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MEMORIES..... for Carrie

I couldn't have been more than two and a half - three at the most - when I was standing in the dining-room of Grandma and Grandpa Mansfield's big house next to ours. A very tall man appeared in the doorway leading to the hall. He seemed to fill the doorway, and wore a funny-colored suit, but the thing that really made an impression on me was the fact that Grandma cried! I hadn't known that grandmothers could cry, but she definitely did, throwing her half-apron (the kind she always wore) up over her face. The scene fades from my memory, but later I learned that the tall man was my father's older brother, Uncle Adrian, home from the First World War and the Army of Occupation. Still later, from scraps of information I picked up here and there, I found that Uncle Ag (as my father called him - most other people called him Bill) had entered the Army as a private, received field commissions that made him a ^{1st Lt.} captain by the time he came home, and went on to become a full colonel in the reserve before he finally retired.

He and my father's younger brother, Uncle Wilfred, had gone into the family candy business with Grandpa, but Dad had rebelled, left home early after quitting school at 14, and married my mother the day after his eighteenth birthday. I didn't know all this until much later, of course. Uncle Adrian remained a remote figure, but Uncle Wilfred was good for fun. He bought records for the victrola in the parlor, and played the saxophone. Neither of the others married until ten years or so after my parents were married, so Jessie and I became favored only children in the family for many years.

This was helped along by living next door. The houses at 406 (ours) and 408 (theirs) West Clinton Street in Elmira were on a single large lot, front and back yards adjoining, with a sidewalk width separating the houses. Grandma's house was as familiar as my own. It was set well back from the street, with a porch on two sides where Grandma sat every nice afternoon in summer, and we often played there on rainy days. The entrance hall had an open stairway, a big old oak coat rack - the kind with a mirror and seat that pulled up for storage of boots. Doors led to the living-room on the left and dining-room at the end. The living-room, which Grandma called "the sitting-room" was the center of family life. It had a big bay window where huge ferns and other plants grew, with a sofa in front, where little girls could play with dolls and later read. Grandpa's chair always stood on the same spot (so did all the furniture as long as I could remember). It was a Morris chair, similar to modern patio lounge chairs in that the back could be lowered to various angles for comfortable reading or dozing, but much more substantial. The lowering mechanism was a brass rod about a quarter-inch in diameter which slipped into brass brackets, almost out of sight. Nobody else ever sat there when Grandpa was in the house, though we sometimes were privileged to sit on his knee and play carefully with his watch chain, sometimes being permitted to listen to the ticking of the big gold watch, held in his hand. Grandma's chair was nearby, frequently drawn close to the little gas heater which was lighted often in winter, to supplement the furnace heat. She had arthritis and entertained us throughout our school years by showing us the red flannel knee-warmers she wore to ease the pain in her knees. Grandma was very jolly, full of little jokes and silly songs. I was permitted to "help" her in the kitchen, and made my first pies and cakes under her guidance.

But back to the house. The parlor was beyond the living-room, separated by an open archway with round columns. The piano and victrola and "best" furniture were in there, but nobody ever sat there.

The dining-room, on the side next to our house, was quite dark, with a great deal of oak woodwork, and unused fireplace, and a side entrance that was only a few steps from our front door. The best china and silver were kept in the mahogany china cabinet and buffet, and I was very proud when I was old enough to be trusted with getting them out or putting them away.

The kitchen had a huge table of oak, dining size, a gas and wood or coal range, a versatile cabinet which contained storage bins for sugar and flour. An opening in the bottom of each of these permitted measuring into a cup, a regular teacup, as we didn't have measuring cups then. The table had room for all kinds of cooking, even rolling out pie dough, and utensils were washed - one of my earliest duties - at the white iron sink. The pantry off the kitchen led down to the rather fearsome cellar, and another door led to the back porch and the icebox. Like Harry Golden's mother, my grandmother had her iceman, her milkman, her vegetable man, etc. Ice was ordered by placing a big card in the window, the figure 25 showing for 25 pounds, and fifty for a large piece in summer. Another duty was to empty the drainage pan under the icebox, which had to be done very carefully, as it was large and awkward. Three steps led down to the back yard and garage and the boy came to be called. When I was little, I wasn't allowed to go in there, and conjured up many mysteries about what it might hold. Actually, it held the usual accumulation of out-of-season objects and the touring car up on blocks to save the tires. Nobody drove a car in winter. The streetcar went right by the house, and one could catch it on the nearest corner. Horses were used also, with the milkman's horse trained to move on to the next stop while the milkman was delivering our milk every other day in the fascinating little open metal basket in which the bottles were carried. Mother and grandma both carefully drained off the cream (it wasn't homogenized then) to use for coffee. I suppose that may be where I got my life-long affinity for cream, our topmilk, in my coffee.

There was always a garden in the back yard, with many vegetables and flowers. Irid, which Grandma called fleur-de-lis (my first lesson in French) grew along the porch on the east side, with lily-of-the-valley in profusion on the west, under the bay window. One of my great delights was to have permission to pick big bouquets, mixing in the violets that abounded nearby, proudly bringing them in for the special vase Grandma kept for them. Our side of the yard had only grass and a swing, with a huge wooden gate leading out to the alley.

Next door on our side, the house was empty, and probably haunted, we thought. On the other side of Grandma's lived Mr. and Mrs. Lewis and their daughter, Kathleen. I thought it very strange that a big grown-up person like Kathleen could be called someone's daughter. We were taught to be very polite to the Lewises, not to make too big a racket and disturb them, though Mrs. Lewis was very deaf, and spoke in the overly loud tone that many deaf people acquire over a period of years. The next house belonged to the Fennells, Judge Fennell and six children, of whom Florence, (whom we called "Fump") was nearest my age. They went to the Catholic school a few blocks away, so we played together mostly in summer, when such distinctions blurred. On the corner where we would get the streetcar, my best friend lived. Her name was Ethel, and she was Jewish. (See how early I became ecumenically minded). She introduced me to matzoh and the fact that a mother stayed in bed when there was a new baby. I wanted to ask why, when I was taken to see this important small person, but considered myself too well brought up to ask. Mr. Lewis was somebody very important at the American Bridge Company, but I have no idea what Ethel's father did for a living. It must have been productive, because she was the first little girl I ever knew who had her own fur coat. Baltimore, that was her last name! There were other families up and down the street that we knew casually, but I don't remember any actual entertaining. Jessie and I learned to go to the meat market on Walnut street or to the corner grocery, corner of second and Davis, for our mother. A block in the other direction was Grove Park, where I played in the sandbox, swung on the big swings, or teeter-tottered with someone my size. Mother made us wear black bloomers to play in. I thought they were hideous and somewhat disgraceful, as there was no dress to cover them, and they were made (by Mother) exactly like the white ones I wore to school and for best.

Back in Grandma's house, one could go upstairs by the back stairway, which also opened off the kitchen and was much preferred over the open front stair, where I was always afraid I might accidentally fall over the banister. (Acrophobia even then?)

There was a large back hall, the back bedroom over the kitchen, with three other bedrooms and a bedroom-sized bathroom between two of them. In later years, when my father and mother went to live there, Dad converted the pantry downstairs to a lavatory for Grandma, as she couldn't get up and down stairs following her broken hip. Grandpa's den became her bedroom, but the rest of the house remained the same. I had forgotten to mention the den. That had a sinister sound too, as I was not permitted to go in there, and I wondered what strange things Grandpa must do that needed to be kept secret. When I was older, I discovered that it wasn't so dreadful after all, but a place where there was a big rolltop desk, a safe, some books, and a chair or two. Maybe it was the word den that frightened me, though "Den" was Grandma's name for her husband, short for Dennis, of William Dennis Mansfield known as "W.D." to the help, or "The Mister".

Dad also converted the upstairs hall into a kitchen, closing off the stairway, and made the center bedroom into a dining-room. The big front master bedroom became the living room for their apartment, the back bedroom theirs, and the "Blue room", the guest bedroom, where I stayed before Carrie and Rob were born, and where Ruth fell out of the highchair for the first time- in the dining-room, of course.

Sunday morning breakfast was an important time in my early years. Jessie and I took turns at being guests of our grandparents, and Grandpa personally fixed our pancakes. The menu never varied, but meant pancakes and sausages and maple syrup. He mixed the sausage grease and syrup on the buttered pancakes, and nothing I've ever eaten had quite the same flavor. We didn't know about cholesterol, and I haven't been able to eat sausage for years, but memory gives that combination the taste of ambrosia.

Our house was very similar, but smaller and set farther back from the road, with a porch only on the front. I still have a picture of Grandma when she was quite old in front of 406. My bedroom was at the head of the stairs - back stairs only in this house - and I was very fearful of walking in my sleep and falling downstairs. Someone must have given me the idea, as I never had the imagination to dream up things like that. For several years, we had two roomers, the Nicholson sisters, Jean and Ella. Jean was actually Regina, a lovely name, I thought, and when she married I considered it very romantic until I saw the groom, an old man with gray hair. Mother sometimes did some handironing at home, when they were shorthanded at the plant, but I was cautioned never to mention this. Neither was I to mention that Mother had worked in the laundry before she was married...had, in fact, met my father there. Mother's concern for the looks of things may have been responsible for my willingness to go along with the fear of appearing less than perfect in the eyes of our parishioners, zeal to have the parsonages always ready for company, insistence on having the children play in their rooms, or at least out of sight.

The laundry and the candy factory were dominating factors of my life until I was married, when I exchanged them for the Methodist Church. Grandpa had come to Elmira from Rochester, where my father was born, to work for Wilfred I Booth in his candy factory. (Yes, Wilfred, known to Jessie and me as Uncle "Wooshie" when we were young, had been named for Booth. Grandpa then struck out on his own and became Booth's competitor, building the three-story factory on Baldwin Street. The business was very successful until the Second World War, and he and Grandma were what was then called well-to-do... not wealthy, but very comfortable. I used to visit the factory at every opportunity, and when I was in high school, would sometimes walk from Elmira Free Academy down to the factory to chat with the dippers and help myself to the newly-dipped chocolates in rows on their plaques. I found the dipping process very fascinating, and could watch for long periods as the two or three dippers worked mechanically with the centers, dropping them from left hand to the right, coating them deftly with the warm chocolate, then transferring them

with a single graceful motion to the wax-paper covered plaques, which, when full, were stacked in tiers on racks like trays in a cafeteria. Nobody else could take the freshly-dipped candy from the plaques, but I enjoyed being the privileged granddaughter of the Mister. Then I usually went into the packing room adjacent and filled a half-pound box with chocolates of my particular choice, though it was supposed to be forbidden. I also would go up to the top floor where grandpa worked, to watch him make whatever it was that day, soft centers in corn-starch molds, rich fudge, which was boiled in huge copper pots, then lifted by two men to be poured out on stainless steel slabs, to cool before being cut with big discs on a heavy bar, rolled along the table, or slab. At Christmas time, I spent more time than usual there, watching as Grandpa, who would let noone else do this, worked the ribbon for crimp, applied the stripes at just the right point, after throwing a tremendous mass of warm taffy-like candy over a great iron hook several times, then running it through a machine to make the fine ribbon for which he was known. The wafers, an inch or so in diameter, were made by hand too, poked from a large funnel with a round stick, in perfect rythm, all perfectly even, though the end one occasionally turned out a bit lopsided, and I was permitted to eat it. I loved their pastel colors and rich taste, never since duplicated. He never even let his sons know his redipes, so that later, when Uncle Adrian tried to revive the business after the War, he could not quite duplicate the taste. Besides, cheaper, mass-produced candies began to be sold in Woolworth's and drug stores, and the demand for expensive hand made chocolates diminished to the vanishing point. It had decreased during the Depression, since candy was easier to do without than bread, but the scarcity of sugar and other components during the War really finished it, as Grandpa wouldn't compromise (those stubborn Mansfields!) with quality, for which Mansfield Candies were known. Eventuall^y he developed harden ng of the arteries of the brain, became impossible to live with, and was committed to Binghamton State Hospital. Just once, I heard my father say that it was the hardest thing he ever did, to sign the papers for Grandpa's commitment.

By then, both the other boys had married. Uncle Adrian went back into the Army, and Wilfred became a Prudential Insurance salesman. The last time I saw either of them was at my father's funeral on May 17th, 1965.

Dad had been in partnership with his two brothers-in-law, Uncle John and Uncle Fred, for a short period, in a tire-vulcanizing business in Utica. Tire vulcanizing also became passe, and Dad came back to Elmira to live at 406, and become a partner with men named Danaher and Manning in the Perfect laundry, located on Church street, behind the First Baptist Church. My mother took me to church ther when I was very little, my first exposure to organized religion. The church seemed very big, the ministers very old, the prayers very long. I remember whispering to her once to ask if God would mind if I raised my head slightly during the prayer, as my neck ached. She must have said it was all right. I have a vague recollection of going to Sunday School a few times in one of the round turret rooms upstairs, though these were pre-school years. Parades always came down Church street to Main, and we would all gather in the big upstairs window of the laundry building, to see if we could pick out Uncle Adrian as he marched in the Armistice Day or Memorial Day parades. The building is still there.

I loved the fresh smell of the hot clothes as they were ironed, and would stand near the big mangle to watch the girls put sheets through flat, folding them with two or three deft movements, like a ballet, as they came out on the far side. The big washers, containg several mesh bags of clothes, the extractors, the drying rooms, wh clothes circulated on racks through a heated cubicle, all smelled clean and special. I still get a nostalgic wave when occasionally I walk by a hospital or hotel which has its own basement laundry, and smell that indescribable hot clean odor. Home laundries do not duplicate it. Somewhere about the time I was in High School, the partners sold the laundry to a corporation, merged with the Service Laundry, and moved to Madison Avenue. Dad stayed on for a year as Manager, a year which stretched to thirty.

Adrian had been Simon's bookkeeper and she came along with it. She began

working for Mr. Mansfield, which she called him until they were married, three years after Mother died.

I started kindergarten at five, at school # 2, corner of Davis and Second Streets, less than two blocks away. I don't remember much about that year, except that I was teased when Mother saw me walking home hand-in-hand with a little boy named Frank. I was rather outraged at her remarks, ~~calling~~^{calling} ~~me~~^{us} "cute", and was sad when Frank died of diphtheria. Jessie and I both had "black" diphtheria (I think the throat characteristically turns black) also. It was a dreaded scourge of childhood then, with the toxin-anti-toxin just being introduced. Old Doctor Soble, our family doctor, who had delivered both of us, came daily and promised me fifty cents if I didn't cry when the serum was injected into my spine. Of course I had too much pride to cry in front of the doctor anyway! It was about then that he advised Dad to get us out in the country, where we would have fresh air and sunshine, away from the city.

It was during this period, also, while we still lived in the little house (Eight rooms, I think, but little next to Grandma's) that Mother had peritonitis. I can only remember being frightened when I was told my mother might die. Her hair began turning gray while she was ill, though she must only have been in her mid-thirties. My grandfather's mother, my "Grandma Mansfield, "Grandma -with-the-birdie" died while I was going to School # 2, also, and I was impressed at the strangeness of seeing the casket in Grandma's parlor, with a prie-dieu before it, and many grownups kneeling, crossing themselves, and crying. Grandpa's sister, Olive Mansfield Reitman, lived on Fourth Street, not far away, and she was quite overcome. I was disturbed because I had to go to school instead of going to the funeral. Obviously, I hated to miss anything! Aunt Ollie (Olive) was a widow with two sons. Mother and she didn't get along well, so we didn't see much of our cousins. They were older and Richard was considered quite fresh, no companion for innocent young girls. Also, I sensed Mother's disapproval of Ollie because she kept company for untold years-year after year-with a shoe salesman for Hudson's Shoes. Maybe Mother knew something we didn't. We lost touch with the Reitmans after the boys grew up. There was another brother, Uncle Frank, who was a farmer near Canandaigua, or nearer Naples, whose sons had been favorite cousins of my father's. Aunt Louise, his other sister had married and gone far away to Michigan to live, so we saw her only once.

Grandma had a half-sister (Eileen) who lived in Waterloo, and some other relatives in that area, but travel was not easy in those days, and we seldom saw them. Eileen had red-orange hair, like my father's, and was pretty and lively, a true Murphy. It may have been Eileen who married a man named Moriarty, a name that caused many jokes in our family, our Osgood family, that is. I'll get to Mother's relatives later.

Taking the doctor's advice, Dad embarked on a disastrous venture. He bought a small farm near Beaver Dams, New York (Steuben County, not far from Corning), installed Mother's parents as tenants, and he came up weekends. It was probably between twenty-five and thirty miles from Elmira, up and down terribly steep hills. The hills are still that way. I tried to find that farm once when I had a bit of spare time on my way home from Corning, and was scared off by the precipitous slopes of the roads. Even putting the car in low, I was scared I who drive constantly. It must have been a very difficult task for Dad to commute that far fifty years ago.

We were miles from a store or any kind of civilization. There was one house within sight. I had skipped half of the first and second grades, so went into third at the one-room school, which was a mile away. Maybe it was a mile and a half. Grandpa blazed a trail through the woods for us, which was fine in the cool fall and spring, but the snow was knee-deep in winter, and I had to slog along in Jessie's or Nellie's tracks.

Time to talk about Mother's side of the family. Nellie was really Aunt Nellie. but as she was only *three years older than Jessie, six older than me, it seemed silly to call her that.*

6.

My memory of that house and farm is spotty. I have a mental picture of Grandpa Mills carving a shoulder yoke of wood so he could carry two pails of water at one time. Jessie and I must have shared one of the two upstairs bedrooms, but I don't remember much about her being there, and she told me recently that she didn't remember me, so that's all right. I shared a double desk with Nellie in the one-room school and had to sit out in the aisle on air whenever she leaned over to get something out of the desk. We carried our lunches in lard pails. Everyone used lard for pies, and the pails - about the size of our present two-pound coffee cans - were standard lunch containers. There was a woodshed in back of the school, as well as girls' and boys' outhouses. Several of us, including Nellie and me, daringly climbed up on the woodpile every noon hour and ate our lunches with feet dangling from a hanging shelf. I wonder now that it didn't collapse with our weight. Nellie was plump even at ~~sixteen~~^{thirteen}. All of the "Mills girls" had wide hips and heavy thighs, known in the family as the Mills legs, and all became quite heavy as time went on. Nellie must have weighed three hundred the last time I saw her, many years ago.

She was a change-of-life baby, born when the others were young ladies and creating neighborhood talk as to whether it was really Grandpa's or Aunt Jessie's. I suspect that she never forgave Grandpa for this late child, as it was obvious even to a *nammy* child that theirs was not a happy household. Nellie escaped early into a disastrous, had several children who likewise married young, and now has great-grandchildren. Both Mother and Aunt Jessie made a home for her at odd times, helped to bring her up. Aunt Jessie kept track of her, worried over her, prayed for her, and probably sent her money from her own meager resources right up until her own death four years ago. (1973. *Mum died last year - 1978.*)

One day I could hear voices raised in argument in the kitchen, which frightened me. I wasn't accustomed to wrangling. I heard Grandma scream at my father, "I'll never accept so much as a spool of thread from you again." I suppose Dad was protesting expenses or asking for an accounting, and I now - looking back - realize that he was not yet thirty when all this responsibility was his.

Anyway, we left and took the only accommodations available, a tiny apartment almost across from the school in Elmira. Mother was terribly humiliated at this change of circumstances, cautioning us not to bring other children home to see where we lived, or to tell people. The apartment wasn't so bad, really, but it had no bath, only a small lavatory under some stairs. We didn't live there long. It was while we were there, however, that I began crying in pain one Saturday night just as my parents were preparing to go out. They took me to good Doctor Soble, who admitted me to St. Joseph's Hospital and operated the next day for acute appendicitis. Such excitement!

Soon Dad had bought the farm you knew, where I finished my growing up years, I don't know where Grandma and Grandpa Mills went, though I do know that both of them were recipients of my father's charity before they died. Grandpa died in my bedroom, the little one off the dining-room, and Grandma lived there too for several months after a stroke, until it became necessary to put her in a nursing home, for which I'm sure Dad paid his share. He was the one who took care of both of his own parents in their old age also. I've often thought that my father, who left the Roman Catholic Church as a teen-ager and professed no faith, showed more Christian compassion and generosity and forgiveness than most of the professing Christians I have known. He could always be counted on. He was a very reticent man, not given to showing affection. The greatest praise I ever received from him was a statement made to me in the hospital not long before he died. Both Jessie and I were there that day. He said "I guess I've got pretty good kids!" I was always Babe to him. I don't think he ever called me Isabelle.

It was back to a one-room school, this one only a short distance away on the corner of our hundred-acre farm. I was the only one in my class, the fifth grade. I was nine years old.

7.

The other people on West Hill, our neighbors, were almost all related, the Storch family, the Hartmans, the Ketchams, the Kakritzs, the Steffens. School had all eight grades, with one teacher, Miss Shelansky. There was the classic wood-burning stove in the center, the recitation bench up front near the teacher's desk, the pail of drinking water with dipper, and two doors leading to the cloakrooms and the chemical toilets beyond, a big improvement. In summer we took our lunches across the creek (on Albert Storch's property), to eat in the shade of the trees. In winter we ate at our desks, later having hot cocoa to warm the insides, the forerunner of the school lunch program. I learned to play go-in-and-out-the-window, Annie-Over and other standard children's games. Jessie was quite grown-up by then, and rode with Dad every morning when he went to work, to attend Elmira Free Academy. She graduated in $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, in January, before her sixteenth birthday, so she was not eligible to attend Elmira College until the following fall. She worked in Dad's and Grandpa's offices in the meantime, learning the rudiments of office procedure which she later used when her children were almost grown and she began working away from home. I quite envied her all the lovely new clothes she had for college, a lovely tweed suit and Andrew Geller Shoes, among other things. My Mother said, never mind, your turn will come. That was 1929, and things were radically different when my time came.

I had no playmates my age, so began to be the loner I have since become. I entertained myself by pretending there were Indians in the woods beyond the house, and would run along the wide hand-hewn beams in the slaughter-house (since torn down) to escape. My balance was good in those days and I was quite fearless. As I grew older, one of my favorite occupations was climbing a tree and reading. I nailed a canvas cover on a small box and put it up in a tree in the front yard, keeping my current reading matter there. Alas, one day I discovered they had mildewed. I climbed a lot of trees, finally asking to have a pair of coveralls like Dad's, so I wouldn't tear my dresses. Mother was scandalized, but Dad bought them for me. I played house all by myself, using the curves of the stump fence that ran along the boundary line for rooms, with stones for dishes and stones marking doorways and windows. Another favorite place was the roof of the milkhouse, which I reached by climbing the big lilac bush next to it. I stored various small dishes up there and made myself pretend coffee (way back then?) out of the dried lilac blossoms.

Dad never worked the farm of course, but leased it to neighbors. The Rinebolds were the nearest, up the road, and the Al Storchs across from the school. We could see the old Storch family homestead from our front windows, across the fields, and in the distance, the Kakritz place. The Syeffen house was beyond that. There were seven Steffen children, I think, but we never went there, as their father was very strict and, we thought, downright mean. The Kakritz children were grown. The two Storch girls were adopted, and I used to wonder about that and how it must feel. I didn't like the Rinenold boys at all, though I was polite to them, but they were younger than I and quite uncouth. Farther up the road were the Carl Storchs whose sons, Paul and Emil eventually came to call on me a few times, but were not encouraged. Their mother was blind. The Cookes lived still farther along, almost at the top of the hill. We would see Esther ride her horse by the house early in the morning on her way to classes at Elmira College. The Cookes didn't mingle. Dad did, surprisingly. He became one of the community leaders, instrumental in getting the REA lines through so we all could have electricity, building the log cabin across from the Bill Storch house for a community house, joining the Grange.

The Grange, Chemung Valley Patrons of Husbandry # 57, was really my first social experience. Children were not left with sitters, so we all went along and stayed outside, playing games, until the meeting was over. That's where I learned to play spin-the-bottle, and later to dance. Eventually, dances were held every Friday night in the West Hill community Cabin. My parents took me faithfully, though they didn't dance, until I was old enough to have other people request that privilege. Now I loved to dance! I never lacked partners, old and young, so I must

Those dances were the highlight of my last two years of high school, as I didn't get involved much in school affairs... it was too inconvenient to get home, though I often rode with Dad at night rather than the old school bus. The bus was driven by Myrtle (Mrs. Al) Storch, the first woman I ever saw drive . It had board benches on the inside, with hard cushions on each which did little to absorb the bumps of the dirt road. The macadam wasn't put in until after I was married. I was so socially unaware that it didn't even occur to me to ask if I could go to the Senior Prom, or the graduation banquet. My graduation dress was white organdy, with ruffles running lengthwise down the puffed sleeves. Later I dyed it yellow and wore it to the Friday dances, alternating with a long pink organdy, also with ruffles, these around the neck.

I had begun to go with Clarence Boyd, who lived over the Hill, beyond the Steffen house. He was permitted to drive his father's car, so we occasionally went for rides. Clarence didn't go to dances, so I had the fun of feeling popular with the other farm boys at the dances.

I was a good student, and graduated fifth in a class of 233. My last summer at home was great fun, as I was permitted more freedom than before, and my parents got very tired of having the young men come calling. Nobody ever did much except go to the movies or for a ride. I wasn't permitted to go to public dances or rowing on the Chemung river or on picnics. I had just had my sixteenth birthday.

Since I had earned one of the five Regents scholarships then awarded in Chemung County, Dad said I could go to college, a State school which didn't cost tuition. I chose Albany, where my room and board at the YWCA House was eight dollars a week, thirty-five dollars a month. My scholarship was for \$150 (they weren't scaled, all alike), so I paid two months' bill each semester, with Dad mailing me a check for \$35. each month. I earned spending money by baby-sitting. I had two skirts, two sweaters, two tea gowns, and a good black dress for best. I got two more sweaters for Christmas that first year. I was "rushed" by all the "good" sororities except the Catholic ones, and became pledged to Kappa Delta, where my idol, Elaine Baird, belonged. I never was much interested in their activities, but enjoyed the sorority atmosphere of Y House, which was a cooperative. We all had to clean our rooms and do the weekly (Saturday) cleaning. I didn't mind that... I had always cleaned at home.

The house was quite different by then from when we moved there. For the first year or so, we used kerosene lights, the outdoor toilet, and drew water from a well. there were two wells, right by the back door, a "dug" well, with a driven well beneath it. I became the family drawer of water at first, and became quite adept at throwing down an overturned pail, attached to a rope, and drawing up a pail of sweet clean water, without disturbing the sediment at the bottom. As soon as he could, Dad wired the house for electricity, set up our own generating system, and installed a pump to obtain water from the deep well, which never ran dry. The batteries for the generator were on a row of steps outside the back door, in what had once been the summer kitchen, which we used as a woodshed. The house was at least 100 years old when we moved there, with huge, foot-square, hand-hewn beams. Dad had a hard time getting the wires through or around them, as the bits on his drills weren't long enough. An old friend who helped him declared that you could turn the house over, put it back right side up, and it wouldn't even be out of line. That wasn't quite accurate, because the floors were not all true, nor the walls, but it was certainly substantial. Eventually, Dad also installed a washbowl and toilet in what had been the pantry off the big main room, the original kitchen. No bathtub until I was away at college. Before then, though, he had transformed one of the tiny bedrooms into a new and relatively modern kitchen, leaving the big room for dining. He installed a furnace too, but we still had coal stoves while I was living at home, with no heat upstairs except what was given off by the stovepipe