

LILA'S MEMORIES

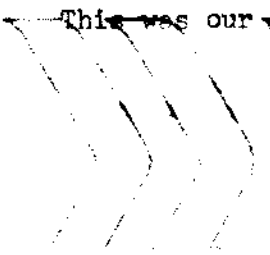
My early memories include that of our old house. It was three rooms downstairs, and a divided upstairs. The kitchen was a large lean-to as it was called. A wood burning cooking stove served to heat the room, and to cook and bake all the food. The stove was unique in that it had a reservoir at the right side which held a large amount of water, and was heated when fire was present. Each day it needed filling.

In one corner was a sink with a handle pump which drew soft water from the cistern beneath the floor. Water was pumped as needed. The sink flow left the house in a pine drain through the wall.

On Saturday night, water was pumped and carried in a pail to the boiler on the stove to be heated for bathing purposes. That was done in a metal wash tub near the stove. One by one, we took turns.

In the center of the dining room, stood a large coal and wood-burning stove. This was the major source of heat as the kitchen stove was let to burn out by bedtime. The little rising glass windows were often broken with all the little fingers poking at them. Wood was burned much of the time until coal was bought during the cold winter. Off this room was a small parlor. Through it was Mom and Dad's bedroom. We all slept downstairs until Evelyn and I were big enough to go upstairs to sleep. Cy, born in 1914, remained downstairs.

Before I leave the old house, I have memory of when Dad broke his leg in 1916. He left with horses and a load of grain for Deansville. It took most of the day to go, grind the grain for flour, get the groceries, and return. This evening, he didn't arrive. Later, Mom saw the horses coming in and stopping near the barn. Dad wasn't there. Turning a corner, he slipped, fell off the wagon, and was dragged on the ground. The hired man put the horses away. Dad was brought home by friends. The doctor arrived to set the broken leg. A bed was put into the parlor, and there he stayed for several weeks. To keep us children from running and bumping his bed, a door was placed lengthwise across the opening to prevent our getting near.

 This was our home until plans were made to build a new house in early 1917. Burdette was born in March, and in the spring, the old house was moved on rollers to near the granery door on the east side. The moving took an entire day. Mom stayed inside to prepare the meals for the family and workmen.

She kept the baby with her as the house moved slowly to its new location while the new house was constructed.

Evelyn, Cy, and I were enjoying the sights. Evelyn and I were to keep Cy, then 3 years old, from getting too close to the workmen. The grain bin, near the door leading to the house, was cleared for a bedroom for us. The upstairs granary was entirely cleared, and cleaned for our living quarters and storage. Thus the summer passed. Mom with baby cooking and helping outside; Dad and hired men in the fields; Evelyn and I to watch Cy. He loved to get near where excavation was taking place for the cellar. The workmen enjoyed throwing lizards at him. Oh, he cried, and how Evelyn and I were scolded by our mother. We moved into the new home on _____.

In 1918 my school days started at Oak Lawn School with Laura Blaska, our aunt, as teacher. I didn't care for school. The walk there, of a mile, was long. There were cattle in the woods, owned by Willard Boyles, near the corner. I preferred to be at home helping mother, and caring for the baby "in the new house". Often Mom would walk to the hill with me to get me started. At the end of the first year, Laura, our teacher, wanted me to skip 2nd grade and go into 3rd in the fall. I cried most of the night so Mom stopped her on her way to school, and said she would have to let me take 2nd. I was the only one in that grade, so I joined the 3rd grade in recitations. In 1918, Cy started school at age 4. He was pounding up the new house.

Jerome was born in 1919. We were planning to go to the July 4th celebration at Angel Park. For years Dad ran the engine that propelled the Merry-go-Round. He would take us along and usually we got a few free rides. Evelyn and I felt this an especial treat. This year we were begging Mom to get ready, and she said "No", none of us could go. Of course, with two little children there, Ev and I were expected to help with matters unbeknown to us.

I have recollection of the end of World War I. Some of us had gone to town with Mom, in the Ford. We were at Trapp's Cash Bargain Store when the whistles, bells, and sirens were set off. The people were in the streets, and everyone had a joyous time. The Ford I speak of was bought in 1917, our first car. What a beauty! We put side curtains on when it rained.

In 1920, we were planning on the 4th of July celebration, particularly because we had two birthdays to celebrate. Didn't the same episode repeat itself, and we didn't get to go to the park again as Juanita was born that day, and joined the family. But, what a pleasure as we now had three birthdays to celebrate on that day.

Aunt Anne Trapp brightened our 4th_s over the years with three birthday cakes. We always waited

for this treat as there was an angel food, a shunshine, and a chocolate cake, and with one quart of ice cream, we had a party.

During these years, a hired man named Adolph Klitzke, spent time with us. I recall going to midnight Mass two different years when he hitched the horses to a bobsled, and took us there and waited to bring us home.

In those days, we picked elderberries in our woods, and made wine in 20 gallon jars. On these outings, Mom felt he was a little too jolly. Lo and behold, during the fall and winter, she discovered he drank the whole 20 gallons. There was none to bottle up!

These were the years when neighbors, including Andrew Scheuerell, Mike Yelk, Mike Manley, and Louis Schuster) would meet on Sunday evenings to play cards. They would arrive in bobsleds and horses were put in the barn for several hours. Wine was served, and later in the evening there was a lunch. How we waited for them to come to our house!

The school house was cold and airy. In winter we sat in our outdoor clothing until noon. Many times, they were wet due to walking and playing in the snow.

Every Friday, we had a meeting to decide on different duties for us children for the week. The older boys and girls volunteered to get the water from the Krebs farm. It was carried by two persons in a pail on a stick. The fountain had to be drained during cold weather due to possible freezing and cracking. Wood needed to be carried from the wood shed into the wood box behind the large stove. In the early years, no coal was burned. During the day, someone had the duty of keeping the stove stocked. Sweeping the floor was a daily task; likewise washing the blackboards, cleaning erasers, and dusting the desks and furniture.

The first hot lunch at Oak Lawn school was something made by the girls in upper grades in the cloakroom. Each would take turns furnishing the ingredients, and the item ^{was} prepared on a kerosene burner. The children furnished their own containers into which the final product was poured. The biggest surprise I recall was cornstarch pudding. I was certain it tasted like the paste we made at home of flour, cornstarch, milk and alum, and brought to school to use. Later on, each child who wanted a hot lunch item would bring thier little container of their own choice. All were then put into a pan of water, placed atop the furnace to heat for the noon lunch. Upper grade students did the serving.

How we loved the train we sometimes saw coming to, or retuning from school. Dismissed at 4 P.M., we hurried to get near the tracks for the 4:05 train bound for Madison. Sometimes we walked the rails east, and then rushed to get back and off the tracks before the train approached. Often, the engineer threw us a piece of fruit, or candy. Just imagine Evelyn, Cy and I sharing it!

For entertainment, there was a Mother's Club. At Christmas, the usual program in which we all took part. And, the most interesting box socials for the public. We decorated the boxes, and planned for the lunch we would take in it. Usually, I had a box fixed with red crepe paper, and ribbons. My first found me so young, I was hesitant to eat with Arthur Straus who bought it. I guess I sat near Mom. Dad attended also, and when Mom's basket went for sale, the men bid him up, and he really had a hard time buying Mom's box. What fun!

During the time when there were just five of us, we often made trips to visit relatives, usually on Sundays. One trip I remember was driving one Sunday to Anna and Philip Fishers, near Columbus. This day, Dad drove our Ford, loaded with Mom and the five of us. As Dad drove into Fisher's yard, he stopped to open the gate, and into the yard we went. At that moment, one of their big billy goats jumped on the hood of our car, and there he stayed. Uncle Philip had some time getting the goat off the hood, and it with the others into the barn. Naturally, we kids laughed and laughed. Dad didn't think it so funny.

We liked to go to Aunt Martha and Uncle Charles Yelks home. Aunt Martha had such good food, and usually we had two meals while there.

Dad preferred going to Uncle Charles and Aunt Eda Hebl's home. While there, he and Uncle Charley talked and argued politics all the time we were there.

When there was a Schuster celebration, Anna and Charles Trapp hosted it. How we looked forward to such parties.

John James came to us in 1923. What a cold, cold, winter. I stayed home to help for several days. I recall washing clothes, and hanging them outside on the lines. They froze as I pinned them on the line. It was then, when outside, that Dad came to me and said I should ask Mom to call this baby John. He wanted a boy with his name.

Gregory followed close after, in 1925. That day, Mom asked me to walk to Grandma Blaska's and ask her to come. I walked there, and Grandma and I walked back together. Whenever we needed supplies as sugar, coffee, etc. over the years, we would run down to Grandma's and borrow it. Oh, how I loved her fresh bread with butter and brown sugar. Many, many times, Evelyn, Cy, and I would walk down to see her. Being the timid one, I'd beg Evelyn to do the asking. She never refused, and there was always a treat when we came.

I must mention the harvesting days as Dad had a threshing rig powered with the steam engine. He threshed the neighbor's crops when ripe. He needed to arrive at his rig early, leaving at 4 AM. In early years, he drove horses, or Mom drove him to his destination. Later, Evelyn or the hired man did it. When the rig and crew came to our home, we prepared food for 20, or more,

men. The extra large dining room in our house was made to accommodate the large crowds. If we were short of cups, glasses, dishes, etc. we girls would walk to Grandma's and borrow them. Many times, Grandma or Aunt Martha Yeld would come to help Mom with the cooking. As there was no refrigeration, all foods were prepared on the day. Many times, the threshers stayed two or three days, depending on the weather. We helped Grandma Blaska with her preparations also. All men were fed when they worked on the farm, including tobacco workers, silo fillers, or whomever, ample food was always served.

One year, silo fillers were detained because of rain. Dad came in at (AM, and said there would be men for noon dinner. He couldn't go to town for meat, and no one else was there to drive. Mom gave me money, and I walked to Sun Prairie, bought 3 pounds of pork chops at Haberman's meat market. I had a nickel left for a Hershey bar. I was told to hurry back as the meat needed to be there shortly after 11 AM. That day it was fried. Mom had potatoes peeled, and pies made, and I helped set the table and serve the food to the men.

As soon as Evelyn and I could do outside jobs, Grandma Blaska would drive up to get us to help him with some jobs. One was to walk behind the mower and guide the hay, or peas, with a three-tined fork. We were joyous when at the end of the day he gave us ten cents (dime) My fondest memory of him was when he stopped with horses and a sleigh, before a Christmas. He called for us to come out. He had a little sled, about 36 inches long, for all of us who could use it. With it was a big bag of candy. What a happy Christmas that was!

I can't forget Ben Blaska. Ben was Evelyn's age. He went with us during some early school years. He was a constant friend, and playmate. He would come to our house to play, and we would beg to go there.

Hattie Hermanson, a neighbor, played a great role in our household. She walked across the field from the Boyle's farm to our house most every day. She was not only a confidant to Mom, but a second mother to us kids. Upon arriving, about 9:30 or 10:00 AM, she would tend the kids, and do dishes. By that time, Mom came in from chores in the barn, and Hattie would be ready to bake or patch and mend clothing. Oh yes, Mom stirred up the cookies, and Hattie rolled them out and baked them. One batch of white cream/^{sugar}cookies, and then, the soft molasses, rolled cookies. There could be pies going at the same time as a pie for the big noon meal to feed the men working in the fields and barns was always a must. After the noon meal and dishes were washed, came the mending. We would always find her patching

overalls, and the kid's clothing. She stayed until around 4 PM, and then she would head home always with a few goodies for her supper. She loved to tell a story about Johnny. Then a little fellow, he watched her cut and sew patches. To him, it seemed always on the men's wear. So, one day, he cut a hole in his pants, and asked her if she would please sew the hole in his pants, too.

In 1926, a busy summer started with the building of Highway 19. In early June, two students at Marquette University stopped, and asked Mom if they could room and board at our house for the summer while working with the road crew. Income was short, so it was a means of extra cash, and Mom agreed and gave them a room. By the end of the week so many young men came, with the same request, that Mom filled the entire upstairs bedrooms, with the exception of ^{Dad's and} that of the hired man, with two in each room and four in the large front bedroom, a total of 8 young men.

By that time, the children were re-located on first floor, two beds on the front porch, and a daybed for two on the back porch, the others in the downstairs bedroom. (Greg, 1 yr. old; John 3 yrs old; Juanita 6 yrs. old, Jerome 7, yrs, and Burdette 9; Cy 12; Lila 14; Ev 16.

The preparation of food was continuous; breakfast for all, lunches packed for each, and a dinner to be ready in the evening for a total of 17 persons. Evelyn had been driving for several years, so she was the daily shopper for groceries. One hot day, July 28, Dolly and I went with her as Dolly had a foot infection from having stepped into a nail, and my problem was imoetigo, caught from one of our boarders. While shopping, we heard the fire whistle blow, and while running to the car, we learned that our barn was burning. Evelyn was so excited, she didn't take the detour for Highway 19, but drove the "road closed" all the way home. What a catastrophe! Very little water so the men and Mom pumped water by hand. Utensils and pails were short, so someone emptied the roast on the stove to use the cooking kettle. With no fire equipment available, the barn burned to the ground. It was suggested that I walk to Grandma's with Johnnie, which I did, and didn't return until later in the evening. There was little sleep that night with excitement of people coming and going lasting throughout the night. Dad had been at a meeting in Madison, and upon his return, he stopped at ^{at} Tester's where he heard the news. His first question was whether anyone was injured or killed. Learning that, a neighbor drove him home. The cows were milked in the woods. Temporary stentions were then

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set up in the pasture so they could be milked easier. With no insurance to plan on, the folks decided to go ahead promptly to rebuild, as a barn was needed by late fall. So, the work^{burned} doubled, as now there were carpenters to feed, also. (Greg still being breast-fed when born)

The Salentine nieces invited Evelyn and Margaret Straus to their home in Milwaukee, and then to take in the Wisconsin State Fair. I worked my way into the invitation, and begged to go along. Without Dad's permission, Evelyn took the Ford, and we left for Waukesha with very little money. The stay was enjoyable, and we started for home. Having a flat tire, we drove on the rim. When we arrived home, we found Mom had more than 20 men to prepare food for. Like mice we entered the house, and went to preparing food and washing dishes like we never did before.

In September 1926, my High School days began. Some days, Evelyn, then a senior, drove the Ford, or, if Dad needed the car, he took us to school. That usually meant waiting for him at Kronke's garage, or Scheuerell's store until he picked us up. Dad loved to play cards, so, it was usually supper time when we arrived home on those days. In the winter, when weather was bad and the roads impassable, Dad took us with the horses and sleigh. Oh, how I hated to have him drive up the High School hill and holler, "Whoa"! Especially, when were often tardy. We usually carried a sack lunch, but on special days, we would go down to Ed Hein's Bakery, and get two doughnuts, or two rolls for 5 cents. Later, we went to Tester's restaurant occassionally, and got $\frac{1}{2}$ sandwich for 5 cents, potatoes, and a piece of pie for 5 cents,—all for 15 cents. This, of course, was a real treat.

As we girls were growing older, we were expected to pack the lunches in pails, for those children going to grade school. Mom would make the cooked cereal, leave it on the worm stove, and then go milking. Several times, she would come to the house, and call us to be sure we had gotten up. Finally, we did, and fed those going to school, and got the lunches ready. Many times, there was just bread, butter, and jam, a fruit, or a cookie, if any were on hand.

At the end of my freshman year, in 1927, I was asked to be the Prom Queen accompanying Stanley Krupman, a junio. Jessie Flint, the advisor, objected strenuously, but Stanley said He'd refuse to be the King unless he could take me. She relented. I worried about the money for my dress. One day, Mom and I went shopping, and found an apricot, taffeta dress with rhinestones, at Manchesters, for \$25.00. Also, silver slippers at Kinny's for \$2.98. Arriving home, Dad objected

to the cost so vehemently that Mom called Harry S. Manchester at his home in Maple Bluff. She relayed the circumstances, and he quietly told Mom she would have to wait until the next day and call the store. By that time, after crying my eyes out, for I thought I wouldn't look right, Mom convinced Dad she would sell some of her chickens, and pay him back.

It was in the spring of 1927 that I called home, one day, to inquire as to who would pick us up from school. Dad answered, and very excitedly said the car was in Sun Prairie, and Evelyn had another ride home. He needed the car to go into Madison, so proceeded to tell me how to drive it home. I said I just couldn't, but he insisted I had to. So, I started the old Ford, and left town. All went well until the last one-half mile. There were ruts, and soft shoulders on the dirt road. I made the decision to try the ruts, and fortunately no cars were coming. I got to the yard, and turned right, and out of the ruts. That was my first driving experience. Again, this year, I made it with Dad. Howard Fuhrman, my first real boy friend, gave me a radio. I took it home, and played it. I was ordered upstairs with the noise box. As time went on, and we were at school, Dad asked Mom if he could hear the news on the radio, as well as music. She brought the radio down, and turned it on and tuned it in to the noon news with Al Gilbert reporting. He enjoyed it so much he tuned it in to WIBU, the Farm Program from Portage. Within the year, Dad received a large floor-model radio from an equipment Company as a gift for his services. That radio remained in the kitchen for years so that he could hear the farm news at noon while having his meal.

A special happening was Elaine's birth in November 1928. Mom asked me to stay home from school that day. I was asked to go for Grandma Blasko to help her. She told me to take Greg for a walk in the woods. Later that day, we found we had a little sister.

With the economic world in recession, money was short. Another tragic happening occurred in November 1929. By then, Dad was driving a new Plymouth car. He went into Sun Prairie on business, and did the grocery buying for our Thanksgiving. In the car was the beautiful horse hair robe that was made from the skin of Parker, our favorite horse. The car was stolen, food and robe with it. At first, Dad thought one of us was in Sun Prairie, and took the car home. Soon, he learned the car had been looted, burned, and found in the Old Lake area.

Oh yes, the Old Lake brings memories. It extended from the north end of Town Hall Road to Highway 151. While in grade school, we would visit the Fehrmans, Theis's, and Hanleys. Then, off to the Old Lake for a swim. No bathing suits, just our regular clothes, so mostly wading. And, would you believe, Mr. Haner, my friend Ruth's brother, drowned in the Old Lake. And, today there is no trace of a lake as it has all been drained.

I graduated in 1930, from Sun Prairie High School, the last class in the old school building.
then
Since/the present Junior High School, before restoration, was built as the new High. Yet, now,
there is another I've never been in.

This concludes my memories through pre-school and school days.