

CLINTON COUNTY TRAILS

Published Quarterly - September 1992

Volume 7, Number 3

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Pres Catherine Reed
V.Pres JoAnn Slabonek
Sec'y Jeanne Serviss
Treas William Serviss
C.Sec'y Janet Snyder

GENEALOGISTS

Pres Marilyse Brooks
V.Pres William Serviss
Sec'y Janet Snyder
Treas Janet Tiedt
C.Sec'y Janet Snyder
Program Chair. Arlene Lounds

MUSEUM

Co-Directors

Catherine Rumbaugh
John Rumbaugh

ARCHIVIST

Myrna VanEpps

NEWSLETTER

Co-Editors

Myrna VanEpps
Arlene Smith

NELLIE (SPENCER) GREEN

Interviewed in her home at Ovid, Michigan, by Jeanne Temple on February 23, 1983.

(Q) Nellie, can you tell us your birthday?

(A) I was born August 29, 1900, on what was then called the Town Line Road between Ovid and Duplain Townships. My parents were Ed and Mina (Satterllee) Spencer. My mother had been adopted by the Daleys/Daileys. Susan Daley/Dailey was her adopted mother. There were four in my family: My brother John; and then in three years, Mabel who became Mabel Bartlett; Laura (Spencer) Crane; and myself the youngest.

(Q) Where did you go to elementary school?

(A) Sherburne School, about a mile east of our home. Belle Winfield was the first teacher; and there were two Daggett sisters, Pearl and Faye, and Kate Jillson. The teacher I remember the best was the one I had in the seventh and eighth grade, Lucile Post. She was a very good teacher.

(Q) In those days the exam you eighth graders took was very, very important to you, wasn't it? You had to go the stated place and take an exam.

(A) It was put out by the county and supervised by the county commissioner, and we poor, little kids were scared to death. We went to the Shepardsville Schoolhouse to take the test. My dad took me with the horse and buggy.

(Q) Who were some that were in your class as you went through country school?

(A) Lulu Lavere, who is now Lulu Cox, started out in the first grade with me and went through all twelve grades with me. Isn't that wonderful? And we were very good friends and still are. She lives now in California. There was Hazel and Frank Hall and our neighbors, the Stewart children; and then the Davidson family lived and helped Delos Myers, and they had three children (One of them died with appendicitis while they were living there.); and then Easlicks, Brennan and the twins Bernice and Bertha; Leon Smith; and there were three or four children from the Ed Smith family; and a family by the name of Rose.

(Q) Your father was a farmer. Did he milk cows?

(A) Oh, yes, and we had chickens and pigs. I think the farm size was eighty acres. My father was a good farmer. He always made pets of his animals. There was one old cow named Granny and he used to set me on her back, and I would ride out of the cow stable on Granny's back. I always took care of the chickens and fed the cows before they were ready to come in at night. We sold the milk and some times the cream. At first there was a horse-drawn wagon that used to pick up the milk and then, eventually, a truck did. We had plums and lots of apples. Dad had a big apple orchard, and he used to sell apples to my Uncle George

Gleason who ran the cider mill at Ovid at that time.

(Q) I presume your mother made all her bread.

(A) Oh, yes. She made three pies every Saturday and usually a cake, and we very often had chicken. Dad butchered every fall, and that is what I was amused about--the salt pork we used to have. We had salt pork and salt pork and salt pork! Mother fixed it in such a way that I really liked it. She would parboil it to get some of the salt out of it, and then fry it until it was very crisp. Then we had homemade chili sauce to eat on it. We had a big garden. Mr. Alderman from Shepardsville used to have a great big team of horses and a big, heavy wagon that brought groceries around every Tuesday, I think it was. And then an old gentleman from Ovid named Foss used to drive along with another wagon on Fridays, and mother would usually trade her big basket of eggs for groceries.

(Q) Do you remember what Mother packed in your lunch when you went to school?

(A) Very apt to be baked bean sandwiches. I liked those. She always, every week, made a pot of baked beans, and that, with some of this homemade chili sauce, made very good sandwiches, and I liked them.

(Q) When you were a girl what did you do for entertainment?

(A) We had a big bunch of young people at

Duplain, and we used to have lots of things going on. We would have different kinds of socials; we had "clothespin socials" for which you dressed up clothespins as twins, and the girl would keep the one twin and put the other one up for auction. Whatever boy bought her twin would have to hunt around until he found its mate. Then he had to eat supper with its owner. She would bring the supper in a box. There were shadow socials where the girl would stand up in front of a sheet. Then the boy, all he could see of her, to tell who it was, was her shadow. It was very hard to tell who belonged to that shadow.

(Q) I know of your love and your interest in the Methodist Church at the Rochester Colony. Did your family go there at that time?

(A) No. When I was young we went to the Shepardsville church, always. Some of the pastors there were: Bancroft--they had a couple daughters around my age; Exner--he was the one that baptised me; and Birdsall was the one that married me.

(Q) What year did you start Ovid High School?

(A) Well, I was thirteen one day, and I started high school the next day--in 1913. I was green and fresh! I drove a horse and buggy. The first year Laura, my older sister, went with me. Dad always rented a barn, and we had to unhitch the horse, put a halter on it, and hitch it to the manger in the barn there (a privately owned barn

usually). Dad would pay them; I think it was two dollars a month. He would bring down a load of hay and put it up in their loft, and then I would have to go down at noon and fork down the hay for the horse; then at night hitch her up and away we'd go. Dad wouldn't let me go to school or drive to school after it got so bad we had to use a cutter because he was so afraid I'd tip over in it. So usually, Dad and Mother would rent a room with some family down to Ovid for two or three months at a time in the winter. I would be homesick, would go home on weekends. My junior year was the year I rode with Lloyd Rummel. Dad trusted him, I guess, not to tip over.

(Q) Do you remember your teachers?

(A) The one I had in first year geometry--I had to take it three years--was Anna B. Johnson; and the last year was Gilman [Effie Guilford?] I think, and she was red-haired and quite strict. Lovica Dean was the English teacher for most of my time in high school. She was very good. We had a high school chorus, and I always was a member and really enjoyed that. The director was Matthews at first, and then later on we had Aurabelle/Arabelle Mayhew who married Ray Lewis here in town. We studied ancient and modern history. My teacher was Irene [Ione?] Orr. She was a good teacher. I was the class poet and had to make up the poem and recite it graduation night. The graduation exercises were held in the old opera house. Now it's the Veterans' Building, but it used to be that everything big going on in Ovid

