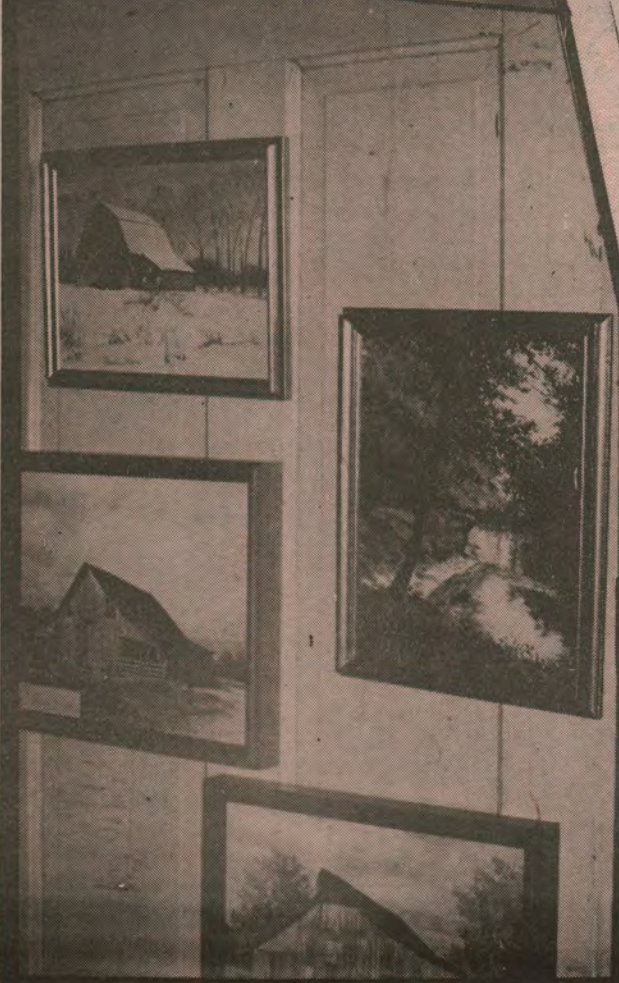
Midge and Wendell Newcomb from Oblong, had one of them pretty criss-cross bottomed chairs. She was workin' on it, showin' how and where to cross the strips of cane to bottom the chair. There was somebody there with a quilt, too. Mable Elliott, she lives right there in Bellair, had set up a quilt in the middle of the store so people could all see just how it used to be done. She had some other quilts that were finished, some lace tablecloths and afghans that she'd crocheted.

Then two ladies come all the way from Marshall, or Clarksville I guess it is. Martha Buckner and Catherine Findley were their names. They were braiding rugs. Now there's a craft that goes back to the Indians. Or before, I expect. Buckner and Findley were braidin' right along, lettin' people watch and explainin' as they went just what they were doin'.

Why, they were even playin' '42' at a table settin' right back there next to the stove, just like it always was. And they was playin' with the dominoes that come out of the store when it was sold back in '71. Clyde Purcell let 'em borrow 'em, I guess.

Oh, my, it wasn't too many years ago that all them people comin' an goin' would have just been another day for the general store. But how I ramble on. I must close for this time.  
The best to you and yours.

Your Aunt Annie





# A hobby first, then a career

by Jim Elliott

It's spring again, time to clean out your house and start to repair all the things that got broken over the long winter. And if you're like most people, you don't have the time or the knowhow to repair or refinish it.

That's where Wendell and Midge Newcomb come in. They own and operate "The Strippery," a furniture repair shop in Oblong.

"This all (furniture repair) started out as a hobby," Wendell said, wearing a T-shirt with "The Strippery" printed across the front of it.

"When we got married we both liked antiques, old furniture and stuff, and what we could afford to buy wasn't refinished. So we had to buy it and refinish it ourselves. That's how we first got started, that's how we learned to do it.

It wasn't long, though, before other people heard about their repair work and asked if the Newcombs could refinish, repair and cane their chairs. As time passed, the requests came more and more often and became more and more complicated.

With all those requests, the Newcombs started to work on many other people's furniture. "Maybe in the months along (after we got started) we might have done two or three pieces for somebody else," he said. "And then it just got so more and more people started calling and coming by so we just started

doing it. We've done it part time for about three years and the last year and a half we've done it full time. So far we've stayed busy."

And all indications are that "The Strippery" will stay busy repairing, stripping, refinishing and caning chairs.

"We do more of that kind of work (repairing and refinishing) than we do chair bottoms," he said. "The first thing we'd do if someone brought in a chair, would be to strip off the old finish, unless somebody else already had.

"If we have to do repair work, we'd do that next and then we'd put on a finish. We use varnish, it's my preference. So when we buy an old piece, unless it looks good (with paint) I'm gonna refinish it.

"Then the last thing we do, if it's a cane bottom, is put the cane in, that would be the final step. We could have a chair done in a week's time, but that wouldn't be countin' puttin' the cane in."

Standing behind a counter, weaving cane into a chair bottom, Midge said, "Yeah, because I work slower.

"This here is factory-made cane," she said, pointing to the chair bottom she was working on. "It's the easiest and probably the most simple to use."

But there are many different types of cane, from the factory-made press cane to split bottom to old hickory, which is just tree bark.

"That's the kind they used 100 years ago," Midge said, still weaving cane into the chair bottom. "They used bark off young saplings, and things like that. They pulled it off and rolled it together. It was crude, but they refined it. Yep, that was how they did it 100 years ago."

But caning goes back a lot further than 100 years; in fact, it is an art that goes back to India and China in the 2nd Century A.D. The craft was brought to Europe in the 17th Century by the East India Company. And Midge Newcomb has brought it to Oblong, mostly because she had some chairs that needed to be caned but couldn't find anyone else to do them.

"She's the one who does all the chair bottoms," Wendell said, standing on the other side of the counter watching his wife weave the cane into the chair bottom.

"We were basically forced into doing it because we couldn't find anyone around here to do it. Since we've been in business we've gotten a lot of calls to do this so she stays busy. If she wanted to do a chair every night, she probably could. But we just done it out of necessity at first."

Taking a break from caning Midge said, "It's hard work but very rewarding."

"Yeah, each piece is a new challenge," Wendell said. "Each piece is different, you don't run across the same thing in any two pieces. Each one has its own special character."

"Especially old furniture," Midge said. "Old furniture has a lot more character than new. And it takes a pretty good piece of furniture to survive 100 years. Say something's 100 years old, no telling what it's been through. "Once we brought in some chairs that were painted and



Vanessa Faurie and Jim Elliott

## Tales writers win awards

"Tales from the general store" contributing editors Jim Elliott and Vanessa Faurie were among 244 students who were presented National Award Gold Keys from the Quill and Scroll Society in its 1982 National Writing/Photography Contest.

A total of 3,822 entries in the eight divisions of the contest were received in the Iowa City, Iowa headquarters of the international honorary society for high school journalists. Both students were awarded Gold Keys for their entries in the feature division which had 710 entries and 33 winners.

Elliott won with his story "Thornton sez: Tales by an old story teller" that was published in the first issue of "Tales from the general store." The story was written for the 1981 Autumn Issue of the magazine after Thornton Stephens, a 92-year-old, lifelong Crawford County resident, had spent an afternoon recalling stories and tall tales from the past for "Tales" students.

Also published in the first issue of the magazine was Faurie's winning story, "The Bellair Store, just a lot of memories now." She interviewed all known living past owners and former clerks of the Bellair Store which is now owned by the Tales foundation.

Gold Key winners who are seniors are eligible to apply for one of Quill and Scroll's \$500 Edward J. Nell Scholarships in Journalism. Faurie, a graduate of Oak Lawn Community High School where she was the editor of the school, newsmagazine, was awarded one of the scholarships.

Now a senior at Hinsdale South High School, Elliott was a member of the 5A quarter-final football team that lost to eventual State Champion Joliet Catholic. He was also a member of the track team and wrote for the school newspaper.

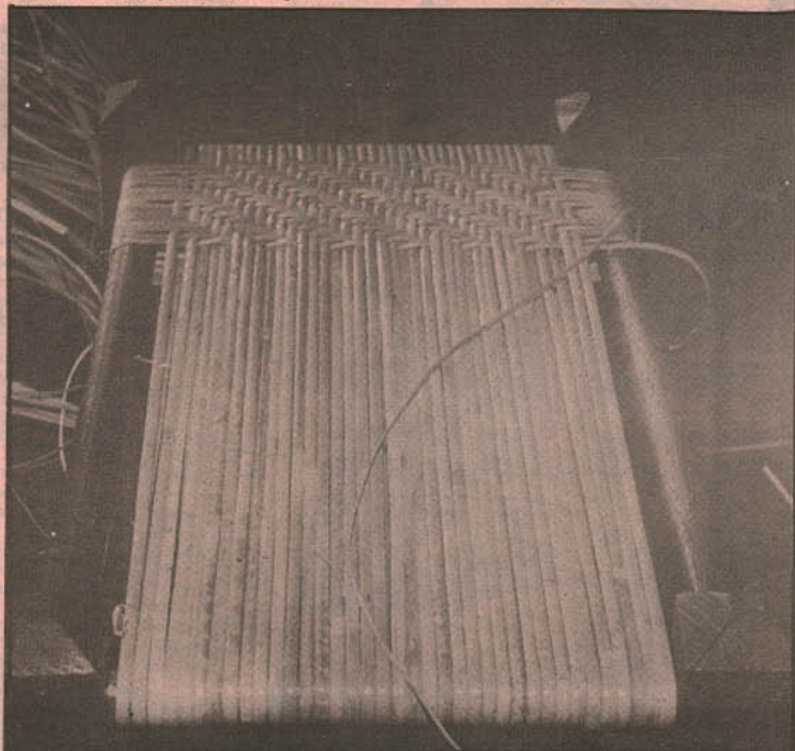
A complete list of National Winners in the Writing/Photography Contest was published in the April/May issue of "Quill and Scroll" magazine.

when we got the paint stripped off 'em, we saw that they'd been in a fire. They were charred underneath, but we couldn't tell it with the paint on 'em. So you never know what you're going to get."

Wendell agreed with her and added, "To me it's fun. Just like if you got something you really enjoy doing, like a hobby, you get to doin' it for your livelihood, too. You just never get tired of it."



Midge Newcomb shows 'Tales' Spring Fair visitors how to cane chairs.



The intricate weaving of an old-fashioned cane bottomed chair.



# Rug braiding

## can be a relaxing hobby

by Vanessa Faurie

It was like a scene from the days of the early settlers. The two women wore long skirts with knitted shawls wrapped around their shoulders. They sat at a small table in the general store and silently braided material that would later be made into rugs.

Even though the pioneer era is long gone, the craft of rug making remains. Martha Buckner and Catherine Findley, Clarksville, are proof of that. Buckner has been braiding rugs for about 28 years and Findley for about seven.

"I always liked braided rugs, so I just made my own," Findley said, looking out above her wire-framed glasses. "I did take some lessons from a lady in Paris (Illinois). She made beautiful rugs. And she could do it so fast."

But like most textile-making crafts, braiding does take time. And the finished product doesn't always have to be a rug. Tote bags, place mats, chair and table coverings, wall hangings and other items can also be made.

The time put into braiding a rug can be well worth the effort. Depending on the material used, the rugs have a long life.

"I'm still using the first one I made," Findley said. "When one side wears out, I turn it over and use the other side."

"And I've made about six. I only do it for myself, so I wouldn't know how long it takes to make one. I don't pay no attention."

Finding good material also takes time. According to Findley, the material is hard to come by. It needs to be fairly heavy for durability. Wool is the most commonly used fabric.

"I never did use anything but wool," Findley said.

Then Buckner lifted her head from her work. "I made a small cotton one once," she said.

"You could use other material," Findley continued, "but they're not as hard. Course it's the same amount of work regardless of what you put in it."

Findley and Buckner have gotten their material from several sources. Either it was old material they had saved or other people had given it to them.

"We have gotten material from Good Will, too," Findley

said. "And we don't use any worn material either. You can see it's all good."

Findley displayed a piece of patterned wool from the braid she was working on.

"These are mostly just old coats," she said. "Oh, I have bought material, too. But it's expensive when you buy it."

After the women choose the three materials they want to use, it is washed and ripped into strips of no particular length and about one and a half inches wide. Two thin wooden stands with a clamp at the top of them are used to hold the material tight enough to work with. As the women sat and braided material, the stands were a little more than knee-high.

"You have to join the three colors first," Buckner said. "Then you put one strip in the center of two. Now pull this side over, then that one."

Buckner intertwined the wool strips, turning over a different color each time. As the three separate pieces gradually became one, more material had to be sewn onto each strip at an angle to avoid a lot of bulk in one area.

"So you sew 'em together on the bias," Buckner said. "Then turn all the edges under so there's no raw edges. You have to turn all three of 'em in. This here is army blanket that I'm using. It's very good to work with."

After making a long chain, Buckner stopped braiding and held up a multi-colored, round rug, about a foot in diameter, that was made from a single braided chain.

"This is called a continuous or coiled braid," she said. "As you start to make the circle, you sew it with this turned-up-under edge inside. Then you taper off the end and sew it on."

Another kind of braided rug is the butted rose. It's made with individual rows sewn together a circle at a time. Each row has to be a little larger so the grooves of the braided material fit together when they're attached.

Buckner used a half-completed rug made with blue, army and gray-colored wools she was working on to show how she joined the rows.

"This is your lacer," she said, holding a small, flat metal stick and weaving thread in and out of the braided rows. "And this is a waxed linen thread from

Portland, Oregon. It comes in great big balls for \$9."

When the rows are made for the butted rose, the two ends of each individual row have to be connected. This butting technique joins the three ends of material so the colors are in the same position as they were in the beginning.

"I've worked on that some times for three or four hours at a time," Buckner said. "But I've got it down now. Then when it's done, you circle onto what's already made. The butted rose is more difficult to make than the continuous braid, but then you can make a patterned rug."

"It can gap, too, though," Findley said, "so it doesn't lay

flat. Or if it's too small, it gets stretched."

But the women are careful not to let that happen. And the results are rugs that look factory-made, but still with a personal touch. Other people have even admired their works enough to want to buy them.

Although Findley doesn't sell her rugs, Buckner has sold some at about \$10 per square foot. Sometimes people haven't always realized how much time and work go into making a rug.

"Somebody had her (Buckner) make one once," Findley said. "And when it was made, the woman wouldn't take it because she didn't want to pay. It was \$50. Well, my land,

that's cheap. If she'd only consider the time. Some people get the idea that if you can make it by hand you can give it away."

But that hasn't kept the women from enjoying their craft.

"The braiding is the best part," Findley said, smiling. "It's relaxing. I've been getting into the quilt business lately, too. I do a lot of sewing, knitting and garment making. They have a fall festival in Marshall where we've shown folks how to braid."

"Anybody could do this," she said. "Braiding is an old craft. An' I suppose weaving is, too. But everybody didn't have a loom, so I guess they did this. And it's a lot of fun."



Martha Buckner and Catherine Findley demonstrating the age-old craft of rug braiding at "Tales" Spring Fair.

# Learning to quilt from Grandma

by Becky Elliott

Ever since I can remember my grandma has had a quilt sitting in the living room in front of the window seat. And when I was little, I used to play underneath the quilt frames all the time.

It was just like a little playhouse where I could sit and play with my dolls. I could also peek up through the potted plants in the window seat and see the roof of the house next door.

But I never paid much attention to the quilt. It was just a doll house to me. All I really remember was looking at the underneath of the quilt while playing with my dolls or hearing Grandma yelling at me to quit walking underneath the quilt and to watch out for the pins. I'd laugh and walk on, somehow always missing the pins.

It seems like a long time ago that I crawled out from under the quilt frames. I'd almost forgotten about them.

Then in a freshman homemaking class last fall, we talked about making a quilt for a class project. We didn't. But I got to thinking about making one.

Although I've always had one on my bed, all it really was to me was a blanket that kept me warm. So since my grandmother had made quilts for her all her children and their families and there were a lot of them around, I asked Grandma how to make one.

"I just put a quilt in," she said, pointing to a diagonal line of colored squares on the quilt. "This quilt top was given to me

so I could finish it."

Grandma moved her chair closer to the quilt and leaned over it. She didn't tell me who had given it to her. And I didn't ask. I listened as she explained how she made a quilt.

"You measure the amount of lining you need for the length of your quilt and add a little extra so that it'll stretch," she said, finishing a stitch that was made to form stitched patterns on the quilt. "You want the lining to stretch so it won't be all wrinkled underneath. Then just cut off the extra."

"Now you take a heavy thread and whip the lining onto this piece of feather ticking," she

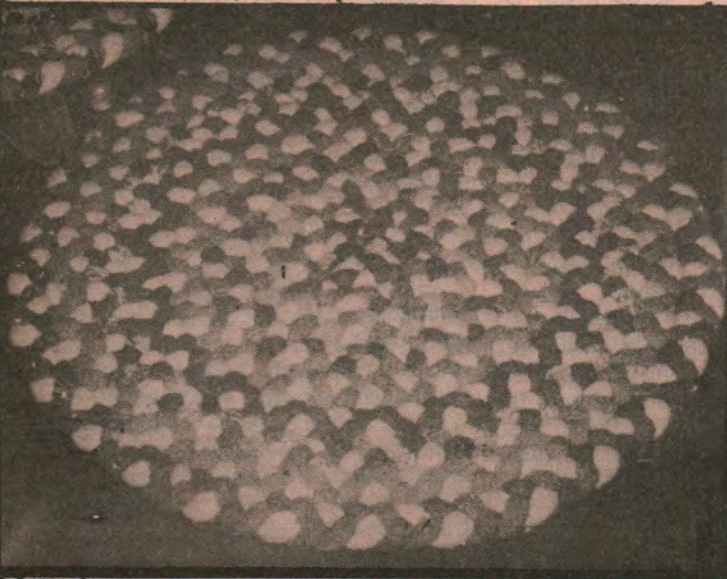
said, showing me the strip of stripped cloth nailed to the long smooth pole. "After sewing the lining in the frames, roll it up tight. Next lay your cotton on (the top of the lining) and then your quilt top and stretch that all out."

As she talked, pointed and looked at me over the glasses that rested halfway down her nose, she stitched on the quilt steadily, stopping occasionally to make sure that I understood what she was telling me. Now and then she'd tell a story or think of when the ladies of the community would go together to quilt at the Ladies' Aide Society.

(continued on page 19)



Grandmother showing granddaughter the tiny stitches of the quilting designs.



The many hours of work is shown in this circular braided rug.



# 'It's a long way from the Gilbert



While on a tour of the main house, Burl Ives' wife, Dorothy, pauses to point out some of the various portraits of Burl taken during his long career as an entertainer.

by Ray Elliott

Around at the front drive, the big, double swinging iron gate was chained and padlocked. But at the back drive, the smaller, sliding iron gate slid out of sight, back into the fence, before I could touch the call button on the speaker.

Down the asphalt drive twenty-five or thirty yards, the surface area spread out to the front of the garage on the right and curved around to the drive-through archway leading to the entrance of the sprawling two-story house on the left, then on down past the guest house and out through the front gate.

The main house, built for the late Amy DuPont on the 5.8 acre estate near Santa Barbara, California, sits back on the higher ground, away from the road, surrounded by trees, bushes and flowers, including a cream-and-reddish-brown-colored rose named for one of the estate's current residents. A break in the tree line across the rolling front lawn exposes a view of the blue Pacific Ocean off a mile or so in the distance.

But little of that view is visible from the back entrance. You have to walk around the lawn and gardens or go out on the sundeck off of a second-story bedroom to see the place and the view. Before I could see much of anything, the door back under the archway opened and closed again. Two German Shepard dogs barked and came running down the drive toward the showroom-clean cars parked in and around the garage in the late-morning California sun.

Just before a man walked around the first of the parked cars, I heard the distinct rumbling voice of ballad singer Burl Ives call off the dogs and sing out a hello. He stood an inch or two over six feet, weighed well over two hundred pounds and was wearing a green-with-

yellow-trim-jogging suit zipped half way up, covering most of his tee shirt and camouflaging some of his protruding middle. His beard was full and white, horn-rimmed glasses sat squarely on his finely chiseled nose and a yellow-patterned silk bandana was tied securely

around his head.

"It helps my sinuses," Ives said, tugging at the bandana and explaining why he wore it as we walked to the house.

In his study a few minutes later, relaxed in one of the brocaded chairs, a large matching footstool and a coffee table

between us, Ives talked about growing up in southern Illinois, his long career in show business and a hodgepodge of other topics. To the left, a burning log crackled occasionally in the fireplace to cut the midday chill and a five-foot television screen with the picture on but the sound turned down sat ominously in the corner on the right. Several hard-bound books, a painting of an English countryside and a hanging plant or two complimented the room, blending together with everything else to give the study a comfortable, lived-in look.

Someone had asked me to tell Ives that he'd seen him in "Paint Your Wagon" in Boston in the early fifties and had enjoyed it. Ives chuckled and remembered the show, explaining how it had been underfinanced and that the regular cast had traveled all over the country by train. And although the show was "worked up pretty good," by the time it got to Chicago everyone who couldn't fly was beat.

"And that night, opening night in Chicago," he said, his eyes glistening and a smile pulling at his cheeks as he spoke, "they were all so tired and angry at the way they had been treated that you can't do a show that way. So Claudia Cassidy was the critic, the main one at that time, for the 'Chicago Tribune.'

"She was from Stoy, Illinois, close to Robinson. And she gave that show a hammering. Which it deserved. The next night she would have liked it, you know.

## Burl Ives

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Amy Roberts, an eighth grade student of East Junior High in the Jasper Unit#1, recently received an Honorable Mention Award in the Writing Talent Search.

Amy's story, "Burl Ives," was entered in the non-fiction prose category. She was also recognized as a top scholar in the eighth grade for Unit#1.

by Amy Roberts

The hurried traveler, taking a shortcut from one major highway to another can reach the end of Illinois Route 49 without knowing how close he came to the beginnings of greatness.

No billboard proclaims "Birthplace of Burl Ives" and no souvenir stand offers sheet music or miniature guitars for sale. In fact, if the serious student went into the county seat in Newton, he wouldn't even find a copy of Ives' autobiography,

"The Wayfaring Stranger," in the local library.

Perhaps what seems a lack of interest is due to the fact that many people in and around Hunt City (now just Hunt) still remember Ives and to them it is just a local boy gone to the city.

But he was born in Jasper County in 1909, a son of Frank and Della Ives, and it was in Jasper County that he grew up hearing the music that would fire his imagination and cause him to become "The Warfaring Stranger."

Burl Ives was only a couple of generations removed from the pioneers who settled Jasper County, and he was a member of the last generation to whom music was all things to all people. He heard and learned and sang the songs that soothed the babies, lightened the work load, vented the grief and frustration, aroused patriotic spirit, elected candidates, honored fallen heroes, amused children and

wrote the roots not of individuals but of the community.

Over the years, Ives has tried and succeeded in many mediums and collected awards in them all. He is a concert singer and musician, award winning actor on both stage and screen, television star, recording artist and author. His talent seems to be all but limitless.

He left Eastern Illinois Teachers' College in Charleston to roam the United States, gathering the musical background of the American people.

Probably, his most important accomplishment is the making of folk music into a respectable art form. He not only gathered and preserved the songs and music but also collected and published the background stories that make this music come alive. Without his unusual ability and dedication, this part of our country's history might be lost today.



# place to the Amy DuPont house

We did have a pretty good show.

"But she was very nice to me," he said, his smile widening and his eyes glistening even more brightly through his bifocals. "She took me aside from everybody and said, 'This ol' boy is all right, but the rest of the people are awful.'"

Someone else had gotten "pretty good notices," too, but that was the end of "Paint Your Wagon." Ives had some ideas about why the show had problems from the beginning.

By then he had been out on the concert tour and "had begun to have a feeling for audiences and to have a feeling about what lifts an audience and what drops 'em." To illustrate that "a sad song in the wrong place will kill a whole evening," he sang a line from a slow song in the show.

"I was born under a wandering star. . .," he sang, scooting up on the edge of his chair. "Which is down. And then the next song that I had to do was a song about my dead wife. It was slow and mournful. . . the whole first act was down. It started out with a funeral, with the buryin'. And I preached the funeral."

"So I went to the producer and I said, 'Look, I'm no expert and (Alan) Lerner and (Frederick) Loewe certainly know what they're doing, but I want to point somethin' out to you, why this thing failed in the first place was because everything is about death and dyin' and God mournful. People, they want to have a little fun, you know.'"

"I changed the tempo on 'I was born under a wandering star' to 'um tum ta de. I changed the tempo on the others, too. And it began to play."

But somebody reported his improvising back to Lerner and Loewe. Ives laughed as he remembered what happened next.

"Fritz Loewe came storming out," he said. "And I said, 'If you were going to do the songs in a concert, your way would be the way to do it. But look here what you've got. You've got five dead songs and a dead woman and a dead man in the first act. That's why it wasn't a success in the first place.'"

Ives never said what Loewe had to say. He just laughed and said, "At the opening of the second act a carriage arrives with all these beautiful girls. It lifts when the girls come on. And that's the story of the 'Paint Your Wagon' I was in. It was my experience in it."

Experiences like that over the years have given Ives the confidence in his own judgment about scripts and approaches to the roles he has played. But he doesn't believe there is any special way or specific area of the country to be from to prepare for a career in show business.

"Oh, you can prepare and have techniques," he said. "But you cannot be prepared for the vital essence of performing or of a human being. That comes probably out of the earth and out of the vitamins and out of the people and out of the environment that you live in. I think any environment can be a proper environment for a performer. It depends upon the entity that's doing it."

"There is only one like me. In all creation, there's just one. On-

ly one that's got the same fingerprint. There's only one that sounds like me, and so that particular one happened to be able to do this particular thing as other people do other things. James Jones from Robinson did write beautiful and great novels, and Skinny Connors from Newton was a scientist."

From this point, Ives moved easily from story to story about the life and the people he remembered from his boyhood days in southern Illinois, saying that nothing really stood out in his mind since he had "thousands" of images from those days, that "it's a very big canvas." He remembered Victor Brough living next to him when they were small boys.

"Victor Brough," he said, his voice lowering. "Yeah, he was a very bright guy. I was just a baby, and Victor was just a baby as well. Two or three years old. We got together and we wanted a billy goat. And I really didn't know why we wanted a billy goat, until. . ."

His voice trailed off as another story came to mind. This time he remembered a trip back to Newton "ten or fifteen years ago."

"We went to dinner for my sisters," he said, remembering food he had liked as a boy. "I told 'em, I said, 'Now, look, I want some sassafras tea.' And we had greens, I think. So I poured some sassafras tea. And the old sayin' was every year when you pour your sassafras tea, they'd say, 'This is really good for you. It thins your blood.'"

"Emery Gifford, a very bright guy who was married to my sister who passed away some time ago, was on the other side of the table and he said, 'I think it's the diggin' that thins your blood.'"

Laughing, Ives said he thought there was some truth to that. What he wrote in his autobiography, "The Wayfaring Stranger," was also true. But he did change some of the names around.

"The publishers wanted me to do that," he said, "because there were some things in there that were pretty wild. So I did. Then they said, 'If anybody says anything, say, well, if the shoe fits, put it on.'"

At least one person thought the shoe fit and threatened to sue Ives for what he'd written. He didn't, though.

"He knew who he was," Ives said. "I said, 'How do you know I'm talkin' about you? All the things I said in there were bad. Do you take those things and say it's you? Maybe it was another man that did that.' I could have proved damn near all of it. And worse."

If he were writing the book over, though, Ives said he wouldn't write it as he did thirty years ago.

"Yeah, I was kind of mad when I wrote that book," he said, grinning sheepishly. "I was slicin' away at a lot of people. That was because I was angry. Now I wouldn't do that because I realize that slashing out doesn't help it."

"The only way you help it is to create a vacuum and move away from it. And then it disappears. Your enemies, you think 'em out of business.'"

Laughing as he finished, Ives sat back in his chair and turned his thoughts back to earlier days. Born on "what was known as the Gilbert place in those days," he and his family soon moved to another farm. He grew up hearing church hymns from his earliest memories.

"One reason I believe that I've ended up a singer and doing what I do," he said, "aside from what I said awhile ago, is the fact that in prenatal times I went right to church and heard those hymns, and they were bouncin' in there. They made an impression on me and to this day, I'd rather sing hymns than any other songs. There are nice ballads, but I love singin' hymns."

The influence for singing came from several people, but Ives thinks it came mostly from his Grandmother White. His mother also sang, and they used to sing one song he remembers about a little girl with no home who was "the fruit of the rich man's home" that made him cry when he heard it.

The clock that chimed every fifteen minutes muffled his soft laughter. He continued talking about his singing career and how he got started at it.

"It was a perfectly natural thing," he said. "There was nothing special in it. When I realized it was something special, I was a young man in Hunt City. My sister, who was a principal near Chicago until she passed away in the early fifties, and I used to sing in church and went out to sing at a Homecoming at a church southwest of Hunt City."

"It was in the summer time, and we sang 'Forty Years Ago.' Which is a good ol' hymn. An evangelistic hymn. We got famous after that."

Before he got famous, however, the Ives family lived no differently than did most

other families in southern Illinois at the time. Until moving to Hunt City, the family went to town "to do the tradin'" in a survey or a buckboard.

"In case it was real muddy or something," Ives said, "why, my dad would go on a horse, ride in. And then in the summer time, of course, we had the huckster. Which is another area I wanted to talk about, 'cause that's the fascinating area."

"Now we had a huckster that came up to our house when we lived on the Gilbert place, when I was just a baby. But it's a real memory. His name was Ansel Whisennand. And he smoked a cigar with a holder that was clear yellow plastic."

"We traded chickens and butter and eggs for coffee and sugar and things like that. The huckster was a wagon that was sort of like an old refrigerator. You pulled on the panel of drawers and here's the coffee, tea, pins and needles and all kinds of things like that on the sides of the wagon. On the back and top he had a place for chickens."

Describing the huckster wagon itself, Ives said "it was more like a stagecoach" than a wagon. He couldn't remember how often the huckster came by.

"I would think maybe once a week, maybe more," he said, chuckling at his southern Illinois dialect. "See, I'm back to southern Illinois—once. And we also had pack peddlers."

He remembered one such peddler named Mr. Bean and wondered if he had anything to do with the Bean that has the sporting goods catalog. He believed that he could have been since he knew the Wanamakers started in Vincennes as pack peddlers and one of them started the first store in pioneer days.

"Yeah," he said, "The peddler was really the guy that meant business. I 'member the

pack smelled marvelously because he had some soap in it. It was perfumed soap. I think the smell of that soap was very good for business. It created an atmosphere."

The pack the peddler carried was "bout like the kids wear" today and also contained "needles and thread, lace, some home remedies, pills and silk." At night, the peddlers sometimes stayed overnight at his customers.

"He stayed at our house, anyway," Ives said. "But we had a sort of open-door policy there. I can 'member my father when some guy came along, just a man walkin' and he says, 'Can I stay all night?'"

"My father had said, 'I never turn a man away from my door.' And he had him come in. So if we had room in the house, he'd stay there. Or if it were summer time, we'd fix him up in the chicken house or in the barn. And we'd give him his supper and give him his breakfast and send him on his way, free."

Although he didn't know if it was the common practice of the times, Ives thought it was "because it was the policy at our house," and he didn't think their policy was any different from that of other families.

"Course we didn't have much," he said. "But what we had was given away unless it was some ol' skinflint. I can remember one type peddler that my mother didn't like. And we'd see him acomin' and we'd all hide. He'd knock and knock and wouldn't get any response and then he'd go away. But Mr. Bean, we liked."

After the Ives family moved to Hunt City, Burl got to see the other side of the huckster's life.

"I used to go with a huckster on his trips then," he said. "Charlie Knicely was his name. I enjoyed those trips tremendously."

Little money changed hands on those huckster trips. Even when members of his family went to the store, they took eggs, butter and other farm products to use to trade for staples since the barter system was still working.

"But the stores were interesting in those days," he said. "The town was pretty lively when we first moved there. There was a harness shop, for instance. There was an implement building and the hardware store and the mercantile store with dry goods and groceries and things like that."

"Then there was the restaurant, which sold sandwiches and pop and candy and stuff like that. Just a few extra things for a weekend. A loaf of bread."

"Next door they had an ice cream parlor. And it was there that was the meeting place. They had a big potbellied stove. That's where everybody would congregate in the winter time. Summer time, too. The boys would all be out in front, sittin' on cream cans and bread boxes. I've sat on many a cream can and bread box in front of the store."

Explaining that these big cream cans were used to send the farmers' cream away to be made into butter, Ives said he thought that "was the beginning of the end" of the old ways. He



Burl Ives today with his two German Shepard dogs outside his Montecito, California home. Ives lives on the 5.8 acre estate built for the late Amy DuPont.



had loved to go to his grandfather's farm because "we'd get the whip cream."

His grandfather had plenty of milk and butter, too. But then the cream separators came in, and his grandfather started taking the cream to town to sell. Much of the milk, bluish in color, that was left after the cream was separated was mixed with bran and fed to the hogs.

"When that money came in from selling the cream," Ives said, "you'd go out there (to his grandfather's) and you wouldn't get anything. That cream went into that cream separator and was taken to town. All that was available for table use was separated milk."

"Grandpa was a man that would work. He was the old pioneer type and a dollar was a dollar. It was real tough to come by in those days. And a cash product like cream was very important to him."

His grandparents on his mother's side, Cryus and Kate White and his mother, Della, the first daughter, came to Clay County, Illinois from Greene or Brown County, Indiana—Ives can't remember which one. He does remember being told that his grandfather built the first church in a place called Little Cincinnati before moving on.

And as he remembers the story about the trip west being told to him as a child, they came in a covered wagon and forded the Wabash River in the winter time. His mother was "scared to death of water" from then on.

"The only thing they had to eat after they had crossed the river was frozen mince meat pie," he said. "The pie was frozen and wouldn't spoil. So they heated it up, and it was good."

His father's family also settled in Clay County, near Louisville, just across the Little Wabash River from where his mother's family settled. Family members on both sides "didn't cotton to the little romance that struck up" between Frank Ives and Della White.

"My grandfather on my father's side was sort of an intellectual man," Ives said, remembering "a nice story as was told to" him. "He had a gimp and he read books. He wasn't a very good farmer."

"My grandfather on my mother's side was a staunch Scot with the Protestant work ethic, and he didn't think this was a very good match. My father was the sort to fool around with sleighs, imaginative things and making things, carpentry things. They weren't on the ball in those fields."

"One night my Grandfather White put all of his stuff together in the middle of the night, put it all in a wagon, took his cows and quietly snuck out down the road, leavin' Clay County, comin' up to Jasper County and takin' his daughter."

"About ten o'clock in the morning there was a little dot in back, and it got closer and closer. It was Frank Ives and his buggy with two rather fancy horses. He stayed a fairly safe distance back."

Ives laughed and paused before he continued.

"He never came any closer," he said. "He was just there. So along about the middle of the afternoon, the young lady sprang from the wagon and ran back and got in the buggy Frank Ives was driving. And that ended that."

And that was the beginning of the Frank and Della Ives family.



Frank and Della Ives, Burl's parents, taken in Hunt City, circa 1947. (photo courtesy of Opal Ives)

Burl was the fifth of seven children. Although his father quit the farm and moved to Hunt City to become a road and bridge builder early in Burl's life, he thinks there are rewards for growing up in the country.

"The greatest reward is just growing up in the country," he said. "Not necessarily in a little town. You can separate the country and little towns when it comes to health. When you're in the country, you get raw milk, you get cornbread, you get greens, you get everything right out of the earth. And that gives you a start."

"Also in the country, you're breast fed, so you get that cholesterol from momma. You get all the things that she built up in strength. There's a difference, too, I think, between the kids who were born and raised, got their first years in the country, from the ones that got them in a little town."

"You get in a little town, and everybody becomes interested in that baloney. Baloney and cheese and canned goods, you know. Little Vienna weiners and stuff like that."

Despite the belief he has that kids raised in the country have a better start in life, Ives said that after his family moved to town everyone considered anybody who lived in the country "a little bit off." Lines were also drawn between people who lived in different towns.

"Willow Hill was a little bit bigger than Hunt City," he said. "And Yale was about the same size. Willow Hill was a little more of a town because it had two railroads going through there at one time. They've still got the IC. So they always felt a little bit superior to us. Which they probably were in many ways."

"They drew lines, or we drew lines, that were very sharp. For instance, there was a great rivalry between Willow Hill and Hunt City in every way. Baseball, wrestling, anything. Then they got a high school and, of course, that was the end."

As Ives talked about the Willow Hill high school, its football team and his own high school years in Newton, his attractive blonde-haired wife, Dorothy, walked into the study and said she'd bring coffee and tea until she could serve dinner. After she left, Ives said the lines he had been speaking about weren't only true in small towns but were also true of mankind.

"It's probably one of his greatest faults, the lines," he said. "For instance, I remember once when we were rehearsing for the Christmas night like they have with people doing recitations, songs, pageants and all. This was the First Christian Church, which was the dominant church there. More people went there than went to the Methodist Church."

"I remember one of the boys pointing to one of the other kids who went to the other church and saying," Ives said, moving up to the edge of his chair and whispering, "A spy to see what we're doing." That line was drawn.

"So people are always drawing lines. And the silliest lines you can imagine are in the theater. You'd think in the theater in New York City, which is fairly sophisticated, you'd find a little more sense. But there isn't."

An example of the lines drawn in the theater Ives used to make his point was from a time when he was doing a show in Chicago called "Sing Out Sweet Lamb." Albert Drake, the star of the show, left after six months, and Ives got more songs and got his name up in lights for the first time.

His parents were there for the first "two or three evenings," and he went out with them. After his parents left, he wasn't invited to go out with the cast. In the meantime, he was invited to a party at the Ambassador East with Paul Robeson, Jose Ferrer, Mary Martin and other people who were starring in shows in Chicago.

"When I came back to the

show the next day," Ives said, "they said, 'Ah, ha, so you're out with the big shots.' So I said, 'Well, yeah, 'cause I came down here for three nights, and you didn't tell me where you were going.'"

"They drew a line between me and them that was soooooo definite, after we'd been close friends for over six months. I'd been going out with the cast every night, going someplace, maybe eating and having a good time and then going home."

Dorothy Ives returned with the coffee and tea while he talked about lines normally not being drawn in show business between sections of the country because everyone is from different parts of the country. Being raised in rural America may even have been of some help to Ives in many of the roles he has played in both theater and movies.

"Oh, yeah," he said, then naming some of his starring roles in both mediums. "Desire Under the Elms,' 'Big Country,' 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,' 'You. . .'"

"Let No One Write My Epitaph,' which is my favorite," Dorothy said, setting the drinks on the coffee table. "Burl, yours has to seep a little bit. Now I'm going shopping. I've got some food for you guys later. Until then, in this establishment you pretty much have to make yourself at home, especially today when the help is out. If you want a piece of fruit or anything, just go out and find the kitchen."

"What is that cooking in there?" Ives asked, sniffing the air. "It smells great."

"I'm making those Chinese bean sprouts with kickapoo joy juice or something like that."

"With rice?"

"No, we don't have bean sprouts with rice."

"Yes, you can."

"No, no, not the starch."

"I think you ought to make a little rice," Ives said and chuckled. "That's typical. . ."

"No rice, Burl," Dorothy said pleasantly and left for her shopping trip.

Ives chuckled again and agreed that Dorothy, his wife of twelve years, takes good care of him. Then he went back to talking about the lines drawn by people because of their differences.

"It's ridiculous," he said. "The more distance between the people of the world, the thicker and harder the lines. 'Cause if everybody's against everybody and everybody is suspicious of everybody, then everybody is afraid. It's fear, fear of the other kind."

While Ives thinks the fear may have been around years ago, he doesn't think people knew about it. They weren't afraid of the man coming down the road, not like they are today.

"Those people out on the street now are out of work, and they are desperate," he said. "And the young people grow up without any training or without home pressures. They're in gangs for protection of fear. It's the same old story, you know. Get the other guy before he gets you."

Wasn't fear present during the depression?

"It was not," he said. "Because people were hungry. See these people today, they're not hungry. People were hungry back then. And when people are hungry, there are other people to help them."

"I remember being around the soup kitchens and the hobo jungles in my time, and there was great kindness to anybody

that would come in to get fed. There was very little violence in comparison to what we have now. At least that I saw."

Part of the difference between then and now, Ives believes, is due to the influence of television.

"I think that box there has a lot to do with it," he said, pointing to the large television screen setting in the corner of the study. "Information, ideas. If a young person grows up watching it, he's shown violence. He is shown great opulence, and he doesn't have it. He says, 'What's wrong with me?' So he gets a couple of guys together and gets what he wants."

The churches are no different because they are very big, and it takes a lot of money to keep them going. Yet Ives believes that the church hasn't necessarily changed in his lifetime.

"In some respects, you watch on television and you'll see the same church I saw out in the country," he said. "Then on the other hand, you'll find some extremely sophisticated operations in the church. There is only one thing that remains constant, and that's the teachings of Christ."

Some things that haven't remained constant are stories about Ives since he left Charleston as a college junior and all-conference football player over fifty years ago with a guitar slung over his shoulder to carve out his place in show business.

"I went back to Charleston on Homecoming, forty-nine years after I went there," he said. "I guess that was in '76. Did a concert. And in the meantime, I've heard all the stories about me. Most of 'em have no basis at all. Complete lies, you know. Story about me comin' out of the girls' dormitory and gettin' caught and hangin' in the vines."

"There's nothing to that at all. Just incredible stories. Some of them complimentary and others not. This one merchant in town, dealing in big sacks of something—I don't know what the hell it was—went to the college, they said, and asked if I'd come down and work for him one Saturday. Said I just walked in there and picked up those 400-pound sacks like they were nothing. Complete fabrication. No such thing."

Among other things that Ives has heard about what he supposedly said or did include that he "was badmouthing the place." Anything he has said, he believes to be "factual and valid." About Dr. Livingston Lord, Eastern Illinois University's first president, he has nothing but praise.

"He was really quite a great man, I think," Ives said. "For instance, I made pretty good grades the first year; second year, not so good; and the third year, I lost interest. It was just as boring as hell for me."

"And Dr. Lord called me in and looked at my grades and said to me, 'I think you've got too restless a spirit to be an educator,'" Ives said and leaned forward in his chair, whispering as he finished. "Which was right on the button, right on the button. He was that kind of teacher."

Even though Ives was restless and didn't stay in school until graduation, he still believes the experience at what was then Eastern Illinois Teachers' College was of some value for those who attended the college.

"Undoubtedly every experience helps you," he said. "But there wasn't anything that helped me directly. I didn't



learn anything that was of use to me. The plays, for instance, were cast through the English Department, and whoever made an A in English would get the lead in the play. If you made a C or a D in English, you wouldn't get anything but maybe a walk-on part. So I always got a walk-on.

"Yet for a, uh, barbarian from the sticks to come into this atmosphere was a very good thing, a very good and civilizing influence. The whole school was, and I believe that.

"Everyday we had chapel. And everyday we sang the doxology. It was the Episcopalian service transplanted right into that school, with a string trio playing classical music. We had the reading of the lesson, a little sermon by Dr. Lord. They were classics.

"Oh, we had everything but the incense. Furthermore, we had the Minneapolis Symphony. It was a little pocket of what you might call New England, the finer parts of New England, society transplanted to the Midwest."

At the time, however, Ives didn't always see the value of what Dr. Lord was doing for the students. He and other "rebels" would hide from the Student Council when its members took daily roll. And when they weren't there, they had to see Dr. Lord.

"That's the way it was," Ives said. "You see, Dr. Lord built that school. A lot of people resented it later when the Supreme Court said you couldn't do that. They said he would turn over in his grave if he knew he was breaking the law. I don't think he would. I think he would have said, 'The law is wrong, because I'm bringing something to these students.'"

One problem Ives saw with the transplanted New England culture, though, was that there was no recognition of local culture. He remembered only one teacher who asked him to come to her class and sing some ballads as examples of local culture.

"She recognized the folk lore, the ballad as something cultural," he said. "I 'member that even Dr. Lord was up talkin' once and said, 'If you've got a Stradivarius violin, you don't let some country fiddler fiddle at a dance.'

"Well, he was wrong in that some of those country fiddlers are as technically as good as (Jascha) Heifetz. Some of them are tremendous and would do the Stradivarius no harm at all. There was not an understanding of anything from this area that I could notice there.

"For instance, I 'member Dr. Lord once talkin' about a friend of his who was an evangelist. And he maintained that the evangelistic songs were more vital and more important than the traditional songs, the doxology. And he got up and he sang one, and Dr. Lord said it was certainly more vital. But it was because his friend was the singer, you see, not the material.

"So they didn't recognize the roots of the Midwest. They didn't recognize the fact that those hymns were the things that those pioneers rode on. Rode through all the suffering they had and all the hard work. Those hymns were part of the pattern. Without 'em they wouldn't have made it."

Explaining that the hymns were very strong in the people in the westward expansion and were "what picked their spirits

up," Ives said that Dr. Lord and his people couldn't know that because they were presenting another side of life that was valid, too.

"But now that I'm older," he said, "I can see where they missed the boat. What you could memorize and retain in your mind was what was important to them, not what you could create."

The Negro spiritual had the same effect on the survival of the black people. And mention of the spiritual reminded Ives of the one black family who lived near Hunt City when he was a boy.

"The man's name was Rollie Anderson," he said. "He lived right across from my uncle. He went to the church my grandfather went to. He was treated just like everybody else. No problem there.

"I 'member my Uncle Pres (White) who lived right next door to Rollie Anderson once said, 'Well, I had a great time last Sunday. There was a car load of niggers come down from Chicago, and they invited me over there,' he said. 'And we prayed and sang all day.' And he said, 'It was the most spiritual time I've had in my life.'

"I told that to someone in New York and they said, 'Yes, but he said it, didn't he? He said it.' They picked out that one little flaw, which was the only way my Uncle Pres knew. Only word he knew. And he didn't mean anything derogatory at all. But see, there's another line. He had no line, but the people tried to make him have one."

Those family members were the people Ives looked up to as a boy growing up in Hunt City. He particularly looked up to his father and grandfather.

"A few times I took on preachers," he said. "But they had feet of clay."

Asked how he would like to be remembered, Ives said softly, "It really doesn't concern me. That part of me that in the old days was pleased to go in a nightclub and everybody'd say, 'There's . . .' and point. That's gone. It was there, but I think it's pretty much gone.

"My focus now is out from me, rather than in me. So what I can do for the world and what influence, in a small way, I can

have is where I am now. I've tasted it all. I've had the applause, and I've had the awards. I've had all these things, and I know it's like cotton candy at the fair: you bite into it and it's gone."

While that is gone, Ives said he supposed that when he does a concert and he reads that somebody liked it, he still likes that better than if they didn't. Now, though, he goes on stage with a different attitude.

"There was a time that I went on to put it over," he said. "But now I go on to touch people. It's as simple as that. There's nothing like, at this time in my life, to walk out before an audience.

"There they are and here I am with a guitar," he said of his relationship with an audience. "I start my program out with something simple. So simple, as simple as I can get it, 'cause the biggest part of them don't know what to expect. That simplicity disarms them and prepares them to listen to what I'm puttin' out. And that's not altogether words, either. That's beyond words.

"In 'The Ballad of Barbara Allen,' the same servant goes down the same road to the same house to talk to Barbara Allen to tell her that Sweet William is dying. She comes back and goes through the same door, talks to the same guy in the same corner of the room, goes out into the same field, is buried in the same church and the same things climb up the same walls that were first in my mind. That has never changed.

"So I walk out and look at that audience and I sing," Ives said and began singing, "In Scarlet Town where I was born, there was a fair maiden dwelling . . . And I mean it. 'Cause it is so. It is a truth I'm hitting, it's not words. It is not words. It's not music—it's a truth.

"That is what that ballad is, the thing that's in my head. It's always been there and has grown and is very vital. That's why I get by with it. Other people have gone out and tried to sing 'Barbara Allen' and they won't get half way through and people are movin' and coughin'. But I nail 'em, 'cause I don't try. I create a vacuum.

"I'm here," he said, touching

his head and chest. "I mean here someplace. And so are they."

Other than the simplicity and the sincerity, how he touches people or what he does comes from no specific plans. In fact, it's the opposite.

"I don't have any plans at all," he said. "I just do whatever comes to me. I discovered that you don't make plans. Or I don't because if I do make 'em, it doesn't happen.

"Anything good that's ever happened to me came right out of left field, man, whamm," he said, making his fist into a ball and swinging it in front of him. "It usually comes on when you withdraw, when you have no idea it's coming. And I think that's a part of the whole business. If you have this great desire and are trying to get something to happen, it's a false move, I think. I don't think you can push the really good things.

"The times that really propelled me forward were times when I had regressed. I had moved right away and out of it. Then it kind of seems like you create a vacuum in which this thing comes in, oh gee. That's the way 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof' came. I was comin' to California and had a job in real estate. I was quittin'. Really quittin' when (Elia) Kazan sent me the script."

If he had been trying to get the role for which he received an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor, Ives doesn't think he would have gotten it. He feels the same way about his role in "Big Country." He based his beliefs about trying for something or planning for it on desire.

"See," he said, reflecting on the Academy Award and the two roles that kept him permanently out of the real estate business, "desire is a dangerous thing. Very dangerous. I won't say it's negative, but there's something about it that's not quite kosher.

"And this box here, the television as I said earlier, creates such desire in the public's mind, in little minds and children, that they're brought up with unfulfilled desires which makes for unhappiness. And happiness, I think, is in direct ratio to that which you can do without. Not that you do, but that you can."

By this time the logs in the

fireplace had burned down and a slight chill settled throughout the study in the fading afternoon. Ives coughed occasionally as the conversation drifted from football to atomic energy to Zen Buddhism to a concert he had done in Chautauqua, New York where he sang in the same spot where William Jennings Bryan gave his free silver, cross of gold speech.

"I told the audience," he said, "that when I was very small, small enough to ride on my father's back, and he was holding my feet, we went to the Chautauqua in Merom Bluff, Indiana in a Model T roadster to hear a man called William Jennings Bryan.

"And I heard him. I 'member the sea of people standing and hearing this voice that was sort of like a ray of light. Everybody was quiet."

After he coughed again, Ives fell quiet, too, and began looking around his chair and the coffee table. The clock chimed before he spoke.

"I'm looking for my clicker," he said solemnly, still looking for the remote control for the television. Then in his best, measured Burl Ives voice, he continued. "That damn thing gets away in the most peculiar manner. I have to get up and look around."

We both got up and looked around a few seconds before Ives found it. He held the back of his chair as he stooped to retrieve it. Sometime later the conversation turned back to southern Illinois and education.

"I wrote a theme once for English," he said. "And I got an F on it. It was just marked all over with red ink. But I kept it. Many years later, I was goin' through a damn box of stuff, the old annuals and stuff from schools. I ran into this theme. Failure. And I read it.

"It was good," he whispered hoarsely. "It was delicious. But that stopped me from writing right there. Had I been encouraged, if that teacher had been smart enough to see, not the mistakes in capitals and phrasing, but the essence of what I was doing there, I might have ended up writing and God knows what.

"But that was it. I knew it was good. When it was shoved in the face, I said, 'Well, jeez, this is not my area.' There's a great danger of sitting on the wings of talent. Talent is a very flimsy and delicate thing. And if it's not nurtured, something can come on and blacchhhh—stop it."

Singing was different while he was with his family and friends. His father bought an organ, and his sister learned to play it when he was just a small baby. The family sang hymns around the organ. Ives knew the songs and began singing them early, being "the only one right on the notes." Everyone gave him encouragement.

But he didn't always get that encouragement. When he first went to New York, he was sent by a singing teacher to St. Paul's, an old church on the east side, to sing for a man. The choirmaster wasn't impressed.

"He came out and says, 'Where do you come from?'" Ives said. "I said, 'Southern Illinois.' He said, 'What are you doin' in town? Are you goin' to be a singer?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'Go home,' and walked away.

"So I walked out on the street. There was sort of an enclosure in front of the church. I stood there a minute. I was taken (continued on page 19)



The family portrait of the Ives children, circa 1918 when Burl was about nine years old. Left to right from the top are Audry (Halterman), Newton, Clarence, Macomb, Artie, deceased, Argola, deceased, and Burl Ives. (photo courtesy of Opal Ives)



# Spring fever and happy trails

by Suzie Davis

Willie's singin' "Blue skies . . . nothin' but blue skies from now on," as I pull into the grocery store parking lot to do my weekly Thursday night shopping, thinking of little more than how clever someone was to have made windshield wipers keep such good time.

Looking for a place to park, it hits me that those twenty-foot mounds of snow are now little one-foot humps of dirty slush. As I walk towards the door, I stray to one side, swing my leg soccer style and kick the top off one of the humps.

As the pile scatters, I remember being four years old and how I used to kick the crusty slush that hung from the edges of the pond into the spillway with the tip of my little red rubber boot. As I watched the ice disappear into the foamy overflow back then, I knew it wouldn't be long before Spring would come and I could play outside all day long.

Fall and winter weren't that bad. I kept busy helping Mom make beds, baking cookies and following her around, but I was beginning to long to ride my backyard prairie.

When the sun came out and dried out my prairie, I squirmed out of a fitting for one of the pink frilly dresses my mother always seemed to be making me and pulled on my faded brown corduroys.

Bounding out the back door, I jumped on my imaginary horse whose name changed frequently, depending upon who I was, and galloped across the prairie to the bluff.

As I leaned back in the saddle and rested a hand on my six shooter, I sniffed the air and put my face to the breeze. It lifted my hair off my neck and became a part of me.

My little nose picked up a whiff of wood smoke and I told myself there must be Comanches camped upwind of my prairie. Better go scout ahead—there's a herd due in this afternoon.

"Chilck, chilck," I said, sucking air between my cheek and gum, nudging my horse on up the trail . . .

"That'll be \$32.35," the check-out lady says, bringing me back to the present. I shake my head and reach into my back pocket for the money. The bag boy hands me my sack and a half, and I wonder where the rest of it is.

It drizzles rain all weekend. Just another blah couple of days without any deadlines or heavy responsibilities, but I lack any real desire to do anything.

When I open my eyes to another Monday morning, I can see immediately this will not be a regular "Rainy-days-and-Mondays-always-get-me-down" day. Today, the sun is shining. It looks warm outside.

I run to the kitchen to look at the thermometer that tells the indoor and outdoor temperatures and confirm my suspicion. It's only 7 a.m. and already it's forty-two degrees. Heat wave—I'll bet it gets up to sixty-five today.

Now I can dress for work without feeling like "Nanook of the North." Driving into town signs of Spring are everywhere, the grass looks greener, buds are on the trees and the robins

have returned.

While I think about the day ahead, I decide I'll have to get out and make some calls—it's a great day to walk around in the warm sunshine. The kind of day that has a steady breeze.

Again I remember how I used to direct my face into the same kind of breeze long ago while fantasizing I was riding my very own horse at a full gallop, coming from nowhere, going nowhere in particular.

"I hope Rowdy Yates and Mr. Favor come over the next hill," I said, "just so I can ride along with them for a few miles."

More breeze, more fantasy. It's been a rough day on the range for this little wrangler.

Walking the concrete trails, I come back down to earth and realize I've arrived back at the front door of my place of gainful employment, an unfortunate necessity to survival. I pick up a copy of today's paper and look at the weather report, which promises more Spring-Fever weather. The forecast looks good, clear skies and warmer through Thursday.

The evening proves uneventful as I brood over the thoughts I toyed with throughout the day. Gazing at the patterns I've studied thousands of times that cover the canopy above my head, I rest easily knowing all the pieces are in place—my version of counting sheep.

Not a creature is stirring, not even the cats at the foot of my bed. Sleep approaches and visions of mushrooms and gardening dance in my head.

Morning dawns as quickly as Monday night set. After rolling around under the warmth of my granny's home-made quilt, the same sleep-educing canopy works equally well to bring me from drowsy to awake. An infancy stage of waking up.

A short stage at that—"Mew, mew," turns into "Mmmmmeeeeeeooooowww!" as my little blue-eyed, bobtailed kitty demands her freedom to greet the world good morning. The warmth of the Spring morning's

sunshine feels good as I open the screen door to let her out.

I can see it will be another beautiful day. And warmer—five degrees warmer than it was at the same time yesterday.

How will I stand to stay at work? I know the fever is going to reach out and grab me, pick me up from behind my desk and land me somewhere in the middle of Nowhere Country, Rural USA. I will have no control.

But I absolutely have to be at work today, so I resign myself to the fact that if I want to eat, I gotta go.

Making my regular Tuesday route with a slight lack of the enthusiasm I usually muster, I can enjoy being outside for a couple of hours. Confident there's a better place to be, between stops I'm able to let my thoughts wander to just such a place.

With my face to the southwest wind, I think about playing an April Fool's joke two days early. I'll just call the office and say, "April Fool! You thought I'd be back by noon? Ha! The joke's on you."

The thought is fun while it lasts. Maybe tomorrow I'll surrender.

March 31. This is it. It's going to be even warmer today. I will surrender to Spring Fever. Without a second thought, I plan my escape.

Actually, I'm not feeling up to par today. If I were at home instead of work I know I'd feel much better. Sounds good to me.

Well, I'm on my way. The thrill of it all rushes over me because I know I'm free from what sometimes feels like prison. I pass through the front door to "the outside," and it does feel good.

The heat, which has built up inside my car from setting closed up in the bright morning sun, falls out as I open the door. Inside, I open the sun roof and side window to surround myself with the breeze—my nourishment for the afternoon ahead.

Favorite clothes are nothing special to a lot of folks. To me they are. Feeling like an over-

due hug from an old friend, I slide into my oldest straight-leg jeans and a T-shirt. The boots and socks can wait until I reach my destination. I want to feel the cushy grass under my feet for a while.

One more thing before I'm off—the flask. A wrangler without whiskey in the saddle bag is like a day without sunshine. Anita Bryant may not agree, but if I run into Rowdy Yates and offer him a snort of orange juice, he probably wouldn't put in a good word for me with Mr. Favor.

Humming a few lines of "On the road again," I head out of town, damning modern transportation as I notice the gas guage is on empty. Just one of many confirmations that I was born a hundred years too late.

Determined nothing can spoil my spirit today, I commit myself to the theme of the season. The breeze is brisk, today is the last day of March and I intend to ride it "out like a lion."

As I head down the lane towards the barn, I can see the horses pulling up grass and chewing it nonchalantly. On the short walk to the house I let our a series of high-pitched whistles and a "Hi, Babies." They look up, and one replies with a deep-voiced nicker.

Inside, I try to decide which direction I'll head as I fill my canteen with water. Gotta have a chaser. I stop by the refrigerator to pick up a couple of carrots and shove them into my back pocket, behind the bandana.

Unable to decide between north, south, east or west, I pick up my saddle and bridle, stroll out the door and decide to follow the breeze. It always seems to know where it's going. With any luck at all, time will stand still this afternoon and I can just blend with the wind.

The horses have moved around to the other side of the barn now, closer to the feeding spot. They're hoping for an afternoon snack.

"Fat chance, kids," I say. "I'm the snack today."

I slide my saddle down my forearm, canteen first, up-ended against the aluminum jon boat laying in state like a dead man waiting to be carried home with the owner's call to the river, his Spring-Fever trip.

As I walk around behind the bay mare to the big Appaloosa gelding, the mare sniffs at something in my hip pocket. Turning to follow me, she stretches her neck to get a better sniff at the treat hidden in my pocket.

One horse's curiosity leads to more from the other, and I soon have both of them nuzzling at me trying to get at the carrots.

"Okay, okay. You can have them now," I tell them, pulling the carrots out and giving the little one hers first.

Daintily she nips off the first inch. Two more inches disappear quickly between her teeth, then the remainder.

Not so with the big guy. One loud chomp divides the carrot in half and his top lip works like a finger to pull in the rest. Successful, he chews the whole thing at once.

While he chews, I slip a halter over his nose and fasten it, lead him to the gate and on into the barn. With him tied securely to a post, I walk over to get the brushes and hoof pick, while the big spotted animal watches me between remaining chews.

With an uummpphh, I tighten the girth around his belly and realize just how much weight he has gained from lack of exercise over the long winter. This ride will be good for both of us.

As I swing my leg over his back and get settled, I think just how good it feels to be back in the saddle again. I turn his head toward the gravel road that leads down to the creek bottom.

We follow the creek to the edge of the woods and pick our way through the trees while my thoughts turn to the days when I didn't have a care in the world and the only horse I had was my imagination and my own two legs.

Now I have a real horse and wish I were carefree again. How does that song go? ". . . all my life's a circle . . . but I can't tell you why, the world keeps spinning 'round again, the years keep rollin' by."

As we leave the shelter of the woods and step onto the edge of an open field the wind touches my face and lifts away my worries. At a steady trot, we move across the field.

The sight of the hill ahead takes me back to when my biggest responsibility was watching for the arrival of the herd. I lean forward in the saddle, take up the slack in the reins and run up the hill with the wind rushing past my ears . . .

. . . the wind carried the familiar sound of a herd of cattle. At the top of the hill, I saw Rowdy headed my way. As we met, we stopped and turned to look out over the grazing cattle below.

"We've been waitin' for ya, pardner," Rowdy said as we leaned back in our saddles and rested a hand on our six shooters. "Are ya ready?"

Before I could reply, Mr. Favor looked up from below, waved and his deep voice echoed across the prairie, "Head 'em up. Move 'em out."



Galloping across the prairie, face to the wind . . .



# The passing of the privy

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** While we don't plan to make a practice of publishing articles that are unsigned, we'll make an exception with this one which was signed "A Peculiar People." In this case we'll honor the lady's request for anonymity because she said she was a "staid great grandmother" who would "lose her happy home" if we told who she was.

American knowhow has come a long way in the development of the modern whispering toilet stool. Webster defines the old-fashioned outhouse or privy as A) for private use, B) hidden, clandestine or furtive.

These structures were in use in the Midwest by the middle of the nineteenth century. No special accommodations were needed prior to this because of the abundance of trees, brush and other natural camouflage that made concealment no problem. Hazards were snakes, bugs and poson ivy.

## Hazards were snakes, bugs and poison ivy.

By 1885, progress had been made at Montgomery School for at a meeting there the directors contracted two buildings to S. C. Montgomery for \$17.50. In 1881 Lindsay School had let out a contract to Wm. Seitsinger, for the sum of \$29.80, to build



An oil painting by Helen Graham, Oblong, of the old outhouse that still stands on the Ralph Newlin homestead southwest of Bellair.

two privies four by six by six feet high from floor furnished in a good workmanship manner with a shingle roof and one door to each with a button inside of the door.

The modern method of cleanliness (washing and air drying of the hands was

unknown by the user of these early outhouses. Corn cobs, corn husks and the like were early sanitary equipment. And the advent of the Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogues were welcomed for more than one reason.

Placement of the outhouses

varied. The outhouse at private dwellings was often placed at the end of the grape harbor. The grapes and the cool shade made this an inviting spot in the summer.

Sometimes the privy was placed beyond the wood pile. Timid persons kept the wood

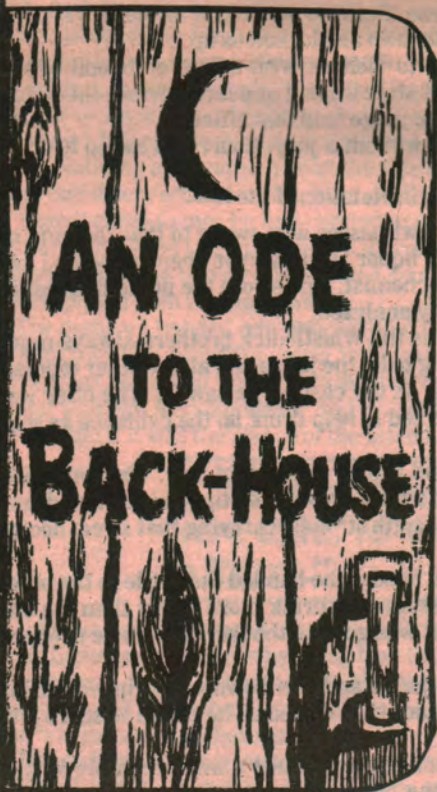
box filled before getting up nerve to go all the way. This was especially true when company was present.

Estate houses situated back from the road placed an outhouse in the front yard under trees for the convenience of visitors. Two-story outhouses were a rarity, but one is reported to be located in Martinsville as of today.

## Two-story outhouses were a rarity, but one is reported to be located in Martinsville as of today.

During the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a big improvement was made in the construction of outhouses. A small excavation was made in the ground, and the bottom and the sides were concreted. This served as a base for the outhouse known as a "Roosevelt." These were a boon to country folk since most city people had inside plumbing by this time.

The old outhouse, sans roof, has gone the way of the "surrey with the fringe on top." A few Roosevelts are scattered throughout the countryside and once in a great while an artistic old-timer has withstood the ravages of time.



## AN ODE TO THE BACK-HOUSE

by James Whitcomb Riley, Indiana poet. Reprinted in a Mansfield Sanitary Inc., company brochure from 1932-1945 for selling modern toilet fixtures.

When memory keeps me company and moves to smiles or tears,  
A weather-beaten object looms through the mist of years,  
Behind the house and barn it stood, a half a mile or more,  
And hurrying feet a path had made, straight to its swinging door,  
Its architecture was a type of simple classic art,  
But in the tragedy of life it played a leading part.  
And oft, the passing traveler drove slow, and heaved a sigh,  
To see the modest hired girl slip out with glances shy.



We had our posy garden that the women loved so well,  
I loved it too, but better still I loved the stronger smell  
That filled the evening breezes so full of homely cheer  
And told the night-o'ertaken tramp that human life was near.  
On lazy August afternoons, it made a little bower  
Delightful, where my grandsire sat and whiled away an hour.  
For there the summer mornings its very cares entwined,  
And berry bushes reddened in the steaming soil behind.



All day fat spiders spun their webs to catch the buzzing flies,  
That flitted to and from the house where Ma was baking pies.  
And once a swarm of hornets bold, had built a palace there,  
And stung my unsuspecting Aunt—I must not tell you where—  
Then Father took a flaming pole—that was a happy day—  
He nearly burned the building up, but the hornets left to stay.  
When summer bloom began to fade and winter to carouse,

We banked the little building with a heap of hemlock boughs.



But when the crust was on the snow and the sullen skies were gray  
In sooth, the building was no place where one could wish to stay.  
We did our duties promptly, there one purpose swayed the mind,  
We tarried not, nor lingered long on what we left behind,  
The torture of that icy seat would make a Spartan sob,  
For needs must scrape the gooseflesh with a lacerating cob,  
That from a frost-encrusted nail was suspended by a string—  
For Father was a frugal man and wasted not a thing.



When Granpa had to "go out back" and make his morning call,  
We'd bundle up the dear old man with a muffler and a shawl,  
I knew the hole on which he sat, 'twas padded all around,  
And once I dared to sit there—'twas all too wide I found,  
My loins were all too little and I jack-knifed there to stay,

They had to come and get me out or I'd have passed away.  
Then Father said ambition was a thing that boys should shun,  
And I just used the children's hole 'til childhood days were done.



And still I marvel at the craft that cut those holes so true,  
The baby hole, and the slender hole that fitted Sister Sue.  
That dear old old country landmark; I've tramped around a bit,  
And in the lap of luxury my lot has been to sit—  
But ere I die I'll eat the fruit of trees I robbed of yore  
Then seek the shanty where my name is carved upon the door,  
I ween the old familiar smell will sooth my faded soul,  
I'm now a man, but none the less I'll try the children's hole.





**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This story was written by 92-year-old Thornton Stephens who lives with his wife of 67 years, Mabel, on the Clark-Crawford County line road northwest of Annapolis.

by Thornton Stephens

One dreary late March afternoon several years ago, I started to the barn to do my evening chores and was surprised to see a strange rig pull into my driveway. It was a light springwagon with a canvas top and side curtains. At that distance, I could make out the words on the side, "Professor Whistledick" and "Magic X." It was pulled by a shaggy mule.

The rig stopped and the lone occupant alighted and came toward me, thumping along. He was about five foot two inches in height; he was dressed in a loud pair of yellow and white striped pants. His left pant's leg was rolled to about the knee position revealing a wooden leg with a heavy cap on the lower end.

The tag ends of a Texas-type bowtie were just visible through the foliage of a Van Dyke beard. On his head was a pickle dish hat, vintage of the late Nineties. He extended his hand and introduced himself. Said he was from Tennessee and he had a drug, a product of his own distilling. He was advertising and demonstrating a drug that made all other drugs either obsolete or twice as effective.

As liquor to drink, one snort would roll back ten or fifteen years from any man's life. Two or three swallows would guarantee your wife ten or fifteen hours of peace and quiet. It was the best linament known.

It would remove varnish, restore natural color to the hair or beard could be used as a permanent—well, they never had to be redone. It would destroy termites or, properly used on oil painting, would give them that natural look all artists strive for but few obtain. It would not harm flesh or change water.

Jake, as he called himself, said what he was interested in at the present was to find accommodations for himself and his mule for the night. If we could keep the pair of them he would be glad to demonstrate all of the uses of his drug and he would guarantee complete satisfaction or he would settle in cash.

On a proposition like that, I couldn't turn him down as we always tried to take care of a stranger in distress. For "In as much as you" and so forth.

And besides I did feel sorry for that little mule.

I told the professor to unhitch his mule and water him, then bring him on to the barn. I would go on ahead as I had to dress a bad wire cut on a mare's leg.

Jake halted me. He went to the back of his wagon and got a large black bottle which he handed me.

He said, "Now don't drop it as it might explode and blow out a hole big enough to drop that barn in. Take it with you," he said, "but wait for me to dress that wound."

After the mule had been cared for, Jake uncorked the bottle and fished out a little brush from his vest pocket. He gave the wound a good painting with the liquid.

Incidentally, that wound healed up and haired over in three days.

At the supper table that night, Jake freely put away the biscuits, kraut and pork ribs as he beguiled us with the story of how he and his brother, Hank, had accidentally discovered their concoction, how it was threatening to compete with doctors, druggists and veterinarians and beauty parlors.

He said he and his brother "owned a little farm over on The Other Side of Oak Ridge From the Government Plant." They lived in a cabin at the foot of the ridge and raised a patch of corn each year which they made into moonshine whiskey in a little cave above the house.

They had to compete with several other stills in the county and if it had not been for their superior produce they would not have had a very good living at that. The county had voted dry at the last election, but the county officers did nothing to stop moonshining until the people in the county seat made it very plain they would vote the other way if something was done and soon.

The sheriff got busy and raided every known still and confiscated them. He also arrested the owners and brought them in before the judge who sentenced him to jail.

They were turned loose in a day or two with their stills returned if the judge, states attorney and the sheriff were elected again. Further they were promised a good drink of the best booze in County for voting right as they came in for the election.

They were to stop at Jim's Place and get their drink, then come across the park to the voting place. They were to tell all their neighbors they were included in the plans.

"About ten days before the elections," Jake said, "the sheriff drove up to our door and unloaded ten gallon jugs and told us the reason he had not raided our place was but very few people knew about us and he and some of his friends were depending on us for a supply of good liquor.

"But what we had to do was to fill those jugs with good whiskey and donate it to him for election purposes. The time was nearly too short to fill the order out we got busy and set two barrels of mash to ferment.

"On the morning we were aiming to start running off the liquor, I just happened to look out the window and see Bill Johnson's old blue boar turning handsprings out in front of our house.

"A quick trip to the cave revealed our calamity. The hogs had broken in and upset one barrel of our mash. What would we do? The sheriff said, 'If you don't furnish the liquor or if we lose the election I will arrest you the last thing I do.'

"That last barrel only would about half fill the order after it was distilled. Hank stood looking out across the valley scratching his head and whiskers awhile, then he sent me to town for some gunpowder while he dug some poke root.

**"Now don't drop it as it might explode and blow a hole big enough to drop that barn in."**

"After dinner we went to the last remaining pool of water in the branch, chased the hogs out and got water to heat as we dumped in poke root, gunpowder and some very strong sorgum. We boiled it quite awhile, and from time to time, we skimmed off the hog hair, skum and mud.

"When enough of this had been mixed with the liquor to make ten gallons, we sampled it. To our delight we found it satisfying in very small amounts with a very delightful taste. We poured out three bottles full for our own use from the jugs, then refilled the jugs from the kettle.

"After dropping off the jug's at Jim's Place that night, we stopped in and had the druggist analyze the concoction for alcohol content. But then only part of it had been distilled.

"The hillbillies started coming in early. They came by Jim's Place and got their drinks, then they started to the park to vote.

"They never made it. And by midday about a hundred sons of the brush, some bewhiskered, some barefooted lay dead to the world in the City Park.

"They lay there when the poles were closed. They still lay there when the votes were counted in favor of the dry ticket.

"Hank and I felt pretty sure the sheriff would take his spite out on us some way, maybe with: sniper bullets, or possibly arrest us as he said. As he only had about fifty more days in office we planned to leave the county before that time was up.

# Professor

"The druggist had given samples of our drug to several drug firms to test. They all reported several uses for the drug and said it was legal. Now all was hubbub and bustle for us. We wanted to make up two hundred quarts of "Magic X" then go on an extended advertising tour to raise money to start up business somewhere.

"First we needed a water supply. Hank started digging where the last water was last seen trickling out at the foot of a hill. With a little taste of "Magix X" from time to time he was able to do two men's work.

"By night he was down about eight feet and no water was in sight. I was not able to help with the digging on account of my wooden leg. But next morning Hank hit something solid like a rock. It sound hollow underneath.

"Hank said, 'Toss me that bottle.'

"It was the wrong thing to do. He missed the bottle and it struck the rock. The resting explosion was a giant 'SWUCH' Hank's rubber boots came out first, then his clothes, followed by Hank wrong end up.

**"Then the sherrif promptly arrested us and carted us to town and locked us up."**

"The rubber boots disappeared over the horizon and alighted side by side in the widow McGuffy's flower bed. Which she had just watered and was nearby where she stood talking to the new Preacher. He had just quoted the following scripture, "You must keep yourself clean and unspotted from the rest of the world," when the boots splattered mud from the flower bed on the stiff white bosom of his shirt.

"Hank went up about sixty feet and came down in the top of a bush Evergreen tree, unhurt except his pride and a few scratches. He dropped to the ground where he lay till his nerves quieted and came back natural.

"Then he asked, "What happened?"

"Hank went up about sixty feet and came down in the top of a bush Evergreen tree, unhurt except his pride and a few scratches. He dropped to the ground where he lay till his nerves quieted and came back natural.

away in the brush, as fast as they were filled. Just as we were filling the last ten bottles the sheriff and his deputy slipped in the back way. They sat and chatted for quite a spell as friendly as you please, then inquired if they might buy two bottles of liquor for their own use.

"Of course we would do anything to please them, so we sold it to them. Then the sheriff promptly arrested us and carted us to town and locked us up.

"At our request he allowed the druggist to visit us with a lawyer friend of his. Between the two of them, bail was arranged after we had appeared before the judge. The trial date had been set for the last day the judge held that office.

"Our attorney chose to have the trial held without a jury. Court was called to order and charges were read.

"Distilling and selling alcoholic beverages in violation of the law."

"The State's Attorney then presented two witnesses who swore to that fact and offered as evidence two dark bottles of the liquor. Our lawyer then presented two witnesses, the druggist and the government chemist, who swore the liquid in question showed only a trace of alcohol when carefully analyzed.

"The judge said he doubted the statement as the Whistledick brothers always made good whiskey. Our lawyer said he was willing to let the judge and all the other officials sample the liquor, then the judge could rule on the case as he saw fit. The offer was quickly accepted. Of course, the judge expected to help drink up the evidence as soon as the trial was over.

"So he accepted the offer as he could stand a good drink right now. The bottle was passed to him. He uncorked it and sniffed it a time or two then tipped it up and drank freely. His Adam's apple made several full length strokes, carrying that sweet nectar of sin to his deep hungry innards.

"He wiped his mustache on the back of his hand as he handed the bottle to the other three waiting scalawags who each in turn seemed to drink more freely than the one before. The deputy was last and he proved it was good to the last drop as he dropped the empty bottle to the floor.

"Sweat broke out on the forehead of the judge and run down and dripped off his chin. Unheeded, his eyes took on a vacant stare then closed as he began to snore and toppled off his chair, dead drunk.

"The spectators, excepting the government chemist, made a wild scramble for the door as the other three imbibers followed the judge's example and lay inert on the floor.

"Hank and I got busy and dragged the four drunks into the jail which was only a baboon cage in the court room. Hank locked the door and dropped the key in the spittoon.

"Our lawyer gathered up all the papers relating to the case and burned them in the pot-bellied stove. That chemist congratulated us on our unique manner of handling the case and was given the remaining bottle of "Magic X" to experiment with.

"Hank and I knew if we didn't want to attend a double funeral of the Whistledick brothers, we better be miles away, headed for parts unknown except by ourselves, the one above and our lawyer, who would know how to contact us in case of need.

"We loaded up our old pickup that evening, turned the hogs out to live on the mast. The dogs could live from the neighboring slop pails. We gave the garden stuff to a neighboring colored family who agreed to look after things for a fat hog.

# 'Magic X'



# Whistledick's

"By four o'clock next morning we were miles on our road in our flight to Egypt. Not south like the Holy Family. But north into southern Illinois to Cairo where we separated with a plan to canvass one county each week in a fixed order so we could write to each other."

Jake said people were much interested in their product and he thought they would have no difficulty in selling all they could make. And one farm home where he stayed two days on account of rain, the lady sprinkled some "Magic X" on the laying mash. The roosters crowed about every five minutes and some of her hens laid three eggs before leaving the nest. She thought this was caused by the extra exercise the roosters gave the hens.

Jake asked to be allowed to sleep on that cot on the back porch with his clothes on and only a light cover. Said not to wake him for breakfast as he rarely ate any. He unstrapped his wooden leg, pulled the cap off the bottom and set the leg by the kitchen door.

Then he sat down on the bed and reached for that bottle, took two or three swallows and advised me to do likewise as it would give me "eight hours of untroubled sleep."

I only got one swallow part way down and it came back in a hurry.

Next morning Jake lay sleeping sound as I passed him as I was going out to milk before breakfast. A queer sound was coming from the wagon which I thought would bear investigation. I raised up the hind curtain for a look and what met my eyes caused me to wonder if I did swallow some of that dope.

There was about a half hundred bottles of "Magic X." But what drew my attention was a hardware cage of the strangest little animals I ever saw. They looked like giant pinching bugs but had tails and ears like a mouse. Several were eating their breakfast. They would pinch off a piece of wood from a block Jake has swipped from my woodpile on the last trip he made last night out of doors.

They would set up and nibble on the morsel till it was gone. Several mothers were nursing their young ones and grunting to them like a mother pig grunts to her young ones. They were South American Termites. And there must have been two hundred of them.

I hope none escaped.

Jake was somewhat restless when I came in from doing my after breakfast chores. He would kick his legs a time or two, then yelp and let his mouth sag open to snore like a bull singing base at a banquet.

I thought I had to do something for him, so I tried some of his own medicine on him. I poured his mouth full of that magic of his. It came back out like old faithful in action as he jackknifed into a sitting position.

He thanked me for waking him because he said he was having a nightmare. He dreamed he was having breakfast with St. Peter, but he thought he could smell a trace of sulphur smoke and when the chef came in with the food he saw he had horns, a barbed tail and cloven hoofs.

When I hollered was when I slammed the door on my thumb as I was leaving the joint. Noticing a jagged hole at the side of where the wooden leg stood, I upended the limb and discovered a large rubber cavity in the lower end.

Then it came to me: he had carried in some of them termites and turned them loose on purpose. When I accused him of it he said it was just to show me how easy it was to destroy them. He told me to get him a saucer and bring me one of my wife's paintings, which he had seen the night before.

The picture I handed him was not an oil painting. It was a hand-tinted enlargement of a picture of a beautiful young lady standing on the fer bank of a stream of water, with grass, trees and water, making an ideal background.

She was my aunt Malinda. And she said she was a maiden from choice, but she never said if it was the choice of the intended victim.

**"By four o'clock next morning we were miles on the road in our flight to Egypt."**

Jake poured out some of the dope in the saucer, then carefully treated the picture all over, including the frame by using that little brush. He told us it would not change the character of water or harm flesh. He told us to watch carefully and when the varnish was gone and the picture takes that more natural look all we have to do to stop the action is to paint it with kerosine.

The picture was hung on a convenient nail above the hole in the floor and forgotten "What are you going to do about them termites you turned loose on us?" I now enquired, with some heat in my voice.

"Just watch," Jake said as he set the saucer near the hole in the floor and made a sucking sound like he was calling a puppy.

In about a minute the termites began coming out of that hole, one after another and rowed up around that saucer and lapped that stuff like kittens lapping warm milk. Jake continued to call but finally gave it up.

He said there should have been twenty four but only twenty three came out. Each little varmint as he finished drinking, set back on his haunches, licked his lips, combed his mustache, then shivered a moment before he keeled over on his side, kicked one hind leg a few times, then died.

They were counted according to sex and found to be eleven males and twelve females, and were piled near the door. Jake said not to mind that lone male, as they rarely multiplied unless with wood mice. And the resulting offsprings being hybrids they never reproduced, and were highly beneficial because they were equipped with

fishtype claws, and a very poisonous stinger in the end of their short but mouselike tails.

They would seek out mice and rats and destroy them. The very few in the zoos are highly prized.

My job was to repair that floor, and I would need a board as well as some tools. Jake followed me to the shop to get the tools and on his way to the barn to feed and harness his mule. He said he was sorry to cause me my trouble and offered to pay me any damage.

And my good wife offered to help me by holding a flashlight for me to better see how to square up that hole and fit a board to it. Just as I was giving the board the last finishing touches before nailing it in place that lost male termite came running out of that hole like it was pursued by the evil one. My good wife screamed and dropped the flashlight in the hole.

We never recovered the flashlight.

I brushed the termite off on the floor, then tramped on it. It had the end of its tail bit off, both ears split and its face scratched and bleeding which made me think its courtship had been unsuccessful.

My pleasure at being able to drive the last nail and stand on my feet again was short lived. Tragedy had struck again when we heard a woman scream. It seemed to be far in the distance, yet there was a quality to it that by one accord, we both looked at the picture we had forgotten.

Disaster had struck as most of the frame was gone, as was grass, brush and trees. But the worst of all, Aunt Malinda's clothes were all gone and when she saw us looking at her she folded her arms across her bosom to conceal her nakedness as best she could, then gave us a look of scorn and one last scream of despair as she made a running leap and dived into the water and disappeared forever.

Only a few bubbles came up afterwards as they still do to this day. And that has been many years ago.

Many artists have tried to paint pictures of that water. But they say it can't be done as the color of water is always changing as well as the bubble pattern. One noted artist has painted it ten times but still he is not satisfied with his work.

So I tossed the termites out the door and called our cats to what they seemed to think was a delightful change from their usual diet, Jake had his mule hitched ready to go and had come back to the house to thank us again for our hospitality and to bid us good bye.

As he turned to go, we saw a big black car pass, then back up and turn in our driveway. The car had a big U.S. emblem on its side. Three passengers alighted and came to the house.

Jake was delighted to see them as they proved to be his brother, Hank, their lawyer and the government chemist. Of course, Jake was concerned why they had hunted him until an explanation was made. They just happened to see his wagon as they were passing on their way to the county seat where they were to find him.

They all stayed and from their talk over the weekend, it seemed that in the course of some private experiments the chemist was trying out he set a four-ounce bottle of "Magic X" by the side of a tree while he was preparing for an experiment. The sunshine touched off that bottle of explosive and it blew down that tree.

**"... what drew my attention was a hardware cage of the strangest little animals I ever saw."**

While he was preparing for the experiment, thinking he had found something worth while in the way of rocket fuel, he had reported it to the higher ups in Washington, who sent a group of experts to Oak Ridge to study it.

The Whistledick's lawyer saw sent to hunt Hank and and obtain a quantity of the "Magic X" for further experiments. The final report must have been favorable because they came back to contact the Whistledick brothers immediately.

They guaranteed them a good salary to oversee a plant to be built near their water supply. The brothers alone knew the exact formula of the explosive, and its peculiar, they believed, and is caused by a trace of some unknown substance leaking from from the plant at Oak Ridge and finding its way into their water supply.

They guaranteed the safety of the brothers from their enemys by alerting the F.B.I. and confiscated all the "Magic X" that could be found in private hands as it was too dangerous for them to have. An agent was being sent to take care of all expenses and details.

In order to get production started quickly, the lawyer said he believed everything was on the square and he would advise the brothers to go back to Tennessee with them in the car. Jake got an old cracked skillet, then he and Hank carried the coop of termites to the woods where they gave them a final meal out of one of the bottles. Our cats had been having a concert down by our corner.

And just as I started out to watch the men prepare to leave, a string of cats came bouncing past me, with their fur all turned the wrong way, their tails all bushed out and screaming and squalling at the top of their voices. They ran up telephone poles and thirteen jumped off.

The men stood and watched the cats go by, but only Jake knew the cats had eaten the termites.

Hank looked at Jake with a knowing grin on his face, like maybe he thought Jake flavored the cats feed a little on the sly. Jake's stock of "Magic X" and personal belongings were quickly stored in the car. Then he asked if I would care for his mule till he could make some different arrangements about him. Said he would pay me well for it and give me the wagon for a bonus.

They were headed for home, leaving the mule hitched to the wagon me to unhitch. Someone had set a full bottle of "Magic X" by the side of the tree as an extra bonus for me.

The kids had a lot of fun riding and driving the little mule on the road. I guess I sort of fell in love with him myself. He seemed to like to be petted. Seemed to understand me when I talked to him as he would nod his head if I said something that pleased him.

Sometimes I like to put my necktie on and go into the stall by him and tie my necktie to the manger pole. Then was when I thought each of us could appreciate the brotherly love that existed between us. Next summer Jake came back for his mule, said he missed him and also had a yen to see Egypt again. Said the jailbirds were let over one day in jail till they agreed to pay for a new lock to replace the one that had to be cut off with a torch.

Also he said after they'd left the judge and the other officials locked the jail and tossed the key in the spittoon the new officers pretended they had no right to release them not knowing what they were charged with. Someone jokingly remarked, "It was 'Magic X'."

When that was fully understood they were turned loose. Maybe they had learned it didn't pay to jump to conclusions. You might be wrong.

So Jake said he and Hank were living on easy street now and, of course, with many friends who would like to help them spend their money.

After he had gone I found another bottle of that "Magic X" we had by that tree. My wife, Mabel, and I have often wondered if the small amount of "Magic X" we have mixed with our cough remedy over the years has anything to do to do our living to our number of years.

# hits the spot



# Palestine, rich in history and tradition

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Written by Lola Armstrong of Lawrenceville in the late 1920s and first published in "Midwest Story Magazine." It was again published in the Robinson Argus around 1970.

by Lola Armstrong

When one enters the town of Palestine, Illinois, today, it seems scarcely possible that at one time this place well deserved the title of "The Paris of the Prairies." Yet both tradition and fact bear out the theory that such was the case.

Many a story can be related of the early days of the town when gentlemen of note and ladies of great refinement crossed their path with that of the honest settler, the couer de bois, the priest and the fleeing outlaw.

The settlers and hunters made up the majority of the settlement while the rougher element was fortunately, more transient. The aristocratic group was enticed by the benefit of trade, and often the pure adventure of the enterprise.

It is thought that white people settled in and near the site of Palestine as early as 1800. Such seems entirely possible in view of the fact that the situation was so near both Vincennes, Indiana, and the banks of the Wabash River, and facilities for trading with the Indians were most favorable.

It is definitely known that the Eatons settled in Palestine in 1809. Others quickly followed.

Tradition has it, and with a great deal of authenticity, that before the coming of the settlers, a Frenchman named Lamotte lived on the prairies of the surrounding country, serving as interpreter for the various tribes of Indians. He owned vast lands over the country that were supposed to have been given to him by the Indians for his services.

**It is thought that white people settled in and near the site of Palestine as early as 1800.**

When the Government arrived to negotiate with the tribes for their lands, they seemed to regret their generosity to Lamotte, and as the quickest way of disposing of an embarrassing financial situation, they killed the Frenchman and threw his body in the creek that now bears his name. The township, Fort, creek and the prairie country all being named Lamotte, seemed to substantiate the story of such a man having lived.

Fort Lamotte was the actual start of the town and was built about the beginning of the War of 1812. It was undoubtedly built in the manner of all frontier forts of the day, and was situated on a slight knoll, near the banks of a stream.

The site lies just south and east of the edge of the town today, and conjecture as to the exact spot gives cause for much argument. In 1814 there were twenty-six families and ninety rangers living in the fort, a force of considerable size for the far western frontier of the time.

Fort Lamotte was a prominent outpost for all that vast region called the Northwest Ter-



Postcard picture of the west side of Main Street in Palestine, Illinois, circa 1910.

ritory extending to Canada. The early settlers included families whose names still make up a large part of the population of the town. The Kitchells, Woodworth, Culloms, McGaugheys, Hutsons, Wilsons and many others.

All went well in the fort until some difference of opinion occurred with the family of Eatons. Just what this quarrel was is not known, but the result was that the six Eaton men with their families went a short distance north and west, probably near the edge of the gravel pit today, and built a fort that at the beginning was practically a family affair.

This fort was facetiously named Fort Foot by some wag of the opposite force, supposedly because the Eatons were possessed of very large feet. And with the establishment of the two forts, the foundation of the town was laid.

Crawford County itself was the eleventh county to be formed in the state of Illinois. Palestine was platted into one hundred sixty lots in 1818. Improved land could be bought for four dollars and sixteen cents an acre, and more and more people were availing themselves of the opportunity to take up new land.

At the time the town was platted, a square was donated to the county for a courthouse and there a log courthouse was erected. Roads were laid out, and while they would be considered nothing more than crude trails today, they marked a great step forward in the progress of that day.

As the town grew in importance, the inhabitants had the usual pioneer struggle for existence, making for themselves there on the wild prairies names that would pass down into history. Homes were but crude affairs of little comfort, but the physical and mental courage they housed were unsurpassed.

Game was plentiful, and the territory around Rich Woods was particularly a hunter's paradise. Some undesirable animal life was there also, but the settlers' manna in the form of squirrels, 'possums and turkeys were numerous. An immense deer lick just west of that richly wooded country gave them an opportunity to secure choice venison.

The nearness of the Wabash River enabled the settlers to

vary their diet with the fish to be had for the taking. Fortunately, the Indians were, generally speaking, friendly and aside from occasional depredations on the cabin of some isolated settler, they gave little serious trouble.

Of course, the territory had its quota of Indian tragedy where whole families fell under the bloody tomahawk. The most outstanding one was that of Issac Hutson who lived a few miles north of Palestine, on the banks of a creek that now bears his name.

Hutson had been to the mill at Palestine to get meal ground, and was starting home in the early evening. When within sight of his cabin, he could see smoke rising from the vicinity.

Discarding his meal, and riding his horse for all the speed the animal could put forth, he soon came upon a sight that was the greatest torture the frontiersmen had to face. The Indians had killed his wife, their six children and their neighbor who had tried to go to their aid.

Not content with merely killing the latter, they had cut his heart from his body and elevated it upon a pole as a further token of their fiendish ferocity. Then setting fire to the cabin, they went on their way.

Hutson was a broken man, and later joined Fort Harrison, where he fought the Indians with such fanatic hate that he eventually was killed by them when taking a needless risk in a skirmish.

**The Indians had killed his wife, their six children and their neighbor who had tried to go to their aid.**

A happier phase of the life of Palestine is shown in the gayeties that people seemed able to provide for themselves even under such conditions. As the town grew, two inns were built. These were an important thing for the town because of the Land Office that was established there in 1820.

Anyone wanting to enter land anywhere in the southern part of Illinois had to come to Palestine to make their negotiations, and

that, together with court being held there, made it the most important town in the state aside from the State Capitol at Kaskaskia. This Land Office operated for twenty-five years, and made fascinating history in the Palestine country. The desk made specially for the Land Office by some company in Philadelphia, is a greatly treasured article among the historical effects of the town.

So it was these two inns, the Wilson House and the Dubois that came to be the best known meeting places outside of Vincennes for people of both high and low social standing. The Wilson House used the symbol of the rising sun on its sign. It was the stopping place for the stagecoach that wound its way up the Vincennes-Chicago road.

The Dubois tavern was honored by the fact that Lincoln spent a night there while on his way to the Sangamon country in 1830. About that time Palestine had five or six hundred inhabitants, contained five dry goods stores, one church, two taverns, two mills with distilleries attached, two tan yards, two shoe shops, one hatter shop, one carpenter shop, three blacksmiths and two saddle shops.

Undoubtedly the Lincoln family felt that they were passing through one of the metropolises of the western country.

Trade was not confined to the surrounding country, but large cargoes were sent down the Wabash and on to New Orleans. Warehouses were built on the river banks near Bristol Hill, and it was surely one of the busiest places on the whole length of the Wabash River.

Corn, wheat, livestock and the all-important corn whiskey of the day all found their way South for Creole consumption. Many interesting stories remain of the fascination and dangers of attending the journey.

Asa Kitchell, one of the town's leading citizens, started with a cargo but neither the men nor cargo were ever heard from. Two suppositions remained: they had either capsized and been drowned or the boat had been captured by river pirates and the crew murdered. Truth of many such stories is buried in oblivion.

At the end of the trip, it was customary for the owner to sell his produce and the boat, and

make the long journey back on foot through the Indian country.

Authentic accounts of the gay parties held at the Wilson Inn leave little doubt that many great gentlemen and ladies attended social affairs from Vincennes. The historic stagecoach road of the time made traveling the distance seem comparatively easy. It has been said that they often arrived in fine carriages that used four beautiful horses to make the trip.

People also came from the important towns of York and St. Francisville, so that Palestine seemed to be the center drawing place for beauty and culture. One wonderful party description says that the men came in full dress suits and silk plug hats, and the women wore evening dress and flashing jewels one would not expect to find in such a wild country.

A dance was in progress until midnight, when they stopped for a marvelous feast on chicken, turkey, roast pig and high grade wines and liquors. Then the dancing continued until sunup. Without doubt many a stately minuet has been danced within the environments of Palestine.

Palestine can make her claim to having been the home of great men, too. Not only those who were noble in their lives of frontier achievement, but men who made names for themselves in the history of our country.

**Without doubt many a stately minuet has been danced within the environments of Palestine.**

Governor Augustus French was one of these men, and deserves honorable mention in any of the histories dealing with Palestine and its importance. Originally he came to Edgar County from New England, and from there moved to Palestine in 1839 where he had received an appointment in the Land Office.

French purchased land south of town and built a very beautiful home called "Maplewood." He was accused by his contemporaries of being stingy, but it is known that much of his money went to educate a younger brother and sisters. He has left many letters of importance that give him a place of high rank in our histories aside from the fact that he was governor of Illinois.

An interesting story relating to the court of Palestine wherein they dealt with the Indians is given in the case of the State of Illinois vs. William Kilbuck, Captain Thomas, and Big Panter, three Delaware Indians who were charged with the murder of Thomas McCall in 1819.

A man by the name of Cornelius Taylor kept a still and had been forbidden to sell whiskey to the Indians without a written order from the proper authorities. McCall was a surveyor and had had many dealings with the Indians. It is said that he gave them orders for whiskey when it suited him to do so.

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# Palestine

At this particular time when they importuned him for 'fire water,' he refused. But in order to get rid of them he finally wrote something on a piece of paper and handed it to them. They, thinking it an order, proceeded to ask for the whiskey.

When they found it was not the desired order, but, on the contrary, was an order not to give them any, they were so angered that they murdered McCall and were arrested for the act.

The jury found them guilty, but a motion was made to arrest judgment and a new trial was ordered. This time Kilbuck alone was tried and found guilty of the act. He was sentenced to be hanged on the 14th of July, 1819, but made his escape the day before the hanging.

Many authorities think he was allowed to escape, thus making it unnecessary to carry out the sentence and perhaps bring about trouble with the Delaware tribe.

All too long has the history of Palestine been overlooked in search for more important incidents. The question remains whether or not there are any more important historical facts hidden away in the State of Illinois than can be found in this small town so rich in historic fact and tradition.

Vincennes has her historical romance in Thompson's "Alice of Old Vincennes," but it yet remains for the work, the loves, the hates and the history of the colorful days of Palestine to be portrayed by some writer of the future.

# Quilting

(continued from page 9)

"When I used to help the Ladies' Aide quilt," she said, "someone would get on the other side (of the quilt) and pull it real tight. Then they would sew it. But since I don't have anybody to do that, I just pull it as tight as I can and pin it."

Grandma told how the Ladies' Aide used to make quilts for other people for two cents a yard for every yard of thread they used. And the money they got, she said, maybe \$5-\$10 a quilt, was donated to the E.U.B. Church of Bellair.

Squinting her eyes and wiggling her nose to reposition her glasses that had slipped down her nose while she talked and looking back at the quilt, Grandma said, "After it's all sewn in, roll it backwards on the pole as tight as you can. Then you begin quilting. That's sewing the lining, the cotton and the quilt together, I guess.

"If you have a quilt you can mark," she said, taking a pencil and marking on the white material, "you can mark a design on it. But this pencil won't mark so I can see it. I'm just guessin' at it."

By guessing at it, Grandma meant she etched the pattern out as she stitched. And she began stitching, explaining that she quilted across the three feet of quilt between the pole frames as far forward as she could reach before rolling the quilt toward her and up tight again.

"You keep doing the same thing until you get finished," she said. "And then when you get all done, you take it out of the frames. Just rip it out and cut your lining.

"I buy quilt binding and sew it

on with the sewing machine, but some people just cut it off, turn the edge up and whip it down."

With that Grandma stuck her needle in the center of the quilt and left it, letting me know that she was finished. Showing me how to make a quilt is one thing. Me making one is another thing.

But now that I know what a quilt really is and how to make one, I think that it will mean more to me than just a roof to my doll house.

And I know that when cold weather comes again, I'll pull my quilt up around my ears and know how much love Grandma puts into making a quilt.

# Memory quilt

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Written for an expository writing assignment at Lincoln Trail College.

by Cassie Pinkston

Few handmade articles are more personal and practical than a quilt. The knowledge and ability to do this work is often handed down from one generation to another. Or it may be learned from friends.

The origin of the memory quilt goes back many years. A time of getting together for an all-day quilting bee is not as frequent as it once was. Ladies would take a covered dish and go to a home to help get a quilt out (finished) and to visit.

Many times church congregations made memory quilts for their minister's family, usually writing names of members in paint or embroidering them on the material. Also, each block could be made with a design unique to the family it was representing.

Quilt patterns were and still are exchanged and traded among interested people. Many patterns are available; each having its own name according to its design. Quilting has always been a good pastime during long winter days and evenings when many other activities are limited. It isn't unusual for a quilt to last a hundred years if given the proper care.

Material may be purchased new with a definite color scheme in mind or scraps from past sewings may be used. Scraps are best for a family memory quilt as each piece represents a dress or article of clothing in that family's life.

The middle layer or filler for the quilt can be bought in cotton batting or polyester fiber. A worn blanket may also be used. The blanket stays together and does not bunch up if not quilted closely or if the tie method is used.

The backing is the third layer and is usually a print or plain sheet chosen to coordinate with the quilt top. And there is a special thread sold in different colors, white being the all-time favorite. This quilt thread is readily available, is stronger than conventional thread and does not tangle as easily. A small needle is used and another must be a thimble.

Pieces are cut and sewn together to form the top layer of the quilt. This may include more than a thousand pieces or less, according to the size and shape of the blocks.

The material is then placed in suitable frames and stretched tight so no wrinkles are visible. The conventional long frames

may be used or an oval wooden frame on a stand is good, since it can be moved often and doesn't take up as much room.

Years ago, the layers were basted to strips of permanent material attached to the poles. Today's quilters simply staple theirs and pull out the staples when finished.

Then the three layers are sewn together in small, even stitches along each side of all seams or on designs drawn by pencil on the top. The needle is inserted from the bottom up, pulling the knot through the bottom layer to be hidden from view. The underneath side shows up all the quilting and may be reversed for a different effect.

It may take several weeks of working on the quilt while it is in the frames, although a steady and diligent quilter may finish in two or three weeks. The piece is then ready to be removed from the frames and bound.

Binding consists of folding the lining evenly over the top approximately one and one half inches and then sewing it by machine or by hand, mitering the corners.

Quilts can be stored in a plastic bag and kept for use on a cold winter night, or if wrapped in colorful paper, given away. They make ideal wedding gifts. The recipient is always reminded of the giver, the time and the thought that went into the gift, even though the actual cost may be quite low.

Therefore, knowing how to make a memory quilt, gathering material needed and willingly doing the work involved, may all add up to a very enjoyable and satisfying accomplishment.

# Ives

(continued from page 13)

aback, of course. And something says to me, 'He's wrong.'

"He was," Ives said, whispering softly. "So think there is that small voice that you've got to listen to. You've got to differentiate that from desire. Which is the trick."

In the back of his mind, Ives knew at an early age that he wanted to sing, but "didn't know where, how or what." He believes he had an instinct for what he does.

"Somebody asked me why I became a ballad singer," he said. "I said the same reason a dog takes after a rabbit. It's a long way from the Gilbert place to the Amy DuPont house, though. It was a loonnngggg treacherous journey."

After a relatively long and successful life, Ives has little advice he can give to young people about anything. He can't give advice because it is only words. And he doesn't believe words can measure up to experience.

"When I was a kid, I heard 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,'" he said. "That's fine. Now I know what that means. But I didn't know then. That's a statement, man. That's powerful and that's tough to realize. It's tough to be a Christian.

"So they've got to go through the whole thing like everybody else. They've got to make the same mistakes. And when they make mistakes, then they'll probably make them again. The third time they might say, 'Well, this is not a good thing to do.'

This life is not a vacation; it's a school. It's not a place to have fun, to gain material wealth, to sit and bask. It's a place to learn. And if you don't learn it this round, you'll have to learn it the next. So you might as well get it done. That's the way I feel."

Because he thinks "it would seem unfair to get just one shot at life," Ives leans heavily toward reincarnation. He said he has begun to learn a few things. And with what he has learned this time around, he thinks if he can bring it with him the next time, he should do better.

"Maybe I won't be as successful," he said. "Maybe I'll be more successful. But that's not the point, I can do a better job as a human being, and I think that's the problem of moving from the animal to the higher side of one's nature. If that sounds like religion, then that's what it is."

Whether there is another shot at life for Ives or not, he has only one word "to put the cherry on the top of the sundae" that sums up his life and how he feels about it.

And the word... "Ecstasy," Ives said, smiling and touching his fingers together lightly in front of him.

He stood up and walked toward the bathroom just outside the study. Stopping in the hallway, he looked back at me over the top of his horn-rimmed glasses and said, "Well, we've strayed pretty far from the topic, haven't we?"

I nodded slightly. Ives took another step and looked back again. "Or have we?" he asked.

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