CHAPTER 10

A Heritage of Memories

By Jane Stephens

Early residence of Sam Rettig, one of those interviewed.

INTERVIEWS

In this chapter are the informal, chatty interviews with some of the older generation, most of whom are still living here. The memories give a good picture of the area as it was. Some of these reminiscences tell of the hardships while others show a lighter side which made life bearable. These people helped establish Moweaqua as the community it is today and will be tomorrow.

EDA BOHLEN

Eda's maiden name was Tabbert, and there were five girls and two boys in the family. She came to Moweaqua in 1912, from Strasburg. About a year later she married Herman Bohlen, and they had three children, Alta, Paul, and Ralph. Before her marriage Eda taught four years, one at the Long Grove School.

Her recollections took still another phase. She remembers visiting the Presbyterian Church when it was on the west side of the park. She was surprised that their service was so similiar to the Methodists. The Day Store with its long watering trough in the front was quite a place for the men to exchange their tales as the horses drank. She was always interested in the flaming forge at the Wellgman Blacksmith Shop across the road. When she thinks of Coffman's Mill, she remembers a little hill that they had to go up and down before getting there. When the big snows came, they had to scoop out a half mile lane, which would be like a tunnel and have only one way traffic. Fourth of July in the park was really a highlight. The band played in the bandstand; there were always speakers; and ice cream was a treat.

Of course on Saturday bread for the week had to be baked, the yeast being set the night before. Potato water was used for the liquid. One day Winfred Bohlen remarked, "There will probably come a day when we'll just go to the store to buy bread, too."

JOSIAS WRIGHT BROOKS

Josias Wright Brooks moved to Moweaqua vicinity about the time Moweaqua became a town. Josias was the son of John and Polly Anna (Wright) Brooks. They were born in Brunswick County, Virginia. They moved to Baldwin County, Georgia, where Josias was born in 1808. They moved to Bedford County, Tennessee, in about 1810. John was working on the roof one day and was killed, leaving a wife and ten children.

Josias married Martha A. Barding, daughter of David Barding, October 13, 1833. They had four children born in Tennessee. They moved to Paducah, Kentucky in 1842, where four more were born.

There was much unrest about the slave question. Josias felt the slaves would be freed so he sold his slaves, being twenty-three in number and also his farm of 700 acres, except two acres which he donated for a Methodist Church and cemetery. He moved with his family to Moweaqua, Illinois, where he bought a farm south of town in 1853.

Martha Barding Brooks died in 1856 leaving ten children, the last being born after they came to Shelby County. Josias later married Martha Demeris Selby in 1858. They had eight children. Three of the children moved from the Moweaqua area. Josias, Jr., Alfred, Stephen, Charles, and Barkley remained.

Josias Brooks was an Elder in the Moweaqua Methodist Church. He retired to Moweaqua, living on East Main and Putnam (where Gail Stewart lives). The property has been in the family over 100 years. Josias ran a store which later became the Gaskill Store in the 100 block of East Main Street. He died in Moweaqua on April 9, 1874, age 66. Martha died in her home on East Main Street on April 10, 1910, age 80.

BERNARD CARR

His parents were Walter A., born west of Macon and Addie Mae Hohn, who was born at Collinsville. Bernard was their only child, and he was born on the home place and lived there sixty years. His birth delayed the arrival of Santa Claus at the Christmas Eve party at Sanner Chapel, for Santa was the one that had to go for the doctor. One of the "gifts" Santa had for the community party was the announcement of the new big boy at the Carr home. Bernard married Pearl Myers, who lived southwest of town, on May 14, 1927, in a home wedding. Four days before, there was a terrible tornado in Moweaqua and it did quite a bit of damage. They have two children, Melissa, and Melvin.

By now things were getting more modern, and the town was getting cement sidewalks. One evening after one of the new walks had been poured, a drunk fell and was not found till morning. His clothes had to be cut off him before they could get him up.

Big preparations had to be made for the winter before the roads got impassable. Dried fruits, such as peaches, prunes and pears, large boxes of crackers, etc., were ordered from Sears. Then the depot would let purchasers know when the order arrived. Then from town, they would get 100 pound barrels of salt, 50 pounds of flour, and brown sugar to cure the hams. The big all-day job was coming in with four wagons to get the coal supply. They had to be careful as they put in the big chunks not to break the wagon floor.

Then going home, they would stop as usual to water the horses at Round Grove School. Since they had eight horses, they did not use the trough which was there for that purpose but carried a bucket of water to each horse.

Then Pearl told us about her grandmother, Isabelle Rigsby who was born in Livingston, Tennessee, coming to Stonington in a Prairie Schooner. The cow was tied on behind and frequently someone would walk, including the eight children. The trip took six months. The grandmother recalled seeing Indians when she would go to the spring for water. Pearl's parents were baptized in the icy waters of Flat Branch. Her father, James Myers, had the first car, a Reo, in this part of the country.

As we left, Bernard asked if anyone had said anything about the hard times of 1933. They sold hogs for a cent a pound, if they could find a buyer with cash, for that was what they needed, too.

LEILA CARR

Leila was born in Prairieton Township. Her parents started out on a small thirty-eight acre farm. Her father planted and cultivated strawberries with the help of Old Mollie, with Leila riding her and guiding her down the rows. Her father also had a watermelon patch which he would guard with his old shot gun as the melons ripened. Sometimes gypsies would come through in the covered wagons and

camp. They would come begging for food; they were given something so that they would not steal. In about 1893 there was a very hard freeze that froze the berries and all living plants.

Leila remembers the many times she went fishing with her grandfather, walking through the mud to Charter Oak School; watching the talent show under canvas tents; and going with Mrs. Duckwall to Chicago where she entered a nursing school. Soon after that she married and lived in Sanner Chapel, Indiana, Georgetown, and Oconee, later settling back in Moweaqua.

FRANCES CHEATHAM

Frances was born seven miles east of Macon. Her mother, Linda Marshall, was born in New York; her father, Charles Crane, was born in Mississippi. They had four boys and three girls. She married Earl in 1919. First she went to school at Maple Grove and later in Decatur. She walked to school but at that time West Macon was a cow pasture. Dr. Pratz, whom her mother worked for dressing many of the newborn babies, would have been deeply moved by an incident that happened at his funeral. The casket as it was being carried down the aisle was preceded by a little foreign lady who carried in her hand a tin can still with the corn label on and filled with flowers and placed it on the altar. Dr. Duckwall loved to tell this story. When he was just opening up his practice here in our village, he would come dashing down the stairs from his office, hit his horse a crack, and head out of town to make people think he was on a call. His practice soon built up. As a little girl, Frances thought Doc had the little babies in the big case that he always carried.

Her brother Arch drove for a mule buyer, Mannie Wilson. One day when Arch was really driving "them" mules, Mannie told him, "I'd rather be an hour late for Heaven than get to Hell on time!"

She remembers Stine's hearse being driven by a pair of very beautiful and very black horses. Frances had a horse that frequently would run in the races on the track south of town. One day she drove it in a funeral procession and had a time to keep it from passing the hearse.

GERTRUDE GORDEN

Gertrude was born in Nashville, Illinois, and came to Moweaqua when she was about six, as they had relatives living here. Her father was also born in Illinois. Since the four children the Hoffmans had were girls, Gertrude learned to milk at an early age and still is not too fond of milk. The girls would also deliver fresh butter, eggs, and chickens in their horse drawn cart, to the Moweaqua townspeople.

Although she was only four, she very vividly remembers her dad planning a trip to Missouri. Not having a mobile trailer in those days, they fixed up a covered wagon, hitched up the team, and the colts trailed behind. Gertrude said she could still smell the fried potatoes as they would cook their meals on an open campfire. At night they slept in the wagon.

She and Glen were married in a double ceremony in the Fame Church. They had forty-seven years together and had two sons, Haldon and Thomas J. She showed us a lovely and very unusual valeintine that was the first valentine Glen gave her. It was about fifteen inches square, so had to be mailed to her in a box. They don't make valentines like that today!

LILLIE GORDEN

Her parents were Jacob and Virenda Adams Bilyeu, and their eight children were all born in the same house as their father. She married Orville Gorden in 1916, and their three children, Carl, Marjorie, and T.J., were all born in the house that their father was born in.

She attended Oak Branch School. There were spelling bees, cipher (math) contests, and box socials. At the socials, somehow the same boy always seemed to get the bid for her box. She remembered other things, such as the time when her older sister, Eva, had a date with Trace. She would always sneak into the parlor and aggravate her sis. At one of her grandmother's quiltings, when a neighbor came to help, "Little Russell Bilyeu" was quoted as saying to the neighbor, "Mrs. Gorden says you don't quilt too well, and we have to take it all out after you leave." Also flour sacks were used for aprons, under drawers, and tea towels (dish towels). Her church memory was of the big fish fries. They would start working three days ahead of the event. The fish would be fried outside in big iron kettles. It was quite a money making project.

NETTIE GORDEN

Her father was James Dickens, who came from Arkansas; her mother, Nancy Kinder, was from Missouri. Some of the Dickens boys fought in the Civil War and were never heard from. By coincidence while on a train trip they met Senator Caldwell who checked on the family and learned the father had been killed in the war. There were six children, five girls and one boy. They lived to farm and did quite well. She married Louis Gordon in 1905. Both of them were born in Prairieton Township. He farmed until he was 80 years of age. They had one daughter Mildred. She attended the Oak Branch School, and after finishing the eighth grade she took a final. Spelling Bees were a highlight for both the school and community. If a student won the local match several times, he then went to the county seat. H. Agnes Prescott was her teacher. During the winter term when so many big boys were in attendance, the board tried to hire a man teacher; then sometimes for the spring term a woman would teach. She has been a lifelong member of the Christian Church. One early Christmas she remembered the hired man put cotton on his jacket and came calling as Santa Claus. The tree with its lighted candles was in the corner. When Santa reached to get a present for the grandchildren, the cotton caught on fire.

While we visited with Nettie in Mildred's home, her daughter showed us a vine that had come through the foundation and into the room along the wall. The roots were outside but the plant continues in an abundance of beautiful ivy growth draping itself around the floor lamp.

CARRIE JACOBS

She was born in Prairieton Township. She married Henry Jacobs. They had one daughter, who lived most of her life west of town also. She and Nettie Gorden are the last living children of the Dickens family.

CHRISTINE CAMERON GREGORY

Chris remembers the common pasture in the north and northwest parts of town. Anyone who had a cow could pasture her there. Then at milking time, whoever was to

do the milking would take his milk stool and go down to the pasture to milk "ole bossy."

Chris's folks came here from Colorado in 1904. Her home was built 70 years ago, and at that time there was only one other house there. She married Everett Gregory, and Reverend Milford performed the ceremony.

On Decoration Day the school children, dressed in their very best, carrying a bouquet of flowers, and preceded by the band marched out to the West Cemetery. There they would decorate the graves and then march back in orderly fashion to the school. The third and fourth grades met in the basement as the school was so crowded. One day her brother Dave fell off his chair and caught his head between the rounds of the next chair. They had to call a janitor to saw the rounds to dislocate the captured head. She recalls other entertainment. There was an old cider mill south of town. All the high school bunch would collect at her place, and they would go down for a cup of cider. On Sunday, the couples (dressed in their best) would walk out north and cross the trestle. When the southeast pond was frozen, they would go ice skating. First they would stop off at the Cameron Home where Mrs. Cameron had made baked beans, baking them till they were very hard. The skaters would fill their pockets with them. They were a substitute for peanuts.

Some of her teachers were Nettie Rogers, Gertrude Hudson, and Jennie Whiston. Her class (1909), which had five graduates, Chris being the last survivor, bought the first piano that the school had.

EDITH PEARL GREGORY

Edith Pearl Gregory was born August 15, 1888, to Richard and Alice Parks Gregory. She is the oldest living member of a family of eight. The first fifty years of her life were spent at 240 West Main Street.

Living on the west side of the tracks was like living in another town; it was very pleasant. The deep well-kept lawns gave a park-like appearance. The large family of boys always drew other children from the area, so there was nearly always a ballgame in progress,

However, there were problems. Nearly all the homes were fenced in with ornate iron, white picket, or wire fences. Tom Ponting, Sr., was a cattle feeder living out on the west road. When his cattle were ready for market, they were driven up West Main Street to the stockyards to be shipped by the Illinois Central to Chicago or St. Louis. The herds of cattle could be heard approaching when far out on the west road. It was a terrifying sound. Every house sent someone to close the front gates to keep the cattle from straying into the yards.

Another hazardous experience was the seven block trek to school every day. There was safety in numbers, so the west side "kids" walked together. First to be dealt with were the many freight trains switching for the two elevators and the stockyards and the hoboes that frequented the tracks. Then there were the six saloons and their customers to pass. In bad weather, muddy Main Street had to be crossed on crosswalks that could not be found for the deep mud. The suction of the mud pulled off many an overshoe.

After finishing high school in 1907, Pearl went to work for W. E. Corrington in his general store located where the Ondes Sport Shop is now. There she sold lard, flour, sugar, etc., in the bulk, fitted shoes, and tried to translate requests for "Jerk" (elastic for garters, bloomer legs, and sleeve holders) and "hodds and hends" of yard

She later spent several years working in the post office under John Clark and the Longenbaughs as postmasters.

When her mother's health failed, she quit her outside employment and helped at home. A lover of flowers and antiques, Pearl spent many hours in growing a flower garden and collecting "collectibles".

After the death of her father in 1942, she went to work for Lawrence and Earl Gregory in the hardware and furniture store of R. Gregory and Company. She kept books and clerked there until 1954, when the store was sold.

In 1948 she sold her home on West Main and moved to 319 East Main where she lived until illness overtook her, and she now lives in Lincoln Manor where she enjoys the activities there.

TRACE AND EVA BILYEU GREGORY

Trace and his buddy, Earl Housh, sure enjoyed their young life. They attended out of town football games, driving a pair of mules to get there. They often went coon-hunting (the Houshes having the first hound dogs in the vicinity). At one of them they were having an egg roast and decided they needed a chicken to roast. One of the other fellows told Trace and Earl to go to his place and get a chicken. They could not find one there so decided to go to one of the other hunter's home. He never knew he was eating one of his prize hens. Earl in trying to spot the coons and dogs would just swing from limb to limb like a monkey.

Then one time on a hayride they wanted to cross the Okaw River, which was quite high. They all might have been drowned if Fred Pinkston had not insisted they use a skiff along the bank, tie it to the horse's tail, and get across that way (chances were taken then, too).

The Christian Church at Pleak was not permitted to have a piano or organ, so they used one of the first tuning forks. They remembered that at the Hard Shell Baptist the members would wash each other's feet.

All eight of the brothers and sisters in Eva's family were born in the same house as their father. Four of these have celebrated their golden wedding anniversaries: Eva and Trace have had 64 years together. She remembered a traveling doctor who treated her mother with a salve which was to be applied to quite a deep raw open place on her breast. The treatment was extremely painful but did affect a cure.

She went to Oak Branch School where there were 50 to 60 pupils, three in a seat, and some 21 years old.

Then before we left, we were really transported into the past. When they tore down the old barn on the farm, they panelled their basement with the wood, even using the old barn door. On the mantle of the more up-to-date fireplace, were two lamps, one of them being the parlor lamp. Also on there is a jewelry case, Trace's first gift to Eva. Two old seats from a buck board give additional seat space. In one corner was their old mailbox on its stand. It really is cozy to sit there and remember!

CHARLES HARRIS

Charles was born in Indiana in a two-story log house. His parents were James Overton and Ann Adams Harris, who came to Moweaqua in 1889 in a covered wagon. It took them a week to travel the 250 miles. They walked quite a bit to relieve the load and to break the monotony. They would come near someone's home, and often these people would bring them some food and exchange news. He married Lenor Kirk in 1910, previously attending the Lucy School where he received his elementary education.

He particularly remembers their large apple orchard, containing all varieties of apples. Another memory is of the thousands of ducks and geese around the swampy areas and so many pheasants. His special memory was the prairie chickens. He could hear the male's call for miles. One day eighty of these chickens followed the four horse plow picking up the worms.

The land boundaries were marked with a large flat rock, a cross cut into it, and then placed at the corners. He really appreciated the help of their shepherd boy on early mornings in rounding up the cows and horses. He remembers a four inch sleet while he was crossing a creek so high he had to kneel in his saddle as the horse crossed it.

He talked of several family plot cemeteries that were around but now have been covered over. One still in existence is the Ludwig Cemetery where that family was buried to form a circle with a brick walk enclosing it. He talked of his experiences as a country school teacher at Chadwick and Fame and as an architect for our present school and of Mac Wilson, the contractor.

MR. AND MRS. FRED HARRIS

Mrs. Harris' father bought a farm and came to Moweaqua. She attended school one mile east of the Fame Church. When the teacher, Edith Brown, had time, she tried to give those that were ready their high school education. This was probably the beginning of independent education, as they had to do so much on their own. There were about forty-six students, and the older boys attended mostly in the winter. Mr. Harris went to Nebraska-Charter Oak Schools. Then the family moved to Dunkel Station area which could boast only of a grain elevator and a railroad station.

They met at an ice cream social. The stage for the program was a hayrack brought in for this purpose. Elsie met Fred when he came back to congratulate her on her part in the entertainment. Since a former minister that they liked so well had moved to Green Valley near Pekin, they decided to go there to get married. They took the 5 A.M. train and came back on the midnight train.

Her grandfather, Will Fathauer, came from Germany. Her grandmother, Mary Jostes, came from Germany in a sailing vessel, the trip taking 12 weeks. Mr. Harris' father, Richard Harris, came from England, but his mother, Josephine Adams, was born near Stonington.

They recalled the blacksmith shop, run by John Clump, who not only shoed horses, but also made wagon wheels. Mr. Mauzy, the first policeman, would always meet the midnight train. Though there were many events in the park, they remembered that they would walk in dust almost ankle deep. The fire equipment was a two wheel cart, and high school boys would see who could get there first to push it to the fire. Mail was delivered by a two wheel cart and then by horseback when the roads got impassable.

Getting more up-to-date (1933-1940) Earl Cheatham would come out to their farm at noon or of an evening. He would quickly kill and skin a hog and bring it back to his store to finish the job of butchering. Again how times have changed!

LAWRENCE HEITMEYER

Lawrence was born in Shelby County, the son of Anna Mary Brink and Henry Heitmeyer who had four other sons and three daughters. He attended Pleasant Flower School, and Mr. Baggett, who was one of his teachers, would chew tobacco during school and then go over to the coal bucket to spit it out.

He attended the Salem Methodist Episcopal Church which had one room and the pot-bellied stove. Lawrence remembers when he was twelve that Reverend Ludwig, had four sons who became ministers. The church was sold and moved across Flat Branch to become a barn.

One of the things he remembers is his dad going hunting for food with a muzzle loading gun and fishing in Flat Branch. He recalls his dad building a big fire for the iron pot to get ready for butchering, and neighbors gathering to do the threshing, and of working from daylight to dark, hand-shucking the corn. There would usually be about 4,000 bushels.

He married Mary Jane Burnett who came from Shelbyville. She started teaching when she was seventeen; she taught two years at Pleasant Flower.

Lawrence enlisted in the Fourth Division on February 22, 1918, during World War I. He had a short training period at Camp Taylor, shipped to New Jersey, and then across on May 10, 1918. He landed in Calais, France, joined with the British, and got very tired of their ration marmalade. There were no available trucks so all of their traveling was hiking on foot. They hiked twenty-one days carrying sixty-five pound back packs. In 1919 he headed back for America with an honorable discharge.

ELIZABETH HIBBARD

Elizabeth was born in Sheffield, England, the daughter of James and Sarah Birley. There were five boys and five girls in the family. She came with her father, mother, and sister Emiy to America in 1910. A few months later the rest of the family joined them. They had a nice trip over, which took a week. They spent a day on Ellis Island where all immigrants were checked.

The family first went to Niantic and two years later moved to Moweaqua, which at that time had a population of about 800. In 1913 she married Walter Hibbard who was also from England. They had three sons and one daughter, losing one son at the age of twelve with strep throat. Elizabeth had two brothers, James and Tom, who were killed in the mine disaster.

She remembered that the roads were muddy and that usually cars were put in storage for the winter. She remembers an English aunt coming to America for a visit and also John Hibbard going to England to visit and that there was still tax on tea over there. She also reminds us that though we have our problems here in America, taxes and inflation are worse in England.

MARY HOWSE

Her parents were William and Mattie Watkins Stanberry who were born in Odin, as was Mary. She went to Chadwick School. She was a charter member of the Little Flock Baptist Church. She married James Howse in 1915 and they had five boys. Her husband passed away in 1946. They lived on the farm.

Mary's mother, Mrs. Stanberry, was the Moweaqua Centennial Queen in 1952, who soon would have been 100, during the big celebration held at that time. Mary has seven grandchildren, sixteen great grandchildren, three great great grandchildren. At one time they had five generations represented.

PEARL PARKS HUMPHREY

Pearl was born in 1889 in a little home three miles east of Moweaqua. Her mother, the former Carolina Greggs, married Walter Parks, and they had two sons (Delmar and Oscar) and three daughters (Gertrude, Pearl, and one dying in infancy as happened to many pioneer new born babies).

She remembers their neighbors having smallpox and all the children died. Trace Gregory's father who was on the health department had to declare them under quarantine to try to prevent an epidemic which so many feared as there was no prevention and little known cure.

Pearl remembers many English families settling here, and the natives enjoyed hearing them talk as they dropped the necessary h's and added extra ones. The story is told of the Hudsons and Snyders talking about another dreaded disease, cholera. One Englishman was quoted as saying: "This germ it is not in the 'air of your ead; it is in the hair of the hatmosphere".

One of the big highlights of Yantisville and surrounding area was the Yantisville Band which had several members. Pearl smiled as she particularly remembered the extra tall, thin drum major (a Longenbaugh) with a bright feather bobbing atop his head. The Modern Woodman Lodge was very active. Pleak Store was important to the area where she remembered buying a special big red apple for five cents. Many belonged to the Hard Shell Baptist Church.

She attended Round Grove School. Grades one to eight gathered around the pot bellied stove and recited at the recitation bench. Charles Coburn, Vera McGee's father, seemed to be a favorite and wonderful teacher who played ball with them but also switched a few. Harper's Readers were used.

HAZEL MILLER KOONTZ

Hazel's mother Jennie Miller went to the first school in Moweaqua which was on the southwest corner across from the park. She recalled how her mother and Grandma Jacobs would ride in an open box car to Assumption.

One of the highlights in entertainment was the Chattaqua coming to town. A huge tent would be pitched in the park, and crowds came to hear the lectures, musicals, and plays. In 1909, she heard Billy Sunday preach in Decatur. They went up on the four o'clock train and returned on the midnight train which was held at the station there for the late comers so none would be stranded.

The Potter Hotel, possibly in the vicinity of the old Rettig Home, was run by Hazel's grandfather and uncle, H. I. and Ed Potter. They had a black cook there whose specialty was deep fried mush. It had a large room where traveling salesmen could display their wares.

In 1897, on one of the coldest nights on record, 27 degrees below zero, their home burned to the ground. Their insurance had expired two weeks previously at the same time a daughter, Edna was dying. That evening Hazel was attending the wedding of a cousin, Ida Snyder to Ben Smart. When she went home the next morning, all that was left standing were two tall chimneys. There was no house in Assumption, Macon, or Moweaqua that was available to rent, so they stayed with friends and relatives.

Hazel was one of the last operators on the old switchboard. When there was an emergency, it would light up like a Christmas tree as everyone wanted to know about it. During a fire they had to call each fireman and give them the key to the fire station. Then the system became automatic as the Inland Company took over, and this personal service became part of the "good ole days".

ELLA LAUGHLIN

Ella is the daughter of Nancy Jane Baird and George McClelland; they had one son and two daughters. She was born on a farm six miles east of town, but two years later they moved to the Village where she received her education. In 1919 she married David Laughlin, and they lived in Cleveland two years, later moving to a farm east of Moweaqua. The Laughlin farm, which was purchased in 1865 from a Mr. Armstrong who had got it from the government, is another of the Moweaqua Centennial farms. The Laughlins had one boy and one girl.

Ella's dad worked in the post office and became its first rural carrier. He went east of town and took mail to Prairie Home and Allenborough as well as his route which covered a large area. As a very little child, Ella probably set a first and last record at the post office. Her mother gave her a letter that must be mailed and told her to get a 2c stamp from her dad at the post office. When she got there, her dad was not there. She stretched herself up to the window and said to the postmaster, Mr. Gregory, "Please put a 2c stamp on my letter and charge it to my dad." Later Mr. McClelland was quick to find he had a 2c charge at the post office.

Her memories include the following: the Baptist picnic, the big pay affair the Christian Church had, (the annual Thanksgiving dinner and supper), the Circus which to the town was as big as the Ringling Brothers, and the Opera House where a seat had to be reserved, and the Methodist parish trying to get more people to come to Epworth League, so they changed their meeting to Monday night as Sunday was "date night."

Ella baby-sat with two children for 5c for a half day. Her first nickel she spend to ride the merry-go-round which was in town for a few weeks. The young girls wore two or three petticoats when they dressed up. One of their pleasures was taking a stroll, even though the streets were extremely dusty. After they changed their clothes, they would have to take them outside to shake off the dust.

JESS LONG

Jess was born in Wichita, Kansas; his parents were Harry and Florence Warren Long. They had three boys. The family moved to Moweaqua in 1900. He attended Long Grove School and church at Sanner Chapel. In 1943 he married Nancy Johnson. He started his plumbing business in Assumption but soon moved to Moweaqua and has been in business forty-years. He was overseas during World War I and did not get home till 1919 as he was in the Army of Occupation in Germany.

He recalls that Route 51 was built in 1924 but was called Route 2 as it was the second paved road in the state. He frequently had breakfast of ham, eggs, bread, and all the coffee he wanted for 20c at Shaffer's Restaurant and 5c beer at Billy Brown's. Of course wages were $7 for a six-day week.

He liked to go hunting and had a couple of good stories. One time a group were hunting on the Illinois River. Monk Day had to come back sooner than the others. He wanted to make an impression as a successful hunter so he bought some ducks from the other fellows for 65c each. Later he found out that they had sold him his own ducks. A group took the Illinois Central down to Ramsey on another hunting trip. They stayed at the hotel but slept in their clothes as the old pot-bellied stove was quite inadequate as a heating system. When the warden checked their quota, they had one bird too many and that bird cost them $25.

At the time of this interview Jess's thoughts were more on the present as he had just been given a lovely surprise party his sister-in-law, Erma Gloria Johnson. Many of his friends and business associates had dropped by to help him celebrate.

FANNIE MOSS

The following is taken from a letter mailed to the Bicentennial Committee:

Back in 1850, my grandfather, Dudlay Watson, freed his slaves on his plantation in Kentucky and moved his family to Moweaqua on a farm just west of town. My mother, Rebecca, was age four when she arrived at her new home. There were six boys and six girls. Mama told me how grandfather would give to each daughter, after she grew up, cash to drive the horse and buggy to town to purchase their supply of clothing. They spun the thread, made the garments, and life was happy in the good old days. Happy hours of square dancing were enjoyed.

My mother, Rebecca, married James P. Mackey in Texas. At sixteen I was in school in Springfield, Ohio, graduating in 1909 and had one term in Wettenberg College.

In 1913 I married Leslie Moss and came to Moweaqua where I have lived for 62 years. Our daughter, Neva May, married Harry Pipes, and they had one son, Allan.

At the age of six, Neva May was the youngest unofficial dog catcher in the village. She would catch stray dogs and often had six or eight leashed to her trike and would ride up Main Street to Billy Brooks' meat market. Kindhearted Billie always gave free "weeners" for all dogs. At the age of fourteen, Neva May was playing her piano key board Silver Accordian at band concerts in nearby towns, on the radio, at schools, and often at old fiddler contests.

The years have passed with their medley of pleasure and pain as years have left Fannie and Neva May widows, but to escape the bitter cold and snow of Illinois, Fannie has moved out to share the sunny days near the peaceful Pacific with her daughter.

But Fannie's big local contribution was her writing of the *Moweaqua Centennial History (1852-1952)* with the picture of a covered wagon drawn by oxen. This book sold for 50c and was published by Claude and Elsie Snyder.

NELLIE PINKSTON

Nellie was born in Fayette County. Her parents who came to Moweaqua in 1916 were Oliver Craig and Adeline Sherwood. There were four girls and seven boys. Nellie worked in the Commercial Hotel which was managed by Lottie Bethards.

She had many memories of her childhood. Her dad was Sunday School Superintendent for services held in the schoolhouse. As he drove the wagon or sleigh, he would pick up all the children on the way. They did not want to kill a chicken, so they decided to have a guinea. If you know anything about that bird, how they run and fly, they chased it all day before it was finally captured. When she was home, her bedroom was no larger than a clothes closet. Before going to school she had to milk nine cows. She received fifty cents a week and seventy-five in the summer.

The young people had lots of fun gathering in each others homes, having taffy pulls, and popping corn. They would walk two or three miles, cutting across fields. One time her brother Roy put on a sheet to scare the kids. Two got scared and turned around and went back home.

But one of her favorite memories was when she was Cop for the very big successful Moweaqua Centennial. She had Reverend Potter in "jail". When he complained of being hungry, she went across to the restaurant, and they gave her a ham bone which the preacher hungrily gnawed on. Another man gave her $5.00 to jail his wife.

ADITH WILLIAMS POOLE

Adith was born in Marissa. Her husband Charles was born in 1893 in the house where they started housekeeping, and Adith still lives in the remodelled homestead. She came here to teach in 1919 and stayed with Dr. Wooters, the veterinarian, who married Kathryn Kyner. She taught twelve years in our system. When she got out of high school, she wrote for her first certificate. Then she later was given an emergency one to teach during World War I and a provisional certificate later when there was a shortage. She later attended Normal. She taught Sunday School to the adult group at the Christian Church for 52 years.

Charlie worked at Hedges grocery store and Joe Miller's Clothing Store. He is a veteran in World War I. He was hired to work at the coal mine and had only worked two days when the disaster occurred. Then his task was to check the rescuers in and out of the mine. For thirty years he worked at the South Elevator.

BESS PROTSMAN

Her father, Cyrus, was born at Yantisville; her mother, Moll, was born at Obed, as was Bess. She married Lawrence in 1906 and they had two boys and five girls.

She went to Obed School, and one winter there were seventy-two in attendance, one a twenty-one year old man who wanted to be a teacher. She remembers her teacher was very small and quite witty. She had sent a troublemaker home, but the father sent him back telling him he did not need to be scared of such a little thing. He, of course, repeated it to her. She grabbed him by the collar and really gave him a good "whopping!"

She remembers butchering time. They would start early and have help fom neighbors. Since it was an all day event the ladies really had to do some cooking. They always butchered six or eight hogs for the winter. As soon as they could, the sausage would by put in a large tub where it would fry and fry. Then some of it would be stuffed into bags, which had been made out of flour sacks or tapes (intestines that were thoroughly cleaned and scraped) which would be attached to the sausage stuffer. As the crank was turned, it would fill the tapes. Another time consuming task was rendering out the fat to make lard. The hams and bacons were hung in a smoke house. A large iron kettle which had been filled with green wood, would be lit. This would be kept burning for several days. When lambs were butchered, care had to be taken that the wool did not touch the meat part as it would give it a terrible taste, and often the meat could not be used.

Most families also made their own soap, gallons of it. Grease that had been saved till they had enough, would be heated and then added to the lye water. This would be stirred with a large wooden paddle till it was thick and syrupy, let harden, and cut into cakes. It got the clothes whiter than "Tide" does today.

SAM RETTIG

His father Lewis Rettig, who came from Ohio, married Agnes Prescott. His mother taught at the school located on the southwest corner of the park. He went to Charter Oak School and remembered his reader was the Harper Reader and his grammar the Harvey Grammar. He was born just north of this school. He met Marie Keim at a band concert and married her in 1922. It sometimes took four horses to pull a ton of coal from the mine over to the electric plant (as he said sometimes the mud was belly deep on a horse). There were street lights which burned two sticks of carbon. Ed Bethards was manager of the plant. It had two generators were run by steam. Sam refused a job to be "fireman" at the plant.

Although Sam had four sisters, he often rocked the children and even sewed some (taking two flour sacks to make the "drawers"). Everything around the house that was crocheted Sam made. Even when his own children came, he still sewed and helped out.

One of the things he remembered was Doc Sparling often would be on call all through the night and napped between calls. He named six saloons that were in town and remembered a lesson on the harmfulness of alcohol. At the church, they dropped an egg in the "firewater", and it fried. During weiner roasts, socials, and parties, a bunch of the boys would swipe some, if not all of the refreshments. His grandmother had told him of how Indians would peek in their windows.

An interesting article (written by our local Edna Sollars for the *Decatur Review*) was given for us to read. One of his family took an active part in a fight with John Paul Jones who gave Master Stacy a lovely set of dishes for a wedding gift. A few of these dishes are a highly prized possession of the Rettig family. At the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Ezekiel Prescott, the groom wore the first white shirt ever worn in Moweaqua.

FRANK RIBELIN

His parents were Benjamin Leslie and Hannah Marian Orme Ribelin. They had two children, Frank and Emma Lorine (Morton). His parents were married in Ogden, Utah, and Frank went through grade school in Salt Lake City and high school in Moweaqua.

His grandfather, Benjamin F. Ribelin, and grandmother, Harriet F. Luck, who were both born in Kentucky, later came to Moweaqua and bought a house where Sherwood's Funeral Home is now. He had a general store on the northeast corner of the square. Above it was the opera house.

Frank and Beulah Wagaman were married in 1926 and had two sons, Herbert and Jack. In 1945, Frank married Helen Adams, and they make their home in Moweaqua.

DAISY SANDERS

Daisy's father was Joseph O. Armstrong, the youngest of ten. He married Mary Isabelle Jacobs, and they had six children. Her great-grandfather settled on land presently owned by attorney Carl Miller of Decatur, but at that time in 1825 they were the first permanent residents of Penn Township. The great-grandmother, Jane Roach, according to their records, was an indentured servant who came over from England. Daisy's father built many a home for his family in town. The first being a log cabin on the northwest corner of the park, then a lovely two story home, located where Dr. Pistorius has his office. Later the house was moved, and it is now the home of Grover Jenkins.

Some of the things she likes to talk about were her grandfather killing an eleven foot panther near their place. When supplies such as salt and sugar were needed, they would go to St. Louis which was a two day trip one way. One time while they were gone, Indians were camped near the homestead. When they returned, they found the Indians had moved their place and eaten many of their chickens and other supplies. She remembers walking to the store with her pennies and now and then dropping one of the precious coins between the opening of the board walk. Someone usually took up one of the boards so she could retrieve it.

She attended school on the west side of the park. Daisy's parents lost four children during the dreaded epidemic of diptheria and scarlet fever. The Armstrongs originally were Scotch immigrants.

MABEL FRAZEE SNYDER

Mabel Blaine Snyder recalls her father, Oscar Frazee, was the first surveyor in the area. Later he had a tile and brickyard (as people build new homes some of these bricks have been found in perfect condition). Mr. Frazee's home was close to a pond which gave some water problems, so he decided to tile. Skeptics said he would only drain the pond into his home. It worked as he had thought it would, so he was in the drainage business.

She smiles as she remembers the big exciting interest in Moweaqua baseball. The diamond was on the site of Mrs. A. D. Day's home. When a game was scheduled, everyone went — men, women, and children. At one time five Snyders were playing. Roy played with the Three I's in Bloomington, and Blaine became captain of the U. of I. team. Later he played on both the New York and Canadian Leagues. Valentine Snyder started the first bank as Moweaqua began to prosper.

Mabel was born in 1888 in the home where she still lives, although many changes have been made. Her father was Oscar Frazee and her mother the former Addie May Jacobs. She married Blaine Snyder who has passed on, but he has two sisters living, Mattie 95 years and Lillian 97 years. Their daughter Betty Jane, who had polio while in college and was in a wheel chair, was an inspiration to many as she finished getting her degree and later was secretary for the chief physician at Warm Springs, Ga.

There were four graduates in Mabel's high school class of 1906; Clifford Parker, Iva Tate, and Ernest Leaf.

Blaine's grandfather gave the land for a right away for the railroad to come through which was a vital asset to the growth of the new village. Later he gave land for the town to have a park.

ZEVA SNYDER

Zeva was born three and one half miles west of town. Her parents were H. C. Miller and Marie Jane Widick, whose father was an early settler, farming for many years around Moweaqua. They had three boys and one girl. She attended school at Forest Hill where her teacher was Mrs. Annie Osborn and at Chadwick where she had Charlie Harris. She remembers plowing through snowdrifts on the way to school. Then when spring came since there was a creek between their house and the school, they sometimes had to stay with a neighbor. She married Merville in 1911.

The church they attended was a Christian Church, Campbellite. The choir loft was at the side of the pulpit. Everyone came to the basket dinners. The tablecloth was spread on the ground, and the people sat around on the ground. Chairs were brought out for the older members.

Though many remember Charlie Wortham, she was the first to tell us about him. Charlie, who lived in Blue Mound, had a tent show. He came to neighboring towns in the summer, would pitch his tent, and put on some very good and entertaining plays sometimes drama and often comedies.

Zeva's grandparents were among the early pioneers. William H. Miller, her father's father, came from Pennsylvania. He married Marietta Boyer, and they had four boys and two girls. He was a harness maker by trade. They were highly respected citizens of Moweaqua for many years. He died at the age of seventy-one in 1895.

Her mother's parents, Abner and Eliza Widick, came to Christian County in 1853. In 1844, they were married and had ten children. Abner was a farmer and one of the leading citizens of this community until his death in 1891. The mother was a devoted Christian and died in the house she called home for fifty-seven years.

DOC SPARLING

Eva Sparling recalls Doc telling her about one cold night when snow was about as deep as it had ever been, Mrs. Reatherford sent out an urgent call that the stork was on his way. Doc and Doc McDaniel, who drove for the Doctor, got out the horse and buggy and lit a lantern that they put under the carriage robe to provide some heat. It was impossible to distinguish where the roads were so they drove into a ditch and upset. We just do not know whether Doc got there before the stork or not.

MARY SPANGLER

Mary was born in Effingham, her parents were K. S. and Martha Green Manes; there were four girls and two boys, Mary being next to the oldest.

We visited with Helen Stollard who had some notes ready for us about her Aunt Mary and who was also "Aunt Mary" to many who were not related. She loved debates, box suppers, and dances, although sometimes she would attend dances on the sly. She had a variety of talents such as writing lots of poetry, many riddles, and entertaining friends and relatives by telling fortunes with coffee grounds, with some of the predictions coming true.

She married Henry Reatherford in 1891 in Pana. They had seven children: Sylvia who had seven; Charles, five; Clarency, five; Pearl died in infancy; Louis, three; Mabel and King each had one. Then they raised two grandchildren and any boy who came and wanted to work on the farm, some staying with them for some time. Henry died in 1944. Although Aunt Mary had lived on the farm most of her life, she was afraid of the pigs, sheep, and cows. As a result she moved to town. Soon she decided to go into Chicago to satisfy an old desire to learn to be a nurse. One of her patients was Julia Enslow.

Although she is now a patient at Americana, she still loves to go. She enjoys putting on one of her pretty pantsuits and coming to her favorite eating place, Windels, here in her hometown. Since she has been at Lincoln Manor, she has frequently played her French harp, and often her gentlemen friends would sing the melody. They might even do a little waltzing.

MARGARET GILMORE STIVERS

Margaret was nine years old when her family left Scotland to come to America. One memory she recalled of her native country was the customers coming to the grocery store with a syrup pail. What a lovely, golden amber the syrup was as it was ladled from a barrel into their pails. They were nine days on the boat. On their way they saw spouting whales and icebergs. She saw the Statue of Liberty in the early morning sunrise as they came into New York. They first landed on Ellis Island where they were given a fright as Margaret's eyes were examined four times before they were given the all clear to enter the United States.

Her grandmother, Mrs. Robert Young, lived in Stonington. When she was fourteen, Margaret came there to help out, coming from West Virginia. During the flu epidemic she went out to the country to take care of a child, but the entire family ended up having the disease, and the case lasted four weeks. At that time a nurse was on twenty-four hour duty, taking care of the sick, the household, and doing the cooking.

The night before she went on the case the snow was very deep, and she rode out in a storm buggy that had a little stove to combat the cold.

She first came to Moweaqua on a nursing case to take care of Mrs. Tom Ponting. In 1923 she began working at the newly established hospital. There her first patient was Mrs. Jessie Adams who had been badly burned as her clothes caught fire as she was warming herself in front of the fireplace.

In 1925, she married Karl Snyder. They had only been married three years when he died. Later she married Jesse Stivers, and they had one daughter.

LOTTIE STOVER

Lottie was born west of town in Christian County. Her parents were Malinda Jane Porter and Jessie Christopher Jacobs. Her mother's father was killed in the Civil War. Since the mother died young, their two daughters were raised in the Soldiers and Sailors Home in Bloomington.

She married Thomas Daniel Stover in 1924, and they had three children, eight grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Dan's parents homesteaded near Prairie Home.

She attended the Jacobs School and had Mr. Colbert and Frank Simpson for teachers. She really enjoyed the farm even milking the cows. One time when her parents were gone, her brother tried something he had always wanted to do. He hooked up the washing machine motor to the churn. Although the churn really did some dancing around the floor, they soon had butter. Another inventor not appreciated in his time!

CHARLES AUGUSTUS STOUT

Charles Augustus Stout was born in Camp Point, Illinois, January 21, 1881, the only son of Arthur and Eva Donahower Stout. He came to Moweaqua early in 1925 to manage the Moweaqua Co-Operative Grain Company. He had worked in grain elevators in Weldon, Cerro Gordo, Clinton, and Keokuk, Iowa.

He married Flora A. Gober in 1906 while working for the Illinois Central in Clinton, Illinois, as an engineer. They lived in Moweaqua for forty-six years.

Charley and Mrs. Stout built a lovely home at the northwest corner of the park and lived there for many years until his death in 1971. He and Mrs. Stout had two children, Mildred and Charles, who grew up in Moweaqua and attended the Moweaqua schools.

Flora A. Gober Stout was born December 20, 1889, on a ranch near Denton, Texas, the daughter of William Penn and Elizabeth Gober. She recalls her grandparents being chased out by Indians and not returning home for a year. She also remembers riding in a covered wagon to town and explains, "Everyone had covered wagons in those days, the only means of transportation."

Her father died young and left his widow with seven children. She moved her family back to Clinton, Illinois to be close to relatives. In Clinton, Flora grew up and graduated from high school in 1904.

She and her husband in their later years in Moweaqua spent many hours collecting and packing clothing for the church World Service project. She was active in church and missionary work, the Federated Women's Club, and the Garden Clubs of Illinois. Today she lives with her son, Charles, Jr., at 1125 Chapin Street in Beloit, Wisconsin. She still pursues her hobby of reading and does a lot of letter writing.

At age 90, she says wishfully, "I'd still like to go back to Texas and see if Martin Valley is still there".

ELIZABETH STUMP

Her mother was Christine Thompson; and her father was David Stump. They had one boy and six girls. For a time, the family lived at Trinidad, Colorado where he worked in the mines, later coming to work in the mine here. She attended the Moweaqua School. There were twelve in her graduating class, and at this time there are still two girls and five boys living.

She remembers the deep snow since she always walked to school. The snow would be as high as the fences, and they made a tunnel down the road. Mr. McHenry had a parrot, which was the first one she had seen and heard. It could say just about anything.

She married Glen Stump in 1911, they had a boy and a girls. They lived on a farm and now their children continue to farm.

JOE THOMAS

I was born in Moweaqua, the son of John and Lucy Thomas. My father owned and operated a grocery store in which he sold clothing, shoes, and groceries. Later he sold only groceries. Jesse Long and Haldon Ayars were in business when my father was and, at the time of this writing, still are.

Reminiscing over years, I find that life has changed in many aspects. I have recollection of many incidents in Moweaqua. I can remember several men who would gather on a summer afternoon to play croquet. One of the last courts was directly in back of the T. G. Cheatham grocery store.

Practical jokes were very prevalent in those days, and many were the victims, but most of them were taken in good humor. This is one I especially remember. I was riding along one day with Charles (Chuck) Workman. He was working for my dad, and in those days it was the custom to deliver groceries. I happened to have a friend along with me. Just as Chuck was about to finish delivering the groceries we had a flat tire. We pulled into the Jim Hedges filling station. Tom Bilyeu was working there at the time, and I remember that he and Chuck said that the only way they could fix the flat tire would be to have some wrinkle stretchers. The first place that they sent us was to Harry J. Long Hardware store, which is the American Legion building now. From there we were sent to Lucky Robinson Jewelry Store and then on to many other business places. We finally ended at the Smoke House which was operated by Frank House. Esther Wyatt was working there. By this time my friend and I were getting very tired from running all over Moweaqua for wrinkle stretchers. We just gave up. Come to think of it, I wonder how they fixed the tire without the wrinkle stretchers? Knowing Tom Bilyeu and Chuck Workman, I can still see them laughing about putting something over on two innocent boys.

My father used to tell about how a businessman would catch a rat in a wire trap. When one would get caught, the word would be passed around. The men gather in the alley behind the store. There were times when the rat would get away. My father said that before the hardroad went through, this used to take place on Main Street.

When the hardroad went through Moweaqua, it was a boom to the town, but to me it only meant watching. I vaguely remember that they had this little track that ran right down the middle of the main road. This track was used to haul in supplies.

To me one of the most important events was the year of 1952 when Moweaqua celebrated its 100th year. This was one of the best centennials ever held I believe. Many towns around us later had their centennials, but none compared to ours.

The most tragic thing that happened in Moweaqua was the mine explosion. I was only about 12 years old at the time. Many men lost their lives which was a great loss to our community. It left many homes without breadwinners.

I could write about many happy and wonderful times that took place as I was growing up in Moweaqua. I have been away going on ten years, but Moweaqua is still my home. It is a great place as the greatest people in the world live there.

CHARLIE VANMETER

Although he has been gone for many years, tales of Charlie VanMeter are still being retold, usually with a smile. He was found on the streets of New York, an orphan. He took the name "VanMeter" from a man with the Society for Orphans who had been kind to him. After serving in the Civil War as a drummer boy and combat soldier, he found his way to Moweaqua. Joseph M. Housh gave him a home. He also lived with Mr. Beverly Armstrong and the Herman Sims. Mr. VanMeter was built something like Charlie Chaplin — short, slightly stocky, with a close cropped mustache and having glossy black hair kept that way through a daily application of shoe blackening. He was a race horse jockey in the area for many years, later working on farms nearby. His last years were spent in the Moweaqua Hospital, keeping his racing silks and army medals at his side. He led many parades, riding a spirited horse and carrying the American flag.

Although Mr. VanMeter was big hearted and generous, he was also quite a practical joker. Once, supposedly, a group of men loafing at Pleak's Store dared him to ride a mule inside the Baptist Church during services. Taking the dare caused him to leave the country for awhile to let tempers cool down. Another time, or perhaps this was the same event, remembered differently, he rode a horse into the Christian Church during the offering. He grabbed the collection plates and left as the audience sat spellbound.

He once felt slighted not to have been invited to a young ladys's party, so he slipped up to a window of her house during the party and threw an angry skunk inside. That was the end of that party!

When the town completed the new wooden sidewalk which ran the full length (three blocks) of Main Street, the local citizens were justifiably proud of it. One night about midnight Charlie fired his six-shooter to herald coming events. As he galloped down the walk on his horse, he continued shooting and yelling. The sheriff had no trouble counting the whole boards remaining on the prized walk. Charlie had had too much to drink again.

One of his most enjoyed pranks was the despair of village Romeos. He would find a tree with a strong limb hanging above the road. He would climb up on the limb and wait for a buggy containing a young couple to come along. Being intent upon each other, Charlie's presence went unnoticed until he would jump down onto the buggy seat, dislodging the suitor. He would then drive off at a fast clip, with the girl at his side.

He believed Indians had buried some treasure southeast of Moweaqua and went out to dig for it. He reported hearing "Injun spirits" howling and moaning at the site, however, and decided the "Injuns" didn't want him to dig there, so he took the warning and quit. Perhaps some other practical jokers furnished the "spirit voices" that night.

Even as a senior citizen Charlie's walk was springy and his posture erect. He quite enjoyed regaling others with stories of his past. Whenever he found a willing listener he would start off with, "By Gad, did ol' Charlie ever tell you the story of . . .?" His eyes would snap and he would begin the fiftieth version of the same story. When it was completed, he would give forth a hearty chuckle and say, "By Gad, ol' Charlie could think 'em up!" Couldn't he, though?

FLORENCE WORKMAN WEBER

Florence, whose parents were early settlers in Christian County, was born March 10, 1885. Her father was William and her mother Anne; they had seven children (Florence, Lulu, Daisy, Pearl, Pete, Oakley, and Ernest). She attended the Nebraska country school and two years of high school. The teachers she remembers were Mose Wetzel, Fannie Harris, and Emma Schroll.

She remembered two disastrous storms. One that did much damage was a hailstorm that broke out so many windows that two carloads of glass were brought in by train. The new wooden walk was badly pitted. Shovels were used to scoop out the hen sized balls of frozen ice that blew into homes when the hail shattered their windows. Then there was a tornado that blew a two by four through a home and straw through the trunks of trees.

She recalled the businesses in the up and coming village. Among these were blacksmith shop, little restaurant, the poultry house where her brother worked, livery stable, barber shop, Nalbech Harness Shop, Potter Hotel, Haslams, Mat McHenry, Millinery shop (very lovely creations), the opera house, and tavern. Moweaqua, too, had its crime wave. One night at the opera a man killed Mr. Scarlett. There was quite a bit of drinking and celebrating on pay days.

Tom Gilliland, a local celebrity, was a "great" singer, sometimes appearing at an opera performance. At one time five doctors practiced here — Doctors Godfrey, Dobson, Duckwass, Sparling, and Buck. Dr. Kyner was a dentist.

Then her memory turned to how anyone who baked bread went to the Samuel Miller home to purchase some of Aunt Jennie's yeast which would be drying on a dining room table that was about ten feet long. This made her remember the night the Miller home was destroyed by fire, on one of the coldest nights the old timer could recall. When her father came in after helping fight the fire, his mustache was covered with ice.

The Billy Dove Restaurant was famous for its fish sandwiches. When he needed hamburger, he would give his grandson a dollar to get ten pounds at Cheatham's Store. A granddaughter Lorine had the newspaper agency and at the time the paper was ten cents per week.

As we left, Florence said, "Oh, after you leave, I'll think of so much more. There's been such a change, such a change!"

GRACE WEMPEN

Grace was born two and one half miles east of Walker. Her father was John Kemmerly. Her grandmother was the only one of her family to leave Germany and come to America. Their German name of Deuhr became Beaur over here. She married Will in 1915.

The family lived in various homes. One time two families ended up occupying the same house for a short while. The three room house was crowded with the two families and two households of furniture. She went to school at Pleak. Although there was no "busing" they swapped schools with the children of another family so each would have a lesser distance to walk. If no swaps were available, a tuition had to be paid.

The Hard Shell Baptist Church was close to them. Services were held twice a month and the foot-washing ceremony twice a year. The Camp Meeting in the maple grove were well attended, and boards were fixed for the congregation to sit on. Their singing was different, they sang a line and read a line.

Sometimes thirty men would gather to do the threshing, and the women and children would come to help fix the dinner. Some would stay for supper. Two dollars worth of beef was needed to feed them all. Eggs were five cents a dozen but inflation hit them too. No longer could coffee be bought three pounds for a quarter; it was now ten cents a pound.

The condition of the roads was what she recalled. The first mile east of town had a very low and muddy section. To make it passable, they fixed a corduroy road, covered it with dirt, and later used slag from the mine. If a section was impassable, they left the wagon, rode horseback into town, putting their purchases in a gunny sack, and then returned to the wagon.

Sometimes the mud was thick like gravy and went "blurp-blurp". If it was thick mud, it would get into the spokes of the wheels, and the driver would have to get out frequently to clean it out. In winter when a freeze was coming up, the farmers would drag one side of the road. After a freeze it became a good "smooth" road. If it was freezing weather, all drove on that side, in thawing weather all drove on the other half. Woe be unto those, if it were known who they were, who drove on the good side during a thaw.

A new recollection was one about the gypsies. They frequently would camp where they saw open timber in winter or summer. They cooked out in the open. The wagons, often five or six of them, would be their home. The women would want to tell fortunes. The local people were quite happy when they left.

RALPH WICKLEIN

Ralph's parents were Mabel Brookshire and Fred Wicklein, and he was born in Macon County. They had two boys and two girls. When they came to settle three miles north and one-half mile west of here, no one lived there. The land was timberland and had to be cleared; one half mile west of them was a log cabin.

He married Gladys Jones in 1924. She was born in Elwin and had grown up in town so it was quite a change for her to become a farmer's wife. They had the twin girls and also another daughter. The twins were born in December. As they drove to the hospital, there were dandelions all along the roadside.

Then they recalled a butchering day when it was fourteen degrees below zero. They would hang a calf and a quarter of a hog in the cob-house. As they needed the meat, they would go out and slice off what they needed of the frozen meat. It it should start to thaw, they would can the meat. Some of "Wick's" and Gladys' memories were of the Literary Guild. The talent sometimes was not too polished but they all enjoyed it. They had memories of floods that would make the roads even worse, of cattle caught in the flooding creek, but surviving; and of watermelons floating in the creek, having been washed out of their neighbor's field. They had just finished threshing when the rains came. The wagons in the field were washed down the creek. Again the floodgates had to be replaced. The creek flooded, but there had been no rain in the Moweaqua area. It had started from a flash flood at Walker.

Mabel B. Wicklein, "Wick's" mother, was a charter member of Charter Oak Club. In 1920 it started out as a women's club but later became a community club. Ralph and Gladys are still active members. Ralph and later his three daughters all attended the Charter Oak School. It is still in existence but now it is a private home.

"Wick" inherited from his father the title of "Mayor of Possum Run," but neither had a further interest in "politics."

ROY WISELY

He was born in Greenup, Illinois, in Cumberland County. His mother was Lucinda Ozier of Scotch-Irish descent, and his father was Lewis Wisely. There were three girls and Roy. His wife, Marie, died in 1963, and they had two girls and a boy. At the age of fifteen, he delivered telegrams. A few years later he was a telegraph operator. He was told by his supervisor he was only operator that was not hitting the wrong key all day long.

He enlisted when the war broke out in 1917. He was sent to France. Since he was a signal man, he copied down the Armistice news and reported it to the captain. He worked at Evans Elevator in Decatur for forty years.

One of his childhood memories was the time when his father's brother came with his family of four in a covered wagon from Kansas and stayed all winter.