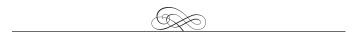
Paul M. Angell, Born February 23, 1899. Died April 15, 1984. "Drama's most vital expression is in the common day." - EMILY DICKINSON

PAUL M. ANGELL WAS BORN IN THE LAST YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY and grew up in Iowa. His formal education ended after one year of high school. In 1916, with World War I raging in Europe, he joined the U.S. Navy. A gifted musician, he was assigned to John Phillips Sousa's Marine band and spent the the following years touring with the band raising morale and selling war bonds. He survived the 1918 flu pandemic that decimated the troops at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, served in Santo Domingo during the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic, then left the service and joined his father's contracting business

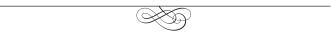
INTRODUCTION



With the onset of the Great Depression, there was very little new construction so he went on to start up a number of small businesses. In 1932 he founded a company to market and manufacture a novelty food item, the ice cream cake roll. Throughout that difficult period and on through World War II he and his wife, Gwendolyn Angell, persevered while raising nine children. The firm, Newly Weds Foods, Inc., has gone on to be a global leader in its field with 25 manufacturing facilities in 10 countries around the world. In 1984 he died at the age of 85.



HIS LIFE ENCOMPASSED NEARLY A CENTURY Wherein our country went from the Horse-Drawn wag on to landing on the moon.



It fought two world wars and experienced its worst ever economic downturn while evolving from the telegraph to the internet. The nation, through good and bad, transformed itself from an isolationist, rural, agricultural economy to an urban, manufacturing, world power.

His story could be seen as unexceptional in such exceptional times. Yet the profound, formative influences of his seminal experiences combined with those titanic events had deep seated effects on all who went through them. For Paulthey no doubt strengthened his underlying, inherited ethos of the importance of hard work, self reliance, fairness and an unrelenting sense of urgent optimism.

Gwendolyn Angell, nee Gwendolyn Bernice Knaggs, was born in 1912 and grew up in Milan Michigan. Her father, Thurlow, died when she was six. Her widowed mother, Mabel, carried on, teaching in a one-room school and eventually marrying Leroy Tooman.

Gwen's early years growing up in rural mid-America were typical of the time. Her later life would encapsulate many of the same epic circumstances that so influenced all of her generation: the aftermath of World War I, the Great Depression, World War II and astonishing social and technological change. Those times (combined with her family's heritage of constructive involvement, grit and a positive, pragmatic outlook) helped to mold her character, and through her, the characters of her children. Gwen died in 1997 at the age of 85.

This book started out in 1982 as an oral history of life in Iowa during the first years of the 20th century as recounted by Paul's sister, Virginia Thelin. Years later it was transcribed by Mrs. Angell and presented to her children in an attempt to pass on the heritage. Recently I decided to update the work by digitizing the material and re-releasing it in published form. However, as the work progressed it became apparent that half the tale was left untold. The story of the formative years of Gwen herself was missing. She had provided a short narrative of her family's early times as a small addendum to the book, but little else. Then, a new trove of old photos from her life was uncovered and made available. Consequently, many of those images have been added along with other materials to help fill out the early accounts of these two exceptional people.

Our hope is that this work will help future generations become a bit more informed as to where they came from, offer insight into why they are who they are today, help them understand what values anchor and inform their every action, and make manifest how that ethos is, to a large degree, the great legacy of their forebears.

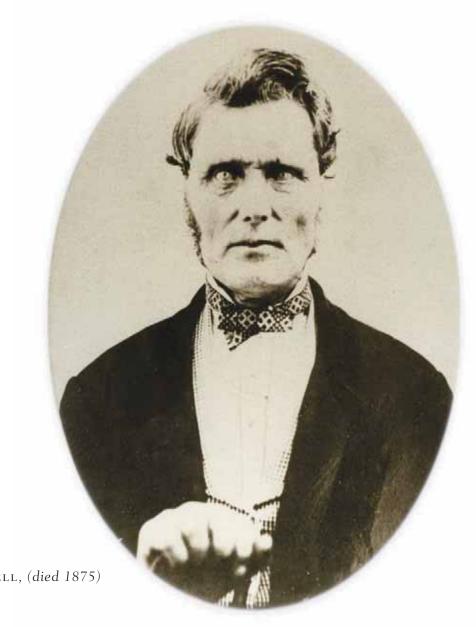
COVER PHOTOS: Paul 1922

COVER PHOTOS: Paul Angell and his sister Virginia circa 1905; Gwendolyn Knaggs Angell circa

THE GENEALOGY OF THE ANGELL FAMILY IN AMERICA begins in 1631 when Thomas Angell immigrated from England at the age of thirteen. Apparently, he was an adherent of Roger Williams as he eventually settled in Williams's new colony, Providence Plantation, site of the present day capital of Rhode Island. Indeed, to this day one of the main thoroughfares through the city is Angell Street. It originally marked the southern border of his property, now part of Brown University.

In time, a branch of the family moved on to western New York. From there in 1839, one of the progeny, Daniel Angell, struck out for Michigan. His wife, Olive, soon joined him, blazing the trail west with a wagon pulled by a team of oxen. One of their children, Daniel Moore Angell, married Cecelia Blakney. Their child, Merton P. Angell, was born on the family farm near Lamont, Michigan in 1869. Merton married Cora Starks and on February 23rd, 1899, she gave birth to Paul Merton Angell, the first subject of our story.

PROLOGUE I



Olive (Mrs. Daniel) Angell, died in 1870's

DANIEL ANGELL, (died 1875)

PROLOGUE I





DANIEL MOORE ANGELL, (died 1909) AND CECELIA BLAKNEY ANGELL, (died 1922)



PROLOGUE I

Merton Pierce Angell, Cora Tryphena Starks Angell, (12/4/1872 - 4/25/1960) and their son, Paul Merton Angell

1982 Reminiscences of VIRGINIA ANGELL THELIN

With Occasional Comments By Her Brother

PAUL MERTON ANGELL, SR.



Photographs Reproduced by Barbara Hale Published at Angell House – River Forest – Christmas 1994



Neil & Abbie Stark Jorgenson Spokane, Christmas 1905

O NCE WHILE WE WERE STILL IN GRAND RAPIDS, Aunt Abbie, Mama's sister, was on a train to Washington state to visit their brother Emerson, who had established a lumber camp there and was doing quite well. On the train, she met a man to her liking and in time they were married. They settled in Washington.

Between Abbie and Emerson, Papa was persuaded that there were golden opportunities in the West. We left 98 North East Street in 1907, laden with shoeboxes and home made candles from the Freeman girls, our neighbors.

No parlor cars for us, no dining cars for us either, though there were such on the train. First we ate from the shoeboxes. Hard-boiled eggs were easy to carry, and I always associate the smell of hard-boiled eggs with the smoke and soot smells of a steam locomotive. Then there was a car at the rear of the train with a cook-stove where ordinary family travelers could make coffee or get a light meal.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES



A T CHICAGO, IN ADJUSTING THE CHAIR CAR SEATS, my finger was pinched badly. Faintly remember the conductor talking with the folks about it and bringing bandages. Not many had thought of suing for half a million in that era. I had to wear a cot for a while and in time I lost the nail from that finger.¹

Aunt Abbie's husband was a carpenter. He thought Papa would find lots of carpenter work in Washington. Not so. Papa responded to a plea from Emerson to come to his lumber camp to cook. Going up above the timberline was quite an experience.

The lumberjacks were rough men with few table manners, but good healthy appetites. Many were Norwegians or Swedes, but Papa lumped them all together as Sighwegians. He would often tell how they just leaned over to drink their coffee, slurping it up instead of raising the cup. Naturally no PLEASE PASS. It was lumber camp reach.

We stayed in a suburb of Tacoma with Aunt Abbie,² From her house you could see Mount Tacoma. It appeared to be within walking distance due to the clearness of the air, but was several miles distant. A few months of Washington state weather³ were enough for both of the folks, and shortly after returning to Grand Rapids we were off to the new venture in Iowa.



EMERSON STARK'S LOGGING OPERATION. Merton Angell (brother-in-law) became the camp cook in 1908.

^{1.} Think this may have been on the way back from Washington, Virginia was just a little girl, but she didn't cry. (Paul)

^{2.} I can still see the yard where I was accused of losing a jacknife – one of many lost through the years. (Paul)

^{3.} In Washington sometimes the fog was so bad that I would have to count how many blocks to go to the corner where I should turn and then count again how many blocks to the school. (Paul)



PROSPECTING FOR LUMBER, circa 1908 in Washington State.

REMINISCENCES



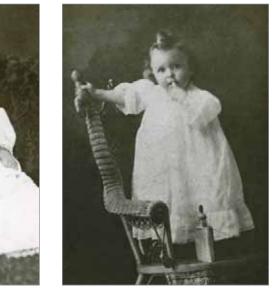


Paul Merton Angell, one year old.

Hill in front of 98 N. East Street, Grand Rapids.

Cora holding Old Kiss, Merton holding Virginia, and Paul M. Angell seated to right.

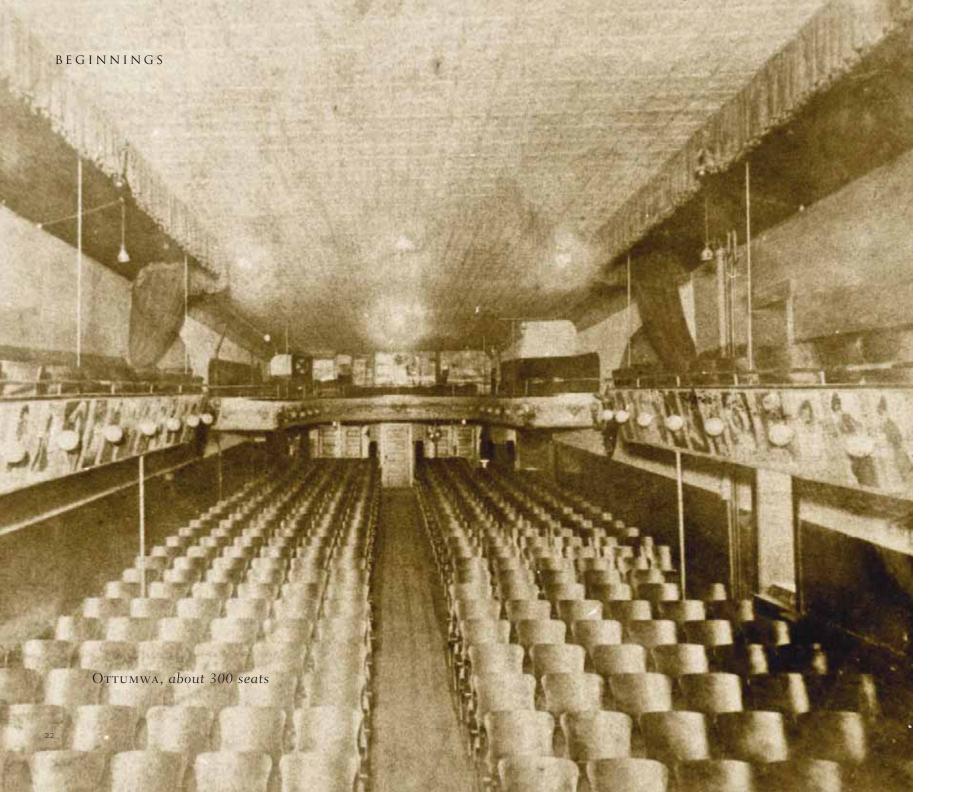
REMINISCENCES



Paul M Angell, circa 1900 (note the metal flask baby bottle).



Paul and Virginia 1906



TBELIEVE UNCLE MOSE HAD A MOVIE HOUSE in Grand Rapids, at least he was **L** associated with one. At the time they said my grandfather, Daniel Moore Angell, a very religious man, father of Merton and Moses, thought Moses was on his way to HELL when he got involved in the movie business. Once persuaded to go see a picture, he wanted to attend every day.

Don't know what happened to Mose's venture in Grand Rapids, but it seems he was able to persuade Papa to go into business with him. Incidentally, he was christened Moses, known to us as Uncle Mose, but became Mark Angell in his ventures in Iowa. Our family's savings, acquired by frugal management, helped to get the Angell Circuit going.

Papa went to Clinton ahead of us to get the movie house started. I don't remember our trip there from Grand Rapids, but remember our first night. Papa had a room in a private house. The first night we made a meal of cinnamon rolls from a nearby bakery and tea was brewed in a tin pail suspended somehow over an open gas jet. Our goods soon arrived and we became part of the new venture.

A NEW ADVENTURE

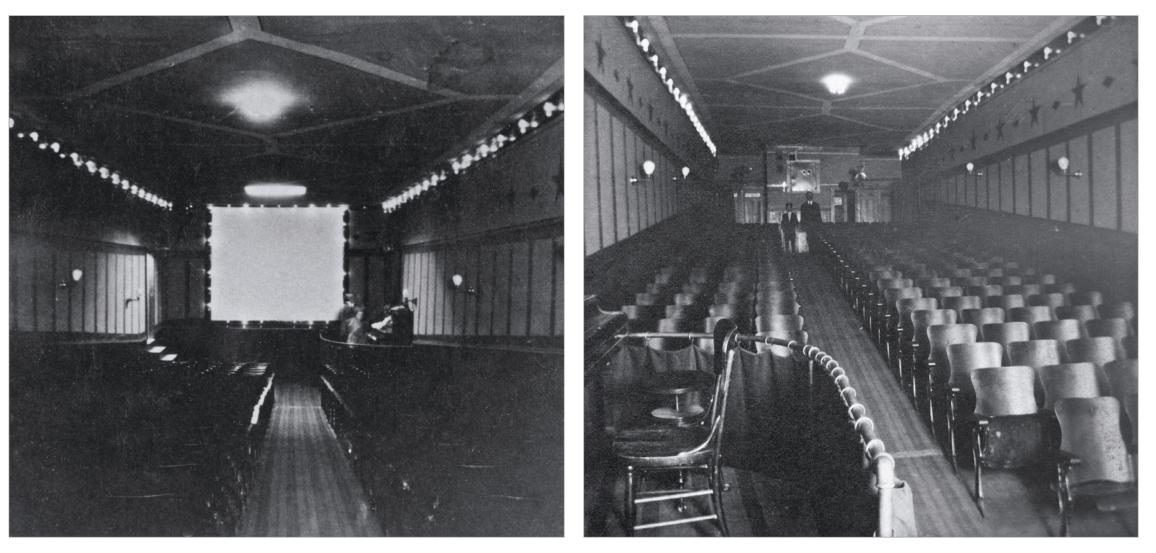


A T FIRST WE LIVED OVER THE THEATRE in a pretty plain flat.¹ There was a bath tub – a big tin one with a wooden rim around it – and a toilet with a water tank high overhead. Attached was a chain to pull to release the water. Mama's frequent question was, "Did you remember to pull the chain?"

There were rat holes in the baseboards, and at first rats ran in and out freely. Papa covered the holes with tin, but the rats chewed other ones. Our dog Trix came to us as a stray, He was a fox terrier mix, looked like the Victor record listening dog, and was an excellent ratter.

Papa in later years would tell and laugh about how Trix would go down through the theatre during the show after a rat, setting lady customers to squealing as he ran under their seats. One good shake after he had his teeth sunk into the right place and Mr. Rat was a goner.

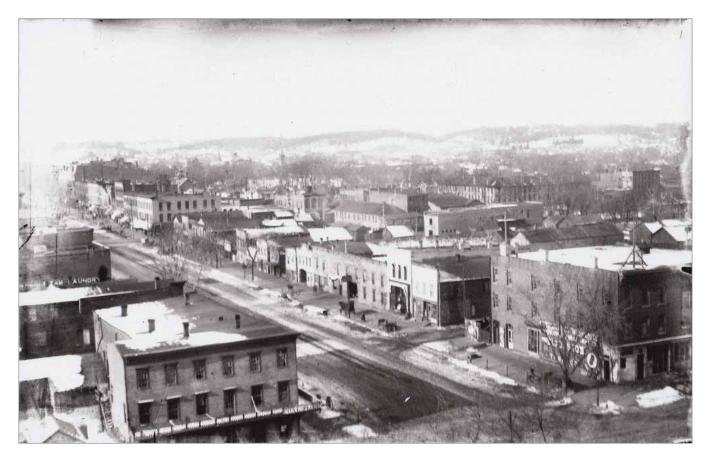
THE LYRIC THEATER, Clinton Iowa



^{1.} I remember playing violin in the second floor of a house in Grand Rapids before Grandma was crippled. I started school in Grand Rapids – Diamond Street School – Kindergarten the first day; first grade the second day; then settled into the second grade from then on. I remember a pole in the center of the schoolroom that I would climb even though it was not the thing to do. (Paul)

REMINISCENCES

THE LYRIC THEATER, Clinton Iowa, opened in 1908



Clinton, Iowa

C LINTON HAD BIGGER AND MORE PERSISTENT RATS because it was on the Mississippi River with lots of river transportation and rats abounded on the wharves. Papa called some of Paul's chums "river rats."

One of the chums was from a family that had a boarding house or hotel on River Street. Papa's idea was that anyone living there was a tough hombre, he didn't approve of the boy, and that in itself made him a river rat. I wonder if Paul remembers the boy's name? ¹

On the same side of the street, but across the alley, was the Daisy Day log cabin saloon. Some of the kids my age were sent there with little covered tin pails to carry home beer for their fathers. My folks would never have thought of sending a child into a saloon.

LIFE IN CLINTON



There was usually a bottle of brandy or whiskey in our house, but it was largely for medicinal uses. Old Taylor was THE name for good whiskey. A whiskey sling was a comfort with some types of aches and pains if not a cure for them. No aspirin then. I've heard Papa tell that a man going to the dentist would take a good swig of whiskey and then tell the dentist to go ahead and drill. No anesthetics unless you were a sissy and asked for laughing gas.

For me going to school the first day in a new town was quite a jolt. Don't know how Paul felt about it, I went. The teacher made over me when ignoring me would have suited me better. I decided I didn't want to go to school the next day. Between Mama and the hair brush - or was it the crumb brush (everyone then had a brush and tray to brush the crumbs from the tablecloth) - I was persuaded. Don't think I got many whacks while turned over her knee. Don't remember ANY, but however few they conveyed the idea that doing what one was supposed to do was the thing to be done, period. Soon got used to the new situation.

In first grade one of our exercises was to take grains of vari-colored corn and place them around our names written in chalk on our desks by the teacher. Lots cheaper than our printed workbooks of today.

THE CLINTON HOUSE WAS PURCHASED AS A GOING but a "pioneer type" theatre. **I** Most motion picture houses of that day were just started in vacant stores not designed for theatres, so they had level floors which were not too suited to give all customers a good view. To get a sloping floor, some remodeled by building the floor up toward the back. Then customers had to walk up a sharp ramp as they entered.¹ Papa told how he and Mose took axes, went down under the Clinton theatre and dropped the joists, lowering the floor instead of building it up. That meant one could walk in on the level. Natives were surprised that the owners themselves knew enough to do the work, not knowing that those business men were a couple of former farm boys always being able to work a scheme somehow to get a thing done.

The interior decorations were ours. I vaguely remember the stars along the wall being cut out. The apparent paneling was made from strips of plain wallpaper – called oatmeal paper, wasn't it? A little platform for the piano. The singer stood by the piano while the slides for the illustrated songs were thrown on the screen. Cocoa matting down the aisle.

THE CLINTON MOVIE HOUSE



^{1.} Clyde Dickerson – hotel three stories high. Clyde and I would play cards every afternoon until the older fellows came. Remember so well going up on top on the roof of the hotel and watched an airplane come down from Savannah, Illinois - would come down and light on the water. (Paul)

The machine was hand operated. One climbed a ladder to the operating room. A reel was about 15 minutes long and it took several minutes to change reels. In the interim there were glass slides to be flashed on the screen. One always read, LADIES PLEASE REMOVE YOUR HATS. Another was just plain ONE MINUTE PLEASE WHILE WE CHANGE REELS.

If it took too long to change reels the audience would hiss or whistle. Films frequently broke and had to be patched on the spot. Slides again. Sometimes if the express man came early with the day's run the films were run through before the show to see what condition they were in.

As to the LADIES PLEASE REMOVE YOUR HATS, hats were big in those days, anchored into long pinned-up hair with hatpins.



TO SIT BEHIND A WOMAN IN A BIG HAT WAS TO Scrunch down below the hat or dodge back and forth for a look at the film.

Sometimes Papa or an usher, who also doubled as a sweeper and general flunky for the munificent sum of from \$5 to \$7 a week, would go quietly down and tap a lady on the shoulder asking her to remove her hat. Women resented the request, as the adjustment of those hats took some maneuvering. Some women just naturally took their hats off when sitting down, as a matter of courtesy.

At times the operator would flash the "HATS OFF" sign in the middle of the picture. I don't know technically how this was done, as with the early machines the heat of the carbons would burn the film if it were not kept moving.

In the early years there must not have been any extra reel to collect the film as it ran through. Instead the film ran into a tank of galvanized iron so that in case of fire it would burn itself out, but not set the whole place on fire. The film in the tank would be rewound during intermission or during the song, although the operator had to run the slides in rhythm with the lyrics. Incidentally, the operators patched the films with a special film cement with a "never to be forgotten" smell. Now when someone says derisively, "Banana oil", I know exactly what he thinks of that whereof he speaks. *Pee-U. Pee-U.*

A T FIRST, THE SHOWS WERE MAINLY ONE REELERS. Price 5 cents, which gave the name of "Nickelodeon" to many theatres. Some one reelers, particularly French films, *Pathe Frere* particularly famous, had three separate comedies. Being silent films, the country of origin didn't make any difference. Those short comedies were strictly slapstick. Later came the two and even three reelers – they were the big timers. For some time advertising was up to the exhibitor. Later printed posters came with the films. In time, some posters came before the films did so one could advertise in advance. At first there were one sheet printed posters. Then came two and three sheet posters. That meant that two or three sheets had to be pasted together by the exhibitor. They were then tacked onto the poster boards and set up out in front.

Very popular were Westerns with real Indians, cowboys and big herds of real buffalo. One producing company was the *101 Bison*. Since the features ran several times a day, and since Papa was manager AND ticket taker most of the time, he used to notice some things others didn't.

A great army of soldiers would march up and around a hill. More and more would keep coming. After several viewings he would notice that the same soldiers were circling the hill, marching endlessly, so that 25 or 30 extras would appear as legion.

) UR SINGERS WERE MALE OR FEMALE, usually not professionals but aspiring amateurs. They were frequently from other areas seeking their fortunes in the big city of Clinton. Thus, they often needed a place to stay and were looked after to a certain extent by the folks. Papa never liked to fire anyone and frequently left that job up to Mama. At one time there was someone who needed firing. Papa had to go to one of the other houses out of town briefly and asked Mama to do the job while he was gone. I believe the operator was a Jack Shockey. One evening while selling tickets and watching the film at the same time, business being slow, Mama noticed that the film was running in a jerky manner, fast and then slow. She left the ticket booth, climbed the ladder to the operating booth and got hold of the reel lever just as the drunken operator was falling asleep. Mad, she turned the reels quite fast. Afterward some of the help said the film had been of a parade, and that they had never seen elephants run as fast as those elephants did.

Mama was always wearing out a coat or suit on the right side hip from carrying the money to the bank daily, almost all of it being silver dollars. She had it in a purse, walked down to bank (never a thought of being robbed), though what paper money there was went into her stocking if she closed up at night and took the streetcar to North Clinton.

TOLA WAS BORN IN CLINTON ON MAY I, 1910, up over the Lyric. Papa had been down L to one of the houses a short train trip away. One morning when Paul and I got up, he was back. Shortly we were shown a tiny baby. I had no idea one was on the way and don't think Paul did either. At that time we were absorbed in our own youthful activities.

EVIDENTLY OUR FOLKS HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED THAT THEY SHOULD PREPARE THE OTHER CHILDREN FOR THE APPEARANCE OF A NEW ARRIVAL

A SURPRISE ADDITION







^{1.} The Oskaloosa house had a sharp ramp as Virginia describes. (Paul)



ABBIE STARKS JORGENSON AND HER SISTER CORA STARKS ANGELL with Virginia and Iola Angell in Clinton, Iowa 1911 As to where the baby came from, Papa explained that there had been a man on the train who had offered him the choice of a puppy or a baby, and he had taken the baby. Paul and I were given an unusually large amount of money – as much as 10 or 15 cents – and told we could go over to the novelty store and spend it. There was no doubt some need for a little privacy at home at the moment.

There was a woman, Mrs. Graham, who came in to help care for Mama, but how long she stayed I have no idea. Mama had been right around selling tickets part of the time until quite close to the birth. Long capes were the style then, and she had a voluminous one. Most people, as she later told, had no idea a child was on the way. Pregnancy at the time was not a subject for casual conversation. Most women stayed out of the public eye for the last six months before a birth.

So, off to spend our money. I can't remember that we were affected psychologically by the blessed event. In that period there were fascinating novelty stores, little holes in the wall usually run by an older Mom and Pop. They usually lived behind the shop. A bell tinkled as one opened the door, and after a moment someone appeared to wait on you.

Not much shoplifting at the time. I don't know that our morals were so much superior. Actually don't think the idea of shoplifting had occurred to our age group at the time. Besides taking something without paying would have been called STEALING – not that nifty term shop-lifting. But back to the store. Most of the goods were from Japan. There were china dolls about an inch and a half long for a penny, white glazed material with black hair painted on and a semblance of facial features. Neither arms nor legs moved, but children could play with them, making dresses out of scraps of cloth. Ten cents bought a fair sized Japanese umbrella, brightly colored with Japanese figures and scenes. Spokes and handles were of bamboo. One seldom sees them now, but similar Japanese lanterns are used in evening garden parties.



MERT AND MOSE ANGELL

OR THE BOYS, THERE WERE TIN SOLDIERS, Γ puzzles, popguns and gorgeous glassies for shooting marbles. All sorts of penny candies, of course. We used to read in our geography books of how little the Japanese were paid for a long day's work. How could these things be made, shipped here, sold to the stores and then sold to us for the little they asked.

It was in Clinton, somehow through Uncle Mose, I think, that Papa reluctantly acquired an electric car. Think it had something to do with the payment of a debt. It was pulled into the yard behind the theatre and sat there as long as I can remember. It never was driven, but we used to sit in it and pretend we were steering with the lever. Yes, a lever – not a steering wheel.

To advertise one's program, the theatre owner had to provide his own signs and posters. A sign painter used to come up into the flat, spread banner cloth out on the dining room floor, get down on his knees and go at it. Sign painters, it seems, frequently had an affinity for alcoholic beverages, but they did put out pretty good banners. They had to have everything printed out on a piece of paper, as most had not gone far in school or at least had not been at the head of the class in spelling.

Our ticket seller in Clinton was a slightly heavy Irish girl, Maggie Whalen. She was a Catholic. I had no idea what a Catholic was, but from a conversation between the folks I got the idea that Catholics were somewhat different from Methodists. She was a cheerful likeable person. She made no attempt to convert me, but once gave me five or six pennies to put into the collection box in MY Sunday School.

A few doors from the theatre was a penny candy store. One of their best buys was a cinch-athin piece of taffy-like candy wrapped in a yellow paper. It was not very tasty, but it had an attractive feature. Inside some cinches was a slip of paper entitling one to another cinch, even the second free cinch might be a lucky one. The lure of gambling enticed me and I spent all of Maggie's pennies in the candy store. Soon after I was struck with guilt at having done so. For several days I kept out of her sight, always bending down as I passed the ticket office to go upstairs.

VARIOUS COMMENTS OF PAUL'S

REMINISCENCES



IOLA IN OTTUMA, born May 1st. 1910

I remember one sign painter we had who was quite an old fellow, but really pretty good, especially when realizing that both hands were just stumps due to having been burned off as punishment for robbing a grave! (Paul)

* Maggie Whalen lived In Comanche, right next door to Clinton. (Paul)



CABLE NELSON PIANO, (example)

The Cable Nelson piano

O UR FLAT IN CLINTON HAD A BIG BACK PORCH, really the flat roof of the theatre, which extended beyond the flat. It connected with the porch of the flat next door. There lived Mr. and Mrs. Hufford. He was in a wheel chair. He had what we called locomotor ataxie. At that age I always thought that had something to do with transportation. Actually we weren't too far off only the ataxie has to be changed to ataxia. His wife was a hairdresser, the support of the pair. She operated at the flat. Oh, no, no permanents. Those who could afford it had their hair washed and arranged in puffs.

Iola was then around two. Mr. Hufford in his condition was depressed and frequently ill natured. When we had moved in, his wife told us later, he had said he hoped the baby wouldn't bother him. His back porch provided his only chance to get the air unless two men carried him downstairs. There was no barrier between our two porches. Soon, Iola had tottered over to see him.



Without introduction they got acquainted and before long he had her sitting on the tray of his chair. I don't think you often see a wheel chair today with a tray. The older chairs were big cumbersome ones with wooden frames and a tray like that on a high chair. It not only supported the person to some extent, but also made a place for a book or a meal or a child. Iola couldn't say Mr. Hufford. Instead he became Huff-Huff, and he liked it.

Papa used to take short trips to the other houses and would send back a card. At one time there were theatres in Clinton, Ottumwa, Oskaloosa, Keokuk, Cedar Rapids and Lyons. Don't know about the financial relations with Uncle Mose or how the interest was divided in the Angell Circuit.

We moved from the flat to a house not far away, and then again to a double house in North Clinton. That meant just an extension of Main Street to a residential section to the north. Board the streetcar in front of the theatre, go in a straight line, get off in front of the house. Stay on as much farther as you had come and you were in the village of Lyons. If my memory doesn't trick me it was there that the lady in the other side of the house was taking vocal lessons. Her practicing gave us a chance to mimic her.

By this time, we had the "Cable Nelson," a beautiful piano – it had a better tone than the player piano. Paul took some lessons then, and I might have had a very few from the sister of our housekeeper.¹ The reason that I remember the very few lessons is that the teacher in a social gesture gave me a glass of buttermilk. I could never understand how anyone would drink buttermilk, and I knew for sure I could not. I kept slowly spilling it on my apron – little girls wore Mother Hubbard aprons then- as the teacher went in and out of the room tending her cooking.

Anyway, the Cable Nelson went with us to Oskaloosa, on to Ottumwa, and then to the farm. It was tuned just a little below normal pitch so that a violin always had to be re-tuned when playing with it. I think that is why the tone was so mellow.

E VERYTHING WAS CHEAPER. Our housekeeper may have gotten seven dollars a week plus her lunch. She didn't stay overnight, but did the work, took care of Iola, and got things ready for supper before she left.

Paul and I did some innovating on the piano, exercises not assigned by the teacher. We had a parody on "Jesus, Lover of My Soul". I really think it was Paul's composition. The first line was used intact, then followed: "Swallow a frog and croak in a bowl. Where the nearer waters flow, I will empty that nasty bowl." I knew this was wicked, didn't approve of it, but still thought it was pretty clever.

Iola was still "the baby", but Mama was up and at 'em, selling tickets or managing while Papa was out of town. Mrs. Raymond, a fine middle-aged woman, took care of the house, the baby, and gave us nearly free rein.



HOW DID MY FOLKS FIND THE MONEY TO START A BUSINESS, DRESS AND FEED US, BUY A PIANO AND AFF ORD SOME LESS ONS AT 25 CENTS AN HOUR?



Free rein led to various incidents. Most houses then, if they had any outbuildings at all, had a barn, not a garage. Few of the barns still had horses in them. They had haylofts reached by an inside ladder. The barns provided places to play hide and seek, to explore, and in our case to carry on a little neighborhood warfare.

Across the street from us lived a family of twin boys. They had not just a sagging weather beaten barn like ours. Theirs was a well-painted carriage house. A half friendly, half warlike relationship existed between Paul and the twins who were a few years younger than he. I remember them being chased into their loft by Paul. Perhaps a few well-packed snowballs were heaved at them. So they told their papa on Paul; their papa came to complain to our papa. Nothing drastic happened. Probably Papa told Paul in no uncertain terms to let those boys alone. We built some pretty good snow forts that winter.²

While we were in Clinton Uncle Mose came through from one of the houses with a car. Big excitement. It was parked in front of the Lyric. Believe it or not-a six cylinder Ford. I have heard that only a few of these were made.

With the top down, Uncle Mose and Aunt Pearl in dusters. Doris along, but don't know whether she had a duster or just took the dirt. Goggles, too, and they were needed.

RIDING IN AN OPEN CAR ON DIRT ROADS Brought one home half made up for a Blackface show with eyes looking like Burnt holes in a blanket.

HOPPING A BOB







^{1.} Mrs. Raymond was the housekeeper. She made the best chocolate cake — Jesus, but that was good! (Paul)

^{2.} I told Virginia we'd give Hyatt (one of the twins) a little excitement, I said, "Virginia, come on, show how you can take hold of this." So she did – It was a shocking machine, only I didn't give her much of a shock, and Virginia told Hyatt it felt real good. So Hyatt took it and I gave him a big shock and he cried like hell. (Paul)

It was planned that we would all go down to a nearby town. That may have been my first car ride, though I think I once rode in a chain drive truck with a farmer the folks knew. That one was, if I'm not mistaken, a two-cylinder job.

We all piled into the Ford, women with veils tied down to anchor their hats. Was the town Marion? It was probably six or seven miles away. On the way, at the foot of one of the steep hills abundant in Iowa, the car refused to turn another wheel. Passengers piled out and walked up the hill to a farmhouse where Uncle Mose negotiated with a farmer to use his team to haul the car to a nearby town where it was repaired.

It took some time. Meantime Doris began to complain that she was hungry. We were in the farmer's house being treated cordially. Probably Aunt Pearl tried to shush Doris, but she voiced her hunger. In that era there was little between meal snacking. Food was cooked from scratch. The farmer's wife said she didn't have a thing ready to eat on the spur of the moment except some cold potatoes. They would do. So Doris snacked on cold potatoes.

That story was told over and over, as was the story of the breakdown. The car got back we all piled in and returned to Clinton, never having gotten to our destination.

Four Negroes, known as the Hart brothers, owned a livery stable near the theatre. They sang. A few times Papa had them sing at the theatre as a special attraction. People liked them. Papa especially liked the bass singer. "Down in the deep, Let me Sleep when I die. Sailor Beware, Sailor Take Care," - then the base going DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, DOWN - each down going lower. I kept wondering how far.

Lots of snow in Iowa. Sometimes it piled up as high as your head in front of the theatre. From the North Clinton house we used to hop bobs. Bobs were sets of short runners used on everything from heavy coal wagons to light delivery rigs. There was a set in front and a set in back to facilitate turning.

Then you could belly flop or sit up as you chose. Why not hook it on while the rig was stopped? Most drivers didn't want you dragging along. Some didn't want the responsibility of your being hurt. Some thought the horses had to work hard enough as it was. No, no cars on the street, especially in winter. But you could overturn as a rig went around a corner. If a driver in an open wagon lifted his whip from the socket you just let go of your rope and sat there in the street waiting for another hop. Some drivers enjoyed towing the kids. I hopped mainly coal wagons. They went slowly enough so that hitching wasn't hard.



TO HOP A BOB YOU PUT A LONG ROPE ON YOUR FLEXIBLE FLYER, RAN AFTER A RIG, THREW IT AROUND ANY EXTENSION AVAILABLE. G RABBED IT. RUNNING ALL THE TIME.



Once Paul and I hooked a laundry rig, a lightweight covered vehicle the forerunner of the panel truck. With only one horse pulling, but a good one. We sailed along at breakneck speed. At least so it seemed to us, skimming over the snow on the sled, no snow removal problem then. The snow was needed for the bobs.

Soon we had gone over the line into Lyons, a small village where we had a second theatre. There, there was a convent surrounded by a high iron fence. Before we knew it we were inside the fence, as the laundryman was making a delivery there.

I might have seen a nun before, but had never been close to one. What would those black clothed people do when they saw us in their domain? We sat tight. If they noticed us at all they paid no attention. Delivery made the driver pulled out. Safe at last! We dropped off at the main drag and hooked another bob home.

THE LYONS THEATRE WAS NOT A VERY ORNATE PLACE. Across the Mississippi from Lyons was – and is – Fulton, Illinois. Along the banks below the bridge on the Iowa side were quantities of long stemmed deep blue violets. There was a little park on the bank along the river with a squirrel cage containing a treadmill. Iola and I spent some time watching the squirrels race that wheel while the folks were taking care of getting the Lyons theatre started. I don't think it ever did much business.¹

Clinton was built along the riverfront. Not far from the Lyric was a good-sized riverside park. At one time the Wright brothers were scheduled to arrive at the park in their flying machine. A great crowd turned out. Something went wrong and after waiting several hours the people went home. They did come the next day, but have no recollection of seeing them. Probably didn't.²

THE LYONS THEATRE





The Mississippi carried many commercial vessels. There was a high bridge connecting Clinton and Fulton, Illinois. Known formally as "The High Bridge," for us it was a sight to see. Had to be high enough for the tallest vessels to pass under. There was a long approach, a steep incline, then over the hump and down into Illinois.

Once or twice, Papa hired a surrey from the Hart brothers' stable. They inquired whether he would be able to handle the horses. He was able. What a thrill! An hour's drive. This would have been on a Sunday. Most of the time theatres were closed on Sunday.

Paul helped sweep the theatre out mornings. There was always the chance to pick up a little change dropped on the floor. Besides money we acquired a collection of hatpins and various other trinkets. Hatpins ranged from those long shafts with a plain black knob to ornate ones of real gold tops engraved with initials.

Superba theater, Lyons

1. Pa would give me a dime to take the picture from Clinton up to Lyons. Dickey (a boyfriend) would go with me for company and I had to share the dime with him so didn't make much money. (Paul) 2. Yes, I saw the Wright brothers. We went up on the hotel roof to watch for them, which is probably why Virginia didn't see them (Paul)



PAUL AND COMPANIONS SKATED ALONG THE EDGES OF THE RIVER and played ice hockey with almost any object as a puck and a crooked branch for a hockey stick. This brings on a recollection that the respect of our parents for something of decent quality resulted in our having ball bearing roller skates, costing two or three dollars a pair, while a lot of kids had cheaper ones – no ball bearings – with which they had to work much harder to get anywhere. Most skating was done on the sidewalks, though there were skating rinks we went to later on.¹

Illustrated songs were the frosting on the cake at the five-cent movie houses. Some were tear jerkers, some sentimental, some lively and catchy. "By the Light of the Silver Moon" was a good one for the illustrated song maker. Then "When You Know Your Not Forgotten by the Girl You Can't Forget." The folks made a lot of fun of the male singer² who sang, "...by the girl you can't forGIT."

ROLLER SKATES



The slides were glass. At times the operator would get a slide in backward or upside down. That brought on foot stomping, hissing or hand clapping by the audience. Same results if the operator was not watching closely and didn't keep the slides in time with the song. If a film was out of frame, the ticket taker or usher took a pole of some kind and thumped on the ceiling of the lobby under the operating booth-that is if the audience didn't beat them to it by stamping. "OOPSoperator sleeping at the switch. Maybe taking a nip."

F ROM CLINTON WE WENT TO OSKALOOSA to take over the theater there. The manager, Ross Hadley, who had been there was not making a go of things. Jimmy Hillary, a little boy, swept out and helped around.

Papa was disgusted with Hadley's extravagances. For one thing, he had purchased a big roll top desk to use in keeping track of the business. The folks had always managed to take care of their business at the kitchen table or in the box office.

Even more extravagant, it seemed to Papa, was Ross' purchase of a good big victrola with an impressive brass horn. It sat in a window above the ticket office blaring out its tunes to draw attention to the picture show. Paul and I thought that was something, as we had never had a phonograph. There were stacks of records, which we played over and over.

OSKALOOSA

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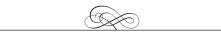
^{1.} We skated from 2nd to 3rd and 8th to 9th – a complete block and could either skate across the park on a diagonal or completely around. I skated with a partner – can't remember her name – her father was a dentist. (Paul)

^{2.} The singer was Ariel Rausch – peculiar – a guy that Uncle Mose had hired to sing. Don't think my mother tolerated him more than a couple of weeks. He was a fairly good piano player. (Paul)

B E G I N N I N G S

If I recall correctly, we were In Oskaloosa only long enough to build the house up and sell it.¹ Oskaloosa was built on a kind of grid system. In the center was the inevitable city park with a bandstand. Remember the one in *The Music Man*? There stood a life-sized statue of Chief Wappelo. Oskaloosa was in Wappello County. Keokuk had its Chief Keokuk statue, though not in the park.

Most of the time we lived up over the theater. Hadley had had a little vaudeville there, so under the stage were a couple of dressing rooms, crude, unfinished cubicles. Papa didn't like vaudeville, though it was a drawing card. For one thing, acts that would play such small towns were generally not very good. Besides, some acts depended on jokes, some of which might be suggestive. Smutty was the folk's term for even mildly suggestive jokes, and Papa wanted no part of them. He didn't mind exchanging dirty jokes with our Uncle Arthur, Aunt Belle's husband, but that was in private.



IT REMINDS ME OF A FAVORITE DEFINITION OF PORNOG RAPHY I GOT FROM SOMEONE Else. Pornog Raphy is the doing or saying In public of something that in private Would be quite acceptable.

I REMEMBER IN A SILENT PICTURE, once, a woman holding up a little garment to her husband. The implication was that bye and bye there would be little footsteps in the home. Papa just shook his head in disgust and walked away. Sometimes if a picture had the slightest bit of action that he thought suggestive he would retreat upstairs and just sit, letting Mama close up.

I am glad, however, that I grew up in a time when love was considered to be a sentimental attachment. You can almost say that there is explicit sex in the lyrics today. Then – to the more sophisticated – there might have been some implications, but you couldn't ascribe much SEX to words like "*Come, come, I love you only, my hero, mine.*"

Paul would remember the names of the musical comedies and light operas better than I as he was older and went to see more of them. As early as in Clinton he used to peddle bills for the shows, thus getting a comp – a complimentary ticket to see the show. 2

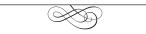
One I remember coming was "*The Chocolate Soldier*," though I didn't see it. The music from it was very popular at the time. A dramatic performance that came was "*The House of a Thousand Candles*." In one of the musical comedies was a popular song titled "*Pretty Baby*." Lilting. Sorry I can't give voice to it right here.

Along the way the words were "Won't you come and let me rock you in my cradle of love and we'll cuddle down so close?". One of my chums, Lily Brody, told me that those words weren't very nice – in fact, were bad. I couldn't see anything bad about them.

T N ADDITION TO THE ACTS WE COULD GET in a small town being of mediocre quality **I** if not just plain objectionable, there was the heartache of the folks in stranded acts, people broke and no booking ahead. There came one man and wife team, she pregnant and unable to carry on. Papa referred to them as "the poor devils", an expression of compassion so far as he was concerned. They probably got their pay and a ten spot to get them to their home base so that Mama wouldn't get stuck with caring for the woman. (They had tried to sell the folks the woman's fur coat. No go).



MINSTRELACTS. CALLE D BLACK FACE SHOWS. WE RE POPULAR AT THE TIME. NO BLACK PEOPLE - WHITE MEN WITH BURNT CORK FACES.



One act we got consisted of a father with both arms cut off above the elbows; a mother and five boys - The Seven Sylvesters. One of the boys was about Paul's age, and Paul managed to get into a fight with him the morning of the show. Both boys showed the results. Papa was mad at Paul. The other father was afraid Papa would be mad at him, and in addition was mad at his boy who was needed in the act. The youngster went on with the act, possibly with a black eye. Neither father placed any blame, except on the kids.

The Sylvesters were a pretty good act. The father was the interlocutor. One of their songs was "Go to Sleep, My Dark Diana, Sleep and Dream of Me."

An act I liked was just a man with an accordion and a monkey. One of his numbers was that love song from Italy. I could sit down and write the tune right now.

We had a good piano player there, a man who played to augment the meager earnings he got by giving lessons. Rags were popular at the time. They weren't the easiest things to play. "Down Home Rag" was one I remember him ripping off.

He, his wife and children came to our place for Thanksgiving dinner. In helping with the dishes after dinner, the wife dropped one of the little serving dishes belonging to Mama's cherished berry set. That was one large bowl and six little dishes of very fine china – the kind that is almost transparent.

Nothing of great portent about that, except that one dish was broken, and that is why when Bert recently sent me some of Iola's treasures there were but five little dishes. Miraculously in being shipped from Arizona to Muskegon all of the set survived intact.



ONCE AGA IN. HOW DO WE A CCOUNT FOR THE THINGS OF IMPORTANCE WE FORGET AND FOR THE FAR-GONE THINGS OF ALMOST NO CONSEQUENCE WE REMEMBER?



As to the city park mentioned before, it was the starting point for the streets and avenues, which were numbered in the one direction and lettered in the other. Too bad more cities and towns are not laid out in like manner instead of following old cow paths as in Muskegon where Second and Third Streets cross.

Mentioning Chief Wapello in the park reminds me that cigar store Indians were common then. A tobacco store of any consequence had a wooden Indian, usually life size.



IT HAD A BRIGHTLY PAINTED HEADDRESS. WAS DARKER IN COMPLEXION THAN A REAL INDIAN. AND HELD A BUNDLE OF CIGARS IN ONE OUTSTRETCHED HAND.



There was one in Grand Rapids as late as 1910. The wooden Indians, the wooden horses of the harness shops and the big wooden watches of jewelry shops with the hands at twenty minutes to eight were picturesque symbols of the business they advertised. I have always understood the time of those wooden clock signs represented the time at which Lincoln was shot.

All of this digression from Oskaloosa. I must not omit, though, that Paul had a girl friend there - Peggy Dean. How much of a girlfriend, I don't remember. Perhaps he carried her books home once, or let her into the show free.

TOTALLY UNRELATED IS THE MEMORY OF OSKALOOSA having cement sidewalks **L** downtown, but in residential areas wooden walks or no walks at all, and in wet weather that Iowa mud would almost pull the rubbers off your feet. Oh, yes, everyone wore rubbers then, men, women and children. In moving from Oskaloosa we left Trix with Jimmy Hillary, the little boy in the picture.

Later when we went there to visit someone we found that Trix wasn't getting very good treatment. I prevailed upon Papa to let him go back to Ottumwa with us. We had gone with the Ford, our first car. It was 25-30 miles to Oskaloosa, so we carried pail along to dip water from a creek in case the radiator needed refilling. Standard practice then-no service stations. Trix was delighted to get to go with us, and we were more so to get him back.

1. The man who bought the Oskaloosa house walked up and down the aisles a couple of times and disappeared. He returned in a couple of days and said, "Well. I guess I'll take It. Here, Mert.." Probably paid about \$1,500,00. (Paul)

Shockey was the Oskaloosa operator. Could roll the most beautiful cigarettes I ever saw. (Paul)

2. One of the musical comedies, which I had a comp ticket for bill peddling and I was sitting high in the balcony, one of the boys said I better take a chew of tobacco, which I did, and got very sick, but stayed to the end, anyhow. (Paul)

years in the back of Aunt Virginia's closet

PAUL ANGELL"S VIOLIN found after 60

VARIOUS COMMENTS OF PAUL'S

- while I had a private room.
- outdoors for three days.
- as the others.

REMINISCENCES

* Peggy Dean's father was a banker. Her brother was a little bit older than I, but friendly.

* Ida Olivera was about 16 and I was 14-15 and we both played violin at the theatre.

* We were in Oskaloosa 10 months at the most, I would think.

* Went through 8th grade in Clinton public school. Went to high school. – sometimes. Teacher by the name of Koppke. I threw an ear of corn at him, hit him on the head. He was madder than hell and for quite a

* In Oskaloosa – ventilating system with big rotary fan in basement of school, going all through the building. Some of the upper class boys put some asafetida in (makes one want to retch) and so had classes

* In Oskaloosa just didn't go to school so Pa said if I didn't go to school then I would play violin regular hours at theatre. 2:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon and from 7:00 to 10:00 evenings and got \$15 a week same

* In school would put straight pin in toe of shoe and prick whoever sat ahead of me. Very bad.



F OR THE TIME, THE ORPHEUM THEATRE IN OTTUMWA was fairly ornate. No idea who painted the frescoes. A little classic Greek influence in the ornaments at the corners of – or above – the arch.

The gilded papier-mâché angels with a light in each hand were considered quite elegant. The ovals were bordered with small colored bulbs. The larger oval in the center was in the operating booth. The operator could take care of the film and still watch what was going on in the street. If the bulldog owned by the operator of the opera house up the street was on top in a fight with our Trix, our Pete Hancock would sling a burned carbon down in an attempt to break up the fight.

Beside the double door shown on the left was the stairway to our flat above. Half way up one could enter or exit from the balcony.

ORPHEUM THEATER, Ottumwa

THE ORPHEUM



Ben Westerhoff trap drums in Ottumwa. Ben was quite a handsome fellow. He thought so, too. He was the only drummer we ever had.

Imitation palms on the left; and the stairway to the boxes. There was also a balcony with the projection booth at the back.

Note a yardstick over the bass drum – used for various effects. Comedies as well as dramas benefited by the use of effects.

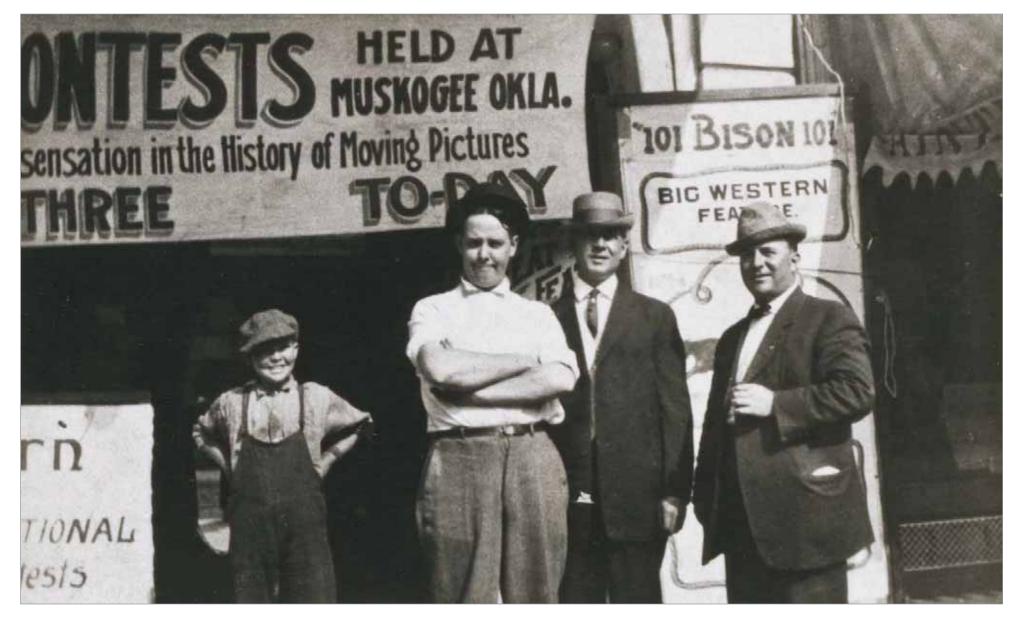
There were "effects" of all kinds. Note the bells, xylophone, tom-tom, a boxlike affair with two mouthpieces – for train whistles, a flat piece of metal to hit for crashing thunder – or other crashes, two "gadgets", drum-like affairs with a string coming out. They were used to give a lion's roar and could be used for other sounds. Coconut shells tapped properly on a block of wood gave the sound of horse's hooves. They could be made to gallop, trot – or just walk.

It took agility to move from one trap to another, and a good drummer had to have creativity, as the movies were different each day – not held over for a week or weeks, as of now.

Ben B. Westerhoff, as he liked to be listed on programs, wanted no playing with his traps. He published a song, which may be in our old music. He worked in an amateur movie that was shown once after hours in the theatre, and I believe that was the end of it. He did go into the army in W.W.I.



Ben Westerhoff's traps, drums and effects



JIMMY HILLARY (cleanup), Ross Hadley (manager), Mert Angell and an unknown man

T DON'T KNOW WHY AUNT FRANCES LEFT the Ottumwa house. Grandma was L with her. By Grandma I mean the widow of Daniel Moore Angell. Grandma had had one or more strokes, but I think she was still walking a little. Later she had a wheelchair. When Frances left we took over the crew she had. She had considered the crew her little family. One young Italian girl, Ida Olivera, had been traveling with her family in a musical group that came to the theatre. Her father had mistreated her. Aunt Frances befriended her and took her on as a violinist. Wow! Just think. A piano player, a violinist, a singer of illustrated songs and as many as three reels of "Movin' Pitchers" for one nickel.

No idea what happened to Ida after Aunt Frances left, but many years later she visited Frances in Luther, Michigan. She had married, was in good circumstances, and was always appreciative of Frances's help.

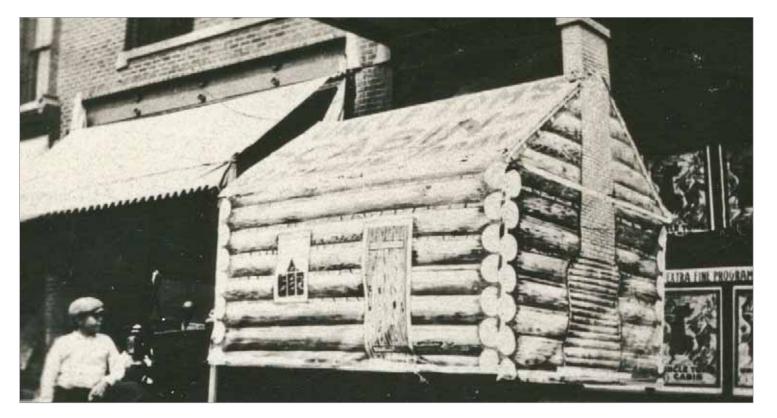
Frances had a maternal attitude toward her customers, too. She told that some little urchins would come along with only a couple of pennies wanting to get into the show.



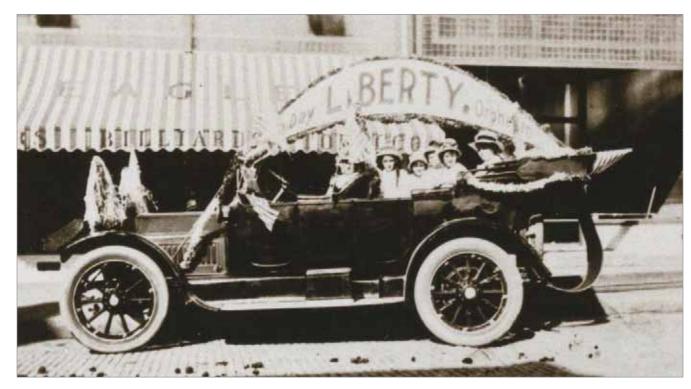
SHE WOULD TELL THEM TO GO HOME AND WASH THEIR HANDS AND FACES AND THEN SHE WOULD LET THEM IN FOR WHATEVER THEY HAD.



For a brief period we moved into the flat Frances and Grandma had. Ottumwa was hilly. Though their flat was directly behind the theatre, across the alley, it was on a considerably higher level, so we had to walk up a steep hill to get to it. We were on the second floor of a four family house. Shortly after Frances and Grandma left we moved across the hall on the same floor.



PAUL with "Uncle Tom's Cabin" ad mounted on a Ford



Mama went to the theatre in the evening to sell tickets, leaving Paul and me at home. Part of the time she left Iola with us, but I don't remember her ever waking up or being a bother.

down classics.

VIRGINIA AND FRIENDS riding in a 1913 Cadillac advertising "Liberty"

At the time there were pulp paper books selling for a dime. Papa called them "those damned dime novels." Not dirty books. Some were potboilers from struggling novelists. Some were scaled

I said *not dirty*. Today the word is "porno", but then literature not approved by the Methodist Church was called just plain *dirty*.

E ARLIER, WE HAD READ SHORT VERSIONS of the classics in little books given away by the tea stores for so many tickets. Tea stores had all kinds of bulk tea and coffee and gave away tickets something like green stamps with purchases. There we had gotten *Sinbad the Sailor* and various tales from *The Arabian Nights*.

Now, however, Paul had graduated to the dime novels and to *Top Notch*, a pulp paper magazine of just good stories. In the evening when not quarreling with each other we would read. Probably Paul did most of the reading, I the listening. One of the stories was *The Golden Coin*. A gold coin had been cut into six pieces that were scattered far and wide.

When assembled the pieces would reveal the location of a great treasure. It continued for several months. What a shock to come to the words "TO BE CONTINUED" just before the completion of some hair raising episode! Holders of the pieces were forever in danger. Who finally got the pieces together and what was the treasure? The denouement escapes me entirely. Those stories took the place of TV serials today with never a sex encounter or even a suggestion, but plenty of action and suspense.

Paul had for a long time a bad case of what we then called eczema-possibly today's athlete's foot. Treatment was washing, clean socks and peroxide. He could put on a real foamy exhibition by pouring on the peroxide. The infection was a nasty inconvenience, but didn't restrict his activities too much. Another of his afflictions was getting cinders in his eyes. A short ride on any coal burning train was almost a guarantee of a few cinders in the eyes, especially if one just had to open the window and stick his head out, as Paul did.

USUALLY THE CORNER OF A HANDKERCHIEF ROLLED UP, SPIT ON AND SENT ON A FISHING EXPEDITION WOULD REMOVE THE CINDER, BUT PAUL SEEME D TO GET THE KIND THAT STUCK HARD AND PRODUCED A LONG LASTING IRRITATION.

Sometimes when Mama was gone we used to quarrel about---what, I don't know. Almost anything, just for variety. When Mama came home I would greet her with, "Mama, Paul..." Before I got any farther it was,"I don't want to hear ANYTHING about that!" Gee whiz, no sympathy.

It was at this location that I acquired the rats. Paul had picked up some baby rats some place. Not hard to do around the alleys then. He put two of them into a cigar box and put the box into the top drawer of my dresser.







I SUPPOSE HE ANTICIPATED SCREAMS OF TERROR WHEN I OPENED THE DRAWER. THE BABY RATS WE RE SO SMALL A ND SO APPEALING THAT IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME TO BE FRIGHTENED.

Maybe I knew what was in Paul's mind, for I think he had encouraged me to look inside the box. Must have been quite a letdown for him. I persuaded Mama to let me keep them. They grew. They moved with us to the flat over the theater. They rode around in my fur muff in the winter. They had a cage of some sort in the house. How they ever escaped a ratter like Trix, I don't know. Finally they got to running loose in an air well, being gone longer and longer between home visits. When they had been gone for quite a while Papa said they had probably just escaped to their natural habitat. I'm not at all sure they weren't aided in their escape.

N OW BACK TO OUR FIRST RESIDENCE ON SECOND STREET where the rats first **I N** arrived. At this time, Paul was going to business school. We had acquired a typewriter, quite a thing to have in those days. It was, I think, an Underwood Number 4. I, of course, wanted to use it. *RTYU*, *FGHJ*, *V B N M*, over and over again. The typing manual showed just how to practice. Naturally Paul didn't want me to use HIS typewriter, so he made use of a button I didn't know about to lock the keys. Probably I explained to Papa about this, but I don't remember any positive results.

When Paul left for the Navy, I became the company secretary. I followed the business forms in the manual to a letter. Am sure Carl Laemmle got some pretty primitive letters for I was only 13 and had had no course in business correspondence. His secretaries may have shaken their heads at them, but as for Laemmle, one of the early movie moguls, I doubt he was any more versed in the art than I.

SECOND STREET RATS



Part of the time Iola and I went to the theatre with Mama. In the small ticket booth Mama had put up a shelf for Iola to nap on. The ticket seller sat on a high swivel chair. No one could see Iola there down below the counter and she could sleep throughout the evening. When the window closed we would put her in the buggy and push her up the steep hill home.

Trix was a regular family member now. Once when we shut him in so we could go down town with the buggy, but without its mascot, he jumped from the second story porch and caught up with us. Where the buggy went, he went.

There was a pretty good opera house in the same block as the theatre. Musical comedies and light operas played there frequently. Stock companies came too. Paul being older got to go to more of the shows than I did. To some of the stock shows I gained admission by furnishing a prop. Guess stock companies didn't carry every little property. I got to see Uncle Tom's Cabin on a comp by furnishing a dipper – a common dipper to use in a water pail.

The owner or manager of the opera house - not sure which, was Rusty Owens. Sometimes Rusty would let us in free for the last act. Professional courtesy. Never could figure out for sure how one troupe was able to smash a violin at every performance. Naturally I thought the violin smashed was one played during the performance.

One musical comedy was Adele. I have frequently wondered if our Adele got her name from it, but again have never thought to ask.¹

D O CLOTHES MAKE A DIFFERENCE? Aunt Frances used to pick up garments that were on sale at Herpolsheimers in Grand Rapids, where she was then working. She sent them to us because "Co-rah" was so good at sewing. They were grown-up garments, but "Co-rah" was so good at remaking. Once she sent a voluminous skirt – a large loud plaid. Mama said it looked like a horse blanket. It was made over for ME. To tone down the plaid Mama made a sleeveless pullover top of ruby red velvet. In that outfit I remember sitting in the balcony of the opera house ¹ watching some performance with the soaring feeling of "being somebody."

The Birth of a Nation came to the opera house.¹ All movies were silent then, but for that there was a real orchestra, not just a piano player in the pit. It was a very impressive performance- a kind of "Gone With the Wind" of that era.

DO YOU LIKE THE SKIN?



^{1.} Yes, I named her Adele for the musical comedy. (Paul)

At one time Paul went with a girl named Stella Blunk.² Her father was a paving contractor, probably THE paving contractor of the town. Paving then meant bricks, many men and good strong teams. The Blunks had a little money and some prestige.



STELLA HAD A SISTER ALICE AB OUT MY AGE W ITH WHOM I CHUMME D TO SOME EXTENT. ALTHOUGH I CONSIDERED HER ABOVE MY SOCIAL LE VEL.

The girls had a pony and a wicker pony cart which they were free to use. With few cars on the roads and a pony that took its own pace, there was little danger for riders.

Paul used to ride in the cart. Today Stella would have a sports car instead of a fat pony. Alice was allowed to take the pony at times, though she was cautioned not to overburden it or hurry it beyond its chosen pace.

Every family has its own stock of meaningful expressions outsiders don't catch. Almost everyone knows the "*FHB*" and the "*MIK*," but the private ones are more fun. Once I was invited to Alice's birthday party-presents expected. Hair ribbons, handkerchiefs and teacups were popular presents within a fifty-cent range, though ten centers were most popular with givers.

There was a chicken dinner, and Alice peeled off the skin from her portion saying to me, "Do you like the skin? You can have mine."

Henceforth, in our family if there was some undesired morsel one was trying or even tempted to palm off on someone else, we said, "Do you like the skin?".

soaked clothes.

It seems she didn't want her mother to know she had been that near the water, so when we went home she entered a side door and left her clothes in the laundry and got dry ones from the maid. MAID! This was a mother who did not work outside the home, and they had a maid. We had had the HIBED GIBL when Iola was small, but there was a distinction.



THOUGH I CONSIDERED THE BLUNKS A CUT ABOVE US SOCIALLY. I THOUGHT THIS WAS WHAT WE TODAY WOULD CALL EXTREMELY G ROSS.



One time I got to go on a picnic with Alice and some friends. There was a nice grove on the Des Moines River not far away. Playing around, Alice fell in the river. No tragedy – just a girl with

B E G I N N I N G S

The building the theatre was in was owned by the Redmands.³ There was a big flat above the theatre and we moved there from the Second Street place probably because of convenience. At the front was a group of rooms arranged like any family home, and in back of that was a string of rooms arranged back to back with a hall on both sides. Why not a central hall and one room on each wide with windows in each? As it was the rooms were rather dark but clean and safe. We rented the rooms to selected unattached males who worked nearby.⁴

3. I saw Redmand and his sister when I drove through Ottumwa about 15 years ago.

THERE WERE THREE WINDOWS AT THE FRONT in our part of the upstairs, two in the living room and one in our parent's bedroom. There was a flat over the grocery store, too, the occupants entering by our stairway, though we saw little of them.

We often think that in the years as far back as 1908-1919 things must have been pretty primitive. They were, and they weren't. Ours was a good flat with a bathroom and a tub. Steam heat was obtained from the local electric plant, paid for like electricity. In addition, we had a hard coal burner in the living room. A hard coal burner could have, and ours did have, isinglass windows through which one could see the rosy glow of burning coals. Evidently we never had isinglass as a spelling word, as I have had to look it up. We knew what it was, but not from whence it came. The dictionary says it came from the bladders of sturgeon or cod. Anyway, I'm glad our stove had those windows. It was resplendent with shiny nickel fenders on which to toast your feet and often to scorch the soles of your high-topped buttoned shoes.

A SIMPLE LIFE



^{1.} Here, I first heard "Ride of the Valkyrie.

^{2.} The Blunks were well to do and had a Cadillac. I had gotten an auto from Pa. He took it in from a fellow who owed him some money. I went down and got it in Libertyville, 20 miles away. It rained and Iowa roads then got muddy, The lights went out, and it was a terrible drive, but I made it. It was a Ford with a right hand drive. Pa said, "Lets see if we can fix it up and sell it." So I said, "It runs pretty good, I'll take my girl for a ride." So Miss Blunk (about 14 or 15) and I rode around and stopped and then when went to take her home. Much to my dismay, the transmission had thrown oil all over her dress.

^{4.} One of those rooms rented to a pharmacist, and we used to play cards together – he really had two rooms. Pa wouldn't let me go to California with him to the Exposition, and I couldn't see why not. Another fellow about 43 or 44 and his son, 20, had a room and at the end was a room where I slept. That is where I would say, "Good night, Pa." Then as soon as Pa came upstairs, on with my clothes and out the back door with the 43-year old father for a little carousing.

B E G I N N I N G S

On top of the stove was more ornamental nickel, a sort of dome which could be swiveled around so that you could put a teakettle on top, or a pot of soup, or any item to be cooked slowly for quite a time. The old tea kettle gave off steam to help humidify the atmosphere. No need for expensive humidifiers then.

It was my idea of a wonderful time to spend an evening with an apple and an Horatio Alger book in one of the big leather chairs in front of the stove. The folks would be down stairs running the show. Mama came up as soon as the last show started — the ticket office closing then. Iola usually stayed down with Mama, napping on the shelf in the box office.

At one time in Ottumwa, Paul and I took piano lessons. We went together, and I sat while he took his lesson. He had longer lessons than I. We didn't take very long. His lessons were 50 cents mine 25 cents. I have since wished my teacher had been a disciplinarian. As it was, she would play a piece or an exercise that was to be my lesson. I would listen, play the tune by ear, and depend on the fingering, not the notes. This worked fine at times, not at all at others.

I remember that while I was still very poor at reading notes, she gave me some polyphonic exercises, each hand playing, it seemed to me, in opposition to the other.



THAT WAS AK IN TO AN AMATEUR TRYING TO JUGGLE FIVE BALLS A ND THREE PLATES BEFORE BEING AB LE TO CATCH ONE BALL IN MOTION. THOSE EXERCISES HELPED TO SOUR THE WHOLE PROJECT. It was much more satisfying just to play by ear. The lady alternated between listening to my lesson and watching the baking in her oven. I probably stopped when Paul did.

Paul started taking violin lessons with a teacher by the name of Maximillion¹ – spelled here as we pronounced it. A friend of Paul was a boy with one eye crossed. He was known as "Cockeye Siegle." He also played violin, and quite well. I think they sometimes played (*violin*) together. As time went on Paul played in the theatre. At first it was just on special occasions, later regularly in the evenings. Thus we had piano, violin and drums, so called, though the drums included many ingenious effects to accompany the pictured actions. Most places had just a piano player, and some just had a player piano.

At the time of the sinking of the Titanic we showed the one reel version, probably the only one put out at the time. Was it authentic? I don't know. Pictures of the ship were, no doubt, but the actual sinking??? Could look it up In the history of the movies, but have not done so. Anyway the picture drew big crowds, and I believe we raised our price to ten cents, something Papa was reluctant to do.

AS THE TITANIC SANK THE PICTURE FADED. PAUL WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THERE AT THE END OF EACH SHOWING TO ACCOMPANY THE PIANO IN PLAYING NEARER MY GOD TO THEE. AS HE TELLS IT, HE PLAYED A COUPLE OF SHOWS, THEN WENT UP TO BED WITH A DIME NOVEL.





Up came Papa telling him to get down there with the fiddle in short order. Paul may now tell it with a few more vivid details. He knew it behooved him to do as told and made it down to put the final touch in the fourth or fifth sinking of the Titanic that evening.

Great crowds poured in to view the Titanic. I don't think we showed any other film that night. I"ll admit that the music did a lot for that last scene. I hung back from watching the ship sink more than just once. Many in the audience were deeply touched by it. In Upstairs, Downstairs, Lady Marjorie went down in the "Great Titanic Disaster," as it was called.

> **T** HAVE SAID WE RENTED SOME ROOMS behind the flat to a select few men. I don't know I where they ate, but in those days a weekly meal ticket for a modest price gave one three substantial meals a day at most local restaurants. Even in 1925 in Milan, I had my three meals a day on a \$7.00 ticket, pie and all. There was a separate bathroom for the roomers - quite modern accommodations!

1. I think his name was really Max Gamalon. (Paul)

A HARD LIFE





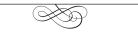
THE HELP IN THE THEATRE BECAME MORE THAN JUST HIRED HANDS. THEY ALL HAD THEIR PRIVATE LIVES AND PROBLEMS, B UT OFTEN WENT ON PICNICS WITH US ON SUNDAYS.



I've probably said before that our operator, Pete Hanson, had a decided limp, worse sometimes than others. Think one leg was a little shorter than the other to start with. His wife was an invalid, but a few times she came along on our picnics. Her eyes bulged, probably thyroid trouble not attended to, and the folks suspected that she was what you now call into drugs. Then one who took drugs was called a dope fiend. Pete was always pleasant with us, always poorly dressed. His failing was liquor, leading to the practice rather common in theatre help of drawing ahead.



PAPA WAS CONSIDERATE OF THE HELP TO A GREAT DEGREE EXCEPT WHEN THEIR PROBLEM WAS THE RESULT OF PERSONAL WEAK NESS.



I can remember Pete coming upstairs begging for an advance. He was partially drunk at the time, and Papa lost his temper, shoving him down the stairs. There was a landing half way down at the balcony entrance so Pete wasn't hurt, but I remember feeling sorry for a grown man practically crying for booze money and crying out, "Now Mert, don't hurt me!"

When we left Ottumwa for the farm, Pete was very sad. Shortly after we got to the farm he wrote begging to come and work for us. Papa might have given in to his coming but knew that crippled as he was and unused to physical labor, he would be of little help. Besides, Mama knew that it would mean taking care of his wife Margaret rather than getting any help from her, and there was work enough just going from city to farm life without an invalid to care for. Pete finally got a job as custodian of a church and they got by fairly well.

It paralleled a girl putting her hair up for the first time. Now that boys wear long pants from childhood they don't have to go through with the awkwardness of that transition. Instead of speaking of children of a certain age as being teenagers, Papa spoke of that stage as "getting around fool's corner." There was supposed to be an awkward age in the teens. Since there are few formal situations today, kids today don't have to worry about being awkward or out of place. Anything goes.



THE CHANGE FROM KNEE PANTS TO LONG PANTS WAS A MILESTONE TO THE PARENTS. TO THE BOY SUPPOSE DLY BECOMING A MAN, AND TO ANYONE ELSE W HO HAD KNOWN THE BOY PREVIOUS TO THE CHANGE.





Sunday Outings

T N THOSE DAYS FEW HAD CARS and fewer had individual garages. I believe the Cadillac **L** was kept in a nearby garage at night. There was a black man, youngish, who seemed to be quite a mechanic and Papa had confidence in his work. However, Papa began to suspect that the fellow was driving the car into another state to pick up liquor. Iowa must have been dry at the time. I do know that the car stopped being used as freely by that mechanic.

Often repairs for a car were hard to find, and a good blacksmith would fashion some of them. There was one such a few blocks from us. His name was Duke, "MR. DUKE" to his wife. Somehow we got to know the Dukes and a few times went on picnics with them. There were then enough horses and horse drawn vehicles for a blacksmith to keep busy servicing.

SUNDAY OUTINGS



B E G I N N I N G S

There were some Duke boys, one of whom was about Paul's age. Paul and the Duke boy built some kind of a log cabin along the riverbank. Evidently there was land that no one cared about, perhaps never visited.

Someone had a motorboat – Orville Duke and Paul¹. Paul, another boy, and Trix were cruising down the river when they came to a rapid they didn't expect. Trix was dumped out where swimming was too tough for him. As it was told, Paul jumped in and pulled Trix out. Don't think the river was very deep right there. Am not sure whether the episode was told when it happened or later when there would be no fuss made over it.

There was high water in the spring and a lot of current on the Des Moines River. I remember once Paul and a companion taking the boat down river during the high water. Easy. It was getting back that was hard. Papa and I, and who else I have no idea, went to the bridge that connected the two parts of the city to watch for the return of the boys. Lots of others were there just to see the high water. Toward evening, the boys made it back – probably exhilarated by the experience. The family was relieved.

PAUL THINKS OUR PLAYER PIANO WAS TAKEN in payment of a debt. Who would have owed Papa, and how he would have had a player piano is a mystery. There is no one left to know about it, but it came. Due to Paul's developing musical tastes, perhaps also to the influence of said violin teacher, Maximillion, Paul was privileged to go down to the music store and pick out piano rolls.

The records were costly – what else – ? Classics, of course. I complained, not having developed said classical tastes. Good music, I believe, has to be heard more than once – maybe several times, to be appreciated, I soon became a devotee of *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Stabat Mater*, *The Magic Flute*, *Don Juan*, *Fidelio*, *Zampa*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Blue Danube* and various other old timers.

THE PLAYER PIANO



^{1.} Duke and I owned the boat. I had saved almost \$300 (from playing the violin in the theatre – and not paying any board and room, nor income tax) and we gave about \$275 for that twin cylinder. We went down to Eldon – took about 20 minutes – and then decided better go back, but against the current we couldn't do anything and it took us about 4 hours to row back. (Paul)

The piano rolls frequently rerolled a little off center in the same way that a window shade often rolls to one side if not carefully let up. In that case the holes in the rolls were not over the right slots and the music was jumbled.



TO PREVENT DISTORTION ONE SAT AT ATTENTION WATCHING FOR THE ROLL TO GO OFF CENTER. SPIT ON ONE'S FINGERS AND TRIED TO SLIDE THE PAPER OVER TO WHERE IT BELONGED.

Beside that one selected music to go with the film, speeded up the tempo if fast action was being shown, pumped harder and used the LOUD lever in exciting places. There were a few rolls of lighter music. One I remember was "Gus Edward's Musical Review," another "The Red Mill."

Some rolls had words along beside the perforations. Ours didn't. Thus, as I pumped away covering dinner hour for the live musicians (Ben Westerhoff, drums, Lillian Deskin, piano, and Paul, violin) I had to make up my own versions of what I thought the words might be. Once in a while if there were only a few in at supper hour I would dare to play with my own two hands but my version was puny compared to that on the piano roll.

VARIOUS COMMENTS OF PAUL'S

- With the log cabin on the Ford, I was over on the north side of Ottumwa, driving slow, coming to the bridge when Pinky, a big colored fellow who drove Cadillac for the banker, roared up behind at about a hundred miles an hour, smashed into the back of the Ford and drove away down the street.
- Once Uncle Mose drove over in a Dash racing car that would go like hell. So I came along and went right by him (not with the log cabin). He said, "Why don't you get that damned crock (the Ford) out of here?" He was on his way to the "House of Ill Repute" to see the girls. Lil Dale was the name of the Madam.

T OLA AND I WENT TO THE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL. As 1914 rolled around. **L** patriotic music bloomed. "Over There" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning." That one, I could render by ear, and was rather proud to play it in Sunday school, where it was popular. The hymns were for grownup piano players, for they – it seemed – were invariably in four sharps or five flats.

The synagogue was about a block beyond the church, both on Main Street, as was the theatre. The Jewish boys went to the synagogue on Saturday to study Hebrew, but not the girls.

While near the church and synagogue I had better include the nearby fire barn. Yes, it was a BARN. In case of fire the big beautiful horses came racing from the barn, a fireman clanging the bell by hand, and woe be to the dog that raced along too near to the flying hooves.

ENTERTAINING OURSELVES



Another attraction in this same end of Main Street was the junkyard owned by the Barmasches. Ida Barmasch was a schoolmate. We used to put on plays for which we charged two or three pins. What better area than the bays between piles of junk of every variety? We were around twelve or thirteen.

The plays were usually on the spur of the moment and didn't amount to much, but it was at one of those ventures that I first heard "*Poor Butterfly*." I didn't know what it was about, had no idea it had anything to do with the opera, didn't know many of the words. Rarely will you hear "*On the Old Fall River Line*." We thought the words were very clever. Ending – "*But I wish*, O Lord, I'd fell overboard, on the Old Fall River Line."

Lillian Deskin's mother worked in a women's apparel store. Once she alerted Mama to a sale of a coat for me. It was bright red wool with white kid collar and cuffs and big pearl buttons. Mama bought it, and I thought I had never seen anything prettier.

To the YMCA which allowed females to use the pool on Saturday mornings. Iola is wearing the coat while I swim. Iola hangs over the edge of the pool, falls in. I am near, grab her, she gets hold of the ladder and is helped out. Coat and leather collar are soggy. I really wasn't thinking to save the coat when I grabbed her. It was no dramatic rescue, just an automatic action, but people intimated that maybe it was the coat rather than the person that prompted the rescue. The coat came out of the deal pretty well.

HELL HOLE ACROSS THE STREET

I F A DRUNK WAS NOISY OR WAS REPORTED as annoying a female customer, he was asked to leave. If a man was obviously inebriated when he came to the box office he was refused a ticket. If he asked why, he was told that he was intoxicated. If he questioned what that meant he was bluntly told, "You're drunk." Usually if a drunk was tapped on the shoulder down in the house and asked to leave, he would do so without much argument. However, if one argued that he had paid his nickel and refused to leave voluntarily, Mr. Angell would grab him by the coat collar and march him up the aisle at close to double time. A few times, a fellow would dig in his heels in resistance. He would still be hustled out and shoved clear across the sidewalk.

The folks would tell of one fellow who said to Papa, "If it wasn't for your gray hairs, I'd show you!" Papa had been somewhat gray since he was twenty-one. His moustache was coal black, his hair had a white streak up the middle, the rest of it was black. Sometimes people would ask him if he dyed his moustache.



B E G I N N I N G S

There was one policeman, think he was the police captain, who used to drop into the theatre. Believe it was Al Lightner. He was called "CAP." We liked to have him drop in, especially if there was a full house and people standing out waiting for the next performance. We were more likely to have an ice cream session after the show if we had had them standing out all evening.

One more. The Rescue Mission. Right across the street from the theatre! When we had seen the dally picture, Iola and I used to go to the mission. A coal stove in the corner, a few rows of drifters who sought a place to keep warm, a piano and a few hymns. Along in the sermon the minister would rail against "THAT HELL HOLE ACROSS THE STREET." Don't know whether he knew we were from there. We must have been thick-skinned. Sometimes you could hear the preacher clear across the street. That would have been in the summer, with doors open. I remember a preacher's son at school who made remarks about people whose parents ran a movie theatre.

Aunt Frances said people felt the same about her when she first went there, but of course she was a regular church goer, and probably gave some "readings" (*quoted some psalms*) at church functions, and the better people began to accept her and Grandma. We were accepted and respected by most, but THEATRE PEOPLE were still beyond the pale for a lot of folks.

O NE SCHOOL FRIEND'S FATHER WAS A PHOTOGRAPHER. His studio was in the big front room of the flat, and if the studio was not in use we could play there. They had a piano with a special lever which when pushed over made the piano sound like a banjo. You can make any piano sound something like that by putting a piece of paper between the strings and the hammers. It was more fun to play their trick piano than an ordinary one.

My special pal was Lily Brody. She had a slightly older sister Bertha, and a brother Sidney, Their father had a small men's clothing store in our block, Paul enjoyed annoying me by calling the girls the Brody brats.

Ottumwa was developed on both sides of the Des Moines river but mostly on the theatre side. Across the river was a bathing beach.

THE BRODY BRATS



Papa was not a willing purveyor of gimmicks. Uncle Mose was a real promoter. At one time he set us up with many sets of dishes to be given to customers who had a card punched to represent a certain number of admissions. They were nice sets having cream pitchers and even little individual butter dishes about two inches in diameter. They went well, but we must have had a lot of them, as there were a few sets left when we left Ottumwa for the farm.

One promotion Papa didn't seem to mind. A photographer came to town, took his camera down the street, took pictures of people at random. Then slides were made and we advertised, "COME AND SEE YOURSELF ON THE SCREEN."

One year, Mama got Papa a rocking chair for Christmas, the same Christmas he bought two big leather chairs for the family. Neither knew what the other was getting. In 1913, I got a Brownie camera for Christmas, the year Mama and Iola went to Mississippi for Christmas. Two of her sisters, Hattie and Fanny, lived there.

I stayed home and went to Michigan with Papa the next summer. I still have the Brownie and it takes a fair picture even now. Getting it was a big deal. I remember it was wrapped and stowed in a closet to be opened on Christmas. Naturally, come the day, I had to take pictures immediately. No flash bulbs, so I think it did right well in our upstairs flat with only winter light.

FEATHERS JOINS THE NAVY

T DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT RECRUITING STATIONS then, don't know I where Paul signed up. We all walked him to the depot quite a few blocks down the street.





HIS GOING DIDN'T IMPRESS ME G REATLY: I DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH TO BE FEA RFUL. HAVING A BROTHER IN THE NAVY WAS KIND OF A STATUS SYMBOL.



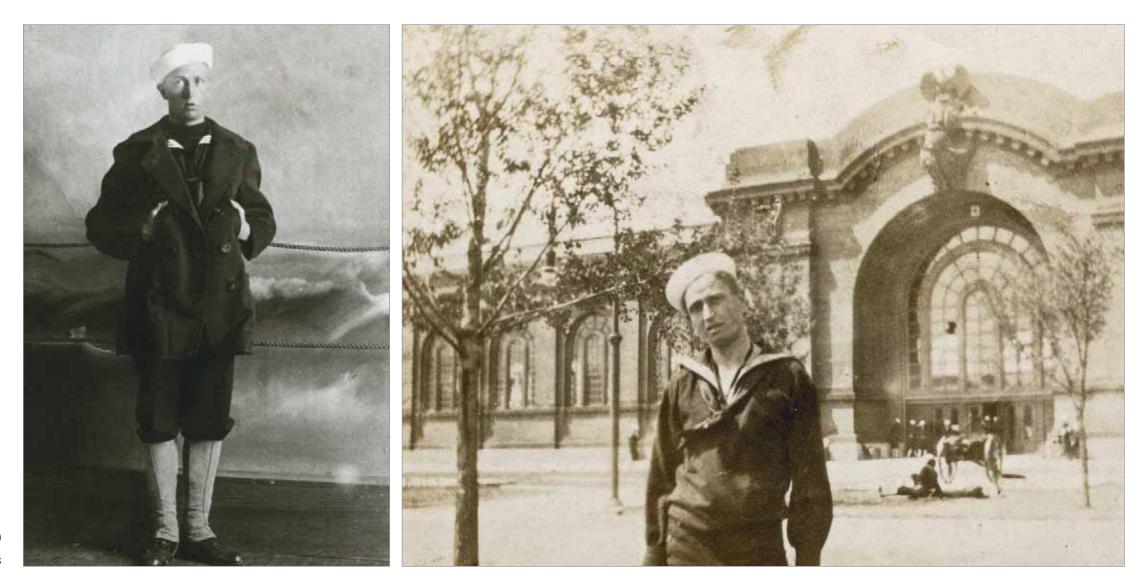
The train came and he left, no doubt with expectations of exciting adventures to come. Don't believe he was too disappointed either.

Great Lakes Naval Training Station, John Philip Sousa's Band, parades in that great metropolis of Chicago, invitations to dinners at the homes of well-to-do people who showed their appreciation of the servicemen partly by entertaining "THE BOYS." Then, Santo Domingo.

Papa went to Chicago once while Paul was in training. Asked some of the recruits if they could direct him to Paul Angell. Sure they could, and the call went out, "Hey Feathers! Your Dad's here!"

Anyway the train pulled out. On the way home I remember Mama dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief and Papa taking her arm. Iola and I trailed along a little bewildered.

> PAUL M. ANGELL, May 1st. 1917 (age 18) at Naval Training, Great Lakes Illinois



REMINISCENCES

PAUL M. ANGELL at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center



Grandpa (Daniel Moore Angell) left the farm to Mose. Apparently Papa and Mose made some arrangement whereby Mose retained sole interest of the Angell Circuit and Papa took over the farm – the family home – with a nice big mortgage on it. Paul having left, and therefore, giving no promise of becoming a partner in the business, plus the lure of the old days on the farm with none of the worries of the theatre business, probably had a great deal to do with our going back to Michigan.

I wonder if a popular song "That's Why I Wish Again, That I was in Michigan," that came out about that time, helped the folks to make the decision. I don't know if it was a mutual decision or whether it was Papa's. In a few months we moved to Michigan where Iola and I attended the same schoolhouse Papa and Mama had gone to.



SO THIS WAS IOWA IN THE EARLY 1900'S. A FAIRLY PROGRESS IVE MIDWES TAREA, NOT AT ALL A B AD PLACE TO SPEND ONE'S CHILDHOOD AND START GROWING UP.



Years later, when I was in Chicago and Papa was working at the bakery, Mama came through from Grand Rapids on the way to Washington to take care of Aunt Abbie who had broken her hip. She was in a cast to her waist. Uncle Neil was not equal to the situation. It meant being nurse and cook too. He was not adept at either job. Abbie had practically lost her mind from the trauma of the situation and the problem of the heavy cast.

As Mama took off on the train West from Chicago, Papa remarked, "I'll probably never see her again." He was always fearful of wrecks or other accidents. You might say he was an advocate of *Murphy's Law*.¹

With proper care and food Abbie recovered and Mama returned, later to care for two other relatives on Papa's side – Uncle Arthur Smith once and Aunt Frances twice. In a tough situation, call on Cora.

Some years later Neil wrote that Abbie had died. Papa had often spoken of him as being a peculiar devil – not mean or bad, just plain peculiar, but upon Abbie's death he said he didn't care about living any longer. Shortly he died and the ashes of Abbie and Neil are buried in the Starks lot in Lamont, Headstone: JORGENSON.

1. Murphy's Law – anything that can go wrong will go wrong. (Paul)

REMINISCENCES





MABEL ALMA PALMER KNAGGS TOOMAN, Gwendolyn Knagg's mother, was the child of Charles Frederick Palmer (1854 – 1913) and his wife, Sarah Jane Snell (1857 – 1948). The Palmers trace their heritage in America to Walter Palmer who came from England to Salem, Massachusetts, in 1629.

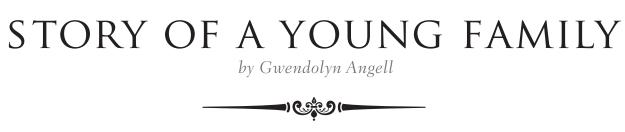
They were primarily farmers active in colonial civic affairs, serving as scouts in the War of 1812, fighting and dying in the Civil War. Their progeny moved west with the frontier and eight generations of Palmers succeeded till the birth of Charles in London Township, Monroe County, Michigan, just a few miles east of Milan.

PROLOGUE II ___) (C____) (____



N EARLY IOO YEARS AGO, A HANDSOME, ATHLETIC YOUNG MAN met a smart, headstrong young woman, and they fell in love. They had both grown up on small farms in a typical midwestern 19th century rural area, a few miles outside of Milan, Michigan. Life wasn't easy in either family, but not unusual for the time. An orange could be your Christmas gift, and going barefoot in the summer to save your shoes was the norm. The boy, Thurlow Knaggs, had a younger brother and sister, and was adored by his mother, Lella. His father, Charles, was a farmer, and also a carpenter and mechanic. The girl, Mabel Palmer, had four sisters and one brother and a strict mother, Sarah Jane. Her father, Charles, was a farmer.

Gwendolyn Bernice Knaggs Angell (Born November 21, 1912. Died December 5, 1997).



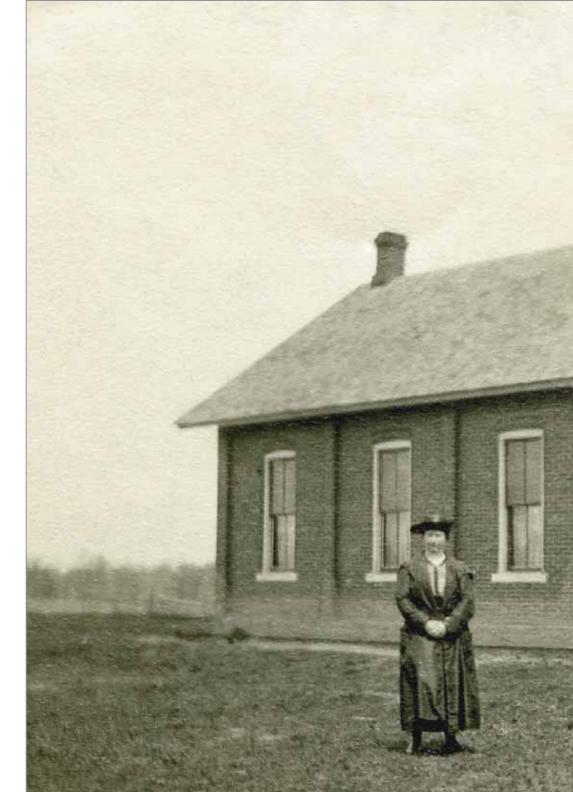
As soon as Mabel graduated from high school in 1907, she was hired to teach school in a one-room country schoolhouse. She was 18 and taught, and disciplined, boys and girls from first through eighth grade. Thurlow went to the Dairy School at Michigan State in Lansing.



WHEN THEY WANTED TO MARRY IN 1909, APPARENTLY THEIR Parents, or at least his Mother, disapproved,

So, they went to Detroit and crossed the river into Windsor, Canada, to be married. She was 20 and he was 18.

MABEL PALMER KNAGGS IN 1918 at the one room school house where she taught, in Raleighville, Michigan.





THE DEFIANCE TIGERS OF DEFIANCE OHIO. Thurlow Knaggs with his young wife, Mabel, standing to his right.



Michigan Agricultural College, Lansing MI., 1910. Thurlow is on the right holding the tip of the pennant.



MABEL PALMER KNAGGS, GWENDOLYN BERNICE KNAGGS AND THURLOW KNAGGS (circa 1912)

They first lived in Toledo, next in Defiance, Ohio and then in Morenci, Michigan. Thurlow worked in a dairy in each town, and, being a good baseball player, always played on a team. While living in Morenci, their baby girl, Gwendolyn, was born on November 21,1912.

A few years later, they moved back near Milan to a small house, about a quarter mile down the road from his parents. It sat atop a slight rise and overlooked the Raleighville schoolhouse that was halfway between the two houses.

Mabel continued teaching, and when Gwendolyn was three, Mabel took Gwendolyn to school with her and started her in first grade. Gwendolyn kept up with the older children in her grade, but she didn't like the fact that her mother was the teacher.



GWENDOLYN BERNICE KNAGGS, age 3 mo., weight 17lbs.

GWENDOLYN BERNICE KNAGGS, age 1 year, weight 26 1/2 lbs.



THE KNAGGS FAMILY, THURLOW JAMES KNAGGS, his father CHARLES ASBREY KNAGGS, his mother Adelaide Moses Knaggs-Lampkin and Gwendolyn Knaggs by her side (circa 1916).

CHARLES KNAGGS AND GWENDOLYN going for a buggy ride

DRAFT HORSES on the Knaggs farm near Milan Michigan

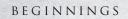
THE KNAGGS FAMILY outside of their log house, circa 1895.



FACING PAGE: close up of LELLA KNAGGS and her eldest child Thurlow.



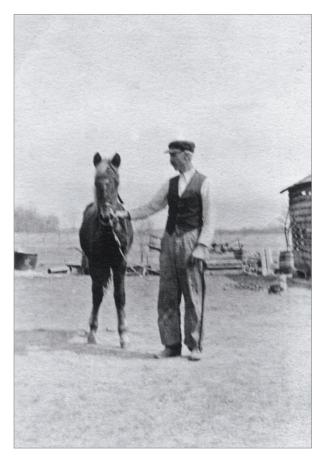
STORY OF A YOUNG FAMILY



THE KNAGGS FARM near Milan

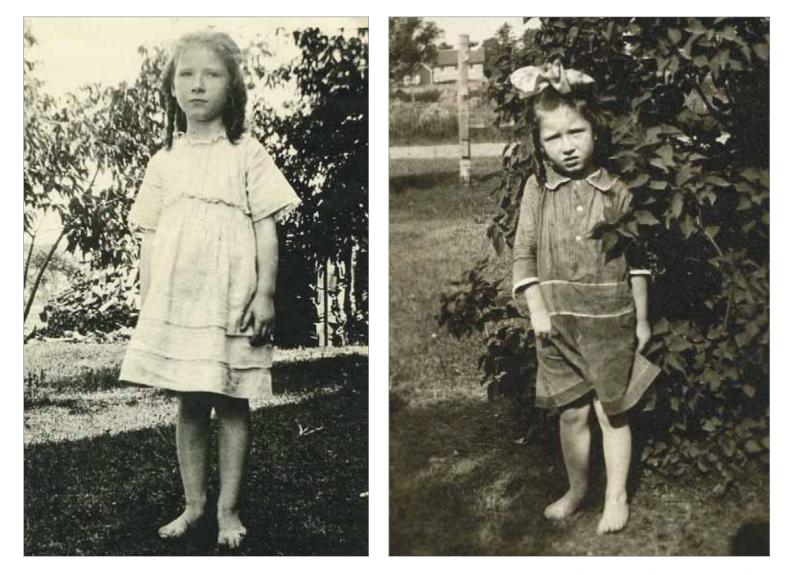


STORY OF A YOUNG FAMILY



CHARLES KNAGGS





Gwen at age 4 on Grandma Knagg's Farm in Milan Michigan in 1917



Mabel Tooman and Gwendolyn, 1918





Lella Knaggs with Gwendolyn circa 1918 after the death of her son Thurlow.



Gwendolyn Bernice Knaggs Angell (11/21/1912 - 12/5/1997)



Thurlow had developed kidney trouble and was hospitalized a couple of times. In 1917 he had surgery, but he continued to fail. The operation took place on the kitchen table in Bessie (Mabel's sister) and Charley Moyer's farmhouse. Eventually his health had deteriorated so badly that they were forced to give in up their home. An auction was held in March 1918, and the following is from a poster announcing the sale.

Thurlow died March 23, 1918, Mabel married Leroy Tooman October 3, 1920. They lived in Milan with his three sons and Gwendolyn.

Gwendolyn skipped two grades and finished her senior year at age 13. The school administration thought she was too young to be out of school, so she worked in the superintendent's office for the next year and graduated with the class of 1927.

Gray Mare, 7 years old, weight 1100 pounds Bay Horse, 11 years old, weight 950 pounds Grade Cow, 6 years old Roan Cow, 3 years old, due in June Heifer Calf Sow, due in June

Wagon, Box, Birch Plow Double Work Quantity of C **Kitchen** Tabl Rugs Couch Few Bushels

All sums of \$10 and under, cash. On all sums over \$10, nine months' time will be given on good bankable notes at six per cent interest. Two per cent off for cash on all sums over \$10.

Leroy Tooman, Mabel Alma Palmer Knaggs Tooman (1889 - 1967)

AUCTION SALE

On account of sickness, I will sell at public auction, on the late Geo. Thompson farm, near Raleighville school house, one and one-half miles South-west of Oakville and four and one-half miles East of Milan, on:

Friday, March 29th, 1918

Commencing at 12 o'clock sharp, the following described property:

HORSES, HOGS AND COWS

Grade Cow 3 years old, calf by side Yearling Heifer Sow, due in April

TOOLS, GRAIN AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS

, Flat Hay Rack	Тор Видду	Disc Harrow
-	Steel Roller	Spike-tooth Drag
rk Harness	Two-horse Cultivator	One-horse Cultivator
Corn	About Twenty Chickens	50 Bushels Good Oats
le	Chairs	Rockers
	Iron Bed	Stoves
	Reading Table	
s Early Seed Potatoes	And other articles too numerous to mention.	

TERMS OF SALE

Thurlow Knaggs, Prop.

Guy Thompson, Auctioneer F.E. Ross

A POSTER ANNOUNCING THE SALE.



GWEN at graduation

Gwendolyn and good friend Fidelia, Milan, Michigan



GWEN posing with a favorite aunt and cousin as she reached her majority, circa 1932



GRANDMA KNAGGS AT 85. She died two years later in 1958 having survived all four of her children.

I would like to thank my sister Pat Angell for permission to use her photos of our mother, Gwendolyn Angell's early life. Without them, the book would have been incomplete. She also helped in filling in many of the names, dates and other details that had been lost to me over the years. The original work on the photos for Gwen's volume was done by my niece, Barbara Schmeling, in the early 90's. That work was completed before the introduction of Photoshop, Lightroom or any other computer assisted graphics program making the task that much more arduous. Her work made possible the sharing of the imagery with my generation as well as helping to sustain it for posterity.

I would also like to thank her daughter, Stephanie Schmeling. Stephanie, for her Master's Thesis, turned her grandfather's World War II diary recounting his participation in the Battle of the Bulge into a fascinating, instructive and ennobling experience via a web page devoted to it (www. personalizehistory.org). That effort was an inspiration, pushing me to complete this piece that I had been putting off for many years.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife of forty five years, Elsa Angell. Her support and editorial skills were both key in our efforts to complete the project with a modicum of literary polish and a minimal number of factual, grammatical and spelling errors.

TOM ANGELL October, 2011

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