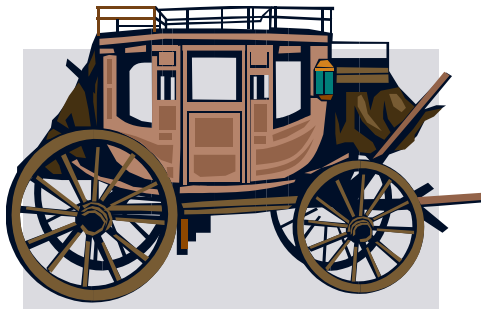


RECOLLECTIONS



JACK D. BUTTENHOUSE

Boy Scout
Magician
Hobo
Oil Industry Publicist
Publisher (Stage Coach Press)
UNM Press Editor
Rare Book Dealer
Historian of New Mexico

By
**JACK DEVERIE
RITTENHOUSE**
(1912 –1991)
Albuquerque, New Mexico

From his unpublished hand-typed chapters
Original Copyright ©1981-1989

Composited, Illustrated, and Edited By Harry Briley

Revised 12/6/2020
Second Edition

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Preface

For a long time, I hesitated to write my memoirs. I did not feel that what I had to say was important and I thought books, magazines, and newspapers covered the history of my time adequately. Then I realized that everyone has a story of interest to [his or her] children, grandchildren, and other descendants. Therefore, I wrote for them. They may find that they [might] repeat some interests, habits, and beliefs of a previous generation.

Parts of the story may be of interest to people outside the family, such as people engaged in the same pursuits. As a bookman, I like autobiographies of other bookmen. I learn from their experiences, especially when they describe the details of an experience.

My usual method in writing any chapter was to narrate simply the events, doing the whole thing as a one-draft attempt. Later, I added names, dates, and small addenda. These I simply wrote on extra sheets of assorted paragraphs, placed at the end of each chapter for incorporation whenever the work is revised [as done herewith].

Acknowledgements

In this account, I wrote mostly about myself. This was principally because my son, David, asked for a chronology of the places where I worked throughout my life, so that he might see my life as a whole. I have thus not written much about my dear wife, Charlotte, or the children: David, Douglas, Susan, and Anne, to list them according to age. However, without them there would be no story, no success. They were my true incentives, not my ego urging me on. Without them, all else would be empty.

My daughter Susan Blair was the family genealogist and had all official records of the family tree, or rather the family grove. Dates listed here were subject to verification by her records [as curated by her husband Dennis Blair].

It was true that I emphasized my successes. We all tend to do so, but I have included many of my troubles, for this was written more for the grandchildren and those still beyond, in the hopes that they may gain from my own experiences, both good and bad.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack D. Greenhouse". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

Editor Remarks

As a Christmas gift, Jack sent a copy to us of a chapter or half-chapter per year. He wrote news reporter style on a manual typewriter with an uneven strike pattern and a fading inked ribbon. On his original one-pass hand-typed draft, Jack inserted hand-written addenda edits. In 1987, he purchased a Brother WP500 Word “Compressor” (his term) that let him to edit latter chapters with less hand-written corrections.

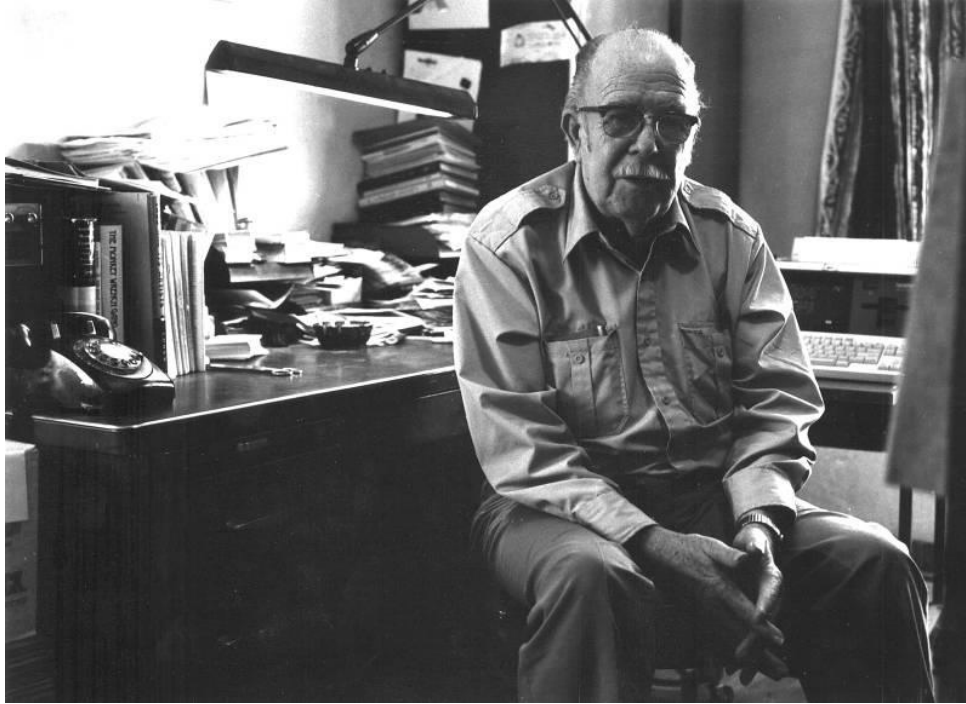


Figure 1 - Typing on the Word “Compressor” – After 1987

I hoped for twenty-five years to capture these chapters to a computerized format, both for safekeeping and edited into an illustrated readable format. Unfortunately, upon his death, the Brother diskettes bearing the files for the latter chapters went missing and the few found were not PC compatible. I scanned each paper page to computer text at 60% accuracy. That posed problems for the hand-typed pages with his inked corrections.

I preserved the extemporaneous flow of his informal and easy going writing style. He gave no topic headings or component outline. I crosschecked his hand notations. The text overall had many run-on sentences, suitable for ad-hoc speech, but I adjusted these for readability. Some run-on sentences remain because the cadence of his spoken thought required such a theatrical flow. Each chapter now has topic headings and a table of contents. Editorial elaborations appear as [bracketed text]. I moved entire paragraphs as they tumbled from Jack’s typed one-pass monologue into the topical section or chapter for which they applied where it did not interrupt the narrative flow.

- Harry Briley, 2011

Master Structure

Each chapter is a stand-alone document with a separate table of contents. These mostly chronological memoirs in three sections start with general recollections that set the stage for the topical chapters that follow.

Chapters:

- 1. Life in the Mid-West Twenties**
 - 2. Boy Scouts**
 - 3. College Years**
 - 4. Magician**

5. Settling Down on Highway 66
 6. Wander Year
 7. A Year in the California State Guard
 8. Advertising
 9. Books and I
 10. Stagecoach Press

11. Albuquerque Roots
 12. UNM Press
 13. Historian and Commissions
 14. London 1977
 15. Antiquarian Bookman
 16. The West is Wider than You Think
 17. Spain 1989

18. Closing Shop

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CHAPTER 1 – LIFE IN MID-WEST TWENTIES

Introduction

In organizing these recollections, my thought was to write various chapters dealing at some length with various parts of my life. However, these need a skeleton to cling to, so the memoirs should open with a general chronological account spanning the whole story. This means some [minimal] repetition occurs in the later chapters.

[Editor Note: Jack wrote this chronology of his parentage using some data from his daughter Susan Blair. It occurs in front of this chapter as an appropriate beginning. He expressly wanted to specify the full details of his family history.

The (edited) text about Mary Stieg came from his notes typed in 1937 for her funeral or obituary. I spell it here as Stieg instead of Steig. Both family names live in Reed City. A Constantine newspaper (noted later) spelled all relatives as Stieg in her obituary. In 2021, I confirmed all the Woodland Cemetery headstones spelt their names as Stieg.

Children wrote their names in an 1886 *Harper's Geography* textbook passed down through the family. I found “Phenie Stieg, Reed City, Michigan, May 1891”, “Albert Stieg”, “Ida Parkhill”, and “Hazel Giles”. Jack penciled in that book flyleaf that Hazel was Jack’s mother. Josephine (Phenie) was her aunt. Albert was Josephine’s brother.

In 2013, two complete sets (a binder of originals and a photocopied set) of previously unseen annual newsletters, along with accounts of their early road trips surfaced in the estate after Charlotte Rittenhouse died in December 2012. Portions (but not all) of the text from this archival trove occur unmarked directly in these pertinent chapters. This adds missing details as appropriate to his story without duplicating his original content.]

Maternal Great Grandmother

Mary Stieg [at age 88] in December 1937 brought to a close a life typical of the early pioneers. She saw Reed City grow from its very beginning.

Born Mary Roberts [in September 1849], in North Tonawanda, New York, she there met young William [Louis] Stieg, recently of Breslau, Germany. William set out for the raw pioneer country of Michigan [in 1864]. Two years later in [10/1866], Mary Roberts at seventeen, came west to meet William and married in Big Rapids.

The young couple started a store on their 30-acre homestead in what became Holdenville [an outlying section of Reed City]. William hauled supplies by team from Grand Rapids [66 miles to the south], requiring several days for the journey. Grand Rapids then had 30,000 inhabitants. During his absence, his young bride was alone in the log house, and on many nights, she heard wolves howling and sniffing just outside the barred door.

Their trading post with its meagre stock was typical. They traded with the Indians, itinerant trappers, and the few pioneer families. Money was scarce and trading soon became too difficult. That trade stock consisted chiefly of:

- calico [any colorful small-patterned printed cotton fabric]
- sugar
- salt
- powder
- Barlow knives [a single-bladed folding pocket knife]
- sugar kettles [for boiling maple sap]
- pots
- skillets
- bars of wrought iron
- sheep shears [for cutting wool]
- gimlets [a small screw-tipped tool for boring small holes]
- augers [for drilling larger holes]
- indigo [a dye for denim fabrics]
- shovels
- whiskey
- plug tobacco [for chewing, not smoking]

They next turned to farming. Similar to other pioneer farms, they grew a great deal of wheat and Indian corn, cutting their wheat with cradles and other primitive tools. In season, they made great quantities of maple sugar and syrup, catching the sap in wooden troughs made of hollowed logs.

A cradle (cradle scythe or grain cradle) was a hand-tool to reap grain. It was a scythe with a set of fingers attached to the handle, such that the cut grain falls upon the fingers to lay down cleanly in a row for collection. A Scottish farmer invented it in 1794. The long handle let the reaper work standing up which revolutionized harvesting. The American pattern dates between 1800 and 1840.
- <http://en.wikipedia.org> (edited)

Once when William was absent, Mrs. Stieg saw a distant forest fire roaring in the direction of their cabin. Hurriedly, she yoked up the oxen and plowed furrows around the cabin. The flames stopped at the line of fresh earth.

From their front door, the Stiegs often shot wild game and preserved the meat for future use. The Indians in the region took a great liking to the couple, and one chief tried to swap wives with William. When William objected, the chief drove his old wife out and then came [back] to William saying, "*We have a young squaw now. Now you swap?*"

Their log house felt cramped as their children were born, so they built a frame house on the site. Fire destroyed this first house and in 1891, they built the frame house standing on the old homestead [in 1937].

The Stiegs had two daughters and four sons:

- [Henry Ryan] Sanford [1869-1943] (San) – A farmer
- [William] Louis Jr [1871-1950] (Lou) – A farmer
- Louise [Mary Elizabeth] [1873-1932] (my maternal grandmother)
- Lydia Josephine [1875-1931] (Louella) – A stenographer
- Albert [Charley] [1877-1960] (Al)
- Benjamin [Franklin] [1880-1959]

When William Stieg died in 1902, the pioneer hardships ended and the community developed into a typical farming section. Reed City grew where Mary Stieg once saw only dense forest filled with wild game.

In 1931, her first daughter Lydia Josephine died, and the next year, her other daughter, Louise (Mrs. Robert Hassinger) died [in July 1932]. The four sons were still living [in 1937]. She was survived by 39 grandchildren, 40 great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild. A true pioneer, she came to the wilderness with her husband, and with their hands wrought a home for their children.



Figure 2 - Mary Stieg (undated) – Lydia (13) with Louise Stieg (15), 1888



Figure 3 – Ben Stieg, 12/1898 – Louise Stieg Giles with Hazel (19), 1911

Paternal Line

My daughter Susan Blair [1953-2002] was the genealogist with many names and dates. [My abbreviated chronology focuses here on my immediate family. Susan’s many big binders of genealogical data in 2015 were stored in Plano Texas. Data for and beyond my grandfather, Samuel (and Barbara) Rittenhouse was sparse, but two of his three children affect my story: Uncle Charles in Phoenix Arizona and my father Earl Norman.]



Figure 4 - Samuel Rittenhouse and daughter Clara - c.1896-ish

Linda Leffler Simpson of Chicago additional paternal data (edited)

A carpenter, Samuel [Metz] Rittenhouse (born 1848) married Barbara Ellen Barkley (born 1849). They had three surviving children: Charles (1870), Clara (1876), and Earl (1882). They migrated by June 1900 to Oak Street in Butler, Indiana where their adult children were still single. Charles was a traveling salesman [for Alamo Company?] and Clara worked as a milliner [hat maker].
- Monograph: Charles Henry Rittenhouse, 12/10/2007, page 1

Brad Young of Hillsdale found a rare reference to Clara (edited):

Friday, October 3, 1902 Hillsdale Leader Newspaper: “Miss Clara B. Rittenhouse (25), daughter to Mr/Mrs S. M. Rittenhouse, Oak Street, [Butler, IN] and Elmer Orr, of Garrett, IN [19 miles away] were married Tuesday (9/30) at the home of the bride’s parents by Rev. T. H. Bready (Methodist). It was a very quiet wedding as only a few relatives were present.”

None of the Rittenhouse clan appears in the 1901 City of Hillsdale directory. [The Hillsdale Leader Newspaper thus must have served over a 100-mile radius. Garret was 60 miles and Butler was 48 miles southeast respectively.]

Area Geography

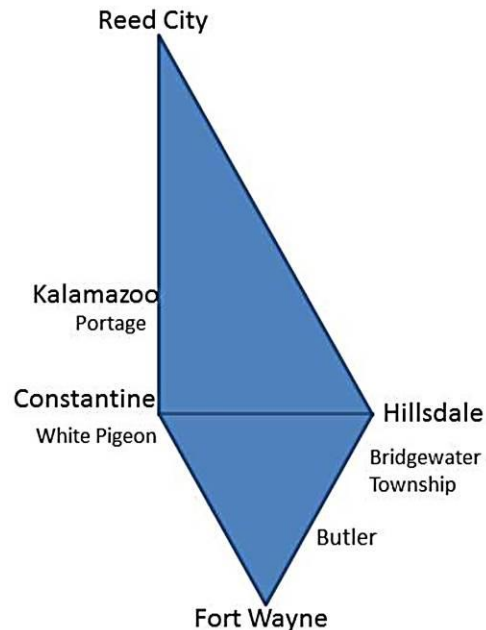
[The cities mentioned early in this chapter were mostly within 100 miles from each other. Most cities occur where three states meet. Dekalb County (Indiana), Williams County (Ohio), and Hillsdale County (Michigan) share borders.

Reed City was 120 miles north of Kalamazoo. Portage was only 7 miles south of Kalamazoo. Constantine was 34 miles south of Kalamazoo. White Pigeon near the Michigan/Indiana border sits only 4 miles south of Constantine.

Fort Wayne was 71 miles southeast of Constantine. Butler sits on the Indiana/Ohio border 34 miles northeast of Fort Wayne.

Thirty miles northeast of Butler, rural Bridgewater Township, Ohio, still had no towns as of 2015. The township abuts the Ohio/Michigan border adjacent to Hillsdale County. All the Samuel/Barbara Rittenhouse children were born in Bridgewater Township.

The town of Hillsdale was 18 miles due north of Bridgewater Township and 61 miles east of Constantine. There was a mix of rural agriculture and urban heavy industry.]



Hillsdale College

[Both Charles and Earl attended Hillsdale College. This institution figured prominently in their high school years. Until 2015, the puzzlement of attending high school at a college confused this narrative. Two primary researchers explored their back-story.]

[Linda Leffler Simpson of Chicago, Illinois, wrote a seven-page monograph about Charles for the San Tan Historical Society in Queen Creek, Arizona in 2007. Brad Young of Hillsdale, Michigan researched the background of the builders of the Alamo Building that his wife owns in Hillsdale. In 2015, President Dave Salge of the San Tan Historical Society tentatively provided their names. Upon contact, both researchers took up the challenge with the passion of history detectives loving the thrill of the hunt. Brad enlisted Linda Moore, Librarian of Hillsdale College for schooling information.]

Linda Moore, Hillsdale College Librarian wrote (condensed):

E. N. Rittenhouse started Hillsdale College for the 1898-1899 year [at age 15] in the Preparatory Department (high school). Both 1900-1901 and 1901-1902, listed him as a third year student. Per the college newspaper, he belonged to the Amphictyon Literary Society and quarterbacked on the college football team against Michigan Agricultural College (known now as Michigan State).

His older brother, Charles H, started here in 1886 [also at age 15].

[Brad Young found an article about Public Schools in the Hillsdale City Directory. The Hillsdale public high school had an attendance of 130 in 1894 with a graduating class of 19. There were about 1200 school-age students in Hillsdale. Students matriculated out to UM at Ann Arbor (Hillsdale College was not mentioned in that 1894 city article).]

Hillsdale College started and remains as a private Christian college:

Founded as Michigan Central College in Spring Arbor in 1844, it moved to Hillsdale in 1853 as Hillsdale College. Its Articles of Association states that the College undertakes its work “grateful to God for the inestimable blessings resulting from the prevalence of civil and religious liberty and intelligent piety in the land, and believing that the diffusion of sound learning is essential to the perpetuity of these blessings.” That sentiment continues as its commitment.

Established by Freewill Baptists, Hillsdale was officially non-denominational. It was the first American college to prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, or gender, and became an early force for the abolition of slavery. It was the second American college to grant four-year liberal arts degrees to women.

A higher percentage of Hillsdale students enlisted during the Civil War than from other western colleges. [Michigan was part of the western frontier.] Of the 400 who fought for the Union, four won the Congressional Medal of Honor, three became generals, and many served as regimental commanders. Sixty died.

Because of the College's anti-slavery reputation and its role in founding the new Republican party (Professor Edmund Fairfield was a leader at the first convention), many notable speakers visited during the Civil War era, including Frederick Douglass and Edward Everett, who preceded Lincoln at Gettysburg.
- <http://www.hillsdale.edu/about/history>

When Charles and Earl attended:

George Mosher was president from 1886 through 1901. Mosher was a nurse caring for wounded soldiers in the Civil War. He was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Bowdoin College. After serving in a German consulate, he accepted the Hillsdale presidency in September 1886. He was the first Hillsdale president who was not an ordained minister. His was a period of high academic achievement. Hillsdale was widely known as one of the strongest small colleges in the Midwest.
- <http://www.hillsdale.edu/about/history/presidents>

Uncle Charles

Dad had only one brother, Charles, who was [12 years] older.

[Charles did not leave a family history, but the two researchers scoured Census data and Hillsdale newspapers in 2007 and again in 2015 to describe this mysterious Uncle and his frequent business partner Jacob Detweiler (both of whom arrived in Arizona in 1915).]

Linda Leffler Simpson compiled (condensed):

In 1902, Charlie [2/1870-1931], age 32, married Stella Laird [1881-1948], age 21. The Compendium of History and Biography of Hillsdale County, Michigan (1903, page 277) listed Charles as corporation Secretary and on the Board of Directors for Alamo Manufacturing Company of Hillsdale which built gas engines. They had a wide North American market (Canada to Mexico). Their one daughter Helen [1906-1993] was born in Michigan.

The April 1910 census listed Charles as a mechanical engineer. His family lived in [isolated rural] Estancia, New Mexico [50 miles southwest of Albuquerque].
- Monograph: Charles Henry Rittenhouse, 12/10/2007, pages 1-3, 5

Brad Young fleshed out the early career years (edited):

Charles co-founded in 1900 the Alamo Company. It moved and reorganized to Hillsdale, MI in early 1901 as Alamo Manufacturing Co. It reorganized again around 1915 as Alamo Engine Company. My wife co-owns the Alamo Building.

September 9, 1902 Hillsdale newspaper: "The many friends of C. H. Rittenhouse, secretary of the Alamo Mfgr. Co., were surprised to learn of his marriage, Thursday, at Grand Rapids to Miss Stella Laird, of Mendon, MI."

September 16, 1902 Hillsdale newspaper: "C. H. Rittenhouse and bride returned from Petoskey and Mackinac. Mr. and Mrs. Rittenhouse found on their arrival a fine present from the Alamo employees, stockholders and friends, of a brass bedstead, mattress, springs, and commode [a sideboard with wash basin]."

June 9, 1903 Hillsdale newspaper article: "C. H. Rittenhouse, who is in the west in the interest of the Alamo, has sent in an order for a carload of engines to be shipped to San Francisco. Business is opening up in splendid shape out there."

Charles left Alamo early in 1905 once the jobbers took over the engine product and handled outside sales. The 1905/06 Hillsdale City directory listed Charles and Stella at 84 South Howell. Charles now worked for Jackson Engine and Motor Company, Jackson, Michigan as a sales manager. His brother Earl lived with them and worked at the Alamo Manufacturing Company as a toolmaker.

By 1906, Charles moved to Jackson at 514 West Franklin. His young brother Earl likewise moved to 109 South Jackson Road in Jackson (and left by 1907).

Charles was the travel agent with Field Brundage Company (FBC), manufacturer of hit-and-miss gas engines similar to Alamo engines. He became the sales manager in 1907. [The catalog giant,] Montgomery Wards, purchased FBC and moved the plant assets to Illinois in 1908.

Charles incorporated Western Construction Company (WCC) in Wichita, Kansas in 1909. The directors were C. H. Rittenhouse, J. R. Detweiler, W. A. Vincent, A. M. Jack, and F. C. Wilson, Santa Fe, with the last two from New Mexico. He formally organized WCC in 1910 (Rittenhouse, President, Detweiler, VP, Vincent, secretary and treasurer). They built a pumping system for irrigation projects.

The same rural Estancia 1910 Census for Charles referenced Jacob R. Detweiler as a machinery salesman with wife Jennie and son Willard. Charles and Jacob were both age 40. One of their largest irrigation projects (\$350,000) pumped underground near Portales [in eastern] New Mexico. That project began in 2/1910 and completed in 1911. The project listed Vincent and Rittenhouse as the WCC executives. Westinghouse Company supplied the gas engines.

The City of Moriarty explained why Estancia appealed to Charles (edited):

The Santa Fe Central Railroad built a line here in 1903; and in 1908, the line became the New Mexico Central Railroad. The railroad ran between Kennedy (southeast of Santa Fe) and Torrance and then passed through Stanley, Moriarty [due east of Albuquerque], Estancia, Willard, Progresso, and Cedarvale.

This passenger and freight line connected Santa Fe to El Paso and Santa Fe to Chicago via connections at Torrance. The railroad established the town of Moriarty. Following the railroad, a rush of homesteaders cut the land into farms and fields. After the early 1930's drought, farmers left the Estancia Valley.
<http://www.cityofmoriarty.org/index.php?page=our-history>



Figure 5- Charles H Rittenhouse in Angola, Indiana - c.1900-ish

The National Register of Historic Places quoted several sources (edited):

Charles Rittenhouse completed [yet another] irrigation project in Deming, [in the southwest corner of] New Mexico. He sold out to farmers [about 1912].

<http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/nrhp/text/98000053.PDF>

NRHP: Queen Creek Elementary School, Page 4, 12/26/1997

Brad Young wrapped up the early years (edited):

In 1912, Charles next hired on with Bessemer Gas Engine Company, Grove City, Pennsylvania as Sales Manager and opened office in the newly constructed Michigan Building in Wichita, Kansas. It appears Jacob Detweiler likewise joined Bessemer as a traveling salesman.

Kalamazoo, Michigan

I was born in the small downtown Portage Hotel in Kalamazoo, Michigan, around 10pm on Friday, November 15, 1912. Most children were born at home. My parents [John and Hazel] were at the hotel because my maternal grandfather Robert Hassinger owned it.

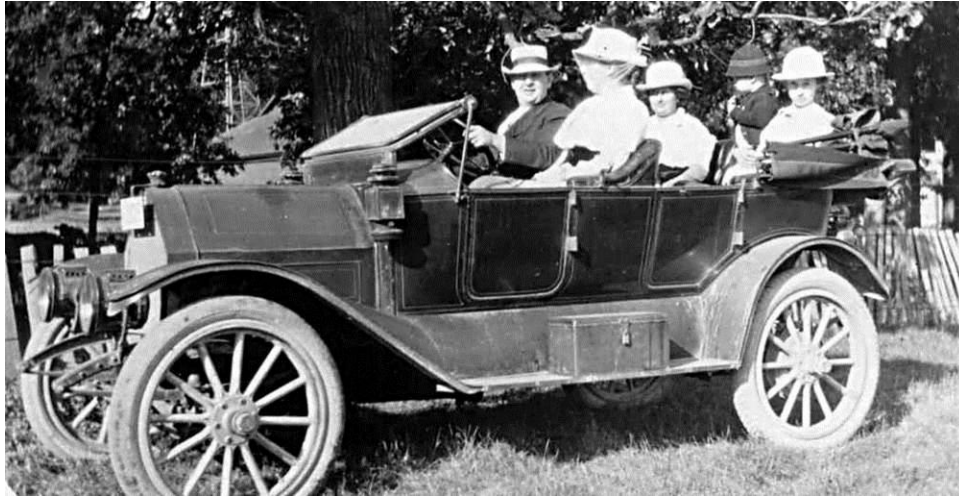


Figure 6 – 1912-1913 Buick Touring Car – Kalamazoo 1914

L-R: Robert Hassinger, Louise, Hazel, toddler Jack, Gladys

[The steering is on the right and doors have rear hinges (both changed in 1914)

The canvas nearest Gladys spells Kalamazoo, to transport rail travelers to his hotel.]

He later owned Hotel Harvey in Constantine [in 1917] until his death. Grandmother Louise Stieg, born in Reed City, married [Harry] Giles [in 1891] and had two daughters: Hazel (1892) and Gladys. Later she divorced Giles and married Hassinger [in 1911].

A Constantine newspaper carried her obituary in July 1932 (edited):

Mrs. Robert D. HASSINGER died [at age 60] Thursday. Funeral services were Sunday afternoon and all businesses in Constantine closed from 2:30 until 3:30.

Louise Mary Elizabeth STIEG, born in Reed City, Michigan, Feb 1872, married Harry GILES in 1891. In Dec 1911, she married Robert HASSINGER. They came [in 1917], buying the Hotel Harvey which they own and operate.

She is survived by her husband // her mother, Mrs. Mary STIEG [who died later in 1937] // her daughters, Mrs. Earl RITTENHOUSE [Hazel], and Mrs. Gladys HASSINGER // grandchildren, Jack, Howard, Marie RITTENHOUSE, Robert, Bonne Jean HASSINGER // brothers, Sanford, Louis, Albert, Benjamin STIEG

Mrs. HASSINGER belonged to the Lutheran Church, Pythian Sisters [Knights of Pythias], and Rebekah Lodge [Odd Fellows]. After services at the Lutheran Church, the Pythian Sisters accompanied the body to Constantine Cemetery.

My Parents

Earl Norman Rittenhouse married Mabel West on October 13, 1906 in Jackson, Michigan. Their daughter Barbara was born September 1907 [and the family moved elsewhere in 1907]. Earl divorced Mabel on March 18, 1912.



Figure 7 - Hazel Giles Anderson, 12/1913 - Earl Norman, 1916

My birth father was John Anderson, a [proverbial traveling] salesman [in photographic supplies] who lived at the Portage Hotel. Mother [Hazel Giles] was twenty when I was born. [Eighteen months] after my birth, John disappeared and she never heard from him again, nor found a trace of him [for two years]. On March 29, 1916, Hazel Giles Anderson secured an [abandonment] divorce in the court at Kalamazoo. [Two weeks later], she married Earl, in Mishawaka, Indiana.

On August 18, 1916 [as a three year old], Earl Rittenhouse legally adopted me, and my [revised] birth certificate shows him as my father. By personal choice, my mother and stepfather never mentioned the origins of my birth.

In the summer of 1931, close to age 19, a relative told me about Anderson, and this brought the matter into the open. My parents said they kept it quiet so I would never feel different from my brother and sister. They never told my brother and sister about the adoption. I respected their wishes even since their death, but [I now] want to set the permanent record straight.

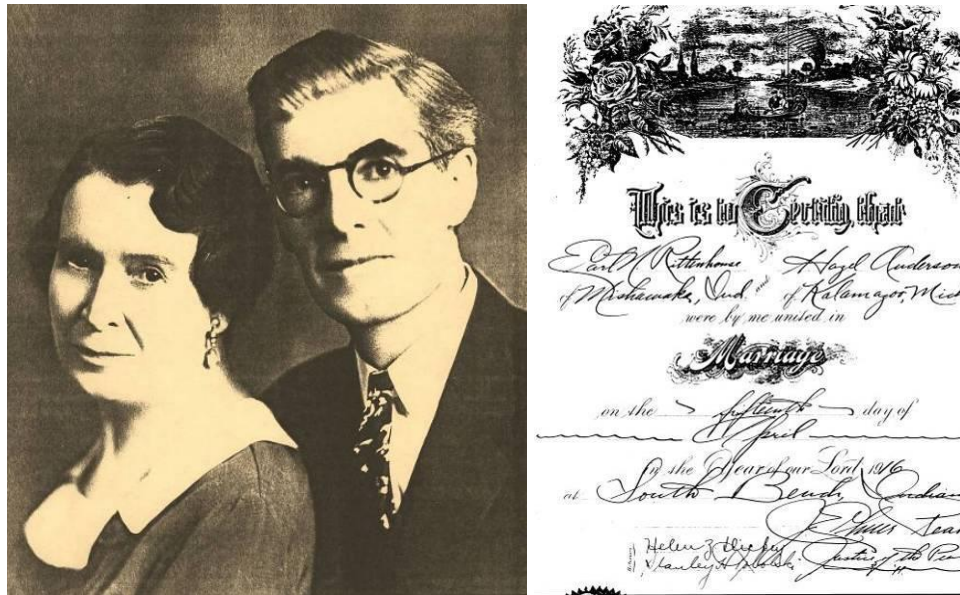


Figure 8 – Hazel and Earl Rittenhouse 12/1935 - Wedding 4/15/1916

Charlotte Rittenhouse wrote to her daughter Susan in July 27, 1981

When your father was about 18 months old (approximately May 1914), [John Anderson] disappeared, purposefully or accidentally, no one knew or, if they knew, said. After your grandmother married Earl Norman Rittenhouse, he adopted your father and maintained the fiction through her death that Earl was Jack's [birth] father. Various uncles and cousins were not so tactful, but had little solid information to offer. Your father [later] saw some legal papers in Kalamazoo. Howard and Marie were never told about your father's paternity and Jack sees no reason for telling them. They have always regarded him as their full brother, and I guess he feels that their feeling for him might be altered if they knew. So in the Rittenhouse genealogy, please respect this family skeleton.

[By 2015, such an adoption is now the opposite of a 'skeleton' and indeed a high honor for a loving father, which Earl seemed, formally to adopt. Regardless, Jack himself started these memoirs in 1981 partly to explain this matter. - Editor]

STATE OF MICHIGAN
THE PROBATE COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF KALAMAZOO

At a session of said Court, held at the Probate Office in the City of Kalamazoo, in said County, on the 18th day of August A.D. 1916.

Present, Hon. Samuel H. Van Horn, Judge of Probate.

In the Matter of Jack Devere Anderson, Minor

On reading and filing the declaration of Earl Rittenhouse and Hazel Anderson Rittenhouse his wife, that said minor is adopted by them as their child and that they intend to make such child their heir-at-law, and the consent in writing of Hazel Rittenhouse, she being the mother of said child, John B. Anderson, the father of said child having abandoned said child and said child being under the age of ten years, to such adoption and change of name, and George C. Thayer Agent of the State Board of Corrections and Charities, for said County of Kalamazoo, having given his approval in writing to such adoption and change of name, and the petition of said parties that an order be made that said Earl Rittenhouse and Hazel Anderson Rittenhouse stand in the place of parents to said child, and that said child hereafter bear the name of Jack Devere Rittenhouse.

It appearing to the court that said Earl Rittenhouse and Hazel Anderson Rittenhouse are persons of good moral character and of sufficient ability to support, educate and provide a suitable home for said child,

It is Ordered, That said Earl Rittenhouse and Hazel Anderson Rittenhouse do stand in the place of parents to said child, and that the name of said child be changed to Jack Devere Rittenhouse and that he be an heir-at-law of the said Earl Rittenhouse and Hazel Anderson Rittenhouse the same as if he was in fact the child of said persons so adopting him.

Samuel H. Van Horn
Judge of Probate.

Figure 9 - Record of Adoption – 8/16/1916

MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF RECORDS AND STATISTICS
LANSING

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY That a registered Certificate has been filed and is now carefully preserved in the Official Records in the Michigan Department of Health at Lansing:

Name Jack Devere Rittenhouse

Place Kalamazoo, Michigan

Date of Birth November 15, 1912 Reg. No. XXX

Father Earl Mother Hazel

Residence Kalamazoo, Michigan

H. Allen Moyer
H. ALLEN MOYER, M. D.,
State Health Commissioner.

PRESERVE THIS SLIP. IT MAY SAVE YOUR CHILD TIME AND MONEY.

Figure 10 - Revised Birth Registration

Childhood Memories

Childhood memories were sketchy and only partly one's own. Many recollections were things our parents told us later, usually so often that we think of them as our own. However, a few sensations of early years strongly remain with us in a scattered array.

The hallway was my first playground. The hall floors had a carpet runner down its length with a strip of dark oiled wood exposed along each side. Before I walked, I crept along the hall close to the wall, which often soiled my clothes at the knees from the oiled floor.

By age two, my mother often dressed me in a sailor suit. My mother once took a steamboat across the Great Lakes, probably across Lake Erie to Niagara Falls, according to surviving photographs. The sound of the ship's steam whistle was painfully loud.

We often visited the home of my great-grandmother, Mary Stieg, on a hill at the outskirts of Reed City, Michigan, north of Kalamazoo. In her big two-story place, the central room of activity was the kitchen, with a big central table and a wood burning stove. I played with a zither, a musical instrument resembling a small harp with many strings atop a sounding box such as the body of a violin or guitar.



Figure 11 - A typical Zither (Source unknown)

It was only necessary to strum the strings to produce a sound. I sat on the floor by the stove and played on it. The family cat slept under the cast-iron stove for warmth and safety, and sometimes while playing I reached over and tweaked the cat's tail. She gave a loud meow, and I called her my 'cat-horn'.

At three years old, we spent part of a Christmas at my great-grandmother's farm where the nicer snows were several inches deep. I received a pair of copper-toed boots similar to cowboy boots, and a book entitled *Little Black Sambo*. I was never aware that Sambo was black. I saw so few blacks that I was not conscious that a different race existed.

The boots made more of an impression. I had the idea that the boots were magical, that no depth of water or snow existed from which they would not guard me. I walked into knee high drifts and promptly got both boots full of snow with a chilling disillusion. I sat by the big iron kitchen stove to dry off.

As a small child, I was naturally more often in the presence of women than men. Others often referred to women as "ladies," and I pronounced this only as "lee-de-lahs," but to me this was the correct description. They all seemed to wear big, wide hats with lots of [feathered] plumes. I had no toys, playmates, or pets.

Grandpa Hassinger owned or operated a series of hotels [all along Highway 131]. At various times, he ran the Portage Hotel in Kalamazoo, the big Randall Hotel in Fort Wayne, one at Three Rivers, Michigan, and one at Ligonier, Indiana, and possibly others, ending with the Hotel Harvey in Constantine, Michigan. Most were small hotels catering to travelling salesmen and occasional theatrical troupes.

A hotelkeeper's family easily obtained passes to theaters, so my mother attended it often. Those were the great days of vaudeville. Many theaters joined as circuits that sent vaudeville acts on tours, so vaudevillians often referred to themselves on "the Keith circuit" or on "the Gus Sun time." My mother knew all of the popular songs of the day and often sang those years later to us children, songs such as *In the Baggage Coach Ahead*, *If Jack Were Only Here*, and *After the Ball*. I learned all the verses of the last-named song while most people have only heard the chorus [from the much later 1962 musical *Show Boat* by Hammerstein].

They said that I once sat in the lap of [Democrat] William Jennings Bryan. One faint recollection was my mother holding me on a sidewalk in bright sunshine, and she placed me in the lap or arms of a large man sitting in the back seat of an open touring car at the curb. Politicians were great baby-kissers even then. It might have been Bryan.

Teams of four or more horses pulled the great, glittering wagons for circus parades on Kalamazoo streets. The sound of a steam calliope [organ] still awakens those memories.

Restaurant food was rather ordinary. Only Chinese restaurants had deep-frying equipment to cook French fried potatoes, but cut thick, not like the thin shoestring type. When we went to a Chinese restaurant, I said, "*Mister Chop Suey man, I want some French-fried potatoes.*"

My mother liked to dress fashionably. Pictures show her in a Japanese silk kimono (which she later gave to me to wear in a magic act) and in an [equestrian] riding costume, although I do not believe she rode much.

Phoenix, Arizona (1917-1921)

Those early years in my grandparents' small hotel ended and real life began when we went to Arizona in February 1917. Earl Norman Rittenhouse (referred hereinafter as "Dad") was about thirty-five; mother [Hazel] was near twenty-five.

I have only a few facts from Dad and Mother. They never talked much about their Arizona experiences. I regret that I did not ask about their days there.

Uncle Charles in Phoenix

Charles settled in Phoenix as [an irrigation specialist and later as a] land developer. This tall portly man looked like a senator. His wife, Stella, was thinner and quite the lady. Their daughter Helen was [six years] older than I, so I never knew her.

Brad Young noted the arrival of Charles (edited):

Rittenhouse and Detweiler teamed up in 1915 with a syndicate headed by John Schock of Wichita with capital of \$750,000 to bore wells upon a tract of 25,000 acres of land near Chandler, Arizona [southeast of Phoenix]. Rittenhouse and Detweiler [owned the] Bessemer Gas Engine sales office in Phoenix, AZ

Linda Leffler Simpson wrote (condensed):

I heard that Charlie, as remembered by those who knew him [in Arizona], was reticent of attention and oriented to 'strictly business'.

*By 1915, he was first listed in the Arizona State Business Directory as co-owner with Jacob R Detweiler of an irrigation engine manufacturer called **Rittenhouse and Detweiler** of Phoenix.*

- Monograph: Charles Henry Rittenhouse, 12/10/2007, pages 1-3, 5

The National Register of Historic Places quoted several sources (edited):

G. R. Duncan accompanied Rittenhouse to Arizona and Duncan cleared the desert with mules. Rittenhouse delegated his farm operations to R. R. Detweiler [a relative of Charles long-time partner, Jacob R Detweiler].

<http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/nrhp/text/98000053.PDF>

NRHP: Queen Creek Elementary School, Page 4, 12/26/1997

Dad attended [preparatory high school 1898-1902 at] Hillsdale College in Michigan and he knew something about [basic] engineering [working at Alamo Manufacturing as a toolmaker]. Uncle Charlie induced him to work [at Rittenhouse and Detweiler in 1917]. Dad took out a homestead claim on some land and later turned it over to Charlie.

Arizona Desert

Dad first went alone to Arizona for a short while. He came back east and took Mother and me to Arizona in 1917. We first lived in a rented home in Phoenix.

I had a fast tricycle that was a little taller than nowadays with solid rubber tires less than an inch in diameter, and wheels using thin wire spokes.

Once, sent to the store for a pound of hamburger, I put the parcel inside my shirtfront and rode homeward at great speed. I ran into the irrigation ditch, a foot or two deep, which flowed beside the sidewalk in much of the town. I got both the parcel and myself wet.



Figure 12 - 1917 Dollar (Littleton Coin)

We moved out on the desert later, then thirty or forty miles southeast of Phoenix. My brother Howard was born before we moved. We lived on the desert in the last half of 1918, possibly earlier. It had no vegetation other than mesquite trees, bushes, and an occasional bunch of grass.

However, the level land needed only water. Dad supervised the installation and operation of [irrigation] wells. Water was at shallow depths, perhaps sixty feet. A Bessemer gas engine powered the pump, and a stream gushed out greater than from an open fire hydrant. The water ran into wide ditches and then into narrow ditches. Today that desert land is green with grape vines and other crops.

We learned about dangerous small desert creatures: the tarantula spider, up to four inches across, covered with dark hair; the Gila monster lizard, the rattlesnake; and the scorpion. We shook out our shoes in the morning in case a scorpion crawled inside. We saw only a few of these. I saw only one rattlesnake, a big fellow, stretched out and sunning on a timber across an abandoned vertical mineshaft. The only other animals were jackrabbits.

Once I prodded a tarantula with a stick until he crawled inside an empty tin can, and I folded the tin flap down to imprison him. Then I called Mother, who was far from happy with the adventure. One evening, mother wrote a letter when a tarantula fell from an overhead rafter and landed on the table beside her. She casually picked up something, perhaps a fly swatter, and knocked it away.

One set of railroad tracks ran beside a dirt road. Our [240 square foot] two-room wooden [grey] house stood by that [parallel] road. Someone could raise it up, put it on wheels, and move it. Each room was about ten by twelve feet.



Figure 13 – My Little Grey Home in the West – 1/1919
L-R: Jack, Howard

Jack's caption for this photo referred to a popular song of that decade:

LITTLE GREY HOME IN THE WEST

Hermann Frederic Lohr (music) D Eardley-Wilmot (lyrics) 1911

*When the golden sun sinks in the hills and the toil of a long day is o'er,
Though the road may be long, In the lilt of a song
I forget I was weary before.*

*Far ahead, where the blue shadows fall, I shall come to contentment and rest,
And the toils of the day, Will be all charmed away
In my little grey home in the west.*

*There are hands that will welcome me in. There are lips I am burning to kiss,
There are two eyes that shine just because they are mine,
And a thousand things other men miss!*

*It's a corner of heaven itself, though it's only a tumbledown nest,
But with love brooding there, why no place can compare
With my little grey home in the west!*

Hear a gramophone recording by Irish tenor John McCormack, who recorded it for Victor records in New York on April 6, 1914.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZrViqdIjgI>

The wide windows had big shutters hinged at the top. When we lifted and propped [the shutters] up, they formed a shady "porch". During our absence or a sandstorm, we lowered and fastened these shutters. Sometimes sandstorms picked up the finest dust and blew it fiercely through every crack. During the worst one, Mother put me under the bed with a damp washcloth over my face for a while.

One room had a stove, table, chairs, and cabinets for dishes and food. The other room had a large bed, a small one, and a cabinet for clothes. There was no running water, gas, lights, telephone, bathroom, or sink. Here we lived for at least a year, while Dad worked.

I had no neighbor playmates, but I always amused myself. We had no musical instruments or phonograph. Radio was not yet available for home use.

My dad made a small pedal car for me, with four [wire] wheels from a boy's wagon, pedals that worked a "crankshaft" to turn the wheels, and a steering wheel. It was hard to operate it in the sand, but some hard surface places existed where it ran fine.



Figure 14 – My Homemade Pedal Car - 1918

Dad had a set of fine drafting instruments, plated in shiny German silver, long before the days of chrome plating. My only spanking from those desert years came when I took his [expensive] instruments out, hung them on a mesquite tree, and called for Mother to come see our "Christmas tree."

Dad purchased a .410 gauge single-shot shotgun. He broke its breech open to load a new cartridge before each shot. I could not touch it. Mother learned to shoot it for hunting and protection. We rarely hunted and never had to use it for protection.

Trips to Cashion

The closest store was at a crossroads named Cashion. We always pronounced it ‘Cash-in’. Sometimes I rode there and back with Dad in his big Maxwell touring car.

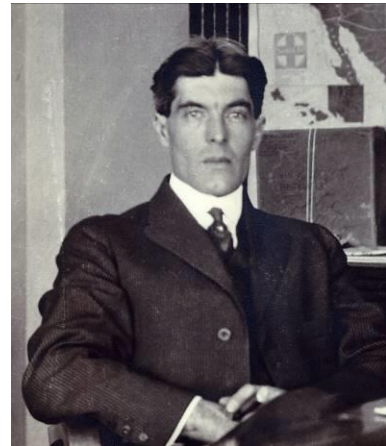
The Maxwell always carried a two-gallon canteen of water and a shovel. Once we stopped under a tree to let the motor cool. When ready to start, we found that we had parked on soft sand and sunken to the axles forcing Dad to dig us out. Another time, we drove along and I saw a loose wheel come spinning on ahead of us. The stiff chassis of that old car did not sag until we stopped so Dad could put the wheel back on.

Around October 1917, statistics from a great national epidemic of influenza showed as many as 500,000 persons in the United States died that year from it. Alone out on the desert, we ran little risk, but Dad hired a stout German nurse named Kitzel to care for us, and we had no great trouble.

World War I was on then, but we knew little of it out on the desert. The Armistice celebration dance occurred in the general store at Cashion. All the area children stood outside and watched their parents dancing in the brightly lighted store.

Back in Phoenix

In 1919, I was within months of seven when I started schooling. We moved into Phoenix and visited our desert place only once more. Dad built, chiefly with his own hands, a four-room frame house at 1326 East McKinley Avenue. It had a living room, kitchen, bath, and two bedrooms. We had vacant lots on both sides and our backyard met the playground of McKinley Elementary school. That time on the desert had a deep inner influence on me. I never felt menaced by the desert, not by its vastness, emptiness, dryness, or heat. To the north, we saw the Superstition Mountains; to the northwest, we saw Camelback Mountain at Phoenix. There was wonderful peace and quiet, marvelous sunsets, and never loneliness.



Earl in Phoenix, c.1919

Years afterward in Fort Wayne, both Dad and Mother yearned for Arizona. When I visited around 1980, the school filled the entire block, and so our old house was gone.

I enjoyed life in Phoenix. It was hot in the summer, often well over 100 for weeks at a time. However, I did not mind the heat. No one had air conditioning and not many even had electric fans. We accepted the heat as natural and inevitable, just as we accepted the wind. I saw it snow once in Phoenix. It lasted less than an hour and the small flakes disappeared three feet above the ground.

McKinley Elementary

Phoenix grew without the built-in background culture found in Middle Western cities. I liked school very much. The building was new, the teachers good, and the textbooks free. They showed me a kindergarten (a new idea), but I recoiled from the circle of itty-bitty chairs, so they put me in the first grade.

With the many children at school, I caught all of the childhood diseases. In the next 18 months, I suffered through measles, mumps, whooping cough, and chicken pox. [Vaccines invented much later mostly eliminated these common school-age scourges.]

I took to reading immediately. They used the phonetic system with syllables on [flash] cards. The idea was instantly plain to me.

The classes split into half-year semesters. One attended first in grade 1-A, then in 1-B, and so on. At eight and a half, I advanced to Grade 3-A. When the family moved to Fort Wayne (discussed later), I lived with my grandparents (now living in Constantine). However, I could not start Grade 3-B in a fall [semester] in Constantine, so they tested and put me in the fourth grade, a couple of months before age nine.

I entered Sunday school. Mother and Dad had an average devotion to religion, and Mother realized that we needed a moral education found only in Sunday school. The use of the word "Sunday" was not correct, for I attended the Seventh Day Adventist church. It was less than a block away and I walked there by myself as the first of several denominations with which I became acquainted. I was at one time or another in the Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist-Episcopal, Episcopal, and Unitarian [churches].

Homemade Toys

I had one neighbor boy as an occasional playmate, named Wally. Once, my Dad gave me a pair of roller skates. I never learned how to skate but I used the skates to make a scooter. I took a piece of a two by four [board], nailed another piece on one end as the upright, and atop that upright nailed a crossbar to hold. The skates had a bolt in the middle of the instep by which the skate adjusted to fit the foot length. By removing that bolt, the skate came apart into front wheels and rear wheels. I nailed one set to the front of the two by four and the other at the back. Voila! I built a scooter that worked! I gave the other skate to Wally so he could make a scooter. Dad asked me where my other skate was. When I told him, he made me get it back from Wally.

We invented or copied other homemade toys. One pleasure was to roll an old tire down the street like a hoop. Today's tires are short, fat, and heavy. Back then, tires all had inner tubes, small in cross-section, had a large hole in the center, and were light. A good motor tire did not last over 10,000 miles. We ran alongside our tire, kept it rolling by using one hand, and learned how to make it turn a sharp corner. Such a tire, when hung on a rope, made a good swing from a tree.

We made a simple push-toy from a stick two and a half feet long and any can lid about six inches in diameter. One simply drove a nail through the center of the lid into an end

of the stick, making it a wheel at the end of a stick. One ran pushing this wheel ahead. This toy made me have an accident as I ran along, pushing it with my eye on the wheel.

Riding toward me on the sidewalk was a man on a bicycle. It was his job to clean the small irrigation ditch that ran between the sidewalk and the curb, providing water for the shade trees. He had a sharp-edged shovel slung fore and aft along the frame of his bicycle. Neither of us saw the other until we collided. The sharp edge of his shovel cut into my outstretched right arm just above the elbow. It bled profusely, but Mother stopped the bleeding, and I still carry the scar.

A favorite sweet was cactus candy. We cut a short cactus and sliced away the outer, prickly skin. Inside was a watery pulp. By boiling this with sugar, Mother made this candy, but the best in town was at D'Onofrio's Candy Kitchen. For many more decades, D'Onofrio's was a Phoenix landmark.

An Early Depression

My sister Marie was born in the home on McKinley Street in April 1920. Later that year, a serious economic depression practically wiped out Uncle Charlie and affected our family. That was a postwar (WW I) depression year and jobs were hard to find.

In summer 1921, Mother and Dad returned to Indiana. We traveled by train via El Paso to Fort Wayne. Dad was weeks from 39. Mother was just short of 29. I was months past eight. Howard was three and a half, and Marie was a one year old.

The National Register of Historic Places quoted several sources (edited):

Following WWI, a crash in cotton prices hit the [Queen Creek] area farmers hard. Many farmers lost money and took several years to diversify their crops.

Charles Rittenhouse [about 1920] opened a store and small community grew up around it named Rittenhouse. He planned to construct twenty pumping plants [near the town] to tap the underground water table. By 1924, he formed the Queen Creek Irrigation District to raise money for the project.

[Farm produce] prices remained depressed. In 1928, the [farm] property of Rittenhouse reverted to the bank and the loan assumed by Leo Ellsworth.

<http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/nrhp/text/98000053.PDF>

NRHP: Queen Creek Elementary School, Page 4, 12/26/1997

Linda Leffler Simpson added (condensed):

[The post-war economic downturn in 1920 later found Charles's partner Jacob living at the] *Phoenix YMCA in the 1920 census.*

In 1923, Charles listed himself as manager of Queen Creek Farms Company with an occupation of fruit growing. In 1925, he listed himself as president. By 1928, his occupation changed to real estate [because he had lost the farm to foreclosure per the National Park Service above]. By 1930, [he established and built] Cotton Farmers Ginning Company. Charles died from a cerebral hemorrhage in 1931.
- Monograph: Charles Henry Rittenhouse, 12/10/2007, pages 1-3, 5

Brad Young found Jacob active in a new sales career:

The 1930 Census listed Jacob Detweiler as a real estate salesman in Kansas City. He died in 1935 at age 65 in Chicago, Illinois.

Last visit to Aunt Stella in 1935

[As detailed in my **Wander Year** chapter, I hopped freight trains in 1935 to Phoenix.] My aunt was astonished to see me and apprehensive. Our two families had never been really close to each other. I knew my uncle died [in 1931] and that her only daughter had married and already left to Honolulu.

[Stella] ran a rooming house for three or four young women grade school teachers. Now here comes this riff-raff nephew off a freight train to stay for heaven knows how long. When I assured her that I planned to stay only overnight, she became warm and welcoming, for she was indeed lonely for any relative. I stayed two days sleeping on a cot on a back porch. Perhaps seeing a relative [helped me decide] that pointless [hobo] wandering had ended and to head back home.

Brad Young discovered that:

Stella died in Hawaii, November 1948, apparently while living or visiting with her daughter Helen. Helen died in Hawaii in 1993 at age 87.

Charles Rittenhouse Landmarks

The railroad built a siding at our [desert] place and painted Rittenhouse on the sign there. By 1924, there was a small settlement with crops and shade trees. The postal service moved [in 1947] to the village of Queen Creek two miles south. In 1951, I drove through Arizona and visited the place. There was a big roofed [corrugated steel] loading platform by the tracks and a general store where our shack had been and a few houses.

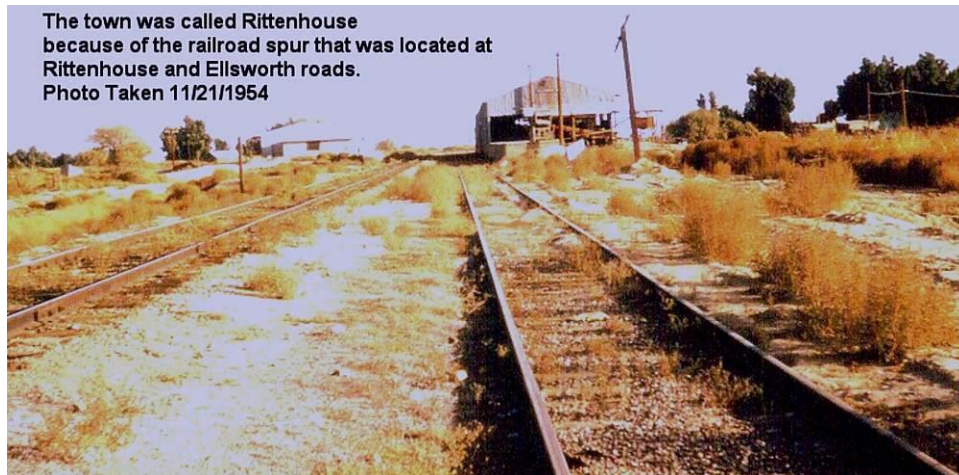


Figure 15 - Rittenhouse Siding (Donald A and D Arter Rittenhouse 11/21/1954)

[Maps listed **Rittenhouse Substation** and Queen Creek Siding in 2011. East Rittenhouse Road was Highway 236 southeast of Chandler in southeast Phoenix.]

Uncle Charlie was mentioned in Robert Conway Stevens' small book, *A History of Chandler, Arizona* (University of Arizona Press, Social Science Bulletin 25, 1954, page 61) saying, "In 1919, C. H. Rittenhouse formed the Queen Creek Farms Company at a point near Rittenhouse station on the Arizona Eastern Railroad."

Frances Pickett wrote in his book: (edited)

By 1924 [after Earl left], land developer C. Rittenhouse established Queen Creek Farms Company on 1000 acres of desert. He put in some of the first wells, which pumped 2150 gallons of water per minute. The water enabled cotton, plums, apricots, alfalfa, grapes, and more. A little town developed at the railroad siding to ship the produce. [Charles built a] cotton gin on the corner of Rittenhouse and Ellsworth. Called Rittenhouse until 1947, a new post office renamed it as Queen Creek.

Histories and Precious Memories of Queen Creek Area, Arizona 1916-1960, San Tan Historical Society, 11/1996



Road Sign (S. Blair)

Wikipedia described the **Rittenhouse Elementary School**:

From 1920 to 1922, they held the first classes in the Rittenhouse/Queen Creek area in a small board-and-batten building previously used as a cook shack [possibly Jack's former home?] by employees of [G.R.] "Gid" Duncan. He was a partner of land developer Charles Rittenhouse, after whom the school was named. Duncan allowed the use of the building and land for the school.

In early 1923, school officials acquired the use of a wooden church building, constructed circa 1921, which served as the community school until 1925. With increasing development and population growth, they needed a permanent building. In 1924, construction began on the three-room, U-shaped red brick building. Although completed in 1925, the first classes began in 1926.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rittenhouse_Elementary_School

The Town of Queen Creek wrote about that School (edited):

In 1924, a new schoolhouse began on Ellsworth Road, one half mile north of the Rittenhouse railroad siding. The school named after Charles Rittenhouse, would be a three room building, constructed of Arizona red brick with white trimmed transom windows. The wood floors were tongue and groove, and the blackboards were real slate. Two roll-down room dividers separated the rooms and a small stage was equipped with an abbreviated fly loft. The Rittenhouse School served us until 1982, and now houses the San Tan Historical Society museum.

The Town of Queen Creek wrote about **Rittenhouse Airfield** (edited):

Pilots at the Rittenhouse Air Force Base during World War II practiced touch and go patterns. As one of five satellite airfields supporting Williams Field, it was located 6.5 miles east of Queen Creek. The airfield conducted training in bombers and fighters with four paved runways. The longest was 4000 feet arranged in a triangle. In the late 1960's, the northwest/southeast runway was lengthened to 6200 feet. After abandoned between 1966 and 1971, it still had an operating VOR beacon - an elaborate navigation aid for an abandoned airfield!

The old airfield got a new lease in 1999, listed as the Rittenhouse Army Heliport with the FAA as an active military facility for the Arizona Army National Guard. The only listed runway was a 1500-foot asphalt section of Runway 12/30, described as having "potholes and loose gravel on runway."

The Arizona Army National Guard helicopter crew from Papago Army Airfield in Phoenix occasionally used the Rittenhouse Airfield until 2003.

<http://www.queencreek.org/about-us/town-history/historical-stories/rittenhouse-air-force-base>

Fort Wayne – Bowser Company (1921)

Dad got a [machinist] job at the Bowser Company [after leaving Phoenix], which made pumps at gasoline service stations. My folks lived briefly in an apartment near the Bowser plant and later moved over on East Elm Street in rented rooms.

S. F. Bowser and Company of Fort Wayne (edited):

Sylvanus Bowser invented the gas pump, but he wanted a better way to pump water from a well. His invention could not draw water at depth, but succeeded at shorter distances. Bowser applied his principles to small pumps badly needed anywhere that sold kerosene. The automobile was yet future.
- http://www.petrolianacollectibles.com/company_histories.htm

How Products are Made – Volume 4 (edited):

The first pump marketed for gasoline came from a kerosene pump designed in 1885 by Sylvanus Bowser of Fort Wayne. With his "Self-Measuring Gasoline Storage Pump" in 1905, he was still somewhat ahead of consumer demand. His invention operated with a manual suction pump. The 50-gallon metal storage tank in a wooden cabinet [with fume hoods] sat curbside at a general store.
- <http://www.madehow.com/Volume-4/Gasoline-Pump.html>

Collectors Weekly discussed these early gas pumps (edited):

Bowser Company in Fort Wayne, built the first pumps in [1885], followed in 1898 by pumps that pulled fuel from an underground tank. By the 1920s, service stations sprang up and the gas pump became a key promotional medium.

'Visible gas' pumps had a clear glass cylinder, usually 5 or 10 gallons on top of the pump, to see if the gas was dirty [or contained water]. This 8 or 10 feet tall manual pump pulled gas from the underground tank. The gas flowed by gravity down the hose into the car's gas tank.

- <http://www.collectorsweekly.com/petroliana/pumps>

Constantine, Michigan (1921-1922)

To save money, my parents decided that I should live for a year with Grandpa [Robert] and Grandma Hassinger at their hotel in Constantine. Their small 24-room Hotel Harvey was not part of the famous Fred Harvey chain, but my life was really about to open. That November 15, I was nine years old. Before then, my memories were scant impressions. However, after that date I clearly recalled people, places, and events.

“From our early files”, Advertiser-Record, 5/13/1931 (Courtesy of C.Petre)

[Ten years ago in 5/1921,] *Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hassinger were in Elkhart [Indiana, at the railroad depot?] to meet [daughter and son-in-law] Mr. and Mrs. [Earl Norman] Rittenhouse of Phoenix AZ, who will spend the summer here.*

I reached Constantine in the summer of 1921. This village in southwestern Michigan, not far above Indiana, sat on the St. Joseph River, locally always called the St. Joe. Four miles south lies the town of White Pigeon; about seven miles northeast was the town of Three Rivers; and seven miles southwest was Mottville, derisively called "Mudville."



Figure 16- Constantine on Highway 131 (mapquest.com)

The St. Joe River was a quiet stream, with clear, green water. From the iron bridge, I saw the fish swimming below. Many townspeople tied rowboats along the bank. On a pleasant afternoon, many rowed the stream for pleasure.



Figure 17 - St. Joseph River view from Hotel Harvey (H. Briley 6/2016)

A few hundred yards upstream, a low dam was built where workmen were completing a power station for the town's electricity. Above the dam, the ice froze over in winter for

ice sailboats. Portable shacks, pushed onto the ice, sheltered fisherman while they fished through a hole chopped in the thick ice. The population was [about 1250] with one school building for all grades, first grade through high school. A small park occupied a half block, slightly sunken. It sported grass, trees, a bandstand, and one huge cannon.

Constantine was not historic. The only place of historic significance was the 1830 grave of Chief White Pigeon, about a mile south and three miles from the town of White Pigeon. The grave once stood within a farmer's field and had a good stone monument.

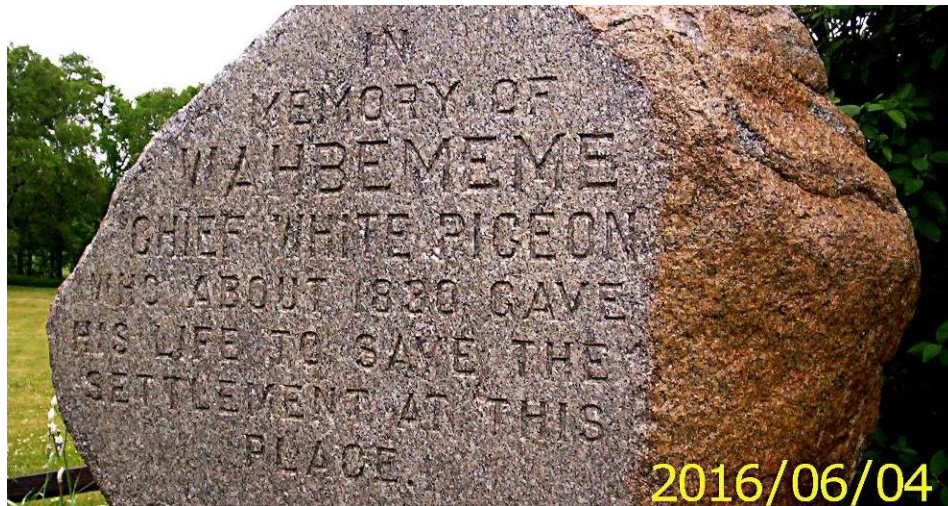


Figure 18 - Chief White Pigeon Memorial - 1909 (H. Briley 6/2016)

Chief Wahbememe Burial Site -Memorial Marker (edited)

Potawatomi Chief Wahbememe (White Pigeon) was a signer of the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, which placed Michigan Great Lakes forts in U.S. hands. The chief was known as a friend to the white settlers in Michigan.

According to legend, while attending a gathering of chiefs in Detroit, Wahbememe heard of a plot to attack the settlement later known as White Pigeon. He immediately set out on foot, running 150 miles without stopping for food or rest to alert the village. After warning of the impending danger, he collapsed from exhaustion and soon died. They buried his remains on this site.

In 1909 members of a White Pigeon women's group, raised support to create this monument. The owner of the burial site, John Weaver, with the help of his sons and neighbors, loaded this granite boulder onto a wagon at the Edison Rockwell farm in Porter Township, Cass County. Four horses pulled it ten miles to this site. On 8/10/1909, a daylong celebration marked the dedication. Four thousand people, including Lt. Governor Patrick Kelley, watched as Chief Wahbememe's great-great-grandson, Willie White Pigeon, aged six, unveiled the monument.

Business District

The [historic] business district formed a T shape: one long block with [two-story] stores on both sides [south down Washington Street closest to the river], and the crossbar of the T ran one very short block in each direction [on West and East Water Street]. The town's business section was chiefly built in the 1880s, with most buildings of brick.

Some old [horse] hitching rails made of three-inch iron pipe still fronted some stores. Many wagons filled the streets. In winter, they used horse-drawn sleighs.

The stores were all locally owned and no chain stores. One quite old-fashioned drug store sold mostly medicines. A second drug store had a soda fountain, with small round marble-topped tables and chairs made of heavy bent wire.

The town had two banks, a hardware store, a men's wear store, a barbershop, an ice cream parlor run by a Greek confectioner who made candy, a blacksmith shop, a livery stable, a poolroom that three years earlier was a saloon, and a library in what was a store. On the main street, there was a lawyer's office and a doctor's office with a sort of storefront.

We had a town marshal the boys all called Verne. He was on duty during the day and early evenings. The only time I ever saw him in action was when a psychopathic man attacked an old man who walked with a cane. The psycho took the cane away and began to beat the old man with it. The marshal arrested him and put him in the jail.

The jail sat inside a large building that housed the town's volunteer fire engine. During that year, no fire occurred. The jail [itself] was a large cage about nine feet square [but appears in the photo at most six by three feet] made of quarter-inch-thick iron straps.



Figure 19 - Constantine former jail (John Barry Historical Society 2019)

There was [a solitary] "department store," selling chiefly dry goods. At its back, a counter had seats where ladies sat to look through pattern books or examine bolts of cloth. [This store occupied 150 Washington in the historic business district.]

Patti Vail Losh commented in 2013 about Vail's Department Store:

Vail's Department Store opened in 1906 [1904?] by my grandfather, Percy Lee Vail and wife Florence Queen-Vail. My dad, Robert Vail, [is their son, whom Jack knew as Bobby about age 9 back in 1921].

My mom [Mrs. Robert Vail] made our clothes with Vail's Department Store Simplicity Patterns and yard goods. Mom made shirts for my brothers, dresses for herself, Beth, and I out of the same [single bolt of] material. So 1950's of her!

There was an old-fashioned grocery, with a coffee grinder on the counter with a big wheel to turn. Most of its goods sat behind the counter. You asked for what you wanted and the grocer took it from the shelf. The front of the counter had glass frames displaying; coffee beans, red beans, white beans, and other dry produce.



Figure 20 – Grocer in Detroit Michigan - 1920 (shorpy.com)

Crates of fresh vegetables sat on the floor. A big round cheese sat on the counter, under a glass cover; the grocer sliced off what you wanted. They usually sold some items such as tea, sugar, crackers, and coffee in bulk. The grocer weighed out what you wanted. There was more than one grade of coffee ground to any fineness desired.

There was a motion picture house in a converted store. The seats were ordinary chairs, joined by a plank beneath that kept them in fixed position. The projection booth was at the street end and the operator climbed a short ladder. The floor was level, so they placed the screen high. All of the movies were silent, and music came by a player piano in the "orchestra pit." A man and wife ran the place; she sold tickets and he ran the projector. There was no popcorn or candy. The theater ran usually only on weekends.

A local doctor, the second in town, had a home near the business section with an adjoining building having a few rooms for patients. We called it the Sweetland Clinic, not a hospital. There was no real hospital.

At the far end of the business district, a middle-aged blind man ran a popcorn stand, in a small building about six by eight feet. All of us boys were amazed at his ability to tell a dime from a penny. His sense of smell was so acute that he knew when a boy bathed with Lifebuoy soap, then a new product.

There probably were other businesses. I recall no [gasoline] filling station, although there was an auto repair garage. There was no toy or sporting goods store. There was a milliner [women's hats] but no beauty shop. The town had a weekly newspaper. The "Knights of Pythias" lodge hall sometimes offered other social events in the big room.

[The Grand Rapids branch line of the New York Central Railroad] ran through Constantine twice daily each way. All [train] engines were steam driven. The small railroad station was eight blocks [east of] the hotel.



Figure 21 - Constantine Depot - 1930s (Courtesy of B.McDonald)

In 1920, Michigan Central constructed a [small] brick depot at Constantine, after its [large two-story] depot was destroyed by fire - www.michiganrailroads.com

Industry

Clarence Brody, a distant relative of [Robert Hassinger], operated the large creamery. It sent trucks to collect big cans of milk from farmers who set them at the roadside for pick up. They milked their cows twice daily. The creamery produced chiefly butter, shipped regularly by refrigerated freight carload lots to big cities.

"From a Meek Beginning, Reflections of 150 years, Constantine 1828-1878",
John Barry Historical Society, 1978 (edited)

The Constantine Cooperative Creamery Co. was organized in 1915, when the Cooperative Creamery bought out the Constantine Creamery. The Constantine Commercial Club [had] formed teams to call on each farmer in this area and sign them up for this new company. Each farmer paid fifteen dollars for a share of the stock, the price being the same today [in 1978].

Every few days I walked over to the creamery and got a container of buttermilk for the hotel. Grandpa sent me off with a half-gallon milk can and a nickel for the buttermilk. Buttermilk was a by-product of making butter. They collected it in a big, open-topped vat that held two barrels. A [community-used] cup hung beside the vat for any workman [or visitor], and my reward was all of the cool buttermilk I wanted to drink.



Figure 22 - Constantine Cooperative Creamery (John Barry Historical Society)

Two gristmills ground farmers' grain, run by big water wheels using water drawn from the river. One mill, closed for years, was a mysterious old place to explore.

The town had little [other] industry. Two places made caskets shipped by rail. When anyone asked about industry, we thought only of the "casket factory". [Drakes Casket Company on 455 East Water Street was about six blocks east of the hotel.]



Figure 23 - Drake's Casket Company (John Barry Historical Society)

There was one cemetery. The undertaker ran a furniture store as his principal business. He had many folding chairs for rent on occasion. When a funeral service was held in his store, he removed some furniture and set up the chairs.

There was another intermittent industry. Not every year, but at different periods, men came to town making mother-of-pearl shirt buttons from clamshells. They used a pair of long rakes, paired like the blades of scissors, to get the clamshells from the riverbed. They opened the clams and used some whirling tool cut out a button-sized disc. The dirty brown back, or outer shell, was ground away. They drilled holes [in the button]. These men worked under any temporary shed or shelter. After the "crop" of clams was [fully] exhausted, they moved on, as there would be no further opportunity for a few years.



Figure 24 - Shell buttons (Indiana State Museum 6/2016)

Hotel Harvey

Hotel Harvey [remodeled from John Barry's riverside warehouse into a hotel in 1904] was the largest building [in the village]. Its front and one side were on business streets [Highway 131 (Washington) and West Water Street]. Its back faced the river.



Figure 25 –Hotel Harvey on West Water Street (mapquest.com)

Traveling Salesmen

To understand Hotel Harvey, one must understand the economics of the time. Today, many businesses are chain stores with regional warehouses to provide goods. Back then, each man or family ran their own business. They had to locate [their own] sources of merchandise. Much selling was done by traveling men without automobiles.

A traveling salesman got off the train with several sample cases or goods. A "hack" [carriage] from the hotel met all trains. At first, this hack was a horse-drawn vehicle, enclosed with two long seats inside and entered from the back. Later, Ford built a car with a similar body. The hack took the salesman between the station and the hotel.

The salesman had two ways of reaching the [retail] stores of the area. One way was to rent a buggy and drive to all stores within a radius of four miles, taking his samples along and getting an order from each storekeeper.

Another method was to rent a "sample room" to show merchandise. Hotel Harvey had a sample room in a wing adjoining the hotel. It was a plain room looking like an empty store. Buyers entered its own street entrance, or through the hotel [lobby]. Along the walls, hinged tabletops let down either flat or at a slope, and other tables filled the room.

A salesman usually stayed three nights, sometimes longer. In the hotel trade, they were called "transients," to differentiate them from family travelers. Almost every small town had a small hotel and no tourist motels. Tourism [was rare and only] increased as autos became more common and roads paved.

The Hotel Itself

Half the twenty-four rooms were on the second floor and half on the third floor. The third floor rooms had a steep slope in part of the ceiling under the pitched roof.

Cynthia Petre in 5/27/2020 described a visit upstairs.

There was a staircase to the second floor apartments. We went up to the third floor via a drop-down [attic] ladder. Two fires (1961 and 1972) possibly damaged that floor, so we walked balancing on [ceiling] joists. You could see where the original teeny-tiny hotel rooms had been. We went out on the fire escape [on the second floor] to see the river running, a wonderful view.

The front of the hotel had a wide porch, supported by iron pillars. In front of the big front windows sat two long park benches of comfortable design. Without air conditioning or fans, it was more pleasant to sit on those outdoor benches on hot evenings.



Figure 26 - Hotel Harvey (PostcardDepot c.1912 and H.Briley 6/2016)

A lobby extended across the front on the first or ground floor. Along the eastern street side, a dining room with eight to ten round tables ran the length of the building. The ground floor hosted the kitchen, pantry, and rest rooms.

This hotel was like a thousand others in the region. Rooms cost three dollars a night. There was no other lodging in Constantine. There were no extra gimmicks: no soft drink or candy machine, no ice machine, no free matchbooks, and no souvenir ashtrays.

As one entered the hotel's front door, the wide staircase to the second floor was directly ahead. To the left was an L-shaped counter holding the big hotel register book, which all signed. To the right of the front door, the lobby held a long table and several easy chairs. Here the traveling men wrote letters and reports or played cards into the evening. A favorite game was called "rum", the forerunner of gin rummy. One walked past the long table to enter the dining room.



Figure 27 - Hotel Harvey Lobby – c.1910 (Courtesy of C.Gray)

Each room had a carpet on the floor (but not wall to wall) and a double bed of the style common in homes (there were no twin beds). There was a dresser, a place to hang clothes, and a commode [sideboard] with a large ceramic washbowl and a big ceramic pitcher for water. There was a chamber pot in each room. Heating came from steam radiators. No room had running water [?] or telephone. The rooms were generally light and sunny. One large bathroom on the second floor and a smaller bathroom on the third floor served the guests [like a college dormitory]. First come first served.

The hotel never filled, and as the years went by there was less business in rent and more in the dining, which was only open at certain mealtimes. When radios came in, Grandpa was first to buy a large "console" model. It stood on legs in its own cabinet.

An article announced the 9/1/1908 opening of the overhauled building as a hotel. Edited from “Items of Constantine”, 9/10/1908. (Courtesy of C.Petre)

John Barry, Michigan governor 1842-1846, erected a warehouse for river freight in 1845 [on pilings in the river]. With the advent of the railroad, he moved it to Washington and West Water Streets in 1862. Chester Brown overhauled it in 1904, [as a hotel] by Constantine workmen [and passed to hotelier Orley Harvey].

The office, dining room, kitchen, checkroom and gentlemen’s toilet are on the first floor. The furniture there is Mission style, weathered oak finish. Heywood and Knapp made the dining tables as another sample of Constantine workmanship. A broad easy stairway leads to twenty-two sleeping rooms [on two upper floors].

Here a wide hallway extends through the center north to south with rooms on each side. This hallway contains a public parlor, general bathroom, and ladies’ toilet. The furniture here is of mahogany and oak, and on the third floor of oak.

Each room has an iron bed, coiled springs and an elastic cotton felt mattress, all of the best. There is hot and cold water in each room [on the second floor] and both procured on the third floor in the hall. Individual towels will be furnished.

A Bernbard boiler will furnish the steam [radiator] heat. Laundry fixtures are in the basement. On the south, the large porch and balconies above make pleasant resting places. A set of Old Hickory furniture is on the first balcony.

The landlord is a man born and raised in Constantine. Mrs. Harvey possesses an affable, pleasant nature, and with her knowledge of what makes a place homelike, will make an ideal landlady. Mr. Harvey has a gentle and pleasingly manner. As a [former] travelling salesman, he learned what the travelling public appreciates.



Figure 28 – Hotel Harvey Second Floor (Courtesy of A.Birdsall)

Owner's Apartment

Above the [salesman] sample rooms in the west wing was a three-room apartment for the hotel owner's family. Adjoining it was another room, No.10, with a bathtub. If anyone wanted to pay for a room with bath, they got No.10, but few paid the extra charge. Instead, that bathroom served the owner's apartment.

The owner's apartment had a long living room, a bedroom, and a “sewing” room. I slept on a small bed in the sewing room. The living room had a long sofa, behind which hung a print of two horses by Rosa Bonheur, not an original. There was a wind-up phonograph [player] and a plaster statuette of a classic Greek woman with a water urn.



Figure 29 – Hotel Harvey, riverside view (H. Briley 6/2016)

Between the hotel and the river, a small backyard lawn and trees cut into the riverbank a few steps down from the street. This was chiefly the private preserve of the hotel owners.

Edited from “Items of Constantine”, 8/9/1917. (Courtesy of C.Petre)

The management of Harvey Hotel will change on 9/1/1917 to Robert Hassinger of Kalamazoo. The proprietor, Orley Harvey, has had charge of the hotel since it opened to the public [exactly] 9 years ago [on 9/1/1908]. Mr. and Mrs. Harvey gave the place such a home-like atmosphere, and served such excellent meals, that the travelers said the Harvey Hotel was one of the best-conducted hotels. He wanted to make Constantine [known] for the fine accommodations to be enjoyed.

Mr. Hassinger has been successful in the hotel business in different cities. He knows how to keep the [sole] Constantine hotel up to its high standards.

[In 2016, the dining room continued as a restaurant. The rooftop dormer windows were removed in 1966 (per Tod Witek). The third floor after the two fires became an unused attic area with the dormer windows removed. The second floor rooms and owner's apartment became rented apartments. The salesman sample room became a spacious quiet bar with large picture windows overlooking the river. The original hotel lobby became a poolroom for the bar. The riverside area remained as a quiet lawn.]

Hotel Staff

Both Grandpa and Grandma worked the hotel affairs. The staff was townspeople who went home after work. In busy periods, he hired others locally part-time. I got along fairly well with the staff and guests.

The staff included Belle, the cook, whose sad face belied her friendly manner. "Matie," a short Irish-type woman helped in the kitchen and waited on tables. Blanche helped make up rooms after guests left and waited on tables.



Figure 30 – Hotel Harvey Dining Room – c.1907 (Courtesy of D.Harrison)

The night clerk was an old man named Frank Frain (or Frayne). Tall, thin, and quiet, he had the perquisite of a small glass case that held a couple of boxes of cigars and other tobacco products. The profits were his. A tabletop cigar lighter sat beside the cigar case.

The hack-man [livery driver], named Palmer, had a wooden leg that made him walk stiffly. He sucked his teeth noisily and usually chewed on a toothpick or matchstick.

Livery Stable and Other Parts of Town

The blacksmith shop and adjacent livery stable especially interested me. The blacksmith shop was quite traditional, with a forge using a great bellows, an anvil, and a water tub made from half a barrel. The clang of hammer rang on anvil throughout the area.

The blacksmith put new shoes on horses, did general iron repairs, and put new rims on wagon wheels. The rim was made of wide strap iron, formed into a loop, and the ends welded. He then heated it in the forge. As the heat expanded the loop, he stretched the new rim over the wooden wheel. He then quickly placed both in the [water] tub, so the iron cooled and shrunk before the wooden wheel charred.

The livery stable had carriages for rent and horses to draw them. It was a two-story structure with the ground or first floor at street level. Built on the riverbank like the hotel, the lower floor held the stables and kept the carriages most commonly rented. A long ramp led up to the second floor. Here were sleighs stored during the summer; many for local people with no space at home.

In 1921-22, the Constantine livery business was already declining, as motor cars became common. There was once a great pile of wool on the upper floor. I suppose some buyer purchased from farmers who had a few sheep, and collected the wool here for shipment. I played in the wool pile once or twice, but became rather oil-covered from the lanolin.

Boyhood Adventures

My year in Constantine was quite pleasant. I had to dress neatly and stay clean, lest it reflect [poorly] on the hotel. I began to be a social individual. I was known as "Bob Hassinger's boy", which gave me entrance to any home.

For the first time, I had many playmates of my age and size. The fathers of my small "gang" of boys owned some sort of business. Our parents or grandparents probably encouraged this. Bobby Vail's father owned the dry goods or "department" store. The Armstrong boy's father ran the drugstore. Theo (Theodore) Thomas' father was mayor. An hour ago, I could not have told their names, but they flowed onto my typewriter.

Some boys lived in good houses, as houses went in a small town then. Theo's family still had the old carriage house out back, with an auto where the carriage once parked. Upstairs held the hayloft, from which they tossed hay down to the former horse stables.

We went around town to explore the few alleys, to hang around the popcorn man's place, or to skinny-dip, swimming nude in one of the small streams that fed into the St. Joe. We rowed up and down the river and found at least one "secret" stream that flowed into the St. Joe concealed by overhanging trees and bushes where the stream joined the river.

I could not swim even though I went out in boats. The St. Joe was quite shallow in places along the bank and I played in the water. One 'game' was to get out to where the river was about three feet deep, sink below the surface, and crawl on my hands and knees along the bottom. This way I lost any fear of the water and developed some speed. I

sometimes went so fast that I came to the surface doing a type of "dog paddling". I could thus remain afloat and reach shore. I fell in only once off a dock but getting out was easy.

Sometimes we used a rowboat to cross the river and steal a watermelon from a farmer's field for a feast. For a while, I had my own boat that I found drifting downstream. I got it to shore, tied it up to the hotel's landing, and found some oars. It was not a fine boat but serviceable. I agreed to surrender it to anyone who claimed it, but no one ever did.

Down along the riverbank, workmen who built the iron bridge many years before had discarded a section of caisson. This was a sheet iron cylinder three feet in diameter and five feet long, standing on end. In the bridge itself, these were filled with cement to become supporting piers. This one was partly sunken. We dug out the dirt inside, covered the top partly with boards. We used it as a hideaway where we tried to smoke hollow weeds, but one or two puffs of the acrid weed were all anyone could tolerate.

We sat together at the movies. While I [mostly] ran around with Theo Thomas and Bobby Vail, I had other friends. One was "Okie" Cutler, whose father ran the poolroom. Another was a workingman's son with little money, so I invited this boy to have supper with me at the hotel occasionally. We always had steak, a real treat. Steaks were always fried directly on the grill [flat cooking surface of the hotel's kitchen stove]. There was nothing for broiling. Backyard barbecues were unknown.

Sam Scribner did odd jobs around town. He was the town drunk although I never saw him really drunk. Sam took a fancy to me and once said, "*Come along with me, I've got something to show you.*" He took me a block away to a flat area down by the riverbank just beyond the gristmill. This patch often flooded with the spring rise of the river, so no one used it. Sam stretched a rope between two trees there and placed a discarded canvas wagon tarpaulin over it, pegged down as a tent. Inside was a discarded old chair. It became my camp for several days and made me remember Sam forever.

Elementary School

In September, I entered fourth grade. My teacher was a young woman named Charlotte Fry. I promptly developed a great crush. I was sure she was the most beautiful and intelligent woman I had ever seen. This one-sided romance ended when she gave me a spanking with a paddle, after I used my pocketknife to carve soft erasers into army tanks that I moved around my desk in mock battles. The classroom had an attached cloakroom, a long closet for our winter coats. Punishment was administered in that cloakroom.

Here I first learned about plays. When we acted out one scene in some little play, I was told, "*Now, Jack, you exit.*" "I what?" I asked, believing I was to do something [in the scene]. She explained that "exit" meant to leave.

My fourth grade report card was signed each month by my grandparents. I received the top grade in reading, spelling, arithmetic, and language (English grammar). I got the next

lower grade in effort, geography, physiology, and music, and a low grade in penmanship. I was never a good penman and still had trouble with it well into the eighth grade.

We had few playground games and no equipment. The school had no gymnasium or assembly hall. One popular game was marbles. Every boy had a pocket sack containing miserable little clay balls of bright color, but each of us had a few glass or ‘crystal’ ones with lovely interior stripes and swirls. I usually lost and my sack never lasted long. In any gambling, I was never any good throughout my life. The only bully I ever knew in boyhood was at that school, a big fellow who took bags of marbles from smaller kids.

When Halloween came around, I knew there was something that involved candy and going house to house. However, I did not know you went around collecting candy. I rigged up a ghost costume from a sheet. Flashlights were expensive. Thus, I made a candle lantern with six small berry boxes, the kind you get in the grocery, made of wood so thin it was translucent. Four were joined together easily with wire, a fifth was fastened beneath, and the sixth on top after inserting and lighting the candle.

I made up small packets of penny candies in tiny paper sacks. I went to five or six houses where I knew the family was poor. I crept up quietly, placed the bag in the center of the porch, banged on the porch to make a noise, and then hid. Someone came to the door, see no one, and then noticed the little sack [of candy]. I kept the whole thing secret, because there was no fun if secrecy was lost.

Pocket Money

Grandpa Hassinger was never rich but he was well off. He believed in quality. He always drove a Buick, back when the Buick Company, not a conglomerate, made them. He believed in Buick quality. In clothes, his wardrobe was not large, but he always chose suits by Hart, Schaffner and Marx, and his shoes were always Floersheim. He believed that good articles lasted longer and gave more use for the money.

We had little pocket money, but we had ways of getting it. Once I found a large pile of cast-off auto battery plates discarded on the riverbank behind a store. My Grandpa gave me a fine wooden coaster wagon for my ninth birthday, and I loaded a few plates into it and hauled to the town's only junk man. He paid a surprisingly high price, so I went back and loaded the wagon so heavily that Grandpa had to help me haul it up the riverbank to street level. That brought me almost five dollars, most of which Grandpa held for me.

Once I saw an advertisement wanting boys to go door to door selling small tin containers of a marvelous salve. If you sold all of the shipment and sent in the money, you got a toy puppet theater with backdrops and puppets. I sent for it and went door to door to sell the stuff. I worked hard at this, once coming home so late I got spanked, as it was long after dark. I think my grandmother bought the unsold balance. I got my little puppet theater.

Traveling Shows

Across from the livery stable was a large vacant area, perhaps half a city block, held by its owner as undeveloped land. He rented this space when tent shows came to town, in

the sort of small circus-type tent often used by old-time church evangelists. One such tent show stayed for a full week, and of course, I hung around as any boy would. Once they needed a tray for use by a butler, I got one from the hotel for them. The plays were not memorable except for a skit about Mutt and Jeff, two cartoon characters of the time. In the “backstage” area behind the backdrop, I first saw a woman smoking a cigarette.

Candy “butchers” sold boxes of cheap candy between the acts, some said to contain fabulous prizes such as silk stockings or opera glasses. Theoretically, you picked a box at random, but I soon realized that the candy men knew which boxes contained prizes and which contained gifts of little worth. The truly fine prizes were usually in boxes sold to “shills” in the audience, people who really worked with the show.

One week, a traveling medicine show man came to town. In the evenings, he operated his one-man show from the back of a wagon on the corner across from the hotel. He did magic tricks to draw an audience. This was my introduction to show magic. His lighting came from the street lamp and a gasoline lantern on a pole by his wagon.

He sold ‘tonic’ of course and other items. It was the first I heard about a styptic pencil, which men use to stop bleeding from a cut while shaving. I misunderstood his elaborate pitch to mean that this wonderful thing stopped bleeding from any cut, and I wanted one of those marvelous objects to heal a cut when I gashed my finger with a knife.

Major Purple

The most fascinating man I knew in Constantine was Major Purple. The name alone was romantic. I do not know how he earned his rank, as he was not old enough for the Civil War. He was built like Grandpa Hassinger: a bit short and on the plump side. He made a living selling lodge regalia. Men's lodges were quite the thing. Members often wore uniforms, sashes, plumed hats, even dress swords, and they had various richly embroidered flags and banners to carry in parades. Major Purple traveled the state selling such gear.

He lived in a Victorian style home built in the 1880s. Two elderly women lived with him. They were sisters, but I do not know whether one was his wife or both were his sisters. A flower garden behind their home was jammed with a profusion of hollyhocks and other flowers. Beautiful birdhouses of great handiwork perched on poles in the garden. One was a small keg containing several “rooms,” a bird apartment house. The converted carriage house was Major Purple's den or office, with the walls hung with many types of banners. Small racks of little silk flags of many nations sat on tables. I was admitted only a few times to this room of wonders.

Later Visits

In the college summer of 1931, I hitchhiked through Constantine and visited the two Purple sisters. They served me tea in a genteel fashion and showed me some shelves of books upstairs under the sloping roof. They told me to take several books of my choice. I knew nothing about rare books. All I took was a number of books by Charles Dickens, whom I knew to be a prominent author. They turned out to be reprints of little value.

They showed me the converted hayloft, now a storeroom of cast-off objects. It included a fine wood chest, containing an early view camera that used glass plates, perhaps eight by ten inches in size. The camera was made chiefly of wood, perhaps rosewood, cherry and a bit of mahogany, with rich brass fittings. I had no way to carry it while hitchhiking.

We went back to Constantine next in 1934. I did not return until 1949, when [my son] David and I returned from a trip to Toronto. Both grandparents were dead and the Hotel Harvey sold. We stayed overnight in a second floor room, and that hall had the [same] old hand-cranked phonograph from 1921. I brought back one original record, a march so horribly scratched it was painful to hear, but it brought me eighteen years of memories.



Figure 31 – We rowed this creek off St. Joe River, Constantine - 5/1949

The biggest change by 1949 was in the decline of use of the St. Joe River. I wanted to take my son David on a row to my "secret" stream, but no boats were tied to the bank in the town section. Someone recommended a home at the edge of town with a boat. We did a little rowing, but the river and its banks no longer held the old [boyhood] charm.

[My brother] Howard visited Constantine years after my 1949 visit. He sent me many photographs showing the business section under preservation.

Fort Wayne, Indiana (1922-1930)

The school year of 1921-22 ended and I moved to Fort Wayne. In the summer of 1922, our family was living together again in Fort Wayne.

A colonial history of Fort Wayne explains a medal described later (edited):

The [Native American] Miami nation settled at the Maumee, St. Joseph [not the same river in Constantine], and St. Mary's Rivers in the mid-17th century called Kekionga ["Blackberry Patch"]. This became the capital of the Miami nation and related Algonquian tribes. Around 1676, French priests visited on their way back from a mission at Lake Michigan. In the 1680s, French traders established a post at the location because it was the crucial portage between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. The Maumee River was only ten miles away from the Little River branch of the Wabash River, which flows into the Ohio River.

The French built Fort Miamis, in 1697 as one of the many between Quebec, Canada, and St. Louis. In 1721, Fort Miamis was replaced by Fort St. Philippe des Miamis. The first census in 1744 revealed 40 Frenchmen and 1000 Miami.

In 1760, after the French and Indian War, the area was ceded to the British. The fort was renamed Fort Miami. In 1763, various Native American nations rebelled against British rule and retook the fort as part of Pontiac's Rebellion. The Miami regained control of Kekionga for more than thirty years.

In 1790, President George Washington ordered the United States Army to secure Indiana. They fought three battles in Kekionga against [Chief] Little Turtle and the Miami Confederacy. Miami warriors annihilated the United States Army in the first two battles. General Anthony Wayne led a third expedition, destroying their village while its warriors were away. When the tribe returned to their destroyed village, Little Turtle sued for peace. After General Wayne refused it, the tribe advanced to Fallen Timbers where they were defeated on August 20, 1794. On October 22, 1794, the United States Army captured the Wabash-Erie portage from the Miami Confederacy and built a new fort at the three rivers, Fort Wayne, in honor of General Anthony Wayne. – wikipedia.com

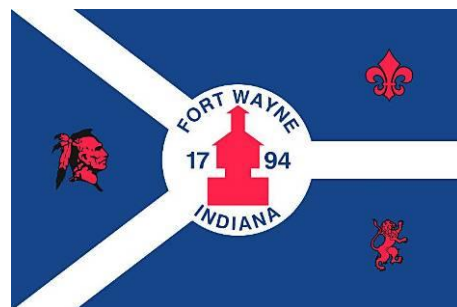


Figure 32 - Fort Wayne City Flag

Business District

Fort Wayne grew up around its downtown business section. Some neighborhoods had a cluster of stores such as a grocer, a drug store, and a barbershop, but no [shopping] malls.

People traveled much by streetcar and all lines went through the main downtown intersection of Calhoun and Main streets, known as "transfer corner." The Allen County courthouse stood there, a fine old building that occupied a full city block. In its northeast corner, on the ground floor was a room set aside for veterans of the Civil War. In 1925, any man who fought in the last year of that war at the age of sixteen (there were many) would be only seventy-six. Therefore, many men spent their days in the veterans' room, reading newspapers, swapping yarns, and playing checkers.

Many years before, Columbia was the main business street, which ran a block north of Main. In my youth, it still had an active harness repair shop but most of the other stores had become warehouses or carried farm supplies.

As the automobile grew in popularity, a Western Auto store appeared, carrying parts and gadgets. Woolworth's was the only store with a lunch counter. There were no cafeterias but later Riegel's cigar store installed a lunch counter.

The only chain stores then evident were ten-cent stores and variety stores, perhaps a drug store, and a specialty shop or two. One department store, Wolf and Dessauer sold high quality merchandise. The Grand Leader department store sold cheaper goods. Later, there was a Sears's department store.

Significant changes occurred during 1922-1930. Telephones became dial phones; one no longer asked an operator to connect you with a [telephone] number. They installed traffic signals at intersections for the first time. Radios became widely used. Motion pictures changed from silent to sound.



Figure 33 – Looking down Calhoun at Lewis Street - 1930 (www.acpl.lib.in.us)

Machinist Work at Tokheim

Dad [began his lifelong career as a machinist] for the Tokheim Company by 1923, which made gasoline pumps.

Tokheim Oil Tank and Pump Company FORT WAYNE, INDIANA, U. S. A.

He operated a drill press, lathe, milling machine, anything that ran in a machine shop. They often gave him more responsibility. There was one superior he did not like: George Eilers. Dad often came home cursing him. To us kids, George Eilers was an unknown arch-villain.

Dad saw how industry changed. Henry Ford, needing many workmen, broke the process of machine shop work into many separate jobs, with most tasks done after [only] two or three weeks' training. You pulled a lever on a drill press or stamping machine, and that was all, week after week. The old all-around [skilled] machinist was vanishing. Dad once said, "Give a good machinist a set of blueprints and a few tons of steel, and he will build you a locomotive." However, that day was ending.



Tokheim Tank and Pump Company (edited):

A merchant in Thor, Iowa, wanted to pump kerosene in his general store. Around 1898 he invented a dome oil pump with a glass cylinder at the top, and while not a true 'visible', John Tokheim possibly invented the first visible pump.

His efforts grew into a large company in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 1918, investors moved it to Fort Wayne where it expanded rapidly. While the Depression hurt companies, Tokheim survived with products of excellent quality and appearance.
- http://www.petrolianacollectibles.com/company_histories.htm

How Products are Made – Volume 4 (edited)

John Tokheim's 1901 invention pumped gas from a storage tank up into a glass dome. The consumer measured the amount visually and made sure that the vendor had not watered it down. Many manufacturers later produced pumps like Tokheim's and Bowser's. Common features were hand-operated pumps, glass-dispensing areas, dial gauges of questionable reliability, and a globe-shaped head on top bearing a logo. The first electric gas pump came out in 1923.

The pumps were gaudy and decorative, boldly declaring their manufacturer. This reversed by 1930, when gas itself became the branded item by major suppliers.
- <http://www.madehow.com/Volume-4/Gasoline-Pump.html>



Figure 34- Tokheim Plant closed 2/2006 (H. Briley 6/2016)

Unnoticed Amish Country

[Editor Note: On a first-time visit to Indiana in June 2016, my hosts gladly drove me around Fort Wayne, White Pigeon, and Constantine. The Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis gave an excellent overview Indiana in the 1920's to 1940's era. I could not help but notice the absence at the Museum and in this memoir chapter about the Amish and Mennonite farmers in Indiana and especially along the roads leading to Constantine.

While Jack as a youngster in Fort Wayne probably did not get out of town often, certainly he must have seen the Amish buggies on railroad trips to Constantine in the summers. Thought mostly to be a Pennsylvanian phenomenon, many farmers migrated westward making northern Indiana the largest concentration of Anabaptist communities.

Middlebury and Shipshewana act as tourist centers. Highways 5 and 13 had numerous Amish buggies drawn by single horse along the widened bicycle lanes for them. The large quantity of “road apples” from the horses gave a measure of the traffic. I noticed the odd juxtaposition of a modern hay-baling machine hitched to a team of six horses.

Since these were not “city folk”, Jack might never have interacted directly. Even so, it seemed odd that he did not reference an entire culture within 40 minutes of Fort Wayne.

The Menno-Hof museum in Shipshewana gave an immersion-type tour of the Anabaptist history (Hutterites, Mennonites, Amish). While one Amish branch eschews connecting to the electrical grid, the museum boasted modern lighting and museum technology.]

Dodge Avenue

Dad rented a house at 1102 Dodge Avenue [by 1922], and I entered the fifth grade at the Rudisill School, a nice brick building. It was eight blocks from home. Sometimes I went in my new scooter wagon brought back from Constantine. A boy got around well in a proper wagon. You knelt on your left knee inside the wagon and kicked yourself along with the right foot on the sidewalk, steering with the wagon tongue.

I had only one teacher in our fifth grade room. Howard and I had a sparsely furnished bedroom of our own. Our favorite play spot was in the back yard, where someone long ago deposited the roof of a small streetcar, one of those short little cars that ran on four wheels. The roof had a raised section, a clerestory, with small windows. Once we crawled under the curving lower roof, there was room inside to sit up.

I got spanked once on Dodge Avenue. I took an alarm clock apart to see how it worked and managed to get it wound up and clicking. I held it up to Howard's ear to hear it, but his hair became caught in the gears and the result was only solved by cutting off some of Howard's hair. He had beautiful curly hair that was Mother's pride, hence the spanking.

[In early summer] 1923, we lived briefly in one side of a rented double house on Brie street. Down at the end of the block, workmen were building a factory to make handles for rakes, hoes, and other garden tools. We made lemonade at home with ice in it, and hauled it to the handle factory in my coaster wagon. The workmen bought it but said they preferred soda pop.

The old Berghoff brewery was several blocks away. When the prohibition law went into effect, they converted production to soda pop. Howard and I took the coaster wagon over to buy a wooden case of twenty- four bottles of assorted flavors. They cost us three cents a bottle and we sold them for five. Later we got two cases at a time to save trips.

At the other end of our block lived a boy named Johnny Steigerwald, who was a bully. His father was a policeman, and Johnny capitalized on that fact, intimating that if we did anything to him, we would get in trouble with the law.

Johnny became our competitor. Once, when both of us were selling with one case each, we both ran out of pop. The workmen said they would buy from the next one to get to Berghoff and back with more. We beat Johnny. He next switched to root beer, which he bottled at home. However, his bottling went awry and all of his bottles blew their corks.

By this time, Marie was old enough to be a playmate. Once, Johnny said something insulting about Marie in our yard. I challenged him and a fight started. I do not know who hit first, but I hit last, with a terrible swing that knocked Johnny down and actually out for a few seconds. I thought I had killed him but he got up and ran home. That was the only real fight in my entire life. I was three months short of eleven years.

Edsall Avenue

Later that summer we moved into a long-range home, at 1534 Edsall Avenue, the east side of Fort Wayne and within walking distance of the Tokheim plant. Two fine trees shaded the front of the house. Our home, from the summer of 1923 until the end of 1936, deserves a complete description, for such an account will show how we lived.



Figure 35 – 1534 Edsall Avenue (unpaved) Front - 1928
L-R: Family dog “Jerry”, Earl in Scoutmaster Uniform

We had a part-collie-dog named "Jerry" and several cats. The cats came along and adopted us. They lived off table scraps. No store carried pet foods. The cats lived as much outdoors as in, with regular crops of kittens.



Figure 36 - 1534 Edsall empty lots (H. Briley 6/2016)

[A two-story house appeared on internet map sites but both lots were undeveloped in 2016 with a bare gravel pad. The house sat street-side immediately behind the tree in the photo. The shack structure to the rear acted as a garage.]

Three Room House

We moved into a three-room wooden house resting on cement blocks. It was L-shaped, with a living room and bedroom across the front and a kitchen back of the living room. The living room was perhaps 10 by 14 feet; the bedroom perhaps 10 by 12, and the kitchen 10 by 12. There was one closet off the bedroom and a pantry off the kitchen. With five of us in three rooms, Dad built a 10 by 12 feet bedroom for Howard and me.

There was no basement or attic, no garage, no indoor plumbing, only a traditional outhouse or privy fifty feet back of the house. The only utility was electricity from a single light bulb or lamp fixture hanging in the center of each room. There was no gas, no sewer, no running water or water heater, no telephone at first, and no shed. In short, it was a small farmhouse without a farm, at the eastern edge of town. Only two or three houses sat east between the city limit and us; beyond that lay the countryside.

We caught water for washing by eaves troughs leading to a cistern, a cement-lined container by the back door, operated by a hand-pump. Drinking water was carried in a 14-quart bucket from one of two wells, each about a hundred yards away and owned by people who let us draw water.

This may sound quite bleak, primitive, and poor. We never felt that we were “poor” but only temporarily on short income. We knew some people down the street whom we considered poor. They were almost illiterate, never painted their place, papered their walls with newspaper, were usually out of work, dressed shabbily, generally slovenly, and dirty. They just did not seem to care. To us, they were “the poor”.



Figure 37 – 1534 Edsall Avenue Backside - 1929

Furnishings

The living room had several chairs of various styles and a round oak table on a pedestal in the center. One corner held a large barrel-shaped coal stove with much nickel-plated ornamentation. The coal bucket sat beside it.

Another corner held a hand-cranked Edison phonograph [player] that required special records, about a quarter of an inch thick. Dad machined an adapter to play the standard 78-RPM records, then made chiefly of easily broken shellac. At one side, stood a Victorian-style “secretary”, whose front folded out to provide a desk. Beneath the lid were two shelves for books. The foot-treadle Singer sewing machine stood beneath the front window.

The bedrooms had minimal furniture. There were few double mattresses in those times; no inner springs or foam rubber. The iron bedstead had [an exposed] set of springs, made of a crisscross network of wires with horizontal coiled springs attached to a frame. The mattress was merely layers of cotton felt, held in shape by “tuft” threads that ran from a button on top to a button on the underside.

Pillows were stuffed with chicken feathers. Down-filled pillows were as infrequent as to be [treated as] heirlooms. All homes had quilts or comforters; some as heirlooms, some made by the housewife; but many were commercial.

In the kitchen was a cast-iron cook stove. At one side were four iron stove lids removed to cook directly above the flame. At the right was the oven, and at the far right was a sort of iron “bin” that warmed water for dish washing. Along the north wall was a small washstand with a tin wash pan, towels, and the bucket of [drinking] water.

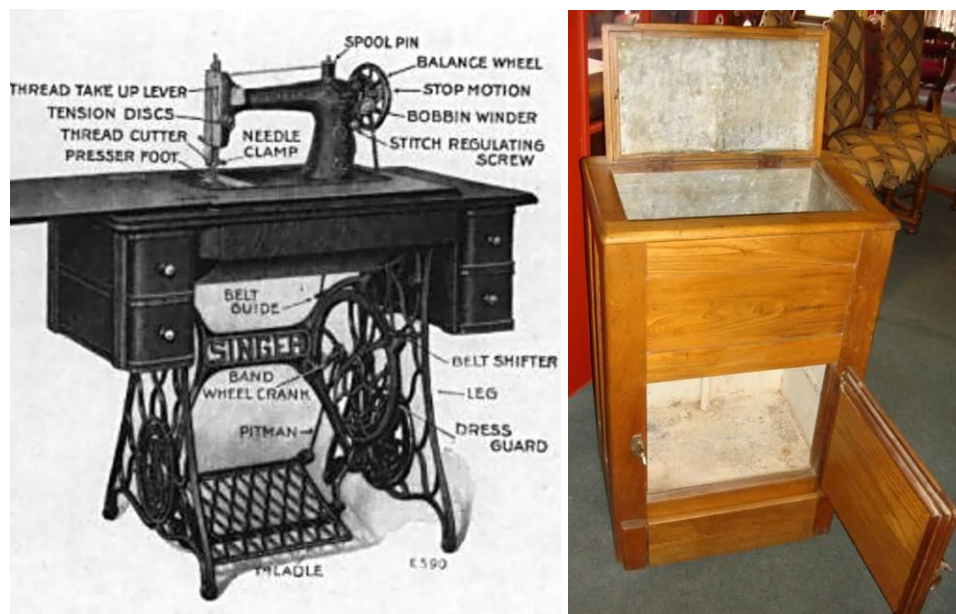


Figure 38 - Treadle Sewing Machine (Singer) - Icebox (mrbeasleys.com)

On another wall was a kitchen cabinet to hold dishes. Our icebox held a fifty-pound chunk of ice. Beneath the ice was the [food] door. At the bottom, a pan held water from the melting ice. Usually this pan overflowed before anyone thought to empty it.

Mother had an electric washing machine, a brand simply called "Automatic". It had a big round tub opening at the top, with the mechanism inside working with a rotary motion that reversed at each half turn. The tub stood on a metal base that had space for an ordinary metal washtub to receive clothes. This metal tub usually hung outside the back door and the space for it on the washer base made a good seat for a child.

We bathed in the kitchen. That laundry washtub [became our bathtub] using water heated in a bucket-sized kettle on the stove.

In the center of the room was a light kitchen table. Dad sat on one side of the kitchen table, Mother sat opposite, and I sat between them. Howard was still small enough that he preferred the seat on the washing machine stand. Marie was still in a high chair at one corner of the table, but she no longer needed the high chair's table and ate from the table.

The heat in the house came from the [two] stoves in the living room and kitchen. On severe nights, a portable Perfection kerosene stove warmed the boys' bedroom, but it added only a few degrees of warmth.

Early in the morning, Dad rose to light a fire in the living room stove. The two iron stoves burned coal. In the summer, cooking was done on a tabletop three-burner Perfection kerosene stove resting atop the washstand during use.

There were no wall outlets at first. Dad had no power tools. The only electrical appliances were a clothes iron, a curling iron, and the washing machine. These plugged into the overhead socket whenever used. At Christmas, we lit the tree with real candles for only an hour or so. Dad stood by with a bucket of water in case a fire started.

I want to impress the fact that we never thought of these as great hardships. Most of our neighbors had the same problems. We accepted it as the normal way of life.

Life was good on Edsall Avenue. It was a blend of town and country life. It was the middle of the booming 1920s. Some called it the "roaring twenties," but we saw no particular roar out at our edge of town.

Vegetable Garden

For several years, we grew vegetables. Near the outhouse, we raised rhubarb and horseradish. Two sides of the house sported many flowers. We planted a lawn, but it grew haphazardly because there was no way to water it. Behind the house, we grew radishes, lettuce, string beans, and carrots. In our vacant lot beside the house, we grew tomatoes, cabbages, and, at the back end of that lot, sweet corn, popcorn, peas, and pumpkins. Mother did a lot of canning, especially tomatoes, and put up a lot of jelly.

We made sauerkraut from our cabbages, slicing the cabbage on a kraut-board with a knife blade set in it. A bottomless box slid back and forth on top of the board, shredding the head of cabbage, which then fell into the spare washtub beneath. In a five-gallon crock, a layer of cabbage was covered with salt, then another layer of cabbage, and so on until the crock was full. A round piece of board fitted inside the top of the crock as a lid and a washed heavy stone weighted it down. Over the top, a piece of cheesecloth kept out flies. As the sauerkraut cured, the board sank. It kept for months this way. I am sure that this heavily salted diet added to Dad's hypertension.

We made some [tomato] catsup. Mother made table syrup by boiling sugar in water and adding a few drops of Mapleine flavoring. In the fall, we ranged eastward a half mile into some woods to gather hickory nuts. Their shells were hard and the meat was meager but sweet.

Meals

We ate fresh vegetables only during the growing season. A popular meal was a great quantity of string beans, picked fresh, and boiled with a chunk of salt pork to add flavor.

Most of our meals were one-dish meals or with a vegetable or two. Macaroni and cheese might be the meal, or stew, or hash. We often had pancakes for breakfast. Liver and onions was a favorite. Liver was quite cheap since many considered it an inferior meat. Its value as a protection against anemia was not yet known.

We often made popcorn in a covered aluminum kettle atop the stove, keeping it always in motion until the popping ended.

We rarely had butter but used oleomargarine. The dairy industry got a law passed that oleo could not be sold in colored form as an imitation butter. The oleo came in a white form. However, each pound came with a capsule of coloring matter. The capsule was punctured and the drops sprinkled over the white, lard-like oleo. It was a child's task to use a fork to blend the color through the mass until it looked like butter.

Home deliveries

A few horse-drawn vehicles remained. The milkman came around in a wagon and left a quart or two daily. He sold milk in bottles with a paper disc closures. The milk was not homogenized and the cream soon rose to the top. Mother shook the bottle vigorously before opening it. When the weather was very cold, the milk expanded so the cap and a half inch of frozen cream stuck out above the bottle top.

A vegetable huckster came around with a wagon loaded with crates of fruits and vegetables. A scale dangled from an iron bracket at one side.

The iceman had a wagon. We hung his card in our front window when we needed ice, showing whether we wanted 25 or 50 pounds. He wore a heavy pad like armor on his right shoulder. He used tongs to grasp the ice and swing it over that shoulder before coming into the house. Kids could collect any chips of ice scattered on the wagon floor.

We bought coal for about \$8 a half ton, and the deliveryman dumped it in a pile outside our back door. A junkman came by now and then in a wagon to buy scrap iron or rags. This was one of the few ways children earned money.



Figure 39 - 1923 and 1928 Dollar Bill (Littleton Coin)

Adams Elementary School

That autumn of 1923, I entered sixth grade at Adams School, three blocks [south on] Edsall Avenue. It was the last year of that old building, which looked much like my Victorian brick school in Constantine. It had only six rooms, one for each grade.

The principal Albert Parker taught the sixth grade. He worked a small farm a few miles out from town when not at school. I found him stern and not likable. He criticized me in class for having "spindly legs" and did not spare other children either in this way.

I suffered from "school lag" caused by moving among different schools in each of my years in the third through 7th grades. Not all schools taught at the same pace, and I was sometimes behind or ahead in class work. I did not know about an adjective or a participle. I could not read music but I read text and spelled better than the others spelled.

All lessons were in one room. A music teacher came an afternoon each week. He was a proud Welshman and taught us that the Welsh called their land "Cymru." I prepared and recited a biographical introduction about Beethoven. It was just a classroom exercise, but it was my first attempt at public speaking. Each child had a similar assignment.

We played on the bare playground at recess. If it rained, we stayed inside and Parker gave us exercises with "the wands." These were three-foot sections of broomsticks, kept in a sort of umbrella rack in a corner. Each child took a wand and stood in the aisle beside his or her seat, doing various bends, stretches, and twists in unison. Later, I often noticed many of the mannerisms of Mr. Parker in President Harry Truman.



Figure 40 - Adams School – Jack playing Bugle on far right

That sixth grade left less of an impression on me than any school. I became eleven years old. The old building was replaced around 1925-26 by a fine new brick school.



Figure 41 - Adams Elementary rebuilt in 1926 (H. Briley 6/2016)

Howard and then Marie started school in that new building. Those years of moving made it easier for me to move around the country later. I felt fewer roots.

Wabash Railroad

About a hundred feet south of us ran a double-tracked line of the Wabash Railroad [now the Norfolk Southern]. A never-built street between our house and the railroad added to the vacant lot on our south side. My parents bought the two lots as one property.

Edsall Avenue crossed the railroad at the front corner of our property using a wooden bridge. The railroad ran in a cut with sloping banks. Trains came by almost every hour, but we became so accustomed to the sound that the noise never bothered us. [The old wood bridge became a footbridge blocked to vehicle traffic between 2011 and 2016.]



Figure 42 - Edsall Bridge (www.acpl.lib.in.us undated and H. Briley 6/2016)

Wild strawberries grew along the banks of that railroad cut. They were smaller and sweeter than the strawberries in our garden. We ate them as fast as we picked them. [Impassable underbrush heavily overgrew the steep banks by 2016.]

The engines were always steam locomotives. We were quite aware of the dangers, for we were told of a boy who fell beneath a train and lost a leg. This railroad always attracted us as we stood at the rail of the [wooden] bridge and felt the "whoosh" of the smokestack when the engine passed beneath us. We sometimes counted more than a hundred cars.

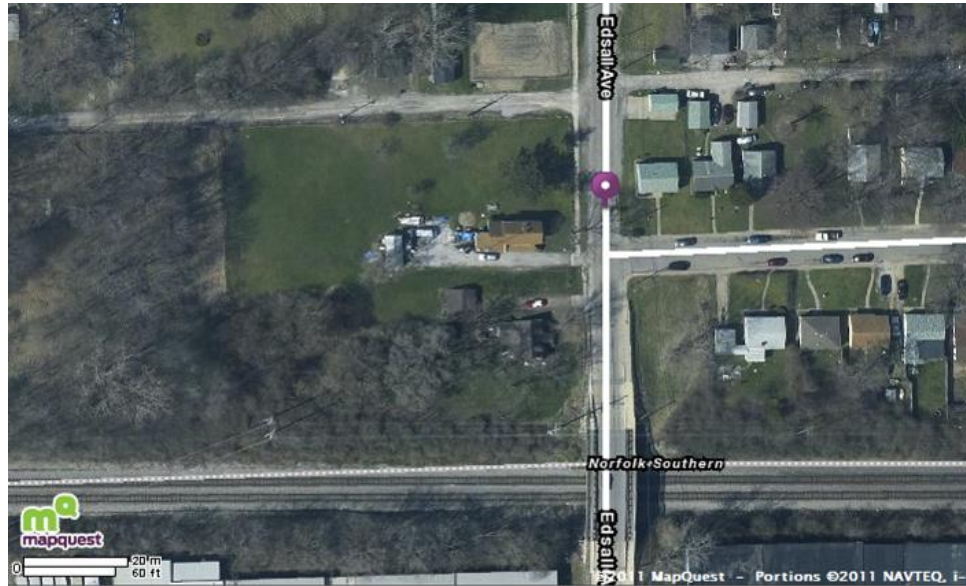


Figure 43 - Property adjacent to Edsall Bridge (mapquest.com 2011)
[The house at the T-junction of Edsall and McDonald was removed by 2016.]

One season, workmen replaced several old ties in the tracks. Dad lugged the discarded ties up the bank. We used them for fuel and for various play construction projects. Dad was out of work for a short time one winter. Both money and the coal pile ran low. We gathered coal along the tracks. Since the fireman shoveled coal into the [locomotive] firebox, several lumps always fell off his shovel. Mother and Dad walked along the eastbound rails for perhaps three blocks, carrying the washtub between them, and all three of us kids scampered around picking up coal. If a train went by while we did this, the fireman sometimes threw a shovel of coal out for us. We always filled the tub.

Fort Wayne was a major division point on several railroads, especially the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Pennsylvania repair shops in Fort Wayne rebuilt freight cars. They pushed cars being prepared for new wooden bodies onto a siding beside a large depression in the ground. They threw boards ripped from those cars into this shallow pit open to the public. Anyone wanting free scrap lumber visited the "Penney dump." Most lumber was fit only for firewood, but sometimes enough could construct a shed or garage.

A great convenience was the interurban streetcar between cities. The interurban car was much heavier than a city streetcar. It ran cross-country on railroad tracks at great speed powered by overhead electric wires. [Arthur Reddersen designed this unibody steel car in 1923 and was built by St. Louis Car Company. Indiana Service Corporation and Fort Wayne Consolidated Railway both ran inter-city service through Fort Wayne until 1937.]

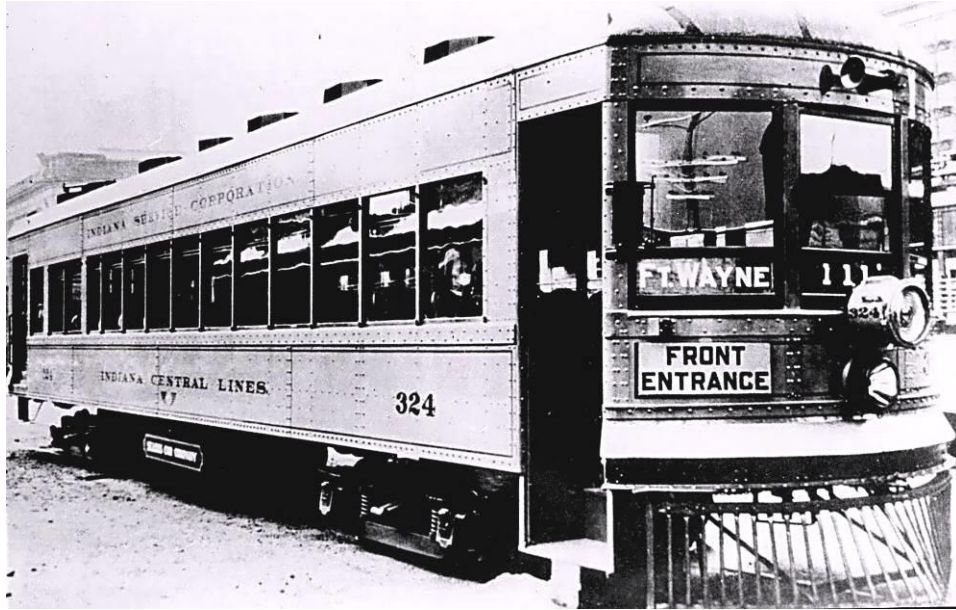


Figure 44 – Indiana Service Interurban 1923-1937 (www.acpl.lib.in.us)

After our basketball team won a regional championship, the team and many supporters rode to the state finals tournament on a chartered interurban car. Sometimes two interurban cars were hooked together. I rode home on the interurban on a few occasions in college at Terre Haute in 1930-33. In the [late] 1930s, these cars all vanished.

The Greyhound bus line or other national lines were not yet organized, but small bus lines ran where no other transportation was available.

Mr. Fenker

[South] across the railroad tracks was a small "truck farm" that raised berries and vegetables, owned by a German named Fenker. When cherries or raspberries were ripe, he hired women and teenagers to pick them at two or three cents a quart [as seasonal income. The city named very short Fenker Avenue after his farm.]

Mr. Fenker had a son named Lawrence, a thin, gentle boy with a weak heart, possibly from rheumatic fever. Lawrence and I were good friends. I learned to operate their player piano by pumping the pedals to force air through the holes in the paper rolls to produce music. Once on a trip back to Constantine during a summer at age eleven or twelve, I ran the player piano in the Constantine movie house a couple of nights, thus gaining free admission. I selected fast or slow music according to the movie action.

Fenker owned a complete set of the works of O. Henry. Lawrence and I read his stories aloud together, roaring with laughter at some of the events, especially in the volume about *The Gentle Grafters*. Lawrence dreamed about going to a military school. He wrote for the thick, beautiful brochures and catalogs from such famous schools as Culver and Staunton. We looked raptly at the pictures of cadets in uniform. I did not see Larry after a few years, and I presumed he died young, never making it to a fancy school.

Games

We had no neighborhood playground or park, but we needed none with the vacant land around us. We never had enough kids at one time to play baseball. However, with even eight or ten kids we organized into two teams to play such games as "Go, Sheepie, Go!" under the streetlight a block away. In this game, one team "guarded" the light pole, while the others tried to sneak past the guards and touch the pole.

We played "King of the Hill," in which one team stood atop any available mound, while the others tried to push or wrestle the others off the mound. Fighting was not allowed. By 1923-25, Howard was old enough to join with the rest of us boys in games.

Childhood Friends

The [electric] Lewis Street trolley line came east as far as Edsall Avenue. The end of the line was only two blocks away. The fare was seven cents each way. [The Lewis Street Line ran to Robinson Park, the first Boy Scout summer camps in Fort Wayne. Although the photo below predates the upgraded streetcar used in 1923, it still ran on rails. The rails on Lewis Street were pulled up and replaced by an electric bus in the 1940's.]

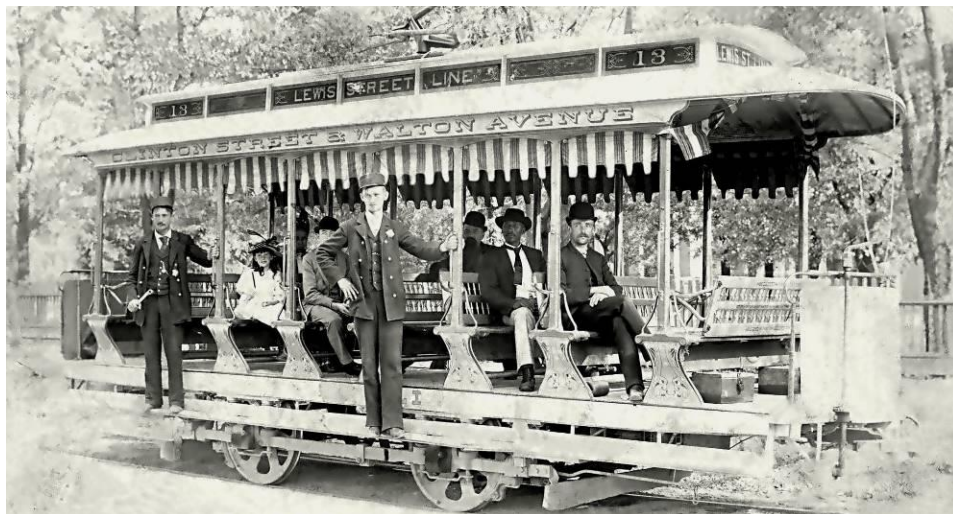


Figure 45 - Lewis Street Electric Trolley 1896-1918 (www.acpl.lib.in.us)

On Saturdays, we took the streetcar uptown to the Colonial Theatre, a movie house that showed Westerns on Saturday morning at a special five-cent admission. The old Lyric Theater faced the Colonial, still a vaudeville house when I was in the fifth grade, but vaudeville was already dead. It revived now and then with specialty acts in other theaters, between movies on the same bill. Back home, we relived each Saturday's movies.

Across the [Wabash] railroad tracks was what had once been a real farmhouse with a real barn. A family lived there with two boys, named from different marriages of the mother: Art Laflin and Howard "Houchie" Tester. By a strange coincidence, Art's birthday fell on my same month and day, and Houchie's matched my brother Howard's. Both boys were on the verge of delinquency, but were not mean or vicious.

Art's ambition was to become a bootlegger because "they make big money." We found some old, big swatch books of wallpaper samples and cut them up to resemble currency. We set up a bar made of a plank across two boxes and filled bottles with water. There we pretended to play poker, although we did not know the first thing about the game. We swaggered up to the bar just like "real" cowboys. I do not know whatever happened to Art and Houchie. They did not join our Scout troop later and just drifted away.

One day, I saw a man carrying a kit of carpenter's tools followed by a boy walking east along the railroad tracks. They built a house a block east of us, probably the easternmost house in Fort Wayne. They first built a small shack and then a modern house with a real bathroom on the same lot. That boy, Henry (Hank) Doermer, Jr. became a good friend all through Boy Scouts. He loved to read Altsheler boys' books about woodsmen and trappers. If we went to the movies separately, we each told the other the long full plot.

Mother watched my friends carefully. She did not approve of my time with Art Laffin, but she came to like Hank. I could not understand how one deliberately picked one's friends. To me a friend just happened, and if there was merit, then the friendship ripened. I had many fine friends by any standard.

Noise Makers

On Halloween, we played noisy pranks with a gadget called a "tic-tac." We notched an empty thread spool with a knife along one of the end flanges to look like an asterisk. A large nail acted as an axle. We wound a string around the spool as on a toy top, crept up to a house, put the tic-tac against a windowpane, and pulled the string. The notched points made a wild buzzing sound through the windowpane. The object was to get away and hide before the people came storming out of the house.

On another occasion, I made a huge mallet by sawing off a ten-inch length of an old telephone pole, boring a hole in its side, and pushing in a three-foot length of old broomstick. When whacked down on a porch, this made it sound as though the house was falling apart, but the soft pinewood of the telephone pole segment did not mar the paint on the porch. This brought the tenants out in a hurry.

Hamar Middle School

In the fall of 1924, I moved to Harmar Middle School, nearer the center of town. Students from outlying elementary schools had to go to Harmar for the seventh and eighth grades. It was a new phase in my life. Some of the kids I met in the seventh grade were my friends for the next six years all the way through high school.



Figure 46 - Harmar School, Built 1914, Torn down 1979 (www.acpl.lib.in.us)

I usually rode the [Lewis Street trolley] to Harmar. A weekly pass for a child was only fifty cents. We went anywhere just by showing it to the conductor as we boarded the car. I carried my lunch since a room at school had tables where the pupils ate lunch.

Perhaps once a week, my mother had nothing suitable for a school lunch, so she gave me twenty cents to buy something. A small grocery across from the school sold hamburger buns "by the each", lunchmeat by the slice, and small bottles of milk for a nickel. The sandwiches thus came to a nickel each. I got two sandwiches and had a dime left over.

Dad's line of work impressed me, so I signed up for a course in woodworking and in mechanical drawing. Later, I took a course in woodworking and woodturning in high school. At Harmar, I learned how to disassemble a carpenter's plane, identify each part, assemble, and adjust it. At home with Dad's plane, I showed him what I had learned.

Hamar operated like a high school. Each day, our first class was our "home room", where roll was taken, notices given, and report cards handed out. From then on, we went to different rooms for each topic: English, mathematics, physiology, history, art. There was an auditorium and a gymnasium. A plaster replica statue of the Winged Victory of Samothrace stood at the top of one stairway.

I needed glasses but did not know that my eyes were poor. A teacher had us stand to read an eye chart. I thought it demeaning to admit that I could not see the letters, so I memorized what I heard the others say and passed the test. It was over three years later that I realized my handicap and got glasses just in time to avoid failing some topics.

Some teachers often found certain good students and paid them extra attention. No teacher had "pets" but they helped a certain number of willing students. Erma Dochterman, who taught English and art, gave me special encouragement.

Another example, Miss Burwell taught English and had us write a story. I wrote a little story about how a child had a little milk pitcher of which he was fond. Although the pitcher could not communicate, it liked the child. One night, burglars tried to enter the house. The little pitcher warned the family by throwing itself from the shelf, perishing in the crash but saving the family. Miss Burwell called me aside and praised this story, urging me to try more writing. I was about twelve.

A teacher, a man, was a stamp collector and told about his hobby. He showed us a stamp worth \$25 that he found in a cigar box of hundreds of assorted stamps that he bought for five dollars. I started to collect stamps but it no more than just an accumulation.

One of our tough teachers was "Old Lady Stanley," who had us memorize and recite the preamble to the Constitution, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and other selections. She was a stern but good teacher; I still remember most of those recitations.

Not all courses turned out well. I was still poor in penmanship. I had trouble with mathematics. One term I worked hard and got good marks on all tests, but still got only a B. I asked the teacher why when my tests warranted a higher grade. Her name was Mrs. Hume. She said, "*Very well, if you want me to change the grade, I will; to a C When any student wants a grade changed, I do it ... to a lower grade.*" From then on inwardly, I always called her Mrs. Fume.

The biggest thing that happened to me at Harmar was that I could join the Boy Scouts at age twelve. My life in the Scouts was so rich that I wrote the **Boy Scouts** chapter.

In the late spring of 1926, I completed the eighth grade at Harmar. There may have been a final [student] assembly, but no graduation, no cap and gown, and no special diploma.

At twelve and thirteen, I attended a sort of Junior high school near the center of town. With my student pass on the trolley good for unlimited rides, I rode the few blocks to the downtown section [to get a hot beef sandwich for fifteen cents at Woolworths] and walked around in the stores.

Family

During the 1920s, we made many trips from Fort Wayne to Constantine. When Dad could not drive, we went by steam train north about sixty miles to Sturgis. In those sixty miles, it made stops at Huntertown, La Otto, Avila, Kendallville [a stop near my summer Boy Scout camp], and Howe at minimum. Thus, it was hardly a “limited” [or “express”]. Grandpa [Hassinger] drove from Constantine to pick us up at Sturgis. [This Grand Rapids Indianapolis line north of Kendallville was abandoned in 1979 (following Highway 9). South of Kendallville to Fort Wayne was abandoned in 1982 (Highway 3).]

My grandparents signed my boyhood autograph album (11/22/1925):

Love many and trust few, and always paddle your own canoe

- Grandpa [Robert] D.Hassinger

Let your life be like a snowflake which leaves a mark but not a stain.

- Grandma Louise [Stieg Giles] Hassinger

Nov 22 - 1925
Love many and
trust few, and always
paddle your own canoe
Grandpa
R.D. Hassinger
Dear Jack.
Let your life be
like a snowflake
which leaves a
mark but not
a stain.
Louise Grand. Ma
Hassinger

Figure 47 - Autograph Album - 11/22/1925

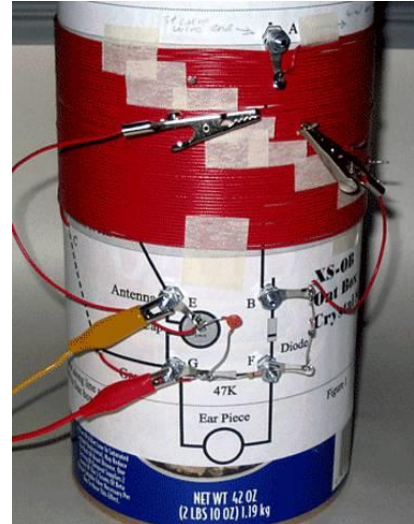
At home, we often talked about Arizona. My parents preferred life there instead of in Indiana. The Southwest became a sort of Eden to which I might return. This mystique further fixated in my mind by the movies that I saw most Saturday mornings, with all of the cowboy stars, together with Western pulp magazines always around the house.

We had no serious illness in the family, no operations requiring hospitalization, no major illness, and no broken limbs. If anyone ran a high fever, we called old Dr. Devoe, who lived ten blocks away and had his office in one room of his home. He still made house calls to bedridden patients and dispensed his own medicines, mixing them from bottles of ingredients on a shelf in his office. He was friendly, casual, and always effective.

Radio

The first radio set we had was a crystal set given to me by my great-aunt Josephine Stieg. It needed no battery or electricity and sound came only through a pair of earphones. Around Christmas in 1924, I listened to Lionel Barrymore reading Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. This set received from a distance of less than twenty-five miles, so we were limited to the two local stations. There were no radio networks until 1927 or 1928.

Within a year of getting that first crystal set, I made one myself with a coil of no.22 enamel coated copper wire, a small piece of galena mineral (the “crystal”) mounted in a base, an earphone, and two small metal clips to attach the earphone(s). I wound the wire around a round Oatmeal carton, with one loose end touching the crystal, and with wires to the clips. I scratched a line along the surface of the wound wire, exposing all of the coils. One probed the crystal to find a sensitive point [by moving the loose wire] along the coil to find the point where the length of the coil matched the frequency of the radio station. Suddenly there was sound! If I placed the earphone on a plate with a strong signal, two persons could hold their ears near the plate to hear.



Many people built their own radios. The ten-cent stores had radio counters where they sold parts with free diagrams. Soon commercial electric sets became available. Dad rigged up our first electric wall outlet in 1925 and we all heard the radio.

Church

While in Constantine, I attended Sunday school. In Fort Wayne, at 1102 Dodge Avenue, I attended a Baptist Sunday School. While on Edsall Avenue, [our family] went to St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church, built in the 1880s. A couple of years after we joined, they built a new building. Today, some mortgage companies welcome churches. Back then, a church had to raise its own funds. The new location [on south Edsall] was closer to our house and they built a wooden "tabernacle" like a warehouse with a dirt floor. I was baptized in the [temporary wood] tabernacle, never having been baptized before.

Later they built across the street, made of brick and stone. When the large basement was completed, services were held there. Within a few years, the entire work was done.



Figure 48- Possible Church Building on 2502 Edsall (H. Briley 6/2016)

We picked the Methodists because they were nearest [a few walking blocks past Adams Elementary. By 2016, the building became a run-down apartment building. It had no church markings, but this large and deep building was out of character with neighborhood homes. A local resident thought it had been a dormitory for Catholic nuns.] Fort Wayne was about one-third Catholic, one-third Lutheran, and all other denominations made up the other third. My friends in the Boy Scouts came from all three [groups].

We three children walked [across the Edsall bridge] to Sunday school and on our way back home about 10:30 am, we met Mother and Dad walking toward the regular church service. Usually Mother told us to put a cup of water on the roast in the oven, for Sunday was the one day we had the luxury of a roast.

Until I left high school, I [regularly] attended Sunday school there. The minister once gave an entire sermon on the need for missionaries, and afterwards he came to me and said, "*Jack, you know I was talking specifically to you.*" No sale.

High Schools

That fall in 1926, I entered Central High School. There were initially two public high schools. Central was the old original school but not yet an old building. [After Jack left Fort Wayne, Central Catholic High School was built across the street to the west. Thus, there was name confusion. By 2016, both had ceased to be schools and Central Catholic became a parking lot for the Catholic Cathedral at the corner of Lewis and Calhoun.]



Figure 49 - Central High School (www.acpl.lib.in.us 1927 and H. Briley 6/2016)

The town grew to the south and South Side High school [accommodated them]. A good share of its students came from business families who built homes in an upper middle class neighborhood. I doubt that many blacks or many with Middle European names attended South Side. We considered it the “rich kid’s school”.

On the north edge of town, North Side High School was finished during my first year at Central, so during that first year our classrooms were crowded. In my second year, many transferred to the new North Side High. I suppose a thousand remained at Central High. My graduating senior class in 1930 had about 160 students.

North Side was a fine school with a swimming pool. There was no municipal pool. The only other pools were at the YMCA, the YWCA, and at the Catholic Community Center.

There were parochial Catholic schools, a Lutheran primary school, a Catholic high school downtown near Central High School, and a Luther Institute a block away. The Luther Institute gave general high school courses and had a good reputation, but it mainly prepared students for [vocational] work in business, such as secretarial.

Central High School

Central High School [not the next-door Central Catholic High School] was 26 to 30 blocks from Edsall Avenue, depending on the route meandered. Few students drove cars.



Figure 50- Central High School entrance (H. Briley 6/2016)

On good days, I walked both ways, a total of five miles. Except for Hank Doermer, who lived a block beyond me, I was the outermost boy in my group. As I walked, other boys fell in, so there might be six of us in a bunch as we reached the halfway point.

Much of the time, I rode the [Lewis Street] streetcar. A student's weekly pass still cost only fifty cents [discounted from 70 cents], later a dollar. However, there was not always a dollar available. We did not get an allowance and had to earn our own money.

I had various jobs at school. After my freshman year, I worked in the school cafeteria, cleaning up the trays of dishes. Pay for an hour's work was a 35-cent lunch. In my junior and possibly senior year, I worked in the high school library, putting books back on shelves in proper numerical order. There was some small cash income from this.



Figure 51- Central High Library (www.acpl.lib.in.us 3/24/1928)

In my junior [1928-1929] and senior [1929-1930] years, I worked after school as an office boy at the Boy Scout headquarters. There I ran an Elliott addressing machine, stuffed envelopes, and helped to write the local Scout bulletin.

Education Valued

We sometimes compare our schools with today. We think that our teachers were better and tougher; students more disciplined and moral; and the tests harder. Our children will probably say the same. The schools in any generation produce remarkable young people.

There were positive circumstances of school life in Fort Wayne 1926-1930 preceding the Great Depression. Most of our fathers worked. The times did not seem so bad.

Many students had parents or grandparents from "the old country," and those parents made children aware of the importance of education. There was good discipline in class. Anyone disruptive was expelled. The law required education only through age sixteen.

Very few smoked, and no student smoked in school or within sight of school. Drugs of any kind and alcohol were unheard things, although there may have been some drinking at parties away from school. I never knew of anyone having anything stolen from his or her locker. I never knew of a single pregnancy of a high school girl in those years. There may have been some whose families took the girl elsewhere, but I never heard of it.

There was a strong feeling that after graduating from high school, you could take up a career. I had no especial difficulties in high school that caused me sleepless nights or trauma. I was moving upward and outward in life.

Teachers assigned homework and expected it completed. I never had any problems there. Although books were required in literature classes, I read them for pleasure. I wrote my essays at home. Most other class assignments I handled during the one or two "study hours" we had each day in a large assembly hall filled with a hundred desks. We never had any "science fairs" by which gifted students could excel.

We had a high school band, a small marching group that appeared at games and parades, neatly but not fantastically uniformed. They did no intricate maneuvers such as bands do today. We had two cheerleaders, both male. There were no pom-pom girls, flag carriers, etc. Before all major games, especially basketball games, a "pep session" rally was held in the auditorium right after classes ended at 3:00 pm. The room was always filled. We all knew the various yells for the school and shouted them out.

I never wore long pants until high school. The usual wear for boys up to age 13 was knickers, pants that buckled just below the knee. I wore heavy black cotton stockings below that. Zippers on men's clothing were not common or only on the most expensive garments. Today's costume of sweatshirt (or T-shirt) and blue jeans was not known. Jeans fell into a category with [bib] overalls, worn only by farmers or workmen for dirty difficult tasks. [Jeans were thus unthinkable as school wear.]

Course Subjects

I signed up for college preparatory courses. Everyone assumed that I would go on to college, but no one had any idea where or how. One signed up for a general high school course, a [vocational] shop course, or a business (secretarial) course.

I went through the standard courses: history, English, mathematics, and a foreign language (Spanish), plus some lesser fringe courses such as public speaking, woodworking, and physical education (which we called “gym”). I took some science: physics and botany. I failed in no course, but neither did I make the Honor Roll.

In my freshman year, I continued with woodworking. In English literature that term, we read Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus' ship interested me, and from its description and the artwork I found, I made a foot long wooden model of the ship. I took it to literature class, and it helped my grade although I had not been devious enough to plan that effect.

I took algebra in my first year, plane geometry, and then solid geometry. It was in these classes, where we had to solve problems drawn on the blackboard by the teacher, that my poor eyesight was revealed. I got wrong answers simply because I was not copying the blackboard correctly. This became apparent in the plane geometry class, and the teacher recommended that I have my eyes tested properly. As a result, I wore glasses for the rest of my life, and my grades improved considerably.

We had athletics, but the only professional athletes were in baseball, boxing, and wrestling. A few basketball teams were sponsored as professional teams by various firms, but the salary was not high. As in all other Indiana high schools, we were most excited about basketball. I never knew a boy who had not at least tried out for basketball in Indiana. [Team sports] did not extend to grades one through eight. (In Texas by the 1950s, even lower grades fielded uniformed football squads.)

Gym classes never captured my attention. I was not good at track, was always scored out in wrestling, never tried football, and was only passable at basketball. Eventually in the Boy Scouts, I worked at these things enough to pass the test for the Athletics merit badge.

I briefly tried music. I became a good bugler as a Scout, which indicated I might do well with a trumpet. My folks bought me a B-flat cornet, a stubby version of the trumpet. It cost them \$15 and must have involved much sacrifice. My instructor John Verweire taught orchestra and was a trumpet player of some fame. However, I had never learned to read music, and when asked to sound a C, I just blew any note that came to mind. I did not last long.

I took part in dramatics with a minor role in one or two high school plays during each of my years. Since we did plays in the Scouts to raise money, I had no fear of the stage or addressing an audience. I was not first-rate but fully at ease (and always was).

Talent was another matter. In one play, I played a policeman walking a beat. In a Shakespearean play, I was Touchstone, the court jester. In my last play, I led in *Thursday Evening*, a one-act comedy by Christopher Morley, about a marital spat between two young newlyweds. Marianne Cowan played opposite me. She later studied under Katherine Cornell and attended the London School of Dramatic Arts. . She was pretty but unapproachable. Before the curtain rose, she quite earnestly asked me not to kiss her at the end of the play, but only to approach doing so. It was an unnecessary request. I liked her but had no romantic intentions.

To meet my science requirement, I took a course in [basic] physics. This was chiefly on understanding the forces of nature: gravity, inertia, momentum, leverage, hydraulics, and such. I was only an average student, but what I learned stayed with me all through life. I took a year of botany, but never took chemistry.

Many of my teachers at Central continued there when Howard and Marie went through Central. Vera Lane taught English composition. Miss Welch taught Literature. Victoria Gross taught Spanish. I recall Coach Mendenhall.

Most of all, I recall Rex Potterf, who taught history. I wrote two term papers for him. One was on the National Origin Immigration Act, by which Congress established quotas for immigrants based upon the country of origin. Another term report was described the fascist regime established by Mussolini in Italy. Mussolini took power in 1922 and in power only six or seven years when I wrote. I based most of it upon articles from *Time* magazine and the *Literary Digest*. In general, it was favorable, such as that, Mussolini made trains run on time. As the years passed, I reversed my position completely.

One recitation came out well in Potterf's class that I worked hard on. I talked about the Battle of Waterloo. On the blackboard, I drew a battle map and described the battle itself, showing how all the forces moved. I made this talk late in 1928 or early in 1929.

In the summer of 1929, while on a short European tour after the Scout Jamboree in England, we visited the battlefield of Waterloo. A small mound was built with a visitors' platform. When I saw the countryside, my battle map came to life! This connection between history and reality undoubtedly helped to firm my [lifelong] interest in history.

Teenage Friends

In high school, I had more than one circle of friends; some overlapped, but most did not except in minor instances. I never belonged to the top social set, the ones who had wealth or pretensions or were from "old" families. I never had any yearnings to do so.

The main constant circle included the boys with whom I walked back and forth to school. Most of these were neighbors and nearly all of them joined my Boy Scout troop. One of my best friends was Carlyle "Bud" Pio. He did not live in my part of town, but I induced him to join our Scout troop, and thus we were always together.

My good friend James Gardner ('Jack') Morey was exactly the sort of friend my Mother would approve. His mother was a somewhat older widow and lived near Central High. She managed the school cafeteria. They lived a quite genteel sort of life, attended symphony concerts, and had a tastefully furnished house in late Victorian style. He played the piano. He later taught English in a Fort Wayne elementary school and became a leading actor in the town's little theater.

Tau Epsilon – Senior President

In my third year at Central, I organized a small fraternity. The laws forbid high school fraternities in Indiana, classing them among "secret societies." It was possibly some leftover [recent] ruling from when the Ku Klux Klan was active in Indiana in 1921-23.

Even little Constantine had the Klan, the women's Klan Auxiliary, and Junior Klan. The only visible evidence I saw in Constantine was when they burned a big cross in front of the home of a Jewish couple who came to start a factory, erected the building, but failed to complete it when hit by the [early] depression of 1920-21.

I read about the fraternity in a youth magazine and wrote for details. As the Fort Wayne chapter of Tau Epsilon, we never had more than ten members, and never did much beyond several social meetings. The fraternity did not continue after I left high school.

In the summer of 1929, the northeastern Indiana Boy Scout Council selected me for an expense-paid trip to the international Boy Scout Jamboree in England. Other Fort Wayne boys went, paid by their parents or by a civic club. I was the only one from Central High (as the others were from South Side High), and I wrote several articles home to the Fort Wayne newspapers. This made me better known at Central.

With my fraternity brothers to campaign for me, I was elected president of the class of 1930. I was pleased, but I knew that no groups campaigned for the other candidates. The office carried few duties. We had no student council and no turbulence among students. As president, I handled the finances of the senior play, collected money for graduation cap and gown rentals, took orders for graduation announcements, and served in similar capacities and committees.

A City Medal

[Editor Note: Jack never mentioned receiving an undated medal from the Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce found in his estate. The current Chamber has no records about it. The Fort Wayne Police Pipe and Drum Brigade logo used a similar design on a shield.]



Figure 52 – Jack’s Chamber Medal (undated) and Police Pipe/Drums (2004)

The medal text states:

- Chamber of Commerce / Fort Wayne / Indiana U.S.A. / Service – Citizenship
- [An image of a fort corner tower]
- [An image of a “Y” with an Arrowhead on a Shield with two flanking stars]

Michelle Merritt, VP Member Relations, and Communications, Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce reported in 2012:

I am not familiar with [this medal]. Our members who were part of the Chamber in the late 1940s-50s did not recognize it. Our History Museum now has a copy of your photograph and we shared it with the local Boy Scouts.

- *The shield was an early version of our Fort Wayne city flag*
- *The shield was the crest of the Chamber*
- *The "Y" is the confluence of the St. Joseph, St. Mary's, and Maumee Rivers*
- *The building is likely the old "fort" of the trading post for European settlers*

Cars

The auto soon became more common. Dad first had a Ford Model T touring car and later a "Whippet," sometimes called a "Baby Overland" with glass windows all around. The Model T started with a hand crank below the radiator. The Whippet had an electric starter, but for many years, all cars retained the front crank in case the battery was low.

We never drove during the cold months. At the first real freeze, we propped the car up on cement blocks to relieve the strain on the tires. We drained the radiator and stored the battery in the kitchen pantry. It was a rite of spring to get the cars running again.

My First Car

In my senior year, spring 1930, I acquired my first auto, a 1922 Ford touring car for twenty-five dollars second-hand (five dollars a month). I got the auto licensed and a driver's license without a driving test. If you drove the car to the examiner, that was good enough. My license renewed each year without examination, even though examinations later applied to first-time applicants. Not until early 1941, did I have to pass a test.

Today, I probably could not drive a Model T. It had three pedals: forward, reverse, and the brake. Speed of motion on reverse depended upon how far one's foot pressed the pedal. There was no low or high gear; it had one ratio of power. It had no speedometer but the average speed was between 25 and 35 miles an hour. An early hot-rod enthusiast added a high-compression head and other improvements. Once I raced this car after modifications. A friend alongside on a motorcycle clocked me at 55 miles an hour!

It had no windshield wiper, but Western Auto or Sears sold one with a hand lever. There was no gas gauge; the tank was underneath the front seat. To check the gas, I stopped, lifted the seat cushion, unscrewed the cap, and stuck in a wooden ruler marked in gallons.

The tires were not reliable and even worse on this second-hand car. Once I had three flat tires within twenty-eight miles. Each time, I had to jack up the car, pull the iron rim off the wooden-spoke wheel, removed the tire, pull out the tube, patch it, put it back together, and pump it up with a hand pump.



Figure 53 – My 1922 Ford Model-T Touring Car - 1930

I used the Ford in my after-school job to pick up overdue books for the public library. The library wanted only the book back. Any fine I collected was my income. I bargained and negotiated if the patron had little ready money. If that failed, I took back the book without a fine. I used the Model T that summer as Scout camp adjutant to go back and forth [to town]. Before college, I sold it to an old friend, Harold Lickey.

The Great Depression

During my school years, we lived on Edsall Avenue. Most of my social life and non-school activity appears more fully in the **Boy Scouts** chapter.

The Great Depression began with a collapse of the stock market on a "Black Friday" in September 1929. People whose livelihood was in stocks and finance felt it immediately. It took many months before the working class homes in Indiana felt the impact, and it was two years before its full effects reached everyone. Therefore, I faced graduation with no particular qualms. Money was short and work long, but that had always been the way of things. [Since we were already at the bottom,] we had nowhere to fall.

Fort Wayne during the 1930's from Wikipedia (edited):

Population growth occurred most in the 19th century, with the arrival of a large number of Germans, Irish, and later Poles. Most immigrants were of Catholic or Lutheran faith. The Germans and Irish gave strong majorities for the Democrats; Fort Wayne was the only Northern city of over 50,000 people carried by Democrat William Jennings Bryan in 1896. The German population turned hostile to the Democrats during World War I, but the city voted for Roosevelt.

The city economy relied upon manufacturing, and after 1910, many businesses made parts for the automobile industry exploding in Detroit. By the 1930s, three Fort Wayne factories made 70% of the nation's gasoline pumps. Other factories made railroad car wheels, boilers, tanks, washing machines, medicines, motor trucks, automatic phonographs, display cases, meatpacking products, mining machinery, tents and awnings, and beer.

With 10,000 employees, General Electric was the largest employer. Over 6,000 women and girls worked in factories during 1900–20, chiefly in food preparation and hosiery. They had low wages and little advancement, but most women quit when they married. Employers, such as Wayne Knitting Mills and General Electric, built well-appointed dormitories and clubs to attract workers. In the 1920s, prosperity led to improved conditions, shorter hours, and higher wages.

Dependent upon heavy industry, Fort Wayne suffered in the Great Depression beginning in 1929, with most factories cutting their workforce. When local relief ran out, Fort Wayne turned to the New Deal. By summer 1938, as the economy skidded downward again, 17% of Allen County families were on welfare, with 66% of the funding coming from the WPA [Works Progress Administration].

During a few years in the mid-1920s, Dad's father, Samuel Metz Rittenhouse, lived with us on Edsall Avenue. He was in his late seventies. All the time I knew him, he wore a neatly trimmed, rounded white beard. He lived with us, sharing the bedroom of Howard and I, sitting long hours in the sunshine that came through a living room window. He had no pension; Social Security did not yet exist. Long ago, he invented a windmill mechanism and sold the patent to a factory, but not for any great sum. His only income

was from selling door-to-door a type of oil mop used on hardwood floors, and he left each day to start out by streetcar to a new neighborhood.

Finally, his health became so poor we could not care for him, and he went out to an old folk's home at the edge of town. He died [April 5, 1929] while I was away at a Scout camp and I hurried back for the funeral. He came from near Pioneer, Ohio [Bridgewater Township]. Through Grandpa Rittenhouse, we had many distant relatives in northeastern Indiana [DeKalb County], northwestern Ohio [Williams County], and around Fort Wayne.

Dad's work at Tokheim was up and down, as in many factories. Mother did what she could to earn extra money with few opportunities. For a time, she went to a local garment factory and brought home piece work, the task of doing embroidery, such as small flowers on a baby garment, not too much on each garment, just enough to catch the buyer's eye. She was paid by the dozen for very little income.

Leaving Home

Graduation finally came for me and the rich Fort Wayne years ended. I lived in Fort Wayne from the summer of 1922 after I came down from Constantine until the summer of 1930 when I went away to college in Terre Haute.

In my last talk with my history teacher, Rex Potterf told me that I was capable of doing remarkable things, but that for some reason I had ups and downs of energy, and that if I found the source of this and kept myself at a high pace, I could do more. He was quite correct in his judgment, but I have never found the secret [of that high energy].

Those years 1922-1930, a short time indeed, were the years that my whole life was shaped so that it seemed three times that long.

Jack's Grandmother Louise wrote a note of encouragement (8/22/1930):

Dear Jack. Your mother sent me your letter of the 18th to her. I am enclosing some money for you to help get along with until you can help yourself. Be a good son and even though you work hard, you are starting out in the world. I sure hope for your success, work, and then some more work, [which] is what puts us on our feet. Joe [Lydia Josephine, her sister] had to give up her job. She is not well at all. I hope you can find something better than what you have, or can add to your work so you can make more. Best love to you. Longingly, your Grandma – Mrs. R. Hassinger

I was in Terre Haute from August 1930 until late September 1933 when I suspended my university studies. There was no hope for any job that interested me. It was a decision I later regretted, because I could not get many [desirable] jobs later in life simply because I lacked a college degree.



HOTEL HARVEY

On the Banks of the Beautiful St. Joe

ROBT D. HASSENGER, Proprietor
Hassinger

CONSTANTINE, MICH.

8/22/30

Dear Jack, your mother
sent me your letter of
the 8th to her. I am
enclosing some money
for you. To help get
along with. until you
can help your self.
be a good boy. and
even tho you work hard.
you are starting out in
the world. and I sure
hope for your success.
work and then some
more work. is what puts
us on our feet. Joe. has
had to give up his
job. she is not well
at all. I hope you can
find something better
than what you have.
or can add to your

work so you can make
more. best love to you
lovingly your
Grandma
Mrs P. Hassinger

Figure 54 - Louise Stieg Hassinger Note - 8/22/1930

I returned to Edsall Avenue and made a little money reviewing books for the Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette. I could sell the review copies [as my income]. After that, I visited Fort Wayne intermittently until I left for California in January 1941. After 1941, I was back in Fort Wayne on rare visits of seldom more than two days.

Many, perhaps most, of my classmates remained in Fort Wayne, or at least in Indiana. Many went away for college but returned. Several took over their father's business. My class held a fiftieth reunion in 1980, but I did not care to return. It would be a costly trip for such a short visit.

For Further Study

For the best information on manners, customs, and morals of this part of Indiana in the 1920s, I urge the reading of the book *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (Robert Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, Harcourt, Brace and Company, NY, 1929). These two social anthropologists made a deep inquiry into the attitudes then prevalent in Muncie, Indiana; in the middle 1920s.

They spent a year living in the town and asking many people how they built a home life, earned a living, trained their children, spent their leisure, worshipped, and ran their government. Muncie was not far from Fort Wayne, and nearly all that the Lynds found [applied equally well] to Fort Wayne. The book runs 550 pages.