Model Ts, Pep Chapels, and a Wolf at the Door

**KANSAS TEENAGERS,
1900-1941**

**edited by
Marilyn Irvin Holt**

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Division of Continuing Education
The University of Kansas

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To my parents

Joe Neil Irvin, an Illinois teenager of the 1930s
Vera Operchuck Irvin, a West Virginia teenager of the 1940s

Contents

Introduction	ix
 I. A New Century Begins (1900–1909)	
1. “Trek on a Prairie Schooner”— <i>Retta Forsythe Burns</i> <i>Travel Account</i>	5
2. “Saturdays are really lonesome in Kansas”— <i>Jacob Frank</i> <i>Balzer Diary</i>	13
3. “Stories of My Early Life”— <i>J. Glenn Logan</i> <i>Reminiscence</i>	27
4. “The Student in Politics”— <i>Dwight D. Eisenhower</i> <i>Speech</i>	33
5. A Year’s Calendar— <i>Dickinson County High School</i> <i>Annual</i>	37
 II. Pioneers and Progress (1910–1919)	
1. “I Remember”— <i>Josephine Boltz Reminiscence</i>	47
2. “Pioneer School Teaching in the 20th Century”— <i>Maude Elliott Reminiscence</i>	61
3. A Teenager’s Writings— <i>Marian N. Freeman Minnis</i> <i>Diary</i>	75
4. Two Essays— <i>Eileen Marshall Composition Book</i>	87
 III. The Years That Roared (1920–1929)	
1. A School Newspaper— <i>Keats Rural High School</i> <i>Publications</i>	93
2. “What Wonderful Years They Were”— <i>Esther Lietz</i> <i>Interview</i>	97
3. Letters to Nellie— <i>Nellie Yates Correspondence</i>	111
4. An Orphan Train Rider in Kansas— <i>Howard Dowell</i> <i>Interview</i>	117

5. A Lane County Teenager— <i>Howard Lang Reminiscence</i> ..	127
6. A Senior Year— <i>Thelma Shephard Diary</i>	135

IV. The "Dirty Thirties" and More (1930–1941)

1. Junior High Views— <i>Manhattan Junior High School Student Writings</i>	161
2. Members of the Prairie Band— <i>Lorenzo Mattwaoshshe and James Wabaunsee Interview</i>	167
3. "Wolf at the Door"— <i>Ralph G. Marshall Autobiography</i> ..	181
4. "Two Legs To Stand On"— <i>John D. McKee Autobiography</i>	191
5. "It Has Been a Pretty Good Year"— <i>Belva Lucas Diary</i> ..	203
6. Looking Back at the Red and Black, 1938— <i>Liberty Memorial High School Yearbook</i>	223
7. Life outside the Barrio— <i>Simon Martinez Interview</i>	229
8. "Life on Mississippi Street"— <i>Doris Brewster Swift Diary and Memories</i>	241

References	261
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Index	265
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Introduction

Amid the dazzling displays of the 1939 New York World's Fair was a time capsule. Among its contents were a Mickey Mouse plastic cup, a copy of *Gone With the Wind*, and assorted comic strips. The idea was to preserve pieces of the twentieth century for a future and distant world. The diaries, letters, reminiscences, and memories presented in this publication are themselves a time capsule, preserving for its readers what Kansas teenagers thought and did in the first decades of the twentieth century. In some ways, these teenagers seem as contemporary as teenagers of today. In other instances, their lives reflect a by-gone era.

Over the span of years, Americans often look back with nostalgia to the early 1900s. The years seem simpler and more innocent. Even the "Dirty Thirties" have a mystique. Of course, anyone looking closer at the years between 1900 and 1941 finds much more than simplicity. The times were dangerous and devastating. They were also exciting and full of promise and adventure. The complexity of American society allowed gangsters to rub shoulders with movie stars, Prohibition to reign while bootlegging thrived, and reformers to preach while labor strikes and race riots flared. The years were a time of changing lifestyles and attitudes. The automobile, telephone, radio, and moving picture brought the world closer to everyone. The country went to war, suffered through economic depression, and took pride in its scientific and technological advancements.

Certainly, a teenager's diary or letter cannot be expected to delve into great issues of the times and offer insightful analyses. Usually, young peoples' writings and memories center on themselves, their families, and friends. But the impact of technological and shifting social attitudes in Kansas's post-settlement, post-Victorian decades was recorded, however unconsciously, by teenagers. In their own words, they tell us about their world, and in that telling, we see a reflection of the early twentieth century. It is a view worth considering.

Also worth noting is the slim amount of material that exists from Kansas teenagers. Very few diaries, journals, or letters can be found in local or state repositories. Since we are so near the end of the twentieth century, it is somewhat surprising that little has been collected for the early years of the century. The lack of records influenced the compilation of this volume. Reminiscences and autobiographies, as well as oral history interviews conducted by the editor, were employed to expand the diary and letter material for the teenage years. Teenage writings, such as school newspapers, also were used. Generally, the material falls into two broad categories: diaries or letters that teenagers wrote for themselves or for one or two others; and material meant for public consumption, although that "public" varied from close family members to a teacher or fellow students. Knowing that one's words will be read by others may influence what is said. Nevertheless, in these selections, that did not seem to dilute the emotion or clear descriptions of events and ideas.

While little record exists from the teenagers, there is a multitude of books, articles, and speeches by adults of the period who had plenty to say about those young people who were no longer children but not yet adults. Grownups in all walks of life had their own ideas about what was good for teenagers. A majority believed that organized sports, clubs, and wholesome extracurricular school activities built character and responsibility. Some argued that structured recreation reduced juvenile delinquency (a growing problem with a reformatory population to match) and kept teenagers out of the ranks of joyriding, liquor-drinking, cigarette-smoking "Flaming Youth"—so popularized by the budding film industry. Reformers and Progressives fought for compulsory school-attendance laws and expanded curricula. It was fine to offer a liberal arts education, but vocational training had its place. Also important was control of labor, especially at a time when teenagers often went to work rather than to school. Just about anyone of note, from social worker Jane Addams to Kansas governor and United States senator Arthur Capper, had something to say about teenagers. Still, what they had to say for themselves is hardly known. The voices presented here offer a glimpse of Kansas and its young people.

In comparing twentieth-century teenager experiences to those presented in the C. Robert Haywood and Sandra Jarvis volume, *"A Funnie Place, No Fences": Teenagers' Views of Kansas, 1867-1900*, common themes are apparent. Teenagers went to school, worked, were surrounded by friends and family, and thought about their futures. There is one great difference between the two eras, however. The nineteenth-century teenagers were,

for the most part, newcomers to Kansas. Born somewhere else, they had something against which to compare their new Kansas environment. Thus, the nineteenth-century accounts pay special attention to the landscape, the weather, or the people because these differed from what the teenagers had seen or experienced in Illinois or Ohio or New York. The nineteenth-century accounts also support Elliott West's overriding theme in *Growing Up with the Country*: young people transplanted onto the frontier saw their environment differently from adults. They did, in fact, grow up with the country, were influenced by it, and at the same time shaped the region's future.¹

Sensitivity to surroundings, so apparent in nineteenth-century views, is rare in twentieth-century materials. The reason is simple. The majority of the teenagers presented in this publication were born in Kansas. Their home state was their touchstone. They confirmed western author Wright Morris's observation that "For most people I knew the navel of the world seemed to be wherever it was they came from. . . ."² For most of these twentieth-century teenagers, the "navel of the world" was Kansas. If they made comparisons, it was between farm and town life or between conditions in one county or region of the state and another. Maude Elliott was quick to note differences between Lawrence and western Finney County; Howard Lang often compared life in Barton County to that in Lane County. Some of these teenagers were mobile and lived in more than one area of Kansas, but by place of birth and home environment, they were, with few exceptions, Kansas "natives."

The twentieth-century teenagers did share, however, similar attributes with their nineteenth-century counterparts. Elliott West wrote that young people on the frontier were encouraged to develop faith in their own abilities to meet a challenge, to be independent and self-motivated, and to accept a work ethic in which they played a vital role. Much the same can be said of teenagers during the early twentieth century. Although family

¹C. Robert Haywood and Sandra Jarvis, eds., "A Funnie Place, No Fences": Teenagers' Views of Kansas, 1867-1900 (*Lawrence: Division of Continuing Education, University of Kansas, 1992*); Elliott West, *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* (*Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989*).

²Wright Morris, "How I Put in the Time," in *Growing Up Western*, ed. Clarus Backes (*New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991*), 110.

In smaller Kansas communities, one building served all students. The Sylvia, Kansas, school housed high school studies upstairs, elementary classes downstairs. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

and parents hover in the background, independence and self-reliance ring from the teenagers' writings and memories.³

Certainly, not every individual experience is represented in this volume, and one personal viewpoint of the teenage years is exactly that—personal and individual. Nevertheless, when the individual voice becomes a collective chorus with the same circumstances or memories repeated time and again, it means something important to understanding an era and its people. We know, for example, that the automobile became more available and prominent in American culture, but the consistency with which it was mentioned by teenagers reinforces its presence and influence. Boltz and Lang began driving when they were twelve; Shephard drove as fast as she could, whenever she had the chance; Doris Brewster and friends skipped church to sit in the car and talk; and even when teenagers, such

³*West, Growing Up with the Country, 252–54.*

as Simon Martinez or Lorenzo Mattwaoshshe, had no car, it was mentioned.

Also mentioned by teenagers was the practice of boarding in town to attend school and the variety of high school courses. Secondary schools of the 1800s, when they existed, focused on the "classical" course of study—literature, languages (primarily Latin), mathematics, and science—as preparation for college. Colleges, in fact, often provided secondary-school classes as preparatory to entering college. By the early 1900s, however, the number of high schools increased, and curricula expanded into "track" courses. (This was encouraged when the federal government provided money for vocational education.) Track education was noted by teenagers. Thelma Shephard and Howard Dowell took the Commercial track (Marian Minnis may have too since she wrote of stenography as a career and on a few notebook lines practiced shorthand); Howard Dowell's future wife, Nora, studied the Normal (teacher training) course; Esther Lietz wanted to take a Normal course but her school did not offer one; and Simon Martinez enrolled in Manual Arts. As a Hispanic, Martinez's experience was different from those of nonminority students. Encouraged to pursue a skilled trade, he was unable to find employment because of discrimination. As he later realized, schools often raised students' expectations but ignored realities of job placement.⁴

The most basic bond among these teenagers was schooling. Yet, the availability and quality of education varied widely. Some teenagers found themselves in newly organized rural high schools. A few began their teenage years in a junior high, not an elementary school. Kansas prided itself on its school systems—from one-room country schools to city high schools—but education was really what the local community, teachers, and students could make of it.

Some teenagers did not attend school beyond the elementary level, and it was not unusual to find fourteen or fifteen-year-olds in the eighth grade. The reasons for intermittent school attendance (which produced older students in elementary grades) or for ending education after grade school were many. The most prevalent were distance to school, lack of funds, work at home, responsibilities for family support, and parental at-

⁴A good discussion of contradictory messages for Hispanics can be found in Vicki L. Ruiz, "Acculturation, Adolescence, and Mexican American Women, 1920–1950," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850–1950*, eds. Elliott West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 61–80.

Some young people, like this Leavenworth couple, married and began families while still in their teenage years. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Leavenworth Public Library Collection; Frank Morrow, photographer)

titudes toward education. Even those attending school usually balanced studies with work. Whether it was helping mother dust or holding down a job in a shoe shop, work was an intricate part of most teenagers' lives.

Teenagers also spent time worrying and wondering over the opposite sex. Marian Minnis thoughtfully wrote of what she wanted in a future husband and home, while analyzing the available list of suitors. Thelma Shephard expressed the immediate thrill of boyfriends and dates and the heartbreak of an ended romance. Young men mentioned dating, but not to the degree expressed by some of the young women. The idea of "dating," wrote Beth Bailey in *From Front Porch to Back Seat*, was fairly recent and "not a traditional or universal custom." In the early twentieth century, dating moved courtship out of family parlors and community events to public places such as restaurants and theaters. Going "out" on a date replaced the suitor's "call" at home. Of course, some teenagers did not mention dating. Few seemed preoccupied with it, although Doris Brewster wrote that she might worry for a whole hour that she would never have a real boyfriend. On the scale of what was important and occupied their time, dating ranked below demands of work and school, economic con-

straints, and other kinds of social activities that brought young people together in groups or with their families.⁵

Other common threads in teenagers' memories and experiences were music, hunting, and debate. Eileen Marshall wished that she had more time for her music. Doris Brewster played the piano and sang in choral groups, and some of Esther Lietz's strongest high school memories were those related to music. Music and debate were integral to John McKee's high school years. Jacob Balzer found debate much to his liking, and Dwight Eisenhower had his chance at public speaking. Howard Lang used his musical talent for financial gain; he also hunted for the bounty money it provided. Marian Minnis and Ralph Marshall wrote about hunting, although for Marshall it was an essential activity that brought food to the table.

One thing that does *not* appear in these teenagers' writings and reminiscences is the word "teenager." Some of these young people referred to themselves and friends as "we kids." Howard Lang and Ralph Marshall noted themselves by their age of fourteen or fifteen. None of the persons included in this volume, however, represented themselves as teenagers. The word was not widely used until the 1940s, although *Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary* notes that "teenage" first appeared in recognized publication in 1925 and "teenager" in 1939. Nevertheless, the young men and women identified themselves in other ways. They were, said James Wabaunsee and Lorenzo Mattwaoshshe, just young men and women beginning to take on adult roles.

These teenagers shared some similar experiences, but they were also a diverse group. Since the material culture changed so dramatically between 1900 and 1941, part of their diversity in experience depended on the decade in which they were teenagers. Part of the diversity also stemmed from differences between rural and urban landscapes and the traditions of various racial and ethnic groups. The subject of differences is particularly important because this stressed acculturation, Americanization, and a homogenous society. Native Americans, Hispanics, and Blacks were expected to assimilate into the dominant white culture, although segregation affected how easily they might participate in school activities, recreation, and work opportunities. With World War I, Americanization classes intended to turn immigrants into English-speaking citizens. Public senti-

⁵Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 12–14.

Sunday school picnics and other church-related activities provided recreational outlets for teenagers. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Leavenworth Public Library Collection; Frank Morrow, photographer)

ment during the First World War also demanded that Germans give up their language in their schools, churches, and newspapers. For some of the teenagers included in this volume, acculturation meant that they were not only bilingual but bicultural. Martinez, Mattwaoshshe, and Wabaunsee were, as was Balzer who, as a German Mennonite, moved from English to German and from Mennonite to outside world depending on immediate circumstances. Sometimes these teenagers talked about differences and made comparisons, but most often, they concentrated on themselves and blending with others their age.

In organizing the material for this volume, selections were placed in a general chronological order. The ending year is 1941, although the Simon Martinez interview includes the war years. Generally, however, the material ends with 1941 because the lives of teenagers during World War II were significantly different from those of the pre-war years. The war years, in fact, deserve a separate volume to fully explore teenagers' new social and financial freedoms, the culture that catered to teenagers, and homefront and military experiences.

The chronological presentation by decade seemed the best choice for this publication, but chronology has its problems. The decades have their

historical bumps and internal boundaries. The 1910s, for example, were clearly of two parts, the pre-war and World War I years. The same is true for the 1930s. The decade was not one long depression, ended only when everybody confronted the challenges of World War II. Economic recovery was apparent by the decade's last years, separating experiences of better times from those of the worst. Still, every decade represents a distinctive time frame, and for that reason, each chapter begins with a brief introduction of the decade and its unique personality. Other than those introductions and brief entries for each selection, the teenagers tell the story.

The illustrations were chosen on the basis of visual representation of a subject. Oftentimes, they broaden the view of the teenage world. These images are intended to be "read" since they can tell a great deal about the social and cultural context of the times. The cumbersome yards of fabric in a girl's basketball uniform, for example, may seem funny or quaint, but a photograph of a young woman's basketball team says much about society's changing attitudes about young women's proper place and behavior. Teenagers photographed beside an automobile, a road paver, or a radio also

After a day of fishing on the Saline River, the catch was recorded with a camera. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

illustrate the presence of innovations unimagined by an older generation. By reading an image, we can decipher a teenager's role or immediate environment. We can decide what people thought was important to their lives. Photographs enhance the written history, and sometimes, when there is no printed word for us to follow, photographs can be vital clues to a time gone by.

The photographers deserve mention too. After all, they are the ones who captured the images. For this publication, some photographic materials were drawn from the Kansas State Historical Society's extensive holdings, and a few were taken from other sources. Most, however, were selected from the Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries. Of special interest in the Kansas Collection were the photographic works of Jules Bourquin in Horton; William Long in Hoxie; Frank Morrow in Leavenworth; Joseph Judd Pennell in Junction City; and Hannah Scott in Independence, Kansas. None of these photographers remained in their

In the early years of the twentieth century, physical education classes and school sports opened to young women. Pictured is the Sheridan County High School girls' basketball team of 1925. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Long Collection)

studios. They took their talents and cameras out into the world. They went into people's homes and into schools; they recorded leisure time and work; they photographed groups and individuals. Their photographs, many published for the first time in this volume, recorded life in all its rich variety.

The material in this volume was edited where necessary for readability; but when misspellings or lack of punctuation did not mar understanding the context and meaning, the text was left in its original form. Brackets were used to clarify, and ellipses were used to indicate brief omissions. In the oral histories, material was edited for reading since the spoken word—the starts and stops we make in conversation—can be difficult to read if taken verbatim. Annotations were made to expand on a subject, but the statements of fact or opinion in all materials are solely those of the individuals.

I. A New Century Begins (1900–1909)

*The first decade of the twentieth century opened with both disturbing and exciting events. In 1901, President McKinley was assassinated and Theodore Roosevelt became President. In 1903, saloon-smasher Carry A. Nation disrupted the U. S. Senate. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition opened in St. Louis in 1904, and San Francisco suffered a devastating earthquake in 1906. Ping-Pong was a fad. Favorite high school sports were football, basketball, and baseball. Physical education classes opened to girls. Bestsellers included Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, Kate Douglas Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm*, and Jack London's *Sea Wolf*. One of the most popular and enduring songs was "In the Good Old Summer Time."*

In 1903, Kansas established compulsory five-month school terms (twenty years later, the eight-month term would become law). The 1903 law required anyone between the ages of eight and fifteen to attend school, but it also allowed teenagers who were fourteen or older and employed to attend only eight consecutive weeks of a school term. Partly because of this exemption, some educators suggested that high schools add "manual arts." (At first, this catch-all phrase included anything from domestic science to woodworking; later, it meant skilled trades such as printing, sheetmetal working, and carpentry.) Manual arts inclusion was not easily accepted. It would require more money and expanded facilities, and, in the public mind, a high school education was preparation for college, not job training. Nevertheless, a few schools began to offer manual arts. This did not become the norm, however, until the 1920s.

By 1901, it was clear that the Spanish-American War and its aftermath had made the United States a new world power. International standing, however, meant less to the average person than the feeling that, in a new century, Americans had to become modern. Progressives sought to improve society by stop-

Large crowds attended chautauques which provided educational and recreational programs for all ages. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

ping its abuses. For young people this meant controlling or stopping their labor in dangerous occupations such as mining and heavy manufacturing, providing more organized recreation to keep them out of trouble, and passing school laws that ensured more young people a chance at an education.

The new decade also meant applying science and technology to everyday life. The telephone brought instant communication and lessened the isolation of rural families; the electric light bulb helped make life easier and safer. The Wright brothers' historic airplane flight in 1903 proved the sky could be conquered, and the automobile was no longer a novelty that frightened horses and pedestrians. After the first cross-country auto trip in 1903, from San Francisco to New York in fifty-two days, and after Henry Ford introduced the Model T in 1908, people clamored for paved roads. (Although Topeka had an improved roads association as early as 1900 and a hard-surfaced road was constructed in 1907 north of Chanute, it took another twenty years before Kansans saw noticeable

increases in the number of paved roads.) Meanwhile, up-to-date “scientific” farmers turned from horse-pulled machinery to steam-powered tractors and threshers. To Americans, all of this was “progress,” although no one could foresee the ways in which technology and inventions would reshape work and leisure.

Some clubs, such as this bicycle group, drew members who shared the same interests. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Leavenworth Public Library Collection; Frank Morrow, photographer)

“Trek on a Prairie Schooner”: Retta Forsythe Burns Travel Account [1901–1902]

When settlers moved onto the western frontier during the 1800s, some kept diaries or wrote accounts of their experiences. Retta Forsythe Burns's travel narrative "Trek on a Prairie Schooner" is not one of pioneer settlement, but it contains elements of nineteenth-century travel accounts. There are horse-drawn wagons, scenes of camping out, and finding protection from the elements. Retta and her family moved from a farm to Topeka and then to Independence, Kansas. From there, the family went to Holden, Missouri, only to return to Kansas. Retta and her sister Stella were just entering their teenage years when the moves occurred. Their father wanted to find another farm in a place that offered good educational opportunities for the girls. During this time period other farm families did the same, moving to towns and cities to improve their children's school and social lives. Writing years after the event, Retta believed the travel experience was one to be remembered for a lifetime.

Up until September 1901, Stella and I had attended a country school, known as the Towhead School.¹ Now my parents (Mr. and Mrs. Robert Forsythe) decided it was time for us to enter a grade school in Topeka. We were a bit late in completing arrangements so missed the first two weeks, but school had been dismissed for several days during the second week, due to the assassination of President McKinley. I entered Jackson School in 8-B and Stella entered 8-A. Stella entered High School at the end of the first semester and I was promoted to 8-A.

Around the holidays of 1901–1902, Father sold the 400 acre farm, on which Stella and I were born, to a Mr. Carls and he was to take possession on March 1, 1902. In the meantime, Father had a sale to sell house-

Retta F. Burns, travel account, MS., Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas (hereinafter cited as KSHS). Reprinted with permission of the Kansas State Historical Society.

¹Local communities and their residents often referred to schools by names that ignored official district names. "Towhead School" was a colloquial term that referred to young blonde-headed pupils.

hold goods, farm implements, chickens and the cattle and horses he did not want to retain. Then Father scouted around and rented a ranch in Butler County near Latham and shipped the cattle and horses he retained to the ranch and sent my brother and his wife (Rollin and Neva Forsythe) to take care of the stock. Before selling the chickens, Mother filled a coop with hens so we could have baked chicken and dressing.

As Father was on the lookout for another farm, also a good High School, he decided to go to Independence, Kansas, and drive through so he could view the country en route. He kept one wagon and two horses, Maud and May, and the shetland ponies—Nancy, the mother, and Victor, the yearling colt. A couple of years or so before selling the farm, Father had purchased a beautiful, cut-under carriage with buggy top and fenders over the hind wheels from the step, so he had retained it but made arrangements with Mr. Carls to leave it on the farm, protected from the weather until he was ready to come by for it.

When we were ready to leave Topeka, Father put bows and a canvas cover on the wagon and loaded in the trunks and such things as we would need on the trip then shipped the balance to Independence. We left Topeka late one afternoon and stopped at the farm to get the carriage then drove on to spend our last night with old neighbors with whom we had always been very close friends. We left the next morning but were scheduled to have dinner [*noon meal*] with friends several miles distant but on our itinerary. After dinner, we were finally on our way.

Father had tied the carriage onto the wagon, then he tied Nancy to the back of the carriage and let Victor follow, only tying him of nights. When we left Topeka, we still had two hens left in the coop so Father set the coop on the floor in the front of the carriage. I was scheduled to ride in the back seat of the carriage so I could keep an eye on Victor.

Everything went well and we reached Dragoon Creek [*in Osage County*] so Father decided to camp there for the night so we could water the horses and ponies in the creek both night and morning. I can't remember supper or breakfast but imagine Mother had prepared food so we didn't have to do any cooking. As it had been a strenuous day, we were all tired so prepared the beds for the night. We had piled two mattresses on top of each other on the trunks etc. in the bottom of the wagon so we then put them end for end with sheets, pillows, etc. It's a good thing we were always so tired of nights as there wasn't much spring in the mattresses piled on the junk in the bottom of the wagon.

When the beds were ready, Mother began looking for the hatchet. We had put it in the wagon so we could use it to chop up wood, etc. to build a fire to cook our meals over. She hunted and hunted but couldn't find it. Then it finally dawned on me why Mother wanted the hatchet. She was afraid so I began to kid her about it so she gave up and didn't look for it any more at night on the trip.

The second night we stopped in front of a farmhouse. Father had asked if they objected and if we could water the horses and ponies at their tank. They were very gracious and friendly and brought their chairs out to our wagon to spend the evening with us.

The next afternoon Nancy, the shetland, spied herself mirrored in the back of the carriage and it frightened her. Something had to be done about it so Father instructed us to turn her loose and let her follow. I was skeptical of that but followed instructions and learned that animals were just about as smart as I. My work doubled for me as both ponies explored every open gate we passed and I would jump out of the carriage to chase them out of wherever they were exploring. Then both ponies as well as I would have to run to catch up with the wagon. Then I would jump in the back seat and ride to the next open gate. Needless to say, I was getting plenty of exercise.

As we drove through the various towns, Mother would buy food for our noon meals so we only had to build a fire for breakfast and supper. One night we parked by a farmhouse and the folks there insisted that Mother cook on their stove. The next morning we got up and found one of our horses, Maud, had a colt during the night. It wasn't very strong and couldn't stand up so Father said we would lay over that day. As Mother had prepared our meals on their stove, she helped the farm lady can peaches that day and they were so grateful for her help.

I found a book and passed the time reading it. During the afternoon, Father decided to take a nap so he chose a shady spot under a tree by the roadside and stretched out on the grass. He put his hat over his face to keep out the light. Shortly I heard him yell and glanced up to see what was going on and saw Victor, our shetland colt, running down the center of the road with the crown of Father's hat in his mouth. He ran about half a block, set Father's hat down in the center of the road, then headed back for the wagon with his eyes on Father. Father started for his hat and picked up something to throw at Victor, but Victor put on a burst of speed and was back before Father reached his hat. Victor knew better

than to try anything else soon. Father planned to make room in the wagon for the newborn colt, but it died during the night.

I remember one late afternoon the weather was very threatening and we stopped to camp. We hurriedly built a fire and started frying potatoes. It started to rain before they were brown enough so I held an umbrella over the fire to finish cooking them. Then we filled our plates and ran for cover—Father and Mother to the wagon seat, and Stella and I to the carriage—she in the back seat and I in front. It rained incessantly so Stella and I stayed in the carriage all night.

One day we were travelling south when we came to a crossroad with a farmhouse about a quarter of a mile west. Father wanted to walk to it to inquire about something. Due to a recent rain, water was running across the road so he rode the shetland. [*Father*] held his feet up while he crossed the water. The woman insisted on his taking a head of cabbage, so we later enjoyed cole slaw.

On our last night before reaching Independence, the clouds began to gather and boil up and got more threatening every moment. We knew a bad storm was in the offing. Father turned in at the first farmhouse we came to. The farmer saw us and rushed out and told Mother, Stella and I to hurry to the house while he helped Father put the horses and ponies under shelter. When he came in, he explained his wife had gone on a visit some time before, so he showed Mother the kitchen and suggested she go ahead and fix supper. Soon two neighbor ladies who had gone to town together stopped in also to get out of the storm. The farmer and Father went out to put their horses in shelter. Shortly after, Mother had supper ready.

After supper, we washed the dishes and cleaned the kitchen ready for breakfast. As the storm was practically a whole night affair, the farmer helped Mother with bed arrangements. By morning, the storm was over so the two women got up and headed for home before breakfast. Mother got breakfast then we washed the dishes and cleaned the kitchen, then the beds were made according to the farmer's dictation.

The farmer wrote his name and address on the side of our wagon and asked Mother to write him as soon as she had time after our arrival in Independence, which she did. The farmer answered and advised that his wife was at home by then. I think she had been gone long enough for him to be lonesome by the time we arrived. He wouldn't allow Father to pay him a cent for our accommodations.

We arrived at the house in Independence, that Father had previously rented, before noon that same day. We unloaded the wagon, then Father drove to the Santa Fe depot to see if our household goods had arrived and found them there.

That summer we had a large bluegrass yard so nearly every day we would put the two ponies on leashes to graze on the grass. During the early summer, Nancy had a colt which we named Mabel. She was a little dickens as our close neighbor had a round flowerbed with her favorites planted in it. Mabel soon learned that she wasn't supposed to walk or run in it so that was the very thing she tried to do, always knowing she was guilty of being naughty. There was a hedge fence between the sidewalk and the homes on our block, so every time Mabel would hear walking on the sidewalk, she would sail out through the opening in our hedge and scare folks on the sidewalk then turn and race back into our yard. She was shorter than the hedge.

The neighbor also had a little boy, Benny, three years old. He practically lived at our house and kept Father amused when he played in our yard with his dog. We all loved him. He never had many chances to go for a ride so, when we went out, if it was possible to take him, Father always found room on his lap for Benny. His Mother wrote that when we left Independence, he went into his home, pulled a pillowcase over his head and cried and cried and said he would never again like anyone who lived in that house.

As it was nearing August and nearing the start of a new school year and Father hadn't found any farming land around Independence to suit him, he decided it was time to move on in order to get settled in time for High School. He studied the map and decided to try Pittsburg, Kansas, next.

As we had not been very comfortable in our sleeping arrangements on our way to Independence, Father decided to put an extension over the sideboards of the wagon to accommodate the width of a set of springs and mattress. During daytime, we put one set of springs and mattress on top of the other set; then put them end to end for sleeping at night. When that was done, Father chartered a [*railroad*] car and loaded it with our furniture for Pittsburg; then loaded the things in the wagon we were to take with us. We were then on our way after spending four months in Independence.

I remember going through Cherryvale headed for Parsons, Kansas, when I heard Father yell "whoa" to the team. Father had recognized an

approaching vehicle as former residents of Carbondale, Kansas. They chatted a bit and then they told us that the Stoltsmans, who used to run a general store in Carbondale, now lived a few miles down the road and that we must stop to see them, which we did. The Stoltsmans insisted on our staying for dinner as it was mid-morning then. After dinner, we got under way as Father was anxious to get to Parsons before night.

When we reached Parsons, Father stopped for something. While he was gone, a woman passed the wagon, carrying a basket of grapes, on her way across the street. Victor smelled the grapes and decided he would like a taste so he started for her. When she saw the shetland coming, she yelled "Call him off." I had to get out and lead the scamp back to the wagon.

Father stopped at a little country store one day for something. There was a huge pile of watermelons outside the store. When Victor spied them, he entertained the group of loafers sitting around by trying to get a bite of watermelon. Try as he would, he couldn't sink his teeth into a melon but the loafers enjoyed watching him try.

The night we got to Pittsburg, it was threatening rain so Father drove up to a livery stable in order to put the horses and ponies under shelter, but a man there opened the door wide and told Father to drive the wagon inside; so we spent the night in the wagon inside the livery stable and the rain just poured down so we were fortunate to be inside even though we had to go without supper.

Previously, the weather had been nice. I have forgotten where we spent the nights until we got to Trading Post, Kansas. There we camped a short distance from the town as there was a wide open space with a lot of grass. It was Saturday night so some of the country bumpkins, who had gone to town before we parked, came by on their way home and snored as they drove by. I had been awakened by the horses jerking on their ropes, which were tied to the wagon wheels, so I heard them trying to mock us. The next morning, Father decided to give the horses a half day's rest so he turned them loose to graze on the grass. Those flies that horses detest above all others—I can't think of their name now—were so thick there so, when one got on May, she headed for the wagon on the dead run. I would jump out and kill it for her so she would go back to grazing until the next fly lit. Father brought some field corn for dinner that day so we enjoyed roasting ears. We moved on after dinner.

When Father went to the depot at Pittsburg, the car containing our household goods was there so he had it shipped to Holden, Mo., as he

hadn't seen any farming land on our trip so far that he was interested in. As I remember from there on, we had a lot of rainy weather so we couldn't build fires on which to cook but usually camped near a house and Mother would ask if she could use their stove to do the cooking. She was always welcome to do so.

I remember another night when we didn't sleep in the wagon. Don't remember whether it was a private house or not, but do know that Mother asked the man if Adrian was near. The man thought she said "a drain" so he told her there was a small creek near. We kidded Mother for years about Adrian, which we learned later was close to Merwin, Mo.

We arrived in Holden, Mo., shortly before September 1, 1902, where Stella and I entered High School and spent a year and one semester when Father bought a home at Paola, Ks., where we graduated from High School.

That ended our trek seeing the country in a prairie schooner. It was a great experience and am glad to have had it, but didn't enjoy travelling that way in rainy weather.

*"Saturdays are
really lonesome
in Kansas":*

*Jacob Frank Balzer
Diary [1903]*

In 1903, nineteen-year-old Jacob Frank Balzer entered Bethel College, a school founded by German Mennonites in North Newton, Kansas. Born and raised in Minnesota, Balzer was a long way from home. At times he was homesick. He felt the strain of beginning classes, especially since courses were almost exclusively in German. Balzer spoke both English and German but believed that his German was "really awful." Nevertheless, he was determined to make the best of college by concentrating on the positive—new friends, school activities, and recreational outlets. Weekdays were taken up with school; Saturdays were sometimes lonely; and Sundays were set aside as a time for contemplation. Jacob Balzer graduated from Bethel in 1905. Later, after attending the University of Chicago Divinity School, he returned in 1914 as dean of Bethel College. During his lifetime, Jacob Balzer kept many diaries, but the diary for his first two months as a college freshman provides a look at a young man's thoughts as he began an important new phase of life and learned about himself.

Aug. 24th Monday A person becomes sentimental during preparations for leaving home. A peculiar, rather a funny feeling came over me when I purchased a trunk.

Aug. 26th Wednesday In a week from tonight the first day at Bethel will begin. At times I long for the time when I shall be there to make my course there for nine months—

Sept. 2nd Wednesday The last few days I have been very curt about my daily jottings. There is reason for it! When last I wrote fortune saw me at

Jacob Frank Balzer papers, MLA.MS.61, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Reprinted with permission of the Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College.

home but now after days of travel I find myself in the study room looking forward to a most pleasant year.

For those at home, mother especially, it was a sad parting and I know her tears were from the heart. I also felt peculiar in the hour of parting and fully recognized the meaning of those goodbye tears. I learned to appreciate the thoughts and worryings of a mother. I saw what a mother's love should be and thanked God for the privilege of enjoying such tokens of love.

When goodbye had been said and we [*Jacob and his father*] were seated in the cars, I once more gave myself to thoughts and then first could really acknowledge my situation as it was. Tears could not be restrained and I sat there for at least fifteen minutes devoted entirely to myself and those at home dear to me.

It is a sacrifice for parents to part from their children for the sake of the children but it is a holy sacrifice, a noble one.

Sept. 3rd Thursday The first day of school at College is over and I look into the future with great hopes of enjoyment and benefit. The lessons with the respective teachers will be enjoyable. Prof. Wedel's classes,¹ as I have heard it mentioned by others, are a treat, and devotional exercises are impressive and appropriate.

Sept. 4th Friday It is peculiar how pleasant the evenings are here. Tonight especially we have such a clear evening sky. The moon seeks out the golden heavens and soothes as it seems the tired nerves relaxed from the day's heat.

The Belles Lettres society was organized tonight. A far excellent program was rendered. Good music was an excellent feature. Music sometimes is as good as a sermon well-preached. After the evening's program the boys gathered on the porch of the Minnesota home² and sang songs

¹This was either C. H. Wedel, school president, or P. J. Wedel, newly hired as a professor of natural sciences and history.

²The Minnesota Home was a men's dormitory financed in part by Minnesota friends of Bethel College. The dormitory accommodated sixteen with room preferences given to students from Minnesota. Peter J. Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College (North Newton: Bethel College, 1954)* commented that because the dormitory "was not planned for careful supervision," disciplinary difficulties occurred (p. 101); these difficulties included watermelon parties and boisterous after-study gatherings.

Jacob Frank Balzer (Courtesy Mennonite Library and Archives)

that recalled home and its pleasant hours. What a different life will the college life be from that of some American schools. Out here in the fresh country air is an appropriate place for nourishing deep inmost feelings.

Sept. 5th Saturday I am alone today. My roommate went home to attend a Sunday school he has been teaching. I have had concourse with several boys and have become acquainted. There is an interesting study among such a crowd. Each has a different personality, each has different desires, each has a different ambition from the others.

Sept. 6th Sunday My first Sunday at College. The forenoon was fully well occupied but the afternoon was rather lonesome. Right after dinner I went into my room and tried to go to sleep but couldn't. Started reading and soon felt drowsy. After that I slept for an hour but I had partaken of such a hearty dinner and accordingly nightmares, rather day-dreams, troubled me and when I awoke I was in a sweat. After that I read some more and played my banjo. Then I made order in my trunk and—why the supper bell rang and I had not spoken to a soul all afternoon.

Sept. 7th Monday Today my feelings responded to every touch. Joy and grief seemed to mingle with another. At times I would exalt in myself and again my spirits would drop.

Our rooms are looking more homelike every day. The carpet makes a great difference in the appearance of the room. Order and arrangement, arrangement that pleases the eye, pleases the whole being. Pictures for wall-decoration are lacking. I would give something to have a stock of the pictures I had at home which were discarded already.

The weather is beautiful at present, a timely rain has cooled the air and laid the dust.

Sept. 8th Tuesday Today Henry Goertz made an unexpected appearance. He got here twelve o'clock last night. It seems more familiar now that he is here. The boys indulged in a game of baseball after school and other gymnastics after supper. We feel better for it. It was awfully hot twisting about and wrestling. It is really a joy to be among such a crowd of boys. . . .

Sept. 9th Wednesday Splendid weather for baseball. This afternoon it cooled off wonderfully. A cold North wind changed the whole atmosphere. An evenly matched game is always interesting in baseball. The score read 6 to 7 in the other side's favor.

It was a peculiarly sentimental day. Everything seemed to go wrong at first, and I felt like giving up lessons and everything. No wonder then that thoughts of home were near but when school hours were over we went to the ball grounds and there drove away all such feelings and actually now I feel as hopeful as can be.

A person after studying English subjects for four years is unaccustomed to German almost exclusively. Sixteen hours of German is almost tiresome. Greek is simply abominable and I cannot learn to like it. It's puzzling indeed.

Sept. 13th Sunday This has been an important day! I shall be candid about it. It has been a day for reflection. Different moods held sway. When I awoke this morning, it was with a somewhat heavy feeling because—well because father was going to leave. It was a sad feeling that came over me whenever I thought of father's departure and in my imagination loomed up the thought how would it be if I were going now. My heart just leaps to think of it. Yet such thoughts must not be allowed to linger because if a person lives only in the future the present, whenever his thoughts relapse, will seem too dark. It is one's duty to enjoy the present as best as can.

Those at home are so close to my heart, none dearer to me, none more precious and such absence from home first teaches a person to realize what treasures he has. Nothing more ennobling, more uplifting, can be thought of than to know one has loved ones thinking of you and carrying you in their hearts, remembering you in prayer to God. If such is the case it is man's highest duty to preserve home-ties and keep them holy. It is a Godgiven privilege and must be taken care of accordingly.

Such home feelings are instrumental in bringing man closer to God, drive him into prayer to seek consolation and help. When that lonesome feeling comes over me, I find it necessary to seek companionship. Companionship that is trustworthy.

Sept. 14th Monday This week has made a good beginning. I enjoyed the day. It was nice and cool, rather too cool for I am sitting at the table now with a woolen bed cover over my shoulders. I enjoyed a brisk walk to Newton today before supper. Mr. Ennes called me by telephone to make arrangements about a ticket and I was obliged to go and am glad that undesirable thing is done with.

I do not believe in such close affairs. I do not like to approve so near the danger line, to the line of wrong. An excursion ticket ought by rights not be transfered and if we sell it there is no excuse to offer.³

The turning horizontal bar will be finished by tomorrow. Today I look into the future with high hopes. How will it be tomorrow, that is the question, there is the rub.

About the ticket business now. It is a peculiar question as to right and wrong. In one respect, which in every respect it is wrong. I like to decide and think over such questions and reason about them and now if I am really fair with myself I should judge it not to be right to sell such excursion return tickets but then some may say if the original purchaser makes all the signatures and if no forgery is resorted to everything is all right. It may be but in the highest sense of right and wrong it is not right because if a company sells a roundtrip excursion ticket to a person, that person is expected to get nothing more out of it than the trip. Now in the opinion of most people this will not seem logical but there is a grain of truth somewhere that's undoubted.

³*Whether Balzer was selling a ticket or allowing someone to use his ticket under his name is unclear. The matter clearly played on his conscience.*

Sept. 15th Tuesday Sunday I seemed to dread the approach of this schoolweek but now that I have worked myself into it, it seems delightful. It is necessary, in order to prevent homesickness, to bury oneself entirely in the schoolwork and school doings and then life will be worth living if heart and soul is in the work. Preparation for Wedel's Classes is done more with happy anticipation than that of the other classes.

Sept. 17th Thursday How quick the days and weeks go by. The third week of this schoolyear is almost to an end. At this rate school-life will not seem long.

Tonight was exciting indeed. About at 9 oclock the boys upstairs tramped on the floor to call us up, making us believe watermelons were on the program as was the case last night and night before last. But no! Yet we should not be thwarted and so some one suggested Henry and myself go to ____ [*illegible*] and get some watermelons. We put on our overcoats and went across fields. Once there we had to get them from the patch. Well we got back safe with two treasures and the time we had eating them, can't be misguided by anyone not in attendance. There were eight of us that attacked the two propositions.

Someone would tell of the aftereffects last night's watermelon had produced on him, how he had been obliged to hurry up to keep up and then we'd almost burst with laughter and watermelons.

If the professors had caught our crowd, what would have happened no one knows and no one cares to know.

Sept. 18th Friday Watermelons seems to be the only topic today. Watermelon parties are frequent all over the campus. Right after supper we devoured one big watermelon and three musk melons. Tonight after the library program there was another big gathering near the Minnesota House and watermelons disappeared fast indeed. I have enough for today. The after-effects are too disagreeable.

Sept. 19th Saturday Saturdays are really lonesome in Kansas. Usually the boys leave for home in weather like this and that makes the campus so lonesome. Usually we go up town in the afternoon. But that is not a very good habit to form because it always gives some unnecessary expenses. Today I went up town and bot some pictures. These were not a necessity that is sure but because it was a bargain very tempting at 10 cts a piece, I bought some. Besides that the cinder walks always wear on shoe soles.

Tonight the first meeting of the Oratorio Society⁴ took place in the Chapel. If a person wants to take in any real value of school, one must partake of such things. Twenty lessons in vocal music = \$13.00 etc, etc. Expenses are enormous for students especially. Dollars roll, while time flies. But I must take in consideration the benefits accrued and be satisfied. Youth will come but once to me and it is my duty to utilize the time of my youth that it may bring me happiness in later years for happiness is in one sense the aim of mankind. Either to make self or man happy and never otherwise. Life is given to us to be enjoyed in a correct way so that God may favor it. We must live in the Lord and be happy and make others happy. That is the Golden Rule and it can only apply when all work in harmony and reason.

Sept. 20th Sunday It has been lonesome today.

Sept. 21st Monday It is rather late and recently I have contracted the habit of going to bed later than usual. Therefore I cut off short and go to bed.

Sept. 22nd Tuesday Another week is well on its way and soon a whole month of school at Bethel will be a thing of the past and I may well consider what benefits have been [*received*] during this time. No doubt they have been numerous in every respect. Practical and theoretical knowledge both have been among the acquirements.

Sept. 23rd Wednesday Today we indulged in all kinds of gymnastics until supper. After a hearty supper we listened to a lecture by Prof. [P. H.] Richert about college rules and regulations, about college trials, etc. Then we were dismissed, later on we devoured some musk-melons, studied hard for a few hours and then—well I'm going to bed now.

Sept. 24th Thursday Yesterday a petition was circulated asking for permission of the faculty for a half-day vacation to enable the students to attend the county fair. This was granted and we had the afternoon to ourselves. Most of the boys went to town. Henry myself and two other boys were the only boys on the campus. Henry practiced his piano lessons for two hours, while I read and the other boys studied. After that

⁴*A musical organization that annually performed an oratorio or cantata.*

we went into the apple orchard and got some apples very innocently. After that we indulged in some exercise with the base ball bat and ball, and at the turning pole. Supper was soon ready and thus we saved about 50 cts by staying home. "A penny saved is a penny earned."

When the teachers allowed the half holiday in morning devotions, they let us know how they felt about the matter. Prof. Wedel remarked that he would have to mourn the afternoon.

Sept. 25th Friday It is late. Just had some musk-melon, watermelon and apples and am full to overflowing. Good Night!!

Sept. 26th Saturday OBLITUS

Sept. 27th Sunday Today was the first Sunday I did not get lonesome. There was something doing right along. The forenoon is always well occupied. In the afternoon the Jugendverein [*Youth Club*] took place. After that I settled down comfortably in the rocker and read awhile, that is until I was disturbed. Then Henry and I went out for a walk. When we came back there was a crowd in front of "Minnesota Home." Supper was soon ready. After supper Mr. Franzen and I went out for a stroll and brought back with us Mr. Doell and Wedel. Together we spent the evening telling stories and reading jokes. We had some side splitting scenes.

Such does not seem exactly proper on Sundays but then they were harmless and healthy.

I have not been sentimentally inclined today but sleepy. I could hardly wait until the church services closed but when I got out of the Chapel my head cleared up again. The same was the case in Jugendverein. I suppose I have eaten too heartily today.

Sept. 28th Monday I read quite a bit today. "The Man Without a Country" by E. E. Hale is a stirring story. It is enough to arouse pity in ones breast for the man who has no country, no home. It is awful to think of it. Then I also read Emersons essay on "Heroism." It is somewhat deep for me to think of heroism in such a way. Emerson says the chief characteristic of heroism is bravery rather persistency.

School has begun again and another week will soon be over for weeks seem only as days seemed in Minnesota. We played a game of baseball and cleared our heads somewhat. It is a splendid remedy for all ailments. I feel fine in respect to my physical constitution and hope that my spiri-

tual is the same altho the latter is not so easily perceptible if the conscience is hardened to any extent. Well I do not consider mine a very hard conscience.

I received my trunk key from home today and of course tried it immediately on the lock but then the lock wouldn't work so I broke the key and that ends another tragedy.

Sept. 29th Tuesday Today was busy and happy day. The lessons were refreshing and interesting. Everyday life is only what you make. It is a good vocation to be in the cheering-up business and raise your own and others' spirits. I feel healthy now as I never have and pray God to preserve it for me or rather help me preserve it by right living, by not disobeying natures laws for indeed a sick condition of mind or body finds its causes in oneself. There is always a very definite and reasonable cause for any abnormal conditions. Some of natures laws have not been followed and you are thus punished. I should almost call sickness of body a sin as well as sickness of the mind or soul or in other words any deficiency in body is as much a sin as deficiency in mind or spirit.

Oct. 1st Thursday I feel free as a bird today. Rules are a menace today. Such beautiful evenings are too good to miss. The boys were wild tonight and somebody was continually about the premises, laughing and running. A debate for tomorrow night is holding my attention. I shouldn't wonder if debating will be my hobby some day. I enjoy to persuade and demonstrate.

Oct. 2nd Friday The debate did come off and our side won 497-488. It was an exciting race. This the first debate I ever won. The time for talking was too short. I always feel good when a week is over. To celebrate, we boys went into the apple orchard and took some apples.

Oct. 4th Sunday It was a quiet Sunday. A day of rest and peace indeed. All meditations were so harmonious and sweet. No thought to mar the beauty of nature at its best. Nature too helped to make the day a blessing and offered no discomfort. It was neither too hot nor too cold. When will we learn to thank our Lord for all his goodness, when shall we learn to appreciate things like that. Every single day He reveals Himself in some such way or other but we ungrateful pass the blessing by unheeded.

Tonight we have the splendid moonlight as a token of His love. To glance up in that infinite sky brings to mind the unfathomable mysteries of our Lord. His strength will forever endure. He holds everything in His firm grasp and through His deep love we are permitted to enjoy life. His ways are full of the grandest and most sublime tokens of love. For us He has done everything.

I cannot express all my feelings that throb in my heart. I pray to God for always and ask that the meditations of my heart be accepted in His sight.

Oct. 5th Monday I did not like this day but yet I enjoyed it. Letters are not very frequent from home. I wish they would write more than they do. Henry received pictures of the schoolhouse in construction at home. It is a superb building indeed. There were also other pictures and seeing them made me somewhat sentimental for the day.

Oct. 6th Tuesday Almost against my will, I attended a concert in town tonight. The concert itself was good. The walk back and forth did me well and I shall sleep like a stone tonight. The evenings are most beautiful and it is a pleasure to be out.

Oct. 9th Friday Today another debate took place in which I took part. Henry and myself had the affirmative side and my roommate & H. Hirschler had the negative side of this question, "Resolved that it is harder for a politician to remain honest than it is for a business man."

The debate was given in German and my German was really awful to hear. Yet it is good practice and exactly appropriate for a person like me.

Another week is gone. How fast? The question often comes how do I make use of my time? and the answer "You could do more."

Oct. 17th Saturday Today was a busy day. In the forenoon it was a pleasure to study without any disturbance. In the afternoon I scrubbed the floor in the bedroom and carried on a regular housecleaning raid and I feel better for it. It makes a person feel good when all dust has been removed. After 4 o'clock we played baseball and had a tie-game.

My feelings have complete control over me tonight. I feel comfortable and at home at present. Everything is so pleasant around me.

Balzer found that he enjoyed debating. His experience was not unusual since both colleges and secondary schools, including Sheridan County High School, offered debate as an extra-curricular activity. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Long Collection)

Oct. 18th Sunday In fact, it was a rather ill-spent Sunday. The forenoon curriculum was alright but right after one of the heartiest of dinners, Henry and I went out for a stroll and we strolled and strolled until we had strolled nearly all afternoon. The strolling part was alright for our conversation was pleasant and beneficial but we strolled too far and strolled to the golf links where we whiled a while until we strolled back to campus about 5 o'clock. After supper I stayed at home and read football literature and Emerson with undecided attention of the former until my head ached! Now I am going to bed! So goodnight!!

Oct. 19th Monday I feel tired tonight. We tried to play football after 4:15 and played too hard to suit me. It was mostly racing that we did. I do admire the game and wish I could some day get sufficiently acquainted with the game to be familiar with its finer points. It is a wonderfully popular game and I think it needs the attention of faculties of schools and colleges in order that the game may not be corrupted, etc.

I got hold of a book today entitled "The College Student and His Problems" and it has interested me all day. It has given me a better insight into the necessity of a college training and has also awakened in me some thoughts that were growing stale and unused under the influence of college life here. It is incomprehensible wrong, it is almost sinful that a place like this has not a place for furthering the health and physical condition of the students. The students that come here must suffer to some extent. In the first place there are no baths to stimulate the desire of a student toward cleanliness. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, that certainly holds true for as soon as a person begins to neglect the latter other things of greater importance will also be neglected. In the second place there is no place for physical education. Now as long as baseball, football and other recreation can be indulged in the student body will spend their time in the open air and they will be more inclined to partake of exercise but when the winter days come what will happen to a student on the long run if he passes most of his time in a soft coal-heated room? If the faculty would provide a gymnasium it would certainly be used; for boys have a pride in rivalry with each other in strength tests or athletics in general. The boys from the country experience too great a change when they exchange the hard work on the farm [for] the great mental strain of studying. The gymnasium for Bethel College is as necessary as a Theological Chair because the health of the students is at stake. A young man that sacrifices his health for study has lost the race for further gain. It will be uphill work.⁵

Oct. 23 Friday Heard Madame Susanne Adsues tonight. It was a very interesting program but I made the mistake and roamed about the carnival grounds afterwards. There was too great a contrast between the noise and din of the street and the well-trained voices of the singers.

Oct. 24th Saturday It was a drowsy Saturday. Last night Henry and myself got back from the carnival about 11:30 and after that someone gave me some chocolates. Those chocolates have produced an awful effect upon

⁵Balzer was not the only student to complain. In 1910 the school faculty, still opposed to a gymnasium, responded to student requests by agreeing to a weekly period of organized exercise and sports conducted by the local Young Men's Christian Association director.

While a student at Bethel College, Balzer became interested in football, a sport already being played by many Kansas high school teams. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

me. My stomach revolts and refuses to work properly. I felt bad all day. The stomach revolution has brot about headache.

Carnivals do not agree with me. They are the most tiring of all amusements. It sometimes seems a pity to one to see such crowds of people spending their time so noisily. These popular carnivals have a great resemblance to the carnivals of Rome when that city, when the whole empire, was reveling in debauchery and sins. The existence of these carnivals shows that the people in general are pleased with such frivolities. It shows that the individual rules for such affairs bring about immoralizing effects to the public and pour the money into the businessmen's pocket.

It is a sad portent, this carnival custom. It is a week spent in frivolities and the compensations for a week thus spent will not keep out. Time says "But I shall pay thee back."

Oct. 25th Sunday What beautiful weather we do have! It was exhilarating indeed and should afford an object of praise toward the Almighty. Innumerable reasons appear every day why God should receive praise but we slight them; we pass every token of his love and make it appear as only natural.

It is really disgusting when I view the way I spend my Sundays. I attend Jugendverein but not in the right spirit. I did not have my heart and soul with it. I was sleepy and could not keep my eyes straight. I cannot boast of having done any very profitable reading nor have I been benefited by any instructive conversation. This is getting too frequent and a reform is necessary. I must have my program for Sundays as well as for other days. The Sunday can be made a healthy recreation, profitable and resting and I must make it so.

Oct. 29th Thursday I almost forgot about writing tonight again. We have been playing football this week and I have always been so tired that this book almost slipped my memory. It is fun to play football and not only fun but instructive in many respects.

Nov. 1st Sunday I am getting real careless about my notes. This week I have jotted down only twice. . . . Another week is beginning and may I get out of it all there's in it, no less and no more. . . .

"Stories of My Early Life": J. Glenn Logan Reminiscence [1905]

• Oberlin

J. Glenn Logan was born in a sod house in Decatur County, where his parents, Daniel and Mary Logan, settled in 1885. Logan attended country schools and graduated in 1909 from Decatur County High School in Oberlin. There had been a high school in Oberlin since 1898, but in 1903, when the state legislature passed a bill allowing counties with populations of less than 10,000 to establish county high schools, the Oberlin school became the county's school.¹ To attend high school, Logan and his brother and sister boarded in town. When possible, they went home on weekends. After graduation, Logan taught in a rural school for a year and then entered Washburn College, where he earned a law degree in 1917. In his lifetime, J. Glenn Logan held the office of Shawnee County Attorney, was a state senator, and was U. S. Postmaster in Topeka. In 1980 he put to paper memories of his teenage years and life on the farm.

I would fix the time of the incident here related to the spring of 1905. I was attending high school in Oberlin as were both Mattie and Harry. This would mean that I was a freshman and Mattie a senior. We were at that time driving a team to the spring wagon to Oberlin on Sundays and driving home on Fridays after school. On this particular day, we were home before dark, but late in the afternoon. Dad had a man helping him who was listing² corn on the eighty across the road south from the

J. Glenn Logan, "Stories of My Early Life," MS., KSHS. Reprinted with permission of the Kansas State Historical Society.

¹The first county high school law, passed in 1886, provided free high school privileges to all students in a county, but only two counties, Dickinson and Atchison, established schools under the law. By 1893, these were still the only county schools, and the state legislature considered ways to encourage more growth of public high schools. One solution was the law of 1903.

²In Kansas, listing was a common method for planting corn because of the soil's composition and moisture content: deep furrows were cut into the ground with an implement called a lister, and then seeds were planted in the furrows. The hired man mentioned here was preparing the ground for planting.

house. He told us that during the afternoon he had noticed a coyote in the field in the furrows where he had listed, and not very far from him, but that after noticing it for a few times, he suddenly realized that it had disappeared. Upon going to where he had last noticed it and looking around, he discovered a hole down into the ground in one of the furrows. He had listened at the hole and could hear movements of the coyote. We were quite excited about it and several of us went out into the field to the hole, and we could also hear noises. But it was getting dark and chores to do. We surmised that the coyote had enlarged a gopher hole and had gone into it to whelp. So, to be sure we kept her in the hole during the night, we placed someone's shirt or jacket over the hole and laid the shotgun across it, thinking she would not try to come out while these were there.

The next morning when chores were finished, we took spades and shovel and went out to dig out the coyotes. We dug down trying to follow the hole, but lost it somehow and when we had dug down four or five feet, we knew we had missed it. The soil was soft in that area and digging was not difficult. Someone was sent to the house to get a pitch fork and a wagon rod to do some probing with. I remember that the hired man was down in the hole we had dug and was probing the sides of it when all at once the soil caved in and almost at his feet was the coyote with bared teeth. I am quite sure no one ever got out of a five foot hole any quicker than that hired man. But the coyote stayed down. The hired man took the shotgun, and with but little provocation, she raised her head and he shot her. He then took the pitch fork and pulled her out of her nesting place. After she was out, we then discovered five newly born coyotes whose eyes were not yet open. They apparently were born between the time she was first seen in the field and the next morning when we dug her out. We took them all to the house, and thought briefly of trying to keep the little ones and feed them, but decided they were too young. There was a bounty on coyotes at the time, perhaps as much as two dollars per scalp. We took the scalps to Oberlin, the county seat, and collected the bounty.³ It was an adventure which provided a bit of excitement. Dad probably deplored the time we spent digging them out, but after all, wages were only \$1.50 per day, and the amount received as bounty made it a financially profitable experience.

³Because coyotes were a threat to livestock and in some places were overly abundant, bounties were offered as an incentive to eradicate coyote populations.

Hunting and trapping were common pursuits for many Kansas teenagers. Even in a studio portrait, these young men were photographed as outdoorsmen. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

I was in high school at Oberlin. We used to loaf around in a restaurant some, where in the evening we might indulge in some cream puffs or other delicacies, if we had a dime. The owner of the restaurant made up a sewing box full of the best chocolate candies, layer on layer—some 14 pounds, it runs in my memory. This he would raffle by selling numbers. When all were sold the lucky number would be drawn from a box in which all numbers were placed. I bought a number and as nothing happened for some time, I had almost forgotten about it.

One evening late, I was coming home from a date and met another student apparently out late for the same reason, who had been down at the restaurant he said and that the drawing had been made and that I was the winner. I thought he was kidding me and so I would not go down to the restaurant that evening. But I was out early next morning, and down to the restaurant at a time when customers were less likely to be there. But when I went in, there was the box on the counter, with a placard, as I remember, showing that I was the winner.

So I took the box of candy up to Kulps' where I was rooming and boarding. I do not remember just how it was dispensed but I know lots of people participated, and I saved a good part of it to take home on Friday evening, and the family and some of the neighbors shared it. My parents' views must have changed somewhat [*on gambling*], or they liked chocolates, for I do not remember that I was chastised particularly, especially as I gave my mother the sewing box, which was elegantly over stuffed inside with green satin. She kept it and used it all her life and when she passed away it came back to my possession. . . . I never became a gambler, but I have had many lucky "breaks" in my lifetime.

My Dad bought the Reed place . . . primarily for pasture. The small pasture on the home place was too small an area to provide for pasture for the increasing number of cattle, young horses and young mules that came with the ability of us kids to help maintain the additional work involved. Of first concern was the fact that there was no water well on the half section. A well driller was obtained and a first try was made either in the draw in the southeast corner of the south quarter or on the shoulder of the draw nearby. It proved to be a dry well. As I remember, the rig was moved to some flat land just west of the southeast corner of the north quarter. The rig was next moved to the place where the well and windmill now stand in the draw, or practically so near the north line of the north quarter. A windmill and large tank were installed. A float in the tank was so arranged with a mechanical apparatus that when the float was lowered to a certain point, the windmill was turned on. When the wind blew and the mill pumped a sufficient volume of water to raise the float to a given point, it turned the windmill off. This worked fairly well. But if the stock drank the water down to where the mill was turned on and there was no wind to turn the windmill and pump more water, the tank would get dry and the stock would get into the tank and disrupt the proper working of the float and it might not work to either turn the mill on or off. For this reason, we had to keep some note of the wind and, if we had calm weather, we made it a point to go up and see if it was working properly. Regardless, someone went by horseback to inspect it at more or less regular intervals. This well always provided adequate water for all the stock we pastured there.

I remember an incident when we had a cow give birth to a calf in this pasture. Dad wanted to take her home, wean the calf and milk the cow. So we went up in the wagon and got the cow tied behind the wagon,

and after some search, found the calf in the taller grass. The cow seemed reluctant to follow the wagon to which she was tied, even though the calf was in the wagon where she could see it. We took them home. Several days later (how many I do not remember but several), someone went up to inspect the windmill. There by the windmill, inside the fencing around it, was a little calf licking at a bit of water that trickled from the pump. No other cow in the pasture was due to have a calf, so there was only one conclusion. The cow had produced twin calves. This explained her reluctance to go when we took her home. How the calf had lived without nourishment was a mystery, but the larger mystery was the instinct which had brought it to the well and to the bit of water available, which was not much more than a damp pump stock.

"The Student in Politics": Dwight D. Eisenhower Speech [1909]

It long has been the custom for students to demonstrate their oratorical skills or essay writing abilities. Often the subjects are patriotic or historical themes. Such was the case in 1909 when three young men—one from Chapman, one from Herington, and one from Abilene—were chosen to address an assembly of Kansas Democrats. One young man spoke on Thomas Jefferson; one spoke on Andrew Jackson. The third, nineteen-year-old Dwight D. Eisenhower, argued for the Democratic party. Over forty years later, some opponents to Eisenhower's Republican campaign for the presidency tried to discredit Eisenhower for his youthful support of Democrats. His speech, however, says less about his political leanings than it does of the times and Eisenhower's own sense of fair play for the "underdog." The young Eisenhower was aware of prevailing political currents. He also knew his audience when he presented "The Student in Politics," a speech duly noticed by the Abilene Daily Reflector and The Dickinson County News.

An old Proverb says: "As the twig is bent so will the tree be inclined." Nowhere does this quotation apply more forcibly than to "The Student in Politics." The young man just starting in politics is taking a very important step in life, and one which in all probability will determine his political standing forever. He will naturally line up with one of the two great political parties and the chances are will remain a life member of that party.

For, a man, after voting the straight party ticket for several elections, seldom changes from one side to the other. This fact is proven conclusively by the controversy now going on in the Republican party. You know there is one brand of Republicans called Square Dealers, Insurgents, etc. and although these men are loud in their denunciation of Cannon, Aldrich and a few others, who are hidebound party men, yet they refuse to join

The Dickinson County News, *Abilene, Kans.*, November 18, 1909, p. 1.

any other party, and at an election vote for the Republican candidates.¹ Thus, in reality, a man's party becomes a part of him, for as truly as he becomes a part of it, and he simply will not leave it.

The average man ceases to reason fairly on the questions involved and always casts his vote as before. True he continues to discuss the political questions of importance but only in an obstinate and lopsided manner of reasoning, in which he simply refuses to see any wrong in his party. Before each election he works himself into a frenzy of loyalty to his party, watches with feverish interest the returns from the different districts, and then goes back to work in the same old way until the next election. Remember, however, we are speaking only of the average voter, whose commonplace duties in life leaves him scarcely any time for politics.

So since a man rarely changes from one party to another, his first vote is probably his most important one, and the causes which influence his first vote are necessarily important to him. In choosing between the two great parties, a young man is often influenced by personal admiration for certain candidates or leaders of his party. A leader of a political party who is a clean and fearless fighter and possesses a winning manner is undoubtedly the means of attracting a large number of votes to that party, for he is naturally the kind of a man that young fellows idealize.

Then there is an inborn desire in all normal and healthy boys to help the smaller of the contestants in an even fight. A young man in speaking of the political situation the other day said, "My father is a Republican and so was his father, but I am going to vote for the Democrats at the next election because I think they need me and the Republicans do not."

But notwithstanding such reasons, as an admiration, love of fair play, the parental vote and the like, a man's first vote is generally cast correctly. He has arrived at an age of self-confidence and has acquired a feeling of self-importance for he figures that he will be about one-fifteenth of a millionth part of the voters of these United States and therefore must be very careful in choosing sides before he is willing to cast his vote either way.

He learns that the party (the Republican) protects our manufacturers by placing a high import duty on all manufactured goods. This practically blots out foreign competition in that line and enables the manufacturers to make enormous profits off of the U. S. citizens. He sees that the rich

¹Joseph G. Cannon was Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives beginning in 1903; Nelson W. Aldrich, a millionaire businessman, was a U. S. senator. The Insurgents claimed to be in line with Progressives and some reforms broached by Populists.

Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1909 high school graduation portrait appeared in The Dickinson County News with "The Student in Politics." (Courtesy Dwight D. Eisenhower Library)

man would still make a good profit, if the duties were removed or at least considerably lowered, and being young, impulsive, vehement and outspoken he calls the system legalized robbery. He also finds that the other party (the Democrat) wants to remove these excessive duties and arrange a tariff that will bring revenue into the U. S. coffers and at the same time be easier on the great mass of the citizens of this country.²

In a further comparison, he learns that the Democrat party wants to make Congress more truly representative of the people, by having the U. S. Senators elected by direct vote of the people.³ The other party op-

²Tariffs were a burning question in the 1908 presidential campaign. Business trusts, believed responsible for high tariffs, were strong, and both political parties promised to do something about tariffs that favored manufacturers by keeping competition low. When President Taft signed the highly disputed Payne-Aldrich tariff bill after his election, he gained the wrath of Republican Insurgents and much of the general population.

³At the time of Eisenhower's speech, U. S. senators were appointed by state legislatures. Not until ratification of the Constitution's Seventeenth Amendment in 1913 were senators elected by popular vote.

poses such a plan or at least has never endorsed it in any of their national conventions. The boy, being rather shrewd, figures out that under such a condition it would be harder for the interests (the rich corporations) to control Congress, and naturally concludes that this is the reason the Republicans oppose such a plan. The young recruit notices, that because one party has been in power for fifty years, with only two brief interruptions, many evils have sprung up in the machinery of the government, which a change in policy for a time would at least remedy if not blot them out.

The young man also sees that the more honest and fearless of the Republican leaders have become disgusted with the policies and actions of the party proper and have branched off into Square Dealers, Insurgents, Progressives and Reformers, though they still cling to the name Republican. He admires these men greatly but he cannot help but remark that they are fighting for many of the same principles which the Democrat party advocates, among them being lower tariff.

So he naturally concludes, that with the Republican party splitting up⁴ and a number of honest and fearless ones tending towards Democracy, that the Democrat party deserves his first vote. And since the first vote generally determines his political standing, we find one more intelligent young man enlisted under the standard of Democracy.

⁴*The splintered Republican party further split in 1912 with Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose candidacy.*

A Year's Calendar: Dickinson County High School Annual [1908-1909]

The 1909 Senior Annual of Dickinson County High School, located in Chapman, was a thin publication with a soft paper cover in red. Despite its modest size, the annual portrayed school life in all its variety and conveyed students' school pride. The photographs and text also illustrated students' pride in themselves. They had good reason to feel this way. At a time when it was not the norm to enter and complete high school, these students had done that. Many had to board in town to attend school, and some were older than their classmates because it had taken them two or three years longer to complete the elementary grades in country schools. This, explained the school's catalogue, was not unusual; in fact, teachers often saw older students as a benefit because "This additional age gives capacity for more and harder work, and more rapid progress."¹ The high school itself was rather remarkable for the time.

Established in 1889, the county high school had several student clubs by 1909, supported athletic programs for both young men and women, and offered courses other than college preparatory. The class of 1909 included four graduates in the College Preparatory course; 18 graduates in the Normal (teacher-training) course; four graduates in the General course of study; and six graduates in the Commercial course, which included shop, home economics, and business classes. The senior class adopted the motto "Get Busy"; notations made in the annual's calendar of events for the year indicate that students were busy, involved, and inclined to add a little humor and fun to their high school careers.

Aug. 31 Students addressed by Supt. Starr.

Sept. 1 Fall term begins. Lots of Freshmen. Things are greening up.

Senior Annual of the Dickinson County High School, 1909, *Chapman Year-books file, Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, KS.*

¹The Dickinson County High School, Catalogue, Chapman, Kansas, 1908-1909 (*Abilene, KS: News Publishing Co., 1909*), p. 12.

Dickinson County High School students attend chapel, 1911. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

Sept. 3 Freshman want to go home to see Ma. Prof. [*professor*] lectures in Chapel² each morning.

Sept. 16 We sang Gloria in Chapel.

Sept. 21 Seniors had a good time at a party in honor of John Stewart.

Sept. 25 Special train to the Fair. All came back broke.

Oct. 3 Y.W.C.A. [*Young Woman's Christian Association*] girls sold pop-corn at the first foot-ball game. J.C.H.S. [*Junction City High School*] 0; D.C.H.S. 12.

Oct. 9 Football boys went to Clay Center. The boys broke training at Wakefield. The bedbugs were awfully bad. Nevertheless we won, 6 to 5. Freshmen girl gives a coming-out party northeast of town. Teachers meet at Abilene.

²*Chapel was an all-school assembly.*

Oct. 14 Mid-term grades. Therefore it has been proved that some of us are fools. Q. E. D.³

Oct. 16 Call for Current Events.

Oct. 17 Crowd of loyal supporters went to Junction and saw a punk game. No score.

Oct. 23 Clay Center met us on our own field. 18 to 0 in our favor. Bonfire and big demonstration in front of Prof's. house.

Oct. 24 Half holiday. Miss Tanner [*Lotos Tanner, science and domestic arts instructor*] sang in Chapel.

Oct. 28 Second football team⁴ went to Enterprise. We got 10 scalps and they got 0.

Oct. 31 Sanborn and [*Herbert*] Rohrer each have a black eye. Which got whipped?

Nov. 5 Girls go to Wichita to Y.W.C.A. Convention.

Nov. 6 Prof. springs a new gag in Chapel. Current events in another form.

Nov. 9 Football team went to Abilene and in spite of the elements and officials we won; score 6 to 0. The delegates from Wichita came back with us. Mr. Dannevik [*Alden Dannevik, assistant principal*] and Miss Scherer [*Nellie C. Scherer, manual arts instructor*] nearly froze to death.

Nov. 12 Big union meeting. Girls gave good reports of the Convention.

Nov. 14 Abilene football team showed their yellow streak and would not play the scheduled game. The Enterprise football team came over and lost in a furious gridiron struggle; score 18 to 0. Whitney brothers are the

³*This stands for the Latin term "Quod erat demonstrandum," meaning "which was to be demonstrated."*

⁴*The Second football team was the equivalent of a junior varsity squad.*

best yet. They prescribed medicine for the Freshmen—it softens the gu-ums.

Nov. 15 Miss Tanner takes a liking to tenor voices.

Nov. 16 Scherer and Tanner entertain their Manual Training classes and Second Football team. Vandals break in and try to make away with the hash, but were surprised and the grub was saved.

Nov. 23 Examinations hit us right in the face. There is much sadness in camp.

Nov. 25 Kids go home to see Ma and Pa and Old Shep.

Nov. 26 All eat turkey. Boys go to Salina to play for Inter-Scholastic Football Championship. In spite of the dope-mixers we punched their goal twenty-three times while they could not score. D.C.H.S. 23, S.H.S. [*Salina High School*] 0.

Nov. 30 Y.W.C.A. Bazaar grand success and the most novel affair held here for years.

Dec. 7 A party went out to skate and some took a swim. They all report a good time.

Dec. 19 K.U. Dickinson's lost on the gridiron east of town. Score 18 to 4. The visitors had bad luck. Basketball game was won by the girls from Hope; score 20 to 4. Football boys entertained by the faculty. Smith Entertainers were fine.

Dec. 23 Senior Day. A big parade in the morning. They marched all over town, giving class yells and singing songs. The bunch was treated to chocolates by "The Racket." After having several pictures taken they disbanded for dinner. In the afternoon they had one of the best class scraps in the history of the school. The Seniors gave their play "The College Window," in the evening to a full house; it was a decided success. So ended one of the best days of the year for the Class of '09.

Jan. 4 Holidays are over and students come back with many New Year's resolutions.

Jan. 9 Many orations. Cooks win first basketball game in tournament for the Trophy Cup.⁵

Jan. 12 Awfully good coasting but fear of committing Shakespeare and terrors of the city bastille kept the students off the hill.⁶

Jan. 13 Herr Weber is trying to cut a wisdom tooth.

Jan. 16 County Teacher's Association meet at the High School. Freshmen sang for the visitors. Montaville Flowers entertained a full house with Dickens' "Christmas Carol."

Jan. 23 Clay Center basketball team win from our second team on our court. Score 24 to 21.

Jan. 25 Seniors gave a party for the Sophomores. It was a very successful party and all enjoyed themselves. Dainty refreshments served.

Feb. 1 Junction City basketball team lose to our second team on our court. Score 42 to 4.

Feb. 6 Cooks win second game in the Tournament of the Cup.

Feb. 9 [James] Akright presents the Cup to the Cooks at Chapel and gives a good speech.

Feb. 12 We celebrated Lincoln's birthday with special exercises in Chapel. Songs, flags and cheering.

Feb. 13 O'Neil gave a fine lecture on "Popular Fallacies." Our boys win from Ft. Riley basketball team. Score 36 to 13.

⁵Since Cooks refers to the school's Cook literary and oratorical society, there must have been an intramural basketball competition among the clubs and organizations.

⁶School legend had it that the Shakespeare Club was organized after the principal caught students sledding one evening, rather than studying; their penalty was to memorize twenty-five lines of Shakespeare.

Feb. 22 Basketball boys went to Ft. Riley and were beaten. Score 18 to 14.

Feb. 27 Miss Tanner entertains Physics class.

March 1 Winds begin to blow. Examinations begin.

March 3 Weary students go home for a few days vacation.

March 4 Basketball boys go to Clay Center and humble Clay in a close game.

March 8 Students come back with renewed zeal for work.

March 23 D.C.H.S. defeats Concordia in basketball with huge winning margin.

March 27 Literary landslide. Cooks make a clean sweep of everything.

Dickinson County High School, like some other Kansas high schools, offered art courses. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

II. Pioneers and Progress (1910–1919)

In 1919, Winfield High School won the state basketball tournament by beating Lawrence 28 to 17. In the same year, the state closed its military draft offices. It was time for Kansas and the country to find “normalcy” after American troops pursued Pancho Villa in Mexico; the nation went to war in Europe; and the country endured an influenza epidemic.

During the decade, labor strikes and racial conflicts mingled with affluence and leisurely pursuits. Kansans, including Clyde Cessna, built airplanes. Crowds gathered to watch aviation barnstormers and to attend chautauquas. Six dol-

Newspaper headlines announced the end of World War I. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

lars bought the revolutionary, pocket-size Kodak camera. Movie theaters offered exciting "silent pictures," and Kansas established a Board of Review of Motion Pictures that censored or banned films altogether. In the last category was D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), banned in Kansas until 1924 because censors and private citizens believed that the film would heighten racism and draw recruits to the Ku Klux Klan.

In 1912, Kansas women gained the right to vote in all elections (in 1919, Congress passed the suffrage amendment to the U. S. Constitution); the state's 1915 sugar-beet crop produced 13 million pounds of sugar; and Kansas went "dry" in 1917. Kansas commemorated the Civil War's fiftieth anniversary in 1911, and thousands of veterans met in a massive reunion while President Taft dedicated Topeka's Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall (later home of the Kansas State Historical Society).

For teenagers in this decade, there were new educational opportunities. In 1915, high school attendance opened to anyone, not just those who had money for tuition. The 1917 Smith-Hughes Act, which gave federal money to high

Scouting was promoted as a club activity for young people. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

school programs, promoted vocational studies in home economics, agriculture, and business skills. At the same time, clubs gained importance. There were Scouts, 4-H, school and church groups, and Arthur Capper's agriculture clubs. During World War I, teenage girls joined canning clubs to preserve food for the homefront; teenagers volunteered for Red Cross work and drilled in high school cadet corps; and many worked to bring in harvests. When the decade ended, Americans looked forward to a better tomorrow.

"I Remember": Josephine Boltz Reminiscence [1910–1920]

In 1910, six-year-old Josephine Boltz, with her mother and two-year-old sister Virginia, stepped down from the Missouri Pacific train at Shields, Kansas. That day began the family's experiences on a Lane County farm. Ten years later, when Josephine was sixteen, her father died. That tragedy altered forever the life she had known. Josephine, her mother, sisters and brother moved to town. In these excerpts from Josephine Boltz's reminiscence, "I Remember," she recalls her time on the farm. Josephine chose the title well. Her memories are clear. The farm and family activities are vividly described, as are the obstacles rural families faced in educating their children. When it was difficult just to ensure an elementary education, high school could seem a faraway goal. For Josephine, the solutions included boarding in town, learning at home, going to school on a motorcycle, and a high school consisting of three students. This reminiscence paints a view of Lane County and western Kansas in the second decade of the twentieth century.

On a windy March morning in 1910 there alighted from the Missouri Pacific fast train from the east, known locally as "the flyer," a young woman in her early thirties and her two little daughters. I was six, the older of the two, and my sister Virginia had just passed her second birthday. . . . My father, who had preceded us some two weeks, met us at the station, and escorted us across the street to the Bitner home. John Bitner operated the general store and post office; my father had become acquainted with him on his arrival, since he needed to stock up on groceries and other items in preparation for our coming. . . . My father had brought our household goods to Lane County earlier while Mother and we two children went back to Ray County Missouri to visit our grandparents, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins. They thought we were

Josephine Boltz, "I Remember," Lane County Historical Society, Dighton, Kansas. Reprinted with permission of the Lane County Historical Society and Museum and Josephine Boltz.

leaving civilization forever, as Western Kansas was thinly settled in those days. There were few telephones, poor roads, and it was before the day of the automobile in this part of the state. . . .

The farm consisted of a half-section lying north and south, E 1/2 27-16-29, the farmstead was at the southeast corner. The house was a two-room sod building. The roof was nearly flat and weeds and cacti grew there, flourishing in the spring rains, dying down when the hot winds of summer came. Colonies of English sparrows built their nests in holes under the eaves. Two small square windows in each side and one in the south afforded light and ventilation. The one door was homemade, and if there were a key to it, I never saw it in the ten years we lived there.

The first summer my father laid a floor, the side of a Missouri Pacific box car, from a recent wreck on the road a mile to the south, in front of the door, and roofed it over with foot-wide boards laid flat, supported by hedge posts at the corners. This offered shade for laundry activities in the summer and a place for the men who worked for us at harvest time or at threshing time to "wash up" before meals. A good-sized boulder stood at one corner; this held washbasins at such times and a cord strung between posts served as a line for the towels pinned to dry. A large wooden packing box set on the north side with its open side toward the south; this usually held milk pails set to air and also served as a house for the dog. A burlap sack on the floor was the only concession to comfort; so far as I can recall the dog slept there no matter what the weather.

Our soddy had a wood floor, and a piece of linoleum that mother had brought from Abilene covered it adequately. An old-fashioned range was used until we bought a kerosene stove for summer use later; a leather-covered couch at one side, the table and chairs, and another dry goods box in another corner which served as a sort of cupboard completed the arrangements in that room, used for cooking and living. The other room was the bedroom, two beds and a dresser almost filled the space. My father put up a shelf along one side on the wall; my mother hung a curtain over it—this served as a closet, the only place we had to hang clothing. We two girls kept our underthings, stockings and such in a wooden cracker-box under the bed. They were supposed to be kept pushed back far enough that they could not be seen. I well remember my feelings of guilt and disappointment when Grandmother, who was visiting, stubbed her toe on my box which was barely under the edge of the bed, and we were unable to make a trip we had planned to Wild Horse Corral.

During World War I, high school canning clubs were a patriotic way to conserve food and support the war effort. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

To the south of the house some twenty feet was the "cave" in which we kept apples, potatoes, canned goods and such. A wooden horse-trough stood along one side and it was our task to drain it every morning and refill it with fresh, cold water from the nearby well; in this mother set the milk and butter to keep them as cool as possible. Beyond the cave was the windmill. I can hear in memory the creaking sound it made, with the "thump" at the end when the rod rose and fell back, as it pumped lazily on a summer evening. Halfway to the top two boards were laid across to guide the rod; there was a square notch cut into the two touching sides, making a hole through which the rod passed; its sides were worn smooth and satiny by the friction of wood against wood. We liked to sit on the shelf made by the boards and munch apples or look out over the countryside. After harvest we could count dozens of stacks of golden wheat in the sunshine, shimmering far to the distant horizon.

At the foot of the windmill stood the stock tank in which we sometimes played, although the water was usually too cold for comfort, since it

was kept filled with fresh water and used for irrigating the garden. A hose set in the water, and started by suction, ran almost constantly during the long hot summers, but we never lacked for water, a precious commodity in many localities.

The garden was situated for ease in watering near the windmill. My parents always raised a good garden, it provided much of our food—beans, peas, beets, cucumbers, melons and tomatoes, besides the early spring crops of lettuce, radishes and onions. Mother always canned a good supply of many of these vegetables. It was our task to watch the hose, move it from place to place, and see that the water level did not get too low in the tank, in which case we were to turn on the windmill and then watch to see that the tank did not run over, thus making a mudhole nearby.

To the west stood the “little barn” a long, low unpainted shed, used only for penning up calves to be weaned; after we bought our first car, one end was fitted with a large door and it was used for a garage. . . . Beyond the “little barn” stood “the BARN”—somewhat larger, with stalls on either side of a large, open middle area, where hay and feed was piled. At one side stood a large wooden feed box, a packing box with a lid to keep out rodents; we loved to lift the lid and sniff the odor of grain and bran. The sunlight shone through the wide cracks, and it was a fine place to play. . . .

To the northwest of the house was a granary. It had once been painted red, but had faded to a sort of orange-yellow. Here the odor of grain was

In the 1910s, Kansas governor and then U. S. senator Arthur Capper sponsored agricultural clubs. Members of an Anderson County Capper Club are pictured at a gathering in about 1920. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

Teenagers often were expected to help with family chores, including garden work. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

supplanted in the winter by the odor of Wright's Liquid Meat Smoke, as the homecured hams, shoulders and sides of bacon were hung from the rafters after butchering-time.

Two small buildings, one sod the other frame, for the hens, completed the farmstead. A lean-to open-front shed on the north side of the granary housed the spring wagon, which, pulled by a team of mules, was our only method of transportation until my father bought the Overland car in 1916. Being a Missourian he liked to work mules, and had bought two young unbroke teams when he came, and until about 1916 or 1917 they were the only work animals he had.

The car, which we called an "automobile"—no one at that time used the word "car"—made the trip to Shields in much less time. It had side curtains which could be snapped on, and a top which could be folded down in fine weather. The wind whipped one furiously when it was down and one had to hold on his hat with both hands, but it was a great improvement on the mules. . . .

Our own district school which was a mile north and a half-mile east of the farmstead, was a small once-painted building, known locally as the "two by four" school,¹ although its real name was Liberty District 16. My

¹*Although schools had official names, such as Liberty District # 16, local residents often named schools informally. Names might suggest some geographic landmark, location, or—in the case of the "two by four" school—its cramped interior or general size.*

first teacher was Grace McMillen in the fall of 1910. The next winter no school was held there, as there were so few pupils, and my father took me to Shields every Monday morning and I stayed all week with the John McMillen family who operated the hotel. My teacher was still "Miss Grace" and I was in the third grade that winter, having covered two grades the first year, since I could go at my own speed, being the only one in the class. . . .

The next fall there was still no school in our district due to the fact that there were only four pupils so the district allowed each family transportation but since we had no car this was not much help²; I was too small to ride, and this was before the pony was bought, and it was too far to walk. My parents arranged with the grammar room teacher Arthur Heaney, who lived at Healy, and rode back and forth on a motorcycle to pick me up and take me to school, in return for the transportation money. I rode in front of him on the tank which necessitated my mother making me a warm coat, buying leggings, warm mittens and a scarf to keep off the chill winds which blew in our faces as we flew down the dusty road. Sometimes we struck a dust pocket and found ourselves upset in the dirt; fortunately I was never hurt as Mr. Heaney made a special effort to protect me.

Other years we went to our own school with a few new pupils who had moved into the district. One year the teacher, Leona Bower, boarded with our family, and again I felt I had a special stand-in [*avored position*], but she made a special effort to be fair, and it did me little good. For some weeks we were the only pupils and the board, of which my father was a member, allowed us to have school at home. We used the extra room which by this time had been built on at the back of the house, and kept regular hours and studied and recited as we would have at the schoolhouse.

That was the year [1918] I graduated from the eighth grade. I hoped to attend high school that fall, but it had been a very poor crop year, and my parents were unable to pay board for me and would not let me "batch" in town, in a rented room as many did at that time. So it was arranged that I should take a few eighth grade subjects over, along with piano

²*A school law passed in 1907 said that school boards had to pay for conveyance of pupils living farther away than three miles from the schoolhouse; if the distance was more than two, but less than three, the board had the option of paying but was not required to do so.*

*Some high schools, like the one in Hoxie, offered home economics classes in sewing.
(Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Long Collection)*

lessons. I did my practicing between noon and the last recess at the home of my chum, Ruth Kell, where a piano was available. Now I wish I had worked harder at it, but there was no one there to push me; I was strictly on my own.

The next fall, 1919, the upper grades teacher at Shields, George Nichols, had taught in a small high school in the eastern part of the state before coming to southern Gove County. He had a daughter, Flora, who was ready for high school, and Ray Tillotson was also ready; the board allowed Mr. Nichols to give us the first year of high school; we came to Dighton to take the semester exams, passed, and so received our first year. We had no library, and no lab equipment at all, but we studied a half year each of Physical Geography and General Science, (very elementary) Ancient History, English and Algebra and called ourselves Shields High School! Mr. Nichols was an excellent teacher—one frequently needs to become older to realize these things. There was no playground equip-

ment at school—perhaps one of the boys had a ball and bat and a mitt, or someone brought a rope and we played “jump the rope”—

Other games were “Blackman,” “Dare Base,” “Ante Over” or for the girls “Needles’ Eye” and in winter when there was snow on the ground, “Fox and Geese” and other games whose names I do not recall. We ate our lunches sitting at our desks in winter or against the schoolhouse, or in a secluded corner of the school yard in the summer. They consisted of sandwiches, hard-cooked eggs, fruit, an apple, or maybe some canned fruit in a small glass jar, and perhaps a piece of cake or some cookies. We often had home-cured ham sandwiches, and we sometimes traded them to the Van Pelt kids for bologna sandwiches—this highly-seasoned meat was a treat to us; my father would have been horrified if he had known about it.

Water was brought from a neighboring well at the “two-by-four” [school], or perhaps the teacher brought it from home. In Shields it was carried from a well in town and poured into a double-walled insulated “fountain” with a faucet at one side. Each of us had his own cup, which was as much a part of our school equipment as our books and slate; if it happened to be a collapsible cup we felt it was highly superior to the usual pint tin cup. . . .

Wheat harvest time was a time to look forward to. . . . Supplies of canned goods were laid in, hams were carefully set aside, crocks of fried-down sausage were checked to see that they were in good condition, and all usual household tasks were set aside as far as possible, for there were seven or eight hungry men to be fed three times a day, and every pound

Josephine Boltz, like the young women shown in this wheat harvest photo, drove wagons of grain. She considered it her “great privilege.” (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

of butter, every loaf of bread, every pie and cake and every dressed chicken were prepared in the farm kitchen. Most women had a "hired girl" for the season if one could be found, usually a neighbor girl. Water had to be carried, a certain amount of laundry done and trips made to town for needed fresh supplies. The women of the family usually took over the tasks of milking during harvest season—the milk had to be strained, cooled, skimmed, and pails scalded and sunned, the cream churned and then there were always chickens to be fed, beans to be picked and the never-ending task of keeping the garden watered and hoed.

My father usually ran the header, for combines had not yet been used at that time. Each header barge, a big hayrack with one low side was handled by two men, who took turns spreading the wheat and driving the team. When a round of the field was made another rack took over—all of this if the harvest was heavy enough—and the filled rack unloaded at the stackyard, where two men stacked it. This was a job which demanded an expert who knew how to stack the wheat so it would not slide off to one side, and would shed rain properly.

Stackyards consisted of two to four stacks, depending on the harvest. When threshing time came a few weeks after harvest, allowing the grain to go through the "sweat," a necessary step if it were to be in condition to keep, the separator pulled into the space between the stacks, connected by a long belt to the engine, which was set back far enough to minimize the danger of fire, since it was operated by steam, furnished by burning coal.

If harvest was a time of tension, threshing time was doubly so—we girls waited eagerly for the excitement it created in our quiet lives. The crew would be in the neighborhood for several days, and we knew about when it would arrive at our farm. In our neighborhood Ford Brown did the threshing for nearly everyone—we never hired anyone else.

The first step was the arrival of the cookshack, a small kitchen on four wheels. It was unpainted and had long windows on both sides, screened and covered with boards which were hinged and could be propped up to let in air, for the cooking was done on a coal range. The shack was set near the windmill, for all water had to be carried to it in a bucket. "Aunt Matt" who presided over it ruled with a stern hand, and woe be-tide the man who forgot his manners and used language unsuitable for a lady in her presence.

A vast amount of work was required to cook for the hungry crew who descended on her three times a day, and the space under the shack

was soon filled with empty milk and vegetable and fruit cans. Meals consisted of meat, usually cured ham or chicken and occasionally fresh beef brought from town that morning, beans, potatoes, cabbage slaw, canned fruit, pies or cakes, and canned vegetables of all kinds, usually beans, corn or tomatoes. Biscuits or light bread were baked fresh nearly every day, as were the pies and cakes. After the dishes were done Aunt Matt would sit in the shade of the shack and leisurely pick over a batch of beans for tomorrow's meal, while she placidly smoked her pipe; this was interesting to us—we had never seen a woman smoke a pipe.

The table was long and narrow, simply two boards braced and nailed to the side of the shack; long benches served for chairs. The whole thing was as clean as soap and water and a daily cleaning could make it—rinsing was accomplished by throwing a bucket of water on the floor, this served the double purpose of cooling and cleaning the shack.

A few days before the arrival of the outfit at our farm we had frequent visits from the "water monkey" and his wagon, a cylindrical tank also mounted on wheels, pulled by a team of horses, to keep the steam engine supplied with water. A large hose was thrust into the depths of the stock tank, and the water pumped in by hand. If a few quiet days occurred the water monkey sometimes had to range far and wide to keep up the supply.

In the house my mother had only to cook for the men who hauled the grain; neighbors usually traded work. The grain was taken either to the granary which was small, or to the elevator in town. As soon as I was old enough it became my great privilege to drive a team of horses and take a load to Shields. At first my father had me wait until his own wagon was filled, and we went together, but in later years, I was allowed to go alone. It was a thrill to drive on the scales where the grain was weighed and tested, then into the elevator where the rear end of the wagon was lowered, and the grain ran into the pit, then back to the scales to be weighed again before starting home with the empty wagon rattling as the horses trotted along.

Since we had only 320 acres, pasture included, my father did all his own work, except at harvest and threshing time. Harvest help was usually itinerant, with help picked from a number of men who "rode the rods" into the wheat area at that time of year. Some returned year after year to help the same farmer. Sometimes our help was neighboring ranchers, who having no wheat of their own were willing to hire out during harvest.

When my father was in the field it became my duty to take him a drink in the middle of the afternoon—a quart whiskey bottle was filled with water "from the northeast corner" of the well, to quote his request, wrapped in a wet towel and then in newspapers; I timed the trip to meet him at the end of the field. He would pause, let the horses rest for a few minutes, while he drank deeply of the cool water, chatted a little with me, then gathered up the reins, clucked to the reluctant teams and began the long weary round of the field, while I trudged back to the house.

I always helped with the teams when he came in at noon and in the evenings, and one summer I helped cultivate a good-sized acreage of cane—I was much more at home outdoors than in the kitchen and it fell to Virginia to help mother there. . . .

A trip to Dighton twelve miles away was an all-day affair until we got the car. . . . The Dighton Hotel was built about 1916—on one grand occasion we ate there. The population of Dighton was only a little over 500 in 1920 and there was an influx of residents that year since there had been a good crop, so it could not have been much over 450 at the time, but to us it seemed a real city. Most of our clothing was made at home, sometimes from clothing sent to us by an aunt who was a school teacher, or from material ordered from Montgomery Ward. Shoes and other items came from the same mail order house; we occasionally bought yard goods at Dighton. . . .

We attended Sunday School at the little Shields church. The first few years it was held in the afternoon. We rode the pony together and later, after I was old enough we drove the car—I began driving at the age of twelve but did not take the car out alone until somewhat later; there were no legal restrictions but my father thought I was too young.³

If there were things we lacked we scarcely knew it—an aunt sent us St. Nicholas Magazine for several years and we traded it to the Kell children in Shields for "The Youth's Companion"; my father subscribed to the Kansas City Journal and there were several farm papers and magazines that came to the household—we read everything we could lay our

³*Beginning in 1913, Kansas law required car registration, and there were some municipal governments that earlier had required drivers to have certificates or licenses. However, a state law requiring the driver's license was not passed until 1931. That law set the minimum driving age at thirteen, if parents assumed responsibility; if not, the age was sixteen. License fees were twenty-five cents for everyone but taxi drivers and truckers who paid two dollars.*

hands on, as well as the limited library the school offered. I recall "Water Babies," "Allan Quatermain," "Rollo in Paris," "A Tale of Two Cities" all of which I read or at least sampled. . . .

When we first came to Lane County we were unaware for some time that less than two miles north of us the "breaks" along the river began, so far as we could see the country was flat to the North Pole. The first time we visited the John McMillens we were entranced by the view, the rugged hills and the valley of the Smoky Hill [*River*], reaching far to the east and west. Mother especially loved the outdoors and we spent many Sunday afternoons wandering over the hills. We traveled in the spring wagon; my father did not care for such recreation and sat in the shade of the wagon reading his "Saturday Evening Post" while the mules munched a little fodder in the back of the wagon. Mother and we two girls roamed at will over the canyons, hunting shark's teeth and other fossils, heedless of the snakes which might have been there. We saw few and were never bitten; what we would have done if we had I have no idea. My father carried staple pullers and a hammer and we took down fences and stapled them back again, going wherever we liked. . . .

A highlight of the week was the usual trip Saturday afternoon to Shields to do our "trading" for that was what it really was; the farm housewife traded eggs, cream and butter for groceries. If there was any amount remaining, it was left on the books as a "due bill" to be used when a sack of sugar or a case of canned fruit or vegetables were needed at a later time. Fresh vegetables were scarce; we bought potatoes, cabbage and apples and stored turnips and other root vegetables in the ground to be dug up when needed.

Shields was a much busier place then than now—in the late teens there was a hotel, a bank, two general stores, a lumber yard, a barber shop, a blacksmith shop, a cafe and a garage, and perhaps a few more homes. It was a trade center for a large area to the north, and much wheat was shipped out, as well as cattle; stockyards were often filled ready for shipping. We liked to see our school friends on Saturday, and the women of the community exchanged news and gossip as they waited for their eggs to be counted, and the groceries made ready, for there was no self-help then; one told the clerk what was wanted and he put it up in a box, or in the egg case, ready to be taken home.

Thus, ten years passed; happy ones as far as we were concerned, for we did not feel deprived, but it saddens me to think how discouraged my parents must have been at times, when crops failed to develop because of

lack of rain or because hail came when it was nearly ready to harvest. Some years we had fair crops, some little or none; my father always said we stayed because we were too poor to leave.

He died suddenly in the summer of 1920 and my mother began making plans to move to Dighton, since I was ready for the second year of high school, Virginia was in the eighth grade, our sister Emily was ready to begin first grade, our only brother Virgil, who was born in 1918, was still too young to go to school. An apartment was found after a number of trips to town, a public sale was held and we moved about the first of September just in time for school, and a new part of my life began.

“Pioneer School Teaching in the 20th Century”: Maude Elliott Reminiscence [1917–1918]

The U. S. census of 1890 concluded that immigration and habitation had closed America's frontiers. Yet, there were areas where frontier conditions prevailed. Josephine Boltz and her family in Lane County certainly knew this, and Maude Elliott discovered it in 1917 when she went to western Kansas as a schoolteacher. A 1916 graduate of Lawrence High School, Maude attended the University of Kansas for one year and was about to leave her teenage years behind when she took a teaching position in Finney County. With her teacher's pay, she hoped to return to the university. This she did, culminating in an M.A. in the Romance Languages in 1924. In 1976, when Maude Elliott put her memories to paper, she was a professor of Spanish at the University of Kansas and a personal mentor and friend to foreign students attending the university. Her 1976 reminiscence, "Pioneer School Teaching in the 20th Century," described conditions in a newly organized school district where residents dealt with the hard truth that it was easier to establish a school than to maintain it. In her reminiscence, Maude Elliott, perhaps unintentionally, also portrayed herself as a "pioneer," attempting to conduct a classroom when she was herself barely out of school.

In this bicentennial year, everyone becomes more interested than usual in historical events—in things of the "Olden Days." My story happened in 1917–1918. That may not seem like "Olden Days" to people who are reviving historical artifacts of 100 or more years ago. But although my experience as a teacher in the sand hills of western Kansas, took place only 59 years ago, it resembles in many ways experiences of pioneers of hundred or more years ago.

In the fall of 1916, as a freshman at K.U., I wrote a composition for English I, beginning: "To me the western Kansas prairie is the most dis-

Maude Elliott Reminiscence, Elliott Papers, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas [hereafter cited as Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries]. Reprinted with permission of the Kansas Collection.

agreeable place I have ever known. It is desolate; the people live miles and miles apart; they are not intimately acquainted with their neighbors; they have few friends. They seem cut off from the rest of the world.

"Of course there are people who have taken up claims in the sand hills because they love the wide-open spaces, the mirages, and the beautiful sunsets. They hope to raise cattle, or possibly cultivate the land by dry-farming or irrigation. But no one can imagine before experiencing it the intense summer heat and the severe winter cold and blizzards; also the unbroken winds at all seasons."

This I wrote in the fall of 1916. One year later I found myself in the midst of the sand hills in a tract of land newly opened in Finney County, to people who wished to take out claims—one of the very last tracts of this sort in the country, I believe. When I arrived there, it was not even an organized school district. I attended the organization meeting. The people who came to that meeting were parents of my pupils-to-be. They all lived in dug-outs or claim shacks or possibly a dwelling that was half above, half underground.

To help you understand the conditions existing in the area where I taught nearly sixty years ago, let me explain a little about claims and claim shacks and why they happened to be in Finney County, Kansas, in 1917. I knew very little about them then, and not a great deal now about statistics involved, dates of settlements, and the whole federal program. But I do know that the federal government opened up tracts of land for people who wished to acquire homes, farms or ranches, and who were willing to live on the land and make improvements and finally own the land when conditions were met. In most cases a relatively small sum of money had to be paid; in all cases improvements (at least a claim shack) had to be built; and the settlers had to live on the land a certain number of months a year—for 3 years or more before "claiming" the land as their own. In most cases, I believe, one person could claim and prove up on 160 acres.¹

¹The 1862 Homestead Act allowed 160 acres to anyone twenty-one years old or older, or who was head of the household; the 1873 Timber Culture Act offered 160 acres to anyone planting 40 acres of trees and maintaining them for 10 years; and land was cheap (\$2 to \$10 per acre) from railroads selling their surplus land. Nevertheless, land remained unclaimed, and it was not until the demand for increased agricultural production during World War I that additional settlement occurred in western Kansas; in Finney County the population increased from 3,469 in 1900 to 7,474 by 1920 (part of this came with packing-house operations in Garden City, but it also reflected additional land settlement).

The parents of many of Maude Elliott's students in Finney County lived in claim shacks such as this. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Elliott Collection)

All this was common knowledge in 1917, but what was unique about my district was that it was in the midst of other areas long since claimed, improved, and organized into school districts. Mine was the last such so far as I know. When people in Lawrence heard about my teaching and the conditions there in 1917, they could scarcely believe that such conditions existed at so late a date. The fact that I lived 20 miles from a railroad, a post office and a town and that the nearest telephone was six miles away, (the only telephone in my district) all this astonished everyone, even at the time. Of course there were no highways and few cars to use the poor roads that did exist.

All the areas around my district had been settled previously and the inhabitants of other school districts were better organized, lived in better dwellings and seemed a more stable kind of people—they were farmers or ranchers—not just people proving up on the land. Meade County, not far from where I taught, was settled in about 1885—32 years earlier; Oklahoma was opened to settlers and became a state in 1907—ten years before my going to teach in this brand new district where nearly everyone went because he couldn't get along anywhere else. They tried to raise cattle, broom corn, and I was told watermelons. I saw no evidence of these crops, but I did see great tumbleweeds blown over the hills in "herds" so it

Maude Elliott with her pistol. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Elliott Collection)

seemed, suggesting buffalo on the move. I also saw rattlesnakes, coyotes, and prairie chickens, and sand—sand everywhere—no trees—no gardens, and not even many fences.

Why did I go there? I had always lived in Lawrence and had had one year at K.U. My father was a mail-carrier here [*in Lawrence*] and I had five brothers and sisters who all wanted to go to K.U., too. I needed to earn money to continue my education. And most important of all as a reason for going to Finney County, we had a beloved uncle and aunt in Garden City who could be my family in that part of the state. This uncle helped me get the job in this newly opened up section of Finney County—20 miles southwest of Garden City. It was a fine job, so I thought; I would earn \$55.00 a month, walk 3 miles each morning to school, teach 20 children in eight grades—32 classes a day—do the janitor work, including making the fire in cold weather; then walking 3 miles home to the claim shack I shared with Miss Downey who was proving up on a claim and teaching school in a district more settled than mine²; because the claims of land in her district had been taken earlier and claim shacks had given way to houses, and other improvements had been made. Miss Downey rode to her school about three miles from her claim shack in a

²*It was not unusual for single female homesteaders to supplement their incomes with teaching, as Miss Downey evidently did.*

different direction from my school, in a buggy behind a gentle old horse. Her school building was more modern than mine, and her older students were glad to act as janitor for a small fee. Miss Downey took a gun with her because of the fact that a teacher had been killed in a place not too many miles from our districts the previous year. So she took her shot gun and I took my Colt's 38. . . . I had occasion to use my gun on rattlesnakes—7 to be specific. I killed 8, but the 8th, a small one near our house appeared after I'd emptied my gun, so I took off my shoe and killed the poor little thing with a blow from the heel of my shoe. I wouldn't have killed it except that it was too near our front door for comfort. I also once got a shot at a coyote, but it was at quite a distance and apparently I hit him only a glancing blow in the leg that made him leap into

Although automobiles were the most common form of mechanized transport, some young people owned motorcycles. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Long Collection)

the air but hurt him so little he almost ignored it. I had no proof of my hit to send home, as I did with the rattlesnakes. Their rattles came easily in letters. However, I needed my gun as much for protection against the clerk of the school board as for anything else. He was Frank Clare, a big, strong, vigorous man who lived a mile or so from Miss Downey's and on my way to school. He was a criminal who moved to this new district to carry on his favorite activities—stealing cattle, drinking and stirring up trouble. These facts were common knowledge, but in spite of that he was selected clerk of the school board. He had the best house in the district—half dug-out, half above ground; he had the only windmill I can remember seeing anywhere in the sand hills. He had a Model T Ford, the only one in several districts—remember this was 1917; he had a motorcycle, horses, cattle, and a sweet and gentle little wife and four children, 3 of whom went to my school. In fact, Frank Clare, a criminal, who couldn't read or write, couldn't sign his own name, was the clerk of my school board. He "signed" my \$55.00 warrants each month with an X. As I said, he stole cattle; had fights nearly every time he went to town in the taverns, speak-easies or wherever he went to drink. This was before Prohibition of course, but as you probably know, Kansas has always been dry, about the driest state in the Union.³ So taverns and customers alike were acting illegally. Within a year after my leaving Finney County, Frank Clare had his last fight; he was killed during a brawl in a tavern. I felt relief when that news reached me.

A final use for my gun might have been to shoot a hole in my foot so I could go home to recover. I thought of doing this every day the first few weeks, as I wept all the way to school. My tears were the only drops that fell on that dry road. I was homesick!!!

Now you've seen pictures of a claim shack, the one where I lived, you've seen the best house in my district, half dug-out, half above ground. And I've mentioned other dug-outs. One family in my district, the Blockers, lived in a real dug-out; at one time eleven of them, 9 children and their parents. Three or four of the children attended my school. The first week at school when I was trying to get acquainted with my pupils, Lina Blocker, about seven years old, was drawing a picture on the blackboard. I asked: "Is that your house, Lina?" Her answer: "We ain't got no

³*Prohibition was debated from settlement days, and Kansas laws in the 1880s tried to enforce temperance. The state, however, was not officially "dry" until 1917. National prohibition came with the 1920 Volstead Act.*

house: it's a hole in the ground." Later, one Sunday I walked the several miles to visit the Blockers and found that Lina had spoken the truth. On approaching the claim, the only sign of a house was smoke coming from a hole in the ground. On closer approach, a mattress could be seen lying flat on the ground, on top of a screen door that covered steps down to the interior of the house—an area divided into two rooms where people, chickens and dog lived together. And this family had come from the east, from a good home. But they had had misfortunes that drove them to seek land and a home in the sand hills.

Before going on to my own school, you might like to see the picture of a fine school, where a friend of mine from Lawrence taught the same year I taught in the sand hills. Hers was probably the last sod school in the country. Her district though not far from mine, 10 or 12 miles, had been settled earlier so that her pupils lived in real houses and their families were of a more stable sort of farmers and ranchers. The teacher at the sod school always lived quite near the school—a good school, warm in the winter and fairly cool in hot weather; she lived in a comfortable house with a nice family who gave her her meals, of course.

Now to get back to my own district, I'll show you the development of my school from a chuck wagon. . . . Originally it served as a mobile cook-shack for harvesters, fieldworkers, or other work gangs. The next stage in development of my school came when they used the chuck for a shoe shop in Garden City. It was still a moveable room; they simply put Shoe Shop above the door. Finally when mules had drawn the chuck wagon the 20 miles from Garden City to my district, men had set the wheels down in the sand, and nailed roofing or building paper to the sides and down to the ground to keep some of the wind from coming in through the cracks in the sides and up through the cracks in the floor; but they did nothing to the front of the chuck wagon. They left the sign of its last use "Shoe Shop," and the steps to the little porch, so my school district went by the name of "Shoe Shop." But the name seemed to be about the only thing entirely satisfactory about the chuck wagon made into a school; plans for a new building across the road had long been in the making. It was supposed to be [*ready*] for use by September when I began teaching. Then it was promised for use by Thanksgiving; then by Christmas. When I left the sand hills at the end of February, it was still only a skeleton of a building.

Now, why did I leave after only five months when the school year lasted seven? I left because of several things—the unfinished building be-

ing the least of them. The real reasons were because of Frank Clare and the Norton family. I'll take these in reverse order and explain about the Nortons. They were a family of five living in two claim shacks, proving up on two claims. In one claim shack, lived three of them, Mr. and Mrs. Norton, senior, and their daughter, Lena, my pupil. In the other shack nearby lived the Norton son and his wife. Every year after Christmas the older Mr. Norton left his family to go to Nebraska to make, transport and sell boot-leg whiskey—his regular occupation—his only occupation; in fact, his leaving the sand hills the first of the year was most fortunate for me, because my living at Miss Downey's at that very time became impossible—unless I wanted to live alone. You see, Miss D. unexpectedly married a widower who had proved up on a claim near her school. She sent word to me at Christmas that she would not be living in her own claim shack, and as it turned out I never saw Miss Downey again. I heard that her marriage did not last even to the end of the school year and that she had had to use her shot gun in deciding matters. In any case, I was happy to learn that the Nortons could provide me with board and room since Mr. Norton had gone to Nebraska. Their three room shack was smaller than Miss Downey's one room shack; but it was fairly warm and much nearer my school. I didn't mind sharing it with my pupil and her mother since the three mile trek from Miss Downey's would have been quite frightening during the cold months after Christmas. Some days blinding blizzards made it necessary to feel one's way along fences, and there were few fences along the three miles between Miss D. and my school.

My life at the Nortons proved interesting even though I was cut off from my Garden City friends almost completely. The distance from Garden to my new sand hill home was greater and the weather quite severe, so the Nortons were my "close" companions, and they were a completely new experience for me. The son was a draft-dodger and in the first world war that was considered illegal, of course, unpatriotic and completely dishonorable. All the Nortons were ignorant, talked about the "Kayzer," the government and the war in a fashion quite new to me. So I wrote about them to my family—wrote every day, sort of a diary; and my letters might not be mailed for a month or more. It didn't occur to me that the Nortons would examine all my possessions when I was at school; it would never occur to me that others would read my letters, written daily but waiting to be mailed. And most surprising of all, they admitted it to me and were a bit unpleasant about the way I wrote of my life with them. They definitely did [*not*] enjoy seeing themselves as I saw them. This came to light

at the same time that Frank Clare tried to call my bluff at school. I had had an experience in November fairly early in the school year in which Frank Clare was involved.

I was riding into Garden City with a neighbor in a spring wagon drawn by two mules. You see—if I could get into town on Saturday on my own, my uncle would bring me back to the sand hills on Sunday in his Model T; while if I went with Miss Downey in her buggy drawn by an old horse, I'd be expected to ride back with her next day. This meant spending most of Saturday and Sunday bumping along in an old-fashioned buggy—20 miles in, 20 miles back. One Saturday I started to Garden City on foot, but was picked up by a passer-by before walking more than about 5 miles. Now the time I was riding in the mule-drawn spring wagon, we were rattling along the road which consisted of deep ruts into which the wheels sank several inches, when Frank Clare drove up behind us in his Model T; honked his horn threateningly demanding that we get out of the ruts so he could proceed in them. Of course, we couldn't swerve out of the ruts immediately without damage to the wagon, so Mr. Clare in a rage jerked his car out, drove up beside us and suddenly turned his car into the side of the mules, who went straight up in the air, broke the harness, over-turned our wagon, and ran away leaving Ben Tullot and me lying on the prairie 15 miles from town. Ben was hurt more than I. He had a leg injury, while I suffered only from annoyance and from being shaken up. Ben had to hobble after his mules while I was rescued by a passer-by before too long a wait. Ben remarked, as he started out on the search for the mules: "That Frank Clare better not come near me again, or there'll be singin' at his house."

Now to get back to the reasons for my leaving the sand hills, that is, the Frank Clare reason. It was the end of February and he was slowly working on the new school house across the way from my school. His children always went over to be with him at recess and at noon and had their lunch with him. As I've said, most of the families in my district came there because they couldn't get along anywhere else. They couldn't get along well with each other after they got to the sand hills because they lived under difficult conditions, had to be aggressive to survive and were jealous of anyone who had more than others, as the Clares did. The children brought the family feuds to school, and recess and noon periods were anything but relaxation and play. On Friday noon, the last week in February, Lena Norton came to me complaining that Emma Clare had stolen her precious pocket-knife. She could see it in Emma's desk. It was

not uncommon for these children to take each other's treasures, because I couldn't be inside during recess and at noon guarding their possessions, and outside preventing fights at the same time. There were often wounds to treat and tempers to calm. I kept first aid supplies for the one; for the tempers, I'm afraid I had no cure. I'll never forget the day that little Lina Blocker was guilty of some misdemeanor at recess. As the children lined up to march in after recess, I asked her to step out of line. She responded by taking flight over the nearest sand hill. I awaited her return, knowing she couldn't go the five miles home alone. She must wait for the older siblings. When she decided to face the music, she returned and confronted me defiantly and then without a word from me, she blurted out: "You can go to Hell and I'll meet you at the iron gate." She left me speechless. I pretended not to understand and shortly we entered the school together. So I never did find out how [*to control tempers*].

Now to return to Lena Norton's complaint of Emma Clare's taking her knife. As the three Clare children were with the father at the new school site, I went over to confront Emma in front of her father. I must say I think Mr. Clare was afraid of me, even though he was my board official, maybe because he was. At any rate, he became furious and blurted out: "You can accuse my boys of anything—they probably did it. But my little girl would never steal or lie." And to his children, "Go and get your books and go home," and to me, "It would be a good idea if you did the same." "Fine," I said, "That's just what I'll do. You never kept your word about finishing this building. I'll come to your house tomorrow for my warrant." I really surprised myself by resigning on the spot—if you can call it that. Maybe I was dismissed. Mr. Clare began to protest my leaving saying that I had been satisfactory in general; in fact, he urged me to stay. You see he had no authority to dismiss me; and I'd get to Garden City and tell the County Superintendent my version of the story before he could. He got there first the day he ran into our mules, and made up a fine story that most people didn't believe, but this time I'd be first.

I told him that as it was the last Friday of the month, my records at the school were all completed and I would leave immediately. All that remained for me to do was to make arrangements to get to Garden City; to take leave of the Nortons; and also of my school board members. The most unpleasant step to be taken was to stay overnight at the Nortons and to take leave of them knowing that they were thinking of the letters they'd read telling my opinions of them. Most of the stories about them I wrote for my family's entertainment were not derogatory in any way, be-

cause the Nortons were kind to me and tried to provide amusement and diversion as much as possible. They were limited, of course, in opportunities and had no conception of what I might enjoy; but they tried. They tried to teach me to milk a cow, for instance. I couldn't learn, though we had a cow at home and my father just didn't think of teaching us to milk because we weren't interested. Then they offered their horse for me to ride on Saturday. I was delighted until I learned that it had never had a woman on its back and I had to ride side saddle on a man's saddle. I had no special riding clothes, of course. They helped me mount the horse which immediately took off speedily for parts unknown to me, but turned out to be places I'd be glad to know later. I soon gained control of my horse and rode around my district; and all went well till I had to get off to open a gate. This pleased my horse till I tried to get on again. That displeased my horse and he began to buck when I had partly got onto the saddle. The saddle then slipped to the side and the horse kept bucking and I kept clinging until all my hairpins fell out, and finally I had to give up, get down and lead [*the*] horse home. I had ridden some 18 miles around my district, but fortunately found myself only a couple of miles from home when horse and I had to become equal partners, both walking. I had enjoyed the ride—most of it, and later, the last Saturday of February found that the trip with horse was most helpful, because I needed to cover the same territory on foot to take my leave of the sand hills.

On that last Saturday I started early in the morning, visited the Williams, 1 1/2 miles from home and was invited to stay with them that night. I was delighted to do so and told them I'd try to be back before dark. Then I went the 2 1/2 miles to the Clares to collect my \$55.00 warrant with his X signature; then to the other school board members for their signatures and to take my leave. Fortunately one of the board members had a phone—the only one in the whole district—so I could call my uncle in Garden City and ask him to come for me the next day. Finally, I returned to the Nortons for my possessions—in fact returned either two or three times that late afternoon to get my suitcases. Then I could relax, have a simple dinner with my hosts and retire early. But first we all had fun trying to count up the miles I traveled since that morning. Something over twenty, seemed about right, with 5 or 6 of the miles being the trips back and forth for suitcases—heavy suitcases, 2 each trip.

The Williams claim shack consisted of only one large room, but they curtained off a corner of it for me—a guest room. I fell asleep so soon that I wasn't aware of how the 6 or 7 family members distributed them-

At Douglas County's Lone Star School, Maude Elliott found teaching more enjoyable than at her first school in western Kansas. (Courtesy Elizabeth Watkins Community Museum, Lawrence, Kansas)

selves for the night—some on cots, some on the floor, I guess. When I awoke the next morning everything was in order and breakfast made a lovely fragrance through the house. And my uncle came for me in his wonderful Model T.

The next week I returned to Lawrence, where my family welcomed me as if I'd completed the year's teaching in proper fashion. But I felt I'd been a complete failure and knew I must "confess" all to my good friend the Douglas County Superintendent, Mr. [O. J.] Lane. You see he had encouraged me to get a certificate and had helped with the formalities necessary to teach in a country school. I told him briefly of my abrupt resignation (or dismissal) I wasn't sure which. Then I told him of the only thing I was sure of—that I'd never teach again as long as I lived—never! He listened sympathetically, then casually suggested that I ride out to Lone Star the next day with the mail-carrier to visit that school. It seems there was a sudden vacancy because of illness in the family of the

Lone Star teacher. I calmly replied I had no interest in vacancies anywhere, but Mr. Lane insisted on my taking the ride to Lone Star since I wasn't busy. So I went. When I saw the Lone Star school its 35 or 40 pupils, and the banker's family who lived near-by where I could stay; I decided to commit myself for the two remaining months of school. I don't remember, but I believe they paid me \$75.00 a month. I'd have taught there for nothing because everything seemed perfect! It restored my faith in teaching and in people—so much so that I've taught 47 years—happy ones. I'll always be grateful to Mr. Lane for insisting on my riding out to Lone Star with the mail carrier.

A Teenager's Writings: Marian N. Freeman Minnis Diary [1917–1920]

• Kinsley

In two notebooks containing her own carefully detailed drawings, names and addresses of friends and family, and occasional accounts of money earned and spent, Marian N. Freeman Minnis also kept diary notations between the years 1917 and 1920. Born in Jetmore in 1902, Marian was fifteen and living in Kinsley in 1917. Marian's writings are important for her observations of events, but they are especially valuable because they were written by a young African-American woman and because she expressed inner feelings. Marian called her expressions "moods" and attributed them to an active imagination. Sometimes she was dramatic, as with a listing of hoped-for clothing which began, "Things I want this summer if I live." At other times, she tried to formulate what was important to her. Like others her age, Marian wondered about her life, but unlike so many others, she gave form to her hopes and concerns. Perhaps Marian wrote to fill a void. In a segregated society, and in Kinsley with a small black population, Marian had few people of her own age with whom she could share hopes and dreams. In fact, she complained that most of the young people around her were older than herself, and thus she felt compelled to be more grownup than she wanted to be. Writing was an outlet, and Marian never abandoned the desire to express herself. After her marriage to Frank Minnis and through the years in which she was housewife and mother to eight children, Marian Minnis continued to keep diaries. Her teenage writings are important reminders that young people face their present world while wondering what the future holds.

1917—Things I want this summer if I live. A white serge suit trimmed in light blue velvet. 1 pr. white kid gloves. Blue silk hose. Big bow of blue ribbon. A pair of green, white, pink, blue and black silk hose. Also a

Marian Minnis diaries, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries. Reprinted with permission of the Kansas Collection and Frank B. Minnis, Jr.

tie and ribbons of same color. A blue serge skirt. A white one. A lot of cool slip dresses. Colors blue, lavender, pink, white & green.—didn't get them tho.

Oct. Sunday 28, 1917 Sunday very cold. The first snow fell about nine oclock. Had good meeting at B Church on account of Sylvester & Cloyd going to war Tues. It was very sad.

Mon. 29 Very cold but sunshines. Night clear & cold. Moonlight. Party at Walkers. Party given at the Walker residence in honor of the soldier boys who were going away.

Dec. 7, 1917 Friday. A debate given at the High School Bldg. tonight. "Resolved that United States Shipping should increase." Children 15 c — Adults 25. The debaters are Leah Williams, Esther Carlson, Agnes Heignslewau. They are to debate with Spearville & Dodge City. The ones that are to go to Dodge to debate are Irma Wilcox, Effie Hilderbrauf and Mary Mairs. We are in the triangular district of the Debating League.

Ice skating was one recreation for young people. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

Marian Minnis with family. Marian is standing to her mother's right. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

There will be twenty debating teams tonight that will debate in this district.

Snowing about an inche or two deep or more. It is very cold. This is the 2nd snow this fall. We had two weeks and three days vacation on account of the shortage of coal.

Dec. 24, 1917 The eighth grade pupils met at the schoolhouse at six thirty and went all over the south part of town, as far as Laffertys across the creek and sang the Carols that are written on the opposite page. [These included "Silent Night" and the following stanza for a patriotic song set to the tune of "America."]

God save our splendid men
Bring them safe home again
God save our men
Keep them victorious, patient and chivalrous
They are so dear to us.
God Save Our Men.

It was certainly cold and we got awful cold, but above all we had an excellent time. Miss [DeEtte] Wellman was our leader.

At one ladie's house we were given candy, at another's were asked to come in and get warm and at Mrs. Weir's were given apples and cake. And many others thanked and praised our singing.

We went up around Schnatterly's and there was a sick man at one house, we sang "Silent Night" very softly for them. They seemed to appreciate our singing and thanked us. We came up by the [Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe] depot and got warm and sang outside. We were going to wait for the train and sing for them but it was late and we had to hurry in order to get to the Churches for their entertainment. The last place was at the "American" or "European" Hotel.¹ Mrs. Linken asked us in to get warm but we hadn't the time. So we parted the others going to the Churches and Cecil, Arnold, and I came to our homes. We had traveled about two miles at least.

Well it was about eight thirty when I came home quite refreshed from our long evening's walk. We awaited our programme for the home coming of Sylvester Martin, the soldier boy, and a number of others who had been away working in St. John on the Railway System. They came in on Number One which was on time for once. Just as I was speaking my piece Mr. Martin as afore stated came in and of course I couldn't go on further until he had shook hands with everyone, probably kissed some. I didn't watch very closely for I didn't know my piece very well and was studying upon it for the short present. Finally quiet was restored and I went on with my "Annie's and Willie's Prayer." I guess I spoke it pretty well. I never heard any one say but as for that matter it doesn't bother me in the least. Well we went on with the program which was fairly good. At last the Christmas Tree which was a great success, probably for the undeniable fact that Miss Bradley & Winchester & I trimmed the tree but however I must say it was great.

I got the cutest little handkerchief box from Mother and doily and a pair of pink hose from her also. Mr. W. Winchester gave me a handkerchief with lavender flowers in one corner. Myrtle gave me a handkerchief with pink flowers and border. Mrs. Kimbrough gave me the dearest little chamois with crocheted lace and ribbon run through, you ever saw. I am

¹At least two earlier hotels had existed in the building which became the American Hotel in 1879.

sure proud of it. Mother also gave me a little green hat which is very cute I think.

Mrs. I. Bradley gave me a silver teaspoon and that is good luck. I shall keep it to go in my "hope box" when I get one. I wanted one for Christmas more than any thing else that any one could give me. But didn't get one. Rossa gave me a blue silk tie with black figures in the end. It is very cute I think. And Maceo gave me a very useful rubber sponge. Frank [*Minnis*] & Grant who did not get in in time to buy presents have promised to give me presents New Year. Mr. C. E. Minnis gave me a cap. I have received a cap every Christmas for three years in succession. Last year, 1916, I got two caps. Maceo came up Christmas morning and gave the loveliest little ring with two topaz set in it. It is very cute and I just dearly love it and a dear little emerald set ring Sister put on the Christmas Tree for me. Seth gave me a penny. The little dear.

We sat up all night until seven thirty. Then I went to bed, slept til ten thirty. Went hunting about twelve, came back about six thirty or seven. Sure had some walk and fun. There were ten of us and only got two rabbits out of about fifteen. When I came back home I was really dead on foot. But as I had company until Church time I could not go to sleep. I was very tired and was late to Church. We had an excellent meeting and quite a number were there from both Churches. . . .

Larned, Jan. 8, 1918 Visited the Larned school—saw the Professor Lulu and Ludlow the principal. Had a pleasant time there.

Jan. 10, Thurs. 1918 A blizzard and snow storm. Snow up to my knees.

Jan. 11 Friday Cold and stinging

Jan. 14 Pay-day \$3.50²

Sun. Morn. Had the first meeting at B. Church for a long time. Every body was happy. . . . Aunt Nettie gave me a \$1.00; Grandpa \$1.00; Papa \$1.00; Mr. Minnis \$.50; Louis \$.35; I found \$.15. I got me a pair of

²Like other black women, Marian occasionally worked for white families in the community. Notebook entries for money earned and spent indicate that Marian sometimes worked for as many as three families, usually only on Saturdays.

shoes with cloth top pointed toe and high top & Cuban heel. They are keen I think.

March 21—Friday As I sit here to night, I meditate and think whether I should write down the things that are in my mind. There are things on my mind that I wish were not there, yet it is inevitable. . . . In a part of this book I have written facts as I felt and tho't them, as I read them over, it seems strange to me, yet it is true. Probably the things I shall write to night shall some day be still stranger to me. . . . It seems to me that these things which are so essential to life were not for me, if they are, I may be yet to receive them, if not in this world, in the world to come where there is nought but love, joy and happiness. . . . I will go to bed now. Good night moods.

Some day if God see fit and I have a home of love and happiness, I trust God will make me that true Mother, the Ideal Mother, the Mother that God would have me be. I trust also that He will aid me to be an Inspiring Housewife, always a sweetheart to my mate. Amen.

April 28 Thursday night. I am all alone to night and feel as if alone in the world. I have had such a happy five weeks previous that I am more lonely than ever before. I wonder when the time will come when I can entertain and be entertained among the young folks of my own age. All my life I have been apart from the world. . . . I wonder if it were better to be lonely than to be partly happy with the wrong kind of person. To-night I feel as though I am sitting on a pivot—or at the crossroads, puzzled as to which road would be the safest and best. Sometimes I lay awake imagining—dreaming happy dreams which may never come true, but oh if they only would. . . .

All my life I have known no youths of my own age, and even now, the greater part of my friends are a great deal older by far than I am. It gives one the atmosphere of being grown too soon, I think. I enjoy myself most of the time, but one can not and must not do the most happy little frivolous things in their presence as one might do with their equal. I believe each age understands itself better than the other, and where they are mixed, most generally there comes a Crash! Sooner or later. Some live on past it; but I think most of them feel the gap between in some little way or other. If there is Love nothing else need matter except a little common sense. Of course, that is useful always and must be used. Oh

Shoot! I don't know how I feel exactly but I wish I were at a party and so happy that I would forget myself.

June 14 Today is pay day and the 3rd week I've been working for Mrs. Dall Hoffman. I like her fine and get along splendidly. Sister is working for Mrs. Colver, a woman I would not attempt to work for. Sister was riding around in the car with Florence this morning and got stuck between Wilson's and Beebers. I have been lying down since I have been home. I always like to lie and imagine things. It's a great consolation to have a vivid imagination which I have been blessed with. If I had everything that I have imagined I had I would be in my seventh heaven. To imagine great things is to attain them; to attain them is to try and succeed. I wonder if any of us had everything we ever imagined and could think we wanted whether we would be any happier in every respect. I think I could be happier to know that I looked as well as the best and had a nice home: A home that was a house and yet a place to live, a place to be happy and content. Not always are houses homes. Some are places to eat and sleep, just a harbor and others are real homes.

Some day when I find my dream hero I shall have a real sweet home sweet home. . . .

1918—Things I want this summer—A lot of nice under clothing. Dresses. A party dress. High top shoes and different colored hose and ties. Middies and many of the things wanted last summer—Well I didn't get these either. I got a party dress tho.

July 14, Monday 1919 I have been cooking over to Grandma's for the harvesters and getting along splendid, but now am at Aunt Nettie's.³ Messrs. Waldon, Williams, Edwards, Martin, and house folks. Mr. Edwards from Okla. Mr. Waldon and Williams from Lawrence. I'm not in much of a mood to write as I wish to write.

I have had two p____ since I have been here, one at Grandma's and one at here. Mr. E. first. I couldn't be profaned up with that bird. He's too ____ and u____! Might poison me. I like to talk to him tho'. He's

³In one notebook entry, probably from 1917, Marian listed her summer earnings. These included \$31.50 for work during harvest when cooking seemed her chief responsibility.

very interesting, but I don't know any thing about him and didn't care much. He's too rushing.

The other night we came over here in the barge with W & W & Floyd & general drove. They left this a.m. The latter says he's coming back, but the others aren't. W. shot a great deal of B.S. to me, but I'm not such a greenhorn as he might have thot. Anon details finis. May be crazy but I'm not a fool. Oh, No. I think some men try to make fools out of girls if they can, but I hope I shall never be in my case. For instance some one asks you to marry you on the spur of the moment. When he has only met you once and knows nothing of you or your character and you know nothing of his. You know he could not have possibly meant anything he might have said. In one instance he might be already engaged. What do you know about him. In the other he may be a divorcee. In his case he could only have been talking to pass away the time. "Actions always speak louder than words," is my motto. When a guy tells you a thing and acts another, you know he must be lying or stalling. One can never tell when another is telling the truth, so it keeps one on the watch with his eyes open, ears and mouth for fear some little thing may slip by unnoticed. There is a great many things but one has to learn before one is even grown. I think many girls are not as careful as they might be. I am one of those in some things, but the older one gets the more one learns.

July 15 Tuesday Today it has been raining all day long. It is so dreary, yet I do not feel blue only not very well. Such days makes one think of everything; the most things that count, the most important plans one has for the future. Here are some of my plans as follows:

To get a complete education and maybe College. College seems a little too far ahead to plan on going, but I hope to go some day. Next to specialize as a business woman or teacher. I do not think there is any necessity in my getting an education just to work in someone's kitchen or wash tub. Of course I may have to do some of these such things before I accomplish my aim because one can never accomplish anything without some financial basis on which to build. However if the Lord being my helper I will "over come some day." I then expect to get me a home or if Mother hasn't one by then, to get her one, and it will be all the same. If not in that way, I may be a housekeeper for someone else. Then, I guess that will be the end of my plans until then, when there will be more. I don't intend to get married until I am at least twenty one. I think that

Kansas teenagers found employment in a variety of places, including businesses such as this shoe shop. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

will be plenty of time enough, altho I have already had the opportunity to do so, but nix. Only true love can bring real happiness, and not good looks (altho' I want them along with love) not for money or for a home, but I would like all of those along with love. Happiness is supreme. I have seen and heard of many happy and unhappy marriages. The happy ones are the ones I like to see. They are examples of what I wish my marriage to be, when ever it is to be. I am not thinking of getting married very soon, but then I do not think it wrong for anyone to look a long way before one jumps. I intend to see a part of the world, to be sure that I have had my fling before I settle down. Some women marry old men or men who are a great deal older than themselves. Those women most generally have not had their young days, and then marry to have them then. . . . I intend to have my youth before [I] marry so that I will be satisfied then.

July 19 Sat. Mr. Edwards, Mr. Dotson, Mater and Aunt Nettie and Uncle Jim and Mr. Page all went to Kinsley this morning in the Grabbs' car. It surely seems lonesome since they have gone, altho' they left two others, Floyd and another. Mr. Edwards and Mr. Perry Moore. _____ tries to make a hit a mite much but nothing doing for that bird. Too many keener ones. Last night I wrote notes to _____. Surely had some fun in a way and yet I learned a great deal. To night I have no buddy to talk to. All I have is done gone. Boo hoo. Well it's only for a time. I certainly will be glad to go home. I'm certainly tired of being fussed at, its worse than home. . . .

Having a studio portrait taken was a special event. This young woman was photographed in Junction City in 1911. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

Nov. 16, 1919 Sunday. Ah, tis once again the Moods are on and I take pencil to write my present feelings and thots. I am thoroughly disgusted with the trying to solve the problem of friendship. There is one person I have tried to be a friend; yet it is impossible I find. . . . I wish I were thru school. I have planned on the many things that I would like above all to do and to be. Whether I shall accomplish I am or not is a question unanswered.

As I see the many girls and the teachers wearing beautiful clothing, I long for the day to come when I shall be making my own living and having my own way. Perhaps it will be easy and maybe it won't. However I should like a try at it. There are many girls that are out from under the bonds of their parents care, yet they do not dress any better seemingly than I. Perhaps they do not care for nice things, yet I don't think it is that altogether. It is because they spend their money otherwise, perhaps foolishly. However my ambition is not only to wear nice clothes and look nice and have plenty of admirers, but to be a perfect lady in every respect. We have had many lectures in school and out concerning these things such as character and etc. I think I could tighten up my ropes a little more than I have and by the Great Creator's help I may amount to the person I am striving to make.

Good night for a time.

April 29, 1920 Thurs. Sometimes I feel so blue and long so much for things I have not, that I almost decide to get married. Then my mind changes to ambition. To go to school until my education is completed, then to be a stenographer. But when one of the other sex prevails endlessly upon one's mind, what is she to do. True, I am not efficient for a wife much less get married, furthermore I think I am too young. It may be all right for some folks, but I want to be dead sure. I want to be happy. I am planning on that and I want to love and be loved, because I've missed it all so far. To a certain extent, I can't say exactly that I have all ways been unhappy or unloved, but I want always, daily hourly and minutely without ceasing until Death Do us part. Won't that be a great day! Then there will be a new girl, a smiling one instead of a frowning one a loving one instead of oh what. Yet I do not hate nor care I love as I would like to if the opportunity were mine. But altogether there would be a new Mary. Just wait and see.

Two Essays: Eileen Marshall's Composition Book [1920s]

Eileen Marshall grew up on a Jackson County farm. After graduating from Hoyt Rural High School in 1920 and passing the examination for a teaching certificate, she began a career that spanned over forty years. During the 1920s and 1930s, time away from teaching was used to study for a bachelor's degree in education at Emporia Teachers College. There, one of her courses was Rhetoric and Composition. Eileen's composition book from that class contains her assignments (along with the teacher's comments). In some of the essays, Eileen dreamed of traveling to foreign lands or hoped for more time to study her music. In a few compositions, she wrote of her growing-up and teenage years. Written for an audience, and for a grade, the compositions were short and without great detail. Nevertheless, they provide a glimpse of feelings and memories. "A Hard-Boiled Instructor" is Eileen's view of demanding teachers while "A Narrow Escape" recalls the unenviable experience of being lectured by a judge.

"A Hard-Boiled Instructor"

When I hear students talk about hard-boiled instructors, I think of a teacher that I had when I was a junior in high school. He was a very large man with a stern countenance and piercing, gray eyes, which seemed to see everything that happened. He walked with a quick, easy step; and a pupil never knew when he was near. In his classroom and in the study hall, he maintained perfect order. It was woe to the boy or girl who attempted to disobey his commands. He taught history and government, and I learned more in those two classes than any other courses which I took. Maybe it was because of fear that I studied, but I doubt it for he was an excellent teacher; and I learned to admire him and to enjoy my work. At first because of his stern manner the class feared him and called

Eileen Marshall Composition Book (editor's possession).

Eileen Marshall at the time of her high school graduation. (Editor's photograph)

him hard-boiled, but later we found he had a sense of humor and liked him even though he did seem unreasonable.

I disagree with the person who wrote the theme that was read in class last Thursday on hard-boiled instructors. For my part, I do not think we have enough of that kind of teacher. I am quite certain if my instructors in high school would have been more hard-boiled with me in English, I would be able to write better themes now. In high school many instructors allow the pupils to drift along in their work with good grades; but the pupils do not accomplish anything. Sometimes we students criticize our instructors too severely and call them hard-boiled because they grade closely, but they are only trying to help us and are more sympathetic than we realize. (*Teacher's comment: My greatest criticism of this theme is your use of "it" indefinitely. Notice the awkward effect which its use gives to the last sentence on the first page of your composition.*)

Marshall (left) and other young women pose with a road paver used on U.S. Highway 75, which connected Marshall's Jackson County home with Topeka. (Editor's photograph)

"A Narrow Escape"

Several years ago, my friend and I decided to attend the Topeka Free Fair in the evening. It was rather late when we left home, and he did not drive very carefully. When we arrived in Topeka, he was in a hurry so drove carelessly through North Topeka. In order to go to South Topeka, it is necessary to cross the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. We noticed a signalman in the center of the street waving his lantern, but we did not think the train was near so started over the tracks. It seemed to me that when we were on the tracks I could feel the heat of the engine, and I expected any moment to be crushed by that terrible train; but we went safely across.

When we got across the tracks, a policeman stopped us and sent us to the police station. The judge gave us a severe lecture on traffic rules but let us go without paying a fine.

There is no need to say that I did not enjoy my evening at the fair, but I learned a valuable lesson that I never forgot.

(Teacher's comment: You give here only the barest details possible connected with the incident—you should clothe your skeleton!)

III. The Years That Roared (1920–1929)

It was the decade of the Charleston dance craze, the first Miss America contest (1921), Prohibition, and the Ku Klux Klan (Kansas had 60,000 members by 1923). Composer George Gershwin wrote Rhapsody in Blue and humorist Will Rogers told jokes over radio, on the stage, and in his writings. The bestselling book in Kansas in 1921 was Sinclair Lewis's Main Street.

Headline makers Charles Lindberg flew the Atlantic in 1927; John Levi, of Haskell Institute, made the All-American football team in 1924; and Kansan Charles Curtis was elected U. S. vice-president in 1928. Gaining notoriety too were fifty Liberal high school students suspended in 1923 for smoking at a picnic.

This Dickinson County High School agricultural class represented the emphasis rural high schools placed on preparing young men for their future roles as farmers. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

When families were not engaged in the latest fad—the crossword puzzle—they gathered around radios for entertainment and news. By the late 1920s, the country had 618 radio stations; Topeka's WIBW claimed listeners in five states. Cars and trucks were becoming more affordable and ownership soared. On average, one of every three farm families had a mechanized vehicle. Numbers were higher in towns and cities, and by 1929 there were 5.3 million cars in America. When the Victory Highway (U. S. Highway 40) from Kansas City to St. Marys was completed in 1923, Tonganoxie hosted a grand picnic with music, dancing, and airplane rides. Air travel was still rare, but passenger service began in 1925 between Kansas City and Wichita (flying time was three hours).

Some high schools were two- or three-year institutions, but consolidation created more four-year schools. Rural districts often tried to imitate urban trends in education, but they continued to emphasize agriculture and home economics. These subjects seemed critical to keeping young people on the farm, especially when the 1920 U.S. census showed that for the first time in national history, more people lived in urban areas than in rural. There were more 4-H clubs, and in urban schools, social clubs and extracurricular activities increased.

Silliness and fads, great moments and celebrities were all part of the "Roaring Twenties." The decade came to a screeching halt with the Crash of 1929.

A School Newspaper: Keats Rural High School [1920–1922]

• Keats

School newspapers inform the student body and provide journalistic experience for those with writing interests and talent. Students' newspapers also provide a look at school and community life from the viewpoint of teenage editors and writers. KERAHS, the newspaper from Keats Rural High School in Riley County, is one example of the student press. A four-page paper, KERAHS reported school events, provided editorial commentary, and supported itself through paid advertisements from local businesses. In the first article presented here, the editors argued for continued self-improvement of the student body; the second article reported on an Armistice Day commemoration, an important event for schools throughout Kansas. The Keats school, established in 1917, is also an important example of the national movement that pushed for more, and better, rural high schools. By offering such extracurricular activities as a student newspaper, the school lived up to the Kansas State Board of Agriculture's hope that rural consolidated districts afford "first-class advantages for the energetic boys and girls on the farms."¹

KERAHS, January 21, 1920, Vol. 1, No. 2

November 14th the school entered upon a campaign of Better Speech and English. During the week of the observance of the campaign the enthusiasm of the students could not have been better. Everyone worked with a will and carried the campaign to a success. Plans had been made for a continuance throughout the school year. A committee was appointed to carry out the plans.

KERAHS, Keats Rural High School newspaper, Archives, Riley County Historical Society and Museum, Manhattan, Kansas. Reprinted with permission from Riley County Historical Society and Museum.

¹Frank K. Sanders, "Education as an Investment," in Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture (Topeka: Kansas State Board of Agriculture, 1912), 94.

These English classes at Horton High School were caught up in the campaign for self-improvement. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

What has been done towards it? What has the committee decided? Must we, after such a start call ourselves quitters, or are we too lazy to carry the campaign to the real success it deserves?

We don't know where we will go when we leave school. Some of us may go into the business world; most of us will stay on the farm. Better English will never hurt us. We will always feel better, have a broader understanding, for having practiced [*better English*]. It will be an asset equal to a fortune because we will be able to express ourselves correctly and convincingly. We will not have to grope for words to express ourselves. Let us act on this for the betterment of future generations. Do not lay down on such a worthwhile proposition.

KERAHS, November 1922, Vol. 3, No. 3

The community celebrated Peace Day [*Armistice Day*] at the High School, Nov. 11th at 11:00 a.m. There was a delightful program. Each [*elementary*] school of the H. S. district contributed to the program. The way those children got up on the stage and performed is very remarkable.

At noon a cafeteria dinner was served. Everybody seemed to have plenty to eat.

It started raining during the morning and lasted nearly the entire afternoon, but the people braved the storm to see the basket ball games and volley ball games. The high school girls were very much disappointed in not being able to play the alumni, but played a game among themselves. The H. S. boys played the alumni and were defeated.

Everyone made this celebration a success by giving their time and talent. There can be no real celebration without cooperation among the people interested.

Student editors and writers were responsible for school newspapers. Pictured is a 1910 student editorial board. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

"What Wonderful Years They Were": Esther Lietz Interview [1923]

Esther Lietz, daughter of Wilson Henry Kasson and Cora Bell Connell Kasson, was born December 17, 1904. As an adult, Mrs. Lietz completed her college education at Washburn University and taught at Topeka Lutheran School. Her teenage years, however, were spent in Wabaunsee County, and in this interview, Esther Lietz talked about her education and Paxico's pride in its high school. Paxico Rural High School was small in student population and physical size, and it lacked some facilities available at other schools. Nevertheless, Esther found that the quality of teaching compensated for lack of material things. Too, the school boasted boys' and girls' basketball teams and a music education program that emphasized free lessons, singing, and school performances. In her interview, Esther Lietz described her school days and her desire to be a teacher, a goal she achieved soon after graduating in 1923.

Holt: Did you live in the town of Paxico?

Lietz: My parents lived on a farm five miles south of Paxico, Kansas, at the time I was born. I was born in Eskridge. My mother went to Eskridge to deliver me, to be with her sister. I was born in December, and we came home I suppose when I was about three weeks old. They nearly froze me to death; it would be January, and they came by lumber wagon and team. Mama said I was fussing and she would loosen the covers on me. Then she found I was real cold so they stopped in at a farmhouse en route to get me warmed up and then came on home.

When I was three years old, our family moved to the old Kasson homestead, which my grandfather acquired after the Civil War. It was nine miles south of Paxico, Kansas, Wabaunsee County. We lived in District 35, as all schools in the county had a number. I went to that school

Printed with permission from Esther Lietz, Topeka, Kansas.

six weeks as a first grader and then moved to Paxico in 1911. There I had my grade schooling, eight years, and three years of high school in the same building. Now, not many people would have that.

Holt: Was that because there were so few students?

Lietz: Oh, yes. Our school was so young. See, the high school had been started in about 1915. There were three or four classes ahead of mine. I think the first class only had one or two in it. They were so proud of this high school. Oh! They were so proud of it, you can't believe it.

We were housed in part of the grade school building. We just had one big room plus a sort of auxiliary room that we called the library. We didn't have many books. I had three years with that poor facility, but what wonderful years they were. In my fourth year, a new high school building was constructed. I do have to tell you something about that new building. On the east side, it says BOYS. It's printed over the doorway, and on the west side, it says GIRLS. We didn't observe that, but the building architect I guess wanted that distinction made.

Holt: How many high school students?

Lietz: In my own class there were just seven—the class of 1923. My brother's class of 1920 had five. That's why we could be housed in such a small facility. I'd gone through three years as the only female, then a girl who had had an illness came in on our senior year. I was valedictorian—I hate to tell that. I worked circles around those boys in math and everything else.

During my school years children and teachers took great pride in the memorization of addition and multiplication combinations, as well as tables of weight and measure. No computers or calculators.

A lot of parents didn't let their kids go to high school. My husband [*Emil Paul Lietz*] said that when he graduated from the eighth grade, he wanted to go to high school. He was out from town about five miles, and his parents would not let him go. He said he just cried and cried and cried, but they would not let him go. The Catholic community about a mile north of Paxico at Newbury—a lot of those people did not want their children mixing with the world in those days. That's partly why my husband didn't get to go, but he had to work on the farm also.

Some teenagers attended private schools. Posed here are the 1916 girl graduates of a Catholic school. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

Holt: Did you know him even though he wasn't in school?

Lietz: No. I did not know him till I went out to teach school in his district. My first year out of high school I met him. He was plowing across from the schoolhouse with four big mules. I just had to talk to him when he came up to this end, once in awhile. One time I forgot my key, and he had to help me get in. The strange part about his family, or the Lietz boys, was that the brother older than Emil took the schoolteacher [to marry] just the year before me. Then my husband took the schoolteacher, and then the next boy took the one following. They all took the three schoolteachers out there in a row.

I had been raised Methodist, and Emil was born into a Lutheran family. My parents were not quite sure what I was getting into for they believed "Lutherans were just like Catholics."

Class plays and musical presentations were important to many high school students, including Esther Lietz. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

Holt: What was a typical day in high school?

Lietz: We had opening exercises. That included a morning prayer and much student body singing for which I worked so hard pumping the old organ to accompany. Kids would vie to choose the songs. What number do you want? Boy! They wanted to sing their song from *The Golden Book of Songs*. I have the book from which I played and they sang. Some were old Civil War songs, “Just before the Battle, Mother” and “Way Down upon the Swanee River.” We had the flag salute also.

At school every classroom had a picture of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington on its walls. One on one side, and one on the other. I don’t know if it was formal which side they had to be on. And then we had our flag. It was up on the wall, tacked up there. We always had the flag salute in the morning. Everyone was so patriotic, and I don’t remember any of the classmates that would ever be rowdy.

Holt: How did you learn to play?

Lietz: My sister was eleven years older than I, and she bought a piano when she worked in the general store at Paxico. She could only master her right hand, so I was just a little kid and I started to play by ear. We were a poor family—and my mother was giving one of the high school lady teachers one meal, I think her evening meal every day. This lady felt so sorry for me. She asked Mother if she could give me lessons. She gave me lessons all that school year. That's how I got started. My mother and my sister then gave this teacher a real nice gift for working with me—a silver-backed hairbrush, comb, and mirror dresser-top set.

Holt: Was that the only musical training you had?

Lietz: I took lessons one summer at 75 cents each. A lady came on the train from Willard one day a week to Paxico and gave lessons. That's all I ever paid for piano instruction.

Now, we had such an unusual music program at school. I can't believe this as I think of it nowadays. The high school was about a mile from the downtown of Paxico. We had this music teacher who came out on the morning train from Topeka, about 10:00 in [*the*] morning. There was a Woodman Hall in Paxico that had a piano. She gave private music lessons there all day. Kids would walk down from the high school every half hour—the ones that wanted lessons. Free. I think that is unique. Besides this, she conducted the Glee Club and cantatas that we would have. I got those lessons free for two years. I could play better than she could, but I didn't know a thing about any of the realities of music. She taught me all about theory, which was so fine. I didn't have a good singing voice and I always got to accompany. I played for the musicals, one of which was *Madame Butterfly* with everybody in Japanese costumes. She was a wonderful lady, and I loved her. My musical career didn't cost much.

Holt: Do you recall any school pranks?

Lietz: Well, no, we didn't have much of that going on. Although we did have one room downstairs at the new high school where, if you had your work done, you could go down there and read or study without any teacher supervision. That territory got pretty rowdy sometimes, but we enjoyed that privilege. If we had our work finished, we could perhaps lend a help-

ing hand to someone else. It was sort of a social thing and very much fun.

Holt: Were there school clubs?

Lietz: No. We didn't [*have any*] in our high school. Probably they started just a little later. Just the Glee Club. We had an athletic program.

Holt: Just for boys?

Lietz: Girls too. Had a pretty poor girls' team, but we had an outstanding boys' team that took honors. These were basketball teams. We didn't do any other sports. We didn't have football or really compete in baseball. I need to say that for three years my school had no gym, just the out-of-doors, and it was great the fourth season to have an indoor court in the new building in 1922 and 1923.

Holt: Did you play basketball?

Lietz: I did early. That's why I said probably we had a poor girls' team. I even have a picture. No wonder we couldn't play. Look at those black stockings.

Holt: You also have on bloomers and a middy blouse.

Lietz: Had to have that tie on too.

Holt: Did you object to playing?

Lietz: No. I imagine there were people who were critical. Maybe some church members may have questioned the girls having to wear a basketball outfit.

Holt: There is also a picture in your album of a flag with stars on it.

Lietz: Yes. This is the First World War. The stars are for boys from Paxico. If they were killed, the gold star was an indication of that while the other stars were red. I have a picture of a group of us the day the war ended. We were sitting on a Paxico street and just clapping!

For this 1922 photo, Esther Lietz (right) and her friend Edna Woody posed in their basketball uniforms. (Courtesy Esther Lietz)

Holt: You were old enough to be very aware of the war.

Lietz: Oh, yes, I was. I did knitting. They had these khaki knit scarves for soldiers—I don't know how long they were, I bet they were nine feet. I did one of them for the Red Cross, all just plain knitting. Everybody wanted to be a part of the war effort. Cold-packed veggies and fruit canned the "boiling water method" came into use in this era. Everyone had a victory garden. My mother canned a large amount to supplement the skimpy food supply of wartime with all its rations.¹

Holt: Was anyone in your family in the war?

¹*During the war, civilians conserved food badly needed for military use with "wheatless" Mondays and Wednesdays, "meatless" Tuesdays, and "porkless" Saturdays. In Kansas, the State Agricultural Council of Defense, with the United States Department of Agriculture, promoted victory gardens and provided homemaker classes in the latest canning methods.*

High school track team, 1915. Some small Kansas high schools such as Horton had integrated athletic teams. The size of the student body, as well as limited facilities and funds, hindered offering racially segregated programs. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

Lietz: Yes. My brother-in-law was over there in Germany, and they had a little new baby. It was so hard, but I didn't have anyone killed. We had a Paxico boy who died in army camp of influenza. There was a tremendous loss of life among soldiers in the Great Influenza Epidemic of 1918 and many civilian casualties also.²

Holt: You were going to talk about the integration of your grade school and high school.

Lietz: Oh, yes. I've been integrated since I was seven years old, when I started school. Evidently, after the Civil War a lot of black people came to Paxico. In fact, my grandfather had one old man, a black man, that he visited with, who had been born into slavery. I wish I'd known at that time just what a little span of time was between me and the Civil War.

²*In the influenza epidemic, which began in 1918 and continued into 1919, over 5,500 Kansans died.*

But a kid doesn't realize that. Both of my grandfathers fought in the Civil War, for the North. You know, I could've asked them things. I wouldn't have to read it in a history book. Kids didn't realize it, and parents didn't emphasize it. I feel badly about it now.

I went to school with blacks all through grade school, all through high school.³ Then, I taught them there at Paxico. In this one building I went to grade school eight years, high school three years (had a new building on the fourth), and I came back and taught primary grades three years there. Now, that's fourteen years in that one building.

Holt: When you were in high school, did you plan to be a teacher?

Lietz: Oh, yes, I'd always wanted to. That's all I ever had in mind. I knew that I was going to.

Holt: What were the requirements?

Lietz: Our school did not have a normal school [*teacher training*] program. Some schools did. I suppose we didn't have the money for it. If I'd been in Alma, Kansas, they had that plan at their school. I had two choices when I got out of high school. I could have taken a teachers' exam. If you passed it, you were all right. I thought I wouldn't brave that. You would never believe that I borrowed \$100 from an uncle, and incidentally interest was 6 percent. That's what I gave him, 6 percent, and I thought he was doing me a big favor. Anyway, I came down to Topeka. I had a sister living here and I stayed with her and I walked [*to class*]*—*she wasn't very far from Washburn. All you had to do was chalk up eight hours that summer. There were requirements you had to do. I did that and passed all the tests. That made me eligible. Can you imagine that? Those poor kids.

Another thing they had at Alma, the county seat of Wabaunsee County, was a whole week of teachers' institute in August. All the county teachers went. It was to your credit. You wouldn't have stayed away. There

³*In some of Kansas' larger towns and cities school segregation existed; in Topeka, for example, the grade schools were segregated, but not the junior and senior highs. In smaller communities, however, school segregation was less likely because there were fewer black students and little money to support separate schools.*

Many high school girls enrolled in sewing classes and expanded their wardrobes. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

they would have teachers and instructors in to teach you in the latest methods. That's really where I learned what to do.

The way they were teaching reading in those days was pitiful. I had learned the phonics method when I was a child. I had such a marvelous primary teacher. But when I started to teach, that's when they were coming up with the word-sentence method. You know, when you see a whole sentence at once. I learned that at the institute. You made your word cards and also your sentence cards. Oh, those kids just breezed through the book because they recognized all those words.

Holt: Did the county superintendent assign you to a school?

Lietz: No. I applied myself. I don't know how I had the nerve to, and I had two chances for schools. I had two different choices, and I chose this one. Good thing I did as it affected my life. I met my husband.

My one-room country school, 1923–1924. In the back of that book [George Herbert Betts, *Class-Room Method and Management* (1920)] is a schedule, lessons plans. You tried to follow that as much as you could, but, boy, you got interested in something and the time was gone. I wasn't

too good on those schedules, but you had to have one. County superintendent—you did not know when the county superintendent was going to pop in on your school. She visited me out there in that one-room school, and you had to be on your toes. She would want to see your schedule, see what you were doing. I'd have mine ready.

I earned \$75 a month for a seven-month school session. I had nine children, but in six grades. There was a lot of one-to-one teaching there. First six weeks I rode a horse out from Paxico, about five miles. Then I boarded in the community for \$15 a month. I walked as the crow flies across the pastures in the snow and anything. I'd say it was a good mile and one-half or two miles [*from where I boarded*]. Then I had to start a coal fire in a pot-bellied stove, and I didn't know a thing about keeping a fire going. Nowadays, I sometimes meet around Paxico one of my pupils, and he says I just worked him to death hauling coal in from the coal shed. Of course, we had outdoor toilets, the boys and girls. You always had a rack for hitching up horses. I felt so sorry, as I've thought about it since, that my horse had to keep its saddle on all day. She was a palomino named Ruby and belonged to my father.

Holt: How would you describe your high school teachers?

Lietz: Oh, they were lovely. We would have about three or four teachers. They would just divide up the subjects. One, we called him "the prof," was the superintendent. He wouldn't teach as much as some of the others.

Only had one run in with a teacher in my whole life. This was a sewing teacher. It was our first year in the new high school. I had such a lovely sewing teacher down in the old building, and we didn't even have sewing machines in those poor facilities. That lady taught me such lovely sewing hints and embroidery and mending and such. She taught me to sew a seam just like it would be if it came off a sewing machine. In the new school, this teacher gave me a poor grade. Personality clash, I guess. I had taken an extra credit, or class, when I was a junior so I did not need the sewing class to graduate. I just dropped the class when the teacher gave me that poor grade. I've never known what was wrong. I always had good grades before this, and the principal stood up for me during this clash.

That evolutionary theory came out so prominent while I was in high school. I had a teacher, a male teacher, who lived and breathed this evo-

lution. Of course, it was so foreign to all of us. Then when I started going with my husband—my boyfriend at the time—we would just argue because this guy in high school had “converted” me. Then, when I got down to Washburn that summer of 1923, there it was. Now I don’t know just when that Darwinian theory became so popular, but it was just rampant when I was in high school and just as I came out in my first teaching period.⁴

Holt: Did you teach it?

Lietz: No, not in the lower grades. What they did in high school and the upper grades I do not know. I was just interested in the primary and my enthusiasm [*for the theory of evolution*] had waned.

Holt: Did the high school teacher you mentioned upset parents with his teaching?

Lietz: I probably admired him and I just believed everything he said. But, oh, yes, the parents didn’t like that at all. Evolution was very popular with the educated people, not the oldsters or the church people.

Holt: Describe graduation.

Lietz: There were three activities. First was a class day. You know, a social thing. Then baccalaureate, a religious service, was on a Sunday at the high school, and I wore my first suit—a navy blue one. Mother took me to Topeka to buy that suit. We went on the train. She made the white dress I had for graduation. At graduation we had black caps and gowns, and we were the first class to have that honor. I would imagine it would be how up and coming your principal was, whether you had caps and gowns—how much he cared. Well, colleges were certainly always having them in those days. Now what I resented so terribly—I have to tell you

⁴As Esther Lietz suggests, individual teachers and some school districts introduced students to the theory of evolution. National attention turned to the subject in 1925 when John T. Scopes was tried for breaking Tennessee’s law against the teaching of evolution in the state’s public schools. In the famous “Monkey Trial,” Scopes was defended by well-known lawyer Clarence Darrow and prosecuted by three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan: Scopes was convicted.

Graduation in caps and gowns was not yet common, although some schools had adopted the practice. Pictured is Hoyt Rural High School's class of 1919, the first to graduate from the school's four-year course (previously the school was a three-year institution). (Editor's photograph)

how much I resented it. My granddaughter graduated from KU about 1980. You know those kids marching down there at KU did not have respect for those caps and gowns. One had an old rubber chicken on top of his cap. That just cut me terribly. A grandson graduated the same year from Texas A & M, and here I saw reverence and respect in their ceremony. Why?

Holt: What were your entertainments?

Lietz: Oh, I have to tell you. Field trips were unheard of. They didn't even know about field trips, but as the first radio came to Paxico, we went as a school body to the home of the only people in town who had a radio. It was one of these big curved radios, and we went there to listen to this wondrous invention. I think this is colossal that I would remember the occasion. So that was a field trip. I have no idea what we heard that day as I was probably very excited. I wish I knew what was broadcasted.

Holt: What about movies?

Lietz: Oh, nothing in school. No visual aids. We didn't even have typewriters so the kids could learn typing so I missed that in school. We didn't have any movies in Paxico, but we had movies at an old building in

McFarland. Once in awhile, we'd go up there. Rudolph Valentino⁵ was my idol when I was a teenager. When I was a child, they didn't have any [movies]. I do remember the old phonograph, with its large horn, gracing the parlor table and playing "Red Wing," when I was a preschool child.

Holt: You wanted to say something about the shortage of teachers.

Lietz: That's why the requirements were so low in 1923—you know just to get eight hours. There was a shortage about that time on account of World War I. A lot of male teachers were killed. Also, if you were a woman, you couldn't be a teacher if you were married. After that one year out in the country, I went to Paxico in the primary grades there. Then we did marry and were married a year secretly because if I told them, I'd have been fired because they wouldn't hire a married teacher.

I had thirty hours of college credit [*from attending Emporia Teachers College*] when I married and quit teaching. Then in about 1953 I started back to Washburn. I started teaching at the Lutheran school in 1956. I taught there ten years, 1956–1966. In 1956 when I started teaching again, there was another shortage of teachers. Went to fourth grade at Topeka Lutheran and my class load was thirty-nine. Then, after this, it was just second grade, and during my ten years there I had about fifteen student teachers. My principal always knew he could put a student teacher under my wing. Only religion we had was our morning exercise, but you tried to emphasize religious principles in everything you did. It was living your principles. My principal told me, "I don't care what you teach. I want you to push the three R's." I did. The Topeka Lutheran School kids have always ranked high when they get into junior high or high school. They've always had that pride.

I was going to evening college and summer teacher workshops and all that. I got my degree from Washburn in 1962. I really finished my credit in 1961, but I had to wait until next graduating class to walk [*at graduation*]. I don't know how I did it, but I did. I had to commute one summer to Emporia for student teaching. I taught, but I had to go down there and get my student teaching grade. So I've had a busy life.

⁵Rudolph Valentino was a silent film star whose roles as a romantic sheik made him a "matinee idol." In 1926 his untimely death at age thirty-one caused sensationalized news stories, hysterical mourning, faked stories of murder, and near riots at the funeral.

Letters to Nellie: Nellie Yates Correspondence [1923–1924]

Among the papers of Nellie Yates, of Lawrence, are letters received from friends during Nellie's senior year (1923–1924) in high school. The first letter, written by "Dot" in Topeka, seems to represent an ongoing correspondence between two young women who did not see one another often. Dot wrote about school, the family's vacation, and wearing knickers—those loose-fitting pants gathered at the knee. This was worthy of comment since changing attitudes about proper attire allowed young women to be seen in something other than dresses and skirts. The other letters, from Marcine in Lawrence, were written under special circumstances. Marcine wanted to keep up Nellie's spirits by sharing news of school and classmates while Nellie was quarantined at home with scarlet fever. (This is not the only mention of public health rules for quarantine; both the Doris Brewster and Belva Lucas diaries of the late 1930s noted the practice.) What Nellie wrote to her friends can only be guessed, but those addressed to her provide half of the conversation in which school, social and family life are discussed.

Oct. 19, 1923

Dear Nellie—

I am tired of school too. I also hate to study. I am taking Senior English, American History, the third year of French, and Chemistry. Chemistry is my Waterloo. If I get through it I will sure be happy. I wish you would ask Dorothy to write to me. I have Chorus and Bible that I did not count. We have to take chorus. You aren't graded in it. It sure would be ripping to have some one call her Miss Sofa. I hope Kate did not do any thing rash.

We sure did have a wonderful trip. We wore knickers. We drove up through Iowa to Duluth, Minn. From there we took the boat. We put our car on the boat also. I was sick before we left here but I got all right

Nellie Yates, letters, Priestly Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries. Reprinted with permission of the Kansas Collection.

again just before we started. Then I had to get sick again before we got on the boat and was sick almost all the time on there. We left the boat at Detroit, Mich. From there we went up to Niagara Falls by train leaving our car in Detroit. We went back to Detroit by boat. From there we drove home through Ill., Ohio, Ind., and of course Mo. I had one concilation on the boat I was not sea sick. We are going to have a dance here Sat. night. We are sure having a hard time getting any music. I am a Sub on the basket ball team. I can't yet figure out how I could even get on that. Your stationary is all right but please excuse my writing and spelling. My misspelt words would fill a book.

Write Soon

heaps of love

Dot

P.S. You sure have got a long name.

Tuesday [*May 1924*]

Dearest Nellie—

I promised you in the letter I wrote on Sunday that I would write to you on Monday but I had to study so much that I didn't get to it. I hope you'll forgive me and I'll tell you all I know, now, to make up for it. Will that be all right?

I don't know very much except that everyone has been saying nice things about you to me today. After school—about four o'clock—Virginia Yates and I went riding with Ernie and Charlie Edmonson—and Bud—and we drove by your house. (I see I use too many "ands") Everyone said what a shame a pretty, sweet girl like you had to be sick. I said how much I thought of you and Ernie squeezed my arm as much as to say "I do too" and Virginia said she sure thought you were sweet. Several of the kids in my classes are awfully sorry for you and everyone wants to see you again—especially me.

After I left them I went riding with Hugo in his new Vielie (?) (Is that the way you spell it? Gosh I'm dumb) and we went by your house. He said, "I want to go by Yate's house. I think it's terrible for her to be sick. Everyone misses her at school so much. I certainly do like Nellie."

About the only thing of importance is that I was called into the office yesterday. They announced a fool rule that if anyone was in the building he had to go to his class. Virginia and I sauntered into the building yesterday morning and Miss Carpenter immediately told us to go to class.

Changing attitudes about proper activities and dress for young women allowed more casual and less cumbersome clothing. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

We started down stairs again, changed our minds and went up to class. She didn't see us change our minds and thought we had continued our course out the door. During first hour I got a note to this effect "Marcine MacLaren see Mr. Olney during 5th study. A.S.H. 5/19/24." I shook in my boots for the next three hours and then I saw Virginia and she had received one just like it. She had seen Doris and she (How do you get around that repeating of one word. Why don't we have more words with the same meaning?) had already seen Pap and told us what he had said and what she had said. We got off easy. All Miss Carpenter did was ask me today for some flowers off our pink and our white chestnut trees. Old reprobate!!!

Just think, dear Yates, only six more days of school, and then three months vacation. It doesn't seem like school could be so near out because we haven't had very much warm weather. I'll bet this will be a funny summer.

They are only giving us three minutes between classes now. Isn't that horrid of them? Well dear one, I guess that's all I have to say so I'll close now and try to write you tomorrow night.

Ian sends his love to you! Mother does the same and you already have been told that you have all of mine every minute of the day and night.

Love forever,

Marcine

P.S. Get Well Soon!!!

P.S. No. 2

I wish I was real clever so I could write something funny to you. Me again.

Sunday [1924]

Dearest Nellie—

It's been a long time since I've written to you and I'm just ashamed of myself for not having written to you oftener but I never was very good at writing letters.

My finals just came out grand. I got "G" in all of them except type-writing and got 77 in that. My semester grades were three G's an M—and a P. If I had worked harder during the semester I could have gotten better grades than those.

It certainly seems funny for school to be out. It doesn't seem right. I have started my summer sewing, tho, the afternoon after we got our grade cards I started to hemstitch a handkerchief to match my green linen dress. As soon as mother makes my red linen, I am going to hemstitch a handkerchief to match it—if there is enough material. (My writing shows that school is out—I'm out of practice).

My black and white dress is done and I am simply crazy about it. I wore it to the . . . party. Viv let me wear her black and white beads with it. They are awfully pretty, I think and I want some like them to wear with my dress.

Naomi and Ian both say to tell you "hello" and give you their love. Mother says tell you she certainly misses your bright smiling face and sends you lots of love. Malcolm isn't here to send you any definite message but t'other day he was looking at my annual and came to your picture and said, "There's the best looking girl in town. I sure hate to have her be sick. I hope she'll hurry up and get well so I can see her again." You know I send you all my love—There's the door bell—

Here I am back again after 'bout an hour. That was Naomi's dinner date at the door. I sure felt small when I opened the door and saw him there. He is about the handsomest person I ever looked at. I had on a dirty apron—It wasn't dirty but I felt dirty when I saw him—and my hair didn't look just right. I went immediately and cleaned myself up.

Swimming was a recreation enjoyed by some teenagers and their families. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

Ernie and I went to a party last night given by a bunch of high school kids down at the Elks hall and Piggy was there. He talked to me for quite a while about you. He certainly likes you. He asked me how you were, when you would get up, said he had called up about you several days before, and he said in closing that he sure thought it was a shame for you to be sick. By the look on his face you could tell he really meant it.

Oh! I'm mad. Ernie asked me to go to the Sigma Nu farewell and mother won't let me go. I want to go so much but mother says high school girls shouldn't go to hill parties [*fraternity parties at University of Kansas*]. Lots of 'em do it, tho, now don't they?

I hope you will hurry and get well so we can have some sewing bees—unless you are going away. You know we planned to have some before school was out and never got to it.

Another thing I want you to do is to write in my annual so that I'll have something to remind me of our year in high school together. I've save lots of space for you so begin now to think of what you want to write. I don't want you to wait until the time comes and write your thoughts cause "Catharine Carrol" thinks you might hurt her feelings.

(She asked me to write in her annual and said, "Just write your thoughts—No, don't do that, you might hurt my feelings." Thats me all over, Mable.

Well, Yates, guess thats all I have to say, so will close till some other time in the near future—Tomorrow probably.

All my love,

Marcine

P.S. Again—

Get Well Soon.

An Orphan Train Rider in Kansas: Howard Dowell Interview [1921–1925]

• Republic County

During the nineteenth century, the increasing numbers of dependent children in eastern states prompted charities to seek alternatives to institutional care in orphanages and poor houses. The solution, many decided, was transporting children and teenagers by train to western, rural communities. One of the charities that did this was the New York Children's Aid Society. When its groups of youngsters arrived in a community, they were marched to a church, courthouse, or opera house where adults chose a child or teenager to take home.

Between 1853 and 1929 at least 200,000 young people were relocated; approximately 2,000 came to Kansas. Today, this transportation plan is called the "orphan trains," although many of the children were not true orphans but from families too poor to care for them. The first group brought to Kansas arrived in 1867, and youngsters continued arriving during the early 1900s. One of those was Howard Dowell, who arrived in Belleville with a group of eighteen on June 18, 1909. With Howard was his sister, Clara, and brother, James. Events beyond their control brought them to Republic County. Orphaned when their parents, Fred and Gertrude Reed, and older sister, Ethel, died in 1908 after falling through river ice while driving cattle, the three children went to the United Helpers orphanage in St. Lawrence County, New York. From there, they were taken by the New York Children's Aid Society. On that day of arrival in Belleville, Howard went into the home of Juliet and Luther Dowell. In 1927 he married Nora Anderson and settled on the farm of his Kansas parents. In this oral history interview, Howard Dowell talked about coming to Belleville, his high school days and boarding in town, and life on a Kansas farm.

Dowell: My name used to be George Howard Reed. So when these parents [the Dowells] came in [and adopted me], they dropped the George and I was Howard Reed Dowell. Then our boy—our first child, Harold, we kept the Reed in his middle name. His boy got Reed in his middle

Printed with permission from Howard Reed Dowell, Belleville, Kansas.

name and now their child, he's got a Reed in his middle name. That's four generations that kept the Reed in there.

Holt: Describe coming to Belleville.

Dowell: I was the first one taken when they marched us up the street. I was three, lacked a week being four. Clara was four years older. My folks here were in their forties. They were too old to have children, and they wanted someone to leave their estate to. Now this is the funny part. I don't tell it too often. My mother's brother was standing with them on the line when they [*the children*] were coming in. I was coming up, and he turned to mother. He said, "Well, there comes a little genius." And Mother just pulled me out of there. Back in New York they weren't going to bring me because I was too young. Clara just sat her foot down. She said, "You either take us all or leave us all." She wouldn't have it any other way so I got on the train with the rest of them. Of course, when they took me out of the line here, Mother took ahold of my hand, aholding me. My brother and sister, Clara and James, would not leave. They stayed right there, and so they [*the adults*] got together and said they weren't

An orphan train group photo on an Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe line. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

One year after arriving in Belleville, Howard Dowell (left) was photographed with his brother and sister on the Fourth of July. (Courtesy Howard Dowell)

going to separate us. They were going to keep us here in Belleville. My brother went to the Elliott Hotel [*the Joe Elliott family*], and my sister went to Narka, a minister there. We saw each other after that.

I couldn't have been much more than two years old when my parents passed away. Now Rathbottoms, they took a girl, she was probably twelve or thirteen when she got here. Lucinda was her name. She was supposed to take care of me in the orphan's home. To get me up to the table. I don't know why they didn't have Clara do that, but she took care of me at the orphanage. There was a big dining room. The tables were up high. We all sat in high chairs. In another room, they had seats all around, all boards not padded or anything. But you had your seat where, if you wanted to sit there, you could raise up the lid and there were your toys underneath. You could get them out and play with them.

When we came to Belleville, the mayor gave me a silver dollar. I asked the others, "How come I got the silver dollar?" It was because I was the youngest one. It was a 1900 silver dollar. I still have it.

When we came on that train, we didn't have anything but what we had on our backs. We had no suitcases. We had no change of clothes. All we had was just what we were wearing. Can you imagine? Bringing a

trainload of kids and that's what we had. We didn't have nothing. [*I don't know*] how many days it took. The train did not stop till it got this side of Chicago. They wouldn't let any kids off from New York to Chicago. Then they started to stop at the county seats. Now we were on the Burlington that went through Narka and Fairbury [*Nebraska*] and up through there. Hallie Garwood and some of them came through Clyde and Concordia on the Union Pacific. They didn't follow the same route twice.

Holt: You knew kids who came out on other trains?

Dowell: Right. Now the way I understand it, the first ones that came, they claim they were put in boxcars and shut the doors just like a bunch of hogs or cattle. So when they came to a town, they'd open the doors and let people see the orphans. (Now that's come to me in a year or two.) It don't look like ordinary people would want kids like that. The first ones were taken off the streets. They just promised them that if they'd get off there and come, they'd try to get them a home out west. They just lived on the streets and garbage cans—just anyway they could make a living—that's the way they lived.¹ We were a pretty decent bunch of kids when we came.

We came out of the orphan's home. Mother was the last to go, and when she saw that she wasn't going to make it, we went to the orphan's home [*in St. Lawrence County, New York*]. I can see the carriage come up there and the driver sat up high on a front seat. Had two horses. Clara in the middle of her two brothers, and we got in the back seat and then we drove off. I was too young to know much.

Holt: When you were in high school, did anyone comment on your background?

¹*Many children and teenagers were taken off city streets and sent west. Travel accommodations varied. Most traveled in regular coach cars, reserved just for them so that they did not "mix" with other passengers, but some groups traveled in less comfortable "emigrant cars." Usually these were reserved for the large numbers of immigrants traveling west to settle, but charities also used them for child transportation; with hard wooden seats, or no seats at all, these cars offered, at best, third-class accommodations.*

Dowell: You know there was never anything said until the last few years [*with these orphan train reunions*]. Now all the people out in the country knew I was adopted. All the neighbors.

Holt: You went to Agenda High School?

Dowell: Let me tell you about that. My brother was at the Elliott Hotel in Belleville. Well, they [*my parents*] wanted me to go to Cuba, Kansas, and I told them "no." I wanted to come to Belleville, be here with my brother. So the way it wound up, I wound up in Agenda going to school because they thought I'd bum around here in Belleville and wouldn't study. I wound up going four years to Agenda.

Holt: How far was that from home?

Dowell: Nine miles. I stayed there with people by the name of Flicks. Harry Flicks. And there were girls that stayed there. Two bedrooms upstairs. There were girls in one bedroom, and I was in the other room. Never bothered each other. We never came into each other's rooms. I stayed there four years. I ate breakfast there and at the teachers' at Lewis's across the street, I ate my supper over there. Then I bought me a car. I just kept my car down there so I just went back and forth. Before that, if I wanted to come home, I'd have to catch a train at Agenda and get off at Cuba. One time it snowed so bad I had to stay at the Cuba hotel without any fire all night and then walked down the tracks the next day.

I graduated in 1925; 110 in the school. Now listen, the boys treated the girls all like they were sisters. No trouble. Why I stayed at Flicks there. Girls—one year two girls stayed there; one year one girl stayed there. I never dated one of them. We didn't date until we got up to be a junior or senior. I'd go to school in the morning, come back, get my lessons. I had my room. I'd go up there and do my studying.

There was a barbershop in Agenda. Us boys would come in there and play checkers or dominoes or something at one end. [*The owner*] didn't care at all. He liked for the boys to come in there.

The only thing I ever pulled. Kid across the street. His name was Harry. He was just one class ahead of me. Anyway, these teachers had supper at Lewis's across the street. So we said, "Let's have some fun." Before I went to supper, we took the screen off and pushed it under so Flicks, they wouldn't see the screen. We climbed outside. He dropped a

string down to me and I put it underneath the siding on the house. We took up some rosin and rubbed that string and it popped that house! With the rosin on the string, that vibration would just slap that thing just like you hit it with a sledgehammer. Out they come just like that! They didn't catch the string. It was up too high. So we let them go back in the house and slapped it again. Then it was up to me to get that thing out and up to the roof. Him and me, we thought we'd have some fun with the teachers. That's the only thing—but that wasn't anything bad. I don't know if they ever found it out or not. When I got there at supper I excused myself. But I was never called into the principal's office or anything like that.

The folks in those days paid about six or eight dollars a week for my board. And, of course, on a Friday evening I'd go home, and I'd always come back of a Sunday evening.

We had no trouble in school. Oh, a few of them—Vernie Pentico, he was in my class. He was ornery with just about everybody, but he never did anything bad. Before they had bathrooms in the schoolhouse, he went outside to the outhouse and came back in. He brought in a little snake about a foot long and he stuck it in his pocket, of course. He went in and, when there was no teacher, then he just reached down and turned it loose. You ought to have seen those girls! But that wasn't really bad. He got called into the office several times I know. Just little tricks. But I was never called up or had any trouble. Didn't smoke cigarettes except a couple of times going to a football game. I didn't touch alcohol. Oh, there were a few times—when a threshing crew passed around a beer.

Holt: You and your wife were the same age, but she graduated ahead of you.

Dowell: The folks in 1912 rented the farm and went to California. They bought a house in Lindsay, California. I went to school out there that winter. Orange groves. Oh, my gosh! Those oranges that are left on the trees are good eating. I'd come home back through the orange groves coming back from school. Then they came back [*to Kansas*] in early March, and I went to [*grade*] school at what they called Happy Hollow, District 4. I had all different books in California, and I had to take that year of school over again. Nora was ahead of me. We were the same age; her birthday was in January, mine's in June. Same age, but I had to take that year over so I graduated one year later than Nora did. She was just one

year ahead of me, but we never dated 'till one time had a watermelon feast out in the pasture out east of town. I told some of the boys, "I'm going to take Nora home this evening." Of course, somebody went and sneaked and told her. So I took her home. I think in high school I went out with one other girl in the class above me, and every time we'd go out together her sister was always along. So I took her out twice or so and that was it. So I went with Nora.

Holt: Did you play sports?

Dowell: Oh, I played four years of football. I was captain of the football team two years.

Holt: Eight-man football?

Dowell: No. Eleven. We could play Concordia. We weren't afraid of Concordia or any of them. Vernie Pentico, he and I played in the backfield all four years. I was right halfback or left, and he was the other. We carried that ball all four years.

I was president of the senior class. I played four years of football, and I played baseball. I played baseball at high school on Fridays and the town team on Sundays, but I couldn't take any money.

Holt: Did some stay in school just to play sports?

Dowell: This Vernie Pentico, now he was older than I was. He played football in the fall, but he got to be twenty-one before basketball season so he just quit school. He didn't graduate with us. Nineteen in the graduating class.

Holt: Did you study agriculture in school?

Dowell: No. Nora took normal training [*teacher training*], and I didn't want that so I took Commercial Law. You know, that's done me more good than any of it.

Holt: What were your plans for after high school?

Dowell worked on the family farm, as did the young people shown in this 1916 threshing photo from Reno County. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

Dowell: Well, when I graduated, very few went to college. Now I had a farm waiting for me. My mother had a farm. She was an Arbuthnot, and the Arbuthnots at one time owned six solid sections in the east part of Republic County. My mother had never been married until she married my dad, and then, of course, they took me. I was the only child, and she left the farm to me. And Father had two hundred acres farther east of that toward Haddam.

Holt: You always knew the farm was waiting.

Dowell: Yes. I was brought up with hired men. I was raised as hired help. Trusted hired help, I guess that's the word. My dad pretty near always had two married men helping. On our farm we had our house and then we had another house about two hundred feet south for the hired help. Then we had another farm, three miles east, with a house down there. We had a fellow from Missouri one time that came up and worked for us, and he saved enough money he went back to Missouri and bought a forty-acre farm.

Now the barn at the farm, that's still there. That barn was built in 1886. It cost \$6,600 to build that barn. The house was built in '85; my mother, when she inherited this farm, she had a contract made for the house, chickenhouse, outside toilet, and the barn. That's a three-story barn. Full basement. Dry floors and bins. Hay mow above that. You could put twenty-four head of horses in there, and it had feed racks. My dad al-

ways had eighteen or twenty head of horses. He'd go to Kansas City with a load of cattle, and they had a bureau down there where you'd go get a hired man. Most came from the Ozarks. Some were good men, but they still didn't know our machinery. Dad had mules and horses. If the man wanted to work the horses, I'd work the mules. If he wanted the mules, I'd work the horses. We'd just work out in the fields together. My dad put me behind a team when I was twelve. A four-horse team. We raised wheat, corn, oats, and alfalfa. Milo and cane came in later years. In those days, if you plowed fifty acres of wheat with horses that was a big deal. Now it's thousands of acres with this machinery.

I've had a good life. I wouldn't change mine even if I was an orphan. You know what my mother said? "He brought sunshine into our home."

A Lane County Teenager: Howard Lang Reminiscence [1922]

In the winter of 1979–1980, Howard Lang decided to write a short autobiography. Much of it was about his adult life, but he also wrote about his teenage years in Lane County. Howard's schooling ended when he finished eighth grade. As a teenager he concentrated on work, not school. Most of the work was on the family farm, but Howard occasionally found other ways to earn money until he left home at about the age of twenty-one to work at an uncle's store for ten dollars a week and board. While his daily routine usually meant the chores necessary to keep a farm operating, Howard also found time for recreation. Baseball was one of his passions, but music allowed him to combine entertainment and profit.

This autobiography is being written without much research, mostly from memory which isn't as good as it used to be. As I point out in this writing I only have a grade school education and that was more than 56 years ago. . . . Not knowing where to start in telling about my life and past experiences, I suppose one should start at the beginning. I was born in Garden City, Kansas, on Aug. 18, 1908. They tell me my Dad ran a butcher shop with a pardner named Mr. Harriet. When I was one year old my parents moved to the town of Heizer, Kans. The old rock house is still standing, south side of hiway 96 in Heizer. We lived there about two years when Dad bought a butcher shop in Hoisington. We lived there the next four years. I was six years of age by that time and ready for school. Dad sold his butcher shop and we moved to my grandparents' farm one mile south of Heizer. My mother was born and raised on this farm and never lived anywhere else until her and Dad were married. . . .

Well by this time my folks wanted a farm of their own, so they rented one which was about halfway between Heizer and Hoisington. I went my

"Howard Lang Autobiography," Lane County Historical Society, Dighton, Kansas. Reprinted with permission from Lane County Historical Society and Historical Museum and from Howard Lang.

third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades while we were there. . . . After two years on this farm the folks decided they would like to have a farm of their own. None being available in Barton Co. at a price they could afford to pay, they came to Utica, Kansas, to visit Dad's sister [*Chenoa Smith*] and family and to look around to see if there was something they could buy. . . . As always a real estate salesman can always find something to sell. Mr. Aim Buxton just happened to have the south 1/2 of sec. 9-16-27 Lane Co. to sell. Well after the deal was made we moved to Lane Co. the last day of July in 1922 [*I turned 14 in August*]. That is, my Mother, her sister Lillie, and me, we came in the car. Dad and the hired man drove horses, each one drove a four horse team hitched to a hayrack and trailing a four horse team pulling a lumber wagon loaded with our furniture, clothing, and other earthly possessions. Seems like it took them four or five days to come. They also trailed a few head of extra horses, about 20 head in all. Things were pretty rough for the folks that first spring. We had the most abundant crop of loco weed in our pasture that I have ever seen. Most of our horses got locoed and died¹; the ones that didn't die were dangerous to use. Tractors were not popular at that time so we had to do something for horsepower. Ray Wheatcroft had some unbroken mules we could use for the breaking of them. Dad sent me on my saddle horse to get four of them. We ran a whole bunch of them in a corral, put halters on them and tied them in pairs. Ray helped me start them, after about a mile they went without much trouble. These mules broke out real fine and Ray got a good price for them that fall. That meant the next spring we would have to find some more. A fellow by the name of Shaw that lived some twelve or fifteen miles north of us, said he would let us have some mules the same way.

This time we took six of them. I drove them home by myself not tying them together. My saddle horse was one of the best, and I was 15 years old and thought I could do about anything. Five of these mules broke out fine, the other one was an ornery one. Mr. Shaw sold these mules that fall. Dad started buying some horse colts of his own. This is the way we operated for the next five years.

As I have stated before, we came to Pendennis on the last day of July in 1922. It was never a large town but considerable larger than it is now. There were two general stores which sold groceries, clothing and about

¹When locoweed was eaten by livestock, it brought on chronic poisoning, often resulting in death.

A view of Dighton, Kansas, in the early 1920s. About once a year Howard Lang's family made a trip to Dighton. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

everything else that a person would need. One store even sold a line of machinery. . . . There was not much need to go to any other town as you could get nearly everything you needed in Pendennis. When we felt like we wanted to step out and splurge a little we would go to Utica, twelve miles away. We only lived three miles from Pendennis, two north and one east. About once a year, tax paying time, we would really step out, we would go to Dighton. I remember Morgans hill was a real test for a Model T Ford. . . .

If we had to depend on our crops for a living the first few years we were in Lane Co. we might have got pretty hungry. That was not the case as we always had plenty to eat, some times it was not so fancy but good. My mother was a very good cook and could make anything taste good. Mom raised chickens and garden so we had plenty of fresh vegetables in season and she canned the rest. The chickens of course furnished both meat and eggs, the extra eggs went to the grocery store to trade for groceries. The cows kept us supplied with milk and beef. We butchered beef in cold weather; we had no refrigeration, using part of it fresh and canning the rest for summer use.² We milked from 15 to 20

²During the early 1900s new methods of home canning, with pressure cookers or by the "bath" or "pack" methods in kettles, allowed homemakers to can just about anything—vegetables, fruits, beef, pork, and fish.

head cows most of the time. That furnished us with plenty of milk. The rest of the milk we ran through the separator, feeding the skimmed milk to the calves and hogs. The cream was saved until we had enough to fill a 5 or 10 gallon shipping can. This can would be tagged and taken to the depot at Pendennis to be shipped to a creamery in some larger town. The cream check was usually used to buy our clothing and other necessary items. Sugar and flour were two of the staple items we had to buy.

I think Dad was considered a pretty good farmer in Barton Co. as he had some pretty good crops there. Farming in Lane Co., where we have less rainfall, is a different story. Continuous cropping will not work out here, unless we happen to have an exceptional wet year. We could raise spring barley, some corn and real good cane, also crook neck maze. There was a lot of dry land corn raised north of the river. They would shuck the corn, put it in a crib then they would have a job hauling corn all winter. It was hauled in a lumber wagon, with extra sideboards and four horses pulling it. On cold days the driver would walk along beside the wagon to keep warm.

Now as to my personal income. It was not much. When we lived in Barton Co., we would nearly always go to Great Bend on Sat. to do our shopping, by horse and buggy. Dad would nearly always give me 25 cents to spend. That would last me all day, trying to decide what to spend it for. One time I remember I got a whole \$1.00 for my harvest wages. My big money came when I found an old steel trap and caught a badger with it. I skinned the animal, stretched the hide and took it to Great Bend to sell to Mr. Spaugh. He ran a grocery store and bought furs on the side. That hide brought me \$1.00, that money was invested in more traps and I was in business. I was about 10 or 11 years old at that time, didn't catch too many skunks and badgers but it was a start. When we moved "OUT WEST," I was going on 14 and thought I was quite an expert on trapping, but I never could catch a coyote. My mode of travel was either on foot or horseback, most of the time it was on foot. My trap line was only 5 or 6 miles long, and by going on foot I could carry a gun and hunt rabbits. You must understand that this was just a winter time job.

In the spring, summer and fall, we were always busy with the farm work. That meant getting up at 4 A.M., going out to run the work horses in, feed and curry them, milking from 15 to 20 old cows, separate the milk, feed the calves and hogs all before breakfast. After breakfast we would harness the horses and try to make it out to the field by sunup. We would sit on an old hard iron seat, looking at the back end of them

poor old horses until noon. After feeding the horses, we would sit down to a big dinner that mom had prepared.

After eating and resting for a short time, it was time to hitch up the horses and look at the same end again until almost sundown. After feeding and taking the harness off the horses, I would get on my saddle horse and go after the milk cows. A person had to find the cows before it got too dark or you might not find them as there was a full section to our pasture. In that rough country, every soapweed looked like a cow laying down; a few times I never did find them. After I got home with the cows, supper would be ready. We would go out to milk the cows, with the aid of a lantern. Then we would have to go through the same old grind again, separate the milk, feed the calves and hogs. If we hurried we could finish by 10 or 11 o'clock; of course if we had a little something extra to do, like pumping water for the horses by hand, then it would be closer to 12 o'clock.

There was one thing nice about it though, we didn't have a thing to do until 4 o'clock the next morning. On rainy days we didn't have much to do, just clean out the barn and chicken house, also take the harness apart and oil it if we had time. One thing we didn't do was work on Sunday, except in an emergency, that was our day of rest.

One fall we had our feed bound and ready to shock when it started raining. The cane was about eight feet tall, the ground so wet we could hardly walk so Dad told me I could work on the R. R. [*railroad*] section at Pendennis if I wanted to, until the ground got dry enough to shock feed. They were asking for extra help and I would like to earn some money. There was only one hitch, I was only 16 and the minimum age was 18. Well in that case I was 18. Pendennis was three miles from home so I had a choice of riding my horse or walking. I didn't like the idea of leaving my horse tied up all day so I walked. The pay was 50 cents an hour for an eight hour day, big money for me. It was about two weeks before the ground was dry enough to shock feed. In the fall I pitched wheat to a threshing machine quite a bit but that didn't pay off very good for me as most of it was exchange work. This is what we did for a living.

As for entertainment, it was most all homemade. When we lived in Barton Co. the folks would go to barn dances, ball games and card parties, sometimes we kids got to go too. At school we played baseball with a baseball made out of store string, the bat was homemade too. Another good game was shinney played with an old tin can. Baseball was my favorite game. I would run halfway to school so we could start before school

took up. At recess we would nearly break the door down to get out to play ball. At noon we would wolf down a sandwich and go after it again. That left most of our dinner to be eaten as we walked home from school.

After moving to Lane Co. it was a different story. There were not enough big boys in our school to have a ball team. Harold King, Bill Curtis and myself were the only big ones and Bill was not baseball inclined so that left Harold and me to play catch. That was not the end of baseball for me. At that time they had what was called the "Short Grass League" which consisted of all the towns in the area. Believe it or not, Pendennis had one of the best teams in the league. This was mainly because of the battery, which consisted of Elmer Bogart the pitcher and Wayne (Si) Davis as catcher. No one else was needed on the team as Elmer had such a fast ball, no one could hit him, and no one else but Wayne could hold him. Where do I fit in? Well the rules say you must have nine men on the team. There not being too many men in the area to choose from, the commissioners, Ross Hanks, Bert Davis and one more I don't remember who, chose three rookies to fill out the team. They were Lawrence Hanks, Carl Davis and myself. This was quite an honor as we were only about 14 years of age at the time. Seems odd, at that time the league games were played on Saturday. At that time all farming was done with horses and all the farmers turned out for the ballgame. Later on, when most of the farmers farmed with tractors and could get a lot more acres done in a day, they had to change the day to Sunday.

Well the shortgrass league didn't last very long after that. I don't know if it was because of me or not. The first game I played in, Dad and I were out hoeing loco one Saturday afternoon when Gaylon Davis came driving out and said we have got to have you fill out the team. That made me feel pretty important. The team at that time was Elmer Bogart, pitcher, Wayne Davis catcher, Gaylon Davis first baser, the second baseman I can't recall, the shortstop was Harold (Shorty) Davis. The third baseman was a tall slim fellow named Clark. The outfield was filled with us rookies that didn't have much to do, as it was very seldom that anyone ever hit a ball pitched by Elmer Bogart. Several years later we had a sort of pickup team from everywhere, as we were short of players around Pendennis. . . .

Hunting rabbits took up most of my free time. It was something I could do while herding cattle. A box of 22 cartridges at that time cost 15 cents for shorts, 20 cents for longs and 25 cents for long rifles. We could pay for our ammunition pretty easy. Gove County was paying 5 cents

Howard Lang, like many other teenagers, was involved with music. This group, with string instruments, was photographed in Leavenworth. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Leavenworth Public Library Collection; Frank Morrow, photographer)

bounty for rabbit ears. We would go over to Art Bentleys on Sunday and trade rabbit ears for ammunition. Those rabbits didn't know where the county line was. Art's place was always a meeting place for us boys on Sunday. We always had to have target practice while we were there. The boys that were usually there were Phay Hussey, Harold King, Warren Munsell and myself.

One of the things that we brought with us to Lane Co. was a Stainer violin. This fiddle belonged to my mother. It was given to her by her brother Herman. He used to play for barn dances back in Barton Co.; he said one night he dropped it on the dance floor and it never did sound right after that. He gave this instrument to my mother and bought another one. Well to make a long story short, Mom said if I could learn to saw that thing so that she could recognize it she would give it to me. After a lot of sawing and screeching she said she knew what the tune was

that I was trying to play. Maybe she just gave up in despair. Anyway, the fiddle was mine. I still have it. . . . This was the beginning of my musical career, if you could call it that. From the proceeds of one badger hide, about five or six dollars, I sent to Montgomery Ward for a guitar. There happened to be a crippled boy by the name of Bill Shane, his father was a pumper for the M.O.P. railway at Ludwig, who could play the guitar quite well. He taught me to play chords and before long I was playing second to Ed King on his fiddle. Ed was one of the best old time fiddlers that ever hit the country. We started playing for house dances and wound up playing for dances in Pendennis and Shields as well. That was a big boost to my income, we got about two dollars a night. That helped out a lot as we usually had about one [*dance*] a week in the winter time. . . .

Travel when I was a boy was by horse and buggy, unless you were going a long way, in that case you would take the train. Dad bought his first automobile in 1918; it was a 1914 Model T Ford. This was my first experience at driving a car, if you can call it that. Dad and my uncle would drive out in a wheat field and get out to shoot rabbits. It was my job to follow them and pick up the rabbits with the car. If you are familiar with the operation of a Model T you know all there was to do to make it go was to push down on the low pedal, provided the engine was running. We didn't travel very far with that vehicle. About one year later, Dad traded that Ford in on a Chevrolet touring car. This one was a new one called a 490 I believe. I learned to drive this one when I was about 12 years old. In fact it was the one we came to Lane Co. in, big deal I got to drive it most of the way. The folks kept this car for about three more years when Dad and my brother Marion went to Pendennis to shop. Like all cars, even today, the battery will give out because of old age. When Dad and Marion got ready to leave the battery was down and had to be cranked. Well Marion being like any other 10 year old kid had to try his hand at cranking. The result was the thing backfired and Marion wound up with a broken arm. Dad thought the thing to do with a car like that was to trade it off. At that time Earl Waterson was selling cars out on his farm, Essex I believe. He had a used Buick that he had taken it on a trade that he traded to Dad for the Chevy and some difference. The crazy part of it was I traded a fat heifer to Earl to get the Chevy back. This was my first automobile. . . .

A Senior Year: Thelma Shephard Diary [1927]

• Abilene

Born in Abilene, Kansas, in 1909, Thelma Shephard was a "town" girl whose activities and interests sometimes contrast sharply with those of rural teenagers. A high school senior in 1926–1927, Thelma in many ways represented the popular ideal of the "modern" girl. She listened to the radio, went to movies, drove a car, and bobbed her hair. Thelma also kept a diary, but, unlike Marian Minnis who was often introspective, Thelma recorded happenings. Sometimes she mentioned her parents, Jesse and Elizabeth Shephard. More often, she wrote about friends and school, including "chapel" which was occasionally "devotional" but often a "Pep Chapel" assembly. Abilene High School, like many schools, offered specific courses of study. There was the professional or college preparatory course; the normal course for those planning to be teachers; the home economics course; industrial arts course; and the commercial course for those preparing for office jobs or business college classes. Thelma was enrolled in the commercial courses, which explains references to the typewriting team and the Commercial Club. It also explains diary notations made in shorthand; these were deciphered here, as much as possible. Her high school training paid off. After graduation she was hired by, and worked a number of years for, Duckwall Western Merchandise Co. in Abilene. Several young men occupied her thoughts, but the Bill to whom she refers is Wilmer Hartman—a classmate and her future husband. The diary entries presented here cover Thelma's final semester—the last months before she and ninety-two others graduated as the Class of 1927.

Sun., Jan. 9 Got up about 7:30. Esther, Mabel Webb, and Grandma came up early this morning. We kids did a lot of dancing today. Wrote a letter to Jim this eve. Studied and listened to the radio, which Bob Murphy installed this morning, until after 2:00. Bob sure likes to dance. We kids

Mrs. Bill Hartman (Thelma Shephard) Diary, Personal Papers Collection, Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, Kansas. Reprinted with permission of the Dickinson County Historical Society.

walked to Webbs and back. Was talking to Mabel Ross tonite. Went to bed 3:15.

Mon., Jan. 10 No chapel this morning. Got a letter from Jim. Sent one out to him. Got my typewriting pins today—a 25-word Woodstock, a 40-word Woodstock and a 40-word Underwood. Stayed in typing room this eve. until 5:15. Priems were over to listen to the radio this eve. Took a nap about 8:30 until 11:00. Been “listening in” 1:10 and I’m goine to bed By Gee Whilikins. Got a picture from Grace.

Tues., Jan. 11 Sure hated to get up this morning. Stayed in until after 5:00 getting my History Quiz made up. Poister came out and made a date for tomorrow nite. Priems were over tonite. Got Hollywood and Buffalo [*on the radio*], for the first time, after the folks went to bed. Went to bed 2:30.

Wed., Jan. 12 Letter from Harry. Made up my quiz in Office Man. [*Office Management*]. Had our first final today. Got Francis W’s and Alice G’s picture today. Had mine taken. Stopped in and saw Nettie. The kids came about 7:00, Mabel and Albert were along. We went to the show at the Lyric, featuring Norma Shearer in “Up Stage.” Liked it. We came home and listened to the radio. They left about 11:30. We had chocolate bars & gum after the show.

Thurs., Jan. 13 More finals today. Kenneth gave me his picture also Mabel, Bill and Genevieve Akers. My pictures sure are funny. Earl came down tonite. I sure was happy and just couldn’t be quiet or in the least bit serious. He went home about 11:00. Went to bed 12:45. Got E in my History final.

Fri., Jan. 14 Today ends our finals. Got out about 12:30. Annie came home with me tonite. We went out to Richard’s to get a rooster for Grandma S. Was talking to Earl. Stayed at home this eve. Went to bed about 1:45. Dad says he’s bot the radio.

Sat., Jan. 15 Got up at nine. Washed my head. Went to town this afternoon. We, Mother, Anna & I had our pictures taken. We went to the matinee at Seeleyes [*Theater*]. Stayed home tonite. We kids took a nap this eve, from about 10:00 until 12:30. Went to bed at 1:00.

*Thelma Shephard's senior class picture.
(Courtesy Dickinson County Historical Society)*

Sun., Jan. 16 Stayed in bed until 9:00. Curled Anna's hair. Laid down for about an hour this afternoon. Mother made some candy. Mr. and Mrs. Ross and Irene were up this evening. Irene, Anna & I slept from 9:30 until about 12:00. Went to bed about 1:00—broke the pin on my 25-word award.

Mon., Jan. 17 Got letters from Pauline and Harry. Starting a new semester today. Stayed after school tonite. Got some little pictures from Ethel H., Emza D. [*Dilling*], Opal E. [*Emig*], and Marion Lash. Gave mine to Ethel H., Francis Weishaar and Frances Boughner. Laid down about 9:00. Got up at 11:30 and went to bed again at 12:15.

Tues., Jan. 18 Earl gave me his picture today (2 of them). Stayed in late to get my Const. notes. Got Alice M's picture today & another from Bill & one from Helen [*Rutz*]. Went down to Ross' skating tonite. The kids went down first and then Harley [*Ross*] & I went. Had lots of fun. Harley & I came back by ourselves too. On our way home we stopped at Grandma Reeds & listened to the radio there until after 12:00, Got to bed about 1:30.

A family enjoys an evening's entertainment listening to the radio. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

Wed., Jan. 19 Pauline's and Arbutus' blocks came today.¹ Mabel & I had dates of course with Floyd and Dude. Went to Clara Bow & Donald Kieth in "Free to Love." Went down to Ross'. I went in & sat with Harley and listened to the radio. We got down to Ross' at 10:00 & left about 11:00. Just think. . . . Harley!!!! Got in at 11:20. Got a letter from Jim today wanting me to go to the B. B. [basketball] game Fri. nite but I'm not going. Went to bed at 12:30.

Thurs., Jan. 20 Nothing much happened today. Got Nettie's and Teresa's [Weishaar] pictures. Was in to see Nettie this eve. Saw Earl. Dorothy actually spoke to me first today. Laid down & slept from 9 until 11:20. Got up and went to bed.

Fri., Jan. 21 Pep chapel today & grade cards. Fell down and got all muddy on my knee. Stayed all night at Grandma Reeds tonite. Went to bed sometime around 10:00.

¹*These were quilt blocks for Thelma's Friendship quilt. Other diary entries note receiving blocks from various people. Arbutus was a high school friend who moved during the year's first semester.*

Sat., Jan. 22 Got up about 10:00. Washed my head & curled it. Went to town & to the show, Billy Sullivan in "The Goat Getter." New Serial—"Scotty of the Scouts." Letter from Harry. Got my picture taken. Floyd came out & we took the folks down to Ross' & got Mabel for "Dude." Harley said that that German phrase meant "Wait until we meet again." Fell down in the storm cave at Ross'. We kids came out & stayed at home. He left at 12:30.

Sun., Jan. 23 Got up about 8:00. Visitor² came too soon & was sick all day. Laid down before dinner [*noon meal*] and got up about 8:00 long enough to eat a piece and go back to bed again.

Mon., Jan. 24 Wrote a letter to Harry and also letters to Pauline and Arbutus. Got my pictures that I had taken Sat. both views were good. Saw Floyd's and Albert's pictures but Floyd's sisters got his before I did. Gave Earl, Ethel, Bill, Teresa & Opal my picture. Went to bed at 11:45.

Tues., Jan. 25 Tardy this morning. Have to make up a sixth hour for it tomorrow. Earl was supposed to come down tonite but he didn't do it. That makes it "Good bye" for him. Sis H. clipped my neck tonite. Went to sleep on Mother's bed 9:30 got up and went to bed at 11:45.

Wed., Jan. 26 Made up sixth hour for being tardy yesterday. Didn't speak to Earl at all altho he apologized to mother. Floyd came about 7:30. . . . We kids Mabel & Albert and Floyd & I had our pictures taken [*and*] then went to the show. Cullen Landis in the "Dixie Flyer." Went down to Mabels after the show. . . . and I went into the house. . . . Scotty & his Moonlight Serenaders played from Milford³ tonite over the radio but I didn't get to hear them. Went to bed at 1:00. Gave my picture to Mabel R., Bill H., Cecilia L., Emza D. & Alice G.

²In their personal writings women tended to use oblique terms such as "visitor" to refer to the menstrual period.

³Dr. John R. Brinkley's KFKB radio station in Milford was the first in Kansas; going on the air in 1922, the station's call letters stood for "Kansas First, Kansas Best." With the station, Brinkley gained power and influence. In 1924 and 1932 he ran for Kansas governor, losing both times.

Thurs., Jan. 27 Got out early for Lawrence Elwick's funeral. Came home and heard Mrs. McPherson, the great evangelist.⁴ Got my dinner down town with Ester & Mabel W. & had my picture taken. Took a nap from 8:00 until nearly 10:00. Went to bed at 11:45. Grandma & Grandpa Shephard & Grandma Reed, Esther and Uncle Hugh were up today. Got my Friendship quilt blocks from Mrs. Dunham & Margary.

Fri., Jan. 28 Got pictures from Irene Simmons & Esther today & Floyd. Gave pictures to Irene, Esther, Genevieve A., Nettie & Helen. Went to the show with Floyd. It was Wolfheart in "The Fangs of Wolfheart." He gave me a picture of himself & also one of both of us. He left a little after 12:00. Went to bed about 2:45.

Sat., Jan. 29 Got up at 9:00. Letter from Harry. Had my pictures taken again. Went to the matinee with Mother, it was "The Last Alarm" featuring Wanda Hawley. Stopped in and talked to Nettie. Ione Rubin was run into this afternoon. Stayed home this eve & laid down about 9:00 & got up at 11:00 & then stayed up until 2:00. Heard Little Jack Little play a couple pieces on his last program over the radio & then had to turn it off because it made too much noise.

Sun., Jan. 30 Got up about 9:00. Washed my head this afternoon & gave my face a steam and massage. Tried to work on my cards but couldn't settle myself. Talked to Mabel and we went down there this eve. Had lots of fun with Harley . . . rather flattering when he wants to be. Mabel, Irene, & I went up to his room & took a nap. When I came down to go home Harley and I got into fight. I came home a little before 12:00 & went to bed at 12:00.

Mon., Jan. 31 Devotional chapel & Rev. Colas of the Baptist church spoke to us. The kids went down town this noon and had Frannie with us again. Teresa said she was out last nite. Got a letter from Harry & wrote him one yesterday. Got the pictures I had taken Friday. Had fun with Scotty this eve. Took a snooze from 7:40 until 9:50. Went to bed at 10:30.

⁴*Aimee Semple McPherson, a flamboyant evangelist, reached tens of thousands through mass meetings and the medium of radio.*

Tues., Feb. 1 Didn't much happen today. Got my dinner down town. Stopped in to see Nettie. We went down to Grandma Reed's to listen to their new radio. Wrote to Harry. Webbs came down to Grandma's too. I took a nap & we came home about 12:00. Went to bed a little after 12:00.

Wed., Feb. 2 Tardy this morning. Had a sixth hr. and study hall for it. Floyd came in tonite. We went to the "Devil Horse." It sure was a wonderful show. We went down to Ross' after the show. . . . Harley Whew!!! . . . We came home and he left about 12:00 after getting a couple of my pictures. Got my dinner down town. Went to bed a little after 12:00.

Thurs., Feb. 3 Not much happened today. Quiz in Com. Law. Think I got "by" in it. This was Grandma Shephard's birthday and we had her and Grandpa for the eve. Stopped in and saw Nettie awhile. Got up this morning at 6:00 & went down to inspect the post office at 6:30. Teresa and I got us some hamburgers before going to school. Laid down about 8:30. Got up at 11:00 & went to bed about 12:00.

Fri., Feb. 4 Sr. class meeting to practice our new yell. Tonite was the nite Harry's gang was to broadcast from Jefferson City but because of Milford we only got in at the last of it. Floyd came out and we went to the show but didn't go in because it was full. Came back out home. He left pretty early. Went to bed a little after 12:00. Taught 2nd hour typewriting class for Miss [Mabel] Pinson.

Sat., Feb. 5 Letter from Harry and Pauline. Pauline sent some pictures. Went to the matinee. It was Tom Tyler in "Born to Battle." Saw "Bo" and was talking to him. His sis's sat with me in the show. Went down to Grandma Reed's for supper and then stayed all nite. Laid down about 9:00 and slept till 12:00. Went to bed at 3:00 tomorrow morning. Stopped in and talked to Nettie. Got up about 9:30 [*in the*] morning.

Sun., Feb. 6 Got up after nine. Esther and I washed our heads. Rich came down to see about buying Ginger. . . . We went down to Ross'. Grace, Mabel, Eugenia McC., Orpha Landis & I rambled around town all afternoon. We went up to McColloughs after some milk. I have another one of Donita's pictures. Herbert came and we kids went to Chapman, me

Shephard, like many other high school students, studied the commercial course, which included typing. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

driving as fast as I could. . . . got us chocolates. Then came back to Abilene me still driving and got us some hamburgers. Harley Whew!!! Kissed me 3 times. Got in home about 12:00.

Mon., Feb. 7 Tardy this morning. Took my Memory Book to school today. We kids rambled around up town this noon. The "Frazer Duo" entertained us this afternoon. It was the biggest comedy hit that I ever saw at the high school. It was a scream all the way through. Waved my hair. Went to bed at 9:10 after taking a bath. The announcement of Verna Buyers marriage to Schmit was in the paper.

Tues., Feb. 8 Got a valentine from Arbutus today. Made up a sixth hour for being late yesterday. Clara and Ora brought the baby out this eve. It sure is sweet and I got to take care of it most of the time. Laid down a little after eight, got up about 9:30 and am going to bed at 11:45. We sure got a snow tonite which was a big change of temperature, the past week the days have been like spring.

Wed., Feb. 9 Letter from Harry. The juniors entertained us in the chapel with a short one act play "The Horrible Guest" & a song. Floyd came out and after going after Mabel we kids went to the show "The Fighting Boob" featuring Bob Custer. I wore Harley's black tie & took him some matches I got him Sun. . . . We left Ross' about 11:00, I drove down town and he left about 12:20. Went to bed 1:00.

Thurs., Feb. 10 Got a letter from Harry. Sure a dull day. Stopped in and talked to Nettie after school. Loaned Esther my Jr.-Sr. dress for "Pickles" tomorrow nite. Laid down before 8:00 and got up at 11:30 and studied my History until nearly 1:30 at which time I went to bed. Grandma Reed and Uncle Hugh were up tonite.

Fri., Feb. 11 Stayed all night with Mable R. tonite. Harley gave me a regular professors lecture on typing and stenography before supper. Mr. & Mrs. Ross left early which left Mable, Harley & I there all alone. Spent part of my time being good by reading the "Whiz Bang." Then—oh fluttering heart lay thee still—exciting Whew! Dear heart. . . . Gave him my picture. Went to bed about 10:30.

Sat., Feb. 12 Rained. Mabel and I got up about 9:00. We fiddled around most of the morning. Harley and I got Mabel's diary and read it. . . . Just before we went to town went with Mabel to the hospital to check some of her relation. Floyd and Albert came out and we went up town. Mabel & I spent our time getting groceries & valentines and then came home. Floyd gave me a little red heart shaped box of chocolates. Mabel stayed all nite. We got to bed about 12:30. Saw Harley tonight but he was. . . . Mailed valentines to Pauline, Edna Mae, Arbutus, Harley, Harry & Irene Simmons.

Sun., Feb. 13 Rained. We kids got up 9:00. We fooled around so that I didn't get all my dusting done. Ross' were here for dinner. Maurine Shaw came out this afternoon. We kids took her home and ran around town awhile and I got them some candy. Went out to Maurine's & had some jokes. . . . We were all sleepy as the dickens this evening. Got to bed about 11:30. Irene gave me a Valentine. . . . Gave Doctor [*the dog*] to Nathan Scott today.

Mon., Feb. 14 Valentine from Harry. We kids went down town this noon. Another written lesson in Com. Law. We kids in first hour didn't get quiet when we should have so we got a 250 word theme to write. He gave me Panics. Was at Grandma Shephard's for awhile after school. Went to bed at 10:08.

Tues., Feb. 15 Special chapel today for a few announcements. We were let off early for a matinee at the Lyric "Abraham Lincoln." It was good. Wrote a letter to Harry. We went to bed at 10:30.

Wed., Feb. 16 Letter from Pauline. The Commercial Club picture was taken today. Worked on my typewriting during the noon hour. Esther, Grandma R. & Uncle Hugh were here for supper and the evening. Bob Hartman stopped on his way home and stayed for supper. Called up Mrs. Ross to see about some pictures. Helen and I were together tonight. Laid down at 8:55 got up at 11:25 and went to bed at 12:30. . . .

Thurs., Feb. 17 Got a letter from Harry. It sure turned cold today and tried to snow but the snow was almost like little hail balls. Teresa, Ethel & I ate Jitney lunch today. I had baked cheese, peas, salad and sandwiches & then candy. We had a lot of fun at noon. Laid down after supper at 6:15. Got up at 7:45 and studied my History for the quiz tomorrow. Went to bed at 9:50.

Fri., Feb. 18 Had a Pep Chapel for the game tonite. We kids, the "bunch" sure had a "cut-up" time this noon. Stopped in to see Nettie. Floyd & Dude came in tonite. We kids & Mabel went to the show. Clara Bow & Donald Kieth in "Parisian Love." Floyd sure made me mad when he wouldn't go home. He left about 11:00. Went to bed at 11:45.

Sat., Feb. 19 Letter from Harry. Got up 8:45. Went up town this afternoon and to the matinee featuring Fred Thompson & Silver [?] in "The Two Gun Man." Sure liked it. Was in to see Nettie & she gave me her picture. Stayed at home this eve & crocheted awhile then went to bed at 10:30.

Sun, Feb. 20 Got up at 8:30. Spent the afternoon going thru some boxes of things I am keeping. This eve Ross' came by & we went down there then Floyd & Albert came. This is the end of Floyd & I. We came home

about 11:30 & I wrote to Harry & also a letter to Floyd telling him how terribly sorry I was. Went to bed at 12:30.

Mon., Feb. 21 Tardy this morning & had a sixth hour for it. Letter & my quilt block from Mary. Wrote a letter to Pauline & Arbutus. Sure felt punk today, skipped 4th hour because I felt so terribly. Got a haircut. Stopped in at Netties. Sure "mad" about the fuss my quitting Floyd is causing with some outside family which it should not concern in the least. Went to bed at 8:30.

Tues., Feb. 22 Chapel today for Washingtons birthday. Tardy this morning. Went up to Senior Specialty practice. Came down town with Teresa & went with her to get her hair cut. Helen & I ran around awhile then. Went to bed at 10:30.

Wed., Feb. 23 Tardy today. Stayed after school to make up my sixth hours. Went in and talked to Nettie while waiting for Mother. Cleaned my room while Mother baked pies this eve. Went to bed at 9:30.

Thurs., Feb. 24 Letter from Harry. "Jitney Lunch" today. Practiced for Sr. Specialty tonite pretty promising chance of getting in. Mother went to Mo. [*Missouri*] with G. Shephard this P.M. at 3:00. Got off study period of 5th hour to go to the train. Com. Club tonite. Ethel H. spoke. Had a date with Bill for home but we came home with Dad, date when did that happen where Bill was concerned? Going to bed 10:30.

Fri., Feb. 25 Got up earlier than usual this morning & Dad & I washed dishes before breakfast. A special chapel this morning, Lattin [*Velma Mae Lattin, Latin teacher*]. Was in to see Nettie. Dad was over to Dutch's & I was here most of the eve. by myself. Mabel called up & said she couldn't come because Dude wasn't coming. Went to bed at 1:45.

Sat., Feb. 26 Got up about 9:00. Letter from Harry. After washing dishes I got dinner and got ready for town. Mabel & I went to the matinee. Tom Tyler in "Ready to Go." Mabel stayed with me all night. We cut out pictures for my scrap book & I fell asleep. We went to bed about 10:30.

Sun., Feb. 27 Mabel and I got up about 8:30. Had lots of fun getting dinner. Mabel & I went riding with Harry M. in the Chrysler this after-

noon. Part of the time Grace R., Donita McC., Maurine S., & Francis B. were along. Had a date with Frank Johnson. We were with Opal and LeRoy. He came at 6:30. We got home at 12:50. Went to bed at 1:00. Mother came home this evening.

Mon., Feb. 28 Devotional chapel. Wrote a letter to Pauline. Junie & I went to sleep after supper in the rocking chair. Went to bed at 10:00.

Tues., March 1 Snowed last nite. Got a new pair of tan oxfords this morning. Went up to Sr. Specialty practice was picked with 8 other girls for a Pastoral Dance but don't know for sure whether I'll be in it. Went to bed at 8:30.

Wed., March 2 Letter from Pauline & Arbutus. Got my grade cards today. Stopped in to see Nettie this eve. Studied shorthand and got it all done with extra after supper. Going to bed at 10:15.

Thurs., March 3 Nothing unusual happened today. Ethel & I got our lunch at cafeteria today. We had chili, salad, banana pie & sandwiches. Went up for Sr. Specialty practice tonite. She [*Miss Shade*] said I would be in it. Got my shorthand lesson after supper. Went to bed 10:30.

Fri., March 4 Mr. Endacott [*Earl Endacott, history teacher*] was real nice this morning, he didn't give us our regular History quiz. Chapel this morning. Went down town with Esther & Mabel this noon for lunch, but only ate some candy. Went with Esther to get her hair marcelled.⁵ Went to bed about 11:00.

Sat., March 5 Letters from Pauline & Harry. Washed my hair. went to town this afternoon. Mother & I went to the matinee. Bob Custer in "Hair Trigger Baxter." Stayed home this eve. & trimmed my eyebrows & nails. Went to sleep in my chair early and went to bed at 11:30.

Tues., March 8 Made up the work I missed in shorthand. Went to interlude [*Senior Interlude play*] practice after school and after supper. Miss

⁵Named for French hairdresser Marcel Grateau, the marcel was a hairstyling technique that used a heated curling iron to set deep, soft waves in the hair.

Shade said she wanted me to be in Dixie too. I came home about 8:30 and got my shorthand lesson. Went to bed about 11:00.

Wed., March 9 Letter from Harry. Orchestra Chapel today. Were down to Grandma Reeds tonite. Esther & I changed shoes for tomorrow. Came home about 11:30. Went to bed at 12:00.

Thurs., March 10 Had cafeteria today. I had some chop suey, potato salad, sandwiches, peach pie and doughnuts. Senior class meeting to get a list of the activities you have been in. Stopped to see Nettie. Went to Specialty practice after supper. Got home about 9:45 and to bed about 10:30 or 11:00.

Fri., March 11 Special cafeteria. I had some chop suey and potato salad. Practiced for the Interlude after school. Mother and I went to the picture show. It was "With This Ring" featuring Donald Kieth. Went to bed about 10:30.

Sat., March 12 Letter from Thelma Koelling. Went to town this afternoon. Saw Frank J. several times. Went to the matinee with Mother. Tom Tyler in "Red Hot Hoofs." Was in to see Nettie. Looked through a bunch of old magazines for pictures. Went to bed at 10:15.

Sun., March 13 Grandma & Grandpa S. & Uncle Hugh were up. Mabel & I went motorcycle riding with Harry M. & Everett. Harry & Mabel upset on our way to Chapman. Harley and I had a fight. Saw Sub this eve. & told him that if I didn't can him my intentions were sure good. Had a date with Frank Johnson. Oh Boy. Got two pictures of him. Lost my Cake Eater wrapper.—To bed 10:50.

Mon., March 14 Specialty practice after school and after supper. Hardly anything happened today. Felt rather tired from yesterday. Stayed home tonite. Went to bed about 10:30.

Tues., March 15 Letter from Harry. Specialty practice after school. Went up to practice after supper but they didn't practice. Neal's had another dance tonite but I didn't go. Went to bed at 10:15.

Wed., March 16 Letter from Harry. Chosen for the typewriting team. Took a Speed Writing after school. Supposed to have Interlude practice after school but I practiced typewriting instead. Otto's and Priems were over tonite. Washed my head after supper and waved it. Went to bed at 11:30.

Thurs., March 17 Got a letter from Pauline. St. Patricks Day & of course the Freshmen got paddled. Wrote on the typewriting team with Chapman. Made 49.8 with 11 [errors] & my paper was sent in. This afternoon 50 boys walked out at noon and then had a parade. We got out a half hour early. Went to bed about 11:00.

Fri., March 18 Regular History quiz. Special chapel. Got a talking to for the boys skipping classes yesterday. Class meetings. Went to Sr. Specialty practice after school. Went in to talk to Nettie. Saw the Wolf girls & talked to them. Embroidered after supper. Went to bed a little after 9:30.

Sat., March 19 Got up about 9:00. Cleaned my hat before dinner. Went to town this afternoon. Took in the matinee. Bob Custer in "The Border Whirlwind." Saw Frank several times. Stayed home this evening and embroidered. Went to bed about 10:30.

Sun., March 20 Didn't feel very well today. Had dinner at Grandma Reeds. We all went to Aunt Mabels this afternoon. Esther tried to curl my hair but couldn't do much with it. This eve. we went down to Ross'. Mabel had a date. Went upstairs with Grace and Irene for awhile & then when I came down Harley & I sat in the kitchen and talked. I don't think Harley likes me as well as he used to do. Got to bed at 12:00.

Mon., March 21 Devotional chapel. Rev. Townley speaking. Letter from Harry. Interlude practice tonite after school. I made 1 point on Accuracy against Chapman after my [typing] paper was rechecked. We went down to Ross' after school. . . . Went to bed about 11:00.

Tues., March 22 Bill H. took me to the Swiss Bell Ringers this afternoon. Specialty practice after school. Typing practice after supper. Opal & LeRoy brought out a kid and to help Opal out I went with them. We went to Chapman. Got home about 11:00. Got to bed at 12:00.

Wed., March 23 The Sophomores gave a play in chapel this morning "Love and Lather." It was good. Specialty practice after school. Called up Teresa & then she called me up. Went to bed about 11:00.

Thurs., March 24 Started on my History Term Theme today. Specialty practice after school and dress rehearsal after supper. Got my dance costume & my ballets (\$2.50) today. Went to bed at 10:15.

Fri., March 25 One night of the play over. Guess I got through alright. Got up a few minutes after 6:00. Had two quizzes an enormous shorthand lesson & Sr. play chapel today. Got a marcel at the Powder Box. Letter from Harry. Washed my head before breakfast. Got to bed 10:30. Made a 25-word Remington Certificate today.

Sat., March 26 Went up town early this morning & went down to Ross'. Did a washing of my dress & scarf. Went up town this afternoon, to the matinee. Bob Custer in "Cactus Trails" new serial. Ran around with Min, Margaret, & Viola. We kids had hamburgers & pie at Jake's Place. Was down to Ross' for a fish fry. Oh Harley . . . something is wrong somewhere. Danced again tonite & saw the play. Harley you looked at me tonight like a . . . fool I cried tonight. To bed 12:00.

Sun., March 27 Got up earlier than usual for Sunday. Went down to Grandma Reed's & then to Aunt Mabel's for dinner. Teresa, Fat B., Ralph H., Arlene Foster, Russell H., Faye Emig, Harry M. & I went riding in the Chrysler sedan. Saw the snap shots we kids took some time ago. We got home about 11:30. Had some fun with Frances. Went to bed at 12:00.

Mon., March 28 Chosen for the typing team again. Mother got me a new dress. Was up to typewriting practice tonite. Made 48.7—9 E [errors], 88.7 %. . . Stopped at Grandma S. & stayed awhile. Went to bed at 11:00.

Tues., March 29 Wrote against Mcpherson [*High School*] today. Commercial Club tonite. Francis & Teresa took me down to Ora's where Mother was. The baby sure is sweet. Mother got me another new dress. Miss Horner of the United Companies talked to us at Club. Got to bed at 12:00. Was in to see Nettie.

The automobile played a role in teenagers' lives. These young women were photographed in Saline County. (Courtesy Smoky Hill Museum)

Wed., March 30 Rainy day. Down to Grandma Reed's after school. The Booster issued Scandal Sheets today. Was in to Aunt Mabels. Went to bed about 10:00.

Thurs., March 31 Got up at 8:00. Rainy day. Letter from Harry. Spent the day looking thru magazines and papers. Daddy fixed the buffet with a glass. Teresa called up. We went down to Uncle Zeph's & on over to Uncle Hugh's & nearly got stuck this morning. Went to bed at 11:00.

Fri., April 1 Got up about 8:00. Mother fixed my suit. Called Teresa up. Popped some popcorn this afternoon. Mother & I went to the show tonite. It was "Dame Chance." I didn't like it very well. Went to bed about 12:00. Wrote a letter to Harry.

Sat., April 2 Got up rather early. Went to Salina today. Got my Sr. Spread dress. We had dinner at Beakleys. Sure was tired by the time we got home. Went down to Ross' & we kids went to town this eve. Teresa was with us awhile. Earl talked to me tonite, the first time we have spoken since Jan. 26 and he started the talk first. After we kids went home (Ross')

Harley and I had lots of fun. . . . He sure was attentive. . . . We got in about 1:00 and went to bed at about 1:30. Dog tired.

Sun., April 3 Went down to Grandma R's early this morn. Was there for dinner & then Mother, Grandma & I went up to Aunt Kates but she wasn't home so we stopped at Gartens. I got mad (terrible thing to do) because Mother wouldn't let me drive Uncle Hugh's car. Called up Mabel & Teresa. Stayed home most of the eve. alone. Went to bed about 10:30.

Mon., April 4 Mr. Endacott showed us some moving pictures. Devotional chapel. We went down town this noon. Graded Ellsworth's [*High School*] papers in typing. Helped Miss Pinson with some Neostyle work. Came up to typing practice at 7:30. Made 52.6 with 9 errors. Went to bed at 10:00.

Tues., April 5 Saw Marvin up town and talked to him awhile this noon. Had my shoes for Jr. Sr. put back [*on layaway*] at Davis' this eve. Went to see Nettie. Came up typing practice at 7:00. Teresa waited with me till the folks came. Think I won a 60 % transcription Certificate. Went to bed at 9:40.

Wed., April 6 Letter from Harry. Had a music chapel to see who was going to sing at Emporia and Salina. Went to bed about 10:30—Was in to see Nettie.

Thurs., April 7 Brought Helen and Nettie home with me after school. Wrote in the League Writing today. I think I made a fifty-word pin. We kids went to bed about 10:00.

Fri., April 8 History second semester term themes were due today. Got mine in. Scholarship tests were given today. I had to take the one on American History. Went home with Anna tonite. We went to bed about 9:30.

Sat., April 9 Went over with Richard this morning to see his grandmother. We went to town this afternoon. Went to the matinee George O'Hara "The Timid Terror." Stayed at Richards all night. Anna and I went to bed about 10:30. Was in to see Nettie.

Sun., April 10 Richard, Anna & I went hunting and picked daisies. All the kids were up to the school house this afternoon—mud fights, violet picking, water fights, baseball & basketball, . . . n'everthing. After supper Anna, Jim & I went over to Wolfs. . . . Jim & Anna bro't me home. Got to bed about 11:45.

Fri., April 15 Got my Jr.-Sr. invitation today. Miss Pinson was gone to-day and we kids sure had fun. Teresa, Francis B. & I ran over town. Francis & I went with Teresa to apply at Brown's⁶ & while waiting Bruno took us riding in the elevator. Went to bid Nettie good bye. She leaves Sunday. Mother and I went to the picture show—Went to bed about 11:30.

Sat., April 16 Called Teresa up this morning. Went to Junction City right after dinner. Got my Jr.-Sr. Dress at Black's. Went to town this eve. and Teresa and I nearly wore the streets out tonite. Nearly got into serious positions over our stubbornness but finally after parting awhile we got together again. Got to bed about 11:30.

Sun., April 17 Easter Sunday. Was down to Grandma Reed's for dinner. After dinner Uncle Bob and I went out to see the river & then up to Ikes. Mother & I went violet hunting this morning. Aunt Mabel & I walked over to her place and then went fishing. Didn't catch anything. Ralph Long called up for a date, turned him down and then he wanted one for Wed. nite but I turned him down again. Went to bed at 8:55.

Mon., April 18 Rained terribly hard. Sr. Spread Com. Meeting. Kenneth said I had been selected for the Commercial Club play, wonder if he told the truth. Went to bed about 11:30.

Tues., April 19 The Freshman class entertained in Chapel. It sure was good. Sr. Spread Com. Meeting. Went down to Grandma Reed's after school. Sure had to work to help Mother get things straightened up. Went to bed about 11:30.

⁶*Brown's was C. L. Brown's United Companies, which included telephone and utility companies and was a major employer in Dickinson County.*

Wed., April 20 Letter from Harry. Mother entertained the Club today. Stayed to help the Sr. Spread Decoration committee. Mabel Ross came home after school with me because her mother was here. Was down to Grandma Reed. She was about sick. Took a nap about an hour. Got to bed about 10:00.

Thurs., April 21 Froze last nite. Helped the Decoration Committee after school. Went down to Grandma Reed's after school. Wrote a letter to Ethel B. tonite. Our new neighbors to be, Mary and Bill Whitehair stopped up tonite. Went to bed about 10:00.

Fri., April 22 Usual History Quiz. Ethel & I went up to work on Sr. Spread but no one else was there so we went down town and ran around. Jim came out and we went to the carnival at Summerland & then to the dance at Whitehair's. Got home at 11:15. Went to bed at 11:30.

Sat., April 23 Went up town this afternoon. Got my Jr. Sr. shoes and paid for my ballets. Went to the matinee featuring Tom Tyler in "Lightning Lariats." Called up Teresa this eve. Laid down at 7:30 got up at 10:00 & went back to bed again about 10:30.

Sun., April 24 Went down to Grandma Reeds early after dinner. I laid down about 2:00 and slept till 5:30. Came home & had a date with Thanel Bradley. Mr. & Mrs. Ross were up. Got home at 10:10. Went to bed at 10:45.

Mon., April 25 Devotional chapel this morning. Got a letter from Pauline and a couple of college bulletins. Didn't help make Sr. Spread decorations tonite. Ran around until Mother came with Eugenia McCullough. Harry M. called up for a date this week. Turned him down for Friday but may take another one. Went to bed at 8:50.

Tues., April 26 Got up a little before 5:30. Washed my head. Answered my Jr.-Sr. Invitation. Teresa & I took a walk this noon. Had our first Com. Club Play practice at 7:00 this eve. Went to Com. Club, our special speaker was Mr. Rugh. This was the last meeting and the Sophomores were invited. For refreshments we had ice cream sandwiches. Teresa, Opal and I went home with Ethel after Club. Oh Boy—Candy and spoons.

Went to bed about 10:30. Teresa and I slept together and talked about an hour before going to sleep.

Wed., April 27 Mother is fixing my Jr. Sr. today. Esther, Grandma & Uncle Hugh were up. All of us kids walked together to the post office and then to the greenhouse. Went to bed about 10:00.

Thurs., April 28 Got up at 6:00. Got my dinner at cafeteria, had chop suey, tomato (fresh) salad, Date Pudding, and Orangeade. Got a new pair of blonde shoes. Had to practice for Commercial Club Play. Went to bed about 10:00.

Fri., April 29 Got up at 5:00. Washed my head & went back to bed at 5:30. Got my hair marcelled at the Canary. Teresa, Ethel, Opal & I sat together at the Jr.-Sr. After it a carload of us girls went to the dance at Whitehairs with Frances. Earl wanted to bring me home & I had quite a time between he & Frances. Danced "Home Sweet Home" with Earl. Helen stayed all night with me. We went to bed a little after 1:00.

Sun., May 1 Took (Mother) a picture of my Jr.-Sr. dress & me. Mrs. Thomson & Grandma R were here for dinner & Aunt Mabel and Uncle Zeph. In the afternoon we went riding. Took a snap shot of Irene R. Fat called up twice for a date, turned him down. Mr. Thomson, Uncle Hugh & Mr. & Mrs. Ross, Irene, Esther & Mabel Webb were also here this eve. Took a nap about 9:30. To bed about 10:30.

Tues., May 3 Miss Lunden moved Kenneth's seat to in front of Teresa in Commercial Law. Planted flowers after school tonite. Went to bed at 8:20.

Wed., May 4 Letter from Mrs. Dunham. Had play practice after school. Had a date with Bill Moore. Fat, Helen, Russell, Gertrude, Bill & I went down to Terpin Lake to go boat riding. Helen was the only girl that would go. Started back about 10:30 & it began to storm & we nearly froze & drowned at the same time. Got home about 11:10. To bed at 11:30.

Thurs., May 5 Had a music chapel this morning and a health talk. Ethel & I got our lunches down town today. Washed my head after school. Got a marcel at the Powder box at 6:00. Went up after Helen and then

During stifling summer days, the Horton Boy Scouts camped out in the country, where they enjoyed listening to a phonograph. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin Collection)

to the Sr. Spread. Sat by Teresa & Marshal Gump. Bro't Teresa home with me. We went to bed about 11:30. Grandma Reed stayed too. Creek came out down by Wilsons today.

Fri., May 6 The Boy's day program was postponed so we didn't get our half holiday. After supper Ora & Clara came out. Uncle Hugh and Esther came after Grandma. Started reading "Padlocked" by Rex Beach. Went to bed about 11:45. Saw Earl & he said he might stop and take me to the dance & I told him I'd rather know what I was going to do.

Sat., May 7 Letter from Harry. Mother's Birthday. Went . . . to the matinee Viola Dana in "Salvation Jane." To town again this eve. Teresa, Ethel & I ran around together. Teresa & I had fun dodging Fat & Russell whom we are sure wanted dates. . . . Went to bed about 1:45. Got my tinted picture today.

Sun., May 8 Mother's Day. Was down to Grandma R's nearly all day. Took a nap before dinner & a big one after dinner. Fat called up for a date, turned him down. Everett Baxter called up and I turned him down. Jim was supposed to come but failed to appear. Read a couple short stories. Had the hiccoughs again this morning. Went to bed about 10:00.

Mon., May 9 Teresa wasn't to school this morning. Got my announcements & cards (\$4.40). Play practice after school. Teresa came after me about 8:00. Went to the big Knights of Columbus ball. Danced the Grand March with a representative from Atchison, danced every dance but the last 2 or 3 & I was absolutely too tired to go thru the execution. Got home at 12:40. To bed at 1:00.

Tues., May 10 Too tired & stiff to get up this morning. Got up about 10:00. Went to school at noon. Dramatics Class gave a chapel program "Not Quite Such A Goose." Play practice sure was punk. Walked down town with Cecilia, she got me a "Pie Face."

Fri., May 13 Felt punk all day. Stayed late at school and made up my work. Earl David called up and wanted to take me to the dance but I went with Teresa and Francis. Harry M. called up for a date. Oh Boy, the dance. Scott's orchestra played and I met Derby Gray, keen; well I'll say and Dance!!! Danced with him a lot. . . . Got home about 12:30 & to bed about 1:00.

Mon., May 16 Committee meeting for Sr. Hike. Elsie & I ran around to get the prices of some foods. Good radio program. Took a nap before going to bed about 10:30.

Tues., May 17 Got a Graduation present from Thomson's. Went home after school with Teresa. We walked down to the oil station for some tobacco. Played with Mary Catherine. . . . Stayed after school and worked on typewriting. Someone called up for a date. Don't know who it was. Went to bed about 10:30.

Wed., May 18 Got up at 5:15. Came down to school & went to the Comm. Club Breakfast at Calahans Grove. . . . Ethel & I came back on the back of Kenneth's Ford Coupe. Boy it sure was thrilling but we were rather shaky in the knees afterward. Got out of shorthand & typing fi-

nals. Abilene was having a big day today. Went up town this eve. & Fred took Mother & I to see Clara Bow in "It." Got me a new hat. Uncle Zeph & Aunt Mabel bro't me home after and went to bed about 12:00.

Thurs., May 19 Had part of our History final today. The Graduating class went down to the City Auditorium to get lined up for Baccalaureate. Teresa, Ethel and I got our dinners down town and ate them in the Library Park. N. Scott (Scotty) bro't Doc out to see us tonite. Doc sure was tickled. Went to bed 10:30.

Fri., May 20 Had our History and Com. Law finals today. Dramatics Class Chapel. Stayed home this eve and went to bed about 10:30.

Sat., May 21 Went up town this afternoon and to the matinee. . . . Got my cap and gown. Went with Helen, Bo and Jim to Salina. Coming back and on the way to Helen's I drove the car into the ditch & we turned a flip-flop. None of us were hurt very bad. It took a long time to get Helen quieted. Got home at 2:30 & went to bed about 3:00. Got a marcel this P.M.

Sun., May 22 Bob, Ruth & Pansy Hartman were here. Called Teresa up. Mabel came up & took me to the tea. Miss Velma Mae Lattin was my tea partner. Went to Baccalaureate sermon tonite & we wore our caps & gowns. Got a letter from Pauline. Aunt Mabel & Grandma Reed gave me my Graduation present. Grandma R. stayed all night. Went to bed at 11:30.

Mon., May 23 Mother finished me a gingham dress. . . . Grandma S. bro't me my Graduation present this afternoon. Went down town to go up to Teresa's & Mrs. Johntz & Johnny gave me a ride. We kids, Opal, Ethel, Teresa & I had our supper on Weishaar's porch. Then we went walking. Sure had fun but I sure got sick in the night. Went to bed about 10:30.

Tues., May 24 Came home from Teresa's pretty early and had to clean the whole house. Sure was tired when I got thru. Mother made me a white dress for Class night. The Junior stunt was a representation of the audience at the movies, the Sophomore stunt was "The Train to Morrow." And the Freshmen "The Opera." Teresa and Opal came home with me. Fiddled around awhile & went to bed at 12:30.

Wed., May 25 Letter from Harry. Teresa, Opal & I went down town about 9:00 & Kenneth took us up to Opal's to put on our overalls. I wore Bill's. Then we started out to the place where the picnic was to be. We got to Woodbine & then didn't know where to go. After driving & driving by it several times we finally found it and almost lost our dinner. In the afternoon Teresa, Ethel, Opal & I hiked off & all but Ethel went wading & we took pictures. Bill took us to Woodbine & we got some drinks & almost was too late for our supper. I came back with Bill. Theresa with Ben K. Iris with Lawrence F. & Frances B. with Everett E. We went to J. C. [*Junction City*] & then to Talmage & Bill & I finally landed here about 11:15. To bed about 11:45.

Thurs., May 26 Got a package from Calhouns and one from Aunt Kate. We had our final chapel today & the boys got their [*athletic*] letters. Had to walk home. Had lunch at Grandma S's. Got my last years Jr. Sr. from cleaners. Our graduation exercises went over good. Bill & I stayed for the Alumnus Banquet and there were talks and singing then the "eats" sandwiches, wafers, mints, ice cream & coffee. Bill bro't me home. Sat out in the car awhile & got in at 1:15 and to bed about 2:00.

IV. The “Dirty Thirties” and More (1930–1941)

The Great Depression era saw incredible poverty and dislocation. Economic collapse first affected Kansas towns and cities, but the disaster soon caught up with rural areas where the forces of nature created the Dust Bowl years, 1933–1937. Many unemployed found jobs in government recovery programs—the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, and Public Works Administration; many high school and college students stayed in school with the help of National Youth Administration programs.

Times were hard, but people still looked for entertainment. In 1935, six-man football came to Kansas. “Gangbusters” and the “Green Hornet” were fa-

New Deal projects included community and youth recreational programs, like this Girls' Spiritual Chorus in Leavenworth. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

favorite radio programs, and in 1938, Orson Welles terrified listeners with "War of the Worlds." There were the "swing" bands of Benny Goodman, Count Basie and Glenn Miller. Movies, which had become "talkies" in 1927, offered spectacular musicals and epics like *Gone with the Wind* (1939).

National headlines screamed the names of gangsters. "Public Enemy Number One" Alvin Karpis robbed banks in Fort Scott and Concordia while Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow moved in and out of the state at will. Kansas' reputation as "bank robber alley" prompted creation of the Kansas Highway Patrol in 1937 and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation in 1939.

Kansans of note included Amelia Earhart, first woman to fly the Atlantic alone (1932); Jim Bausch, Olympic gold medal winner in the decathlon (1932); legendary black scientist George Washington Carver, who once lived in Kansas and visited the state in 1930; and Alf Landon, who ran for President in 1936.

By 1937 the worst seemed over. It was the last year of terrible dust storms. It was also the year that Wichita's four airplane manufacturers put thousands to work. America was not yet at war, but conditions were bleak in the Orient and Europe. Americans wanted to stay out of war, but they prepared for it. One newspaper commented "War clouds rain dollars into Wichita."

The decade tried to end on a happy note when the New York World's Fair opened in 1939. The exposition's displays featured a new invention—television; a robot named Elektro; and a "future" city with fourteen-lane superhighways. Hardly had the fair begun when its "World of Tomorrow" was shattered by war. In December 1941, America joined the global conflict.

Junior High Views: Manhattan Junior High School [1930–1933]

Dwight Sanderson, a sociology professor at Cornell University, wrote in 1922 that "the movement is now well under way to divide the period of secondary education into a junior and senior high school . . . and junior high schools, including the seventh to ninth grades, are being established."¹ In fact, by the time Sanderson made this statement, some Kansas communities already boasted junior high schools for young people just entering their teenage years. Manhattan Junior High School, established in 1917 and opened for the school year in 1918, offered various activities and avenues for self-expression. During the 1930s, there was a student newspaper, *Junior High News*, and a literary publication, *The Junior Review*, 1933, from the school's Department of English. Although the student contributors to these publications were coached and monitored by their teachers, the young people used their own words to describe their world as they saw it.

Junior High News, February 5, 1930

New Type of Study Hall

Due to the fact that the study halls are overcrowded it has been suggested that there will be a study hall formed of students who can take care of themselves without a teacher. The students who think they could stay in a study hall and conduct themselves as they should, ought to make themselves known. The students who are chosen for this will have to meet a few requirements. They will have to be on the citizenship roll and receive the O. K. of the teacher. The study hall where they go will probably have a teacher in it, but the teacher will not have anything to do with the pupils.

Junior High News and The Junior Review, 1933, *Archives*, Riley County Historical Society, Manhattan, Kansas. Reprinted with permission of Riley County Historical Society.

¹Dwight Sanderson, *The Farmer and His Community* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922), 94.

Junior high schools often offered vocational curricula such as manual arts for boys. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

If any student wants an excuse to go somewhere they should go in the office to get it and not bother the teacher who might be in the room, studying or grading papers. The students who are in the habit of playing and wasting their time in the study hall, ought not even to try to get in a study hall where there will not be a teacher, because if you waste time in there it would be harder on you than if you wasted time where there was a study hall teacher. If you happen to be one of the students that are chosen, you remember that Mr. Fowler has put his trust in you and it will be your duty to conduct yourselves rightly.

Junior High News, March 12, 1930

News from the Clubs

Miss Fulcher's Nature Study Club is studying about trees. They spent the last meeting appointing different members to study the more common trees and discussing some of them.

The Natural History Club has been divided into groups and is ready to begin work on projects. Mr. Hook from K. S. A. C. [*Kansas State Agricultural College*] gave a talk March 4, on rock formations and fossils around Manhattan. The club has started an aquarium. They will have many interesting things in it.

The Quilt Club elected the following officers: president, Irene Venard; vice-president, Grace Crocker; secretary, Maxine Cole; Sargent at Arms, Virginia Thompson.

At the last meeting of the Story Book Club stories were read and plans made for the national recognition contest.

The purpose of the Appropriate Dress Club is to improve dress and give the members advanced ideas of correct dress, color, and design. It is to give them help and information which they don't receive in their regular class work.

They report on the articles about dresses that they think are interesting. They have made a study of appropriate and becoming hair dress; color problems in dress; and different combinations to be used by different types of people.

The Cartoon Club meets each Tuesday during activity period at the big table in the outer office. Max Besler is president; D. C. Wesche, vice-president; and Glenn Benedict, secretary.

The purpose of this club is to encourage those who like to draw and develop talent along the line of free-hand drawing. Thus far we have only attempted to copy cartoons and comic drawings found in magazines and newspapers.

Cartoons are posted each week on the north bulletin board in the office. Come in and look them over.

The Mythology Club has been studying the Gods. Last week they discussed Appollo [*sic*], the Sun God. Each week a different god is studied.

The Travel Club is now traveling in Kansas. The following talks were given February 18: The train routes and fares from Manhattan to Kansas City; The equipment boys and girls should take. A general discussion followed.

Mrs. David Browne of Norton talked to Miss Petty's Dramatics Club on Tuesday March 4.

At the meeting of the Scouting Club February 25 the boys learned to tie a few knots. First Aid was discussed by Mr. Dailey.

Extracurricular activities for junior high students included play productions and Pep clubs. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Bourquin and Scott Collections)

James Seiver gave a demonstration and talk on tinting pictures at Kodak Club last week.

Junior High News, April 4, 1930

Hall Corridor Squad [by Robert Beardsley]

The Home Room Federation [*student council group*] is starting what we call the "Hall Corridor Squad." There are many things this squad may do. A few of the things the squad will do are: direct traffic in the halls to avoid confusion, see that all lockers are locked, and take lost articles to the office or classroom as required. They may, if they see students in the hall tripping or being boisterous, remind them we are trying to live up to our school code, "Let's make Manhattan Junior High the best in the State."

The squad is for our own, the student body's, good. It is to serve the school as a whole and we should do our part by getting behind this movement and helping the Home Room Federation to put it over. It would give our school a bad reputation to have the very first project our council took up fall through. If we get back of it, it is sure to go over.

Junior High News, May 9, 1930

The Value of Public Speaking

During this six weeks, four of our Junior High School students received the honor of winning the High School Debate Tournament.² This is a feat that draws our attention to the value of public speaking.

The value of public speaking lies in the training of the student to think clearly. You cannot get up before an audience with only a hazy idea of what you are going to say and put it across. You must get the training in thinking quickly before an audience. By this training you can overcome timidity. Training in public speaking gives self-confidence. If you can get up before an audience and feel, "I can do this as well as the next person," you have truly gotten something from your training and practice in public speaking. As for good English, there is nothing more pleasing than to

²Ninth grade students in the junior high were referred to as freshmen, and as such, were allowed to compete with 10th, 11th, and 12th grade high school students in an "Inter-Class" debate tournament.

hear the easy use of correct English. With practice you can attain this use of English.

Most of the students in our Junior High School can not talk in public. Why is this? Because they haven't had training and practice along this line. This is a course that is very much needed in all public school systems.

The Junior Review, 1933

WINDS

Andante

A low moan,

A shriek of wind

A cloud of dust—

Scurrying—

Scurrying.

Hot heated air.

Not a breath

Of wind.

A cloud

Gathering—gathering

It darkens—

A black pall

Is over the earth

Hurst Majors, Grade 7

ON MY WAY TO SCHOOL

As I come on my way to school in the morning, I have to cross the Kansas River bridge. This morning as I came across it, a very pretty sight met my eyes. In some places the river was frozen over. The sandbars around the edges were covered with ice and snow. Then in between these sandbars and little islands of ice, water was running down the river, and ice was floating down. It was a very pretty sight because it looked just like a bunch of little lakes making their way through a mountain. The floating ice attracted my attention the most.

Gladys Mann, Grade 8

Members of the Prairie Band:

Lorenzo

Mattwaoshshe and James Wabaunsee Interview [1930s]

In the 1830s white advancement into the Great Lakes region of the United States forced the Potawatomi farther west. By the 1840s two Potawatomi bands, the Citizen and the Prairie, were located on a Kansas reservation that included areas of Shawnee, Jackson, Pottawatomie, and Wabaunsee counties. Through allotments and loss of land, the Citizen Band moved to Indian Territory in Oklahoma, but the Prairie Band remained in Kansas retaining reservation land in present-day Jackson County. James Wabaunsee and Lorenzo Mattwaoshshe, members of the Prairie Band, grew up together and through the marriage of James's sister Victoria to Lorenzo Mattwaoshshe, the two became brothers-in-law. As adults, James was a truck driver and Lorenzo a builder. In this interview, they talked about teenage experiences, the 1930s and government programs on the reservation, their heritage, and the mix of white and Indian cultures.

Holt: In what year were you born?

Mattwaoshshe: I was born in 1916. February 21. Just a day before Washington's birthday. I do know that. That was one of the first things I heard.

Wabaunsee: March 8th. Same year.

Mattwaoshshe: I might say this. He always tried to boss me, my brother-in-law. He's two weeks younger than I am so I've got seniority.

Holt: You knew each other as boys?

Printed with permission of James Wabaunsee and Lorenzo (L.D.) Mattwaoshshe.

Wabaunsee: Oh, yes! Grew up together.

Mattwaoshshe: I knew Victoria [*my wife*] when she was just a kid playing with dolls. My oldest sister was a neighbor to these Wabaunsees. I used to see where they, as little girls, would make kind of a pretend little house. Take some sticks, make rooms in there. Have mud dishes. We didn't have all this fancy stuff. We had to make our own.

Holt: You lived near Mayetta?

Mattwaoshshe: Yes, but where I first went to school was at Haskell [*Institute*]. It was a boarding school. I was five years old when they sent me over there. I couldn't talk a bit of one English word. Just think. I could learn quick. I couldn't communicate.

Holt: Were you punished if you couldn't communicate?

Wabaunsee: If you talked something besides English.

Mattwaoshshe: If you talked Indian, yes, they would punish you. There was a young man there about my age. He was a lucky kid. He could talk English so he was my interpreter. But I finally caught on.

Holt: Mr. Wabaunsee, you also went to Haskell?

Wabaunsee: A couple of times. Didn't stay very long either time. Not long enough.

Holt: Was language the problem?

Wabaunsee: No, it wasn't that. The folks, they didn't teach us the [*Potawatomi*] language. If you talked anything besides English, they washed your mouth out with soap. So they never did teach us. What little [*Potawatomi language*] we know—Victoria picked up quite a bit from her husband. He talks it. What I picked up, it's just here and there. If you're out, you're bound to pick up something.

Holt: Mr. Mattwaoshshe, was the experience at Haskell the reason you quite school after the fifth grade?

Mattwaoshshe: No. No money. We didn't have fundings and so when we went to school, the folks had to dish that out of their pockets. I had brothers and sisters. They went through the same thing I did. Now, I take that back. My two-older sisters, they did go to school. They went to Haskell at the same time I did, but they were lucky. They could talk a little English where I couldn't. Then I couldn't be with them either because they separated us. The small boys would be in one barracks, a big building. And there was the large boys building. Now, the girls had one building. We couldn't be together.

Holt: Did you get homesick?

Mattwaoshshe: Oh, you better know it. I didn't know what to think about it. I might say this too. When our youngest daughter—they still had the boarding school up in South Dakota and quite a few Potawatomi children went up there—our daughter wanted to go because one of her girlfriends was going. I said, "Hey, I hate to see her go up there. I know how they treat them." But people said, "It can't hurt her." We let her go. First time she calls, she says, "I want to come home." We got up about midnight and went to get her. I just figured there was some reason why she didn't want to be up there. I could just see myself in what she was going through. Well, it was nothing really serious.

Holt: When you left Haskell, you came back to work on the farm?

Mattwaoshshe: After I left there, then I went to Whichaway, a country school on the reservation, Jackson County. Then, from there, I went up to Genoa, Nebraska.¹ That's where I got educated. Got up to the fifth grade. We had a class picture. I was right in the middle in the back. All the rest of the young ones in front of me. See, I was fifteen years old! Fifth grade! They used to tease me about that. Who's that in the middle? Is that the teacher?

But you know, I was a teacher. I was experienced enough in this building trade. We had a training program come up into the reservation. I was one of the instructors. General construction instructor. I've taught them my experience. A few of the students that were in my class, they're still

¹The Indian boarding school at Genoa also attracted Kickapoo, Iowa, Sac and Fox children from Kansas.

working yet. Even had a woman, a sheet rock hanger. Her name was Wabaunsee.

I didn't even finish the fifth grade, but I learned more from first to fifth grades than if I actually did go on to high school. I had to fall out of school because we didn't have the money. The money was hard to get. Now, I've become a builder. A professional. My company was called the New Homes Builders. By experience, that's what I've done, and you know, I compete with a lot of these well-experienced ones. As I worked I learned. I've competed with well-educated, graduated people.

Holt: You were fifteen in 1931, and you came home from the school in Nebraska.

Mattwaoshshe: Yes, I came home and I started working to help my family have enough to live on.

Holt: The depression really hit you?

Mattwaoshshe: You better know it! There were many times when I didn't have nothing to eat. Now when you can't eat, you have to do something. We hunted. We were so down and out. There were four fields that I used to walk through around us. They were full of milkweeds. There's a good vitamin in that milkweed. That's what we'd eat. One field, I'd clean it out. We'd eat the milkweed, and I'd just circle around and go to the next field and the next. About every fourth day, the milkweed would come up again and I'd get them.

Holt: What part of the plant were you eating?

Mattwaoshshe: The whole, the leaves, the tender part. The Indian women knew how to fix it. What would you call that? Like a cabbage?

Wabaunsee: Like your collards, your greens.

Mattwaoshshe: White man's spinach.

Wabaunsee: There were just different ways to prepare it.

Mattwaoshshe: Yes. There's a lot of vitamin in that. Now they also used the wild onion. But I just couldn't eat it. My sister used to say, "If you were starving, you'd eat it." Well, I was starving, but I wouldn't eat it. Now, I'm not stretching this one bit.

Wabaunsee: Every once in awhile, they'd find wild potatoes—what they called Indian potato. If you found one that big [*about the size of your thumb*], that was a large potato.

Mattwaoshshe: Oh, I tell you, that Indian potato. You'd have to work many hours to get a few. They were so fine. They grew in the swamp under the ground on a kind of vine. Every six or seven inches of that vine, there would be a potato growing and so on. Once you found the vine, then you could follow that and get a potato. All under the ground, and you had to get it out. That was a lot of work.

Holt: What about the New Deal programs?

Wabaunsee: That came in about 1933–34.

Holt: Can you explain the New Deal project at Big Soldier campground?

Wabaunsee: That would be the dance ground.

Mattwaoshshe: Right. The dancing ground at Big Soldier. It was a religious ground. "Dancing ground" is what they called it. Religious services there—what they called "drum services." In fact, that was my folks' religion to begin with. As I became grown up, I became a Catholic in the year of 1940. I was baptized a Catholic. Except that I still work with the drum religions. There's one drum that came from North [*northern areas of the United States that had once been Potawatomi lands*] back at the time of Columbus days, and that drum is named after my great-great ancestors—Mattwaoshshe. That's the only drum that I know that still carries the name. My nephew, my youngest brother's son, is in charge of that drum now. But the ruling in the Indian belief is that the oldest son, oldest grandson, whoever, should have that drum.

There's six drums that they use in the religion. Now that's where the drums were used, where they call it Big Soldier camping ground.

Holt: Is that still used?

Mattwaoshshe: Oh, yes. About five different religions that I know of use it.

Holt: Is the stone agency building still standing on the reservation?

Mattwaoshshe: That is the community building. You asked about the WPA. That's what that was. The Indians had that program, and they built that. Since then, there were some who admired that old building. They asked me if I worked on it. Was I old enough to work on it? I said, "Yes, I did. I was on that job." Dad was sick and couldn't work no more so I was the head man of the family so I was on the WPA and worked on that project. I was out in the field digging rock for the building.

Wabaunsee: I was a truck driver. They tried to cut the rock pretty much so it could be made smaller whenever they got it into the rocklayers. You couldn't get in there and hit the rock just any way. You had to have a certain place to hit that rock to try and make it as square as you could.

Holt: How much were you paid?

Wabaunsee: Forty-five dollars a month.

Mattwaoshshe: The people furnishing the teams [*of horses*] were getting, I think, about \$45 a month. I think I was only getting \$23 a month. When we started working, we'd get maybe \$1.50 a day. Twenty dollars then, geez, lots of days of work there.

Wabaunsee: That's just the way things were. We didn't know any better, and that's the way the whole countryside was.

Holt: Did you envy people in town who had cars or more conveniences?

Mattwaoshshe: No, not really.

Wabaunsee: The main thing was the car.

Big Soldier campground, a WPA project on the Potawatomi reservation, was dedicated with a special day of picnics, games, and contests. Shown are young men competing in the fifty-yard dash. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

Mattwaoshshe: If you had a car, man, you were either a rich farmer or a rich worker.

Holt: How did you get around?

Wabaunsee: Team and buggy. Walked.

Mattwaoshshe: We did get some commodities [from the Bureau of Indian Affairs] way back. These Wabaunsees here, James and Victoria, their dad was one of the biggest farmers. He was the only one who had a truck. When it came time to share the commodities out, they had this mutton, the whole carcass. The intestines and such were taken out and the legs cut off, but it was the whole carcass. Nobody had a way of hauling that so Jim Wabaunsee, that's their dad, with his truck, he drove out of that agency. Oh, man, mutton in that truck, piled up. I don't know how many mutton because people, they'd ask him, "Could you haul my mutton?" Next day I heard about this, I was just young fellow. They said, "Oh, Jim Wabaunsee's going to quit farming. He's going into a new business. Seen

Another WPA project for Potawatomi employment was road and bridge maintenance on the reservation. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

him hauling mutton.” That’s how we got by. Somebody had a car, he never drove by himself to town.

Wabaunsee: No. Always a carload. I was thirteen years old when I started driving. All Dad had was the truck. My sister, she learned to drive. She helped Dad with the farm work driving a tractor. We learned to do our own machine work. We couldn’t afford to hire a mechanic to come out and do our repair work.

Mattwaoshshe: If you happened to have a vehicle and you go to town, you might see somebody walking and you’d give him a ride. By the time you’d get to town, you’d have a full carload.

Holt: Were there pow wows the way there are now?

Mattwaoshshe: Yes. Had some pow wows. Run by, I guess, government funds, but they didn’t have no contests and all that. I think they were lucky to get something to eat.

Wabaunsee: Well, almost all raised some garden too.

Mattwaoshshe: Oh, they had fairs too. Whoever raised a garden would take these pumpkins or whatever they raised. Corn. They'd put them on display. Maybe there would be a 1st, 2nd, 3rd prize, which wasn't too much.

Wabaunsee: Yes. They would take what we call sweet corn. You've seen what they call Indian corn, all the different colors. They'd take and let that get roasting ear stage and dry that and then try to get enough to carry on to the next season. Then they had a white corn; that's usually what they'd use for hominy, but still considered a sweet corn. Then they'd dry this large neck squash and cut it in strips and hang on a fence to dry.

Mattwaoshshe: Here's this book. Here were the prizes.

Holt: It's a premium list for the Indian Agricultural Fair at Mayetta for the year 1924. Ten ears of white corn: 1st place, \$1.50; 2nd place, 75 cents.

Mattwaoshshe: That was big money.

Holt: Alfalfa hay, prairie hay. There's a prize here for sougan grass. What is that?

Wabaunsee: That was a tall grass that'd grow about three feet high. It was good, but the livestock would leave it to last. If that's all they had to eat, they'd eat that. They'd also make barns and they'd use that [*grass*] as a roof. Like a thatched roof. It'd shed water. Start out at the edge of the roof down below, then just keep piling it on and breaking joints of it.

Holt: Some of the fair prizes for beadwork were more than for agricultural products. Two dollars.

Wabaunsee: That's because it's harder.

Holt: Was it a big thing for the family to go to the fair?

Mattwaoshshe: Oh, yes. I remember some of the artists. We have a daughter [*Wilma*] in Wisconsin who does sewing and shows her arts and crafts

sewing. She even went to Alaska to show her coats and jackets. She has her own label that she sews in them.

Holt: Since the fair recognized traditional beadwork and clothing, was that a way to carry on the culture?

Mattwaoshshe: Yes. But there's just a few of us that can still communicate [*in our language*]. After World War II was over with, we left here and went out West due to jobs and money. So we left here, and there was no one to talk to. We moved back in 1951, and some of the other Indians would say, "Now you won't lose that [*language*]." But you do. In my younger days when they had that agency on the reservation, Jackson County, when these Indians and the staff in that office made leases or whatever business transactions, I used to interpret for them. I did real good.

My sister used to work there [*at the agency*]. You asked about beadwork. That's what they were doing. Sewing and whatever. The missus finally gave it up. She was a good seamstress. Her mother showed her how to sew and so on.

You've probably seen Indian tacos, the fry bread. Now, there's a skill to that. You can't just take a recipe and say, "Oh, I'm going to make fry bread." Our oldest boy, only boy we have—Joseph Herman—he can make that fry bread just as good as his mamma can. Now there was a lady here who would be quite a few years older than us. She used to be a fry bread maker. Annie's fry bread. She got to liking my wife, Victoria. She said, "Just watch me. I can't tell you how to do this. It's just going to have to come to you. Just stand here and watch me." That's what she did. The lady passed away, but people who ate Victoria's fry bread said, "This tastes like Annie's." That's the gift that lady left her.

Wabaunsee: The way the Indians believe, she gave that to my sister after she died. The Indians are great believers in the life hereafter. Long before they had the Bible and that kind of stuff, we all knew about God. I think God was known throughout the world all at the same time.

Holt: Was the Catholic church at Mayetta a big influence in your lives?

Wabaunsee: Yes. I was raised a Catholic, my sister and brothers and I. You [Mattwaoshshe] were raised by the big drum religion. And those two are similar. The one uses one thing, while the Catholics use another.

Mattwaoshshe: Now questions have been asked about that Indian belief and what sacred things are. They're coming to me now and asking. The drummers, the younger people, they don't know that. You have to have a ceremony where you get an Indian name. That's really important to receive that name. Some time ago, the group, at what we call the Indian Center, had a council. The younger ones, they said, "Who are you to take over our drum chiefs? That's our work." They asked different ones, "How were you named?" There's another drum that they use. It's just one drummer that uses that instead of a drum where you circle around. That's an older religion. They said to me, "How were you named? Through this drum?" "No," I said, "I was named by that other drum which is way beyond that." So they started in on me, "Hey, Catholic, how do you fit in here? You don't fit in." I said, "Wait a minute. You know that third drum that sits in that certain corner of that ring, that religious ring? You know the name of that drum?" They looked. Mattwaoshshe. I said, "That's me sitting up there. Where do you guys fit in? I don't see your names."²

Holt: During your teenage years did you feel isolated?

Wabaunsee: Only one way. That would be work. If they ran out of workers, then they'd take an Indian. Usually you were the last hired and the first laid off. That's where we noticed that. Later, he [Mattwaoshshe] and Dad were in the Carpenters Union, and I was in the Teamsters.

Holt: Did you call yourselves teenagers?

Mattwaoshshe: Not that I know of. You were just starting to do a man's work.

Wabaunsee: No. We were just growing up. You were just a young man or young woman.

²Although Mattwaoshshe was raised in the drum religion and continues to carry on that heritage, his participation was questioned by a younger generation because he had, as an adult, converted to Catholicism.

Holt: What was the best or the worst experience that you can recall?

Mattwaoshshe: There was this farmer we knew real well. The only boy they had was the same age as me. They wanted three men to work while they were putting up alfalfa. My uncle, Joe Mattwaoshshe—they hired him because he had a team and a wagon. The other wagon was the owner's. They didn't bail alfalfa then, they stored it up in the hay mow. They hired our neighbor, John Mitchell, and my dad. But my dad had been sickly. When he went to work, I don't think he worked a half-hour. He got tired and he couldn't work no more. It was too hot. So they asked me to take his place. They were paying \$1.00 a day, which was good money. We worked for three days. I think I did more work because every time they'd haul that hay to the hay loft at the barn, I'd get up inside and use that fork on ropes. All that loose hay and I'd have to get up there and scatter it around. The pitcher on the hay rack, he'd be out in the fields. Not helping me. I was doing double work. I was kind of proud of that. Man! I was doing man's work. We started on Wednesday, and that Saturday about three o'clock we finished up.

In those days we used to have kind of an Indian doings over here at Emmett, Kansas. A get-together, dances. No religious. There used to be a lot of Indians, whites too, go over there. Dr. Mays, he always used to put them on. Drums. Kind of like a pow wow. So I was counting on that pay money. That Saturday night they were having that get-together.

So when they paid us off, they paid the men off. "Here's three dollars for you." When they come to me, the woman—oh, she was the boss of the whole family—she used to call me "Lorando." My name's Lorenzo. She said, "Lorando, now I'm going to tell you. We cannot pay you no man's wages because you're not no man yet. We're going to give you fifty cents a day." I was doing more work!

The best job I got as a teenager. My older brother worked for a farmer. I think he started out at fifty cents a day working on the farm, and he got up to a dollar a day. Being that my brother satisfied this farmer, did good work, when he had to quit, they asked him if I would work for them. They had a combine and they left it up to me. I would grease it and so on. That was the best job. The worst was the fifty cent one!

My first job. These neighbors asked me to hoe the garden. Ten cents a day. Maybe it would take a little over a day, and I hoed in around there. Tried to do the best I can. Tried to do it neat, not just any old way. I

wanted to win them over so maybe they'd hire me again. That was my first job.

When I done with that hoeing, they sent me out to the corn field to go where the cultivator wouldn't catch the weeds in between the stalks of corn. I went along there and I hoed that and covered up the roots of the corn. That was a lot of work. I don't know how many hours I worked a day. I just figured I worked there a whole week. When I got paid, I got seventy cents. Gee! My goodness! I put it in my pocket to show my mother what I got.

It was nine miles from my home to Mayetta. So first chance I got, I said, "I'm going to town. Go to Mayetta." I walked to town. There used to be quite a few people that walked in there. You could get a bottle of pop for a nickel; a hamburger for a nickel; and chewing gum, five sticks, a nickel; and used to get a sack of Bull Durham for a nickel. Smoke. I had cigarette papers. I thought I was big enough that I could smoke. I said, "Well, there was my own money." I went to town. It was about noon when I got there so I got a bottle of pop and bought a hamburger. That was a big treat! After I got done, I walked across and I saw some of them smoking. I thought, "Well, I'll just get me a sack of Bull Durham," and I went and got that. I didn't know how to roll a cigarette. Man! I was a big boy! I stayed there maybe about three hours, and I started walking back. By the time I'd get home, it would be dark. I bought that pack of gum. I was chewing gum and smoking Bull Durham cigarettes. Boy! I thought that I was really big money.

Holt: Mr. Wabaunsee, do you have a best or worst experience?

Wabaunsee: When I was in the seventh and eighth grade, there were three of us. There was a boy and a girl named Hollis—her dad was on the school board. [*With my*] grades those two years, I was low man on the totem pole. We had to go to town for final examination. I went to Delia, and I came out the top one. I was the dumbest for two years, but then the final day, I was the top dog. There were two or three points difference, but I wasn't the dumbest that day. I was proud.

I had some good jobs. Most were later through the union. I knew how to keep the equipment oiled to maintain it. If something broke down, I'd stop and fix it. I carried my tools with me. Even [*later*] when I was in Washington, if anything broke down, I'd fix it. This one foreman gave me heck for doing that, and I said that if you were able to operate a

machine, you had to do your own repair work. I worked in Alaska, California, Washington, and I still like to go.

Lorenzo Mattwaoshshe. He's not only a carpenter—just an ordinary carpenter—he's a master carpenter. He can do just about anything he sets his mind to do. You'd say he was a perfectionist.

Mattwaoshshe: That was my intention from the time I worked for ten cents a day. I wanted to make a showing, a good job of it so, well, I'll get the job again.

"Wolf at the Door": Ralph G. Marshall Autobiography [1934]

Jackson County •

With mixed emotions, Ralph G. Marshall recalled his teenage years during the 1930s. There were good times when his father's best friend delighted children and adults alike by dressing as Santa Claus and driving a sleigh, powered by a long string of specially trained goats, through the rural neighborhood. There were happy gatherings of friends and pleasant hunting trips. For the Marshall family, there was also near disaster as incomes depleted and nature took its toll. Generally, the family was untouched by New Deal programs. Ralph gave the possibility of attending high school little thought. Among his reasons for not going was the lack of money for clothes and meals. Nationwide, a number of social surveys found the same response; teenagers who could not afford "proper" attire, food, or board stopped their education after grade school despite programs like the National Youth Administration which was supposed to help young people. Like James Wabaunsee and Lorenzo Mattwaoshshe, Ralph G. Marshall lived in Jackson County during the Great Depression. Like them, he found the years difficult. They were so hard in fact that Marshall entitled his autobiography "Wolf at the Door." This excerpt is the unadorned telling of one young man's Depression-era experience.

In the spring of 1934 after the corn was mostly laid by, my brother Ted set out on a trip to the State of Washington figuring to make a stake working in the fruit and vegetable harvest there as money was scarce as hen's teeth in our parts. He had taken to farming like a duck does to water and done the better part long as I could remember with Dad helpin' out in emergencies.

My brother Bill was of a different sort. He didn't seem cut out for this type of work and was helping Uncle Edward and Aunt Lou in their bakery business over in Missouri. My sister Ruby was away from home leaving Mom, Dad, and me holdin' down the fort. My farmin' experi-

Ralph G. Marshall, "Wolf at the Door" (Bard, CA: The author, 1988). Reprinted with permission of Ralph G. Marshall.

ences at the time had been limited to hoein' cockleburs and sunflowers out of corn, helping during potato plantin', haying and harvest time providing I wasn't out hunting as my first love was for huntin'. With some gentle urging from Dad, although I doubt he figured me to cut the mustard, I decided to try my hand at farmin'.

I'd just turned fourteen and to be taking over where my big brother left off gave me an important feeling like I was finally reachin' manhood. . . .

The last part of June became unusually hot and dry; however, Kansas was noted for radical weather changes and we were used to taking whatever other folks farther to the west didn't want. Dad, who was great at prophesying weather using all sorts of signs such as the way tree frogs acted, to what extent bees and squirrels prepared for winter or how his rheumatism was acting up, seemed restless. I'd see him out frequently in the fields checking crops and testing the soil; he had a way of runnin' dirt through his fingers figuring to its fertility, moisture content, and the like.

One day after giving the situation a great deal of study, he came to the conclusion we were in for a bad drought which most probably turned out to be the understatement of the century. As we progressed into July, the heat seemed to increase like the Devil was mannin' the thermostat. It became so hot at night we moved our beds out under trees in the yard.

Come harvest time, wheat averaged about eight bushels per acre and Dad sold the better part to pay expenses. The corn turned its leaves up to the sun and quit growin', the garden shriveled, and the spring feeding the main branch runnin' through our place dried up. Dad claimed this spring never failed to flow as long as he could recollect.

We were now forced to water livestock from our well and it was becoming dangerously low. Cattle and hog feed became scarce, grass was poor, and corn which some people burned for fuel in place of wood during the winter of '33 suddenly shot up from the ten cents a bushel it had sold for at shucking time to around a dollar and we had precious little left as our hogs had consumed the better part while Dad held out for a higher market.

Around the Fourth of July was a time when you could figure on a sizable storm, usually a gullywasher along with lightning, thunder, hail, and wind. This year, however, all that came through were several fake ones, wind, dry lightning, and the like but no rain. It continued to become hotter and drier until one night the thermometer hanging on the north side of the house hovered at 110 degrees at midnight and several

neighbors were gathered in our yard discussing the possibility the world might be coming to an end. It was sure a thing to think on.

Our drinking water started tastin' bad after a snake fell in the well. Even after Dad fished it out with a three pronged hook and we had pumped the well dry, the memory lingered on so I carried drinking water from our neighbor's well a half mile to the west. It wasn't long after this unpleasant event that our well went completely dry and I was forced to haul water for both livestock and domestic purposes in fifty gallon barrels aboard our old lumber wagon.

Then a wave of grasshoppers came through and ate a good deal of the remaining vegetation. One fellow claimed they even ate his straw hat.

The hog market dropped to rock bottom with only the ones in top condition being accepted at the stockyards in St. Joe [*St. Joseph*], Missouri, where Dad sold livestock. We fed ours a combination of leftovers and dish water called slop along with a good bait of corn at the last to fatten them. When money was available, Dad would also add tankage and shorts (a bran and meal mixture) to their diet. However, as the feed ran low and the slop got thinner, their weight began a steady decline and the market did not budge. The straw and water diet our cows were on didn't seem to agree with their digestive systems and they got poorer by the day.

Dad heard the Government would pay farmers, as near as I recall, seven dollars and a half per head for their cattle then come out and destroy them.¹ Watching his herd deteriorate day by day finally became too much for Dad so he made arrangements to have them put out of their misery except for three favorite milk cows which he said we'd save somehow.

The day a man came out from a government agency with a gun to kill the cattle was a sad one for Dad. After making his final selection of the ones to keep which seemed to be a mighty painful job, he told the fellow to hold his fire until we'd put a good distance between him and us. We had selected a spot on the other end of the farm for this project for sanitary reasons so after Dad said his goodbyes to the rest of his herd, we took off down a cow path with the three survivors on a dead run. As the

¹In 1934, under the *Agricultural Adjustment Act*, which earlier purchased hogs for slaughter, the government began buying cattle. By October 1934, Kansas reached its allotted number of 455,000 cattle, and Governor Landon asked the government to take another 150,000.

rifle shots echoed throughout the timber, I saw tears streamin' down Dad's cheeks. He was mighty sentimental when it came to animals he'd raised from birth.

The hogs were another row to hoe. Dad, who had prided himself in the fine thoroughbred Hampshire hogs he raised, was now forced to stand by and watch them slowly starve to death. It must have been one of his worst ordeals because of the time involved. After their feed supply was depleted, they began eyeing me like I was something good to eat when I went into their pen. Dad warned me to stay clear saying a hog can become one of the meanest animals on earth under certain conditions. As a safety precaution, we extended one end of the hog trough through the fence so you could pour in a bucket of slop without taking a chance of losing an arm or leg in the process.

There were other people around the country in the same boat. One fellow dumped all of his starving hogs at a neighbor's with a surplus of feed telling him he could have the whole kit an' caboodle lock, stock, and barrel. The neighbor promptly called the sheriff and the poor guy was forced to take them back.

As the extreme heat continued on day after day and night after night, our corn crop seemed to shrink back into the ground like the growing process had reversed itself, and the hogs continued to deteriorate on their straight water diet. Dad always took time to study things out, never one to come to quick decisions. He debated on different humane ways of disposing of them such as shootin'. However, ammunition was scarce and what little we had saved back we needed for huntin' since our own food supply was running low. Sometimes left alone, things have a way of working themselves out or maybe it was in a way the miracle Dad had been hoping for as the hogs suddenly came down with cholera and in their weak condition were soon dead except for one old white sow we had isolated in a pen out in the timber. This event got the hogs out of their misery but didn't solve our problem completely as we had to figure out a way to dispose of their remains.

Dad pondered a good while on what to do with all the dead hogs and finally come up with the idea of burning them figuring fire might destroy the disease. After piling [*the hogs*] into piles with straw over and under, we lit them off. The fire flamed up real impressive like for a time but soon fizzled out, and when the smoke cleared the hogs were still pretty much intact except for being singed and charred to some degree. Dad

said it was sure a pain to think of, but the way he saw it there was only one alternative, bury them where they lay.

The job turned out to be quite a chore digging the hard packed earth with pick and shovel, with the heat and the smell and the swarms of blow flies buzzin' around. Along at the last, a flock of optimistic buzzards which had been circling us finally landed and started edging up closer. Their disappointment must of been about equal to our relief when the last hog was underground. In any event, it sure was a thing to have behind you.

We managed to scrape up a little feed here and there for our three cows. However, because of the small amount, along with lack of vegetation in their diet, they gave less and less of the precious milk that was the mainstay of our diet. Dad, who was grabbing at straws, got an idea from a joke a neighbor was telling one day. The neighbor who was always joking about things he figured you couldn't change said to Dad, "Ralph, the depression has finally broke." Dad said, "How can you tell?" And he answered, "Comin' over here this morning, I saw a rabbit run across the road with only two guys chasin' it." He then went on to say, "If you put green glasses on your cows, Ralph, they will eat about anything they come across thinkin' it vegetation."

Dad, who was looking for possibilities rather than humor, suddenly became fired with an unusual amount of enthusiasm and said the solution to the problem on how to save the cows had finally come to him. He said since there was nothing green left except the leaves on the trees, they could be the answer. We grabbed up a cross-cut saw and axe and headed for the timber where we felled a couple of trees which Dad said we'd work up later into winter firewood. Our three old cows really tore into them trees, stripping off the leaves like they were sweet clover.

This became a regular early morning routine for us. The big problem, however, was keeping the cows off our backs while trying to fall the first tree as they came running hell bent for election as soon as they heard us start chopping or sawing, and we were concerned for their safety. We tried locking them up in a corral where they promptly broke out and came runnin' before the first echoes of our axe faded into the early morning stillness. We finally solved this problem by undercutting and partially sawing several trees then runnin' from one to another until the cows became confused. After the first tree was down, it was easy to fall more while they munched the leaves off that one.

A dust storm rolls toward a Kansas town in the mid-1930s. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

One day a huge cloud arose in the southwest and Dad, Mom and I were all out in the yard watchin' as it approached. This was the direction in which our gullywashers usually came and we were excited with the thought it was the drought breaker we'd been hoping for. Storms had a way of spookin' me, kind of makin' the short hair prickle the nap of my neck. I guess it was the suspense involved as it seemed to take forever for one to arrive with its lightning flashes and distant booms of thunder like a war front slowly movin' in on you. Just before they hit, there would be a rash of little whirlwinds chasing one another around the yard followed by a period of time in which it would get deathly still. Then all hell would break loose with gusts of high winds unearthing everything not tied down. Lightning bolts would come streakin' down out of the sky landing sometimes uncomfortably close, followed by loud crashes of thunder that rattled the windows and left the air charged with electricity and smellin' of brimstone. All this commotion seemed to turn on the rain as it would suddenly come pouring down by the buckets. At times there would be hail accompanying those storms the size of hen eggs or baseballs which pounded crops into the ground and whatever else not under cover.

Tornadoes were what we dreaded most. If there was any inkling of one in the vicinity, we would run for the cellar and huddle in the southwest corner hoping that if the house blew away, we would be spared.

The storm that now confronted us, however, somehow seemed different. Dad, who had been studying it for a good spell, was puzzled by its appearance. He said not only did it lack the usual lightning and thunder but the way it boiled up into the sky was mighty peculiar. As it came bearin' down on us, we were engulfed in a cloud of fine red dust particles that turned day into night and gave us our first taste of the dreaded dust storms that were to plague the midwest during the mid-thirties turning it into a dust bowl.

We retreated into the house and closed the windows and doors, but there was no escaping. The wind blew it in through cracks and crevices and it drifted in under the doors faster than Mom could sweep it up. She improvised makeshift masks out of old rags to breathe through and we went into a sort of hibernation.

The storms became a common occurrence coming in various colors in dust consistency depending on the state where they originated. There were a number of states involved besides Kansas. Western Colorado, Nebraska, Texas, and Oklahoma were part of the heaviest hit. Some folks claimed Oklahoma was where the red dirt came from. Visibility became so bad during these storms, the chickens thought it was bedtime and went to roost during the middle of the day. There was also danger of becoming lost, and some folks tied binding twine between their house and barn as a safety precaution during chore time. This was no problem for me, however, as my sense of perception had been fine tuned during long winter nights coon huntin' without a light.

Our three cows were going down hill at a steady rate, seeming to have lost all their vitality and had to be tailed up come milking time. Dad's idea of cutting down trees so they could eat the leaves was a good one and no doubt their salvation. However, the nutritional value of leaves must have been too low to sustain milk production as they soon went dry and that's when we entered what we called the water gravy era.

At the beginning, Mom had turned out to be a real genius when it came to improvising and stretchin' things. After we had eaten the last of our flour, she made muffins out of hog shorts [*a meal and bran mixture used in hog feed*], which Dad said was edible and must have been as there sure weren't any went to waste. Later on when the shorts ran out, she dug out an old coffee grinder and ground up wheat for breadmakin' that

Dad was savin' back for seed and chicken feed, although there were only a few laying hens left being what might be called survivors of Sunday dinners.

Mom sure had a way of cookin' up a mess of old tough rabbits or squirrels, which I'd come draggin' in, to where they'd melt in your mouth. She'd first brown them in a big iron skillet on the old wood range and if there was no grease on hand, she knew how to scorch them just enough to give the same basic effect. They would then go into the oven to simmer all day with her lifting the lid from time to time adding a mite of water and checking' for tenderness.

After drought and hot dusty winds left crops, pastures and garden shriveled to nothingness, our three surviving cows givin' no milk, the hogs dead, the well and spring dry, the root cellar empty, and our innards full of dirt, things started lookin' bad. Dad hadn't taken to emergency relief programs such as W.P.A. and C.C.C. sayin', "... if our ancestors made do with stone knives and slingshots, so can we." I must have inherited some of their ways as his decision sounded fine knowin' I'd be called on to help put meat on the table.

At fourteen, I was a seasoned hunter having hunted half my life and there wasn't anything I'd rather be doing. My dog Jim and I now tore into the local rabbit and squirrel population like a couple of hungry wolves cruising the countryside takin' them in whatever manner necessary. There was no money for rifle shells so I manufactured slingshot ammo by pouring hot lead into an old bullet mold and gathering up ballbearings and such. It was a no holds barred survival of the fittest situation. If I failed to down a rabbit with my slingshot and it ran into a hole, I'd twist a length of barbed wire into its backside and drag him out. Its dying squeal was music to my ears knowing our empty stomachs would soon be appeased. When too deep to reach with barbed wire, I'd leave a muskrat trap carefully set in the hole entrance coming back later to gather my prize.

Once Jim and I took out after a squirrel, we never gave up. Easin' along the edge of a strip of timber at the break of day, we'd catch them out gallivanting around in the open and seeing their escape route cut off they'd panic and charge our skirmish line sometimes breaking through to a tree where I'd cut loose with a barrage of ballbearings, lead balls or square nuts with my slingshot. Squirrels are tough buggers to kill. However, I discovered when you bounced a ballbearing off one's skull, he'd

usually fall from the tree into Jim's waiting mouth or to where I could stomp him. If they ran into a nest and refused to budge, I'd climb the tree and poke 'em out with a stick. When they made it to a den tree, I'd smoke them out. If ordinary smoke from burning rags or leaves failed to do the job, I'd add a sprig of Dad's homegrown tobacco hangin' in the barn loft to the smudge which soon emptied the tree of all occupants. Several squirrels sometimes came boiling out of one hole clawin' and scratchin' at their eyes, makin' it a field day for me and my dog.

One day in late August as I stood watchin' Dad out in the west bottom field waltzing around in dust up to his ankles and slinging his arms this way and that, I figured the worst had finally happened; he'd come unhinged. Stayin' to a safe distance, I asked in a casual voice what he might be doin'. He said, "What in the hell you think I'm doing? I am sowing turnip seed. Can't you see them thunder clouds makin' overhead?" He was right, there were huge black clouds boiling up that looked of rain, a bolt of lightning suddenly slashed down out of the sky, the thunder rolled and heaven's floodgates opened up. I took shelter under an old hackberry tree which showed numerous scars of past storms, while Dad danced around in the rain whoopin' like an old prospector who had just hit mother lode. I guess it was a time to live dangerously.

I hadn't taken to schoolin' much, the days I wasn't playing hookie, my mind was out in the fields and draws huntin' game as its hard to think on an empty stomach. I did manage, however, to get passing grades right up until the eighth grade, which I failed by one point and when school started in September, I just didn't show up figuring it was more important to find a way to keep eatin'.

The previous spring I had traveled all the way to Holton, the county seat, in order to take the eighth grade examination. Being politically ignorant at the time, the reason I failed seemed more political than academic. When coming to a question during the test asking what N.R.A. stood for I pondered it awhile then wrote down, "Not Really Anything."² The town was a Democratic stronghold except for a few staunch Republicans, including the newspaper editor, and as one neighbor put it, "... would have all voted for a four legged jackass had it been on the ticket." I did, however, get some notoriety from this untimely flash of wit

²The National Recovery Act was declared unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1935.

as my answer to that particular question appeared in the next issue of the Holton Recorder.

In retrospect, I've regretted many times not having a higher education. However, even if I'd passed the eighth grade examination, further learnin' didn't seem all that important at the time, especially when it was over a ten mile hike each day back and forth to the nearest high school located in Whiting and with no money for proper clothes or food for lunch, it would have been a tough row to hoe.

*"Two Legs To
Stand On":
John D. McKee
Autobiography
[1933-1937]*

Born in 1919 in Emporia, Kansas, John McKee spent most of his growing-up years in Concordia, Kansas. There, he graduated from high school, and in 1939 he entered Kansas Wesleyan University at Salina. McKee's story is not one of battling forces of the Great Depression but of fighting to overcome cerebral palsy. McKee described himself as an unusual "specimen" of the cerebral palsied because his left arm and hand were free of paralysis, he had speech, and only his right leg and arm (and only slightly the left leg) were affected by spasticity. His parents did all they could to help him learn to walk and be a part of clubs and school groups. At the time individuals with cerebral palsy often were misdiagnosed and sometimes labeled mentally defective and placed in institutions. John McKee's story is a powerful testament to this young man and his family who refused to accept formidable limitations. As an adult John McKee has written numerous articles for such periodicals as Atlantic Monthly and Today's Health. In these, as in his autobiography, he has addressed the obstacles people often face when trying to achieve productive, happy lives.

The Brace Period came with our move to Concordia, Kansas, and the consequent addition of yet another doctor who thought he might know how to help me. The braces were steel and leather affairs that could be locked at the knees. With them on I could stand up and walk around, as long as I had something to hang onto. The big problem was lack of balance. Like most spastics, I had almost no sense of balance, and like most spastics, I was deathly afraid of falling. As long as I was holding to some-

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thing, I was all right, but put me alone in the middle of a room and I went rigid with fright.

"He seems to have no control of his muscles," the doctor said. "If there were only some way we could teach him to control the muscles of his legs and feet, perhaps he could learn to walk."

Dad thought about that. He thought about it all that week, and the next Saturday afternoon, he said, "Mary, get me a pair of Jack's old shoes." Then he went down in the basement, and when he came back, he had a can of gray paint, a paint brush, and a heavy carpenter's pencil.

Mystified, Mother and I followed him out the back door, I with my braces locked, stumping along stiff-legged, holding Mother's hand. Dad spent that afternoon outlining my footprints on the back sidewalk with black pencil and painting in the outlines with gray paint. Then he planted some lengths of steel pipe on either side of the walk and strung heavy, insulated wire between the evenly spaced pipe lengths at just the right height for my hands.

"Now, Jack," he said, "as soon as the paint dries, you begin walking. You will practice putting your feet down in those footprints, and maybe someday we can take those braces off. What do you say?"

What did I say? I could hardly wait till the paint dried!

At first it was fun. I clung tightly to the guidelines, and hour after hour practiced putting my feet in those gray prints. But the game soon wore off, and often I hung swinging to the guidelines, petrified because I had stumbled and started to fall.

"How did the walking go today?" Dad would ask when he got home from work, and Mother would say, "He walked a long way today, DeWitt. He did fine. He started to fall once, but he caught himself and went right on walking."

Or she would say, "Jack's getting lazy. I had to take the vegetables out to the porch to peel them today, so I could watch him and make sure he walked."

After I learned to walk between the lines, however, and was a least a little less afraid of falling, they left me alone a good deal of the time, patrolling my beat. There are some things you can't learn with your parents hovering over you, and out on that back sidewalk, with nobody holding me up as I wobbled the length of the walk and back, I got my first small taste of independence.

That was how the score stood, on that gray fall afternoon in Kansas, over a quarter of a century ago. I was, at long last, on my feet. I was

walking, after a fashion, but I could never have any sort of independent existence as long as I had to lean on something or hold to something to maintain my equilibrium. There were not always going to be walls or doors or banisters to cling to.

I had been out walking between the lines, missing the painted footprints as often as I hit them with my erratic feet, but still plodding uncertainly up and down the walk. Any time I got tired or downhearted, I could quit, for I was alone this day, but something of what I had learned, something that had been instilled in me since birth, would not let me quit. If I had not been told there was something better, if I had not been gently pushed and helped and goaded on, who knows but what I might right now be flat on my back in a bed from which I would never rise?

At any rate, I had walked until twilight came and the weather turned chilly. Then Mother came out and helped me into the house. . . .

Mother brought me into the living room, unlocked my braces, and set me on the stairway ledge. The sudden change from the nippy air of the out of doors to the enveloping warmth of the big, potbellied German heater was almost too much for me. I grew drowsy and daydreamed. I saw myself grown up, walking down the street straight and tall between Mother and Dad, swinging my arms naturally at the sides, keeping my knees straight without benefit of braces. I saw myself pitching a baseball game, quarterbacking a football team, running races, jumping, climbing trees.

The room was cheery with the red glow from the stove and the light of the old-fashioned three-bulb brass chandelier, and the smell of supper cooking on the stove came deliciously from the kitchen. It was the in-between time of day, when play was done and there was still a little time for dreaming before supper and bed.

I sat there with all the warmth and dreams around me, and I looked at the big library table only two steps away. Could I walk to it? After all it was only two steps. Just two steps without guidelines, without a chair or wall or a person to cling to.

Two steps into nothing, or two steps that might mean the beginning of walking wherever I wanted to go. I might fall and hit my head on the table. I might get one step away from the safety of the stairway and freeze with fright. I might fall. I might fall. I might fall. The thought kept pounding through my head, and I was shaking with fear. Because I had fallen—become overbalanced in a chair, or pulled myself up to a table or

a chair and had walked, hanging on, and had tripped and fallen—and because I did not know yet how to fall, I had hit hard and it had hurt.

But another thought was hammering to get in. I could hear Dad say, "Pick 'em up and lay 'em down, Jack. You won't fall. You can walk." I remembered Mother watching me from the back porch, and how proud she was when I tottered the length of the walk and back, missing the footprints only twice. I was going to walk. My mother and father said I could.

Suddenly I quit thinking. I pulled myself up slowly, clinging like grim death to the newel post. I stood there for a moment, gathering my courage and listening for Mother. I wanted to be sure she didn't know what I was doing. If I fell, I wanted to be able to crawl back to the stairway and sit down before she discovered it; and if I made it to the table, I wanted to surprise her.

Pans were rattling reassuringly in the kitchen. I took one step and wavered. I stood for a split second on one foot, unable in my sudden panic to bring the other foot forward.

Then the trailing foot came around, and I fell forward, reaching the table. My fingers clutched at the edge of the table and I pulled myself erect. I made it!

My parents have given me many things, but the greatest gift they ever gave me was courage—the courage to take two steps. . . .

My friend David Matthew was going to learn the clarinet. I wanted to learn to play the clarinet, too. The spastic fingers on my right hand were a problem, but Dad said we'd try. We went down to Blaney's Music Store, and Mr. Blaney put a beautiful silver clarinet in my hands. Oh, but it was beautiful there in my hands—long and slender, and smooth like the mellow notes that were in it. I could blow the clarinet. I could tongue it properly and bit down on the mouthpiece as I was told, but it was no use. There simply wasn't any individual articulation in the fingers of my right hand.

So there was no clarinet for me. It even looked for a while as if I would have to abandon the idea of joining the band altogether. But in the end everything was all right. At home Dad had a big, blond-varnished parade drum which he had played in a drum and bugle corps and in the city band. I didn't need nimble fingers to beat time, only fairly supple wrists. For a long time my left hand did most of the work, and when we were playing a 2/4 time march, I sometimes used to lay my right hand in my lap and thump away at the offbeat with my left-hand

Not every teenager lived in an atmosphere of home and family. Some lived in institutions for dependent children, the blind or deaf, juvenile delinquents, or those with special needs. The 1922 photograph of the baseball team was taken at the State Hospital for Epileptics, where all ages were represented; the young people picking strawberries were photographed in 1936 at the State Orphans' Home, which averaged sixty-five teenage residents a year. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

stick. With practice, however, my right hand became more useful and drumming gave to that spastic member more strength and direction than it had ever had before. By the time I was finished with drumming, I could do more than beat time. My right hand became responsive enough so that I could get a satisfactory roll out of a drum. Nothing fancy, you understand. Flams and paradiddles remained for the most part merely interesting additions to my vocabulary. But I did become proficient in beating out a marching cadence.

Dad got out the drum, and on the day the grade school band was organized, he took it to school in the car for me. I was a big frog in a little puddle; I had the only drum in the room. Why, this was much better than being third man in the clarinet section.

Since there was no bass drum in the band, I played both parts—the on-beat of the bass drum and the offbeat of the snare. This was to cause trouble when I moved to the high school band later. The bass drummer let it be known that he would just as soon play his one thump to the measure without any help from the snares, thank you. And I did play in the high school band, from the time I was in the eighth grade.

George Cook stood beside me in the percussion section of the high school band. Almost any of us in the section could play bass or snare as the occasion demanded, but George, besides having the requisite sense of rhythm, also had an ear for pitch, and he played the tympani. I was fascinated to watch him change the pitch of those big drums in the middle of a concert piece, testing his adjustments with the lightest flick of his finger against the translucent-thin drumheads.

I have no ear. I can whistle a tune. I can even sing without sounding quite like Johnny Ray, but I could no more adjust the pitch of a kettle-drum with the rest of the band playing its various notes around me than I could play those notes myself.

Not that I didn't try to play the notes. I still wanted to make more music than could be found in the rhythmic rattle and thump of a snare drum. Knowing this, Dr. Sherrard put me to work on the baritone horn. I could operate a valve horn with one hand, and perhaps if we had thought of a baritone or a French horn or a trumpet in the beginning, I could have learned to play it—but I doubt it. I learned to play the scale on a baritone, and I learned to play some exercises. But somehow there was no coordination between my eyes and my hands and my mind and my blowing.

It soon became apparent that I could not play a melody or harmony line in tempo; there was too much to be done by different parts of me at the same time. By the time my fingers and lips and breath were doing what my eyes had signaled to them, I had lost the beat. If I paid strict attention to the rhythm, I blew some awful clinkers.

Knowing how much I wanted to play a horn, and realizing finally how hopeless it was for me to try to learn the intricacies of playing in harmony with the rest of the band, Dr. Sherrard transferred me to melophone, or "peck horn," as the bandsmen called it. The melophone is to the bass horn what the snare is to the bass drum. In other words, it is essentially a rhythm instrument, following the bass horn with the afterbeat. But it was still no good. There were still various notes to be played. With a drum I didn't have to worry about what to play, only about when and for what length of time. I tried desperately to stay in the horn section, but my reactions just weren't fast enough. By the time my mind had told my fingers what my eyes had seen, I'd be a fraction of a second off the beat. And there was the problem of the lips, too. The highest note and the lowest were both open notes on a valve horn—that is, no valves are closed. There are other notes in the scale, too, whose production depends as much on the tension of the lips as on the number of valves held down by the fingers. Separately I could do all the things which were necessary to make music on a valve instrument. I could achieve the proper lip tension, I had mastered the fingering, and I had the proper sense of rhythm and tempo. But here was a problem of coordination I could not solve. From eye to mind to fingers and lips was apparently too involved a journey for my scrambled neuro-muscular system to route without a collision along the way. Finally, in the interest of harmony, I went back to my drum.

But I was still participating. I was still doing what my friends were doing. I couldn't march in parades or between halves at the football games. Carrying the drum would have thrown me off balance and besides, I could not then and I cannot now march in step. I walk more slowly than I used to; I do not have to hurry to put my foot down almost as soon as I raise it, for fear of falling; but I still must set my own tempo. Nevertheless, I got my exercise out of the practice of the marching band. When the band went out for marching practice, I went out with it. While the band marched up and down the street, I walked up and down the sidewalk, out of step but keeping pace. When the band practiced on the football field, I paced the side lines. On game nights I would get to the field early, set

my drum on its rack, and wait while the crowd filed into the stands. Until the band marched onto the field for the between-halves ceremonies, I was an active participant in it.

I got greatest enjoyment, however, out of the concert band. In that, I was a part of the team all the way. We played for high school assemblies and we practiced all year to take part in the North Central Kansas music contests in the spring.

We played the old war horses of concert band music. Besides the Poet and Peasant Overture we played such things as the Light Cavalry Overture and a band arrangement of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony. In season we played such circus favorites as The Billboard March and Robinson's Grand Entry. There is something physical about music. I was marching without moving my feet, without even rising from my chair. I was moving along on great chords, beating the time, thrusting forward, retarding, controlling the whole roomful of sound. I was oblivious of myself except when, in an excess of tension, my right leg would thrust itself straight out and hit the drum rack or the music stand.

Once, when we had reached the finals of a regional music contest, I became as tense as a runner before a race. My stomach knotted. The sticks in my hands were slippery with sweat. But in the middle of the auditorium there was an empty seat, its metal number tag winking at me under the house lights. I concentrated on that seat tag before we began to play, and between that concentration and the remembered rhythms of many rehearsals, I played the whole performance subconsciously. I blacked out. From the opening note to the final crashing chord, I do not remember playing the drum that night. Yet I played, and I did not do what I had feared I might. I did not miss a beat, nor did I come in too early on the drum "break," the high point of the performance for the percussion section. In fact, I later helped celebrate the Superior rating we received for our performance.

I traveled with the band in car caravans all over north-central Kansas. I was accepted as a member of the organization and as a member of the group. I was with people my own age, responsible for myself to myself and to my group. My experience in the band, as had my experience in Scouting, opened further vistas of independence for me at the same time that it increased in me an awareness of the interdependence of people with people, sick or well, whole or handicapped.

I learned to love music from my experience in the high school band. I have found in music something I have found in no physical therapy or

exercise: I have found release from the constant physical tension which goes with being a spastic cerebral-palsied person. I have found more than that: I have found release from myself. . . .

If I got a feeling of playing on a team from my drumming in the band, there was even more of an athletic analogy in my participation in debate. Here was competition. In music you play for perfection, not against an opponent. In debate you pit wit against wit and knowledge against knowledge the way a football player or a wrestler pits muscle and training against the muscle and training of an opponent. . . .

. . . There is some of the same thrill in debating that there must be in acting—the same sweating tension before going on, the same invisible lines between you and your audience, lines that thrum with excitement when you're getting through to that audience and that sag unresponsively when you're not. There is another thrill in debating, too, one that is not present in acting. That is the suspense of combat, the not knowing whether you are winning or losing, the swinging pendulum of yea and nay as you fight for victory using words for fists and reasoning in lieu of footwork.

One of my favorite memories of high school debating, however, has nothing to do with the urge to either acting or athletics. It re-enforces one of the points of this story, that a so-called handicap is what you make of it. On one of our tours in preparation for the regional and state debate tournaments, we stopped for a morning debate in a little town in northern Kansas. I remember neither the name of the town, the names of the debaters, nor the outcome of the debate. But I do remember one of our opponents. He was a tall, thin, bespectacled, earnest fellow. And he stammered. I admired him for getting up there in front of the judges and the audience and us and going right to work on us, stammer or no stammer. I thought I knew what he was doing. It was as if I had gone out for the middle distance events on the track team. The fact that he was brilliant and that one soon forgot, unless there was a particularly long block in his speech, that he stammered at all could not diminish the shining, stubborn courage I saw in him.

Once we could have used such courage as this, my colleague and I. Maybe it's silly to let a lost debate rankle over the years like a hangnail that continues to annoy, but the memory still rankles, still annoys. I know the meaning of defeat. I have been defeated many times. But it is part of my heritage and part of my training that I must never lose a point to life by default. I always thought of debate as a contest which matched my wits as well as my information against those of my opponent. Thus when

my colleague and I were debating a team from Belleville and the Belleville debater quoted from a source that was new to us, I simply started digging in my card file for something that was at least analogous to the case. If we couldn't beat our worthy opponent with information, I reasoned, perhaps we could find an error in his logic or a flaw in his original premise.

Unfortunately it was my partner's turn for rebuttal, and unfortunately he did not reason thus. He did not consult with me about the problem that faced us. He simply got up to speak and there was a trapped look on his face. "Our worthy adversaries," he said, "have brought into the debate material with which we are not acquainted. Therefore we are unable to offer a rebuttal on our opponents' final points." I slumped in my seat and awaited the inevitable. It came. We lost the debate. We might have lost it anyway, but we didn't have to lose it because we quit.

But win or lose, or even if I had never participated in an interscholastic debate, I would not have missed the experience of working on the debates and with the other debaters for anything. After school and in the evenings and on Saturdays we'd gather to search out and organize material. We'd argue it out among ourselves. We'd write our constructive speeches and practice them in separate rooms in the empty building. Such intensive working and organizing, such daily gathering of a team gave me some of the sense of companionship and concerted achievement that athletes must get out of sports.

In my sophomore year, when I first went out for debate, I worked with two fellows who won the state high school debating championship of Kansas in 1935. Cecil Myers and Bill Gunter were not what one ordinarily pictures as debaters. Cecil was a Golden Gloves boxer and Bill was a big guy who would have made any football coach happy. They debated for fun. Studiedly flamboyant, they were likely to show up for a debate in flowing bow ties or sporting beards especially grown for the occasion.

How I envied the seeming carelessness of those two clowns of the debating circuit. Theirs was exactly the right approach, as far as I was concerned—a sort of Will Rogers familiarity mixed with some obviously flamboyant oratory, delightful because it was so obvious and because both Bill and Cecil knew it was obvious. I envied them their assurance. I envied them the fact that their voices didn't jump an octave or two when they started to speak. Mine still did that, even after I had acquired my bathtub baritone. "When one discusses," I said once, "the h-i-g-H cost of medical care. . . ." I had to start over. My voice had gone higher than the cost of medical care, higher than the national debt. Gradually I won out

over the demands of my voice for a sliding scale contract. I started talking from down around my belt somewhere, and while it sounded somewhat ghoulish for a time, I finally got so that I could talk when my knees were watery, my hands slick with sweat, and my stomach tight as a fist. . . .

The memory of accomplishment, though, is as valuable to me as the lessons I learned in debating. On the last day of school in the spring, students and faculty of Concordia High School gathered for the annual honors assembly. At that assembly all the athletes received letters for their play during the past year. Awards were given for everything from participation in the Girls Athletic Association to speed typing, from performance in the band to performance on the debate team. And when my name was called, I walked all too rapidly to the stage, partly from eagerness, partly from my hurry-lest-I-fall gait, and partly because of the sloping floor of the auditorium. I did not go up on the stage. It was too far to the auditorium stage entrance, and the risers which had been placed in front of the stage for the presentation ceremonies had no hand rails on them. So I stood on the floor of the auditorium and reached up and took the big chenille letter from Miss Gwendolyn Fletcher, our debate coach. Winning that letter made up, in large measure, for not being able to play football or basketball, to run or jump as a member of the track team, or to do more than paddle around in the shallow end of the swimming pool. Indeed the presentation of that letter at the honors assembly ranks in my memory with receiving the Honor Camper Award at Brown Memorial Camp. And considering how much I had talked all year to win the letter, my acceptance speech was exceedingly brief. It was a slightly choked, "Thank you."

Thus out of the material at hand, and with the help of my family and of many friends, I created before I was out of high school the basis of the life I was to live. There was nothing conscious in its building; it grew from an unconscious desire to explore and a voracious curiosity about life. I have within me a mental restlessness for which I am thankful; it compensates for necessarily restricted travel. I stumble on strange facts like the man who stubbed his toe on a diamond in his back yard. I proclaim the discovery of an idea new to me like Balboa sighting the Pacific. Out of the material at hand and with the tools God left me I have created and am creating a full life.

"It Has Been a Pretty Good Year": Belva Lucas Diary [1937]

• Wichita

On January 1, 1937, nineteen-year-old Belva Lucas began her diary: "1937. I hope it will hold a lot of health, wealth, prosperity & happiness for all of us." Belva made this wish for herself; her parents, William and Olive Lucas; her sisters, Berenice, Bonita, Burdelle, and Bette; and three brothers, Leslie, Kenneth, and Robert (Bob). (Berenice, Bonita, Burdelle, and Leslie were married.) All figured prominently in her diary since most were close by or living in the family's Wichita home. Belva lived at home, helping her mother with housework and earning money from temporary jobs found through the Young Woman's Christian Association employment service or the National Youth Administration. Although Belva sometimes complained of the lack of money, she and her family were not desperately poor. It was a paradox of the times that some families suffered terribly while others managed to have enough to eat, money for a movie, or a chance to travel. Sometimes Belva wrote about wanting to go to California. During the 1930s, thousands of displaced Kansans headed there, but Belva's desire was not just a reflection of that migration. Before she was born, her family had lived in California and Belva's brother Leslie still lived there. The place represented something different and exciting, and she could hardly believe her good luck when some of the family decided to take a trip west. The account of that trip begins these excerpts from Belva's diary.

Monday, February 1 Well I am thrilled and excited. We decided to go to California today.¹ Bob got a two week vac[a]tion, so Mom, Bob, Bette and I left for California today at 2:25. We got in Okla. about 3:30. We arrived in Okla. City about 6:20. It sure is a big town. We saw lots of

Belva Lucas diary. Reprinted with permission from Burdelle Robison, Park Rapids, Minnesota.

¹Earlier diary entries did not mention any discussions about a trip; the decision seemed spur of the moment.

The five "B" sisters in 1937: Bette, Belva (wearing the California Jigger coat), Burdelle, Bonita, and Berenice. Their mother, Olive Edna, is seated. (Courtesy Charles and Mary Ellen Stansifer)

pretty scenery. Sure hated to leave Burdelle home. We [are] staying alnite at Ardmore, Okla. We got here about 10 o'clock.

Tuesday, February 2 We started out from Ardmore, Okla. this morning at 6:15. We crossed into Texas about 10 til 7. We went thru Ft. Worth, Mineral Wells, Abilene, Sweetwater, Big Springs & others. We sure covered lots of Texas. We went over 500 miles. I got sick riding today. We're staying alnite at Pecos, Texas at the Beacon Courts cabin camp.²

Wednesday, February 3 We left this morning from Pecos, Texas about 7:30. We ate dinner in El Paso. Sure saw Beautiful scenery, especially at Van Horn, Texas. There we we [sic] were up 4400 ft. After we left El Paso we crossed into New Mexico. It didn't take us long to cross. Then we got to Duncan, Ariz. After that did we ever have winding mountain roads & beautiful scenery. This evening we were driving after dark & we

²*As more people vacationed by automobile, cabin camps sprang up along U. S. highways, offering sleep accommodations.*

went over the most dangerous mt. roads but pretty. It was kinda scary. We stayed alnite in Globe, Ariz. Got here 9:30.

Thursday, February 4 We left Globe, Ariz. at 7:30 this morning and did we ever drive over beautiful mts scenery. We went over real high mts. We ate dinner in Phoenix, Ariz. It wasn't so pretty after we left there. We crossed desert there. We got in California about 3. Then we drove in more desert. Then this evening we drove over a whole lot more mts. We got in San Diego at 7:30 and are staying here alnite at a cabin camp.

Friday, February 5 This morning we got up at 6:30 ate breakfast. Then we took a drive over San Diego. San Diego sure is a pretty place. I sure like it here. I'd like to live here. We saw the ocean the first time today. It sure is big & magni[fi]cent. We crossed the bay to Coronado on a ferry this afternoon. Then we went to Tijuana, Mexico. This afternoon we went to Wilmington, Calif. We drove along the ocean all the way. Sure was pretty. We got in Wilmington this evening & saw Les, Erma & Dixie. We're staying alnite here at a cabin camp.

Saturday, February 6 We got up pretty early this morning, ate breakfast, then went over to Les. It has been raining all day. Some California weather. Then this morning, Les, Erma, Dixie, Bob, Mom, Bette & I went for long ride. We went to Los Angeles and is it ever a big place, & Burbank, Glendale & Hollywood. We saw Columbia & Warner [movie] studios. Mom, Bette & I are staying at Grant hotel. Bob is going to sleep at Leslies.

Sunday, February 7 It is nice & sunshiny today. Bob came to the hotel after us this morning, and we went over to Leslies. Then Les, Bob, Mom, Boots [Bette] & I went for a drive. We went on top of a hill & got the most beautiful view. Then we went thru San Pedro, then Long Beach & at Long Beach we went to the Pike. At the pike Les, Bob & I went on the roller coaster. Is that ever a thrill & scary. Then Mom, Bob, Boots, Les & I took a ride on a boat to a gambling ship & did we ever get seasick. We all did & did Leslie and I urp in the boat & so did Bob. We're staying at the same cabin camp. We saw lots of flowers today.

Monday, February 8 We left Wilmington, Cal. today for home about 9:30. We saw Erma & Dixie before we left but didn't see Leslie. We went thru

Riverside, Redlands & saw Smiley Heights & other towns. We saw some pretty orange trees & snow capped mts. & pretty views. I washed my hair this morning at Wilmington. We're staying alnite on the edge of the desert at Blythe, Cal. The sunset & twilight on the desert sure was pretty.

Tuesday, February 9 We started from Blythe, Cal. about 8. We ate dinner at Phoenix, Ariz. I think the drive from Phoenix to Duncan, Ariz. is one of the prettiest drives we've been over. We sure go over some high mts. & see pretty scenery. We're staying alnite at the Hidalgo camp in Lordsburg, New Mexico.

Wednesday, February 10 We left Lordsburg, N. M. at 15 till 7 this morning. We sure traveled over pretty country from Alamogordo, N. M. to Roswell, N. Mexico. We went over snow covered mts. & they had pine trees on them. Boy was it pretty. We ate dinner at Alamogordo and supper in Clovis, N. M. where we're staying alnite at a cabin camp.

Thursday, February 11 We left Clovis, N. M. at 6:30 this morning. We went to Amarillo, Texas, we ate dinner in Pampa, Texas. We run into an awful dust storm in Okla. We were in 4 states today. N. M., Texas, Okla., & Kans. We arrived in Wichita at 7:10. We sure werent glad to be back in Kansas.

Friday, February 12 Is it ever windy & dusty today. We washed a little this morning. This afternoon Burdelle & I walked down town, mailed a letter to Leslie, went to Kress, got some candy & came home. Mom, Boots, Burdelle & I had the car this evening. We went for a ride & went to see Lois & went to the store. While we were gone Pop said there was a boy here asking for me.

Saturday, February 13 Jimmy came here this morning. I guess Bob got fired from his job. Dont know for sure. I didnt go to town today. I went over to the store & got some candy for Jim. Jim & Burdelle went for a walk, when they came back they brot a chicken so we had a nice supper. Mom went to town this afternoon. Burdelle & Jim went some place this evening.

Sunday, February 14 We all got up kinda late this morning. I got up about 9. Phillip [*Berenice's eight-year-old son*] was over for dinner. Jim went

some place this afternoon. Boots went to the show, Mom, Bob, Burdelle & I went for a ride. Kansas sure looks sick after California. Berenice & Buddy [*Berenice's six-year-old son Charles, nicknamed "Buddy"*] were here.

Monday, February 15 This sure has been a blue Monday if there ever was one. The wind blew all day & it was dusty. Burdelle & Jimmy went some place this morning & evening. Bette started back to school today & Bob went back to work. Bette & Mom went to town after school.

Tuesday, February 16 It [*is*] nice and sunshiny makes a person feel better. I guess Jim went some place this morning. This afternoon Mom & I went to town this afternoon. First we went to Cut Rate Drug store where I saw a woman at [*whose*] house I went to a party & she said she wanted to talk to me. Then we went to the Wichita [*theater*]. When [*?*] got [*?*] and good sundaes, went to the store & came home. Mom got me a ring today.

Wednesday, February 17 Burdelle & I went to the Y. W. early this morning to try & find a job. Burdelle worked at the Y. M. at a banquet. She earned 25¢ & her dinner she worked 2 hours. I didnt get anything. Mom paid on a grey suit for me. That [*is*] sure good of her. When Burdelle got home her & I walked over to Lois. Jim called up over to Mac's³ & told her to come over. Berenice was over today. Burdelle stayed over Lois tonite.

Thursday, February 18 I went over to the Y. W. again this morning. I was there awhile then Burdelle came. I had a chance to get a job. I went over to see the lady. She worked at Rorabaughs. She was awful nice, but she wanted me to do the baking & cooking. So I didn't take [*it*] & went back to Y. W. & waited till 12 but didn't get anything so came home. Burdelle took care of a baby this afternoon. Mom & Boots went over to Berenices this evening.

Friday, February 19 Well Burdelle & I went over to the Y. W. & sat around til about 11 & didn't get anything so we walked over to Lois', then we walked home. Mom wasnt here when we got here. We ate dinner, then we walked uptown & we talked to that lady in the drugstore, then we went to the Wichita.

³*They did not have a telephone so apparently they used the phone of a neighbor.*

Saturday, February 20 Did it ever snow this morning & such beautiful snow & big flakes, they were as big as 1/2 dollars. Mom & Bette went to town today. Burdelle & I walked to town this afternoon. We bot a nickels worth of candy & loafed around town awhile & then came home. Its cold today.

Sunday, February 21 I washed my hair this morning in snow water & so did Burdelle. Bette went to Sunday school this morning. Mom's kinda sick today. Shes got a cold. Bob, Burdelle & I went for a ride this afternoon, we came home then we went to town & Bob gave us money to go to the show. We saw Pop down town & we bot some candy, then Pop, Burdelle & I went to the Crawford [*theater*].

Monday, February 22 Burdelle & I went to the Y. W. this morning & I got sent out rite away, to house over at 1218 W. Murdock. I went home this morning & went back at 4:30, helped get supper did the dishes & came home. I walked home. I didn't get off til 8. Oh hell I don't like it. Their name is Schontz. Burdelle works tomorrow. I don't like it where I work.

Tuesday, February 23 Well I went to work this morning. Bob took me. Im working for Dr. & Mrs. Schontz. I washed this morning, mopped the floors & otherwise worked hard. I'm sure tired. The folks I worked for brot me home. I set my hair tonite. Seems awful good to [*be*] home.

Wednesday, February 24 Burdelle took me to work this morning. Boy do I hate to [*get*] up early in the morning. I sure worked hard today. I ironed about 5 hrs. besides the other work. Im sure tired tonite. I got home about 7:30. We listened to the good radio programs then talked.

Thursday, February 25 I had to walk to work this morning. I had to get down on my hands & knees & scrub & wash the stove today. After the lunch the lady said I could go home, so I came home, & then went back at 4:30. I got of[*f*] work about 20 til 7 and got home about 7. Burdelle started working today at a house.

Friday, February 26 There was more snow on the ground this morning. Kenneth took me to work this morning. I cleaned her house this morn-

ing & this evening while I was washing dishes Mr. Schontz fired me so thats that. He gave me \$4. It was snowing a lot when I walked home.

Saturday, February 27 I didnt get up til 8:30. Seemed kinda good to lay in bed. Bette & Mom went to town this morning & I met Mom at Rorabaughs this afternoon. I tried my suit on & they have to alter it. I loaned Mom my money & she got her glasses. Im sure glad she got them. Mom, Bette & Bob went to town tonite.

Sunday, February 28 Well real early this morning or last nite at 12 o'clock Faber came here & wanted Burdelle. He said Jim was in town again & he broke his foot & wanted to see Burdelle, so she went. Burdelle won't tell anybody where he is. We didn't do much today. Phillip was here for dinner. We went for a little ride. Berenice & Phillip were over this evening.

Monday, March 1 The sun is shining today & it is a little warmer, but not much. Mom went down town this morning, & then I went down about 12:30 & met her. We got some awfully pretty pink goods for me a waist, then we went to the Crawford. We met Bette when we got out & we looked at some boots for her, then came home.

Tuesday, March 2 We washed this morning, Mom, Pop and I did. It was a pretty good wash day & we done it pretty quick. Mom cut out my waist today, & I got a spot on it. I sure hated that. Mom went to town this afternoon. I guess Bob is working late tonite.

Wednesday, March 3 Today is \$1 day.⁴ Mom went down this morning & I met her down town. I had my suit fitted this morning. I walked back home, & left Mom at town, then Bob & I came back to town & got Mom, then we came [*home*] ate dinner & went up town & went to the Wichita. I got my suit today. Burdelle stayed alnite here tonite.

Thursday, March 4 We are sitting here listening to Pres. Roosevelt. He's making a good speech. I ironed a lot today, & I'm kinda tired. Burdelle

⁴To boost sales, Wichita stores held Dollar Days about once a month, and newspaper advertisements told customers in advance what was on sale. Montgomery Ward and Penneys, for example, advertised ladies' shoes, men's dress shirts, silk hose, and handbags—all for one dollar.

got the afternoon off today, & she & Jim got a room over next door at Mrs. Mac's. Burdelle was over all afternoon & for supper. Berenice & Phillip were over tonite. Think I'll go to bed pretty soon. Got a letter from Leslie.

Friday, March 5 It [*was*] nice today. Kenneth had the car and he took Mom and I to town. Mom went to the State [*theater*], but I didn't have anything to do so I walked home. I wrote a card to Opal. There was a man here from Crooks after Jimmy.

Saturday, March 6 Its another swell day. As [*Bob?*] went to work he took us up town. Bette went to the show. Mom & I sat in Rorabaughs & watched the people, then we went & got a dish of ice cream. Bob took us to town tonite & he was supposed to meet us in the car but he didn't so we had to walk home. I'm tired tonite.

Sunday, March 7 Bob worked this morning. This is the keenest day yet. Bob, Mom & Pop went for a ride, but they dumped me out down town, & I didn't like it. I saw Bette, & her & I went to the Wichita. Sure was a punk show. I saw Burdelle & Jim & I came home.

Monday, March 8 Mom and I went to town with Bob. We looked at some suits then we went to the Crawford, which was a good show. We're still talking about going back to California. Mom left the show before I did to meet Bette. Berenice was here when I got home.

Tuesday, March 9 Bob took Kenneth to school this morning & Mom & I went with him. We went to the market but didn't get anything. We got a letter from Leslie this morning. I washed my hair today. Berenice was over several times today and Burdelle was over this evening.

Wednesday, March 10 We put a washing out today. It was such a nice day today. I set out in the sun this afternoon. We got a letter from Bonita. Bette just got thru shutting the door on my finger. Boy did it hurt. We got thru with supper & the dishes early tonite.

Thursday, March 11 Well we ironed this morning. Then Mom and I went to town with Bob. Mom got her a permanent, so I came on home. I

bought a flower for my suit at Kress. When I got home I wrote to Bonita. Burdelle was here today. Bob works from 12:30 pm. till 9.

Friday, March 12 It turned a little chilly today. Bob got up kinda late this morning. He went to school after Kenneth & Mom went to town with him. I met her at 1 o'clock at Rorabaughs. We went to Kinneys & Mom bought me a cutest pr of grey shoes & she bought Boots a pr of white ones. Bette put my hair up tonite.

Saturday, March 13 Well who'd of thot it but it snowed this morning, a whole lot. And its cold today. Well I didn't go anyplace today. I've got a sore throat. Mom & Boots went up town tonite. Burdelle was here a little while tonite.

Sunday, March 14 Well up and read the usual Sunday papers. Mom made some awful good pies this morning. She made some apple & lemon pies. She made 7. Its still cold today. We all went for a little ride.

Monday, March 15 I asked Pop for 15¢ to go to the show & he gave it to me so I went to the Crawford. It was a good show. I saw Mom & Boots in the show. We got an announcement this morning saying Leslie & Erma have a new baby girl born March 11, 6:10 P.M. She weighs 7 1/4 lbs. Burdelle was over this evening. Mom and Boots saw Joe Louis.⁵

Tuesday, March 16 Bette was sick this morning so she didn't go to school today. I didn't go anyplace today. Mom took Bette to St. Francis hospital to see what was wrong with her but the interne didn't know so she took her to a Dr. this afternoon & he said she had an absess in her nose. Berenice was over this evening. Got a card from Opal.

Wednesday, March 17 Bette stayed home from school today too. Mom discovered she's got chicken pox I guess. She got it from Phillip & Buddy. We washed today. Todays St. Patricks day & Leslies 35th birthday. Mom went to town today. Mom, Bob & I went for a ride tonite & Burdelle was over tonite.

⁵On the evening of March 15, boxer Joe Louis fought two exhibition bouts at Wichita's Forum. Almost three months later, on June 22, he won the heavyweight boxing championship of the world, a title he held until 1949.

Thursday, March 18 This is Burdelle's day off, she's still working, so she came over this morning and washed. We ironed today. This afternoon Mom & I took some magazines down & traded them for some more. I don't feel so hot today. I took a physic last nite and it worked on me too much.

Friday, March 19 Well this is sure been some day. It was awful dusty today & its colder tonite. The health officer came down this afternoon and put a green chicken pox sign on the house. Boy the wind sure is whistling around the corners tonite.

Saturday, March 20 This is Saturday and didn't go to town today, but Mom did. I read magazines all day. Bob & Kenneth are going to a stag party at Hotel Broadview that the Beechcraft is giving. Its been a pretty nice day. This is the first day of spring.

Sunday, March 21 I woke up pretty early this morning & didn't sleep late. We got dinner, then Mom, Bob and I went for a ride. We went around town and to the airport. Bette didn't go on account of her small-pox [*sic*]. Bob went to play golf with some other boys this morning. Berenice & Bud were over tonite.

Monday, March 22 Mom went to town this morning. I did up the housework. Bette is still sick. Dr. Holt was down to see her today. I went to

A Lucas family entertainment was visiting Wichita's municipal airport. Passenger service was still a novelty. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

town this afternoon. I wore my grey suit. I stopped at the postoffice & wrote a card to Opal, then I paid the rent, went to Kress, then went to the Wichita.

Tuesday, March 23 Mom went to town this morning to get some groceries. It sure rained real hard today. Mom came home for dinner, then her and I walked up town. We got a letter from Bonita this afternoon. Burdelle came over for a while this evening.

Wednesday, March 24 This morning Bob came home from work and said he had quit & was going to California. So he & another man left this noon. I hope & pray he gets a job & sends for us. We got a letter from Les & Erma this morning. Tillie, Burdelle's dog, somebody took [?] we [?] over KANS [*radio*] on lost & found column. Les & Erma named there baby Leslie Anne.

Thursday, March 25 Is it ever cold today. Mom went down & mailed a letter to Bob. This afternoon Burdelle came over & wanted me to go to the show with her so we went to the Wichita. When we got home I went over to her room & visited. She cooked their supper over here. I'm washing my hair tonite.

Friday, March 26 Its still cold today. I wish it would ever get warm. I read quite a bit today. Mom and Boots went to the store this evening. This has been a long gloomy day. I just got the dishes done. Berenice & Burdelle were over tonite.

Saturday, March 27 Gosh it snowed again today, but not much, and gosh is it cold. We washed this morning and it sure was cold hanging them up. Mom, Bette & I walked to town this afternoon. Mom & Bette went to the Wichita and I went to the Crawford.

Sunday, March 28 This is Easter. It is sure some Easter. Its awful cold. Too cold to wear the new clothes. Bette went to Sunday School this morning. Kenneth went some place this afternoon. Mom took a walk to town. Mom made some good pies this morning. Berenice, Ben & the kids were over tonite.

Monday, March 29 It snowed again. Darnit. I hope its the last time. Mom went to town this afternoon & I was supposed to meet her at the postoffice but she wasn't there so I walked up town then walked right back. Berenice was over this eve & so was Burdelle.

Tuesday, March 30 We've been looking for a letter from Bob ever since he left & we finally got one today. I met Mom down town at the Bus depot & gave the letter to her & she sent a telegram to him. Then we walked home & stopped at Berenice's on the way home.

Wednesday, March 31 Today is Mama & Papa's 40th wedding anniversary. Mom & I went to town this afternoon & Mom bought herself a grey suit at Croneys. Then we went to the Wichita & saw a good show. Berenice, Ben & the kids were over & we had some whipped cream & cake.

Thursday, April 1 I guess the weatherman is going to fool us and give us a nice day for a change. Its real nice today. Burdelle came over this morning about 11, and did her washing. She got done about 12. I walked down to the postoffice & mailed a letter to Erma & Les. Berenice, Ben & the kids were over.

Friday, April 2 This morning there was a special delivery card on the door for a letter so I walked down to to [*sic*] the postoffice with Bette when she went to school to get [*it*], but I didn't get it, so Mom & I walked down later & got it. It was a letter from [*Bob?*]. It left Los Angeles at 9 last nite & got here at 6:30. Mom went to town & I went to the Crawford.

Saturday, April 3 It turned cold again today. Mom & I walked down town this afternoon. She got some grey shoes, and she went down to Croneys to get her suit. Then we went to Freidmans grocery then came home. Ben & Phillip are over tonite.

Sunday, April 4 Here it is Sunday again and didn't go anyplace today. I've got a headache, from not drinking any coffee this morning. I read all afternoon. Berenice, Ben & kids were over today. Phillip was here for dinner. Boots went to the show this afternoon.

Burdelle, Bette, and Belva Lucas, 1937. (Courtesy Charles and Mary Ellen Stansifer)

Monday, April 5 We got quite a bit of mail this morning including a letter from Bob. He hasn't got a job yet. Mom & I went to town today. I met her at 2:30. They gave away the most beautiful roses at Dockums, so Mom & I got quite a few. Today Mom called up a man whose ad was in the paper about going to Calif. and he was down tonite.

Tuesday, April 6 Well I got up at 8 o'clock this morning and cleaned up the house. Mama wrote a letter to Bob and went to town this afternoon to mail it. I took a bath today. Ben was over. Kenneth Rippee was here tonite to see Kenneth. Guess I'll stop & listen to the radio.

Wednesday, April 7 Today is dollar day. We got a telegram from Bob this morning saying that he wanted some money & that he had a job. We also got a letter from him. Mom went down town early this morning & I met her at Rorabaughs. She bought herself a hat. Then her & I went to the [?]. Russell Fisher was down to see about Bob this evening. Its cold & windy today.

Thursday, April 8 It turned cold again today & Mom got 500 lbs. of coal. Burdelle came over this morning. She done some washing over here and she was here for dinner. Ben & Phillip were here this evening. Burdelle cooked hers & Jims supper over here tonite.

Friday, April 9 This morning we got another special delivery letter from Bob saying he was [coming] home. The darn snot is homesick. I guess that blows up our chance for going to California. Mom went to town this morning & I met her. She bought me a present today. It was a [?] California Jigger coat.⁶ Is it pretty. I just love it.

Saturday, April 10 We washed this morning. Had a pretty big washing. Its kinda windy today. Berenice & kids were over today. This afternoon I went & got Mom a pint of ice cream, then I went to town. I saw Faber & Lois & I rode down with them. I went to the Crawford. Mom is eating over to Bens tonite.

⁶*The spring fashions for 1937 included Dress, Topper, and Jigger coats. The California Jigger was evidently one style of these lightweight, loose-fitting coats.*

Sunday, April 11 Well as usual didn't do much today on Sunday. Just got up, eat, cleaned up the house, read, and listened to the radio. Mama made some good pies today. Some blackberry & apple. Berenice, Ben & kids were over tonite to listen to the radio.

Monday, April 12 It certainly is a nice day. I ironed this morning. This afternoon I didn't have anything else to do so I took a walk. I didn't walk very far because my feet hurt. It sure was hot. Pop is digging a garden in the backyard. It sure was nice this evening.

Tuesday, April 13 I was sick last nite. I was up up [sic] several times. Don't feel so hot today. I started to walk to town with Mom but I came back, she went on to town to buy some things for Evelyn [Bonita's daughter]. It rained a little today. We got a letter from Bob & one from Bon today.

Wednesday, April 14 It sure is a swell spring day. Bonita sent me a package today. It had a ship toothpick holder, hanky, powder puff, wash rag and birthday card. I went to town today. I didn't do much. Just messed around then came home. Ben & Buddy were over this evening. Today's Evelyn's 12th birthday.

Thursday, April 15 Today's my 20th birthday. This morning I went to see about a job at 2915 E. Central as a carhop. Don't know whether I'll get it or not. I walked back home. Burdelle was over this morning & done her washing. I went to the show. Burdelle was over tonite.

[The carhop job did not materialize, and Belva continued to seek employment. Then, on April 25, her father became ill. Belva wrote that he suffered a "ruptured stomach," which required immediate operation and a long hospital convalescence. In the interim, Belva and her mother looked for work, and Belva joined the NYA program on May 10. The following diary entries illustrate Belva's NYA experience in a sewing room and at the YWCA swimming pool.]

Thursday, May 20 I went to work at 8:30 on the N.Y.A. and got off at 12. I got my check. It was \$3.85. Mom & I went to town, & I bought a pair of cute white shoes, & I bought Mom a pair of socks. I'm going to buy her something else. We bought some candy & Mom went to the

State & I went to the Crawford, & I met her at the bus depot, then we walked home.

Friday, May 21 Went to work as usual this morning. All we did was to sew rag strips together, to make rag rugs with. Came home & ate dinner, & washed my hair this afternoon. Mom went to town this afternoon. Boy it sure did rain this afternoon. I [?] in the rain so I walked out to the hospital to Papa. He's better. Thank goodness. I rode home in a cab. It sure rained a lot today. Mom saw Pearl today.

Saturday, May 22 Well to work again this morning & doing the usual thing. I've got a headache. After dinner Mom & I walked to town, we saw Pearl's mother on the way down. Mom & I messed around town a little, then came [*home*]. I took some things to eat over to Berenices's this evening. Berenice & Mrs. Mac were over tonite.

Sunday, May 23 I got up a little later this morning. Phillip stayed alnite last nite. Ben, Bud & Phillip were over today. This afternoon Mom, Boots & I went to town & went to the Wichita. When we got out we went over to K.F.H. [*radio*] to see & hear Colle[*e*]n Moore the movie actress & Bette got her autograph. Then we came home. We've all got headaches tonite.

Monday, May 24 Boy it sure did rain. I went to work this morning. We're working Mon. Tues. & Wed. instead of Thur. Fri & Sat. so we can get our time in. Mom is taking care of a little old sick lady on the alley. She was home for dinner. We got a card from Burdelle [*who had gone to Boulder, Colorado*] & she sent me a cute whatnot, & we got a letter from Bon & Evelyn. I went to town & got some knitting needles & a white purse for Evelyn, then we went out to see Papa. He was up today. I went over to Berenice's.

Tuesday, May 25 We're learning to knit at work. I don't know how to do it very good yet. We are also making curtains for their stage. I came home from work & cleaned up the house. I stayed home this afternoon. This evening Mrs. Mac came & said she wanted me to go with her tonite at the Forum for the North High graduation exercises for 1937. So we went tonite. When we got out we went to the Mo. Pacific & [?] where

Sewing rooms, like this one in Wyandotte County, provided some employment. Belva Lucas began working in a sewing room in late spring of 1937. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

Eddie Rogers was to see him. He said to me he wished we could have gotten better acquainted.

Wednesday, May 26 Today's the last day of work for this week. We sewed on curtains again today. I came home & ate then Mom went over to that lady's house. Then I walked to town, then I walked to the hospital to see Papa. He's lots better. It started raining as I was walking out. It's raining more this evening. I just love to have it rain.

Thursday, May 27 I stayed home all day today and cleaned up all the house. I wrote a card to Burdelle & Opal this afternoon. Today [is] the last day of school. Bette passed to the 9A. Berenice & kids were over today. Mom still taking care of the old lady. It sure was nice this morning. It was cloudy & quiet & so lovely.

Friday, May 28 Boy I'm sure tired tonite. I walked clear out to the hospital & back. Papa's coming home Sunday. It's hot today but nice. We got a letter from Burdelle & she sent us a lot of pictures of Boulder. Berenice & kids were over this morning. A man Leslie used to know was down to see Kenneth tonite. We have the Dionne Quintuplets on the radio. They're three yrs old today.⁷ Bob's going someplace tonite.

Saturday, May 29 Bob & I washed this morning. Mom is still taking care of that lady but today is her last day. This afternoon I went up town & went to the Crawford. I came home ate supper & after supper Mom, Boots & I walked up town. It rained a lot while we were up town & after we got home.

Sunday, May 30 Today's Decoration day. It has sure been a dull day. Didn't go anyplace all day, just nothing to do but lay around. Papa was supposed to come home today, but they said he wasn't strong enough. Ben & kids were over today. Bobbie caddied today I guess.

Monday, May 31 Today is a holiday too. I don't like two holiday in succession. This morning Phillip, Buddy & Bette went on a picnic. Another met them & went with them. They went in the morn. & didn't get back till evening. Mom & I went to the Wichita this afternoon. It was a good show but it sure was long.

Tuesday, June 1 I went to work this morning. We knitted some more, but I don't know how to do it very good yet. I came & ate dinner, then I went over & stayed with that lady while Mom went to town. Then I came over home, & Bob had got a car out on trial & he took me out for a ride. When Mama got off from work her & I went to the store.

Wednesday, June 2 Went to work & as usual didn't work very hard. Came home & ate dinner, then Bette and I took turns staying over at that lady's house while Mama went to town to get a permanent. We had to stay over there till after six. Mom got a good permanent. I got supper. Got a letter from Leslie.

⁷The Dionne Quintuplets, born in Canada, on May 28, 1934, were an international sensation. Likenesses of the Dionne quintts, all girls, were featured in advertising promotions, on calendars, on plates and cups, and paper dolls.

Thursday, June 3 Today the last day of work for this week. I've finally got on to the knitting. This afternoon I walked out to the hospital & back. I'm kinda tired. Bette cleaned up the house. It rained today. It's nice & cool, cooler than usual. Mom, Bob & I got our fortunes told today. A lady came to the house & told them.

Friday, June 4 I got my check today, \$7.35. Its the biggest pay check I ever got. I stayed with that lady this morning while Mama & Boots went to town. Then this afternoon Boots & I walked to town. I bought a cream colored suit, called a Travel Air suit & a few other things. Then we went to the Crawford. Ben's over tonite.

Saturday, June 5 Well I've had a pretty busy day today. I cleaned up the house this morning, then I went to town. I got some goods out that I had paid down on, & I also paid down on a cute 3 piece play suit, then I got a N.Y.A. card, I'd lost my other one, then I took a bus out to the hospital & I walked home, ate dinner, then I rinsed some clothes & hung them out. Mom & Boots went to town. Bob's gone too.

Sunday, June 6 It sure is a nice day. I got up about 8 o'clock. Ate breakfast cleaned the house, ate dinner, then Mom, Boots & I went to the Wichita. Boots didn't come home with us. I got a 10¢ candy bar & Mom & I ate that then we stopped at Armstrongs & got a great big milk shake. I went over to Berenice's tonite, & she came over here.

Monday, June 7 Boy I'm sure tired tonite. I went to work this morning & I knitted & my eyes hurt. There wasn't anybody home when I got home. I got my dinner, & stayed home the rest of the day. Mom came home about 4 o'clock. I wrote a letter to Bonita & Evelyn today. We burned Mrs. Mac's weeds today. Jean Harlow died today.⁸

Tuesday, June 8 Its raining tonite, in fact its been raining all day. I just love to have it rain. I went to work this morning. I'm starting on a red sweater. They asked down there this morning if someone wanted to work at the Y. W. & I said I did, & I went down, its at the swimming pool, but I don't want to work down there. [?] walked home this noon with a

⁸On June 7, 1937, movie actress Jean Harlow died of uremic poisoning at the age of twenty-six.

girl named Bette Livingstone. I went out to see Papa this afternoon. We got a letter from Bonita & Evelyn this afternoon.

Wednesday, June 9 I went to work this morning. We worked upstairs this morning. I'm still knitting on a sweater. Papa came home from the hospital. He's pretty good. He's able to be up & around. Ben, Berenice & kids were here today. Mama worked at the sewing room today. Bette & I walked to town & got some magazines. Mom's making some candy tonite. Its sure chilly. Did it ever rain hard early this morning.

Thursday, June 10 Its cloudy & cool today again as it has been for several days, & the sun hasn't shone for several days. I didn't go anyplace today. Mom worked today. I think its awful she has to work. The radio hasn't worked for about a week. I sure do miss it. Papa feels pretty good. We're sure having a hard time—nobody working, no money for anything. Oh hell.

[For the remainder of the year, Belva worked for the N.Y.A., and family life continued its routine. On Friday, December 31, Belva wrote: "This is the last day of 1937. It has been a pretty good year. We've had some bad luck and some good luck. . . ."]

Looking Back at the Red and Black, 1938

Liberty Memorial High School Yearbook

High school yearbooks provide a stroll through the past; often, that stroll is a look at how students dressed or a search for one particular name of a teacher or student. Yearbooks, however, can tell a great deal about the student population for a time period. The 1938 yearbook—the *Red and Black*—for Liberty Memorial High School, Lawrence, provides one such example with its two excerpts presented here. The first, a retrospective of the Class of '38 is, in hindsight, a poignant piece. Little did the graduates know that when they wrote of coping with the "difficulties which lie before us," they would face America's entry into World War II within four years.

The second excerpt was chosen for what it tells about the black experience. Population statistics compiled from 1915 to 1940 show that Lawrence's black population ranged from about 16 to 10 percent of the town's total residents of between 12,000 and 14,500 during the twenty-five-year period.¹ It is not surprising then, that the number of black students enrolled at Lawrence's Liberty Memorial High School were few in comparison to white students. What readers may find surprising, however, is the segregation that existed in the integrated high school. Separation of students by race is not apparent in a quick yearbook glance. Yet, closer examination shows that, while students were integrated in the classroom, they were segregated in extracurricular activities. Black students had their own basketball team (the Promoters) and all-black pep squad. (Lawrence was not alone; other town high schools followed the same segregation policy—as will be seen in the Simon Martinez memories of Topeka.) To illustrate the separation of black students as well as focus on the activities of one organization, the yearbook's write-up of the Clarence Cameron White Chorus was chosen.

Red and Black (1938 yearbook), Elizabeth M. Watkins Community Museum, Douglas County Historical Society, Lawrence, KS [hereinafter cited as Watkins, Douglas Co.].

¹"Population Statistics, Lawrence Population 1860–1990," information sheet, Watkins, Douglas Co.

IN RETROSPECT OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

The Senior Class of 1938 will long be remembered because of the widely diversified talents of its members and of the many honors they have brought to Liberty Memorial High School. It was in the fall of 1935 that this large group entered the portals of LMHS as happy-go-lucky sophomores,² to begin the life of the much envied high school student. . . .

It was not until our junior year that we graduates of 1938 gained our rightful place in the sun. We elected Albert Decker to the post of president and we dipped our fingers into the political and social life of LMHS. The Junior play was an instant success. LaDean Davis was "The Patsy", in that presentation. That year four juniors were initiated into Quill and Scroll, the honorary society for high school journalists. The debate team was made up of more juniors than seniors, and the season was very successful. In April, under the guiding hand of Ann Murray, the Junior Prom, a delightful nautical venture, proved to be one of the best LMHS has had for many years.

. . . In May [1938], a new and different Red and Black was issued at the annual signing party. The staff was an all-senior one. After a lively debate, the seniors decided to graduate in caps and gowns, by a vote of 113 to 76. The last week of school was filled with senior activities and the year was climaxed with the student-conducted Commencement exercises on May 27.

Our senior year, our last year in Liberty Memorial High School, will long remain in our hearts as the most enjoyable period of our life. Whether or not we are ready to cope with the difficulties which lie before us in the lives we choose for ourselves, depends upon the foundation we have received in high school. That foundation we know we have received. We only hope we can make our school as proud of us some day as we are proud of it now.

This year the senior class has diverged from the usual commencement routine and is presenting an all-student program. It will be in the nature of a court trial in which American society challenges the preparation and qualifications of the 1938 graduating class to enter civic life. There will be a judge, and the School Board will act as the jury. The prosecuting

²Although freshmen attended classes at the high school, they were considered junior high students.

attorney will be Charles Springer, County Attorney, and he will present the charges.

Edwin Price, senior class president, will act as the defense attorney and will call on members of the class as witnesses.

An essay contest determined the five students who are to speak. The topics are: 1. Hereditary Strength and Physical Security. 2. Participation in an Evolving Culture. 3. An Active and Flexible Personality and Mental Security. 4. Suitable Occupations and Economic Security. 5. Freedom and Equality of Opportunity. The five students chosen were: Emily Wray, David Watermulder, Albert Decker, David Whitney, and Jean Aszman.

After these talks, the School Board will retire and later render their verdict upon the case. It is believed that this type of commencement program will not only be interesting to the onlookers but informative as well. Marston McCluggage, the senior sponsor, has spent a great deal of time upon this year's Commencement; and it will be the last one he will be connected with as he will take a position in the K.U. [*University of Kansas*] faculty next fall. The other sponsors who helped in picking the student speakers were Miss Lorimer, Mr. Emmett, and Mr. Graber.

THE CLARENCE CAMERON WHITE CHORUS

The Clarence Cameron White Chorus was organized during the year of 1929, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Adelia Miller. It consisted of girls belonging to the O.B.A. Club and boys belonging to the Promoter's Basket Ball Team. This chorus was to devote most of its time to singing spirituals. During the last few years songs other than spirituals have been studied. The chorus gives an annual spring party. There are thirty-six members, twenty-two girls and fourteen boys. The officers are Daniel Mitchell, President; Arthur Standfield, Vice-President; Bertha Garrett, Secretary; Thomas Mitchell, Treasurer, and Richard Beahm is the accompanist.

Clarence Cameron White is a composer and is the greatest Negro violinist. He was born August 10, 1880, in Clark[s]ville, Tennessee. At present, he is the director of music at Hampton Institute, Hampton, West Virginia.³ Some of his most noted compositions are "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child", "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen", and "I'm Troubled in Mind".

³*This is a misprint; Hampton Institute, now Hampton University, is located at Hampton, Virginia.*

Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas, had state approval to operate as an all-black high school. These photographs show the school's band in 1937 and the yearbook staff in 1941. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

Each year the chorus presents an assembly program for the school, and other programs for various churches and forums. This spring it presented a broadcast over KFKU [*radio*]. It is the custom of the group to open each program with the Negro National Hymn. The songs sung this year have been spirituals taken from the group arranged by William Henry Smith, and one classical number "Today There is Ringing", by Christianson, which many said was the best number.

This year the group has accomplished something that for several years the others have not been able to do; to sing A Cappella.

Life outside the Barrio: Simon Martinez Interview [1939–1941]

At the turn of the century, large numbers of Mexicans left their home areas and came to Kansas, settling in such places as Kansas City, Emporia, Garden City, and Topeka. Work was generally found in packinghouses and with the railroads, particularly the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. Among these new immigrants were the parents of Simon Martinez, who was born and raised in North Topeka. Just entering his teen years at the end of the 1930s and attending high school in the 1940s, Simon Martinez presents one view of life in Kansas. As an adult, Martinez was deputy director for the Poverty Program in Topeka, served as a CIO representative on the first Governor's Conference on Civil Rights, and has been active in the GI Forum, a Hispanic veterans group. For a number of years he worked for a salvage company, traveling the United States. In some ways, his experiences are atypical from those of other Hispanics. The Martinez family, for example, did not live in the Mexican community, the barrio. In other ways, however, his experiences were replicated many times in the lives of other Mexican-Americans who faced various forms of discrimination—relegated, for example, to the balcony of theaters or denied service in restaurants except for carry-out “sack service.” For Simon Martinez, the teenage years were a mix of work, school, friendships, and discovery. In this interview, he talks about his life with humor and strong conviction.

Martinez: I was born May 21, 1927, in North Topeka. Both my parents came from Mexico. My father came to the United States and was in Texas for awhile. In Mexico he had his own business with wagons—horses and wagons—and that's what he did when he first came to this country

Printed with permission of Simon Martinez, Topeka, Kansas.

This studio portrait of a Hispanic group was made in 1920 at Junction City. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries—Pennell Collection)

in Texas. He went back to Mexico for some reason and then came back and ended up in Topeka. Broke. So he went to work for the railroad.

The amazing thing, as far as I'm concerned, is he didn't go into the Mexican community that was known in Topeka at that time. The Mexican community was surrounded around the Santa Fe Railroad shops. My dad came over to North Topeka and went to work for the Union Pacific, which at that time had no Mexicans working. He bought a home, and we were raised here in North Topeka. I didn't know what it was to run around with Hispanics because there were none over here. The Hispanic community was two or three miles distance. We didn't have transportation.

Holt: Was not being in the Hispanic community a disadvantage?

Martinez: Not at that time. I was brought up in a neighborhood that was a very, very mixed neighborhood. Blacks, whites, Indians, and just us as Hispanics. I was accepted by the kids I was born and raised with. No problem. I didn't start feeling really problems as far as discrimination was concerned until I went to high school.

Let me go back. When my mother and father went to enroll us in school, back in those days they had black grade schools, white grade schools. There was a black grade school two blocks from where I lived. My mother didn't care about color. She wanted us to have an education. She tried to enroll us in that black school. They said, "No way." We had to go eight blocks farther north to an all-white school, and I had to fight my way through the black neighborhood to go to the white school in the mornings and then in the evenings. It didn't bother me then because I didn't think of discrimination. I didn't realize this until afterwards. That was one of the—I shouldn't say frustrating because it wasn't really frustrating—I just couldn't understand why I couldn't go to that one school.

Then, when you went to junior high from grade school, the junior highs were integrated. Just the grade schools—the first six grades—were segregated.

I ran around with blacks, whites, and Indians. There were no Mexican girls in the area. I didn't go steady with any girl until I went to high school, and that's when it really hit me. The Mexican kids in Topeka and even today—this is one of my pet peeves—the Catholic church, the Hispanic Catholic church here has the only, what I consider, segregated school in Topeka. They're all 99 percent Hispanics that go to that grade school. When I went to Topeka High, because I was not raised with the Hispanics, they didn't accept me. I was an outsider to them.

Holt: Did that surprise you?

Martinez: It was a very, very big surprise to me. I couldn't figure out why, and these Hispanic students who came out of the Catholic school segregated themselves. This to me was really frustrating. It was really frustrating. I couldn't understand why. Even to this day, the Hispanic community over in Oakland really doesn't accept us that we're not born and raised in the *barrio* with them. It still happens.

Holt: You spoke Spanish?

Martinez: Right. Keep one thing in mind. The kids that were there at the same time I went to high school, since they were all in that one particular school, they had an accent. I didn't. This was very evident. Not only for me. There were other Hispanic kids who went to the public schools from other areas of the city that were in the same boat I was in, and it was really frustrating for us. There were about twenty Hispanics in each grade of school. I would try to date a girl, you know. I would go up and ask her for a date—a Hispanic girl—they'd turn me away.

Holt: Did you not attend the Catholic church in Oakland?

Martinez: Oh, yes. We went to the church [*Our Lady of Guadalupe*] because that was a National church at the time. It was only for Hispanics and everybody in the city of Topeka who was Catholic was registered with that church. That's changed now even though it's still a National church. They still have their own school over there. Keep one thing in mind. There are two Catholic churches over there within a matter of five blocks, and they both have grade schools. The Hispanic school, even though they're living in the other area where the white church is, they're still going to the Catholic church at Our Lady of Guadalupe. I've said it—I've always said it—that's a segregated school.

Holt: Were there good high school experiences?

Martinez: I had very, very good experiences. I can never recall a teacher in high school discriminating. I can't. I feel that I wasn't counseled properly by the teachers because the profession I wanted to go into was a machinist and drafting. That was what I had looked forward to study, and I got my machinist training in high school. I got my mathematics. I got all the training that I needed for what I wanted to do, but nobody ever told me that "Simon, you can't find a job in that profession in the city of Topeka." And I couldn't. I'm a machinist by trade. I've never, outside the time I spent in the Navy, I have never practiced my trade because there were no jobs available here because of the color of my skin. I went to Cleveland, Ohio, and I worked as a machinist. I went back to school, and no problems. But here, those were the problems I encountered as far as education was concerned.

Holt: Describe an average day of school.

Martinez: The first year of high school, I had eight subjects—which was the normal. I had English, mathematics, history, science, physical education, and the normal subjects a kid would have. I had no problems. I was accepted by the majority of the kids—except my own people. I did have fun. I ran around with different nationalities as far as blacks, whites, Indians, but very little interactivity among the Hispanic student body.

Holt: Were there separate social activities for Hispanic students?

Martinez: No. The only activities that were segregated were black king and queen, white king and queen, the white prom, and the black prom.

Holt: Where did you fit in?

Martinez: We fit in—the blacks couldn't go to the whites', the whites couldn't go to the blacks'. The Hispanics could go to both of them. Now that's the way it was.

Holt: Were Hispanics allowed to participate in sports?

Martinez: Yes. I didn't. I had to work because my parents couldn't afford my bus fare, my meals, everything in high school. I worked in a shoe repair shop from 2:00 in the afternoon until 5:00 in the evenings and then all day Saturday. I worked for, I think it was, seven dollars a week. It paid my bus fare to school when I took the bus and paid for my meals. That's the reason I didn't participate in school, and then I was too small for basketball. Too small for football. The sport that I excelled in was in track, but I just didn't have time.

Holt: You were the oldest of the boys in your family. Did that add to your responsibilities?

Martinez: There were two boys. I was not the oldest of the family. I had three sisters that were older than I was. But even after my parents died and my brothers and sisters were married and had their own families, when they had decisions to make such as buying a house or going into debt for this or that, they'd still come to me for advice. This was my heritage. This is the way I was brought up. The responsibility always fell

on the oldest of the boys, irregardless of whether he was number one or number fifteen.

Holt: Your parents wanted you to have an education?

Martinez: Oh, definitely. That was their main purpose. Another thing they taught us—buy your own home. That was their main objective for us to have our own place to live. They didn't believe in renting. Even if it's a shack—buy it. It's yours.

Holt: Was the depression a great burden for your family?

Martinez: No. We had our own home. My father raised hogs. We always had a cow, and my mother raised chickens. My dad worked for the railroad. He might only work three or four days during that time, but he had—maybe not the best—but he always had enough for us to eat and enough clothes on our back.

I was going to tell you about the suit. When I graduated from junior high, I had no jacket. The only kid without one. My parents couldn't afford it. It really affected me. To this day, when I travel, I wear a suit. I must have twenty suits back there [*in the closet*].

I tell one story. There used to be a boy that went to school with me—a white boy—in grade school here. He would come up to me, "Simon, can I go home and play with you tonight?" "Yea, come on over!" He'd come over to the house from school. He wouldn't go home. We'd go home from school together. We'd be out there playing, and my mother would call us all in for supper. Well, Oscar came in and sat down with us. Just like one of the family because he was such a good friend of mine. After I came back from the Service, I ran into him one day. I asked Oscar then, "Oscar, how come you always wanted to come over to my house to play?" He said, "Simon, you know sometimes that week, the only full meal I would have that week is when I went over to your house to play. I knew your mother would feed me one complete meal." That was during the depression days, and it had never dawned on me why he wanted to go home with me all the time. After he explained it to me, I could understand why.

My mother was the kind of person who never turned anybody down. I can remember back in those days on the railroad. We lived right next to the tracks, and the freight trains would stop and these guys that were

bummin' all over the country would stop and ask for a glass of water or a sandwich. My mother never did turn them down. She once told me, "Simon, whatever you do, don't ever turn down a glass of water or sandwich for somebody that comes and knocks at your door because you never know that some day one of your kids may be wanting some help." She helped everybody in the neighborhood that way.

When my dad died, a gentleman from Chicago flew in for my dad's funeral. I didn't remember the man. He came up afterwards and said, "I had to come to your dad's funeral because when your dad would butcher hogs, he wouldn't butcher one or two, he'd butcher three, four, or five. He'd call his friends in to help butcher, and he would divide the meat and send home everybody with a quarter of a hog, half a hog, or whatever. There was many a day if it hadn't been for what your father gave us, my family would've gone hungry. I had to come to his funeral to pay my last respects." I was very fortunate. My dad always worked.

His one wish was to go back to Mexico one more time [*after he retired*], but he never got a chance. My mother came over when she was a teenager, and she wanted to go back to Mexico so in 1957 her and I went back there. We spent about a month. I took her back to where the path she took when she came to the United States. We went back looking for friends of hers. We found some of her friends, and she was like a little child again. I'm glad I took her back.

Holt: I read an interview where you mentioned skipping school. Did you do that?

Martinez: Yes, I did that. This was in my second year of high school. I took a machinist course so in the second year of high school I only had three subjects. Math, English—which were required subjects—and then four hours of machine shop. That was it. That was the course we had here at Topeka High. I would get my work done. I'd be doing something in machine shop, and while I was turning down a piece of metal or something I'd set the machine and then I'd study my English or math. I'd have the next day's material all done, and so if I'd feel like it, I'd skip school.

Holt: What did you do when you were skipping?

Martinez: I wouldn't come home. We'd go down on the river, go fishing. Go steal watermelons. We didn't have drinking habits or smoking habits.

We'd run around uptown. Go to the movies in the afternoon, then come home. Didn't have automobiles.

Holt: Were any of the movies in Spanish?

Martinez: No. There were no Spanish movies here, and at that time in all the theaters, all the Hispanics and the blacks had to sit in the balcony. You couldn't go into a restaurant to eat. Had signs on the door that said "Served in Sack Only."

Holt: Did things like that limit what you could do on a date?

Martinez: You could go to a movie. Go to Gage Park. There wasn't really that much activity for youngsters. Keep one thing in mind. It was right at

Providing construction jobs and then a source of recreation, the Giant Slide in Topeka's Gage Park was a New Deal project. (Courtesy Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

the end of the depression. Most of the kids had to work, and so consequently we didn't have free hours that most kids have today. We had homework galore, and we did it.

Holt: If someone got in trouble, would he be expelled from high school?

Martinez: Definitely. Let me tell you what I did one time. This was in junior high. I took a bar of soap and I cut it up in little cubes. Got each little cube of soap and filled it with red hot ground pepper then dipped it in chocolate. Went the next day and gave it to the girls as candy. The principal paddled my hiney and sent me home. Expelled! And my daddy then did the same thing.

Holt: What did you have to do to get back in?

Martinez: Oh, I had to pray! I had to get on my hands and knees to that principal and them teachers. I was ornery. I got expelled three or four times. I did some ornery things, but that was the worst thing I could think of anybody doing. I did it to get even with one girl. That was the reason I did it. She was the first one I gave the chocolate to. Then, the other girls wanted some too, and it was too late for me to back down. They expelled me from school, and I went outside. This was an old brick building. I went outside and got a gallon can. I filled it full of paper and leaves and little sticks. Set it on fire and went up and put it next to the schoolhouse.

Got expelled when I was in the second grade. For drinking. Used to be a lady that made cherry wine, and we'd go by her house. In those days, we didn't have city water. We had the old pumps. Down in the bottom of the pumps they kept the butter and cheese and everything. I went to drink water at the pump one afternoon and I looked down and there were these bottles of homemade cherry wine. Simon took one. The boys' bathroom at school was right across the hall from my room. Well, I went in there and I stuck it down where they used to throw the paper towels. Every once in a while I'd raise my hand and tell the teacher I had to go to the bathroom. I'd go to the bathroom and drink some of that cherry wine. About the third or fourth time, I came into the room I guess walking like this [*a wavy motion*]. Teacher knew something was wrong so she sent the janitor to watch me. They caught me drinking that wine.

Holt: But you did well in school.

Martinez: Yes, I did. Did well at Topeka High and went to the Navy. But I did not graduate.

Holt: Why?

Martinez: Like I said, I was raised outside the Hispanic community. My girlfriends normally were either white or Indian. I was running around with this white girl. Back in those days, if a Mexican ran around with a white girl, the white girl was no good. If a Mexican girl ran around with a white guy, the Mexican girl was no good. This is the way we were brought up to believe, and you couldn't change my mother's mind. This one day the girl came up to the house, knocked on the door, and my mother answered the door and she cussed that girl up one side and down the other. That made me mad, and my mother and I got into an argument. I knew that I couldn't live with that. I knew that I was going to have to go into the Service sooner or later, and I didn't want to go into the Army so I talked my dad into signing a release for me to go into the Navy. Went into the Navy when I was seventeen years old. That's the reason I did not finish high school.

Holt: But you finished your education in the Navy?

Martinez: Right. After that I came back to Topeka and I couldn't find a job. You've probably read that the only job a Mexican could have was in the packinghouses or in the railroads. Now that's what I went through. I worked for the Union Pacific. I was an assistant foreman. I got mad at one of the foremen there. The next day I went to work for Hill packing company, the only other place where a Mexican could get a job. I worked there and then one morning I said, "I'm getting nowhere fast." I quit. The next day I was in Cleveland, Ohio. I went to work as a mill machine operator for a big manufacturing company, and in 1948 I was drawing \$2.05 an hour, which was big money. Big money. I enrolled at Case Institute of Technology and worked full time nights and went to school days for almost two years. My dad got sick and I had to come back because my dad, they said, was dying. My wife and I, by that time, we'd been engaged. When I came back, I went to see her. We decided to get married. She didn't want to leave her parents, and I could understand

that so I stayed here in Topeka and went back to work in the packing-house. Thirty-five cents an hour! \$2.05 down to .35 an hour! Then I left to work in the Poverty Program.

Holt: What is the strongest memory from your teenage years?

Martinez: I went to the Service when I was seventeen years old because of an argument with my mother. I found myself in the Service. I cried like a baby. Lonesome. And I think that was one of the things that I really regret. I don't regret the Service. I regret the reason I went in. That's one of the main things I'll never forget. I found myself alone. I knew my mother loved me. I've always known that. She thought she was doing what was best for me. I understand that, and I remember that so much.

Holt: Any other thoughts?

Martinez: With my grandkids and kids, I tell them, "Be a leader, not a follower." That's one thing I've told my kids always.

*“Life on
Mississippi Street”:
Doris Brewster
Swift Diary and Memories
[1940–1941]*

Doris Brewster Swift's book series Life on Mississippi Street is an engaging combination of excerpts from her diaries, those kept by family members—especially her mother—and Swift's reminiscences. The portions from Life on Mississippi Street, The Depression Years, 1932–1941, presented here, are from 1940–1941 when Doris Brewster was a senior at Liberty Memorial High School in Lawrence. Excited about her activities in journalism, art, and choral and theatrical productions, she, nevertheless, looked forward to being a coed at the University of Kansas, where her father, Ray Brewster, was a professor named, in 1940, to head the Chemistry Department. Doris's diary entries combined with those of her mother provide an intergenerational view of family—including Doris's sisters Nita and Ina May—friends, and personal life. On some days mother and daughter reported on the same events; at other times, they recounted their own separate activities. With Doris's reminiscences added, the view is enhanced and includes everything from her infatuation with the opposite sex to reports on events in other parts of the world. To distinguish between diary entries by mother and daughter and to identify the added memories, the diary of Doris's mother, Fay Brewster, is set in underlines; entries from Doris's diary are not. The additional commentary following entries is set in parentheses.

1940

December 24, Tuesday. A warm day so Grandpa and Grandma drive up in the afternoon. We get a number of things ready to take to Ray's family for Christmas. Drive to Haskell to see the lights.

Doris Brewster Swift, Life on Mississippi Street, The Depression Years, 1932–1941 (Tulsa, OK: The author, 1993). Reprinted with permission of Doris Brewster Swift.

... Decorated the tree after supper and drove around to see all the Christmas lights.

(The Christmas for the needy family [*father's Christmas charity*] was delivered before we went on our tour to see the Christmas lights. ... Our tree was brought in from the front porch and bedecked with the baubles that were hung on it year after year. Mother preserved her tree decorations so carefully that I have some of the glass balls which graced the first tree they had after their marriage in 1919. I wouldn't think of decorating a tree without including those ornaments.)

December 25, Wednesday. Warm day. We have some things around the fire place early in the morning. Howard, Ina, Joe and Laurine get here at the same time at 9:45. We enjoyed our tree and also our dinner. Rains late in the afternoon.

(Grandpa and Grandma were already there, but we still had to wait on people to arrive. My most vivid memories of Christmas mornings are watching out the dining room windows for the rest of the family to arrive. Mother tried to keep us busy in order to take our minds off the vacant street, but it didn't work. However, I came to believe her adage, "Watched pots never boil.")

... Pauline here in the evening. Got money mainly. A swell day. Ina May got a Shirley Temple doll and case. I gave the folks chimes for the door bell.

(No more ordinary buzzer, we would have melodious chimes whenever a visitor came to our door.)

December 26, Thursday. Doris, Nita, and I go to town. Doris buys her radio at Hanna's. I get a lot of remnants. Go to town in the afternoon with Mrs. Shafer to look for coats. She buys one for Marcia.

Bought an Emerson radio for myself in the morning. Played Honeymoon Bridge with Jane all evening.

(My Christmas money had been sufficient to buy the radio I wanted. It cost \$15 at the after-Christmas sale. It sat on my desk and I could listen without concern for what Daddy was doing in the study. It was a wonderful radio and served me for about twenty-five years. Eventually we were unable to find a replacement when one of the tubes burned out. ...)

This Brewster family photograph shows Nita Agnes, Dr. Ray Q. Brewster, Ina May, Ida Fay Brewster, and Doris Brewster. (Courtesy Doris Brewster Swift)

December 29, Sunday. Doris stays home from church. The rest of us go. Helen and Dick [Keene] come over in the evening. We listen to President Roosevelt's speech on help to England.

(England was in desperate shape. During the year of 1940, Hitler had sent his armies crashing through western Europe. On May 10, 1940, his troops plunged into Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, which fell in one day. The Netherlands gave up the fight in five days, but Belgium fought on until May 28, when King Leopold III surrendered his army and became a prisoner of war. . . . Never did I visualize the picture I have found of Roosevelt making one of his chats. He is seated at a desk in his shirt sleeves, with three microphones to the right of his script. The microphones could be mistaken for candlestick telephones except for the network label on top of each one. The networks were the National Broadcasting System, Columbia Broadcasting System, and the Mutual Broadcasting System. . . . This particular evening he called upon the American people to rally to the aid of our beleaguered ally. His plea fell upon receptive ears, for it wouldn't be long until we would be "Knittin' for Britain" and "Bundles for Britain" would be reaching the British shores for distribution to people in dire need. Our isolationism was fast coming to an end.)

December 31, Tuesday. In the evening Ray and I figured up bills for the month and plan for next years accounts. Doris and Nita sit up at Elbel's. Rains during the night.

Jane, Joann, Nita and I saw the New Year in. We only stayed until 12. Didn't have as much fun as last year.

(I had fun, but it would have been better if Frank, Bert, or Bob Elbel had been part of the festivities. My lack of enthusiasm was untypical. This time it wasn't dark thoughts about what might lay ahead, reflections on the events in Europe during the past year, nor was it the company. I could have as much fun with the three listed as I could with anyone. It was a manifestation of my feelings of inadequacy where the opposite sex was concerned. Here I was. Seventeen years old and I hadn't even been kissed. At times thoughts that I would never have a real boy friend assailed me and put me into a depressed state that might last for the overwhelmingly long period of as much as an hour. However, the prospects of all the activities that lay ahead for the remaining months of my senior year and the knowledge that by next New Year's Eve I would be a coed at K.U. buoyed my floundering spirits. . . .)

1941

(The rain continued throughout the day, which was a dreary beginning for the year. Maybe it was an omen, but I doubt it. On the rainy New Year's Day, I ate dinner with Ruth Leigh, we helped serve at the [*Reverend Howard*] Koelb's open house, then went to the movies in the evening. On the next two days Mother and Mrs. Rankin were occupied with Girl Scout business, working on annual reports, attending luncheons, etc. In the evenings Mother had dinner parties and Daddy entertained by showing his color slides. It was life as usual on the home front, but we weren't far into the new year until the war clouds moved closer.)

January 3, Friday. Went to Fern's [*Stranathan*] tea in the afternoon. Mary and Winston here in the evening. Part of the National Guard left for a years training taking a number of my friends from high school.¹

¹*Although those called up in the National Guard activation were supposed to be gone for only one year, America's entry into World War II in December 1941 meant that these National Guardsmen were in the military for war's duration.*

(... The National Guard was an easy source of money for boys who were old enough to join. Several members of our high school class had enlisted in order to have pocket money for dates. It came as a shock when they were activated and not able to return for the spring semester of their senior year.

My life changed because of the National Guard, but it occurred after the war. I was working in Tulsa as a geologist when the sister of one of my house-mates called to ask if I would go to the officers' dance at the National Guard Armory on Saturday evening. One of the officers didn't have a date and he didn't dance, but she promised all the other men in their group would dance with me. I had intended to go bowling, but decided the dance would be more fun.

She was right about my date. He was shy and didn't dance. True to her word, the other men kept me on the dance floor and I had a ball. At the close of the evening he took me to my door while the couple who provided the transportation waited in the car. He turned to leave, then suddenly asked if he could call me some time. I gave him my phone number, which wasn't in the phone book under my name. He thanked me for a nice evening and returned to the car. I was convinced that was the last I'd ever see of him—he didn't even repeat the number to see if he had it right. At work on Monday, when I was telling a friend about the evening, I couldn't remember his name. The closest I could come was Paul Quick.

I was wrong on both counts. He called and I've been Mrs. Paul Swift for the past forty-three years. One Saturday as we were going to Lawrence on the Santa Fe train in order for him to meet my family, he took a scrap of paper out of his billfold. He had written my phone number on it as soon as he had reached the car. "I don't think I'll need this any more," he said. . . .)

January 5, Sunday. The last of the National Guard stationed here leave tomorrow. Did a physics experiment with Pauline in the afternoon. Mary Elizabeth Hurt here for dinner with Nita.

(Victor Hurt, the new football coach at K.U., had two daughters. Nita and Mary Elizabeth were the same age. Vera Margaret Hurt was a year younger than I. She sometimes went out with Pauline Rankin, Ruth Leigh and me after the Sunday evening Young People's meeting. We seldom went straight home, especially if we had a car. We usually stopped at the Hillside Drug Store for a coke. Even though Vera Margaret was new in

town, she introduced us to a wonderful pork tenderloin sandwich that was the specialty of a little joint on West 6th Street.)

January 6, Monday. I fix over an old skirt of Laurine's for Nita. Wash it and it looks fine. Is a snowy bad day.

School started again. It snowed all day.

(It had been so long since Mother mentioned remodeling the cast offs of our relatives I thought she had abandoned the practice. Guess not. Nita had a "new" pre-owned skirt. . . . Neither Mother nor I mentioned the speech given by President Roosevelt to Congress on January 6. It may not have been broadcast in the evening when we would have heard it, but the populace of the country was well informed about the contents. He asked Congress to formulate and enact laws allowing him to supply war materials to countries fighting the Axis powers, or to any country whose defense we felt important to our national security. In the speech he listed the basic rights of men, which have become known as the Four Freedoms. . . .)

January 7, Tuesday. Rose Marie [domestic help] is here but does not feel well. No club in the afternoon. I go to town with Mrs. Shafer and buy some plaid material for Nita and Ina May. Ina May builds a snow man.

I'm singing with the A Capella Choir this week in preparation for a clinic on Friday.

(My schedule made it impossible for me to be a regular member of the choir during my senior year.)

January 8, Wednesday. . . . I sew on Nita's green plaid skirt.

Stayed in Physics 2nd hour instead of going to journalism. Went up on the hill to practice for a clinic on Friday during 4th hour.

(. . . Physics was a tough course as taught by Mr. Cunningham and it required a great deal of effort to make a good grade. One day we had to determine what portion of a horsepower we had. One foot-pound equals one pound raised one foot. Horsepower is defined as 550 foot-pounds of work per second. We were weighed before we made a timed dash up four flights of stairs. Our weight times the height of the stairs was divided by

the elapsed number of seconds. This result was divided by 550 to figure our horsepower. Most of us scarcely qualified as a partial pony. . . .)

January 9, Thursday. A lovely day. Finish Nita's skirt. Ina May wants her plaid one, too. Take Nita to town and buy her a green shirt to go with her plaid skirt and she thinks she's all fixed.

After school walked to town with Pauline. On the way home at noon Frank and Claire cut up deluxe. He tried to kiss her but failed. (I was jealous. He never paid that kind of attention to me.)

January 10, Friday. . . . Ina May said, "I'd like to read as well as Jane Holtzclaw." I told her to bring more books home to read. She said, "Oh, well. Jane doesn't have anyone to play with like I do so she spends more time reading."

(Ina May and I suffered from a common ailment. We would like to excel, but were never willing to spend the time required. We were too easily distracted by fun and games with our friends.)

Sang in the K.U. Music Clinic. Went to the Rosedale game with Pauline. They won 27-13. About all I saw was John Jakosky. Is he ever cute! (My infatuation, as always, was totally one sided. He never knew I existed.)

January 11, Saturday. Ray goes to a conference in Topeka. I walk in the morning. Rose Marie has the flu. Nita goes to meet Miss Warner the Girl Scout itinerant director. Ray and I go to Elbel's for a while in the evening.

Finished up the semesters Physics Experiments in the morning down at High School. Went to town in the afternoon with Jane. Played bridge with Jane and Barbara in the evening.

(Since no fourth is listed, we played our three-handed version in which each player bid his own hand and hoped the cards in the dummy would be beneficial. It wasn't a serious game. It helped us develop our playing skills even though it did nothing to improve our bidding expertise.)

January 12, Sunday. A lovely day. . . . Ina May went roller skating all afternoon.

(Lawrence had a new business—a skating rink. I would have preferred an ice skating arena, but the roller rink had a better chance for success. My objection to it was the enforced counter-clockwise traffic flow. Roller skates were not equipped to do figures as they are now. The limitations didn't bother Ina May and her friends, but I felt it was beneath me.)

Instead of going to church, Pauline, Nathan [*Mendenhall*] and I stayed down stairs and talked. [*Mother's*] Uncle George and Aunt Gertrude here in the afternoon for awhile.

(It became increasingly common for us to skip church. The usual three-some was Pauline Rankin, Ruth Leigh, and me. We were conspicuously present when the service ended; but during the 11 o'clock hour, we frequently walked to the Round Corner Drug Store for a candy bar, then talked in Rankin's car.)

January 15, Wednesday. Stayed in art after school. Started the Senior write up for the annual in the evening.

February 16, Sunday. Ray stays home in the morning. Has to go to Independence, Kansas, tomorrow night to make a speech and was tired after his party last night. Doris went to "Gone with the Wind" again in the afternoon. She ate downtown so as to be first in line.

(We wanted the front row center seats in the balcony. Time was of the essence and a trip home for dinner would have jeopardized our position at the front of the line. I didn't believe in taking chances with something as important as my favorite movie.)

Saw Gone with the Wind again with Jane and Phyllis. It was wonderful. Played duets with Daddy in the evening.

(The day at home gave Daddy time to be sufficiently relaxed by evening to enjoy playing duets with me. I would scoot over on the piano bench, which placed Daddy at the treble side of the keyboard. . . . We frequently used Everybody's Favorite Duets for Children and could manage a fair rendition of most of the classic selections. . . .)

March 25, Tuesday. Went to see Andy Hardy's Private Secretary with Ruth, Polly and Gloria [*Goff*]. We collected money for Greek relief. Mother and Daddy went to Hope, Kansas.

In Lawrence, teenagers had a choice of theaters, including the Dickinson. In 1940 it drew attention with the "world premiere" of Dark Command. Lawrence was the perfect premiere site since the film recounted the exploits of William Quantrill, who raided the town in 1863. (Courtesy Elizabeth Watkins Community Museum, Lawrence, Kansas)

(Greece tried to maintain neutrality when the war began in 1939, but Premier Benito Mussolini of Italy demanded the use of Greek military bases in the fall of 1940. The Greek commander refused and Italian forces were sent into Greece. The Greek Army pushed the attackers into Albania, but then Hitler sent German troops to the aid of the Italians. There was a flurry of effort in this country to collect money to assist the Greeks in their struggle. My friends and I gladly did our part, but it was too little, too late. The Germans invaded Greece on April 6, 1941, and the country was quickly overrun. . . .)

March 27, Thursday. Gave Jazz and Minuet at an evening program at the High School. I'm sorry to be about finished with the play.

March 28, Friday. Gave Jazz and Minuet in dramatics contest. We took first division against tough competition from the prison play from Russell, Kansas.

(I have never understood how our romantic fantasy could have rated better than the emotionally draining play set on death row. The action occurred during the final hours before the electrocution of one of the cast members. Dramatic lighting effects, to indicate the execution had taken place, marked the conclusion of the drama. It made a more lasting impact on me than the play on which I had spent many hours. . . .)

April 13, Sunday. Nita feels terribly miserable. She has tonsillitis and not mumps. Ray and Doris go to Sunday School and church. Doris sings in the choir. The Koelb's bring Nita an Easter lily.

A rainy Easter. . . . Had ice cream molds for dinner.

(Our Easter tradition was celebrated for the last time. The molded ice cream lilies and rabbits were one of the many little extravagances that were felt to be too frivolous during the war years. Mother abandoned the special treat we associated with Easter for the duration. After the war they were prohibitively expensive.)

April 14, Monday. Dr. Sisson comes again. We had worried about the measles coming out again. The Dr. says it can't be the measles—must be scarlet fever. Make a test to find out. Ray goes to the Haynes' to stay.

. . . The quarantine is a month.

(Daddy hastily packed and moved out to avoid the quarantine the rest of us faced. It was not a happy day. My memory failed again. I would have sworn I had to stay home six weeks—it seemed that long. It was an interminable sentence at a time in my life when I hated to miss the activities at high school. My work on the annual was nearly completed, but I missed working on the finishing touches.

SCARLET FEVER was written in large black letters on the red banner affixed to our house beside the front door. Nita was the only one of us who became ill. . . . In 1941 there were no miracle drugs with which to treat the streptococcus-like infection. . . . I know nothing of the disease first hand, for Nita was kept in isolation upstairs and that was where Mother spent a good portion of her time in the days that followed. Only Mother was allowed on the second floor.)

April 15, Tuesday. Doctor comes at noon and the test on Nita shows positive. We are busy telephoning everyone that we have scarlet fever.

Doctor calls in the evening and says Ray may come home to sleep but may not get near Nita. We all slept fine that night.

Nita really has it. Daddy gets to come home and attend school just the same. I'm here for a month. Darn it!

April 21, Monday. Doris and I dig some dandelions each day. Nita comes down for lunch but is glad to get back to her bed.

Finished the second page of my paper dolls.² Started reading Gone with the Wind for the 6th time.

April 22, Tuesday. Nita comes down at noon and also at night. The Doctor says she mustn't kiss Ray but otherwise she can see him.

(Nita's total isolation was coming to an end and we were all glad. It meant the quality of our life was going to improve.)

... Dug dandelions in the morning. One of the kids sat on a page of my paper dolls and wrinkled them.

April 23, Wednesday. It's dandelion day on the hill. Ray digs all morning. In the afternoon he goes to town and sends us a new Frigidaire.

First annual dandelion digging day on the hill. Daddy dug. In the afternoon he went down town and bought a new ice box for Mother. Is it ever swell.

(Our first electric refrigerator was purchased in 1928 as a surprise for Mother while she was in the hospital following Nita's birth. The old refrigerator plus \$150 provided us with a new model. Daddy paid half the amount and wrote a check for the remainder in May. . . . The new refrigerator was larger and much fancier. The crisper drawers and the small freezing compartment made it a marvel.

I dug [*dandelions*] too, but in our front lawn. I could hear the loud speaker [*on the Hill*] as the totals turned in by the various organizations were announced. No one was keeping a tally on my harvest, but it was sizable. Dandelions were, and still are a problem in the spring. Before the

²*Doris hoped to have her paper doll designs accepted for publication; an earlier set had been rejected by a publisher, but she still looked for success.*

*Doris Brewster's senior year picture.
(Courtesy Doris Brewster Swift)*

advent of potent herbicides, they virtually took over lawns. The university declared war on the colorful weeds. A holiday from classes was declared, teams were formed, and the contest raged most of the day. It would have been more fun digging with friends, but I vicariously enjoyed the event as I crawled over our yard extracting the long, stubborn roots of the offending plants. According to Dr. Robert Taft's book, Across the Years on Mount Oread, students and faculty joined forces to remove forty-five tons of the insidious yellow weed.)

April 25, Friday. Doris is blue because the Senior play is tonight. Nita is pretty tired so stays much quieter.

The Senior Play was given in the evening. It was Spring Fever. Everyone said it was the best play given yet at high school. (I may have been quarantined, but the telephone lines were available to keep me abreast of the events at school. I received several calls from friends who related the details of the performance I had missed.)

April 30, Wednesday. Doris and I are trying to keep the yard free from dandelions but it rains so much that it is hard to work. Ina May and Nita help too.

... Rained at noon. Spent the afternoon planning our trip to California on the train this summer if we win \$5000 in the Crisco contest.

(A tantalizing turnip had been dangled in front of us and, like greyhounds after the mechanical rabbit, we were off in hot pursuit. Not since Daddy's attempts at contests when he had T.B. had the family been so engrossed in the speculative fun of a competition. The thought of crossing the hot parched desert in the comfort of a streamlined train was sufficient to fire our imaginations. We composed numerous slogans which told why we liked Crisco [*shortening*] in 25 words or less. Alliteration was my forte, but such slogans as "Creamy Crisco creates crunchy crumpets, crumbly crusts, and capital crepes," failed to convince the judges we should win the grand prize. However, our pleasure came from talking about it. If we had won, the reality probably would not have lived up to our expectations.)³

May 1, Thursday. Charlene thinks she will be able to come to Kansas on the train this summer. Got a bound edition of Gone with the Wind today.

(My paperback book had disintegrated. The hard bound edition is now more than a little worse for wear, too.)

Charlene Alford was the daughter of Mother's college friend, Orpha Berkey. She was a non-cousin since her Aunt Lois and Uncle Miles were our aunt and uncle, too. She and I had been correspondents since Junior High days when we discovered movie stars and started our collections [*of star photographs*].⁴ Her possible arrival was truly exciting to contemplate.)

May 3, Saturday. Nita and I get off about 9 to run errands before we go to the doctor to get Nita's permit. Doctor Sisson goes over her thor-

³Part of the daydream of winning the contest was traveling by train, not by car; the Brewsters took many driving trips to California. Doris had a total of thirteen vacations with her family in California; while there, they visited movie studios and such spots as the Hollywood Bowl.

⁴In her diary entry for January 1, 1939, Doris noted that, in four years, she had collected 2,443 pictures of Shirley Temple.

oughly and she is ok. . . . It rains terribly hard. Doris and Ina May have to stay home another week.

(NOT FAIR! The culprit could go free, but we had to remain in relative isolation seven more days to be sure we weren't going to get sick. . . . We had to serve our full sentence. There was no parole for us.)

It rained hard most all day. Finished the cover to my paper doll book after working all afternoon. Did some paintings in the morning.

May 7, Wednesday. Nita goes to school and stays there. Help Shafer's get ready to leave. They get off at 1:40. I fix hamburgers for them at noon. Go to the Annual church meeting in the evening. Ray goes to the Chemical meeting on the hill. The Kansas City group is here.

Ann Tanner and I talked art all morning. Shafer's moved to Austin, Texas. It really has been a hectic day.

(Ann Tanner was a friend of Laurine's and why she was at our house, I'm not sure. I vaguely remember hearing of a romantic entanglement that was a problem. She came to talk to Mother, who could give wise counsel, but I wanted to monopolize her with art discussions. This is not the first mention in my diary concerning conversations with her.

I felt I was destined to become a dress designer, but there was one major obstacle—Daddy. He proved an insurmountable hurdle, which wasn't surprising. I had spent my life trying to please him. When he opposed an art education—he didn't even consider it an education—I did what he thought was best. However, as my high school days were nearing the end, I was still optimistically filled with high hopes.)

May 8, Thursday. Get out of quarantine tomorrow. Whoppee! Claire [*Viesselman*] talked to me for a while in the afternoon. Spent the evening getting ready for tomorrow.

May 9, Friday. Ina May goes to school and Doris goes to Topeka for the National Music Contest. Girls Glee Club has 2nd place rating. She enjoys the trip.

(My month of missed rehearsals made me ineligible to take part in the competition, but I sang in a combined mixed chorus which performed for the evening concert. It was a rewarding way to celebrate my release from captivity.)

May 10, Saturday. Rose Marie is here for the first time for a long time. Doris and I go to Kansas City to look for clothes. She is too tired from her Topeka trip—blisters her feet. We buy a dress for Grandma.

May 11, Sunday. I get lunch ready to take down to Ottawa for Mother's Day. Nita gives me a geranium, Doris a pair of clips, and Ina May a handkerchief. We take down pressed chicken, potato salad, picked beets, carrot and pineapple salad, cake and pudding. Have a good time.

(I had forgotten about Mother's pressed chicken, which was a cool refreshing main dish on hot days.)

Ina May sick in the evening. Hope it isn't Scarlet Fever.

May 12, Monday. Ina May sneezes so much we have the doctor. It's hay fever. After we apply some medicine up her nose she quits sneezing.

May 13, Tuesday. . . . Watched the annual come off the press.

(At least I made it back in time to see the completion of one project. The bindings had to be applied, but it was rewarding to see the pages printed.)

May 14, Wednesday. I go to the Girl Scout Council meeting in the morning—to school to plan the 6th grade party.

Ruth came down in the evening and we did Physics constructions. Had art at the Armory as a demonstration in an exhibit.

(I may have had most of my class work done, but I had missed so much Physics, I was afraid I wouldn't be able to get it all done.)

May 15, Thursday. The Chemistry Department has a reception for George King who has served 50 years as the storekeeper. The children always enjoy the birds he blows from glass.

(George was an institution within himself. The time spent in the store-room watching him fashion fragile winged creatures from dark blue rods was like magic. He had a rare talent where children were concerned. I was most fortunate to have fallen under his enchanted spell during my formative years. We missed him after his retirement.)

Ruth here in the evening and we worked on Physics constructions from 7 till 11.

May 16, Friday. I have enough Physics points to get out of the final, so my worries are over. Mother went to Ottawa in the afternoon.

(Mr. Cunningham awarded points for everything we did—test scores, experiments, home work, etc. The grade I received in his class lowered my grade point average, but I was more than happy to accept it in lieu of making up the missed experiments. What a relief!)

May 17, Saturday. I go to Kansas City with Ray. Go to see Laurine and Joe—take them some roses. The children have a wienie roast in the evening. Ray plants the 6 rose bushes he bought.

Saw Ziegfeld Girl with Phyllis in the afternoon. In the evening the neighborhood had a wienie roast in our back yard.

(Life had returned to normal and Mother's backyard picnics were instigated for another summer.)

May 18, Sunday. After church we spend lots of time in the afternoon with the roses. . . . Howard breaks down after the sermon.

(. . . Reverend Howard Koelb was obviously struggling as he preached the final points of his sermon. He stood still for a second, then slumped in slow motion, but he managed to catch himself on the pulpit and didn't fall. . . . He regained his composure as he rose to his full height, turned and walked slowly away from the pulpit and off the dais. The congregation sat in stunned silence. Daddy moved briskly to the pulpit and concluded the service while Mr. Leigh took Rev. Koelb by the arm and gave him support as they walked from the sanctuary. We had no way of knowing what was the matter with our young minister.)

Went to see Phyllis and then Pauline. Both had to study on Government. A dull afternoon.

(School was essentially over for me and now that I was free I wanted company. Unfortunately, my friends were still burdened with school assignments.)

May 21, Wednesday. Mrs. Koelb calls Ray to come down for they have heard bad news about Howard—Leukemia. He decided to go to Dr. Sisson for a check up, too. Decide to go to Kansas City for a check up, also.

May 22, Thursday. The Koelb's decide it will be better to go back to Boston so Howard will be near his people and Priscilla near her mother. Mrs. Sluss and I go down in the evening to see if we can help.

Practiced for graduation this afternoon. Went over to the Rankin's this evening. Worked in Journalism until 5:30.
(The annuals had to be unpacked and prepared for distribution at the signing party the following evening.)

May 23, Friday. I go down to see if I can help Priscilla. Tell her I will go to Washington with her and Mary Elizabeth and Helen in the car if no one else volunteers. Junior and I go to Ottawa in the afternoon. . . .

Had honors assembly. I was given a pin for being one of the 10 outstanding seniors. Annual signing party in the evening. Finals started in the afternoon.

Lawrence's Dine-a-Mite was a popular spot for dancing. (Courtesy University of Kansas archives)

(The troubles of the Koelb family and the rest of the world evaporated from my mind during this day of triumph. The annual was as perfect as we had envisioned. I had talked Mother into allowing me to buy two, which she thought was infinitely silly. . . .)

May 24, Saturday. Howard gets off at 1. Priscilla, children and I at 1:40.

Rev. Koelb was too ill for the long drive east. They put him on the afternoon train, then Mother left with his family.

(Rev. Koelb eventually returned to Lawrence and the Baptist Church. Unfortunately, he died on January 19, 1943. . . .)

May 25, Sunday. Went to Virginia Stephenson's tea in the afternoon. Daddy and I went to Baccalaureate in the evening. Dean Lawson gave the sermon.

(Dr. Lawson was the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He gave an inspiring talk. The next few days were crammed with end of the year activities—a band concert, the Senior Banquet, and initiation into Thespians—the National Honorary Dramatics Society for High School students. My initiation into the group was the crowning event of my years at Liberty Memorial High School. It was an ambition fulfilled.)

May 29, Thursday. I burn my arm on a light before I reach Chicago. Make connections at Chicago and reach home at 6 in the evening. Doris' commencement exercises were held at night. I enjoy the train trip.

Got grade cards. . . . It's all over now!

(The pomp and circumstance of marching down the aisle in Hoch Auditorium [*at K.U.*] while wearing a cap and gown was impressive. The band played, the choral groups sang, and the speaker gave the traditional talk. I had heard it all so many times before. The completion of high school simply marked the passage of another milestone. It meant I was ready to become the coed at K.U. I had dreamed about for so many years. I had great expectations for the next stage of my life.

The class of 1941 had spent three years in a building dedicated to the memory of former students who had lost their lives in the service of their country [*during World War I*]. Some of our class members were already in military uniform, even though our country was not engaged in hostilities. It would not be long until the names of friends and acquaintances from

our years at Liberty Memorial High School would join those faceless names listed in the school auditorium.

The most vivid memory of one of my final days at Liberty Memorial High School was not mentioned in my diary. When the bell rang for classes to be dismissed for the lunch hour, we emerged from the building to encounter a convoy of military equipment moving south on Massachusetts Street. All traffic ceased to move until the unexpected military parade had passed the school. Where they were going or from whence they came, I know not. Armored vehicles, tanks, mounted artillery pieces, troop carriers—the line of army drab vehicles seemed endless. The soldiers, particularly the ones driving, passed with eyes forward. It was as if they had a distant objective in sight which we on the sidelines could not see.

I felt a chill as I watched the passing brigade. The ominous shadow on the horizon was relentlessly moving closer.)

AFTER WORD

The summer of 1941 was an idyllic time. It was a tranquil period between high school and college. . . . The school year began with rush week, which culminated in my becoming a sorority pledge. For a brief period campus life appeared to be all I had expected, but we were living in a fool's paradise. Late on Sunday afternoon, December 7, our world was shattered. I heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor from the bus driver while on my way to the Young People's meeting at the Baptist Church. The student with whom I shared a seat left school a few days later and enlisted. By the following Sunday he was among the ranks of new inductees preparing to fight for his country. . . .

Campus life changed to meet the new situation. Strong Hall became a living quarters for contingents of Naval Machinists Mates. Platoons of sailors paraded to and from classes chanting as they marched along the campus drive. "I don't want no more of Kansas, I just want to go home," became a familiar refrain as the squadrons moved along in lock step. My social life centered around the Saturday night dances for the service men at the U.S.O. (United Service Organization) instead of university activities. It was the patriotic thing to do. Our sorority members rolled bandages for the Red Cross and made scrap books for the hospitals where the wounded recovered from their injuries.

. . . Many of my friends majored in Physical or Occupational Therapy, courses that had not existed when we enrolled as freshmen. I majored in

Geology, which was not the usual field chosen for girls. Dr. Laudon, Chairman of the Department, had to recruit female students or have his department severely curtailed. Oil companies needed replacements for their men who had been called into service, which made sex no obstacle when it came time to seek employment. . . .

Campus life became far different than had been envisioned by the eager freshmen who enrolled in the fall of 1941. Only a small percentage of the students who enrolled with me participated in the day of concentrated activities that marked the completion of my four years of study in 1945. . . .

I began my career as a petroleum geologist for the Stanolind Oil Company on August 1, 1945. My life on Mississippi Street came to an end two weeks before the Japanese surrendered and World War II passed into history.

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Index

(Some individuals and place names mentioned incidentally in the text are not indexed.)

A

Abilene, Kansas 33, 135ff
Abilene High School 135ff
Acculturation xv-xvi
Agenda, Kansas 121-22
Agenda High School 122, 123
Agricultural Adjustment Act 183n
Airplanes 2, 45, 92, 160, 212
Alma, Kansas 105
Anderson, Nora xiii, 117, 122, 123
Automobiles xii-xiii, 2, 51, 63, 69, 92,
112, 121, 128, 134, 145, 156, 172-
74, 204, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212,
220, 236, 245
driving 57, 134, 142, 151, 157

B

Bailey, Beth xii
Balzer, Jacob Frank xv, xvi, 13-26
Barton County, Kansas 128, 130, 131,
133
Beardsley, Robert 165
Belleville, Kansas 117, 118, 119, 121
Bethel College 13-26
Birth of a Nation, The (movie) 44
Birthdays 217
Blacks xv, 75-85, 104-5, 223, 225-27,
231, 233, 236

Boltz, Josephine xii, 47-59
Brewster, Doris *See* Swift, Doris
Brewster
Brewster, Fay 241ff
Brewster, Ina May 241ff
Brewster, Nita 241ff
Brewster, Professor Ray 241ff
Burns, Retta Forsythe 5-11

C

California 122, 203-6, 216, 253
Carnivals 24, 25, 153 *See also* Fairs
Carriage 6ff
Chapels (school) 38, 39, 41, 136, 140,
143, 144, 147, 148, 149, 151, 154,
156
Chapman, Kansas 37
Christmas 77-79, 181, 241-42
Church 20, 57, 76, 78, 79, 231, 232,
243, 245, 248, 250, 254, 259
Civilian Conservation Corps 159, 188
Clubs
Boy Scouts 45, 198, 201
college 14, 19, 20, 26
4-H 45, 92
Girl Scouts 45, 244, 247, 255
school 37, 38, 41, 42, 92, 101,
102, 144, 145, 149, 152, 162-63,
165, 201, 224, 247, 255

Y.W.C.A. 38, 39

College

attendance 13-26, 61, 64, 105,
110, 124, 258-60
clubs 14, 19, 20, 26
courses 13ff, 259-60
preparatory xiii, 1
sports 16, 19, 20, 23, 26

Concordia, Kansas 191

Concordia High School 191, 196-201

Cuba, Kansas 121

D

Dances 131, 134, 153, 154, 156, 178,
224, 245

Dating xiv, 121, 123, 137ff, 231, 238,
244, 245

Death 59, 117, 120

Debate 21, 22, 76-77, 165, 199-201

Decatur County, Kansas 27-31

Decatur County High School 27, 29

Diaries 13-26, 75-85, 135-58, 203-
11, 241-60

Dickinson County, Kansas 33

Dickinson County High School 37-
42

Dighton, Kansas 57, 59, 129

Douglas County, Kansas 72

Dowell, Howard Reed xiii, 117-25

Dowell, Juliet 117, 125

Dowell, Luther 117, 124

Drinking 122, 235, 237

Dugouts 66-67

Dust storms 186-87

E

Easter 213, 250

Eisenhower, Dwight D. xv, 33-36

Elliott, Maude xi, 61-73

Emporia, Kansas 191, 229

Emporia Teachers College 87, 110

F

Fairs ix, 19, 38, 160, 175 *See also*
Carnivals

Farming 27, 30-31, 44, 50, 51, 63,
124-25, 128, 129-31, 178, 179
in Great Depression 182-90
harvesting 54-57, 81

Finney County, Kansas 62-73

Forsythe, Robert 5ff

Forsythe, Mrs. Robert 5ff

Forsythe, Stella 5, 8, 11

G

Gage Park 236

Games 54, 131, 247

Garden City, Kansas 64, 67, 69, 70,
229

Genoa, Nebraska 169

Gone with the Wind (book) ix, 253

Gone with the Wind (movie) 248

Great Depression 159, 170-72, 181-
90, 234-35

Guns 65-66

ammunition 132

Gymnastics 16, 19

H

Hartman, Wilmer (Bill) 135, 145,
148, 154, 158

Haskell Institute 168

Haywood, C. Robert x

Hispanics xiii, xv, 229-39

Holden, Missouri 5, 10, 11

Holton, Kansas 189

Holton Recorder 190

Hoyt Rural High School 87

Hunting 79, 132-33, 188-89

I

Illness 104, 256

family 211, 217, 218, 219, 220,
222, 250

quarantine 111ff, 212, 250–51,
253, 54
Independence, Kansas 5, 9
Indian Agricultural Fair 175

J

Jackson County, Kansas 87, 167ff,
181ff
Jackson School 5
Jarvis, Sandra x
Jetmore, Kansas 75
Junior high schools 161–66, 231, 237
Junior High News 161–66
Junior Review, 1933, *The* 161, 166

K

Kansas Bureau of Investigation 160
Kansas City, Kansas 229
Kansas Highway Patrol 160
Kasson, Cora Bell 97ff
Kasson, Henry 97
Keats Rural High School 93–95
Kinsley, Kansas 75, 78
Ku Klux Klan 44, 91

L

Lawrence, Kansas 64, 111, 223, 241ff
Lawrence High School 61, 111ff
Lane County, Kansas 47–59, 127–34
Lang, Howard xii, xv, 127–34
Laws
 driving 57n
 education x, 1, 27n, 44
 labor x, 2
Letters 111–16
Liberty Memorial High School 223–
27, 241ff
Lietz, Emil Paul 98, 99
Lietz, Esther xiii, xv, 97–110
Logan, J. Glenn 27–31
Lone Star School 72
Louis, Joe 211

Lucas, Belva 203–22
Lucas, Olive 203ff
Lucas, William 203ff

M

McKee, John D. xv, 191–201
McKinley, President William 1, 5
Mail-order catalogs 57, 134
Majors, Hurst 166
Manhattan Junior High School 161–
66
Mann, Gladys 166
Marriage 82–83, 85, 99, 110, 238
Marshall, Eileen xv, 87–90
Marshall, Ralph G. xv, 181–90
Martinez, Simon xiii, xv, xvi, 229–39
Mattwaoshshe, Lorenzo xiii, xv, xvi,
167–80
Mattwaoshshe, Victoria 167, 168, 173,
176
Mayetta, Kansas 168, 175, 176, 179
Mennonites xvi, 13–26
Military service 238, 239
Minnis, Frank 75, 79
Minnis, Marian N. Freeman xiii, xiv,
xv, 75–85
Motorcycles 52, 147
Movies 44, 109–10, 136ff, 160, 207ff,
236, 244, 248
Music 1, 91, 100
 instruments 133–34, 194, 195–98
 lessons 52–53, 101, 194, 195–98
 performance 77, 101, 134, 198,
225, 227, 246, 248, 254

N

National Guard 244–45
National Recovery Act 189
National Youth Administration 159,
181, 203, 217, 218, 219, 221, 222
Native Americans xv, 167–80
New Year's Eve 244
New York Children's Aid Society 117

New York World's Fair ix, 160
 North Newton, Kansas 13

O

Oberlin, Kansas 27, 28, 29–30
 Orphan trains 117, 118–20

P

Paola, Kansas 11
 Parsons, Kansas 9, 10
 Parties 18, 76, 115, 123, 158,
 256 *See also* Dances
 Paxico, Kansas 97, 98, 101, 104, 109
 Paxico Rural High School 97–102,
 105, 107–8
 Pendennis, Kansas 128–29, 131, 132,
 134
 Phonographs 110
 Pittsburg, Kansas 9, 10
 Poetry 166
 Politics 33–36
 Potawatomi 167–80
 reservation 167, 169, 171, 172,
 176
 Prohibition 44, 66

R

Radio 109, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139,
 140, 141, 156, 159–60, 208, 216,
 220, 222, 242
 networks 243
 stations 92, 139n, 218, 227
 Reading material ix, 1, 20, 23, 57–58,
 91, 143, 155, 156, 253
 Republic County, Kansas 117ff
 Riley County, Kansas 93
 Roads 2, 63, 92
 Roosevelt, President Franklin D. 209,
 243, 246

S

School 112–13, 114, 142
 buildings 67, 98
 clubs 37, 38, 41, 42, 92, 101,
 102, 135, 144, 145, 149, 152,
 162–63, 165, 201, 224
 consolidation 92
 courses xiii, 1, 37, 53, 105, 107–
 8, 109, 111, 123, 135, 136, 141,
 144, 146, 151, 153, 156–57,
 232–33, 235, 246, 255, 256
 equipment 53–54
 graduation 108, 157, 158, 224–
 25, 257
 Native American 168–69
 newspapers 93–95, 161–66
 plays 40, 101, 145, 146–47, 148,
 149, 152, 154, 157, 224, 249–50,
 252
 teaching 61–73, 105–7, 110
 yearbooks 37–42, 115, 223–27,
 248, 255, 257–58
 See also Junior high schools
 Scouting *See* Clubs
 Segregation 104–5, 223, 231, 232,
 233, 236
 Shephard, Elizabeth 135ff
 Shephard, Jesse 135ff
 Shephard, Thelma xii, xiii, xiv, 135–
 58
 Shields, Kansas 47, 52, 54, 58, 134
 Shields High School 53
 “Shoe Shop” School 67
 Skating 40, 137, 247–48
 Smith-Hughes Act 44
 Smoking 91, 122, 179, 235
 Sod buildings 48, 51, 67
 Sports
 baseball 16, 20, 95, 131–32
 basketball 41, 42, 43, 102, 112,
 223
 football 23, 26, 38, 39, 40, 91,
 123
 volley ball 95

Suffrage 44
 Swift, Doris Brewster xii, xiv, xv, 241–60
 Swift, Paul 245

T

Teenagers defined xv
 Telephone 2, 63, 71, 207, 252
 Topeka, Kansas 5, 105, 229ff
 Topeka High School 231ff
 Topeka Lutheran School 110
 Towhead School 5
 Trading Post, Kansas 10
 Trapping 130, 188,
 Travel accounts 5–11, 128, 203–6
 “Two-by-four” School 51, 54

U

University of Kansas 61, 64, 115, 241,
 245, 247, 251–52, 255, 258, 259–60

V

Valentine’s Day 143, 144

W

Wabaunsee, James xv, xvi, 167–80
 Wabaunsee County, Kansas 105, 167
 Wagons 6ff, 56, 69, 128
 Washburn University 27, 105, 110
 West, Elliott xi
 Wichita, Kansas 203ff
 Works Progress Administration
 (WPA) 172, 188
 World War I xv, xvi, 43, 45, 62n, 68,
 76, 102–4, 110, 258
 World War II xvi, 160, 176, 238, 243,
 248–49, 250, 259

Y

Yates, Nellie 111ff
 Young Woman’s Christian Association
 (Y.W.C.A.) 38, 39, 203, 207, 208,
 217, 221

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Model Ts, Pep Chapels, and a Wolf at the Door

Kansas Teenagers, 1900–1941

Marilyn Irvin Holt, Editor

"The diaries, letters, reminiscences, and memories presented in this publication are themselves a time capsule, preserving for its readers what Kansas teenagers thought and did in the first decades of the twentieth century. The impact of technological and shifting social attitudes in Kansas's post-settlement, post-Victorian decades was recorded, unconsciously, by teenagers. They tell us about their world, and in that telling, we see a reflection of the early twentieth century. It is a view worth considering."

—from the introduction to *Model Ts, Pep Chapels, and a Wolf at the Door*

"Holt's book is rich with the honesty, ambivalence, the in-betweenness of the years between childhood and adulthood. Lane County and Lawrence seem worlds apart. 1900 and 1941 are radically different eras. Yet the clear voices collected here bridge differences of time and place and connect every reader to the recent past. *Model Ts*, with its excellent introductions, its honest accounting of both ordinary and extraordinary lives, will reward richly and satisfy deeply."

—**Thomas Fox Averill**, Professor of English and Writer-in-Residence, Washburn University

"Utilizing a variety of primary sources, Holt's teenagers write and discuss experiences that are inclusive of gender, race, ethnicity, and region in early 20th-century Kansas. Native sons and daughters, these teenagers write and speak from their uniquely Kansas perspective—sharing with contemporary Kansans their joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams. This anthology is a fine contribution to Kansas history and to our understanding of the subjective experiences of 20th-century childhood."

—**Carol K. Coburn**, Assistant Professor of Education and History, Avila College

"These teenagers tell us a great deal about the sweeping technological changes that affected the everyday lives of all Kansans. Their writings document the advent of radio and movies, the telephone and the automobile. They also give us insight into life without these modern conveniences."

—**Anne M. Marvin**, Curator of Art, Clothing and Entertainment, Kansas Museum of History

"Marilyn Holt has drawn upon people's letters, diaries, and oral histories as well as from yearbooks, high school newspapers, and class compositions. The teenagers' stories tell of both continuity and change, of 'prairie schooners' and sod houses, of life on the farm and in town, of the boom of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s, and of their hopes for the future. *Model Ts, Pep Chapels, and a Wolf at the Door* fills a void because we have Kansas teenagers' own stories in their own words."

—**William M. Tuttle, Jr.**, Professor of History and American Studies, University of Kansas

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