

A New Chapter at One South Market Street

My second home was a rambling frame house, built directly at the pavement of Main Street. The other corners of the intersection held the town Post Office, Mr. Yaffe's General Store, and the Methodist Church. The house beginning as a log building housing a tailor shop before 1850 had been added to through change of ownership and the passing years. At one time the entrance had been on Main Street. When I lived there the door was on South Market Street and one crossed a wide veranda to reach it.

This dwelling had a living room and a parlor running along Main Street. The parlor was separated from the living room by sliding glass doors. The living room had a bay window on South Market Street. There was a porch on Market Street and the front door opened into a hallway with stairs to the second floor. A sitting room to the right of this had a window looking out to the comings and goings at a busy corner of the small town. Here at the window Auntie would sit watching people go by. She was quite deaf and used her eyes to substitute for what her ears were missing. I remember her making such remarks as, "There goes Mrs. So-and-so wearing her best shoes and the pavements are so wet, she should be wearing rubbers."

When the railroad cut had been put through town, thus removing the hazard of grade crossings, the path of the train track was moved south of Main Street. This arrangement gave Uncle Harry the opportunity to enlarge his property. He bought a single and a double house. The single house was bunked up against his property on Market Street. In this he planned an office for himself and an apartment for his sister Emily, who had been living alone since the death of her mother.

It is in this two and a half story house that we are now living. The property extended on Market Street through a lawn area and a large vegetable garden. This extended on until it reached a green grassy embankment. This was the end of our property and the beginning of Mary Zeager's. At the same time that Uncle Harry had added to his home he had placed a double house at the end of his lot which ended at Henry Street. These two sides had been willed – the north side to Mary Zeager and the south side to his sister Tillie Bruckhart. Mary Zeager had for years been a hired girl and then a housekeeper for Uncle Harry and Aunt Addie.

I could run free from our house along the garden fence, or through the garden path, up the bank and find a warm welcome at Mary's or Aunt Tillie's. To this day I make a copy of Aunt Tillie's cinnamon snap cookies and as I nibble on them recall where she left them in a jar on a lower shelf so that I could reach them. I was free to help myself as long as I left one for seed.

There was a garden gate with passage between these two dwellings. At the rear and on each side was a little outhouse with a little step up to the door. One day as I tried to step onto Mary's the step over-turned and I fell down. Crying, Mary picked me up, wiped my tears and said comfortingly, "Now you are all right." But I cried, "No, Mary, my leg." Sure enough, I had caught my right thigh on a rusty nail and it had made a deep hole in the thick part of my leg. So I was taken to the doctor. He poured iodine into the wound and bandaged it. Blood poisoning from such a wound was feared, so many days ---- the crisis was passed. The wound was healed, and I was none the worse, except for a scar which I carry to this day. I believe Mother had stuck the rusty nail into a piece of bacon fat (speck) which was a charm to keep the worst from happening. Of course, she did not believe in it --- but just in case! It would be another generation before antibiotics were in use.

Our dining room in the middle of the house extended from the sitting room to the side porch. An oak extension table easily seated the seven members of our family: Mother and Father, Auntie, we three children, and a hired girl. The table was set at all times with a white damask cloth. After each meal it was reset for the next meal and a fine mesh cloth thrown over all to protect from dust and flies. Speaking of flies, it seems they were more plentiful than now. Coils of sticky flypaper were hung about to catch as many as possible.

Certain foods to this day bring to my mind a visual image of this table. Steamed crackers served with brown butter for supper in a covered dish from Mother's first set of dishes. Most of these dishes are gone now; this tureen I still cherish. Huckleberry pie (blueberry to you) eaten to the last bit of purple juice on the plate. We were told if we wanted to lick the plate we should "go out under the grape arbor". Some other less juicy pies Auntie enjoyed eating in her hand. She thought a piece of pie tasted best eaten that way. I am under the impression that our pies were cut in quarters. That meant two pies with one piece left over. Great was the competition for that extra piece! Then there were the spreads, simple homely delights of childhood. There was sugar-bread, apple butter bread, smear case and apple butter, the two carefully intermingled and then heaped on a piece of buttered bread, that was a meal in itself. Then there was mo'lassie bread. One summer I spent ten days on my Grandfather Strickler's farm off in the hills between Silver Springs and Mountville. Two things I remember of that episode are the 'lassie bread three times a day and hulling lima beans for Lancaster Market. Today for a fine price I can buy my peas all nicely hulled in a pint or quart container. In 1915 no one would have paid to have peas hulled, but lima beans were sold without the pods. The reason clear if you have suffered husking off those tough, resistant pods.

The kitchen at the rear of the dining room accommodated an ice refrigerator and a coal range. Father sold such ranges and they were hauled from Columbia where they were manufactured at the Keeley Stove Works. Father kept a team of horses and a spring wagon for such purposes. There was a back porch beyond the kitchen; here we left our muddy rubbers before entering. Through here the iceman came with a big block of ice held with great ice tongs and balanced on his shoulder, a piece of burlap under it to protect him from the drip. This ice was placed in an ice chest containing shelves to hold milk bottles. That was progress from when Mother was a child and the milkman drove up in his cart with milk in great milk cans, warm from the cow, and dipped it from his can into your container.

Several times a year Mother organized us to clean kitchen utensils, scouring them with silver sand to remove rusty surfaces. This I recall doing on this back porch where the watery mess could be easily cleaned up. I guess it was iron forks and knives not stainless steel.

Coal for heating the house and for cooking was delivered in a horse drawn delivery wagon. There was a cellar window on Main Street which could be opened, and a chute made for the purpose reached from the delivery wagon to this window. In the cellar was a bin into which the coal would shoot from the chute. From there it was shoveled to the furnace or carried in a coal scuttle with a bail handle up to the kitchen and with a smaller shovel put into the range.

The large garden which was on this property was more than my father had time to work alone. So, in the spring a funny little man, Eli Young, came to till it and perhaps plant. While he was working there, he ate his noon dinner with us. Eli could speak only Pennsylvania Dutch. Except for Father our family could not converse with

him. Mother would offer him more to eat and he would rub his tummy and roll his eyes to indicate that he had enough. Mother thought that some of this pantomime was done to amuse the children. But when Clarence would go into hysterics about it with uncontrolled laughter, Father would send him away from the table fearing that Eli would be offended.

This home that I remember as a little girl had certain rooms that hold special memories. A bedroom and sitting room at the head of the front stairs for the Father and Mother. This sitting room as we grew older was called "the star chamber". Father would come home with some kind of disturbing news. He would say, "Mother, I want to talk with you." Up they would go to the Star Chamber and the door would be closed.

Emily and I shared a balcony room that looked out over the grape arbor. Now, Emily was known to walk in her sleep. So, Mother always hid the key to the balcony door at night. One time, when Mother was away, Emily very carefully hid the key herself.

Another room was the playroom and sewing room on first floor. This was in the southwest corner; a window looked out on the yard along Market Street. Here I had Mother's doll furniture and all my dolls. I remember serving meals to this small family, seating them around the miniature drop-leaf table. At the other end of the room where a door opened to the dining room was Mother's white treadle sewing machine, and shelves and cupboard for material's and notions. At change of seasons, Mother would have a seamstress come in to make over and make new clothing. It was not convenient then, as now, to buy things readymade. We never had an electric sewing machine until each of us girls was given one when we were about to be married.

Across the hall from the sewing room was a room that had served as an office for Uncle Harry and continued to serve as a den, as we might call it now. My chief recollection was a large desk. We children could find paper and pens and such useful equipment for writing. I do not recall any adults using it.

The horse that I remember was Joe, a roan horse with a white star on his forehead. But the day of horses was coming to an end. By 1910, Father had bought a car. It was a KRIT. You never heard of a KRIT? Well, I know that was the name. Later it was bought by some other company, Studebaker perhaps, but that was some years in the future. From a 1911 local paper, I find an advertisement for a KRIT automobile, H. S. Newcomer the sales agent for Lancaster County.



When I was five, Clarence was at Pennsylvania Military College for a year. We all drove to Chester to visit him. There is a picture of the family in, and standing by, this first car, the KRIT. Things that I remember about these early cars: of course, to start them, to get the engine to turn over, they had to be hand-cranked. We did not drive very much at night; but when it was dusk and lights were needed there was an acetylene tank at the side of the car. This had to be pumped up before the headlights could be turned on. Then, just in case of rain, the top to the open touring car was raised by hand, nothing automatic, then a set of Isinglass window curtains were snapped on all around. Since the flow of gas into the engine was by gravity, on a steep hill and if the gas supply was low, it might be necessary to turn the car and back up the hill. I remember having to do this at Pinch Hill at Mount Gretna.



When I was almost six, in September of 1912, I started first grade. This same red brick building with belfry and bell had been Mother's schoolhouse and with additions still served elementary through high school needs for town and country round. Children walked from Florin and from the east and west ends of town. No busses. Some few came from as far away as Rheems. They came on the trolley.

I have no remembrance of my first day at school, but I well remember my first teacher. Mrs. Mary Garber Miller was a widow woman my mother's age. She had been a teacher with my mother, so I was told, many years before. I admired her, but I believe she filled me with awe, perhaps even dread. This I am certain made me very meek and reticent in her presence.

Mrs. Miller decorated the blackboard with beautiful drawings. I remember one of my classmates, Alice Strickler, with special fondness. She had such warm, soft hands! To this day a wave of sadness comes over me when I think of her and that she died when we were in second grade

Our school Principal was Mr. Ira Kraybill. I recall him sitting in the front corner of the room one time on a visit to first grade. I believe that was his last year at the Mount Joy Schools, 1911-1912.

On rainy days we played ring games at recess in a small room in the basement of the school. We sang:

There stands an old miller, all alone by himself.
As the wheel goes around, he gathers up his wealth.
One hand in the hopper, the other in the bag
As the wheel goes around the miller calls: "GRAB"

Today this word "grab" recalls a story of two early Swiss who came to Lancaster County in the early 1700's and started a mill near Lancaster. After some years the one partner sold his share of the business with the comment that "milling business has a tendency to lead men into dishonesty."

The spring of 1915, Father decided to "raise the roof", that is to say to turn a two and a half story house into a three-story house. The Mount Joy Bulletin of September 1, 1915 listed all the building going on in Mount Joy that summer. In the list, "H. S. Newcomer's mansion on the corner of Main and Market Streets was being remodeled."

To accommodate his family while this was going on, he rented a vacant house on West Main Street, and there we "camped out" for the summer. An old lady, Mrs. Herr, had died and it was into this empty house we moved our essential furniture. Meanwhile, the very exciting additions and subtractions to and from our home were being made, at One South Market Street.

Certain childish memories of this summer linger to this day. This house must have been without modern conveniences. Therefore, my bath was taken in one of the string of back kitchens. I brushed my teeth at a pump in the back yard. I recall we used coal oil lamps. Mrs. Herr, it was said, was a strange old lady with lots of money who kept it under her mattress and other such safe spots, considered by some to be better than in a bank where you could not see it. This gave me a special game of search in all the hidden nooks and cupboards, and there were many in this big rambling old house. In the floor of one of the back kitchens was a trapdoor and steps down to an arched cellar. This arched cellar was cool and damp at all times of year, a great convenience for keeping root vegetables in the winter. Behind the fireplace chimney was a built-in cupboard with shelves. The closets had closets within closets. Probably someone had been there before me for I found none of the money. All the cupboards were bare!

Another pleasant memory of that summer was making friends with Mrs. M. M. Brubaker, our next door neighbor. Many years before I was born, before my father and mother were married, my father had worked as teller in the First National Bank where Mr. Brubaker was cashier. So, there was a happy relationship between our families. Mrs. Brubaker, now a widow, quickly became my friend and gave me my first and only lessons in talking Pennsylvania Dutch.

Das ist der Daumen
Das schuttein die Baume
Da legen sie auf
Da schleppen sie Heim
Und dies kleine Shippele
Ablaufen lauten und schwatzen aJl.

This German dialect had been spoken in my father's home. He was familiar with it and I have heard him talking business on the phone with some farmer, every now and then using a "new" word such as automobile. This always amused me. As a child visiting at my uncles' families, I missed out on many jokes told in Dutch. Before we leave the old house with its pleasant grape arbor, torn down in the path of progress, and the yard beyond, replaced by a double house, let me recall. When the fruit of the vine, the luscious bunches of Concord grapes were developing, I felt very important to have the responsibility of helping bag the grapes. With small brown paper bags we would enclose the bunch fastening the bag with a

Here too near the grape arbor were wash lines. In these days there were no automatic washers and dryers. Instead a washer woman, Gertie or Hettie, would come on Monday morning and operate the washing machine by hand, turning the dolly which would slosh the clothes about. Then feed them through a wringer turned by hand, which would squeeze out the sudsy water. Then move the clothing over into a tub of fresh water and so on into a second tub of fresh water. Then onto the lines after a last through the hand-turned wringer.

I cannot remember when we did not have a telephone. A big brown wooden box hanging on the dining room wall. Our number was 11R2. That R2 meant it was a party line. Others on the line would be R3 or R4. When the call was not for you, you could still pick up the phone and listen to the conversation for the other party on your line. Of course this was being nosey and frowned upon. However, a kindly neighbor might give out helpful information. "The person you are calling said she was going to her mother's, so she won't be home until late." Or, "she has just gone to the store. I think she'll be back shortly." If you knew the caller you might have a brief bit of gossip before you hung up. Most calls were local. The telephone exchange was in a little one story building between Father's hardware store and Stauffer's residence. The Stauffer girls were the "telephone girls" in those days. They sat at the switch board plugging in the wires to make the right connections. Everything was hand done. Later the Telephone Exchange was moved to a larger building farther up town on the north side of the street and I assume with more modernized system. A local girl by name, Mildred Nye was the operator then.

At home, you cranked a handle to ring the bell. Operator said, "What number do you want?" You had looked it up in the Telephone Directory just as you do today. Then you gave the number as today, and the switch girl plugged in the connection for you. There was a funny Victrola record "Cohen on the Telephone". When the operator said, "What number do you want?" Cohen said, "Vat numbers have you got?"

In those days without radio or television the hand wound record player was great entertainment for us. We had a Victrola and our collection of records was played over and over. Favorite records that come to my mind: Caruso singing in the Quartet from Rigoletto, Open the Gates of the Temple, John McCormack singing "Mother Machree", and the Scottish songs of Harry Lauder "Roamin' in the Gloamin'." Then there were the fun ones "What Killed the Dog" and "Cohen on the Telephone". Edward remembers "Happy Though Married": "And my wife not wishing to let anyone know we were married, I let her carry the valise". Another was The Anvil Chorus, a favorite with him. Aunt Gertrude gave them a Victrola for Christmas the year Elinor had scarlet fever.

What a change there has been in movies over the century. I see in old newspaper records for Mount Joy that there was a small Dreamland theatre as early as 1912, 5 cents weeknights, 10 cents Saturday nights. The first movie I remember going to was in a barn like building, near the west corner of Main at Delta Street on Mr. Longenecker's property. Just a block from my home. I could walk to it on a Saturday afternoon. They were adventure stories that always came to an end at a suspense filled moment. So it was imperative that we go again next week to see if the boat did go over the falls, and what happened after that! "The Perils of Pauline" was the typical story. Edward recalls his first movie was "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea". Moy took him to see it in Hartford.

As we got a bit older, occasionally our parents would take us to a theatre in Lancaster. It was a great event when we were in high school to have a date and drive into Lancaster to a movie, always in a group.

By this time there was a movie theatre on second floor above the clothing store on West Main Street just beyond the Methodist Church. This auditorium room was known as "The Hall" and here we might also attend home talent plays and concerts. Of course movies were all silent in those early days. There were captions to tell us conversations and explain the action. It was not until about 1927 when I was in college that I heard the first sound movie. To give the picture background atmosphere there was music. At our Mount Joy Hall theatre, I remember a young woman who could play all sorts of popular music sitting to the left of the screen, chewing gum, watching the picture and playing away at a piano, faster and faster as the excitement built up, slowing down and growing quiet at sentimental or sad scenes. She never seemed to look at the piano, while the gum chewing took on the rhythm of the music.

For the early days of radio, I must tap Edward's memory. He did not just listen. He built a crystal set! The year? He was in high school, perhaps 1921. As to specifics, he got KDK.A. "Test your memory, my dearie, / Remember when we got Pittsburg on a crystal set? / Then you are much older than I." After that he built a one tube radio set and could get across the country with that, as far as California. What did he get? The one thing he could remember was the Dempsey-Firpo fight. That fixed that date as September 1923.

The Wolf Yoffe store was across Main Street. Memory does not record my age, when I was first permitted to cross the street and make some small purchase on my own. However, I do retain the imprint of the pleasure this first independent shopping experience gave me. It must have been at no later date than 1912 as the store changed hands in 1913 when the First National Bank having bought the property the store building was moved to the back of the lot.

The Post Office on the opposite corner was a small yellow and green frame building. The mail came in twice a day. There was no local delivery. There were lock boxes while all the rest of us asked at the window for General Delivery. The morning mail was picked up at your convenience, but the evening mail pickup was a social event. Folks from all over town would gather and wait for the mail to be distributed. Then up would go the window and you stood in line to get that looked-for letter. Emily, being five years older than I, was the one to go for the evening mail, visit with other young people and come home with the latest gossip.

Behind the Post Office was the Fire Engine House, with its bell tower, large room for the engine and a second story room for their meetings. It was a volunteer fire company and the men would come running when the bell began to ring. We would run to see the engine come out clanging and to check in which direction the fire. One of the Schroll girls would run over to get the information. What she learned would be posted in the Bulletin window. This Bulletin window was the source of all sorts of news. Whenever we saw a new sheet of paper there, we would run across the street to get the latest town event.

In front of the Fire House and to the east of the Post Office filling the remainder of the lot was a large open space with scattered trees known as the Town Park. Here we would have band concerts or festivals in the summertime.

In the New Home

The summer is over. The workmen have done their reconstruction of the new house. We return to a new home, a much-reduced yard. No longer the familiar grape arbor nor the long vegetable garden. Instead we have close

neighbors. The house that twenty years before Uncle Harry had bunked up against his house was moved to where the big garden once grew. An extension was added to the north side sufficient to make a double house. Now on this original Wyckoff lot that extended along South Market Street from Main to Henry Street there is a three story corner house and two two-and-a-half story double houses.

The first occupants of the new double house were Mart and Elizabeth Strickler. Elizabeth made me welcome as a little visitor and I felt very much at home. After all, she would tell how she had kissed me when I was a new born babe. Her mother reproved her saying, "Oh Lizzie, you should not have done that!" I well remember being allowed to lick the cake batter bowl when watching her baking in the kitchen next to Mary Zeager's. She was always my friend.

When the Stricklers moved from the apartment above the hardware store it was rented to the Richland Club, a men's social club in Mount Joy. Here at the time of the Wilson-Hughes presidential election, I remember watching the returns. No radio in those days of November 1916. Instead the Richland Club by telephone from Lancaster assembled the information, wrote it out on sheets of paper and projected them by magic lantern on to a sheet hung from the balcony of the Exchange Hotel across the street. Meanwhile all the interested inhabitants of Mount Joy and vicinity gathered in the square below to learn the results. It was very exciting for a ten year old. My father was a "Wilson Republican" but my best friend's grandfather was "Mr. Republican" in Mount Joy and of course she was for Hughes. The election was very close, and I went to bed thinking Hughes had won. Then the joy of waking to hear "Wilson was elected, just what I expected!"

Another happy childhood recollection is Memorial Day, or as it was called in earlier years, Decoration Day. This was a special day set aside to decorate the graves of soldiers and to commemorate those who had served their country. Mother was firm in the interpretation of it, this was for soldiers' graves. Other family graves could be recognized by placing a rose upon them, but the emphasis was upon soldiers. It was a ritual. We would rise early, walk to the Henry Eberle Cemetary with baskets of ground cover and flowers freshly picked. There we would make a blanket of wet ground cover over the grave. Then stick flowers through it until it truly looked like a blanket of flowers. People would come from a distance for this purpose and mother would enjoy visiting with friends whom she seldom saw.

Miss Edna Martin was for many years a teacher in the Mount Joy school system. Through the years she advanced from teaching 4th grade when Emily was at that level to teaching History in the high school in the 1920s. She was also in charge of the school library. Rooming with my Aunt Tillie, the magazine subscriptions came to that address through the summer months. What a happy chance it seemed to me to be a friend of Miss Martin and to have the summer St. Nicholas magazines available for my enjoyment.

Another good fortune of mine was to have children's books from the Brenneman and the Bossert libraries open to me to read at my pleasure. I especially remember The Little Colonel series in the Brenneman bookcases and The City Upon Seven Hills, the story of Rome in Mr. Bossert's collection. There was no town library in those days.

Nor were there school buses. Most children walked home at noon for their dinner. No cafeteria service; if you lived too far, e.g. Florin, or Rheems, you carried your lunch. One of my high school friends drove from their farm in a horse and buggy, bringing her two younger sisters with her and keeping the horse at her grandfather's on Pinkerton Road.

When I was in 6th grade our teacher travelled each day from Elizabethtown on the trolley. Also, it was when I was in 6th grade that the Mount Joy contingent of boys for World War I were called up for service, my brother Clarence among them. It seemed the whole town was at the train to see them off. We had been excused from school, then returning to the classroom I well remember singing some patriotic song, perhaps America, and the tears welling up and running down my cheek so that I could not go on singing. America or "My Country 'Tis of Thee" was then used as our national anthem rather than The Star Spangled Banner which more recently has been declared official.

My recollection is that the first leave taking of the boys that morning was more heart rending than the actual leave taking when they went overseas. Perhaps that is in the eyes of little sister. Clarence's mother may have taken a more realistic view of the matter.

My parents visited Camp Meade in Maryland and Clarence came home on weekend leave. I recall Mother doing laundry for him and mending his clothing on Sunday. She explained carefully to me that while ordinarily we would not sew on Sunday, this was necessary and the only time to do it, which made it all right.

During the years that Clarence was in service overseas, I was in Junior High School. An outstanding teacher for those years was Allegra Baker. She taught geography, and it was presented in such a way that it stays in my memory with pleasure. Other recollections of those years are Beatrice Schaeffer, with whom I would often walk home from school, and quiet little Mamie Schultz, who sat back of me in 7th grade. It was at this time that several girls from the rural schools joined our class: Martha Newcomer, who did not go on into high school, but Kit Nissley and Anne Lindemuth continued on and we were best of friends. Others were Rhoda Nissley and Mary Herr. It was about this time that Phoebe Rupp's family moved to Mount Joy and living next to us at 4 East Main Street as well as being in my class we became fast friends, a friendship that lasted on beyond school days. At that time Junior High School, 7th and 8th grades, were seated in one large homeroom. When in 7th grade I recall three big fellows sitting in the back row of the room: Carl Shatz, an Engle and Charley Sievers; they were just waiting to be sixteen and able to quit school.

Outside the Junior High room was a bell rope to ring the big bell in the school belfry. One day Charles Roth was ringing the bell as I walked by. He pulled hard on the rope and then as there was slack in the rope he playfully flipped it toward me. To the surprise of both of us the slack caught me under the chin. I got a mild brush burn but we were both startled.

As you came up the stairs in the old school building, this 7th and 8th grade room was to the east side on the left. At the right was the 6th grade room. If I remember correctly the library was at the front toward the middle. This was Miss Martin's domain. Then there was a long hall with classrooms on either side. Facing down the hall the science laboratory with its sinks and Bunsen burners was on the left, on the right the room where Miss Baker held forth.

Story leaves off here. This piece is unfinished. [D Warren – 2021]