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WHEN WE WENT WEST or "THE LAST OF LIFE FOR WHICH THE FIRST WAS MADE" (Browning)

by Katie Lind

In 1918, when we got our first car - a Model T Ford - both my parents were 27 years old. I was five that July and Harold was going to be three the last of October. Our mother was a small woman five feet tall and ailing with a combination of gastric ulcer and acute indigestion. All summer long she has slowly been losing weight until by fall she did not tip the scale at 90 pounds. Papa and the relatives were fearful that she would come down with consumption (tuberculosis) and often the talk went that perhaps we should go West for her health. Although the kinfolks sort of leaned that direction, I am sure none of them expected my parents to go quite as far as they did.

At that time (1918) we had a matched team of shiny blacks - Pet and Lady - in our barn instead of the western broncs Papa had owned when he was courting Mamma. Both of my parents were downright pleased with the looks of them and the way they worked together. (They never did own up to being proud of them!) Papa's brother Eli lived near Kalona and so was in the midst of the Amish settlement and he wanted that team for he was sure he could resell them - or did he plan to sell them for Papa? I'm not sure which. Other young couples were eyeing cars and some were making purchases, and my parents were leaning that way, too. True, the roads were not kept in shape for cars and one seldom found as much as a pebble in a whole mile of our Iowa roads. In spite of that, the day came when Pet and Lady left us and Papa brought home a new Ford. No second-hand cars seemed to be available at that time.

I recall the day Papa brought the car home but somehow the importance of our first car was far less than what preceded its entrance into our lives. Perhaps it was because Harold and I had

This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Amos Conrad of Albany who died September 6, 1994. Amos was a member of OMHGS and a generous supporter of its activities.

heard about the new car, but the new stock tank was a surprise. We had never seen a round one so when Papa's brothers, Nick and Quinton, rolled the tank across the tread-grass in our Outside Yard, we followed it to the barnyard where uncles set it near the windmill. That is, we started along in the flattened path but were stopped short when we found Harold's celluloid cow in a most pitiful condition. Harold, being the careful budding farmer that he was, was devastated with the flattened cow and I was sympathizing with him when Papa honked the horn of his Ford at us and we watched him drive into the shade of the big maples that grew near the houseyard. He was positively beaming as was our mother who hurried out to join Papa. No, we did not hurry to the new purchase for we were still grieving over the loss of the cow. Oh, we joined in the inspection of the new vehicle when we were invited and I recall the smell of the new leather seats.

Since our trip west occurred when we were so young it never dawned on us to do some enquiring about dates and such matters. The trip was a normal occurrence to us. There must have been a lot of planning during the winter of 1918 and 19, for when spring came things began to fall into place. We do not remember, but were often told, that Grandpa and Grandma - Papa's parents (Mamma's parents

had both died when she was a child) - favored the trip. The only one of Papa's siblings that disapproved was Papa's oldest sister who definitely disliked travel.

Papa put in his crops of oats and corn like usual and Mamma had her garden plowed and planted. We did not leave until after



harvesting the oats for I turned six before we "hit the road" and my birthday is in early July. This gave Papa time to have the Ford rigged up for traveling. Henry A. Yoder's blacksmith shop was barely two miles north of our place, where Hen did all the mending of the neighbors' broken machinery as well as making new parts if they were needed. No cars had trunks, but Hen made a rack which he attached to the rear of our Ford. It was a metal platform upon which could be set the new wardrobe trunk Mamma had ordered from the catalog. I think it was Hen who suggested making a sturdy metal frame to fit between the seats and then found two square truck seat cushions to fit on the frame. The plan was to spread our bedding across the car seat and truck cushions, making a flat area where Harold and I could spend our days and nights. Papa bought washline rope, and before we left for the West he laced it back and forth on both sides of the back half of the car. Fortunately, Henry Ford had instructed his machinists to set a rod from the ends of the lazy-back of the front seat to the folding top of the Model T. I have forgotten what kind of bars were at the ends of the back seat, but the rope was secure. It may have been on our first day of travel that Harold tried standing on his head at the exact moment Papa hit a hole. Mamma looked back just in time to see her three-year old son fall against the rope and bounce back on our bed. My but it was nice to know we could not break the rope loose!

The trunk rack did not give enough space for all we needed to pile our luggage on so we bought an expandable suitcase rack to attach to the running board on the driver's side of the car. Since no Model T had a door on the driver's side of the car, our five-foot-eight-inch Papa had to sort of jump when getting in and out of the car. When cranking the Ford, it took some fast action for Papa to dart around from the front and adjust the spark and gas levers at the steering wheel. Mamma soon learned how to manipulate both the spark and gas levers which cut out some of the fast action for Papa, but it still was tricky to keep the engine going as it should. Sometimes Papa cranked and cranked and cranked until he was red in the face, and sometimes the car kicked him. We were amazed the first time that happened, for we thought of our Model T as an inanimate thing. Papa explained that the crank broke loose from his handhold and flew backward and could break one's arm -- that was kicking.

Evidently Grandma was making cheeses that spring for there was some discussion about sending one along to Uncle Henry. Grandpa was positive it would not be too strong, but Papa and Mamma were not in full agreement. Cheyenne, Wyoming, was a thousand miles away! My grandparents insisted that Henry was very fond of my grandmother's cheese, so Grandma prepared a nice big one in spite of what the young folks' thought. (When Mamma and I discussed this trip, she still insisted the cheese did get too strong but that Uncle Henry relished every bite of "Katie's

cheese!" Sort of seems to me that he had to eat most of it by himself!)

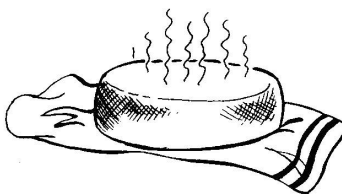
There was sunshine that morning when we were loaded up and ready to leave for the West. Seems I can still see the shining black car setting out front of Grandpa's house. The wardrobe trunk was in place on the rack, with a couple suitcases resting squarely on top and the tent spread over the whole, all tied down with more washline rope. The gasoline camp stove and a suitcase with cooking things stood on the running board and everyone was standing around ready to wave us off. All but Grandma; she came hurrying out with her cheese carefully wrapped, gave it to Mamma who tucked it into the area between the seats under the truck cushions with our other foodstuff. Papa's "Let's go!" was the signal for Harold and me to scramble into the open front door of the car, up and over the back and into our "cage". Papa felt his pocket to be sure the traveler's checks were there and Nick was pleased to see Mamma had the small square box camera in her hand as she took her place. (It was his contribution to make our trip successful. He had won it by selling something or other - perhaps garden seeds - and now had replaced it with a more modern folding camera.)

We all had funny feelings around our hearts but I can't remember any tears, for all the grown-ups were hoping our Mamma would return in robust health.

As we circled the red brick supply tank and turned toward Grandpa's West Lane, Papa snatched his cap from his head and waved it high - and we were off!

Harold and I had fun doing various things like seeing how well we could stretch out and arrange our toys while our parents discussed how to get to Des Moines and Grandpa's brother Nick's farm. We children settled back, both contemplating on how far was West. Harold, not yet four, must have known his directions for when we turned the first corner (one and a half miles from home) he asked, "Are we West now?" It must have taken him about ten miles before he understood that we were driving west right then but would not arrive at our stopping place for a long, long time. Me? My directions have always been muddled and since that time to this, once I am on the open road I go west at every turn when I travel from Iowa to Oregon.

On Mamma's lap lay the open Blue Book which gave directions from Iowa City to Des Moines and told of the Amana Colonies and other interesting spots, but we had to find our own way to the Lincoln Highway. We may have picked it up at Victor, Iowa, for Papa knew how to get there. By evening we had arrived at our first planned stop near Des Moines, approximately 100 miles from home. I have no idea whether Papa could drive right to Uncle Nick's farm or if we drove around hunting the place, but I am sure the Blue



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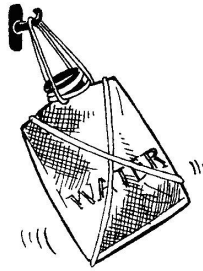
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Book did not list his home as one of the historical places. Most of that day is lost in history as were many of the following ones for Harold and I paid no attention. I played with my tin-headed doll, Ursula, and Harold set up a farm with his limited farm equipment. Sometimes we colored and when we got thirsty, Mamma gave us each one swallow of water from the canvas water bag Papa had hung on the top knob of the windshield. (The Model T Ford had no windshield wiper, no speedometer, no foot feed, no rear view mirror and no heater, but it had a divided windshield. The upper half was turned open by knobs. These were at the upper corners. The water bag never slid off, not even when Papa "opened the throttle" and we sped along at the dizzy and hairblowing speed of 20 miles per hour. When we bumped along the bag bounced and swayed but it stayed in place the whole one thousand miles to Cheyenne and the two thousand miles from Oregon to Iowa when we returned to our home. We heard Papa tell Mamma that the water bag would keep the water cool because of the "evaporation", but when we took our first sip we were pitifully disillusioned. Lukewarm water flavored strongly with canvas made it easy to abide by Mamma's rule of "only one swallow". However, sometimes out on the hot Nebraska-Wyoming desert we filled our mouths as full as we could and called it one swallow.

The faithful Blue Book informed us that the Lincoln Highway was marked by red, white and blue stripes on telephone poles, fence posts or whatever was available. Papa and Mamma also discovered we would need to change to the Old Oregon Trail somewhere in the middle of Nebraska and the markings for that now famous trail were black and orange stripes. We found the highways used the same roadway sometimes and then both markings were on the same poles. Seven years later - 1926 - when we followed the same highway to Oregon we used free road maps that were available at all gas stations. Also there were road signs informing which way to which town and how far from one town to the next, but not so in 1919.

The visit with Uncle Nick, Aunt Lydia, and their family was pleasant but I recall nothing of our activities excepting that when we drove through Des Moines we saw a funny car running along the street without a hood or engine. Papa told us it was an electric car. I was impressed but Harold could not have cared less!

Our next stop with friends was to be in Milford, Nebraska. Since that was several days drive from Des Moines we had our first experience camping somewhere in western Iowa. Harold and I had never seen a tent set up but Papa had no trouble getting it ready for the night. Our tent was one that had a flap to throw over the top of the car, thus enclosing the body of the car; only the hood was sticking out for public view. Although we asked questions, we had no answers for Papa was too busy laying out the tent on the grass. It had to be "just right" he said. Then he took the small camping axe and pounded short wooden stakes near the corners of the canvas lying like a rug beside the car. Mamma helped him pull the big flap across the top of the car and they found it hung right to the ground. Now Papa fastened the "guy ropes"



to the posts and there stood our tent! Someone had told Mamma no snakes would crawl over a heavy rope and Papa knew she would not sleep if she thought she shared a tent with a rattlesnake! ("Guy rope! Now that was interesting. We had heard our young aunt and uncles say "That guy" when some young male had displeased them. Mamma had gone to school at Brush with Guy Smith. Now the ropes were "guys", too. Most amazing!")

While we worked with the tent, Mamma was busy making our supper. Papa had helped her get the stove started and the smell of food was wonderful.

We were not in a campground for there were very few of those and they were on the edge of towns. Papa and Mamma must have known this for towards evening they began keeping an eye out for a likely camping place. The only camp in my memory was probably the first one. We stopped at a large grassy place, sort of three-cornered. There was a nice homestead - house and barn - at the other end of the area, and Papa went to see about milk and eggs and, above all, good water. Then with a can of something from between the seats, we had a good meal. Also, since the water was good, we drank all we could hold! The next morning we refilled the waterbag, folded the tent together, replaced the stove, axe and suitcase on the rack on the running board and we were ready for another day of driving. We heard a happy conversation on the front seat. Mamma admitted to her uneasiness of stopping "just anywhere" but now was satisfied it was safe since not many cars traveled along the road. The nearer we got to Cheyenne, the fewer the cars and the farther apart were farm homes. Sometimes we did like other travelers did, drove to the side of the road and parked for there were few fences and very shallow drainage ditches in western Nebraska and Wyoming - just planed-off ribbons of road without gravel, which seemed normal to us at that time.

By 1926 when we followed this same trail there were campgrounds with cabins sans bedding or dishes. They were considered "furnished" because there was a stove, table, chairs, bed with springs and mattresses. And we only set up our tent once or twice and that was for "Old Time's Sake".

According to Papa's estimate (with the help of the Blue Book) our average mileage per day was 100 to 125 miles. Our rate of speed for the 1000 miles was seldom over 20 mph. Faster than that asked for trouble like a blow-out or hot engine.

We crossed the Missouri River on the Council Bluffs-Omaha Bridge and Papa shouted for now we were in Nebraska. No matter how hard Harold and I looked, we could see no difference but we knew it was the truth and we now were on our way to Milford, Nebraska, and Johnny Whitakers.

As we neared the town Harold and I understood that our parents had a big problem and that they did not quite agree on the solution. Papa's plan was that we stay in the area some days, perhaps a week at the home of his friend Johnny. Mamma's plan was that we stop at the Whitaker farm, say "hello" and be on our way, for she barely knew Mr. Whitaker and had never met his wife, Nancy. Now Papa and John(ny) Whitaker had been good friends throughout their

grade school days - perhaps in the same grade - and attended West Union Mennonite Church where their fathers both served in the ministry. BUT, Mamma had lived some fifteen miles away and attended the East Union church. So in spite of all Papa's good reasons for us to stay at John's, Mamma's foot came down awfully hard, for she was very sure it was an imposition for the four of us to come driving in "on Nancy" unannounced, and only if we would find a place to do light housekeeping or a hotel room for one night would she be satisfied. At that point in the discussion we were now driving up a street in Milford and Papa spied a sign showing that the big building out front of us was a garage and the owner was a Mennonite - Schweitzer's Garage.

There was still some tension in our car as Papa disappeared into the garage and Mamma said to us that we had better forget staying in Milford for a tiny western town like this would certainly not have a hotel, let alone apartments. But she was wrong, at least partly, for soon we saw Papa come out the door and along with him was Mose Schweitzer, the proprietor, who had come to explain to Mamma that his wife often took in roomers and she opened her kitchen for mothers to cook for their family. Before Mamma could express her "Thank you, but" Papa thanked Mose for the offer. The result was that we followed Schweitzer's directions and were warmly greeted at the door of the big, white square house by Mrs. Schweitzer and were shown to our pleasant sleeping room. Supper time found us sitting in the Schweitzer dining room eating with them as favorite guests. And that was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. I definitely recall only a few things about our stay in the town of Milford: the pleasantness of the big house, the happy conversations between Mrs. Schweitzer and my mother, and that Harold bit Dorothy Schweitzer's fingers so hard the teeth marks showed for a while. Mamma had been trying her best to stop him from using this defense, but Dorothy had goaded him beyond endurance and the little scamp considered himself justified; he actually looked happily satisfied until the two mothers came barging from the house to investigate the trouble. Neither child got sympathy. Mamma took Harold and did what mothers have always done - put him to bed. Dorothy's Mamma explained to her once more that she must stop her goading! The problem between these three-year-olds? Whichever of the two considered things too peaceful would merely have to murmur, "My Papa the best", and the war was on!!!

We spent time on the Whitaker farm, too, and Mamma learned to know Nancy Whitaker well enough to freely welcome her to our home some years later. They stayed with

From Hazelbrush to Cornfields is the title of a book by Katie Lind which has just become available. It is the story of the first one hundred years of the Amish Mennonites in Johnson, Iowa and Washington counties of Iowa. There are over 700 pages, including an extensive index. Price is \$38.00 and the book is available from Katie at her home in McMinnville, OMHGS Archives and Library on the campus of Western Mennonite School (open 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, 9-3) or Margaret Shetler at her home in Scotts Mills.

us in Iowa in 1921 during the Iowa-Nebraska conference, and when my parents were in Oregon in the 1930s they were careful to spend time with John and Nancy. Perhaps in later years, had my father (a minister) introduced Johnny Whitaker (a minister) he would have called him John, but only in such formal setting, for to us he has always been Johnny!

The year of 1918 the tiny congregation at Roseland hosted the Iowa-Nebraska conference. Papa and Mamma had planned their trip to take in that meeting so one day while Papa and Johnny were having their usual long talks, they decided that the Whitakers would also go to Roseland. Poor Nancy was more than surprised, for on her porch sat a lot of peaches ready to be put by. Also the family "washing" had to be done as well as other necessary things to get baby Velma and young Hazel ready to leave "day after tomorrow". The young fathers insisted there was no problem there, for they would peel the peaches. Our Mamma was in favor on Nancy going and offered her help. What a busy, bustling day. The men continued their never-ending conversation while peeling away at the fruit; Mamma and Nancy washed jars, cooked and canned peaches. It was hot and steamy in the kitchen but by evening the peaches were all inside rows of glass jars sitting on Nancy's kitchen cupboard, the washing was done, clothes dried and ironed, and the next day we all headed for conference.

According to the road map, Roseland is approximately 120 miles west of Milford, and by evening we had arrived at the conference ground - Johnnys in their car and we in our Model T, and someone directed us to the Schiffler home for the night. From the conversation flying over our heads we caught the fact that this would be where we would live while attending conference. Since conferences are of small importance to six-year-olds I only vaguely recall the gatherings during the daytime. What I do recall is that on our way to Roseland we heard Mamma ask how the small congregation would be able to house us all. Papa said likely the menfolks and boys would be bedded down in the hay mow, and according to the "vibes" in his voice, it would seem he really hoped it would be so. Mamma said she thought Harold could sleep there, too, and so make more space for another woman in the house. Harold wisely kept still but in his mind he knew he was not about to sleep with mice. Sure enough, the Schifflers had made arrangements for floor beds in the living room and bedrooms and the whole arrangement looked like a lark to me. Harold still said nothing. Mamma and Nancy decided they could sleep on the living room floor with Hazel and baby Velma and me and perhaps one more if space was needed. Evidently Harold still kept a low profile and had not even examined the living room for at bedtime he absolutely refused to go with Papa. Likely because of his earnestly fearful face and because they knew his innate timidity, he was allowed to sleep with us women. Nancy had carefully put the sleeping baby down and darkened the room. With the door ajar, there was enough light from the kerosine lamp burning in the next room for us to find our way around. The two Mammams helped us get ready for bed and Harold had another problem - how to undress modestly in a roomful of women. We had to be very, very quiet and were not even to whisper for the baby was a "light sleeper", so only after we were all settled did Harold

take his first good look at the walls of the room. There hung a deer's head! Furthermore, the light from the other room was reflected in the glass eyes and Harold decided then and there to face the mice the next night!

Papa and Mamma thoroughly enjoyed the conference and often spoke of it in later years. It seems to me that Papa was a delegate. I know for sure he would not have bypassed Roseland for that was the home of the Lapps and Papa considered George Lapp one of his favorite teachers at the White Hall school in Iowa, the same school Grandma had attended for a few weeks at the time of its beginning, where Grandpa taught before 1900 and where her five youngest children had attended, at least three of whom sat under George Lapp's tutelage.

It must have taken us two days or more to get from Roseland to Chappell, Nebraska, the home of Grandpa's cousin, Chris Yoder, whose wife, Annie, was a cousin-once-removed of Mamma's. They were complete strangers to Harold and me, and Papa and Mamma had never met them, but Grandma and Grandpa were pretty insistent on our stopping there. Grandpa was one year older than his cousin and Grandma one year older than Annie, so the two couples were likely good friends in their younger days. Chris and Annie must have been expecting us for we found them to be like home-folks. They were the parents of Sanford C. Yoder, who a few years later became president of Goshen College. We children also knew Sanford as bishop at the East Union church, but Sanford did not really rate as high with us as his nieces and nephews who lived on ranches around Chappell.

Chris Yoders figured in the early settling of the Mennonite community at Chappell, but the nearest I could come to when they moved there shows it around 1900. Now in 1918 they were retired and living in town across the street from the courthouse where Chris worked as custodian. I recall how downright scary it was to follow along when Chris Yoder showed my father, also Chris Yoder, through the building. Our footsteps resounded and echoed in the emptiness of the halls and rooms, and when we went to the basement Papa was holding tightly the hands of two children, for there stood the empty jail cell.

Another day, when looking across the street we saw Chris sitting in the shade and his lone prisoner was pushing the lawnmower for him. Papa asked if there was no danger of the prisoner bolting for his freedom, but Chris calmly (and smugly) answered us there was "no way" that certain prisoner would run off for he liked Annie's cooking too much. She had been hired by the county to cook for the men in jail which she did for a number of years. We often watched Chris take the big tray, covered with a very white cloth, across the street during our next visit, in 1926. Her reputation as cook was such that men were known to plan for misdemeanors when they got real hungry and were not in the mind to earn their dinner.

We still had another couple days of traveling before we would reach Cheyenne and the "fabled" (to us) Uncle Henry and Aunt Sarah. Only Papa knew him and that was before Papa was ten years old, when Uncle Henry had been a partner with Grandpa in the ownership of the Green Center Store. Mamma had heard of him because her Aunt Amelia ('Melie) had jilted Uncle Henry before she married Mamma's Uncle

Joe Miller. Seems that Aunt Melie had given Uncle Henry the mitten when he went west to homestead in Wyoming. No one knows for sure if that was the reason or if the young man went west to heal his "broken heart". Be that as it may, he homesteaded a thousand acres some thirty miles out of Cheyenne. After a year of ranching as a bachelor he came back to Iowa and married Sarah Luke, a sister of Jake Luke who had fenced in a patch along the English River and raised deer! Wow! We wanted to meet Uncle Henry, too!

But first we must chug along the Old Oregon Trail for awhile. As mentioned before, someone had used a single-shoveled plow to outline the road for us. Sometimes it rained; we experienced our first cloudburst along such a road. Papa hurried to snap the side curtains into place and barely missed getting wet. We watched the lightning meet the



earth between us and the horizon and Papa did his best to assure us we were safe in spite of the fact we were the highest object in sight because of our rubber tires. We

needed chains on the backwheels to get us going again. Speaking of wheels and tires, we carried no spare tire for Papa had enough tire patching along to care for those needs. We soon learned how to entertain ourselves while Papa jacked up the car, took off the wheel, pried the tire from the rim, pulled the tube out, found the nail in the tire, patched the hole in the inner tube after much strenuous work, got the whole thing together again, pumped up the tube and we were on our way again. No one went two miles without tire patching, let alone one thousand! We also carried a spare inner tube or two, but these came in boxes and could easily fit between the seats. Our wheels had wooden spokes and it seems to me they were painted black to match the Ford. By the time we had seen the ocean and returned to Iowa the car still had one of the black-spoked wheels but two of the others were white and one was red. We children liked to show them off to our peers and would try our best to locate a small bit of dried mud, then claim it was from Wyoming. (We were far too honest to call it Oregon mud!)

Somewhere along the line, Papa had a spark plug whistle attached to the car. We liked the sportiness of the sound and preferred it to the staid "iooga" Henry Ford had put in. When the engine slowed down the spark plug whistle sort of slowly clucked, but when the motor was revved up it made a most satisfying loud, garbled sound. Once we got to Oregon we never crossed a covered bridge over the Pudding

River without begging hard for the wonderfully quavering high sound of the spark plug whistle.

Speaking of muddy roads, chains and flats always bring to mind the challenge we met on Cabbage Hill near the Wyoming line. Papa was not truly a mechanic but he somehow became quite proficient in doing things with the Ford. Mamma fixed her sewing machine with hairpins and odd things, but Papa kept baling wire near at hand when he drove the Ford. I don't recall more than once being taken to a garage on the whole trip. Cabbage Hill had nothing to do with mending of breaks but with Papa's understanding of how to drive a car on sand. The hill was listed in the Blue Book as "seven miles up and seven miles down" and we soon found that all seven miles were similar to driving on a huge sand dune. The uphill grade was fairly gentle but now and then there was a sharper grade up and the poor Ford could not quite make it. Just before the engine would completely turn off Mamma would step out and push. This was the Mamma whose health we hoped to regain and she must have jumped in and out more than twice every mile. She finally just stood on the running board until the next problem spot. This only added to Papa's discomfiture but she staunchly insisted it did not take as much energy as to hop in and out "all the times". Papa solemnly promised that our Mamma was going to learn to drive that car so that we would never again be in that fix, but she never did learn to drive. Just simply refused to learn and Papa finally gave up, but we could see it was difficult, in fact we were careful about mentioning the Cabbage Hill episode for a number of years, and then we were careful to leave out the bit about Mamma having to do all that pushing!

The road up Cabbage Hill wound this way and that and once we came around a curb to find a number of cars stopping along the side of the road with one stopping in the very middle of the "highway". Papa carefully surveyed the probabilities and possibilities as we neared them, then skirted around the car and drove us on to the top of that particular incline. He parked us beside the road and bravely walked down to the clump of cars. We had not been given very friendly "looks" when we passed them in our ascent so Mamma was fearful of his reception and we all watched closely. Instead of the men being irate they were ready to listen to the young upstart and asked him how he managed the feat. Of course, the Ford had one advantage for it was more "leggy" than the Buicks and other big cars setting back there, and it seemed none of the drivers had much experience on country roads. We kept on watching and saw Papa climb into the stranded car, the men all pushed and Papa ground his way up the hill. Mamma tried to convince him to "stop while the stopping was good" for "what if he couldn't drive the rest of the cars up"? But our Papa did not fail in his assignment and drove them all on up over the sand. To be honest, Harold and I could hardly believe our eyes for we had been led to believe by previous conversations that only Model T Fords could go on such hills.

The Blue Book also informed us that we must cross a river by ferry. It explained that we would need to drive through the ferry operator's barnyard to get on the ferry. Sure enough, the Blue Book was right. Papa stopped at the barnyard gate, hopped out across the side of the car and

luggage carrier, expecting to open said gate, but it was padlocked. After shouting, yahooping and searching the barn, we sat patiently waiting for the farmer who finally did appear. We were not sure of his existence. He solemnly accepted Papa's quarter and went into his barn. Upon reappearing with a large monkey wrench in his hand he unlocked the gate and we followed him to the edge of the stream where the ferry was tethered. Mamma wasn't very pleased with the looks of things and because Papa lost his happy face, Harold and I sat tight against the lazy-back of our "bed" and didn't move a muscle. The ferry was nothing but a raft with four by sixes nailed along the sides. It was large enough to allow the operator to walk beside the car if he chose to do so. Then taking the monkey wrench he began pulling on wires strung across the river and we slowly moved until we reached the other side and happily chugged along on our way.

When we drove out of Grandpa's yard we carried a goodly supply of sugar cookies - perhaps some molasses ones, too. Likely Aunt Lydia in Des Moines and Annie Yoder in Chappell added to the supply for we ate a lot of cookies as we traveled. When Papa got sleepy or we were bored with sitting, Papa was apt to say to Mamma, "Give me a cooky, Mrs. Hookey." Harold and I were quick to move to the front of our compartment when we heard Papa begin his request. Indeed, we actually hoped for the little ditty, but Mamma sort of wet-blanketed it and by the time we drove across the Nebraska-Wyoming line we seldom heard it any more. Not that there were no cookies but Mamma did not want to be reminded of the storekeeper Hucke's wife. Of course, Mamma was a bit picky about some other things, too. Like the time Papa bought us a sack of licorice sticks. It was the only time she ever gave us such a substantially sized piece of licorice in our lives for it created some real problems for her. After some time of our licking, swallowing and drooling Mamma looked back at her happy, quiet and well-behaved children. When I saw the look of horror spread over her face I looked at Harold. My! His face was smeared from ear to ear and there were ugly black spots where the licorice juice had dripped on his shirt. Then she looked at me and I watched the horror change to helplessness. The only water available for a clean up job was in the canvas water bag hanging on the knob of the windshield. The next gas station was hours away and when we would finally get there she would not be able to take us to the rest room to scrub us because there was none. Gas stations only had shanties out back. I can't tell you how she cleaned us up but I do know we never again received a piece of licorice that wouldn't easily fit into our mouths and allow us to close our lips.

Once when we were riding along on a shimmering hot day we saw a lake out ahead with nice shade trees around it. We heard with gratefulness that Papa meant to hunt it up, but the next time we listened in on their conversation we discovered Papa was not planning to do so. It was hard to believe they were telling the truth when they said there was no lake, only the picture of one. Therefore when Papa saw another lake a half mile off the road and turned towards it we expected it to be another mirage. We were told it was called Dry Lake - information from the Blue Book again. One could see where people had driven down into what appeared to be softly

rippling water with all the wisdom of two small preschoolers. We did not sit back in complacency when we discovered Papa was following the tracks right down into the lake. We screamed and sort of went wild but Papa just smiled and drove ahead to what we thought was certain death. Not until both parents spoke sternly and made us shut our mouths and open our eyes did we see that the ripples were dried mud. You should have seen the fuss we made of that phenomena to make up for the fuss we had raised before.

One of the songs we sang lustily and a bit off tune was taught us by Papa. We liked to sing it going through the small western towns even when no one was in sight on any street. It was, "We're from Ioway, Ioway! Land of all the west, State of all the best! We're from Ioway, Ioway, Ioway, That's where the tall corn grows!"

Now that we had crossed into Wyoming we were all pretty excited. Even then, we were not without our worries. Cheyenne was small enough that Papa found someone who could tell us how to get to Uncle Henry's ranch, thirty miles out on Old Bear Creek. Bear Creek was near Bear Mountain which was pointed out to Papa as a landmark for us to keep in view. We needed to strike out across the sage brush and sand without the comfort of the familiar black and yellow stripes. They said, "Just follow the main trail, then turn left and keep along Old Bear Creek. You can't miss it."

At first Harold and I were taken up with the novelty of everything for Papa wasn't following any road at all, just two parallel tracks running through someone's pasture. Occasionally we came to a fence with a gate where Papa stopped the car, jumped across the luggage carrier, opened the gap, climbed back in and drove through, and then ended up doing everything all over before we could drive on. Most of these gaps were too difficult for Mamma to open. Gaps were becoming "old stuff" when we came to a Mexican gate. We had seen Papa drive through and over many dangerous and impossible places, but he had never yet guided a Ford over what appeared to us a set of two by sixes lying across a deep hole enough to bury our car. We held our breaths and no one spoke until we were on the other side, then listened to the advantages and disadvantages of Mexican gates. The first gate had four-inch boards nailed along the sides of the planks so that it would be harder to drive off the side but the nearer we got to Uncle Henry's ranch, the less "citified" things were and Papa drove across planks without the little sidings.

On and on we went, mile upon mile of seeing nothing but pasture, one or two herds of western cattle and the trail stretching out ahead of us until even Papa began to wonder if we were still on the right road. Finally at a small ranch house Papa asked about the road to Uncle Henry's. Yes, we were still going the right way, and again, "Just keep on the main



trail and you can't miss them."

Sundown came, and although we had kept on the main trail we were not at Uncle Henry's and Papa decided to ask one more time. The curtains were on the car at that time so Harold and I kept our heads down, because we were too embarrassed to have folks know Papa was so "slow" that he didn't know the way to Uncle Henry's. Sure enough, the main road did lead right past Uncle Henry's cement block house and just before dark we arrived. To us the trail looked quite primitive but to the two who had homesteaded it seemed like a main thoroughfare. I doubt that a car, other than a mailman, went along that road every day.

This will be continued in future issues. This was taken from the talk given by Katie Lind at the OMHGS Dinner Meeting in July 1994. Illustrations in this issue were done by Edna Kennel.

CARE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

by Edna Kennel

I want you to do as I say, not as I have done. Unfortunately, I have lost or destroyed or seriously damaged some old photos and keepsakes by not understanding proper care, or by being so distracted by immediate daily living that valuables became destroyed through neglect.

All light deteriorates photographs. Light coming from the sun deteriorates film and paper somewhat faster than most standard electric light.

If you have an old photograph hanging at a place where the sun may occasionally strike through a window, you might consider having a good photo company copy the old photo. Frame and hang the copy. Store the original in a dark place. Photographers can copy these old photos in sepia (brown) which gives them the look of the beautiful old originals.

Ideally, all photographs should be stored between sheets of acid-free paper in acid-free boxes. This means that some damage over time occurs if you put each photo between typing paper and stack them in a cardboard box. Acid-free supplies are becoming available at more places, some of which are listed at the end of this article.

Never, never store photographs wrapped in newspaper. Newspaper is manufactured by the cheapest processes in the paper manufacturing industry. It has no rag content. It is saturated with acid-bearing chemistry. Printers ink is a mixture of poisonous chemicals and petroleum that has no regard for the atmosphere, for our ecology, or, for your precious family memories.

Do not store negatives and prints in polyvinyl plastics (PVC's). Albums sold in photo shops may or may not be safe unless they bear a disclaimer specifying that the plastic does not contain PVC's. The inexpensive photo albums which have the sticky back and the magnetic plastic cover are not recommended. A product called Printfile, which is a plastic sleeve and is made of polyethylene is safe and comes in several sizes.

Artist supply stores usually are good sources for the

purchase of acid-free papers and mounting tapes. Watercolor artists and printmakers use acid-free paper, matting frames and adhesive hinges. In the artist supply stores, the labels on these products states, acid-free, or pH balanced, or museum quality. An office supply house may cooperate in helping you get a ream (500 sheets) of 100% rag bond paper. Rag indicates cotton, or sometimes linen. These fibers do not require the acid mash process that wood fiber requires to break down. If your stationery store cannot help you, go to the book and supply store of your nearest university or large college. They often carry products required by their students in are, library science or archive management.

LABELING: So, you assume no one could ever forget your mother! Will her great, great grandson who is writing a loving history 60 years from now remember if the woman on the right in the photo was his great, great grandmother or her sister who looked much like her? And now, let's see, was she Martha, daughter of Katie and Samuel, or her cousin Martha, daughter of Katie and Levi? Get it on the back of the photo right now.

If the photograph in question is one of the old, sepia-toned ones which were made in Europe or early USA, it was often mounted on a very heavy cardboard. It is best to not write on the margins of this board. Often these mat boards were embossed with a decorative border and bearing the name of the photo studio. This in itself has some historical value. Type the identification on a pH-balanced adhesive label and adhere it to the back of the board.

In case your photograph is a really excellent "keeper" be all the more diligent in labeling. It is even a good idea to discuss relationships, (their father's name and their mother's maiden name, a talent such as music or poetry, was their father a well-known minister, was their uncle a cowboy in Saskatchewan, was their daughter a missionary). Write this down with the name identification. It will greatly enrich the family of the future.

Labeling large groups is much more difficult. Large groups pictured in uneven and informal groups are even more challenging. Try this: With a sheet of translucent tracing paper and a very soft pencil gently trace out the heads of each person on the photo. Remove the tracing paper and number each head directly in the head space. Then type in a separate place on the paper the head number and the name of that person. This is called a legend guide.

Don't forget to label pets. If there is an anecdote about them, do record this. It will add charm and warmth to any family history.

If you are labeling snapshots such as 35 mm prints, it is a good idea to first carefully test your writing instrument on a margin, or better, on a photo of no real value. Some ballpoint pens will not write on the coated back of Kodak paper. Not all pencils will make a mark. If you find a pen or pencil which makes a legible mark, proceed cautiously. Any pressure on the photograph will emboss to the face of the photo and make it useless for a printer to recopy when you are having your family history printed by a printing company. Do not immediately stack newly written-on photographs. Some ballpoint pens do not dry at once and as you stack the photos, the writing transfers from the back of one print to the face of the next. Allow your prints to dry for

several minutes. Here again, you may want to use a pH-balanced label and simply adhere it to the back of the print.

Children love to look at pictures of themselves and their peers. It's not quite fair to forbid them to touch a photograph. But do try ahead of time to tell and show children in a non-threatening way about little fingerprints. Even clean hands carry a lot of oil. Our body oil has enough acid to continue to etch right into a photograph. Sometimes we can get double prints made when we have film developed. Perhaps a set of the good keepers could be stored away, while one set is used for showing and handling.

If you parents are gone, did you inherit their photographs that were not identified and you do not know "these people"? Run, don't walk, to your nearest and oldest relative. If they are all passed away, who were your grandparents' peers? If they were pioneers into a new frontier, who were the families that traveled with them? Seek out the oldest people you can find. **DO NOT PUT IT OFF.** Please call them tomorrow. Make a party out of having an oldster help you identify photos. Make them feel important, pack a lunch, take flowers and some special coffee or tea. Make it a visiting morning. Be sensitive about when they are tired. If these elders live far away, have a copy made of the photo, even a well-defined Xerox-type of copy may do. Send this to the person you think could help you.

Date photos. It is a good idea to date and identify your prints as soon as you pick them up from the developer. When I returned from a history-seeking trip to Europe I immediately set up a complete album and negative filing system. Each package of a 36-exposure roll of film was labeled A, B, C, etc. When I mounted my photos in albums I noted beside each of over 300+ pictures, A-14, or J-2, and so on. This has been invaluable in immediately locating a negative to have reprinted for the family here and in France. I also typed a label giving the date, who appears on the photo, and a statement about where it was taken, with identification of buildings. Friends who are not acquainted with my family are delighted to be able to page through my albums, read about the European family, and not have to wait on me to explain each picture in detail. I even described in this way little anecdotes, and recorded memorable menus and gave descriptions of the interiors of homes.



Thank you to each of you who have renewed your membership for 1995. If you haven't done so yet it isn't too late. By renewing now you will not miss any issues of the newsletter.