Partridge Public Library
Partridge, Kansas 67566

My Life As I Remember It

Nine people, ranging from the age of sixteen to two years of age, traveled in the wagon by trail to Medicine Lodge, in Barber County, Kansas. They would travel twenty or twenty-five miles a day. It was around six hundred miles from Tabor, Iowa to Medicine Lodge, Kansas.

The trail was marked by signs on trees and arrows. There were out posts to buy food and feed for the horses.

My father filed a claim at Medicine Lodge, the Barber County seat. The claim was for one hundred-sixty acres in Turkey Creek Township, section sixteen, range thirty. This area is now seven and one-half miles southwest of Coats, Kansas. His claim was twenty-five miles northwest of Medicine Lodge.

When the folks came to the United States of America in 1874, Tom Thumb was on the same boat. He was a midget, born in Connecticut in 1838. He was discovered by Barnum when he was five years old and weighed only fifteen pounds. Barnum had a circus. He took Tom Thumb to England to perform for the Queen in 1842. He was two feet tall. As a grown man he stood three feet four inches tall. His real name is Charles Stratton. My brother at the age of five was taller and larger than Tom Thumb. Tom continued in the Barnum Circus and was united in marriage to Lavinta Warren, also a midget, in 1863.

I was the first one born in Kansas and the first one born in the sod house. I was born November 8, 1886, the eighth child in the family.

While father was breaking sod with a plow (the sod had to be freshly plowed to use on the house) and building the sod house they lived in a tent made from the cover of the covered wagon.

They got the lumber from the Turkey Creek Mills to build the sod house. They had to build a wide board frame then put the sod around the wide boards to keep the cold air out. They hauled the lumber six miles from the mill.

There was just one door on the east and a small window behind the stove

on the south.

The sod had grass in it so it would make it stronger.

There was just one room with a dirt floor and a ladder went up the west end for the three boys to go to the loft to sleep. They slept on big boxes. The boxes were used for storage.

In the main room there were: two beds, a stove, a table to eat on and a bench to sit on. Most of us had to stand to eat when we got tall enough to reach the table, as there was no room for chairs.

Father and mother had the baby between them to sleep, a two year old at their feet. The other two girls and I slept in the bed.

The three older girls worked away from home.

There wasn't any high chairs or baby buggies at this time. My father made a cradle out of boards with two rockers under the crib. We had to be careful and not upset it.

My mother put some white cloth up for the ceiling to help keep the dust out. I remember how she would take a broom to dust the white cloth. Sometimes the dirt would sift through the ceiling cloth.

My mother would walk five miles to work for Mrs. Buck. The Buck family were from England too. They had one child and my folks had six or eight at one time. They raised twelve children, so it did not cost more to raise twelve kids instead of two.

Mother would walk over the prairie, hundreds of acres of pastures, because there were no roads. Sometimes mother would be nursing a baby, so she would carry the baby, work all day, then walk home. She had to breast feed the baby every three or four hours.

The prairie was full of cattle, it was on a free range for the cattle. They had cowboys to see about the cattle and had roundups in the spring and fall to separate the cattle. The cowboys wanted to drive the settlers out

so they could have the pasture for their cattle.

They would move the herd of real long horned cattle across our yard. The cattle would run over anything that was in their way. Finally the settlers fenced their land, but wire was hard to come by.

The cowboys would throw a rope over the gate post and pull a big line of fence down and drive their cattle quite a ways. If they ran into another fence row they would do the same thing.

We had hard winters then. We had a bank barn with poles and grass or tree limbs, or anything they could find to cover over the bank barn. Father dug back part way in the hill. During the winter the covered wagons would drive south of a shed we had for shelter for their horses.

The settlers would take their families in wagons in high speed to Lake City and form a ring in case the Indians did come. One time my mother was helping some neighbor and the cowboys came by and yelled, "Indians!" Father loaded all us children in the wagon and went to Lake City. Mother came home and we were gone, along with the team and wagon. She had no idea what had happened. Her only thought was the Indians had been there until father took us back home that evening.

Mother had a heavy wooden box about eighteen inches square with a lock and key. She put the key on a cord and carried it around her neck. She kept medicine and other things in it so the children could not get things they shouldn't have. The box was stained mahogany and was nice looking.

I had the box as long as I kept house. I also had a sack of little wool balls the folks had in their ticking they slept on. Mother would sack it and wash it. It took a long time to dry. I can't remember what they called it. It could not be bought in this country, they brought it from England.

Mother had no cupboards or shelves. I can't remember where she kept things, but she was very clean about everything.

In those days we had no clocks or watches. We told time by the position of the sun and our shadow on the ground. Then later on the folks had a wall clock with a glass door. My father wound the clock before he went to bed. We then had sun time and railroad time. If they wanted to go to the bank they took the train. It was a hour earlier like central and daylight time.

When we herded the cattle along roads or a patch of grass if it was cloudy we could not tell when noon came. The cattle would know it was time to get a drink of water and would want to go in.

I had terrible nose bleeds till I was a teenager. My mother would use an iron or anything out of the tool shop that was real cold and put it on the back of my neck. One time I had nose bleeds so bad that one of the boys went by horseback to get the doctor. The doctor rode a horse back to stop the bleeding. The doctor always used horses either to ride or drive a buggy. I can't remember what he did to stop the bleeding.

I was seven years old before I got a china head doll. We had tin or metal doll heads with black painted hair. My father cut a wooden doll out of a pine board. The head was shaped like a doll head and the body like a dress from the shoulders down. Mother made a dress for it. He used a stove poke to burn the eyes, nose and mouth. My the hours it must have taken to whittle it out with a pocket knife.

All we had to burn in the cook stove in our sod house were cow chips. We would pick them up by the wagon load and dump them near the house.

All the water had to be hauled in a big fifty gallon wood barrel in the wagon. Only hot water was by an iron tea kettle on the stove.

In 1892 the folks built a four-room frame house, two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs. The boys were in one room and the girls in the other room upstairs. Then in a year or so they built a big kitchen and dining room together. The stairs door went from the dining room.

When we moved to the new house the boys would saw or cut the wood to burn.

Our creek was one-half mile west of the house. There was a wonderful cool spring where my father put a box in it so the boys could drop a bucket and fill it then dump into the fifty gallon wood barrel to fill it.

All the water was hauled for the washing of our big family of twelve.

The water got pretty hot for us to drink. We had a water bucket with a dipper to drink from. Often we would walk to the cool spring and carry a bucket of water to the house.

Later years the folks butchered some hogs and put them down in a big wooden barrel in salt brine. I don't remember what we ate before then. It sure was a trying time to find enough food for so many stomachs. I guess we had enough to eat as we were healthy and strong.

I never remember much sickness. In the winters mother was afraid the little children would have croup or colds. Mother was a doctor along with everything else.

Father planted black amber cane for feed. We would strip the leaves off the stalk of cane, then he and the boys would cut the stalks in the proper length to lay straight in the rack wagon. They would take them to Elm Mills to have them ground and the juice ran into a big vat to be cooked down to make dark syrup.

The cane had big black heads. They had a machine with sharp nails or metal all around the cylinder. The men would hold the stalk till all the seed was off. The cylinder was run by a hose attached to a pole. I think it just took one horse to move the pole.

It took two horses from either side to grind the cane to get the juice. The juice was boiled down to make brown syrup. It was kept in gallon crockery jugs with a tight cork and stored under the house for the winter. We sure got

tired of the syrup, but it was about the only thing sweet we had. We even made candy with it.

The cane was so sweet we used to peel it and then chew it. They also fed it to the hogs.

After a few years my father had a mover move the frame house to the creek. It was about one-half mile west and the house is still there. We had plenty of good water from the cool spring.

There were a lot of hard times trying to make a life for us children like they would have liked for us to have known and appreciated. We could not afford a lot. They lived and worked hard so we could have some little thing to be like the other children.

In those days we did not have any Sunday School or church. But Sunday was kept Holy, we could not polish our shoes or anything else. Everything was finished on Saturday. Even as we grew older, windows were washed in the kitchen and dining room every Saturday, and the pies and bread were baked on Saturday.

We had our bath in a big tin tub every Saturday night. It was quite a time for mother to manage. She was so wonderful. She had to carry the water and then heat some in the iron tea kettle to warm our bath water.

When I was eight or nine years old I would help my father do little jobs in the field. I remember my younger brother, Harry, and I were pulling trash out of the drill when father was drilling oats. Harry was too small to keep his side clean, father wanted me to go get a cane stalk so he could whip Harry. I said, "No, he has done nothing to be whipped for. He is too small to have to do it." I never have been able to figure out why I did not get a whipping for disobeying my father. I guess it made him think. I never remember him ever whipping me, but I am most sure he did as we always had to obey.

When we were young we furnished our own company. There were enough of we children we could do so.

On Sundays we would walk up and down the creek. A mile of the creek ran through our place. In the summertime the creek was full of water cress, we loved it. Sometimes we would take bread and butter along to eat with water cress. We would watch the birds fly and sing, and watch the minnows swim. Just down to earth pleasure with one another.

Then in the fall we would sit under a big walnut tree and crack and eat black walnuts. We had a big stone to crack them on. The creek had a lot of walnut trees along it.

The racoons lived in one big tree up the creek a ways. They had their young in that tree, they were so cute! The coons were cunning. Mother had a trough made of heavy lumber on the east side of the creek to feed them in. There were a lot of opossum too.

Mother kept the milk and cream on the east side of the creek, as we had no other way to keep it cool. The lid had to be weighted down with heavy rocks, but sometimes the coons would push them off and lift the lid.

We also did our washing down by the creek and carry the water for the washing. We had a big iron kettle to heat the water and put white clothes in flour sacks to boil them. We used a washboard to rub the clothes on, then carried them near the house to the clothesline to dry. The clothesline was made of twisted steel so it would not rust.

We always made our own lye soap. We would put nice clean wood ashes in an iron kettle to soften the water to make it sudsy. We used wood ashes to make some of the soap for boiling clothes in. It just made soft soap, it was as good as the other lye soap, only it would not get hard like lye soap.

We milked a good many cows. We just had an open corral or pen. It was a good size with barb wire fence around it. We would walk up to a cow on the right side, put our hand on her side and just say "sa". We would put our head in her flank, in front of her back leg, sat the bucket on the ground and milked

her. Very seldom did the cow ever make a move. We would either stand or if we were tall enough we would kneel down. When the bucket was full we would take it to the house and mother would pour the milk through a wire sive or cloth into a stone jar. Then she would put it out to cool.

When we had to break a new heifer, two or three would have to put her in a corner of the corral, while one would milk her. The cows learned in just a few milkings that we were gentle with them. In the summer when the flies were bad it took one to use a branch off a tree to keep the flies off while the other one milked. We did not mind the mile walk every evening about four o'clock to drive the milk cows in the corral. We always went early so we could slide down a big sand hill. We would walk up to the top then slide down again. It sounds like work now, but it was fun then.

When I was young I liked to surprise my mother when she had to drive a horse and buggy seven miles to town. It would be late sometimes when she returned. One time she went to Coats and I got dinner for my father and the other children, I was eight or nine years old. I made pie and got a good dinner for them. A young man, eighteen or so, stopped and ate dinner with us. That was the way it was done in those days. They would stop at meal time and eat at the house they were at. He lived five miles south of us and was driving to Coats. He met mother on her way home and told her what a good dinner he had with pie and all, so it was not a surprise to mother. I never like him after that. He name was Dell Buck.

Other times I would put out the washing. I carried the water from the creek, heated it in a big kettle and washed on the washboard. I liked to do the washing, and hang the clothes out on a line near the house.

One time mother had her supply of yeast for the bread ready. All it needed was corn meal in it to make it stiff. I put the corn meal in like she did and put a bed sheet on the west porch roof, then put a long mosquito bar

over the yeast to keep the flies off. I got big rocks to hold the bed sheet down so the wind would not blow it off.

I never will forget the disappointed look on mother's face. She thought I had ruined the yeast. She always pinched a little piece off and put it out to dry. It all turned out good. She did not scold me, but it was worse to see her so disappointed.

I don't remember what she put in the bread to make it raise. She used what was called hops and green peach leaves, I don't remember the other ingredients if there were any.

I was happy that it turned out good as mother had to bake a lot of bread. I liked to make bread when I was eight or nine years of age.

I never heard mother use a slang word. Her by word was "Oh shaw!" I don't know what shaw meant. The boys knew not to let the folks hear a curse or slang word. Of course, we girls were taught to be ladies and not to be boisterous.

When I was fourteen or more, my brother, Gilbert, and I went with six or eight boys and girls with a horse and buggy to the Natural Bridge. It was located southwest of Sun City, a little town with ten or twelve homes. Everyone got their water from a dug well located in the middle of the street. It had a wooden bucket on the end of the rope to draw the water with. We would pull the bucket up hand over hand then hang the bucket up for the next one in line to use.

There was one store there run by a family by the name of Bizzant. They had their home there too. They kept about everything anyone would want in the store--groceries, piece goods, shoes, caps for the men, and small hardware tools. They had a big north porch where people would sit to visit, it had a roof over it so it was a good place to chat. The hitching posts for the horses were next to the porch.

Then we would go to the Natural Bridge. It was a long, wide bridge which joined two or more pastures. Nature left it that way. People used to drive their team and wagons over it and drive the cattle across. It was real hilly there. The pasture land had wonderful buffalo grass in them.

There was a tunnel back in one of the hills. We could not see light from either end.

My school days were in a one-room school house (Mubery District Seventy-Seven) with a big, tall stove in the middle of the room. There were big chunks of wood on the floor for the teacher to put in the stove. The teacher's desk was in the middle of the room between the stove and the blackboard. The blackboard was slate and went clear across the east end of the room with eight or ten erasers. We were always glad when the teacher chose us to take the erasers outside to dust the chalk off.

The toilets were east of the schoolhouse. The one on the north had "boys" printed on the door and the one on the south read "girls". We had to hold our hand up when we wanted to be excused to go out to the bathroom.

The teacher drove a horse and buggy. She would have to unhitch the horse and put it in a little stable at the southeast corner of the school.

When it was time to go in and take our seats the teacher would ring a bell. After we were seated the teacher would get the school register and call roll to see who was tardy or absent. The register would be sent to the county seat at Medicine Lodge at the end of the year. So many, especially the boys, would quit school.

The county superintendent visited each school once a month. The teacher never knew what day he would visit so she could keep everything in order. He would check her register book. Our desks had to be neat and orderly.

We all wore high-top overshoes when it was muddy or snowing. We left them up around the northwest corner of the room. It got pretty messy when it rained

or snowed.

The teachers were never called by their first name. We would call them "teacher" or "Miss so and so". Mostly we called them teacher.

During the winter the older boys and girls went skating on a big, dry lake. It would rain in the fall then freeze over for all winter, then evaporate during the summer. My folks owned it as well as a lot of land around there. The older boys and girls used to skate during the noon hours.

The girls wore long braids. We had ink wells on each desk and the boys used to put our long braids through the hole and put a pencil through the braid. When we tried to get out of our desk the hair would pull us back in the seat. Of course, that got on the teachers nerves. The boys would have to stay inside during recess for punishment.

When I was between eight and twelve, mother told me that I could go to my sister's, Gertrude's, to stay over night. I started walking to her house, about two miles. A heavy fog set in and I could not see anything, I must have walked in circles. It was so dark, my sister put a lamp in the window. Everyone was on foot or horse hunting me in the dark. It was a couple of hours or more, as I remember. It was eight o'clock when I saw the light and went to my sister's door. Mother and everyone was so happy to see me. Then it was a job to get out to other homes to let them know I was alright. There was a family that lived a half mile from the school, but they did not know I was on my way to my sisters. I am still afraid of fog.

One year we had a man teacher. In those days the boys would be larger than Mr. Thomas. I remember one time he whipped a boy that did not mind. He used a big stick to whip him. They really had a fight. That was the only man teacher we had.

For our enjoyment we played annie over over the school house. We would pick so many for each side, there had to be some large boys on each side to ...

throw the ball over, and not break a window. If they caught the ball on the other side, they would run around the schoolhouse and try to touch someone with the ball. The one touched had to go to the other side. When it snowed, we would make a ring in the snow. One would be the fox and the others geese. The idea was not let the fox catch the geese.

We would make a circle and dig a hole in the center. Each player had a stick and tried to keep the other side from putting the can in the hole. The side that kept the can out the most was the winner. You had to see that you didn't get hit on the ankles.

On Fridays between three and four o'clock, we had a spelling bee, or an arithmetic match of figures. The teacher would put two lines of numbers on the blackboard. There usually were four at a time to see which one got it done first and had it right.

All the schools around had lots of box suppers. We would trim cardboard boxes with crepe paper and made them fancy. Some sure were pretty. The boys would bid on the boxes, trying to get the girl's box they liked best. The other boys would bid it up on the one bidding trying to get the box so they could get the girl. My mother would fix all kinds of goodies, cookies, cake, sandwiches and she used to make tarts. She used pie dough about the size of a nut cup, then filled them with jelly. She had a tart pan.

The schools would put on programs, and they were judged, so each school would do their best play or programs. Each morning at school, we would march around the room, and sing a marching song, like John Brown's Body Lying in the Tomb.

Some years my brothers and sisters would be all there was in our school. Then finally two other families moved in, but not too many. Ten or twelve in school.

After we graduated, we went to normal school if we thought we wanted to teach. I didn't want to teach so I didn't go to normal school. Instead, my folk's said I could go to college. I was to stay with my brother's family at McPherson while attending McPherson College. My brother was studying to be a minister. I only went one semester. Then I went to Woodard, Oklahoma and taught my sister-in-law how to cook and keep house. She was an attorney-at-law and Oklahoma was being settled at that time, and the men were taking out claims of one hundred and sixty acres. My brother, Fred, was postmaster. Fred and Maude were married in 1907.

When my younger brother, Delbert, and my younger sister were ready for high school, the folks moved to Wichita. They lived on South Estella. They lived in Wichita only a year or so. They did not like the big city, so they bought some land outside of Rose Hill. Therefore my brother and sister went to high school in Rose Hill.

My sister, Lina, married Samuel McLain while they were in Rose Hill. They were married in 1912.

Then mother and dad moved back to Coats to be with more of their children. When the folks had their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary, all the children went together and bought them a phonograph and records. My mother sure did enjoy the phonograph. She could hear the music, especially church music, as she was unable to walk to church. My father liked to walk, and always enjoyed being in church. My mother's favorite song was The Old Rugged Cross. She used to say she did not know there was music in her own home. Mother was a real Christian at heart, so good and honest to all. She was called Aunt Sarah by her friends.

This season of the year, November, brings fond memories of all the good wild berries and wild black grapes. They were so good to make wild grape jelly. It sure was good. We used to climb the trees for the grapes and berries.

There was not much to the hack berries, only seed and skin. They were more for the birds and squirrels. The Elder Berry God sure did not forget the wild, but the berries were better after a hard freeze. They were good all winter. We spent a lot of Sunday afternoons climbing the trees for the berries and hunt the creek over, for the best ones in the very top of the trees were sweeter. The racoons and opossum enjoyed them all winter. Black walnuts furnished delight all winter. We spent Sundays cracking walnuts.

My sister and Will Roark courted. He had a two-wheeled cart. You could not sit on the seat until it was hitched to the horse to hold the chaves up, to hold the seat level. It was like the pictures of charriots used in ancient times for the charriot races.

My oldest brother, George, married Maggie Hawkins, she lived just north of our quarter of land, in 1892. I remember the folks had a dinner the next day for them. The yard was full of wagons.

On March 9, 1892 my oldest sister, Gertrude, married Fred Clements in the sod house. I remember they sat in chairs so people could go around them and shake hands. They courted on horse back. Fred would ride one horse and lead the other horse for Gertrude to ride.

When we were small children, and before they began to have Christmas trees, our mother would wash our stockings, pin them together with a safety pin, and hang them over the back of chairs, for our Christmas treats. This was a stick of candy. As I remember, we were so glad to get a stick of candy, more so than the children of our children. We never got candy or mother would get one stick and break each of us a piece. We learned to share even if it was small.

My father was good at playing tricks. I remember one time he cleaned a red corn cob and put it in my Christmas stocking for fun. One time before I tried learning to mend stockings, I mended one one evening. Mother was going

to town, he put it in an envelope and mailed it to me. Mother always stopped at the schoolhouse on her way home is we got any mail, and this time I pulled out this stocking I had mended, before the school children.

Mother had to go to town about once a week to get flour and tea. She used to use gunpower green tea. It was real small flakes. She used to have it ordered as it was an English green tea. Not much sugar, as we used more syrup than sugar, especially in years past when we were small children.

Mother dried a lot of peaches, apples and sweet corn. We would gather a big cart full of corn, then shuck it. It had to be cooked so long before cooling, then cut off the cob. We put the corn on the porch roof, like the yeast, on a bed sheet and a mosquito bar over it, weighed down with a big rock. We liked to help so we could eat plenty of corn.

My mother did not have anything to can in. They could buy tin cans and used sealing wax or soder and a hot iron to melt the big stick of soder. Tin cans were not very safe. They had to be emptied right away or the tin would turn dark, and we could get poisoned eating it.

We had a big orchard of peaches and apples. Mother would carry a sack of apples on her back and walk on a board across the creek, taking sack after sack to the Coats Store or Hotel. We also had a large vineyard so we had lots of grapes to sell. People would come by wagons to pick peaches and apples.

We had a big cellar or cave in a hill bank next to the kitchen door. Mother made a lot of kraut and piccalilli, both sweet and sour piccalilli.

For years we did not have church or Sunday School, but had picnics with other Sunday Schools with a big basket dinner under the shade trees. Turkey Creek picnic grounds were used the most. Finally we had Sunday School at our schoolhouse. There were not many families who came at first, then others moved near. They would come eight or ten miles driving a horse and buggy or spring wagon. I taught Sunday School for a long time. There would be maybe

six or eight come, from preschool to third or fourth grade. One year I gave each child a Bible verse each Sunday. I gave it according to their age, whatever I thought each child could learn. I had one preschool child and of course she could not do like the rest. For all who remembered their verses for a month, I would give a little New Testament.

My father loved his Bible, and always like to talk on the Bible at Sunday School picnics, and along with us young people sang church hymns.

At the Sunday School picnics, every one would spread white table cloths on the ground in the shade. They would put their food out and everyone sat on the ground to eat.

One time mother had taken we children to a picnic. A big rain came, the creek got so high we had to stay all night in the dark, and such lightning and thunder. All the shelter we had was under the lumber wagon. We drove home the next morning after the creek went down. I remember how hot it was going four or five miles. Mother did not seem bothered, as long as we were all together sitting or laying on the ground under the wagons. But now I know she was worried like I would be.

We had a lot of camp meetings along Elm Creek picnic grounds. Once I heard Carrie Nation preach. She sure was hard on saloons. She lived in Medicine Lodge. She would find out where there was a saloon starting up and Carrie would take her horse and buggy and use her little hatchet and go in and break all the whiskey bottles and the big mirrors. She smashed every saloon she could get to. I don't ever remember her being arrested or jailed. She was a great preacher too. She was pretty short and rather plump. If it was in these days, she would not last long, but then, we never heard of a killing nor any crime. What a wonderful world it would be now.

Carrie Nation's house is still standing in Medicine Lodge and is used for a library or museum.

We saw one of the men who was a boy in my class. He then lived in Oakland and had grandchildren. He said he had always cherished his little Bible, and the children knew they could not play with it like they did their books.

We brothers and sisters all went to the same schoolhouse until we were out of the grades. I took the eighth grade examinations. I drove a horse and buggy five miles to the Rock Schoolhouse on Turkey Creek. They had a special teacher, she wrote the question on the blackboard, then we copied them and wrote the answer. Then it was sent to the County Seat at Medicine Lodge to be graded. Then we all, in the county that graduated would go to Medicine Lodge to receive our diploma.

When my mother took me to Medicine Lodge for graduation, I stayed the one day and night with one of my teachers, Beatrice Likes, who had taught our school. She boarded with my folks.

We would go to what they called normal school all the month of August. Then if we passed that month of school, then we got a certificate to teach, on an eighth grade of schooling. I did not want to teach as my parents said I could go to college. My mother took me the twenty-five miles by horse and buggy. I boarded in a nice home with people named Kidd.

The end of that year, my older brother's family came home for Christmas dinner. He was going to McPherson to study to be a minister. We could not get a passenger train out so we rode in the caboose, then walked several blocks at night to their home. There were no taxies then.

While hleping my sister-in-law, Maude, in Oklahoma we went to the government land offices where her office was. It was when Oklahoma was being settled. People were taking claims and a lot of claims were being contested. We went to the land office two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. We went from nine till eleven in the morning and from two till four in the

afternoon. We would come at eleven and I got the dinner as she knew nothing about cooking, nor house work. She had always been a business lady. Maude and my brother, Fred, were married that spring while I was in college and I went there to be with them. I stayed with Fred and Maude every quail season.

When Fred got off work in the evening, we would go out quail hunting. He had an English Setter hunting dog. The dog would get the birds in a covy and settled. Maude and I each had a twenty-guage shot gun. Sometimes we could get one or two, but Fred got his limit and sometimes more than we were allowed. The inspectors were here and they was watching the hunters to see if they got more than the limit, so we had to be careful. We would hide ours in the prairie hay stacks even though it wasn't right, but they were so good to eat and of course we wanted to take them home.

Fred was Postmaster at the Woodard Post Office. I never knew father to have gone hunting with us but once. I used an old English Muzzle to load my shot gun. He measured the gun powder and tamped it down with a piece of paper, there were so many shots or pellets. Then he put on the cap, when he let the hammer down, the fire from the cap would explode the powder and made such a noise. He did not use it often and only for opossum, because they were bad to catch the chickens. The last time I remember father shooting it, he just wanted to show how hard it would kick back. When he would shoot it, it would push way back against his shoulder. One time he loaded the gun as usual, laid it over a log and another large log on top of the gun. It kicked back so hard that the big log fell clear off. It sure was not safe.

One time or maybe twice, my two older brothers, when they were in their teens I guess, took our dolls head and put gun powder in it. Then they set a match in it and there was nothing left of the doll head. When the folks heard about it, it was the last, because they destroyed the gunpowder. A big family finds their own entertainment, good or bad.

Sometime that fall I learned typing and did all Maude's writing on the typewriter. Then on Saturday, we only went to the land office for the two hours in the morning. In the afternoon I cut a stencil on the typewriter and run off all our records on a mimeograph. We mailed out a hundred or more copies to be sent to Washington. Every Saturday night Fred brought all his correspondence to type.

I lived with them a couple of years. They lived in what was called a flat, the same as a four-room apartment.

When I came home, my folks bought me a millinery department store in Coats. I would buy my stock in Kansas City twice a year, then we had a catalog to order from. I kept a lot of ribbons, all colors, which we wore a lot. Wide ribbon sashes, real long and tied into big gows.

I boarded out some, then my sister, Mae, stayed with me some. We lived in two rooms in the back of the store. Mae did not like to be in the store. I sold hats in the fall and winter for fifteen dollars to eighteen dollars each. They were velvet and some had feathers. The summer hats were made of straw, some were soft straw and floppy ones. This straw was called Leghorn straw. I don't know where the name came from. At that time we wore what they called rats in our hair. We would comb hair over the rats and pinned the hats on with hair pins, and sometimes we would put the rat across the back and bring the hair up over it making a roll on top. We had what was called French rolls, all up the back of the head and pinned with hair pins.

The banker, Jim Hellings, would pass my store. He'd open the door and ask what balogna is today. He called the rats balogna. He was real jolly and his mother was too. I loved her.

MY MARRIED LIFE

I, Ollie Burgin, daughter of Robert and Sarah Burgin, was born November 8, 1886 in a sod house at Coats, Kansas, twenty miles southwest of Pratt, Kansas. I was raised and lived near Coats many years.

On December 22, 1909, I was united in marriage to Park Andrew Coffey.

Park, the son of Elmer and Minnie Coffey, was born September 23, 1889 at Wilson, Kansas. Then Park and his family moved to Ottawa, Kansas. In 1901, Elmer, Minnie, Carrel, Clyde and Park Coffey moved to Coats, Kansas.

Park and I had planned to be married in June, 1910, so I could stay in my millinary and variety store until June.

Park's father went to Medicine Lodge, Kansas, the Barber County seat, around November 1, 1909 to pay his taxes. He did not want to make another trip to Medicine Lodge in June so he got our marriage license.

After we found out what his father did, my father drove to Medicine Lodge to see if they would extend or cancel the license. They would not do either.

My mother had taken me to Pratt the same morning my father had driven to Medicine Lodge. We had gone to Jett's Clothing Store, it was the only clothing store in Pratt at that time, to see about material for my wedding dress. My father called me from Medicine Lodge to tell me they would not do anything about the license, so I bought the material, white satin, that day.

I made my wedding dress while I was tending my store in Coats. It was white satin, princess style, floor length and trimmed with pearl beaded lace.

Our wedding date made a hardship for my mother. She always fixed a big Christmas dinner for the children and grandchildren, totaling twenty or

twenty-five people. She had only three more days to prepare her family dinner.

When my mother would have a big family dinner my brothers and all the married men, in-laws, would tease my mother about not cutting the pieces of pie the same size. So they would measure the pieces of pie and try to get the largest piece. My mother could take and give jokes as well as anyone. She was loved by everyone. She was a wonderful mother.

At four o'clock p.m. on December 22, 1909, Park and I were united in marriage in my folks' home. We lived with Park's folks eight long months.

We sent out seventy-five or eighty invitations, I forget how many we had printed and sent out. Our wedding was as up to times as they are now. And my such gifts! We packed the gifts away in a big wooden box and did not see them again until we moved into our homes in August, 1910.

My mother had prepared a big wedding dinner. She had chicken soup, dressing, a couple of vegetables and of course, pie. Mother had moved the bedroom furniture downstairs and put two long tables the length of the room. She had one table in the dining room. The kitchen and dining room were one big room.

Reverend Doty was the minister. After he ate his soup he said jokingly, "Is this all we are going to have, as I don't want to be like a Dunce filled up on soup."

When we were married we only had seventy-five dollars to start with. Park took his two mules he owned and broke sod, as people were turning their pasture land into farm land. He worked the two mules and walked all day after the plow for two dollars a day. He took his dinner and feed and water for the mules with him each morning. Our bank account did not grow very fast at that time. He had to take the team and wagon to take water and then water the mules out of a bucket.

Park's mother kept me busy cleaning house and washing clothes on a washboard for six people. I had to carry all the water for the washing and etc. And so much ironing to do then. Park did all the chores, milked the cows, and did all the feeding of the cattle in the winter months. Park's father fed cattle for other people. It took a lot of feed to haul, but they never failed to remind us that it was an expense for us to live with them.

Park's folks were building them a new house in Coats, Kansas, so there was a lot of embroidering to do for their new home. His folks were raising Mrs. Coffey's niece, Verna Divan. She was ten or so years younger than me, but she was busy too.

In the spring there was a garden to plant, hoe and water. Then canning season for the fruits and vegetables that were raised.

I was sick later that spring or summer with kidney infection. My folks had been in Colorado ahwile. When they came home they came by to see me at the Coffey's. I had not been to the doctor so my mother gave me twenty dollars to see the doctor. I was much better at that time so I took the twenty dollars and ordered me a sewing machine from Butler Brothers Wholesale House in St. Louis, Missouri. It was a White machine. I used it for years and years, even all through the girls in school.

Park's folks bought 240 acres of land and built a new six-room home on it. August 1, 1910 we moved ourselves into the six-room home where Park's brother, Carrel, and his wife, Clara, had just lived one year or a little longer. They were married a year before we were. Carrel and Clara had moved to the farm house. Park's folks moved into Coats to their new home.

We needed more horses so Park broke horses for people to have enough to do the plowing and other work. So I had to go to the field to help him hitch the horses to the plow or whatever he was doing. We had two gentle, kind

mules that I helped him hitch in the morning then unhitch at noon and evening. We had one bad one to break, she was real mean. I would stand in front of the mules with a stick to draw the mean ones attention, when he got the tugs hooked up then she would make a lunge and Park would have the lines ready to go. The mules seemed to understand. If the bad one got too mean the mule next to her would get her by the neck and put her to her knees. We could not afford to buy horses so Park broke horses every year for other people until we could afford some of our own.

We would drive the mean mule to the top buggy with our riding horse. It took two horses to pull the buggy. Park would have to get in the buggy on the go, as she would not stand. It used to worry my folks for me to ride in the buggy and drive her.

When we got more horses, than it was hard to get money to buy more harnesses for the work horse.

The first year in our home we had a basement dug under it.

The first month we did not have any furniture. We slept on a set of springs and mattress on the floor. The month we moved to our home we did not have a chair, but my mother gave me a used kitchen table, we had store boxes to sit on to eat.

Until we got a day off, when it rained, we drove the team and wagon to Pratt to get some of our furniture. We got a beautiful living room outfit, a mahogany rocking chair, a mahogany library table with a shelf underneath, and two other chairs to match, all had leather seat covers. They were beautiful! They had a tan rug with big red roses in the corner. We were so proud of our living room. We had already ordered our dining room table and six chairs from the Sears, Roebuck catalog. The solid oak table was round with boards to put in to make a table seating twelve. Then we ordered

six more chairs, as we had men to cook for most of the summer and fall. Also a flowered rug in the dining room, we got it with our first load of furniture.

Our first bedstead was iron and painted gold. We had one bedroom downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs. It was in the second year, in the spring, we got two more bedsteads and mattresses for the upstairs.

Then in about three years we bought a mahogany piano. We could not buy it all at once so we mortgaged our driving horse. The first time we ever mortagaed anything, it was for thirty-five dollars. I think the piano was a little over one hundred dollars.

We had a good wood or coal cook stove with a warming oven above. We also had a three or four gallon water tank on the side of the stove next to the oven, it was called a reservoir. There was always hot water, hot enough to wash dishes. There was also an iron tea kettle on the stove.

Before we had children, Park and I would practice shooting the twenty-two rifle to see who was the best shot. We would buy the shells by the case. We would drive the horse and buggy through the pasture and shoot at prairie dogs and most any other thing. We would drive down the road and shoot at fence posts or sometimes we would shoot birds off the fence. I got to be a better shot than Park. One time I shot a hawk flying overhead just by accident, he must have flown into the bullett. Park could hardly believe it either.

Hawks got the chickens so badly then as well as young ones. The hawk would swoop down and hit the hen so hard it would kill her, then he would carry her a ways before he took time to eat her. But I could never shoot a chicken hawk, it was a much smaller hawk than what we called the North Dakota hawk. The little chicken hawk usually got the smaller chickens, and

at that time we had buzzards. The buzzards ate dead things. They thrived on dead animals and birds. When the crows came in November, we seldom saw a hawk as the crows would eat the carcass regardless of how long it had been dead. The crows would eat anything fresh too. There were so many more crows than hawks.

Park would go to turkey shoot around Thanksgiving and Christmas. The ones that was the best shot at a given target would get the turkey. Park would usually wind up buying a turkey. Then he would start playing cards. Then he was out of the contest. He loved to shoot the rifle.

When I was in Woodward, Oklahoma, they were setteling on claims. There was a lot of quail on the prairie, and nothing but tall grass. There were some grass fields mowed and staked. There was a limit.

We would load the harnesses and drive all day for Mr. Cumming's to sell the harness and wout get pay taken out on a set harness. They sold around sixty dollars a set for the good heavy harness. Then Park liked to fix the harness up with red and white or red Celluloid rings on the lines of the harness. They were real fancy. Mr. Cumming's would come out two or three days at a time and how he did like to eat. I can't remember anymore what his speciality was, but I always had it ready for him.

I used to raise a lot of chickens, hatched the eggs under the hens. Park built regular setting hen coops, and the hens would raise them. But if it looked stormy, I had to be home or they would not hover all the chickens, twelve to fifteen with a hen. Then Park made us a half-dug house with a roof about twelve feet tall. We then got an one hundred sixty to two hundred forty incubator. We put them in the incubator or house near our yard. I had to turn each egg every morning, it would take an hour or more to turn the eggs by hand. It would take twenty-one days to hatch the chickens and then Park

built three brooder houses as we needed more room. We had a hard coal stove with a round hoover for the chickens to keep warm. Each house had two high windows and we had small feeders that the little chickens could reach to eat prepared feed. When the weather would get warm we did not have to have the room warm, but it always had to be plenty warm or they would pile over one another and smother them. When they would weigh two to two and one-half pounds, I would crate them and haul them to town to sell at a produce house for fryers. I ran the incubator most of the summer. As soon as some got ready to sell I would clean the brooder house and put more little chickens in. I usually raised fifteen hundred to two thousand chickens a year.

Olivia Parkaline, our daughter, was born August 28, 1913 at Coats, Kansas, in our home. We did not have a telephone. Our hired man, Charley Christy, stuttered so bad you could hardly talk to him, would ask me every night when it came close for her to be born, if he should keep the saddle horse in the barn. But when the time came, he rode two or three miles to my brother's house to call them to get the doctor. The doctor's name was Padfield. The doctor got out in time and she was born about six a.m. I had a girl helping me at that time and the doctor brought my sister with him. She lived in Coats.

Neta Lucille was born June 7, 1915 at Coats. Dr. Padfield was her doctor also. It was a terrible storm with wind, rain, lightning and such thunder. I told Park he had better go to the neighbor's house and phone for the doctor, but he waited almost too long. It was one and one-half hours before the doctor got there. My niece, Nellie Roark, was helping me then. She took the horse and buggy and went two miles to get Park's aunt, Cora Divan. But by then, Neta was born and Park had tied the cord. The doctor said he did a good job. We went a lot on doctor books then. I had read what to do just in case the doctor did not get there in time. So Park did just as I told him.

Aunt Cora had Neta washed and dressed before the doctor and two women came. I breast nursed both of the girls. Neta had colic for three months. I was working too hard, as it was harvest time and a lot of work had to be done. It was hard to keep her warm with just the oven on the cook stove. I did not eat right and got too tired to be nursing a baby, but we did not know then.

Olivia Parkaline was five years old when we moved to Reno County, twelve miles southwest of Hutchinson. Neta was nearly three years old. We moved February 25, 1918.

There was a lot of prairie fires when we first came. There was a lot of pasture land southwest of us. When farmers would see a big cloud of smoke they knew it was a prairie fire. A lot of cattle had to be driven away from the fire. I remember when Parkaline and Neta were in their bed, one neighbor came to warn Park. He got up at ten or eleven that night and did not get back till two or three in the morning. Everything was black where the fire had been.

The men did not know the way home, but they would let the horses go where they wanted. Bill, Park's horse, came to the barn at one or two a.m. I don't know how the horses knew the way home, they have a way though.

If it was windy, the cow chips would get afire then blow to other grass or another pasture. The men's faces would be black. All the neighbors would get out and go help.

One time since we were in Reno County there was a big fire southeast of us. The fire got close to a neighbor's house, two and one-half miles east of us, by the name of Wasteen. She got the valuable things and put them in the cars, and then parked the cars in the road. She almost never found them, she was so excited. She threw water all over the floors. The fire nearly

came to the yard, so it was time to get excited. I could watch it from our upstairs. It sure did look to me like it was going to get the home.

We did everything with horses till 1914 or 1915. We got our first car while at Coats. It was an Allis Chalmers, four-seated car. We gave a contract to Dick Halmore, for eight hundred bushels of wheat at harvest time for the car. It would almost cost eight hundred dollars at that time.

Park went to Coats to harvest our wheat out there, the first year we were in Reno County. It took almost two weeks to harvest it. We left all our horses out there until after harvest. We shipped some cows down here with our machinery and household goods. We shipped them to Darlow, then unloaded and took a team and wagon to haul things out to where we were to live. We had a man come with the railroad cars on the train.

I did not learn to drive the car until we moved down here. Park was out to Coats to harvest. I told the girls to stay in the house and I was going to learn to drive the car. I got it out in the big front yard and learned to drive and back the car up for a couple of hours, then I drove it back in the shed. So when I was to meet Park at the train in Darlow, I went in the car. He sure was surprised. From then on I had no more trouble. I soon learned to drive in Hutchinson.

Park's folks moved to Hutchinson at the same time. We traded our quarter of land we bought near Coats for the northeast quarter of land we still have down here. Park's folks traded part of their land at Coats for two hundred and forty acres next to our quarter. Then the next year they traded the rest of their land out there for another two hundred and forty acres.

Park's youngest brother moved down here the next year. Park's folks built a house on that land for Clyde and Gladys.

They moved two five-room houses from our land to the land that Coffey's

bought. They were on our quarter when we bought it. They built on one of the five-room houses for Park's brother, Clyde, and used the other house with part of it as a garage.

Our house was a big eight-room house. On our farm a man, Harold Rexroad, had butchered in the house and raised cattle and hogs. It sure took a lot of cleaning. There was a chimney through every room from the ground up. Park took all the chimnies down and put one from the kitchen and dining room so we could use it for the furnace. It was about 1927 before we got a furnace. Not many houses had furnace heat at that time. It sure was a cold house.

When Parkaline and Neta were old enough to go to Sunday School, I took them to Partridge. There were two churches there then. Then in a couple of years we went to Sunday School and church in Elmer. We went to the Elmer church for several years until they discontinued services. The Elmer Church and the South Hutchinson Church went together as one church.

The girls started to take music lessons when Parkaline was about eight years old. I took them north of Darlow a couple of miles to the home of Mertyl McNurry for lessons. We bought a piano about 1920.

We had a lot of snow the year we moved down here. Park made a sled to feed the cattle from. I drove the team while Park would throw off the feed to the cattle.

We had movers raise our big house and put a basement under the house to have a place for a furnace. We burned coal, so we had to have a coal bin and a sump pump to take the water out.

When Parkaline and Neta were just small we sent and got a Saint Bernard dog from a place in Iowa. He was such a beautiful dog, yellow with a white face and some white on his legs. He loved the girls, and if any man would come, he would go right to the girls and get between them. Everyone was

afraid of him, but he was kind and good to mind. So many people would drive through our yard to go to the pond fishing. Someone ran over him when he was four or five years old. He never got over his broken leg. He lived a month or so and the girls would go out and stay with him till bed time. We called him Prince. So the night he died, the girls stayed with him till bed time as usual, then he drug himself across the road quite a ways in the field into a plum thicket.

I joined Darlow Club in 1918. In that summer I also joined the Ladies Farm Bureau. I was an active member in the Farm Bureau till the 1970's. I got my fifty year pin in 1970. I always enjoyed it. I still belong to what they called H. D. U., Home Demonstration Unit. Then it was E. H. U., Extension Home Unit. I belonged to it as long as I could attend. Mildred Hemphill always took me after I moved to town. Some of the members of the Darlow Club always came and took me. They were all good friends. I belonged to both for around sixty years.

J. Park was born on our farm May 16, 1921. Our farm was twelve miles south of Hutchinson. He was five years old when we moved to town. J. Park was nearly seven years younger than Neta. He went to first and second grade of school when we were in Hutchinson. He always liked music better than anything else. He would leave other boys playing the yard and come in the house to play the piano. I never had to see that he practiced his music. He never cared for classical music, he had an ear for popular music. He took lessons on the piano but he would rather play by ear. When he was older he would write music and play it.

We moved back to the farm in 1929. J. Park went to Partridge to school through grade school with Richard Evans until the sixth grade. We lived a mile from the Evans'.

We bought J. Park a Shetland pony when he was nine or ten years old. He trapped muskrats on the ponds and would ride the pony to run his traps befor he went to school. That was the way he got his spending money. He would put the muskrats in a gunny sack to bring them to the house, then after school he would skin them and shape the skins on a wooden house shingle. He would shape them with a knife and then stretch them to the size he needed. Their hides had to be stretched real tight on the shingle. The larger the hide was the more money they would bring. Hides were worth a good price then, but later years they were not worth so much. But by then, he was old enough to help do the chores.

As soon as he was old enough, J. Park played the trombone through most of school. He kept the first chair in music all through school. The same with Parkaline on the clarinet and Neta the violin.

After we moved back to the farm, J. Park and some of his friends got up an orchestra. They went once in awhile and played for dances. Piano was his favorite musical instrument. It was never too late when he got home from being out but he would play a piece or two on the piano.

When he was grown he drove a tractor in the field with Park. We had two tractors, a Farmall and a big International tractor.

J. Park went to Juco in town one year after he was out of high school.

I had several turkey hens and a gobbler. We had a big pen to keep them in until evenings. We had to gather the eggs as soon as possible, as the crows were bad to get the eggs. I usually hatched turkey eggs under chicken hens. It takes twenty-eight days for turkey eggs to hatch. Then I would let the hens raise the little turkeys. I also had ducks and geese. When the girls got larger, they would help pick the ducks. I made a feather bed and ten or twelve down feather pillows. I gave each child and grandchild two pillows

when they were married.

Every year for several years after we got all the fall crop put away for the winter we would fill silo and shock feed. Then came time to butcher for the winter. We butchered four or five fat hogs in a day. They we would all go to Park's brother's, Carrel's. He would butcher so many hogs as he had a threshing machine. He could butcher nine to eleven hogs. Then Uncle Murry was the next to butcher. He did not butcher but two or three hogs.

We all cured our own meat. If it was too cold in the meat house we would take the meat to the cave to cure. It took six weeks to cure. We used the sugar cure. We made our own with brown sugar, salt and pepper. We would rub each piece and put a lot on the top of the hams, shoulders and the bacon.

After a great number of years, Carey Ice Plant put in freezer lockers or bins. So we put a lot of fresh meat and chickens in the freezer lockers.

We did not butcher beef but once a year. We hung it on the windmill, at that time it stayed cold and kept the beef frozen all winter. We would put a bed sheet around it to keep the birds off. I would just slice off what I needed. It was handy to have it frozen and wrapped.

Then we had a home freezer, the best of all.

We used to buy liquid smoke in the later years instead of the meat house to smoke. It got easier as the years went by. We always made pudding meat, we called it, from the meat off the head and the liver cooked. Then we would grind it and the rind off the fat where we got the lard. All cooked and ground then cooked until all the water was out and the grease came to the top. Then we packed it in syrup or fruit buckets and poured lard on top. It would keep until summertime in the cellar. We made ponhouse out of the water, using the meat off the hogs head. You cook it in a small amount of water until tender. Grind the meat and cook again with water, drain the broth and use to cook

corn meal mush. Combine mush, meat and meat drippings, season to taste. Put in loaf and cool. Slice and fry.

We had a binder to cut the wheat and had two men to shock the bundles, four to six to the shock. They followed right after the binder. Then in the fall or when all the wheat was cut, we would get a steam engine to thresh the wheat. It would take six or seven rick wagons to haul the bundles to the threshing machine. It took an engineer, water wagon, coal wagon, and another man to help. The separators would blow the wheat straw in a big stack, for the cattle to eat on during the winter. We also used the straw for bedding for the horses and cattle in the barn and also in the pig pen.

Then the next way we cut wheat was with the header, it took four horses to pull it. Park would stand straddle an iron beam to guide the header and drive the four horses. We had two header barges that had a high side to catch the wheat from the header and a low side for the elevator to be about level with the header elevator. It took one man to drive the team of horses and one man to load the barge and make the wheat straw level. When the header barge was full the driver from that wagon went to the other one. The first barge would take it to a stack and pitch the wheat to a man to stack the wheat straw so the wind and rain would soak into the stack. It took well trained men to stack the wheat. They put the stacks as far apart so the other wagon could pull between the wheat stacks.

When fall came a steam engine would come to thrash the stacks of wheat into a big straw pile. It took an extra man to clean up around the stacks, so if any wheat fell off, the man was there to clean it up and pitch it to the other stacks. The steam engine burned coal. It took a coal hauler and a water wagon.

When they blew the whistle it meant for us women to hurry and get the

men's wash water and several wash pans. It took lots of towels outside for the men to dry on. We always had a tub of water ready for the men (to get the men back to work as soon as possible) and we had towels made of linen crash. We sewed the ends together about one and one-half yards and had a roller fastened to the wall in the kitchen. We used this to dry our hands on. The linen crash was course and had to be ironed.

We had lots of horses. We kept eight or ten mares just to raise colts. They were Persian mares, sorrel or brown, and a Persian stallion to breed our mares. We raised colts to sell as yearlings or make two year old colts if we had enough pasture for them.

We got our first combine in 1924 or 1926. It was pulled with eight horses. A cousin of Park's drove the horses to pull the combine. To handle four lines and know which one to pull for which team was an art. The wheat comes straight from the combine into a wagon with two horses pulling it. It was pretty dangerous for the driver. Park spent the winter making a metal grain bin on the combine that would hold fifty bushels of wheat. He pulled a lever to open the lid to run the wheat into the wagon. By that time, I think the men scooped the wheat into the dump to run the wheat into the bin. The combine was a McCormick.

When Park had the metal grain bin on the McCormick combine, men from their headquarters came to look at the bin and to take measurements and pictures. The next year all their combines had the grain bin on them. I guess the McCormick Company sold the patent to other companies. Park was the first to build a grain bin on a combine, but he did not get even a thank you. The company changed the unloading spout a little and that was all the cahnges they made. Park said that he made it for his own use and would not try for patent.

We always milked several cows by hand, until we had a milking machine.

We milked in the corral when it was nice, then we got a gasoline engine to run the milkers. We separated the milk by turning the separator by hand. When we got electricity in 1932 we used the electricity for eveything. The girls helped do some of the milking when they got old enough, before we got the milkers.

Our second combine was a Baldwin and the third combine was a Case. We always had International tractors.

A long time ago in the 1920's we leased a little tract of land on Red Rock Creek, just east of our home and south of the bridge, to a man called, Mr. Leach. He was a gold prospector. He worked and drilled two or three years, but the gold was so fine and mixed with other minerals he could not separate it. He got enough gold that he made a little charm to put on a pocket watch chain. Park was real proud of it. Mr. Leach did not pay anything on the lease. It did no harm to anything.

When we moved to town in the fall of 1926 (Neta had leg ache so bad), we first bought a house on East Sixth in Hutchinson. Neta could not walk to Liberty School. I had to take the girls and go after them every morning and evening.

Neta has had pain most of her life. She had pain in her legs nearly all through grade school. Then she had cancer and still has to wear a clostomy. Now she has rheumatory arthritis so bad.

Our first car with glass windows was a Busick. We got it in 1926 while we lived in town, to send the girls to school. Parkaline was ready for high school.

The girls would stay in town when we had to go to the farm to harvest. Several girl friends stayed with the girls and the night watchman, the father of one of the girls, was always near that corner on 1300 North Main. They

would go across the street to the Gossage Grocery Store to buy whatever they wanted, then we would pay the bill when we came to town. They had good times.

We were in town during the flood here, I think it was 1926 or 1927.

George Keller stayed out on the farm for two or four years during school for the girls.

Junior went to the first grade in Hutchinson, Kansas.

A neighbor, Sara Graves, used to take the girls to school after we moved back to the farm in 1929.

Park then played a saxaphone in the city band at Coats. He would drive to Coats once a week to practice. Some nights would be so cold and snowy and with just side curtains in the car it was not very warm. He would have me to accompany him on the piano, but I played by note and could not follow music.

Parkaline played the clarinet while we were in town and she was in school. It was hard for her to blow the clarinet. Neta played the violin all through school.

Park and his folks lived on a farm seven miles southwest of Coats. They were a musical family. He had two brothers, Carrel (two years older) and Clyde (four years younger). Carrel played the violin. That was Park's main musical instrument, although he played the organ and the guitar. All the family would gather around the pedal organ and sing and play a lot. Park's mother played the organ, a big pretty organ. They all played by ear. Park and his brother. Carrel, used to play for dances.

After Park and I were married Park still played for dances. He played the violin and the guitar. I always went along to the dances with him and enjoyed dancing. He did not have much time for dancing. We went to dances for years. When the girls, Parkaline and Neta, got to be nine or ten years

old they liked to dance so well and was so excited to get to go along. We quit going to dances because they liked it too well. We were afraid we were getting them in the wrong company. We used to have barn dances.

All was good and orderly in our home, no smoking and no drinking ever. I never heard of any man taking a drink in those days. If a woman was caught smoking it was dishonorable.

When we got electricity in 1931 it cost eight hundred dollars to build a half mile from Dick Evan's. We had to have electricity as Parkaline came down with tuberculosis the last day of her high school year, in Partridge. She was in bed nearly five years with tuberculosis. We built the sleeping porch above the east porch. It had ten windows on the east and south side. We could not keep a light burning on the porch with so many windows. I had to keep all the east upper sashes down and had cheese cloth over each window.

When Parkaline was down in bed she had to eat a lot of chicken liver. The doctor said that chicken liver was the best and next was baby beef liver. Parkaline drank a pint of milk every two hours, then drank water to take the taste out. We had to have our cows milk tested every so often. Parkaline said my average trip upstairs to see her was seventy-five times a day. When she needed someone she hit the floor with a chair or something. When Neta went places I did not allow Parkaline to be alone. We gave her the best of care. She always said if she had not had good parents like us, she never would have lived.

I did all the washing at home. I had a washing machine ran by a gasoline engine. I hung her, Parkaline's, sheets out every day and maybe several times a day. It depended if she would get any blood on the sheets. We put a folded sheet under her head when she hemorrhaged. I had over twenty-five sheets on hand.

When Neta and Earl Ricksecker were married, Parkaline was not up but a little while. We helped her downstairs to stand up with Neta. They were married September 8, 1935 in our home.

To this union three children were born: Earl Leon, August 17, 1937; Jerry Lee, April 9, 1945; and Betty Jean, October 25, 1948.

Earl Leon Ricksecker married Janet Louise Spahr, of Minneola, Kansas, on July 5, 1958. Born the this union were: Diane Michelle on September 18, 1964, at Columbia, Missouri; and Michael Andrew on September 9, 1966 at Muncie, Indiana. Leon and his family live in California.

Jerry Lee Ricksecker married Sharon Hunt on December 27, 1966. Born to this union were: Amy Kathern on July 20, 1971 at Topeka, Kansas; and David William on February 27, 1975 at Hutchinson, Kansas. Jerry is an attorney here in Hutchinson.

Betty Jean Ricksecker married Ronald Logan Bell on August 24, 1968. Born to this union were: David Eric on October 5, 1969 at Mathers Air Force Base in California. He lived only forty-eight hours. On July 7, 1972 Aaron Michael was still born at Hutchinson. Betty and Ron adopted Joetta Lynn on September 12, 1971 and Cassandra Rene on July 16, 1973 here in Hutchinson.

Parkaline married Galen Epperson on September 20, 1936. Both the girls were married at home. We had a large crowd that attended both weddings. We had ice cream in shape of a dove, and the other was in the shape of wedding bells with cake. We had them shipped in from Wichita. Parkaline was not up the full time she was married. To this union were born Janet on August 10, 1943 and Patricia Diane on October 22, 1946. Parkaline had cancer and passed away November 1, 1962. She left behind two wonderful girls, Janet, seventeen, and Patti, fifteen.

Janet Epperson married Charles Nichols in Kansas City on December 22,

1968. Matthew Thomas was born to this union on September 14, 1973.

Patricia Epperson married Ronald Tope on June 6, 1965 in Partridge. To this union was born: Shelly Annette May 9, 1968; Sheri Linn, May 5, 1970; and Robert Lance on November 25, 1973. All were born in Hutchinson. Patti and Ron have lived near Turon most of their married life. Patti works in the school system in Pratt. She drives nearly twenty miles to work. Ron works at Cessna Fluid Power in Hutchinson and also farms.

We had a nice little pond a little ways south of the house. We had so many picnics down by the pond. Those who wanted to fish could. We had a lot of breakfasts down there. Then our family and friends would stay all day. We had three camp stoves. In two of them we burned coal. We would sometimes have pancakes, bacon and eggs. We really had good appetites. I had a two gallon coffee pot and a smaller one to pour from.

Park put tall poles down in the ground and put boards across the top. He then put a tarpaulin, a heavy cover, over the top and tied one side to the truck, on the west, and held it down on the east side with ropes. It made a nice cool place to eat dinner. The breeze blew through all the time from the north or south.

We would have big crowds of friends and the family. We had along table and we would take folding tables and chairs. The girls, their husbands and families liked to come down there real often. It was a lot of work but lots of fun. Park and I used to entertain. There were four couples that would get together often for a picnic supper at different times.

We would have big picnic suppers in our back yard. The electric light on top of the windmill made plenty of light. A couple of years we saned our pond and had a fish fry for fifteen or twenty people. We had roasting ears and watermelon feeds in our yard too. How we loved people.

We entertained the Darlow Study Club on Valentines Day. It was called the husband's dinner. They say, by the club book, we had club fifteen years straight, as we had a big house with an upstairs. The men liked to play pitch upstairs. We would get the chairs from the bunch at the Johnson Funeral Home or the church. We got them from the home because one of them belonged to our club. In the early days, in the 1920's, they brought their families with their children, then there would be fifty or sixty people. Then the children grew up and married, so we went to eat at a resturant here in town. We would rent a room for the evening. The women would pay for their husband's meal, just for a joke. We always had a good time. We always called it Husband's Sweetheart Party.

I went to the club a few times but it all changed. The last time I went to a husband's supper, I was walking with a cane. Another lady used a cane so we went as man and woman to play pitch all evening. The men as well as the women had fun at that party.

On December 14, 1941, J. Park married Mary Ellen Elliott of Partridge. They lived at Lawrence, Kansas where he had a sporting goods store. Born to this union was Steven Linn Coffey on October 19, 1947.

In 1941 J. Park was drafted into the army and was stationed in the Pacific Islands for twenty-seven months. When he returned home things were not the same for him and Mary Ellen. So on June 5, 1952 they were divorced. The divorce was filed here in Hutchinson. Steven was five years old when we last saw him.

Then on March 6, 1953, J. Park married Betty Jacques Covert at Kingman. Betty had two sons from a previous marriage: Jerry Covert, born April 17, 1944 and John Covert, born March 28, 1946.

Then born to J. Park and Betty on November 11, 1953 was a son, Rick.

Rick was married to Shere Williams on February 14, 1976 at Haven, Kansas. Rick and Shere became the proud parents of a daughter, Sheryl Rena, born September 11, 1977.

Jerry Covert Married Donna Beth Wilderbeck on June 10,1964. To this union was born, Kimberly Linn on March 16, 1970 at Dayton, Ohio; and Brian Allen on December 24, 1973 at Burlington, Massachusetts.

John Covert was married to Sharon Schickau on January 20, 1967. To this union was born: Deanna on October, 20, 1968 and Dean Allen on December 5, 1972 at Hutchinson, Kansas.

From 1901 to 1918, when we moved here, Park and I lived on our farm twelve miles southwest of Hutchinson. We owned three quaters of land. Park's health was not good, so he retired in 1959. We traveled a lot to visit relatives. We went to the Rose Parade in California twice. When we got our color television, it was much nicer to see the parade. We could not find a place to park our car or a place to sit and rest.

We visited Park's sister, Verna, and went to the big horse races. Park loved to watch the horses.

Then we went on hiway 101 to Portland, Oregon to visit Park's aunt, Jenny Hoffman, and her family. Aunt Jenny spent many winters with us when she was up in the years. She also had other relatives in Kansas. She was Park's father's sister.

We went to the fisherman's warf in Portland. It was like a big ship, portholes and all. They served all kinds of fish. Dressed them and then served them. They left the eyes in the fish. I didn't like the fish looking at me while I ate. In the south, in Louisiana, they were glad to cut the head off, as there was a standing line to buy the head. They cut it off with plenty of meat.

We went from Oregon across the Northern States. We saw where they raised the big fields of Idaho potatoes. Then to the Great Fall Mountains, south to Casper and Cheyenne, Wyoming. Then we went to South Dakota and visited at Hot Springs with my niece. Then we went down to Nebraska and visited with relatives in Omaha, Lincoln and Potts Mouth. We visited my only cousins in America and then headed home as it was beginning to snow.

For several years my younger sister, Lina, and her husband, Sam McLain, lived in Perryton, Texas. We took a lot of trips together. We went to the Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico; the Grand Canyon in Arizona; Lake Mead and many places in the Grand Canyon National Park. We went to the Rocky Mountain Park; Estus Park, Colorado; Pikes Peak, Colorado. We went up Pikes Peak to the Halfway House. We went to the Yellow Stone National Park, to see the Old Faithful Geyser and the Teton Mountains. They are real pretty but not as high as the Rocky Mountains. We went to Great Salt Lake, Utah. They say that it is not as large as it used to be. We went in the Morman Chapel to see the mammoth pipe organ.

One fall, we went south to Louisiana, then ferried across the Gulf of Mexico to Port Arthur. Sam was driving a big Cadillac car. We sat in the car and rode across on a flat barge. We came back to Louisiana. The next three days we could hear the big ships whistle blow. There was all kinds of ships and boats, even sail boats. One night we heard a lot of big horns during the night. My sister and her husband always went fifty-fifty on everything. The car in front of us threw a rock through Sam's winshield. It cost us twenty-five dollars each to get a new windshiled put in. That was all the car trouble we had.

I had not joined any church here, but Park and I kept up Payments to the Coats Methodist Church until I made up my mind to join the church in Hutchinson.

I joined the First United Methodist Church at First and Walnut in 1969.

We had always helped the South Hutchinson Methodist Church to do things. I belonged to the Ladies Circle there. We always helped when the church had coffee at the fair. We used to make two hundred and fifty pies a day all during the fair. I would make ten or twelve cakes and take them to the church. They had a man that delivered everything to the fairgrounds.

I used to work in the kitchen at the cafe in the salad department. They served such good home cooked meals. I think we served many more people than the other churches.

Christmas was our big time. We kept my mother's tradition of sacks for the Christmas candy and nuts. I first made the sacks out of mosquito bar. Then nylon net came on the market and I used it. We always counted every piece of candy and nuts so everyone got the same. The last Christmas I made thirty-seven sacks for the families and a few other children. At the price of things now we could not do that.

Park and I bought most of our candy and nuts at Smith's Market. Our candies were: five pounds of chocolate peanut clusters; three pounds chocolate carmel squares; two pounds peanut squares; three pounds orange slices; two pounds large gumdrops; three pounds chocolate vanilla mounds; two pounds peppermint; three pounds chocolate coconut drops; two pounds chocolate stars; two pounds chocolate kisses; two pounds small tootsie rolls; two pounds licorice; one pound jaw breakers; six pounds English walnuts; five pounds Brazil nuts; two pounds almonds; two pounds Hazel nuts; six pounds pecans; and fifteen pounds peanuts. We put every sack together piece by piece.

Every Christmas we would also make about one hundred or more popcorn balls and put them in a big basket. We would put the full basket on the cement on the side of the steps that came on the big porch, for the carolers

from the two churches.

Ivan and Anna Ruth Yutzy, who worked and lived in the tenent house for twenty years or so, and the Sunday School Class would come from Yoder to sing carols for us.

Also from my mother's tradition I always made English Plum Pudding and sauce. It can be kept a long time by reheating it. Here is my mother's recipe:

English Plum Pudding

2 lbs. sugar
1½ lb. beef kidney suet
1½ lbs. flour
1 lb. currants
¼ lb. lemon peel
2 lbs. raisens
¼ lb. citron
¼ lb. candied orange peel
¼ lb. candied pineapple
1 lb. walnuts
1 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. cinnamon
¼ tsp. allspice
¼ tsp. cloves
little salt
8 eggs--well beaten
1 lb. dates

Chop suet and mix with part of flour. Add sugar, fruit and spices. Add well beaten eggs. Then mix and add enough milk to make a soft batter, stiff enough to hold a tablespoon straight up. Divide and tie in a real tight cloth. Boil for five hours. Never let it boil to a rolling boil.

Sauce

1 cup milk
1 cup water
3 tbs. flour
2/3 cup sugar
½ stick oleo
¼ tsp. nutmeg
little salt

Cook over a low fire until thickened. Add ½ tsp. lemon flavoring and ½ tsp. vanilla flavoring.

Park passed away in 1969, three months after we moved to Twenty-Five East Fourteenth, Hutchinson, Kansas. I was so glad we had bought our home and was settled while he lived. But was sorry Park didn't get to enjoy our home like he had planned.

In 1972, I won a contest offered by KWBW radio station. It was an all expense paid trip for two to Nashville, Tennessee. I would sign at each

store when I went to buy something. I had bought some beads at the craft store on North Main. I was so surprised when the man called from KWBW and told me I had won. He asked me how old I was and I told him eighty-five and he said, "Oh no!" I told him not to worry, that I could stand as much as any of them could. So my daughter, Neta, and I went to Nashville. We left from Wichita, Kansas on a big jet. They took me to and from the plane in a wheel-chair.

The first or second night they took me to the front of the Grand Old Opery House to the stage where the musicians were. I got the pleasure of meeting all the stars. They held the spot light on me while they asked my name, where I was from and how I was chosen for the trip. That sure was something to stand before such a big crowd with a spot light on me. I sure was treated royally.

All our meals and the motel expenses were paid also. They served such meals.

It was all so grand! We had seven days there which included sight seeing on buses. There was a bus load of people that came from Hutchinson so we were just like one big family. They wanted to take pictures everywhere. I was a little camera shy.

On our way there we had only one change of planes in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We had friends there so it sure was a wonderful trip. I never dreamed I would win anything.

When we returned home I had a big cake made for KWBW. I had the appropriate decoration for the Grand Old Opery. Meeting so many noted stars was wonderful and they were so nice. It was such a wonderful trip.

Another chapter of my life. A student from the Junior College came to enter my life story. This was recorded on the electric tape recorder then it

will be played back to the college paper and will be put out on a certain day. The young student said she would come again and she'd know me better. This is the fourth time I had been interviewed. The first time was about the antiques where I explained about the old irons we used. We would heat them on the cook stove to do our ironing of the clothes we wore.

Then the library lady came out and got a recipe from several ladies. Then they chose the recipes they wanted to use and they made a nice little cookbook and sent them out for Christmas.

The U. S. Center interviewed me then for the college student. They played the tape recording back over the college radio and I got to hear it. It was plain, but it did not sound like my voice. It was all so wonderful, the opportunities I get here.

I had Helen and Becky Gadbury stay with me while they attended college. It was fun having them with me.

I did the work in my yard. It was a lot of work but I had a beautiful yard.

In 1975 I went to a parade downtown and that is the last I remember. I got sick and had to go to the hospital. I was in there four days then the doctor had me taken to the Good Samaritan Center. I was there almost a week and didn't like it so I went home again. I had a lady stay with me until August. I got so sick I had to go to a rest home again. There wasn't any in Hutchinson so they took my by ambulance to the Pennock Rest Home in Kingman. I stayed there until June 1, 1976.

I have to be in a wheelchair all the time so I went to the Friendship Mennonite Manor in South Hutchinson. Monty came the same day I did. I have a wonderful room. It is close to the nurses desk and next to the window so I can see the coming and goings of people. I can also watch the farming across

the road. It has kept me in touch with the farm life which has been part of my life.

It has been wonderful to be back in Hutchinson where all my friends are. They all have been so good to me.

This last Christmas, 1979, all my family came to the home. I had goodies to eat and had gifts for everyone. Money for the grownups and books and other things for the children. Steven Linn, J. Park's son, was here too. I had not seen him since he was five years old. It was wonderful to see him again. He had his wife and little girl with him. His daughter was six.

I am ninety-three years of age now. For my ninety-third birthday, November 8, 1979, I had a birthday party. Those attending were: Patti Tope, Sharon Ricksecker, Neta Ricksecker, Elnora Burgin, Clara Legg, Mariah Risly, Eva Burgin, Betty Coffey and Helen Gadbury. They fixed a good family style chicken dinner. I had a wonderful time.

I have been helping with the hand crafts here at the home. They have bazaars and I help make things to sell. We have made yarn dolls.

In March, 1980 I had an infection in my left leg and had to go to the hospital. I was there for four days. I still have to be in the wheelchair with my legs elevated so it doesn't cause any more infection due to poor circulation.

Allie Burgin Copy I written 1980
age 93