

HATTIE & RUTH

For my family

HATTIE & RUTH

The Letters of Hattie Pifer and
Her Daughter, Ruth Pifer Martin

Together with Fragments of Family History:
The Whites, Davises, Pifers and Taylors

Sullivan and Moultrie County
Illinois

Compiled and Edited by
R. Eden Martin

Chicago
2011

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FOREWORD

During the late 1980's, I compiled materials related to the Martin family and the history of Sullivan and Moultrie County. These were privately printed in 1990 as *Fragments of Martin Family History*. At the core of this volume were extended "notes" on the Martin family and the histories of the city and county written in old age by my grandfather, I.J. Martin.

I was not able then to compile similar materials related to my mother's families – the Whites/Davises and the Pifers/Taylors. Ruth Martin was born March 3, 1909, Ruth Juanita White, daughter of Leonard White and Selena ("Lena") Davis. After Lena died, Ruth was adopted at the age of six by Finley and Hattie Pifer, so she became Ruth Pifer. She married my father, Robert Martin, in 1935.

So why did I first focus on the Martin side? I suppose in part because Martin was my family name, and I grew up in Sullivan – where there lots of Martins and no White or Davis relatives. The Martins had been among the earliest settlers in the area that became Moultrie County. I.J. Martin had written about the family and these early settlers and their descendants, many of whom he had known. He was born in 1859 and lived to be 93 years old, so he had lots to write about. Also, I.J. had married Rose Eden, daughter of Congressman John R. Eden, a prominent local lawyer and politician.

The Whites and Davises, by contrast, were at the opposite end of the prominence spectrum. Leonard was a local brick mason. His wife Lena died young, and we Martins never came into contact with any of our Davis "relatives." As far as I know, no one in the White/Davis families left any historical record

remotely comparable to what I.J. Martin left his descendants. Also, although we occasionally were in contact with our grandfather, Leonard White (who lived in Decatur), as well as Ruth's one surviving brother, (who lived in Edwardsville), the fact that Ruth was adopted by the Pifers helped to obscure – at least partially – our connection with Whites and Davises.

As to the Pifers, Mother's adopting family, Finley Pifer had died in 1922 – long before my brother Philip and I were around. However, Hattie Pifer lived to see Philip and me reach adulthood. She was born January 18, 1868, and died August 18, 1967 – just a few months shy of 100. She was our grandmother, the only one we ever knew. Growing boys could not have had a better one. She lived in a little house just behind ours. We walked from our backyard into hers, and helped ourselves to tomatoes from her garden or peaches from her peach tree.

So why – during the 1980's – should I have been more interested in the Martins/Edens than the Pifers? Perhaps because I never knew our grandfather Pifer. Perhaps because I knew that our mother had been adopted, so we had no genetic connection to the Pifers. The simpler explanation may be because neither Finley nor Hattie Pifer had written long memos about the history of their families or their connection to the life of the city or county. I knew vaguely that Fin Pifer had been a businessman and had briefly served as Mayor of Sullivan, and that during his time as Mayor of Sullivan, he had something to do with the creation of the Sullivan's Wyman Park. But then he had died. That was about it. Not much to write about – or to preserve for future grandchildren. Or so it seemed.

Finley Pifer had built the brick house at 108 East Jackson Street in Sullivan in which we grew up. Mother had lived there as a child. After she and Father married, it became their family home. For almost a century, Hattie Pifer and then Ruth had lived in that house. They were both packrats. They saved old furniture, old magazines, old clothes, and old hats. The house had a large second floor. Perhaps someone had lived in it once upon a time. But when we were growing up, it was used only for storage. There were boxes of junk, boxes of pictures of people long gone, and a few cartons of old letters and cards – lots of paper.

A few months after Mother died May 30, 1996, at the age of 87, Philip and I cleaned out the house at 108 East Jackson Street. In the attic we came across the cartons of old letters and cards. Casually, without knowing what was in them, we divided them between us. I brought my two cartons back to Glencoe and parked them away in a room with lots of other books and records. I was busy with my law practice and family activities. The boxes would be something to go through later, when there was more time. I looked through them enough to see that there were packets of letters tied together with string, and that they appeared to be to Mother.

When we built a new house in Glencoe in 2005, next door to our old one, the cartons were among the many dozens of boxes that were moved – most containing books. The two with the family letters went to a corner of my study on the second floor, along with several others that had originated in the attic in Sullivan: family pictures, records left from father’s law office, writings of I.J. Martin, and stuff saved by Mother relating to Philip and me from our high school and university years.

My wife Sharon nudged me, at first gently, to clean up the second floor study. But it was five-plus years after we built the new house that I retired from my position at the Commercial Club of Chicago and found the time to do my house cleaning.

As I picked my way through the papers in one of the cartons of letters, I realized that only some of them were Ruth’s. The bottom layer was much older – going back to the 19th Century. There were dozens of postcards. And dozens of letters addressed to Hattie Taylor – the maiden name of our grandmother. There were some business records that had belonged to Finley Pifer, and some court records. A couple of packs of Kodak film had been saved from the 1930’s.

The first thing was to separate this stuff into different categories and then to organize it chronologically. That took a couple of days. I quickly realized that by far the largest chunk consisted of letters to Ruth written by boy friends (or would-be boy friends) while she was in high school and college. She did not keep copies of what she wrote, so the collection is one-sided. But glancing through the boy-friend letters, it was easy to see that these contained reflections of what she had written to them and what she was doing at the time. Not surprisingly, they also contained an immense amount of juvenile blather. After all, these were young men in their teens or early 20’s seeking to impress her. They have approximately the same literary quality as late 20th century teen-age telephone conversations.

There was a lot of hay in this stack, but there might also be gems; and the only to find out was to read it all and preserve any interesting information that might turn up.

So I read the letters to Mother, extracting information and occasional quotes that shed light on what she was doing and thinking.

After that I went to work on Hattie’s letters. Most of them were from her brothers and sisters or from her neighbor and long-time suitor, Finley Pifer, the man she eventually married. The earliest of these letters date back to the years when Hattie was herself a teenager, still in high school. They run up to and beyond when she married Finley, November 18, 1903. There were fewer of these Finley-Hattie letters, and the level of blather was lower. It seemed to me that rather than try to extract bits and pieces, it would be more useful to

transcribe the entire text of these letters, which is what I did.

About this time I recalled that Philip had a box of family-related material as well. He obligingly dug it out and went through it for similar matter – letters to Ruth or Hattie. He found a couple of dozen to Hattie and, more important, a photograph album that either Hattie or Ruth had kept during Ruth's grade school and high school years. I added the Hattie letters to those in my possession, and made digital copies of Ruth's picture album. Philip has also helped edit this work.

The result of this sorting and editing is contained in the transcript of Hattie's letters and the summaries of Ruth's correspondence that appear below.

So far, so good – but there was still a big hole. We knew very little about either the White/Davis (genetic) family background or the Pifer (adopting parent) background. The materials in the box revealed a little. Family history research in Moultrie and Shelby counties revealed more. Particularly valuable has been the help given me by Eileen Bridges, an expert researcher who volunteers at the Shelby County Historical and Genealogical Society in Shelbyville. She looked through the Shelby County records, particularly the census records, and helped me piece together tentative family trees for the Whites and Davises going back to the 18th century.

Philip and I also spent useful time at the Sullivan Court House and the office of the Superintendent of Schools, gathering information about Hattie Taylor's career as a teacher. Thanks to the Bests at the *Sullivan News Progress*, I was able to obtain access to files of surviving newspapers from 1916 and the 1920's containing useful obituaries and other news stories.

The fruits of this research are summarized in the chapters that appear at the beginning of this compilation: the essays on Leonard and Lena White and Finley and Hattie Pifer, as well as the more extended investigation of the White/Davis ancestors that appears at the end of the volume.

Readers (if there turn out to be any) should be aware that these summaries almost certainly abound with misinformation – incorrect dates, wrong names, probably some incorrect relationships. People write down things in old age when memory is imperfect – or they fill in gaps with what they believe to be reasonable guesses. Even when records are accurate, other folks – like me – write them down wrong, or type them inaccurately. You do the best you can; but if you wait until you are certain – until every fact has been double-checked and chased to its ultimate source – documents like this one would never see the light of day. One must regard all such efforts as this as tentative and preliminary – subject, hopefully, to improvement and correction by later generations.

If there is anything of interest in these fragments of family history, it will probably be limited to the descendants of Ruth Pifer Martin – of whom there

are now 6 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. But it is possible there may be a broader interest because their letters shed little rays of light on the realities of how people in small-town America lived during the years of the late 19th century and the early 20th, how some made a living, what kind of schooling they had, how they entertained themselves and spent their time, the technologies they took for granted and their limitations, and the difficulty of surviving the economic turbulence of the late 1920's and early 1930's.

From the editor's selfish standpoint, these letters have given me a better vantage point to begin to understand and appreciate Hattie and Ruth – two of the three people who looked out for me through the years of childhood and until I went off to college in the fall of 1958.

I

LEONARD & LENA WHITE

The parents of Juanita Ruth White were Leonard White and Lena Davis White.

Leonard White, Ruth's father, was born in the City of Little River in Rice County, Kansas, on January 20, 1879. He died in Decatur on May 4, 1960.

According to his birth certificate, Leonard's father and mother were **John White** (29 years old when Leonard was born) and **Nancy Elizabeth "Mullhollan"** (then 30). John White, Leonard's father, was described in Leonard's birth certificate as a "farmer."

Both John White and Nancy Elizabeth White had been brought up in or near Sullivan. At some point they moved to Kansas, where several of their children were born. John brought the family back to Sullivan about 1888 – when Leonard was nine years old. We know this from a news article about Cora Verbryck, who was one of Leonard's sisters. The article, written at the time of her 101st birthday (article May 12, 1982), quoted Cora to the effect that, "When she was seven years old, the family traveled back to Illinois in a covered wagon." So – 1982 – minus 101 – plus 7 – gets us to about 1888 when they returned.

Another of Leonard's sisters was Edith, who also lived a long life. An article written about her when she reached 103 (in 1991), stated that she was born in Wyandotte County, Kansas, and that "she was an infant when the family moved by covered wagon to the St. Louis area. When she was 2, they moved to Sullivan." The article adds that her father died when she was 5 years old, "leaving her mother, who had a crippled right hand and arm, to raise the family."

Leonard had seven brothers and sisters. Their names and birthdates were: Julia (1/13/73), Stella (6/20/74), William (9/29/75), Elmer (9/4/76), Leonard (1/20/79), Cora, (5/8/81), Gillespie (6/11/84), and Edith (10/9/88). Cora Verbryck lived to be over 101. Edith Shadow lived to be over 103. Gillespie (Ruth called him "Uncle Gis") also lived to old age.

Leonard White married Selena (or "Lena") Davis (b. 8-9-1881) (then 19) on July 14, 1901, in Lena's sister's home in Bruce, Illinois. Leonard's marriage license states his occupation as "laborer." The license also states that at the time Leonard was living in Sullivan, and Lena Davis was living in Bruce, a tiny cluster of homes and stores south of Sullivan. Dave Goddard (husband of Lena's sister Mary) was one of the listed witnesses at the marriage.

Leonard and Lena had three children: David Herschel (who went by the name Herschel) (b. 1902), Delbert (b. 1907), and Ruth (b. March 3, 1909). After Lena's sister Mary died in 1905, her husband David Goddard – Ruth's "Uncle Dave" – boarded with the White family.

Then Lena died in 1911 – leaving Leonard with the three children. For a few years, they lived with Leonard's mother, Nancy Elizabeth White, in or near Findlay. Ruth remembered later that Herschel lived with Grandma White but Delbert was "boarded out during the week" and was with Leonard and the family on weekends.

To support himself and his family, Leonard worked as a bricklayer in Sullivan and other towns in central Illinois. Finley Pifer (who with his wife Hattie later adopted Ruth) made bricks and built houses and buildings; and Leonard worked on some of his projects. When Leonard registered for the draft in 1918 (at the age of 39), he identified his occupation as bricklayer; and he identified his employer as H.C. Kuhne, of Rantoul. In 1930, the Livingston Co. census showed that he was working as a brick mason at the local reformatory.

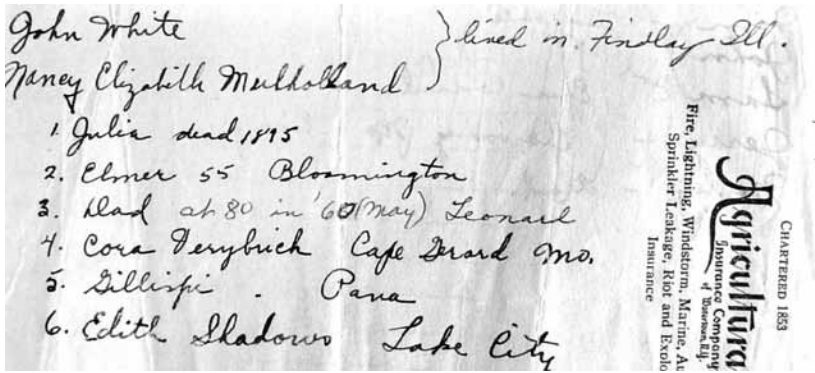
Not surprisingly given his line of work, Leonard apparently never had much money. At the time Ruth was adopted by the Pifers in 1914, the court approving the adoption found that Leonard "owns no real estate property and only owns a small amount of personal property, consisting of household goods."

Ruth's recollection many years later was that her brother Herschel ran away from home at about the age of 16 and went to Edwardsville, where he worked for a railroad. However, the 1920 Findlay census shows Herschel living at that time in the home of his grandmother, along with Leonard. Herschel was identified as working in a railroad freight yard. The 1920 census reports Herschel as 17 years old at the time the census was taken. Perhaps it was not long after that when he moved to Edwardsville. Herschel married Agnes Dorothy Hawk of Shelbyville on October 4, 1921. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Hawk.

Ruth's other brother Delbert contracted TB as a teenager. Ruth remembered that he became crippled as a result and used a crutch. "Uncle" Dave Goddard (husband of Mary, Lena's sister) "was so good to Delbert ...; he took him to the Doctor every week for many months..." Finally, Leonard took Delbert to Albuquerque to a TB sanitarium where he died. Delbert's sickness may have been one of the factors in Leonard's decision to find a new home for Ruth.

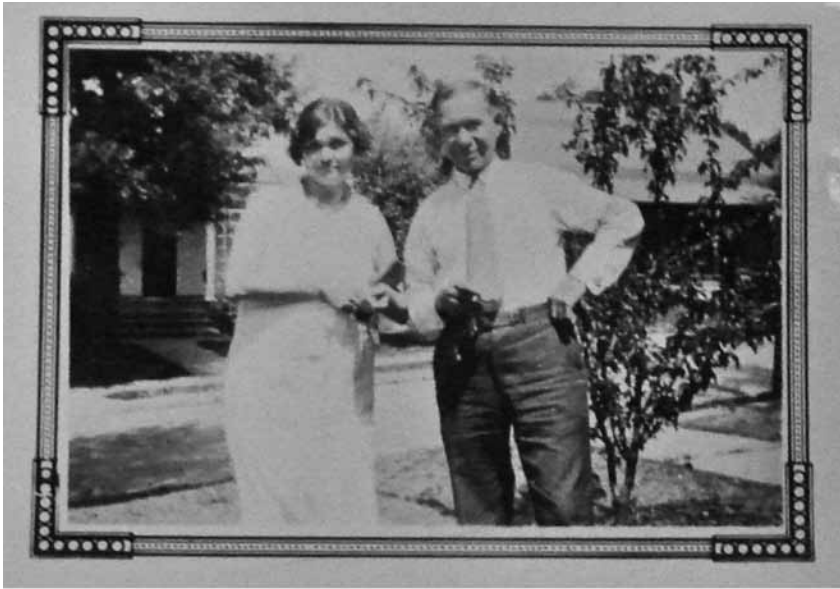
Ruth's adoption by the Pifers in 1915 did not keep Ruth from staying in touch with the Whites. Her father Leonard regularly came to see her for what she later remembered as "short visits," usually bringing little gifts. Ruth also maintained a close relationship with brother Herschel and his wife Agnes, visiting them from time to time. Agnes died February 6, 1936, after what her obituary in the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* described as "an extended illness of complications."

Here is a note about the White family inserted by Ruth Martin into Eden's "baby book." (In listing Leonard's brothers and sisters, she missed Stella and William.)



A decade after Lena White died in 1911, Leonard married again – in 1921 – a woman named Mellie or Millie, last name Baugher or Bauer. This was a second marriage for Mellie as well. The *Findlay Enterprise* for April 28, 1921 reported: "Leonard White and Mrs. Mellie Baugher, married, both of Findlay, Monday. She is the oldest daughter of M/M Wm. Scroggins. He is the son of Mrs. Elizabeth White and is a brick contractor." The 1930 Livingston Co. census reports Leonard, 51, and Mellie, 44, keeping house in Pontiac Village with sons Shelby "Bauer" and Forrest "Bauer." The proper spelling of Mellie's name remains unclear. The *Findlay* newspaper reported in March 1928 that the youngest daughter of "Mrs. Mellie Baugher White," "Beula Baugher" had just married.

A picture of Leonard and Mellie apparently taken at the time of their wedding in 1921 survived in papers saved by Ruth. A note on the back of this picture written by Ruth says this second marriage didn't last long because "Millie" was "jealous."



Ruth was 12 years old at the time her father remarried. She had little if any contact with Mellie or Leonard's step-children. When Philip and I were growing up in Sullivan in the 1950's, we frequently visited Leonard, and Mother talked about him. But there was never any mention of Mellie/Millie. I didn't know about her until I found this picture in Mother's correspondence.

Leonard continued to work the rest of his life as a bricklayer and construction worker. Ruth later told us that Leonard had a drinking problem, which was sufficiently serious that he "took the cure" at a clinic somewhere in Illinois.

After Leonard's marriage with Mellie failed, sometime late in his life Leonard married Eva Conard who had previously married Earl Conard. (Her maiden name had been White: she was the daughter of Sam and Mary Montgomery White, which apparently made her Leonard's first cousin.) When we visited our Grandfather Leonard in Decatur late in his life, she was referred to as our "Aunt Eva."

A picture survives of Leonard White and several of his adult brothers and sisters with their mother – Nancy Elizabeth Mulholland White. She is the "Grandmother" with the "crippled right hand and arm" with whom Ruth lived in Findlay for a few years after her own mother Lena died – before Ruth was adopted by the Pifers. She looks pretty tough. After Ruth was adopted by the Pifers, her new mother Hattie wrote on the back of a picture of Ruth (then age 5) that she "says she wouldn't go back to grandma for anything."



Leonard is at the left end of the back row. Then Edith Shadow, Gillespie White, Cora Verbryck, and Elmer White.

After the Pifers adopted Ruth, though she remained in contact with her natural father Leonard and her brothers Herschel and Delbert, she did not remain close to her grandmother, Nancy Elizabeth.

When Philip and I were growing up, we were taken many times to Decatur to see Grandfather Len White. When I was 10, for example, he would have been 71 (which I am now). He seemed to me to be a very old man. He died May 5, 1960.

Leonard White



Local 13, Illinois, regrets to inform of the death of Leonard White, long-time and highly esteemed member of the local.

MAY 7 1960

Memorial Obituary

Leonard White

SULLIVAN — Funeral services for Leonard White, 81, Decatur, who died at 9:40 a.m. Thursday (May 5, 1960) at his home, were Saturday in Decatur.

Burial was in the Sullivan Cemetery, Sullivan.

A retired brick mason, Mr. White moved to Decatur from Findlay in 1925.

He leaves his wife; a daughter, Mrs. Ruth Martin, Sullivan; a son, Herschell White, Edwardsville; two step-daughters, Mrs. Bonnie Ayre, Decatur, and Mrs. Colleen Lane, Sullivan; three stepsons, Cloyd and Robert Conard, Decatur; and Wayne Conard, Sullivan; two sisters, Mrs. Cora Verbruyck, Cape Girardeau, Mo., and Mrs. Edith Shadows, Sullivan; and a brother, Gillespie White, Pana.

* * *

Ruth's Mother, Selena Davis, was born August 9, 1881, in Windsor, Illinois, south of Sullivan.

Her father was **Joshua T. (Joe) Davis** (born 11-12-1839); and her mother was **America (“Mary”) Ann J. Keller** (born ca, 1845 in North Carolina).

RETURN OF A BIRTH.

STATE OF ILLINOIS) The physician, accoucheur or person in attendance should immediately return this Certificate, accurately filled out, to the **County Clerk**. Penalty, \$10.00, if not so certified and returned within 30 days.

Shelby COUNTY) **STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.**

1. Full Name of Child (if any) *Selena Davis*

2. Sex: *female* No. of Child of this Mother, *6th*

3. Race or Color (if not of the white race), _____

4. Date of Birth, *August 9, 1881*. Place of Birth, *Windsor Tn*

5. Nationality, Place of Birth and Age of each Parent.

Father—Nationality, _____ Place of Birth, *Illinois*, Age, *42* years.

Mother—Nationality, _____ Place of Birth, *North Carolina*, Age, *36* years.

6. Full Name of Mother, *M. A. J. Keller* Mother's Residence, *Windsor Tn*

Maiden Name of Mother, *M. A. J. Keller*

7. Full Name of Father, *Joshua T. Davis*

8. Father's Occupation, *Farmer*

9. Name of Medical or other Attendant and Address, *Mary Keller*
Windsor Tn

Returned by _____ *Mary Keller* M. D.

Dated at *August 14th 1881*. Residence, *Windsor Tn*

The given name of Child should be certified, if possible, when this Certificate is made, and should, in any case, be certified and registered within a year. City, number, street and ward; name in event that have them, locality or precinct.

Lena's father Joshua (“Joshua”) according to the phonetic spelling) was a farmer and was 42 when Lena was born in 1881. Her mother “Mary” was 36, and her place of birth was identified as North Carolina. The “attendant” at her birth was Mary Keller – almost certainly Lena’s maternal grandmother, who (based on other birth certificates) was probably a midwife.

Joshua and Mary had a big family: Mary (3/20/64), America Ann (1866), Hannah (1868) William John (4/70), Charles Wesley (1872), and Selena (“Lena”), the youngest. The mother, Mary, died about 1888 when Lena was a child, and she was raised by her oldest sister Mary, who married David Goddard in 1884. The 1900 Census reports that Lena was living in the same household as David and Mary Goddard. Ruth fondly remembered “Uncle Dave” Goddard as “the kindest man I ever knew.” (Ruth’s handwritten note, preserved in file of materials relating to the Whites.)



On the reverse is written, in Ruth Martin's hand: Lena Davis White, wife of Leonard, 1881 – 1911, Mother of Herschel, Delbert, Ruth.

The Goddards – with Lena – lived in the southwestern part of Sullivan, not far from the Eden-Martin house where I.J. Martin lived. Years later I.J. told his daughter-in-law Ruth that her mother Lena had been “beautiful and slim.”

Ruth also asked her Aunt Edith Shadow and “Uncle Dave” Goddard about

Lena. Edith “said Mother loved music and had a beautiful singing voice and sang a lot.” Uncle Dave told her that “Mother was petite and graceful and he also mentioned how she loved to sing and dance.” (Handwritten notes of Ruth, preserved with materials relating to the Whites.)

On July 14, 1901, Leonard White (b. 1-20-1879) (then 22) and Lena Davis (b. 8-9-1881) (then 19) were married in the Goddard home in Bruce. The marriage license states his occupation as “laborer.” The license also states that at the time Leonard was living in Sullivan, and Lena Davis was living in Bruce, a tiny cluster of homes and stores south of Sullivan. Dave Goddard was one of the listed witnesses at the marriage.

No. 5882

MARRIAGE LICENSE ADULT

Mr. Leonard White
and
Miss Lena Davis

Issued July 13th 1901
Married July 14th 1901
Filed July 15th 1901

L.K. Scott
County Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Return of a Marriage to County Clerk

1. Full name of GROOM Leonard White
2. Place of residence Sullivan, Ills.
3. Occupation Laborer
4. Age next birthday 22 years. Color white race Am.
5. Place of birth Rice County, Kansas
6. Father's name John White
7. Mother's maiden name Elizabeth Monholland
8. Number of groom's marriage One
9. Full name of BRIDE Salena Davis
Maiden name, if a widow _____
10. Place of residence Moultrie County, Ills.
11. Age next birthday 20 years. Color White race Am.
12. Place of birth Shelby County, Ills.
13. Father's name Joshua Davis
14. Mother's maiden name America Ann Kellar
15. Number of bride's marriage One
16. Married at Bride's Residence in the County of Moultrie and State of Illinois, the 14th day of July 1901
17. Witnesses to marriage David Goddard
George Rose

N. B.—At Nos. 8 and 15 state whether 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. marriage of each. At 17 give names of subscribing witnesses to the Marriage Certificate. If no subscribing witnesses, give names of two persons who witnessed the ceremony.

July 14th 1901

We hereby certify that the information above given is correct, to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Leonard White (Groom.)
Salena Davis (Bride.)

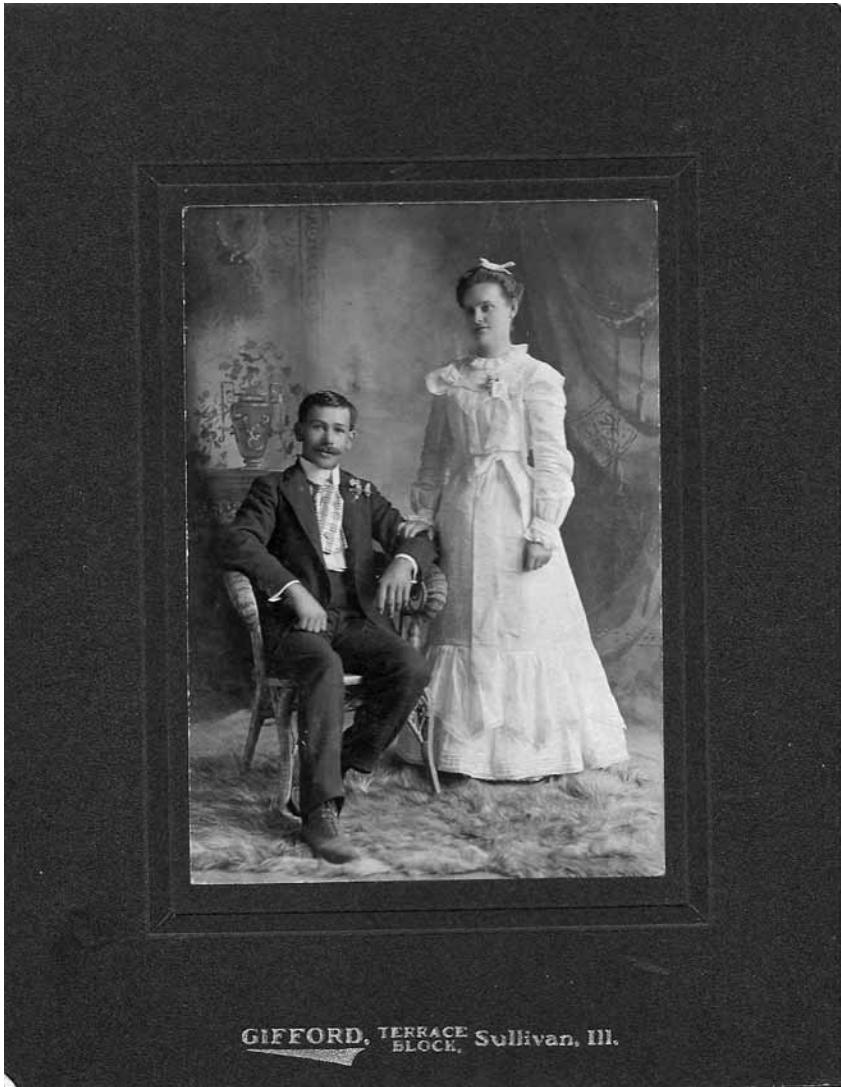
I hereby certify that the above is a correct return of a Marriage solemnized by me.

W.R. Storms
Minister of the Gospel

Dated at Windsor this 14th day of July 1901

7584 Ivers Printing Company, Springfield, Illinois.

Fig. 1 This Return is to be carefully filled out and returned with the Marriage License. This Return does not take the place of the Certificate which comes attached to the License, but is IN ADDITION THERE TO.



The *Windsor Gazette* for July 18, 1901, carried an article about their wedding:

Leonard White of Bethany and Miss Lena Davis was [sic] quietly married at the home of the bride's sister, Mrs. David W. Goddard of Bruce. The ceremony was performed at high noon, Sunday, July 14, [1901] by Elder W.R. Storm, after which the 25 relatives and friends proceeded to the dining room, where an elegant dinner awaited them. Mr. White is an industrious

young man of many excellent qualities, while the bride is a lovely young lady who will be greatly missed by her brother and sister, whose house she has made her home for 11 years. Mr. and Mrs. White will reside in Bethany and both have many friends, who wish them a long, happy, and prosperous life.

The wedding article adds a little new information: that Leonard was living in Bethany (a few miles west of Sullivan) at the time of the wedding, and that he and Lena lived there for some period after the wedding. Also, it underscores the fact that Lena had essentially been raised by her older sister Mary and "Uncle Dave" Goddard, as she had lived with them about 11 years – from age 9 to 20 – after her own mother died.

Sister Mary died January 8, 1905 – by which time Lena was 24.

Ruth was born March 3, 1909. (Ruth's birth certificate spells her first name "Wanetta." The other spelling that I've seen is "Jaunita.")

Form P.H.S. No. 30-A
1940 REVISION
(1216-3034-7-41)

CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH
STATE OF ILLINOIS
DWIGHT H. GREEN, Governor
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

1. PLACE OF BIRTH
County of Moutrie Registration Dist. No. _____
City of Sullivan (Township, Precinct, Block, etc.) Primary Dist. No. _____
* (Check the three terms not applicable: Do not enter "B. B.," "B. F. D.," or other P. O. Address.)
Street and Number, No. _____ St. _____ Ward _____

2. RESIDENCE OF MOTHER: (a) STATE _____ (b) County _____ (c) City or Village Sullivan
(d) Township _____ (e) Road Dist. _____

3. FULL NAME OF CHILD Wanetta Ruth White Birth Mar. 3 1909
(Month, day, year)

4. Sex of Child Female 5. Twin, Triplet, or other? _____ of birth _____ (To be answered only in the case of plural births)
6. Full name Leonard White FATHER 7. Number months of pregnancy _____
8. Legitimacy? Yes _____ No _____

9. Full name Lena Davis MOTHER
10. Color or race W 11. Age at time of this birth 30 yrs. 12. Color or race W 13. Age at time of this birth 28 yrs.
14. Birthplace (city or place) Kansas 15. Birthplace (city or place) Shelby Co.
16. Occupation Brick Mason 17. Occupation _____

18. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as printer, lawyer, bookkeeper, etc. _____
19. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as seamstress, typist, nurse, diet, etc. _____
20. Industry or business in which work was done, as saw mill, quarry, bank, etc. _____
21. (a) Including this child, number of children born alive to this mother? 3
(b) Including this child, how many of these children are now living? _____
(c) How many were born dead to this mother, i.e., stillborn? _____
22. Mother's mailing address for registration notice: _____

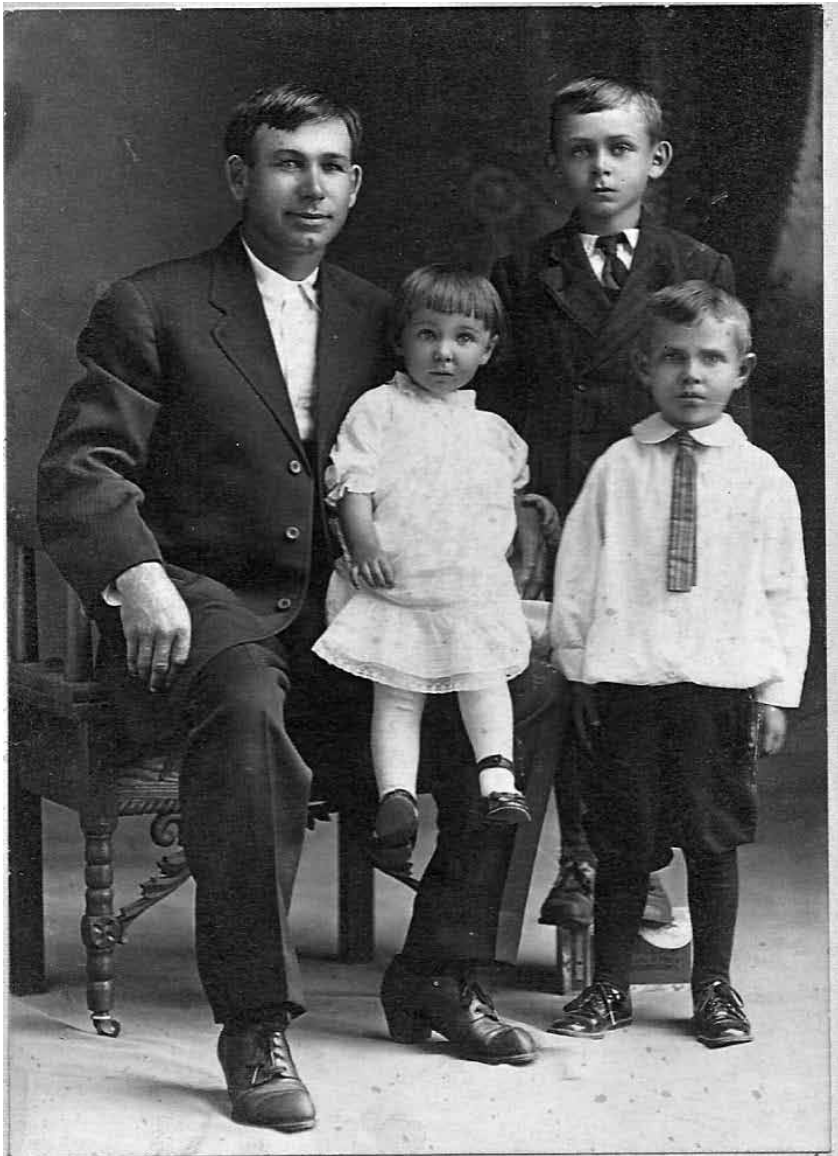
23. (a) Was a blood test for Syphilis made upon the mother of this child? _____ (b) Date blood specimen was taken _____ (c) Name of Laboratory making the test _____
NOTE: Result of the test must not be stated on this certificate.

24. I hereby certify that I attended at the birth of this child which was BORN ALIVE at _____ M. on the date stated above.
Signature W. P. Davidson Physician
Date signed 3-6-1909 Address Sullivan, Ill. Phone _____

CERTIFIED COPY OF A RECORD OF BIRTH
I HEREBY CERTIFY that the attached is a true and correct copy of the record of birth of Wanetta Ruth White made from the original certificate of such birth now on file in this office in accordance with the requiring reports of births, stillbirths and deaths in Illinois.
Signed: Rosetta H. Dawson
Official title: County Clerk
Address: Sullivan, Illinois
May 15 1940

The picture immediately below showing the three children of Leonard and Lena White – Herschel, Delbert, and Ruth – must have been taken about the time Lena died.





Lena's death certificate states that she died on June 23, 1911, of "pulmonary tuberculosis complicated by whooping cough and measles." Leonard did not buy a lot in Greenhill Cemetery, Sullivan, until July 31, 1911, paying \$25.

Ruth was then a little over 2 years old.

II

FINLEY & HATTIE PIFER

Ruth's adopting parents were Finley E. Pifer and Hattie Taylor Pifer.

Finley Edgar Pifer was a Sullivan businessman and civic leader who served two terms – 1913 and 1914 – as Mayor of Sullivan. The son of Uriah I. and Ann Pifer, he was born on January 31, 1868, and died on January 13, 1922. (Hattie Taylor was 13 days older than Finley.)

The family of Uria and Ann M. Pifer is listed in the 1880 Census for Moultrie County as follows:

Pifer, Uria I. 37 farming, From Ohio, with both parents from Pa.
Ann M. 32, "keeps house." From Illinois, mother from Ireland.
Charles O., son 14
Finley E. son 12
Clora, 8
Mary
Susan E. 5

Another son, born after the taking of the 1880 Census, was Guy Pifer. Clora may also have been known as Lucretia. (Lucretia would later become wife of Orien Weakle; Mary, or May, married Walter Delana; and Susan married Ed Bayne. *Sullivan Progress*, January 20, 1922.)

A summary of Finley's early years is contained in a news article in the *Sullivan Progress* reporting his death, January 20, 1922:

“He was a son of Israel and Anna Mary Pifer and was born, January 31, 1868, near Sullivan. He received his early education in the Stricklan school and later in the Sullivan High school. His youth was spent as a manufacturer of hand made brick and he became proficient in brick work. The scene of his labors was near the family home, better known as Pifer’s Park on the east bank of the Okaw. Relics of the old brick factory still remain on that site.”

So Uria was also known as “Israel,” and his mother as “Anna Mary.”

U.I. Pifer is listed as a subscriber to the 1881 *Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties*, along with his wife, **Anna Mary Paterson**. In that subscriber list, U.I. Pifer is identified as a “farmer and brick mfr.,” his place of “nativity” being Fairfield Co., Illinois. His wife Anna Mary was reported to be from Moultrie County. But in the 1880 Census Uriah was reported being from Ohio. Perhaps he was born in Ohio and then spent his early years in Fairfield County, Illinois.

The 1875 and 1896 Atlases of Moultrie County show that Uriah Pifer owned 20 acres of land a few miles south of Sullivan in Section 24, through which ran the Okaw – another name for the Kaskaskia.

In his memoirs, Walt Eden (son of John R. Eden) remembered:

“In later years I often heard Israel Pifer, who conducted a stand at the county fair and other public festivities as a barker for the sale of his red lemonade, announce that his stock came from ‘the Devil’s back bone, where the big snakes stay.’”
(Walter Eden, *Memoirs of a Boy Mayor, Recollections of Sullivan, Illinois from the Civil War to 1909*, at 9-10.)

Finley and his brothers and sisters grew up in the family home near Farlow, now called Allenville, southeast of Sullivan. A picture of the house appeared in the *Sullivan Progress* at the time it was torn down.

Old Israel Pifer Residence has been Torn Down; 63-yr. old Shingles still doing Service



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An old landmark was recently demolished when the old residence on the Guy Pifer place southeast of this city was torn down. This building was erected 63 years ago by the late Israel Pifer. It was very substantially built and at the time it was torn down still had its first shingle roof as covering. Mr. Pifer says that after 63 years of service most of the shingles were still in good condition.

In this house were born Guy, Mae, Susie and Lucretia Pifer. Mae is now the wife of Walter Delana, Susie is Mrs. Ed Bayne and Lucretia is Mrs. Orien Weakly.

The old horse in the picture also has quite an intimate connection with the Pifer family. She is old "Queen" and she raised a colt for every child in the Pifer family, which besides those mentioned above also included Finley and Charles.

The Pifer children and grandchildren cherish many fond memories of the old homestead and of old "Queen" and the beauty spot of nature known as Pifer's park, where each summer many go to enjoy a pleasant outing under the shade of the oaks on the hillside east of the lake.

E. A. Sharp.

Sunday school was well attend-

The Stricklan School, where Finley went to school for the lower classes, was a little west of Allenville. Fin was in the senior class of Sullivan High School in 1890-91 though apparently did not graduate.

The *Moultrie County News* for December 20, 1888, reported that Finley Pifer had recently commenced work as the "night watchman" at the Eden House, Sullivan's main hotel at the time, on the west side of the Square.

In 1889 and 1890, Finley traveled Illinois as a salesman – what he called in his letters a "patent rights man." His product was apparently some kind of medicine or liniment, which he sold by travelling around Illinois on the railroads – via both passenger and freight trains.

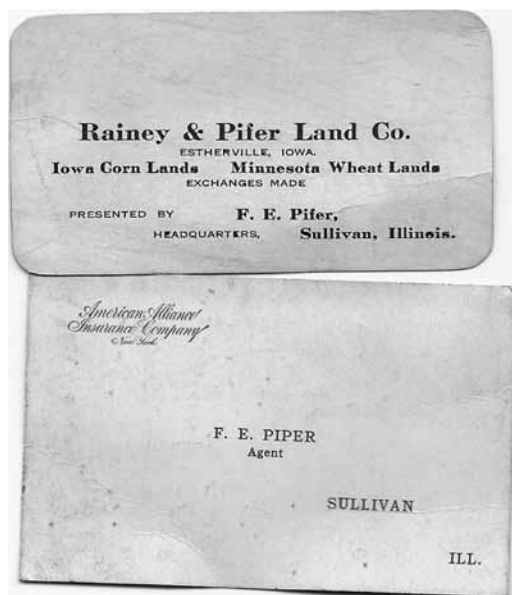
During the early 1890's he moved into the brick making business with his brother Charles, and then into construction. A business letterhead from this period shows the business as: "C.O. & F.E. Pifer, Manufacturers of Hand Mould Brick, Sullivan, Illinois." A brick kiln was located a few miles southeast of Sullivan, adjacent to an area I remember as "Pifers' Park." Fin and his brother would also set up kilns near construction projects – which was a lot simpler than hauling large quantities of heavy bricks dozens of miles in horse-drawn wagons. He used these bricks in constructing both houses and commercial buildings. One of the houses he built was his own – at 108 E. Jackson Street. It is the house that Ruth grew up in. Also, after she married Bob Martin, it's the house they lived in – and thus the house in which Philip and I grew up.



This picture, which was saved by Hattie with her letters, is unidentified, but it appears to be one of Finley Pifer. His letters to Hattie in February 1890 refer to a picture he had sent her, and one of the towns he had been in on sales visits during that period was Petersburg, where this picture was taken. In February 1890, Fin would have been 22 years old.

The news article written about Fin at the time of his death reports that he continued to live in the country while in the brick business, but gradually "became a part of this community life while still residing in the country. In 1903 he moved to Sullivan ..."

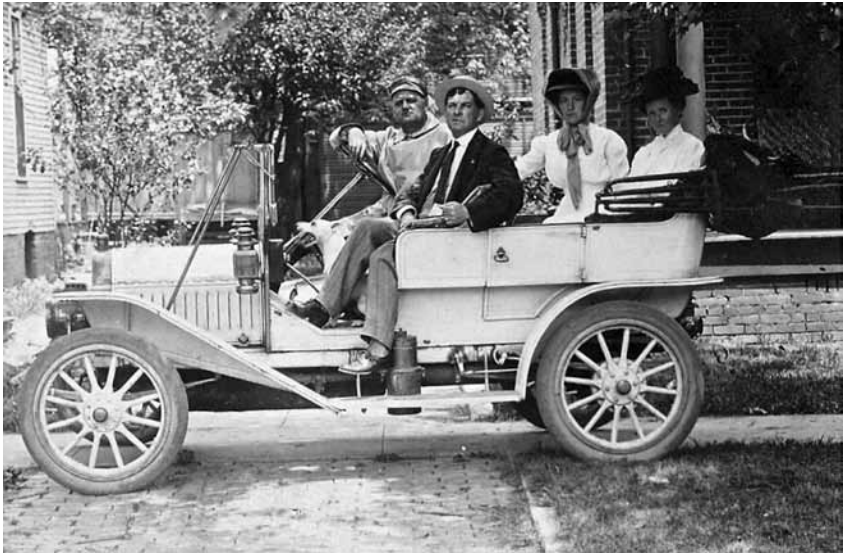
Finley's business interests broadened out over the years – into land investing (with Dr. Keel, James Rainey, and later George A. Sentel), insurance, and banking. In 1919 a Sullivan newspaper reported that he was president of the Auto Signal company of Sullivan, and was “circularizing the county with advertising matter concerning the signal which the company manufactures.” (June 6, 1919, *Sullivan Progress*.) Here are a couple of his business cards that have been preserved.



Ruth Pifer thought he might have been a Director of the Merchants and Farmers State Bank of Sullivan – a bank that failed in 1921, causing loss to depositors and stockholders. It's possible that he was a director, though he was not listed as one in a picture of the directors taken in 1915. More likely he was a stockholder and was called upon to contribute to make good on depositor losses at the time of the bank failure.

Finley and Hattie carried on a long courtship – from at least 1887 (when they were both 19) until they were married in Chicago – far from family and friends – on November 18, 1903. The letters which remain – almost entirely those from Finley to Hattie – appear later in this volume; and they disclose the few details of that courtship that are now known. Nothing in that correspondence explains why they chose to be married far from home.

Fin and Hattie had one of the first automobiles in Sullivan – a white Buick. This picture was taken about 1910.



Another picture taken a few years later shows Fin and Hattie with other members (unidentified) of the Pifer family. Hattie is standing behind Fin, who is seated at the right end of the second row.



Finley was elected Mayor of Sullivan in 1913 and served two years, and was a member of the local Chamber of Commerce in 1914. He was one of four members of a committee to select the site for a park, funded by a gift from Albert Wyman's estate. "Mayor Pifer cast the deciding vote in favor of the Titus tract where the park is located. He was always proud of this, as one of his greatest achievements." (*Sullivan Progress*, January 20, 1922.) Wyman Park was dedicated and opened September 1, 1915. (*Moultrie County Heritage*, May 1980, at 35-39.) Finley also served as president of the Sullivan High School board.

In a picture of the Chamber of Commerce taken in 1914, Finley is seated at the left end of the first row.

ublisher Sullivan, Illinois, Thursday, May 11,

Moultrie History In Pictures . .



SULLIVAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE — 1914

Sullivan has always had some kind of a civic organization thru the years, boosting business and industry for the town. Sometimes it has been known as the commercial club, and boosters club, Community club, the Chamber of Commerce, as well as other titles.

In 1914, it was the Sullivan Chamber of Commerce, and the officers and members of the board of directors posed for their picture in the Star Art Studio, operated by the late W. K. Holzmueller.

Those in the picture are: Front row, Finley Pifer, W. A. Steele, Dr. Lone Butler, and O. J. Gauger.

Back row: Dr. S. W. Johnson, P. J. Harsh, Carl Hill, E. J. Miller, Homer Wright, and George Daugherty.

Ruth Pifer later remembered that her father liked to give treats to the boys and girls at Christmas time; and an issue of the *Sullivan Progress*, December 21, 1916, confirms that tradition:

"F.E. Pifer will give his annual free show and treats to the boys and girls of Sullivan on Christmas afternoon. The program at the Globe theater will commence at 2:30 o'clock that afternoon and hundreds of children are expected to take advantage of this generosity on the part of Mr. Pifer. In addi-

tion to the regular treats, Mr. Pifer has arranged a surprise for each girl who attends. Any child from the country or surrounding community is invited to come as well as those from this city.”

In 1920, according to Fin’s obituary, the family – Fin, Hattie and Ruth – took a long trip to the West coast. Letters and postcards in their correspondence reflect their stops in Colorado, California and Oregon. Here are snapshots of Fin taken about that time.



Fin was a heavy smoker of cigars. Years later Ruth remembered that he was seldom seen without a cigar between his fingers. She also remembered that once when she was little he gave her a cigar to puff on – perhaps thinking that it might cause her never to want to smoke. (If that was his theory, it worked as to cigars, but not as to cigarettes.)

According to an article in the *Sullivan Progress* that appeared June 6, 1919, Finley’s consumption of cigars was extravagant:

“Twenty-five years ago F.E. Pifer of Sullivan bought a trial order of 15 cigars from a factory in the south. A follow-up letter from the factory induced him to buy 250 more of the cigars. A few weeks later he answered another follow-up letter with an order of one hundred and told the factory to continue sending him one hundred cigars a month until he cancelled the order.

“They have been coming each month since that time. Thirty

thousand cigars sold at from five to six cents each as a result of a few follow-up letters in direct advertising. Mr. Pifer has paid the factory more than \$1500 for cigars during that time and he is perfectly willing to let the order for a hundred a month stand as long as he cares to smoke.”

Here is one of the last pictures we have of Fin Pifer. In his left hand, he was holding a cigar.



Finley suffered a heart attack and died on January 13, 1922, when Ruth was 12 years old. The *Sullivan Progress* reported on December 30, 1921, that he had been stricken on Friday, December 23, “while playing pool with George Bieber in the Fred Brown poolroom on West Harrison Street. ... During the play he suddenly tottered to a chair and collapsed. The attack was diagnosed as heart trouble evidently caused by too much smoking, as Mr. Pifer is an inveterate smoker, seldom seen without his cigar. Mrs. Pifer was busily engaged in her church Christmas work and her whereabouts was for a time unknown. She was finally located at the Clarence Miller home, preparing Christmas gifts to be distributed by her Sunday School class.”

On January 6, 1922, the *Progress* reported that Finley had been seriously ill the week before with “uremic poisoning,” but hopes were entertained for his recovery. However, the newspaper two weeks later reported that he had died Sunday, January 13, 1922, as a result of the heart attack. It said that, “On

the night of December 23rd he was stricken with heart trouble in his poolroom uptown. . . . Friends took him home. Reports were for a time optimistic, but gradually his friends became aware that Fin Pifer was on his death bed.”

Finley had been an active Mason, so the local Masonic lodge was in charge of the funeral.



After his funeral, the weekly *Sullivan Progress* devoted their lead editorial to Finley:

“A Man Has Gone.”

“Sunday the mortal remains of Fin Pifer were laid to rest in Greenhill.

“Thus ends a useful life. Sullivan suffers an irreparable loss and all of us who knew Fin Pifer and his lovable qualities have erected to his memory in our hearts a shrine of friendship which will endure, until we too are summoned to the Great Beyond.

“Sunday while the church was filling with sorrowing friends, come to pay their last respects to all that remained of Fin Pifer, the clay from which life had departed, a friend remarked, ‘Fin had lots of friends.’”

When Finley died in 1922, he left Hattie interests in several commercial

buildings and some other real estate. The main buildings were a garage building known as Wolf's Garage on South Main Street, and the commercial Arcade Building on Harrison Street, just northwest of the Square. In his will, Fin provided that income from these assets should be used to give Ruth a good education. After Ruth attained the age of 21 years, she was to have a life interest in these two commercial buildings.

Hattie saw to it that Fin's wishes as to Ruth's education were carried out, though it wasn't easy – as may be seen below in Hattie and Ruth's correspondence.

Over the next few years, the value of – and income from – Finley's real estate interests sharply diminished. Ruth's note written late in life indicated that Fin "lost much money" as a result of the failure in 1921 of the Merchant and Farmers State Bank. The bank somehow stabilized itself and survived a few years longer, going broke on Christmas Day, 1932. It appears that other larger business losses may have been due to litigation against the Pifer estate and then the Depression that followed the crash of 1929.

* * *

Hattie Taylor was born on a farm outside Sullivan on January 18, 1868 – two weeks before Fin Pifer. Her parents were James T. and Elizabeth Taylor. The Taylor family had moved from near Mattoon to a farm in East Nelson township, east of Sullivan in 1864; and then in 1872 or 1873 they moved to Sullivan. Thus, Hattie lived about 5 years on the farm before coming to town. Her father made a living in Sullivan as a carpenter (according to the 1880 Census) and also for two years as City Marshall. Philip recalls seeing James T. Taylor's toolbox in the basement of our East Jackson Street home.

There were 10 children in the Taylor family – including Hattie – according to one of the articles written about her father at the end of his life. The family members appear in the 1870 Census as follows:

James T. Taylor, 46, farmer, with land valued at \$2580 and personal property of \$1000 – from Ky.

Eliza A., 40, keeping house
William W. 19 - works at home
George D 16 – works at home
Mack B 12
Martha 7
Frank 6
Hattie 3
James T 3/12

In the 1880 Census they appear as follows:

James T. Taylor, 54, “carpenter”
“Elyva” [perhaps a nickname] 48 keeps house
Wm. M 29 – carpenter
Martin 22 –
Mattie, 17 - blind
Frankie, 14
Hattie 12
Jas 10 son
Lee 7 son

There are inconsistencies here. James T. could not have been 46 in 1870 and 54 a decade later. George D. has left home by 1880. “Mack B” has become “Martin.” And it was Martin who was blind – not Mattie.

I always thought “Mattie” was my great aunt’s real name, but perhaps it was “Martha.” As Hattie was approaching 90, Mattie had already celebrated her 95th birthday – so the intervals in the 1880 Census are correct. Martin Taylor would later become the father of Juanita Unser, Hattie’s niece, who was close to both Hattie and Ruth Pifer. (Elizabeth Unser Thistlethwaite recently told me that both her grandfather and grandmother Taylor were blind.) The 14-year old daughter’s correct name was “Franklin Ann.”

What about our grandmother “Hattie.” Was it really “Harriet”? Or did the family shorten and simplify it to a nickname – as happened with Martha and Franklin?

The Taylor children attended public school in Sullivan. The school building was on Jackson Street on the site of the later Powers School. It was new during the late 1870’s and 1880’s when the Taylor sisters attended, construction having been completed in 1873. (Though hard to read, the year “1873” appears over the front door of the school.) It was known as the “North Side School” and housed both grade school and high school classes. The first high school class to finish in the new school graduated in 1878.



I inspected the school records in the office of the Superintendent on February 10, 2011. They show that in 1878 Mattie, Frankie and Hattie Taylor were all attending the Sullivan schools – and that in May 1878, Hattie was promoted to the 3rd grade. She was then 10 years old.

Hattie was a redhead. She did well in grade school. Four faded report cards have survived – one from 4th grade (Sept.) and three from 5th grade (Oct., Dec., and Feb.) – but none from high school.

Hattie’s deportment was highly marked and she was not tardy. Her grades were mostly in the 90’s, with a few 100’s – with fifth grade scores distinctly better than 4th grade. The subjects were the basics – reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and grammar –with geography thrown in, and, in the 5th grade, “rhetorical exercises.”

Hattie continued to move through the schools and, as shown by the antique school record, graduated from the high school in May 1887, age 19.

1879-80

SULLIVAN GRADED SCHOOL.

Report of *Hattie Taylor*
B Class *4* Grade for *April*

DEPARTMENT	90
TIMES TARDY	0
HALF DAYS ABSENT	0
READING	99
SPELLING	99
PENMANSHIP	90
ARITHMETIC	88
GEOGRAPHY	92
GRAMMAR	92
RHETORICAL EXERCISES	
86.6	

Scale, 100.

MARIA STURGES, Teacher.
 J. W. COCKENOWER, Principal.

1880-81

SULLIVAN GRADED SCHOOL.

Report of *Hattie Taylor*
B Class *5* Grade for *Oct.*

DEPARTMENT	100
TIMES TARDY	
HALF DAYS ABSENT	
READING	92
SPELLING	94
PENMANSHIP	98
ARITHMETIC	100
GEOGRAPHY	99
GRAMMAR	99 1/2
RHETORICAL EXERCISES	96 1/2

Scale, 100.

MARIA STURGES, Teacher.
 J. W. COCKENOWER, Principal.

1880-81

SULLIVAN GRADED SCHOOL.

Report of *Hattie Taylor*
A Class *5* Grade for *Dec.*

DEPARTMENT	98
TIMES TARDY	
HALF DAYS ABSENT	
READING	92
SPELLING	100
PENMANSHIP	93
ARITHMETIC	100
GEOGRAPHY	100
GRAMMAR	99
RHETORICAL EXERCISES	97 1/2

Scale, 100.

MARIA STURGES, Teacher.
 J. W. COCKENOWER, Principal.

1880-81

SULLIVAN GRADED SCHOOL.

Report of *Hattie Taylor*
A Class *5* Grade for *Feb.*

DEPARTMENT	97
TIMES TARDY	
HALF DAYS ABSENT	
READING	99
SPELLING	100
PENMANSHIP	99
ARITHMETIC	100
GEOGRAPHY	98
GRAMMAR	99
RHETORICAL EXERCISES	

Scale, 100.

MARIA STURGES, Teacher.
 J. W. COCKENOWER, Principal.

The following persons, having honorably completed the course of study of the Sullivan Schools, were awarded diplomas, May 9th 1887.

Belle Birchfield

Mary Baker

Stadie Buckalew

Mary Heskett

Rhoda Love

Floora Poland

Lavinia Shortless

Belle Shepard

Helle Tidwell

Hattie Taylor

These pupils formed an excellent class and were worthy their diplomas.

We do not know where the Taylor home was in Sullivan. A picture survives of the Taylor family on the front porch of what may have been their home. James T. Taylor is in the middle of the front row, easily distinguishable by his age and beard. Hattie appears to be the young woman seated third from the right. The picture is on the back of a postcard; the postmark is badly smudged but the card was sent in June or July, and the year appears to be 1890 when Hattie was 22 years old.



(Twenty-plus years later, in 1913, James T. Taylor was listed in the Sullivan “City Directory” as residing at 1207 Scott Street. In that same directory, the Pifers were listed as living at 1208 Jackson. Later the street numbering was changed and the home the Pifers lived in – and the one Philip and I grew up in – became 108 E. Jackson. Scott Street is the east-west street running parallel to Jackson St. and a block north. So 1207 Scott must have been the address for the little house that our Grandmother – Hattie Pifer – lived in when we were growing up. When Hattie and Fin were married, they – and later Ruth – lived in the 108 E. Jackson brick home. I think the two houses were on one connected lot, which Fin Pifer must have owned. There had been a small frame house on the 108 E. Jackson lot before Fin built the brick house; and he reportedly moved that frame house to the “back” of the lot – to the north, on Scott Street. He and Hattie must have arranged for Hattie’s father, James T. Taylor, to live there in his old age – just as our Grandmother Hattie lived in that house when she was in her 80’s and 90’s.)

After finishing high school in 1887, Hattie taught school for 15 years, according to her obituary. Initially she taught in a one-room “country school” – later in the grade school in Sullivan. Her correspondence reveals that in 1888 – the year after she graduated from high school – she was teaching in the Miller School a few miles east of Sullivan, not far from Farlow (now Allenville). Perhaps she also taught a different term in Lovington. A year later, in 1889, she was again teaching in the Miller School. A list of Moultrie teachers from the October 3, 1889 issue of the *Sullivan Progress* (Moultrie County Heritage, May 1987, at 43) lists her for Nelson Township, teaching in school “No. 7.” She was also reported to be one of the teachers who attended a teachers’ institute in Sullivan in 1890. In 1892 Hattie received a teacher’s certificate for first grade, valid in Moultrie County for two years; it was extended another two years in 1894.

In 1892 the Alumni Association of the Sullivan High School was formed, and Hattie Taylor is listed as a charter member.

By the opening of school year 1895-96, Hattie had moved on from the one-room country schools and was teaching in Sullivan – assigned to the fourth grade class in the still relatively-new “North Building.” (The South Side – or Lowe – school was built as a new high school in 1895-96, and was not used as a grade school until 1916 when the new high school near the park was built in the north part of town.) The next year Hattie taught the fifth grade class – the same students she had the year before. In an article that appeared in the newspaper, *The Sullivan Democrat*, September 9, 1899, Hattie Taylor is identified as the fifth grade teacher with 36 students.

When James T. died in 1916, his estate was probated, and the names of his surviving children appeared in the petition to probate the estate, as follows:

Martin B. Taylor, son, Lovington
Wm. M. Taylor, son, Kansas City
Martha D. Fread, daughter ["Mattie"], Sullivan
Franklin Ann Sharp, Bruce ["Frankie"]
Hattie E. Pifer, Sullivan
James T. Taylor Jr., Decatur
Lee Taylor, son, Sullivan

Frankie married John R. Sharp, and her sister Mattie married William C. Sharp. Perhaps they were brothers. In her first marriage, Mattie Sharp had two children: Gordon Sharp and Mrs. Earl Righter. Then in 1889 Mattie married again – this time Alfred J. Fread (which I remember being pronounced "Fred"). It was a second marriage for both Alfred and Mattie, and to this union were born two more children: Mrs. Clarence Miller and Mrs. Walter Collins. These relationships and names are taken from an obituary of Alfred Fread in the *Sullivan Progress*, September 3, 1920. As a child I remember our "Aunt Mattie." She lived in a tiny house a couple of blocks west of Hattie's. I do not remember when she passed away.

Frankie died May 1, 1928. Her obituary gave her name as "Frances E." and reported that she had seven children, including surviving sons Roland, Dick, Charles, and daughter Nellie (Mrs. Fred) Sampson. My very hazy memory suggests that Nellie may have baby-sat for Philip and me when we were very young.

Hattie remained single much longer than most young women of her era. She did not marry Finley Pifer until November 18, 1903 – by which time both of them were 35. For some reason, the wedding took place in Chicago – far from their respective families.



Perhaps Hattie's age – which magnified the ordinary risks of childbirth – is one reason why instead of having their own children, they decided to adopt. It does not, however, explain why they waited to adopt a child until 1914, by which time both Fin and Hattie were 47. Perhaps it was simply that the opportunity to adopt was not presented until after Ruth's mother died in 1911. Or, as Philip has suggested, perhaps they were helping out their friend Leonard White, who may have had his hands full with two sons, one in poor health, and a six-year old daughter – particularly if the daughter did not get along well with Grandmother Elizabeth White, with whom Leonard and his three children were living in Findlay.

In addition to being a school teacher, Hattie was a regular member of the Christian Church, where she taught Sunday School many years, and worked with other ladies to prepare quilts. During the First World War and its aftermath, she was the county representative of the Red Cross in dealing with the problems of returning veterans. During the Depression, probably in order to earn a little money, Hattie served as a court-appointed probation officer. She was a loyal member and leader of the women's branch of the Masons – the order of the Eastern Star. And she was a supporter of the Sullivan schools – first as a member of the Alumni Association, and later as a member of the "Friends in Council Club."

The Friends in Council Club was created by Sullivan ladies in 1903 and existed for over 25 years. (*Moultrie County Heritage*, August 1989, at 61-62.) Hattie Taylor was one of the charter members in 1903, along with Blanche Eden, our father's aunt. The club was initially divided into two "departments" – History and Music/Art. The members would come together twice a month for presentations and programs. Hattie Pifer was Club President in 1905-1906. The *Report of Moultrie County Schools*, July 1916, reproduced a picture of the "Friends" as the group existed in 1915. Hattie is seated in the front row, far right.



In January 1921 Hattie was elected President of the Ladies Aid of the Christian Church for the ensuing year.

When Finley Pifer died in early 1922, Hattie was 54 years old. Ruth was almost 13. Fin's death resulted in a major reversal in the family's economic affairs – a swing that was aggravated a few years later by the Depression. Finley had been a successful businessman, and owned at his death several commercial properties. It is impossible at this distance to disentangle his business affairs. But it is clear from their letters which appear later in this volume that Hattie and Ruth went from a position of security to poverty in the course of a few years.

Part of this may have been due to claims against the Pifer estate, though one such claim, brought on behalf of a couple named Seass, apparently ended successfully for the Pifers. In late May or early June 1923, as reported in the *Sullivan Progress* on June 5, 1923, the Seasses filed suit against the estate and Hattie in state court asking for an accounting and settlement, claiming an interest in the Arcade building and annex – commercial buildings located a block northwest of the Square built and managed by Fin Pifer. The claim was based on events that occurred in 1899, and was essentially that the Seasses and Fin Pifer were in business together, and that the complainants had an ownership interest in the property. The plaintiffs' claim was based on apparently forged documents and oral evidence from Mrs. Seass about the alleged business relationship. (*Sullivan Progress*, September 14, 1928.) Eventually, the Master in Chancery who heard the case concluded that although they had had such an interest when the buildings were built, in a 1917 settlement Fin Pifer had in effect bought out the Seasses' interest. (*Sullivan Progress*, December 14, 1928.) The Master's report was reportedly submitted to the circuit court for confirmation. No report has been found as to the results of that court review. Perhaps the Seasses abandoned their claims. Or perhaps they were settled. In a letter to Ruth from one of her friends, August 30, 1930, the writer states that he is glad you and your Mother "have finally got that lawsuit settled...."

In at least one other instance, Hattie was not so fortunate. Her letter to Ruth of February 24, 1932, reports the result of one lawsuit in which she "got it socked to me pretty hard – have to pay interest at 6% for ten years on nearly \$600. Don't know where on earth it is coming from." (Letter from Hattie to Ruth, February 24, 1932.)

Despite the economic pressures reflected in the letters exchanged by Hattie and Ruth during this period, Hattie somehow saw to it that Ruth was able to complete her university education – first at the University of Illinois and then, for her senior year, at the University of Arizona.



Hattie Pifer

During the 1940's and thereafter when Philip and I were growing up, Hattie Pifer lived in the small frame house to the north of our larger brick family home. Behind her little house, Hattie kept a small kitchen garden of vegetables. Nearby she had a peach tree. She baked wonderful fruit pies. She did not drive a car, though she was of course willing to ride in one. She regularly walked the several blocks to downtown Sullivan to do her shopping, and then carried her groceries and other purchases home. On Sunday mornings, except in the worst

weather, Hattie would walk the several blocks to and from Church with Philip and me in tow. Other days she made quilts at the Church or did embroidery or needle-point. When she was an old lady, the index fingers of both her hands were bent away from the thumbs at an approximate 45 degree angle – the result of pressure she put on the needles over many decades of quilting and knitting.

Hattie's little house was heated by a small coal burner in her living room; eventually it was replaced by an oil burner. She lived in the small house year round, moving in with us only when winter became too cold. During the 1940's when I first remember her house, there was no indoor plumbing. She pumped water into her kitchen sink using a hand pump. Her toilet facilities were in an "outhouse" in her back yard. At some point – perhaps around 1950 – her house was upgraded to include indoor plumbing.

Hattie looked out for her two grandsons – baby-sat for them, made sure they had peaches and plenty of fresh pies, and took them to church and to the movies.

In 1958, as Hattie approached her 90th birthday, the Sullivan and Decatur newspapers published articles about her:

SULLIVAN, ILLINOIS, THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 1958 10c PER C


90th Birthday for Hattie Pifer

Mrs. Hattie Pifer will celebrate her ninetieth birthday on Saturday, Jan. 18. An open house will be held in her honor on Saturday afternoon from three o'clock to five o'clock in the home of her daughter, Mrs. Robert Martin, at 108 E. Jackson st.

Since Mrs. Pifer has lived all of her life in Moultrie county and the last 85 years in Sullivan, she is well known to the community. Many people in the county will remember going to school to Mrs. Pifer during her 15 years of teaching in and near Sullivan. Others will remember the years she served as probation officer and the years she was active in welfare work in the community.

She was born near Coles, the daughter of James T. and Elizabeth Taylor, and has six brothers and three sisters. Her sister, Mrs. Mattie Fread, recently celebrated her ninety-fifth birthday. Her husband, Finley E. Pifer, died in 1923.

Mrs. Pifer is the oldest active member of the First Christian church, where she taught Sunday school classes for 50 years. She has worked more than 50 years in the Ladies' Aid society. She goes



MRS. HATTIE PIFER

She served as president three years later, and is at present the clubs parliamentary.

Mrs. Pifer has been active in Eastern Star for 67 years and served as Worthy matron in 1905. She is a member of the Past Worthy Matrons club and was its first president when it was organized here 25 years ago.

In addition to two or three books a week, she reads magazines and several newspapers. She has always shown great interest in local and national affairs.

With all of her many interests, Mrs. Pifer lives alone and enjoys sewing and cooking, preferring cooking to any other activity.

She has always been ready on short notice to assist in any club, lodge, or church dinner. Her summertime activities include a vegetable garden and flowers.

When it was suggested there should be something special to honor her ninetieth birthday, Mrs. Pifer said, "I don't see that there is anything so special about being 90."

Mrs. Pifer's former students, friends, and neighbors are invited to the open house.

Mrs. Pifer Busy as She Nears 90

Sullivan, Jan. 11 (Staff)

Baking is still one of Mrs. Hattie Pifer's interests. She will be 90 years old next Saturday—and lives alone. The many pies and cakes which come from her kitchen usually end up on the table of a neighbor, or more often, at the home of her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Martin and their teen-age sons, Eden and Phillip.

Mrs. Pifer's angel food cakes are most popular with the boys but one of her favorites is a white hickory nut cake.

Her recipe for this cake is:

- ½ cup butter
- 1½ cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup water
- 2 cups cake flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup hickory nut kernels chopped.

Whites of 4 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder

Cream butter and sugar well. Add flour and water alternately and salt. Fold in well beaten egg whites and baking powder until well mixed. Sprinkle nut meats with a little water and dust with flour. Add these last to the batter. Bake in two well greased layer pans in a moderate (350) oven.

Mrs. Pifer's favorite frosting for this cake is a 3-minute never-fail concoction:

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 egg whites
- 3 tablespoons water
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cream tartar

Mix all ingredients in top of double boiler and beat with rotary beater over hot or boiling water for 3 minutes.

Mrs. Pifer's enthusiasm for living shows in her attractive home which she keeps herself. She is concerned with the present more than the past and takes great pleasure in her grandsons. They are students in the Sullivan High School.

She has lived in Sullivan since she was 5 years old and was born near Coles. She is the widow of Finley E. Pifer, who built many of Sullivan's earlier homes. She has one living sister, Mrs. Mattie Hread, who celebrated her 95th birthday last fall.

Mrs. Pifer is not a worrier. The days are not long enough to do all



Mrs. Hattie Pifer who will be 90 next Saturday has many interests.



TALK ON SCOTLAND FOR SULLIVAN CLUB

Sullivan, Jan. 11 (Special)

Sullivan Junior Woman's Club will meet at 7:30 p. m. Monday in the Masonic Temple dining room.

Mrs. Russell Davis, formerly of Scotland and now an American citizen, will be the speaker.

The chairman of the hostess committee is Mrs. Marion Spencer.

Newtowners Meet Tuesday

Newtowners Club will meet for dessert-bridge and canasta at 8 p. m. Tuesday in the St. Nicholas Hotel.

and a daughter, Verne Jacobs and Mrs. Tom Bilyeu of Mowqua. There are three grandchildren.

verages reading three books a week from the Sullivan library, plus magazines, two daily papers (both Decatur) and two weekly papers.

At present she is busy with petit-point embroidery and has done several pieces of needlepoint. She is piecing a flower garden quilt of the tiny block variety and quilts twice a week with her church group. She does much of the intricate binding of the quilts by hand.

Of all her activities she probably loves her church the best. She attends regularly every Sunday and sits in a pew which she shares with a group of teen-age boys. This year she holds the honor of being the "Church Mother of the Year".

She has been a continuous active member of the Sullivan Woman's Club since it was founded 55 years ago. She is past president of the club and has been club parliamentarian for several years.

Her activities in Eastern Star began 67 years ago. She served as worthy matron and was the first president of the Worthy Matrons Club which is now 25 years old.

Her services are in demand at lodge and church dinners because of her cooking talent.

Mrs. Pifer remains youthful in mind, appearance and actions. She walks to and from town regularly and to many of her meetings. She is a companion to her grandsons often attending movies, church and basketball games with them and counseling them in many ways. Her favorite TV programs are sports and news casts.

Indoor activities keep Mrs. Pifer busy in the winter. During the summer she maintains a vegetable and flower garden so she can get her exercise.

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Hattie broke her hip in her mid 90's. She recovered well enough to walk with the help of a walker, and enjoyed taking rides in the automobile. The frailties of old age made it necessary for her to be in a nursing home in her later years.

Hattie Pifer died August 18, 1967, five months shy of 100.



Hattie's father was **James T. Taylor** (born March 27, 1825; died February 20, 1916). Her mother was **Elizabeth A. Dubler** (born February 18, 1831; died December 8, 1895). Both were from Bourbon County, Kentucky.

James T. Taylor was part of a large family. Excerpts from a Taylor Family Bible that had been in the possession of Mrs. Leone Miller (a daughter of Mattie Taylor Fread) were summarized in an issue of *Moultrie County Heritage*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (August 1980), at p. 82:

“Mathew” Taylor, born June 22, 1788 – died April 12, 1849

Mary “Kimbrow” Taylor, born December 22, 1795, died “Aept” 21, 1872

Their children were:

Benjamin B. Taylor, born March 30, 1812, died August 7, 1887

Sidda W. Taylor, born May 4, 1813, died February 2, 1892

John B. Taylor, born December 22, 1816, died March 25, 1898

Elizabeth A. Taylor, born January 24, 1819, died March 6, 1880

William B. Taylor, born March 1, 1821, died March 18, 1900

Matthew S. Taylor, born March 25, 1823, died September 14, 1894

James T. Taylor, born March 27, 1825, died February 20, 1916

Joseph B. Taylor, born May 15, 1828, died January 18, 1902

George R. Taylor, born July 23, 1830, died April 29, 1895

Martha [Martin?] B. Taylor, born December 28, 1833, died 1895

Robert M. Taylor, born January 12, 1835, died January 5, 1891

Mary Jane Taylor, born October 3, 1837, died May 19, 1880.

One report has it that Matthew Taylor, the father of this brood, died in 1849 in Kentucky. The “old Millersburg Cemetery” reports that Matthew Taylor, who died April 12, 1849, age 60 years, was buried there. Also buried there is James V. Taylor, b. June 29, 1853, died January 17, 1865, “son of J.L. and N. H. Taylor.”

Hattie's mother, **Elizabeth A. Dubler**, was born February 18, 1831, in Hart, Kentucky; she died December 9, 1895, Moultrie County, Illinois. Her parents were:

William S. Dubler ca 1802 – 1859 Pa – Bourbon Co. Ky

Mariah – unknown ca 1808 Pa – Shelby Co. Il?

This William “Dubler” – from Pennsylvania – may have been have the son of Fredk or “Fredt” “Deibler,” who, according to the 1790 census, lived in Cocalico, Lancaster, Pa.

Another report about the Dublers discloses as follows:

Elizabeth’s father was “William S.” or possibly “William H.” Dubler, b. 1802, d. 1859? In the 1850 census, he is listed as a tailor, 48 years old, from Pennsylvania.

Elizabeth’s mother was “Mariah,” b. 1808, d, 1880. In the 1850 census, she was shown as 42 years old, also from Pennsylvania.

Their children were:

1. **Elizabeth A.**, b. Feb 18, 1831, Hart, Ky. – married James T. Taylor [February 12, 1850 in Bourbon County Ky [died 1895]
2. Dr. William H. Dubler, b 1830, Hart Kentucky, d March 14, 1883, Windsor, 1850 census – tailor ; then school teacher; then physician; Shelby County married Margaret Harrison, b. 1830. After the Dr’s death, she moved to Winfield, Kansas.
 - a. Jessie Dubler b. 1869
 - b. Thomas Dubler, b. 1870
 - c. Ellen Dubler, 1872
 - d. Frederick Dubler, b. 1875
3. Ellen M. Dubler, 1836 born Ky
4. Thomas R. Dubler, b. 1837, born Kentucky, died oct 16, 1869, Moultrie.
5. Martha H. b. 1839
6. Isaac J. Dubler, b. 1842, born in Urbana, Champaign, Ohio; died Edgar Ill.; tailor, born Ky
7. James B. Dubler, b. 1842, born Bourbon, Ky died Dec 31, 1881 in

Terre Haute (lived in Windsor) painter in 1860; and 1870. Buried in Windsor.

Several members of this Dubler family came to the Moultrie County area about the same time, in the 1850's. In his reminiscences, James L. Turner of Windsor recalled that: "William H. Dubler walked from Kentucky to Illinois in 1858, and landed at my father's. My father was a school director and hired Dubler to teach school at Prairie district. Dubler thought he had T. B. and he got up at 4:00 o'clock, walked a mile and a half to school, started the fire, then walked back to my father's where he boarded, for breakfast. The next spring he taught in Windsor and began the study of medicine with Dr. Dunnington." ... Dr. Dubler became a widely known physician. He is buried in Windsor cemetery. *Windsor Gazette*, July 21, 1931.

* * *

James T. Taylor and Elizabeth Dubler were married in 1850 in Bourbon County, Kentucky, a few years before they moved north in March 1855. It is not surprising that other members of their two families came to the same general area.

In 1860 James T. Taylor was 35 years old. The 1860 Census for Moultrie County shows two other Taylor heads of families in Sullivan: Martin B. Taylor, age 27, and Matthew Taylor, age 37. Like James T., Martin and Matthew were from Kentucky.

But what makes this census report intriguing is that living with Martin B. Taylor, 27, physician, from Kentucky, are the following:

Mary E.	17	
Mary K.	65	"Mother" from Kentucky
Joseph B.	32	Farmer from Kentucky
George R.	29	Farmer from Kentucky
Robert M.	26	Merchant Clerk from Kentucky

The family Bible quoted above shows that Joseph, George and Robert were brothers of James T. The census ages "fit" closely with the birthdates in the Bible.

And on a nearby property lived Matthew Taylor, age 37, farmer, from Kentucky, with his wife Mary E., age 27, from Kentucky. Matthew is another brother of James T., and at age 37 he would have been born in 1823 – the age reported for the "Matthew" listed in the Taylor family Bible above.

So these men – Joseph, George, Robert, Matthew, and Martin – are all

brothers of James T., who was 35 years old in 1860. In 1860 James T. was still living in nearby Mattoon, but he moved to a farm in Moultrie County in 1864, and moved into Sullivan in 1873. The “Mother” living with Martin and other Taylor sons in 1860 was “Mary K.” – almost certainly the mother of James T. Taylor. The census report further specifies that she was born in 1795 – which means that in 1860 she would have been 65 – the age reported for “Mary K.”

James T. Taylor was a well-known figure in Sullivan and Moultrie County. Two long articles were published about him – the first in 1908 on the occasion of his 83rd birthday, and the second in 1916 on the occasion of his death. I reproduce them here.

**The Sullivan Democrat, March 26, 1908,
Grand Old Man
James T. Taylor reaches his 83rd Milestone**

We asked him to furnish *The Democrat* with a sketch of his life and he prepared it in his own hand-writing, and we can truthfully say that it came to us in better shape than most copy comes to a newspaper office. His modesty restrained him from writing much that is to his credit that his fellow townsmen know.

He has been a faithful and consistent member of the Christian church since 1841. He has been a Mason since 1849, having taken the Blue Lodge, Chapter and Council degrees.

In his church and lodge he is equally loyal and faithful.

He served as supervisor of East Nelson township for three years, being the first supervisor of that township. He was city marshal of Sullivan two years.

He fought in the victorious American army from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico and had a part in the victory that added to this republic, the territory that is now California, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and part of Colorado and Texas. Of his part in the Mexican war he speaks with becoming modesty. He is certainly a grand old man and his innumerable friends hope to see him enjoy yet many more years of health and happiness.

The sketch prepared by Mr. Taylor is as follows:

“The subject of this short sketch was born March 27, 1825, near Millersburg, Bourbon county, and state of Kentucky, and lived within two miles of where I was born, until I was 29 years old. My first trip away from home was a 40-mile trip away and took three days to make. I was glad to get back to Mother. My next trip was 80 miles and took about ten days to make. I began to think I was a traveler. Afterwards I made five or six trips on the same line.

“At the age of 19 I drove a six-horse team from Kentucky to South Carolina, laden with bacon. It took about six weeks to make the trip. My next trip was to

Missouri in 1846-47, where I visited about four months with my grandmother, Jane Baker, who was living there at the that time.

“Early in 1847 I volunteered in Bourbon County, Ky., for five years or during the war with Mexico. We were with Gen. Scott from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico. I volunteered in Co. H, 3rd Reg. Ky. Vol. Inf., commanded by Captain. Wm E. Simms, 1st Lieut. P.P. Bramblet; 2nd Lieut, C.G. Campbell. Officers of the regiment were Manlius V. Thompson, Col. Tom Crittenden, and last but not least, Major John C. Breckenridge.

“Peace was made and we landed home about 25th of August, 1848.

“We endured a great many hardships. More died from disease than were killed by Mexican bullets. We killed four of them where they killed one of the Americans. They shot from the hip, we from the shoulder.

“On the 12th day of February 1850, I was married in Bourbon county, Ky., to Miss Elizabeth A. Dubler, who departed life December 9, 1895. Ten children were the issue, three of them are dead. We moved to Illinois, March 10, 1855. At that time, Mattoon had one house in it and no railroad. On May 15, the great lot sale took place. After that a town sprung up like a mushroom. In 1860 there were about 2000 inhabitants. I was the first city marshall and it was a cracker-jack from start to finish, and has held its own ever since, notwithstanding there has always been a large majority of good citizens in the town.

“I was an invalid the entire time of the Civil War. I moved to Mattoon in 1857 and lived there until March, 1864. I moved on a farm in Moultrie county, and moved to Sullivan in 1873, where I have lived ever since. I lost my wife December 9, 1895; the greatest calamity that ever befell me.

James Thomas Taylor.”

SULLIVAN DEMOCRAT

LIVAN, MOULTRIE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1884

GRAND OLD MAN

James T. Taylor Reaches His 83rd Mile Stone.

We have the pleasure of presenting to our readers this week a picture and short sketch of James T. Taylor, Sr., one of the oldest and most esteemed citizens of this city and county. Tomorrow he will be 83 years old, but he is still hale and hearty, stands erect, hears well, and can read without glasses. We asked him to furnish The Democrat with a sketch of his life and he prepared it in his own hand-writing, and we can truthfully say that it came to us in better shape than most copy comes



to a newspaper office. His modesty restrained him from writing much that is to his credit that his fellow townsmen know.

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"JAMES THOMAS TAYLOR."
From Goodwell, Okla.

The following letter from John W. Casler will interest many of our readers:

Goodwell, Okla., March 21, '08.
Editor Sullivan Democrat and Friends:—Find enclosed \$2.00—on year's subscription for Ed Cooley and one for myself. We are having fine weather here and very little sickness in our community. I just finished seeding 40 acres of oats and 100 of corn. A severe frost has set in since some heavier than we have had here.

In his church and lodges he is equally loyal and faithful.

He served as supervisor of East Nelson township for three years, being the first supervisor of that township. He was city marshal of Sullivan two years.

He fought in the victorious American army from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico and had a part in the territory that is now California, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and part of Colorado and Texas. Of his part in the Mexican war he speaks with becoming modesty. He is certainly a grand old man and his innumerable friends hope to see him enjoy yet many more years of health and happiness.

The sketch prepared by Mr. Taylor is as follows:

"The subject of this short sketch was born March 27, 1825, near Millersburg, Bourbon county, and state of Kentucky, and lived within two miles of where I was born, until I was 29 years old. My first trip away from home was a 40-mile trip away and took three days to make. I was glad to get back to mother. My next trip was 80 miles and took about ten days to make. I began to think I was a traveler. Afterwards I made five or six trips on the same line.

"At the age of 19 I drove a six-horse team from Kentucky to South Carolina, laden with bacon. It took about six weeks to make the trip. My next trip was to Missouri in 1846-'47, where I visited about four months with my grandmother, Jane Baker, who was living there at that time.

"Early in 1847 I volunteered in Bourbon county, Ky., for five years or during the war with Mexico. We were with Gen. Scott from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico. I volunteered in Co. H, 3rd Reg. Ky. Vol. Inf., commanded by Capt. Wm. E. Simms; 1st Lieut. P. P. Bramblet; 2nd Lieut. C. G. Campbell. Officers of the regiment were Manlius V. Thompson, Col. Tom Crittenden, and last but not least, Major John C. Brackenridge.

"Peace was made and we landed home about 25th of August, 1848.

"We endured a great many hard-

The Sullivan Progress, February 24, 1916

Oldest Man in County Dies

Oldest Man in County Dies

James T. Taylor, 91, the oldest citizen of Moultrie County, Mexican war veteran and one of the oldest Masons in the state, died in his home here Monday morning. For several weeks he had gradually been growing weaker, following a severe illness suffered several months ago.

"The life of James Taylor was one of activity because of his remarkable vitality. The veteran was a conspicuous figure on the city streets until a few months ago when he was the victim of an attack of pneumonia. His vitality baffled the attending physicians who gave up hope of his recovery. However, the illness was too great a strain and he never fully recovered his strength.

"Mr. Taylor was a member of the Christian church of this city and was always in attendance at the morning church services on Sunday when his health permitted. He was also a member of Sullivan Lodge No. 764, A.F. and A.M., Sullivan Chapter, No. 158 Royal Arch Masons, a member of the Sullivan Council Royal and Select Masters and also a member of Gil W. Barnard commandery, also of this city. He was one of the few Mexican war veterans, having enlisted in a Kentucky regiment.

"Mr. Taylor leaves four sons and three daughters. They are William Taylor of Kansas City; Mart Taylor of Lovington; James T. Taylor Jr. of Decatur; Lee Taylor of this city; Mrs. John Sharp of Bruce; Mrs. A.J. Fread and Mrs. F.E. Pifer, both of this city.

"Funeral services were conducted at the Christian church Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 by Rev. W. B. Hopper. Interment at Greenhill cemetery.

"He was born in Bourbon County, Ky., in a log cabin on March 27, 1825, and lived for 29 years within one mile and a half of the place where he was born. He was married there to Miss Elizabeth Dubler in 1850 and moved to Old Richmond in Coles County near Mattoon, in the year of 1855. He tells us at that time Mattoon had only one house, which a man by name of Dan Kenny had dragged from Kickapoo with six yoke of cattle. Mr. Taylor lived at Old Richmond until he built a house in Mattoon. Mattoon started to grow about this time because of the railroad construction. The Essex house was one of the buildings that went up about that time, either 1861 or 1862. Uncle Jim lived in Mattoon eight years. Part of his time he was city marshal and could tell interesting happenings by the hour about his experiences during those years. He said the majority of Mattoon citizens were might good people then, but that there were a few 'crackeracking bad ones.' A whiskey house stood where the Dole

house now is, and it used to keep Uncle Jim busy stopping fights there. There were four murders while he was marshal.

“One interesting incident in his life while he was marshal was a ruse played upon him by some ‘toughs.’ He was trying to clean up the vice district and arrested a young girl in one of his raids. She furnished good bail and her hearing was postponed for a while. The night officer, then, who apparently was not in sympathy with the betterment movement, arranged a night trial for the girl, unknown to Mr. Taylor. Without his evidence, she was acquitted. Then she turned tables and had Uncle Jim arrested for false imprisonment. He was tried but the Justice ruled in his favor and ordered an acquittal.

“He was one of the first thirteen organizers of the Christian church in Mattoon and was a charter member of the Mattoon Masonic lodge.

“He first saw the village of Sullivan in 1854 and says it was about the size of Bruce then. There was one brick house, the one recently torn down, by Walter Wright, and the stone walk in the city amounted to only fifty feet. Around the court house there was a shabby board walk and a board fence to keep the cows out. This is the picture of Sullivan on a visit before he moved here.

“In 1864 he left Mattoon and moved to a farm in East Nelson township and was the first supervisor that that township had. East Nelson was a broad prairie then with only a few settlers along the edge of the river timber. Mr. Taylor lived in East Nelson township for seven years and then moved to Sullivan in 1872.

“After coming to Sullivan he was appointed city marshal and served two years. Sullivan wasn’t used to having temperance men run the police force and the saloon and other rough elements swore that Jim Taylor shouldn’t do so. But by the time he had worked over a few of the bad characters in no gentle manner, his enemies backed up and followed his dictates.

“Mr. Taylor was one of the first directors of the old P.D.& E. railroad company, now a line of the Illinois Central. He was appointed by the legislature. He had been a Mason since 1849, having joined in Williamsburg, Ky. He was a constant subscriber of the Progress for over fifty one years.

“When asked about his relation with Abraham Lincoln, Mr. Taylor once said he had met him twice. The first time he came over from Mattoon to hear the Lincoln and Douglas debate. We asked him if he heard Lincoln speak and he replied, ‘No, I was more interested in Douglas. I heard him talk.’ Then he started talking about the day when both Lincoln and Douglas were in Sullivan. He said that he went with about a thousand others, mostly on horse back, out to about where the Masonic Home now stands, and met Douglas to escort him into town. The Republicans met Lincoln out about where Bliss Shuman now lives. He told about how the democrats were getting ready to have their meeting when Republicans started to march by beating on tin pans. His eyes

flared up and he said as though still have angered, ‘Now, they had no right to do that.’

“After Lincoln had been elected president, Mr. Taylor again saw him in Mattoon. Lincoln had stopped off there while on his way to make his last visit to his step-mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Jim said that a monstrous crowd was at the station to see the president. Lincoln got off the train in company with Thomas Marshal, who was then a prominent banker in Charleston. As they elbowed their way through the crowd to reach the Essex House, Mr. Taylor says he remembers that Lincoln was holding Marshal’s coat tail so he could keep up with him. But he lost his hold on the coat, and Uncle Jim said: ‘I heard Abe say, in his deep loud voice, ‘Hold on there, Tom, I’m loose from you.’

“Back before Mr. Taylor left Kentucky the Mexican war broke out and he enlisted in Co. H., 3rd Reg. Vol. for a term of five years. They were organized in Paris, Ky., and just before they left, Mr. Taylor’s father came up to him and fighting to keep back the tears said, ‘My son, keep good company, don’t drink, and don’t get shot in the back.’ His father was too overcome to say more, but his son said now that all those years that that was the shortest and best piece of advice that he had ever received. His service in the war was on Scott’s line from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico. He was in the city of Mexico eight months. Although his company was enlisted for five years, the war lasted only fifteen months, so at the end of that time they were sent back to Louisville, Ky., and discharged.

“When the civil war broke out, he was offered a Colonelcy if he would again take up arms, but he was unable to accept because a bayonet wound received in the Mexican war made him unable to ride a horse.

“Mr. Taylor was the seventh son of a family of fourteen children; ten boys and four girls. Several of his brothers, John D., R.V., Joe B., and George R. lived for a time in Whitley township. Three of them, Joe, M.S., and George died while living there and were buried in the Smyser cemetery. [The obituary – based on what the newspaper writer was no doubt told by Taylor survivors – got the names of the Taylors who stayed in and around Sullivan right, but misstated the names of those who left.]

“Ten children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, seven of whom, all married, are still living. Mrs. Taylor died in 1895.

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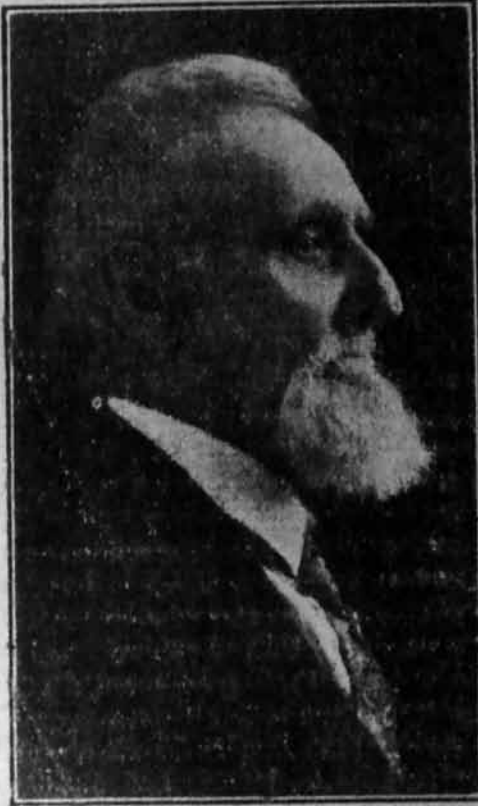
URSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1916.

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James T. Taylor



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Another picture of James T. Taylor appears below. He is standing in the middle of the back row. Seated in front of him and to his left is John R. Eden (father of the editor's Grandmother Rose Eden Martin).

Two great-grandfather's – both from Kentucky, both of whom raised their families in Sullivan. Both served their communities and their country. Their daughters – Hattie and Rose –shaped the lives not only of their children but also their grateful grandchildren.



III

HATTIE'S LETTERS

May 28, 1884

[Hattie was born January 18, 1868 – so in 1884 she was 16, in high school.]

Posted Williamsburg, Ill.

No envelope.

Miss Taylor

Dear Miss. After consideration of what your Brother related to me this eve in regard to wriding in the rear of the vehicle in which we spoke of at Sullivan, I will try to express my feeble congloberated thoughts in a few scribbled lines. I had a lively time by riding in the rear the time we had at the party was immense.

When we was takeing in the sweet meets I proposed to your Brother to blow out the lights and by the by he second the motion. So I blowed it out (Laughter). Excuse haste.

As the clock is drawing nine, I'll close for the time.

Resp.
Jackson White

* * *

April 22 [no year]
Addressed to Miss Taylor, Moultrie Co. Ill.

Mr. Lewis A. Richardson presents his respects to Miss Taylor and asks the pleasure of her company to Church tonight, Meritt School house, April 22.

[The *History of Moultrie County Schools*, by Vera Slover, shows that the Meritt school was northeast of Sullivan, just west of Cadwell. (page 8).]

* * *

February 12, 1885
Posted Cushman, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear folks,

This leaves us all up. The baby is looking well and hearty. I am almost sick with a bad cold and sore throat. Mattie [Hattie's sister] is well.

Yours truly,
W.C. Sharp

Address City Marshal
 Sullivan, Illinois
 Moultrie County

The baby doesn't throw up her milk any more. Hasn't since she was sick. I dreamed of you and ma last night coming out here to see the baby.

I am afraid Walter is going to be sick. He doesn't complain much but then he never does that.

Mattie

* * *

January 17, 1887 [Written the day before Hattie's 19th birthday. She graduated from high school in May of that year.]

Farlow, Ill.
Hattie

Kind friend: -

Please may I have the pleasure of taking you to that sleigh-ride tonight. We will go to Palmyria School house to an entertainment if it is agreeable with you.

Yours Resp.
Finley Pifer

Answer by bearer.

[Farlow was a little settlement that had several names over time. See *The Whitley Point Record Book*, ed. Eden Martin, 1996, at pp. 25-27. "Old Nelson" was the first village in the county, and the first place where county courts were held. Eventually a new village – "East Nelson" – was located about a half mile east of the old location. After the county seat was shifted to Sullivan, the old Nelson settlement died out. When the railroad came through, a station and post-office named Farlow were established there, named after the brothers who kept the store and blacksmith shop. The Nelson/Farlow settlement declined further after Allenville was established nearby in the 1890's, and disappeared altogether when the Federal Government established a conservation area around Lake Shelbyville.]

[Palmyra was the name of a school located in the southwest corner of East Nelson Township, near Bruce.]

* * *

10-87
Farlow, Ill.

Miss Hattie Taylor,
Kind friend:

Please may I have the pleasure of taking you to church tomorrow night.
Answer by bearer.

Yours Respectfully,
Finley Pifer

* * *

Nov. 2, 1887
Farlow, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor

Miss Hattie Taylor:-

Please may I have the pleasure of your company tomorrow night to go to spelling school at the Palmyria school-house, as it is my understanding there is to be spelling. If there is no spelling, there is a lecture at the Opera-house. We can go there if you desire. Please leave a note in the Post Office at Farlow for me tomorrow.

Yours Resp.
Finley Pifer

PS. I will know whether there is spelling or not before I come.

RSVP

* * *

November 15, 1887
Posted Farlow, Ill
Addressed to: Miss Hattie Taylor, Farlow, Ill.

Hattie:-

Please may I have the pleasure of taking you to church at Bruce tomorrow night, November 16th A.D. 1887 or to an entertainment at the Miller School house. Either place you would rather go will suit me.

Yours Resp.
Fin P.

P.S. you need not answer if you desire to go. If not please answer by leaving a letter at the office hear. "Farlow."

F.E.P.

* * *

January 4, 1888
Posted Cushman
No envelope

Dear Hattie, -

As 'brother' is going over this evening I thought I would write you a few lines. I am nearly sick today. Got the 'backache,' you know. [Probably a euphemism to describe a condition her sister would understand.] Grandpa is not well either but the rest are well as common.

We looked for pa and ma all last week but they didn't show their old pates. Grandpa said that he wished pa would come to talk. He always could have such a good talk with him.

We are alone now. Al stays at home with his mother. I don't care a continental.

Hattie, are you going to have a big dinner the last day of Barnes' school? His school closes in about three weeks and some days. If you close your school before that you and Frank must come out and go with me to the dinner. How is Wayne Rob.? And do they know for certain what ails him? Gordon bothers me so that I can hardly write. He has torn this paper.

Mary Rhodes' little Virge is very sick. They didn't think that he would live last week.

I must hurry as I want to do my hair up. Ahem!!

Write back by return mail, seal in an old envelope if you can find one as they read it down to Father's house, Frank.

Mattie

I will send you some paper to scribble me a few words.

* * *

[Another note from Mattie, undated but preserved in the same envelope as the one preceding.]

Sunday at home

Dear Hattie.

I thank you very much for ____ my tie as that is what I wanted out of it. I was glad to hear that you are all right again. I can't come this evening. Would like to but have no way of coming. Isn't that too bad? There is baptizing out

there this evening. Come out and go.

How is sleepy Fin? Did Fin tell you about me inviting him to come and see us? You must come out when your school closes and we will go fishing. I went fishing the other day and the fish bit so that they came very near taking my line.

Ta Ta
Mattie

[“... when your school closes ...” This reference and the similar one in the January 4 letter show that Hattie was teaching in January 1888. Since earlier mail had been addressed to her at Farlow, it was surely the nearby Miller School. See more below.]

* * *

1-19-1888

Hattie:-

I am a going to town to-night. If your folks don't come after you, stay down and I will take you home. I will be there by 6 if I can.

Yours,
Fin

* * *

1-31-1888

Hattie:-

I will be after you, if agreeable, tonight to take you to a music party not far from Nelson.

Yours,
Resp.
Fin

P.S. excuse pencil

No, R.S.V.P. by _____ if a school is going on and you have not time to write, you can send word by the _____

* * *

Jan. 31, 1888

Sullivan

Addressed to Hattie Taylor, Farlow, Illinois

Dear Sister [Hattie]

We received your letter all right and pa got it cashed, and paid Wyman. I will send you a \$1 Bill. Pa said we couldn't send you a quarter in a letter handy. I think you will have a nice buggy ride in the mud, with Finny, I suppose, don't have a runaway. I was invited to a party last night at McClure's for Jennie Swank. Sunday was her birthday. Just our class went. They wanted to get her something and I couldn't go because I had no dime. Wasn't that too bad? Carl M. is lots better today. Hattie, I guess we are about to sell our house to Mr. Gaseworth. I guess that is the way to spell it. Well, this is all for this time so I will close, from your Sister.

Frank.

[Depending on which Census you believe, Frankie was either two or three years older than Hattie.]

* * *

Feb. 13th, 1888

Sullivan, Illinois

Addressed to Hattie Taylor, Farlow, Ill.

Miss Hattie Taylor,

Kind friend:-

I will be over to Nelson tomorrow evening to take you to a Valentine party if the roads are not too bad. If they are very bad and I don't come, please don't be disappointed, and I hope you will not be disappointed if I do come.

Yours Respectively [sic]

Fin

P.S. Please excuse paper.

* * *

March 14, 1888

Farlow, Illinois

Envelope addressed to Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois

Dear Teacher:-

Our kind and most highly appreciated letter was gladly received yesterday, and its contents read with much joy and pleasure.

I looked for a letter from you every day after you went home. Katie Gipson has come home. Please, Teacher, write and tell me if Katie and I passed our examination. I don't know how much we have to have on examination to pass. Well, teacher, Flora and George McGary is parted and George has moved to Oakland. Flora says that she just hates George now. Katie and I went to the last day of Mr. Kinzie's school; we just had a dandy time. He treated on candy and gave cards to the children. O, he just cried like his heart would break when school was out. I never thought of him crying. Mr. Knox told we girls the final was the 30th of this month. I don't think any one has got the school yet, there hasn't been any one at Dugs except Mr. Knox. No I don't guess I'll get to go to the small teacher, this summer.

I wanted to come to the exhibition awful bad but I didn't have no one to come with me. Yes, I heard about the fight in Sullivan. What, part of the History do you want us to study before examination. If Katie and I pass we will be there, if it's a nice day, we will come and walk and come up to your house, and go with you. Wait for us. Please answer very soon. And every question asked.

Your friend, Kittie Preston.

* * *

March 16, 1888

Farlow, Illinois

Envelope addressed to Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois

Miss Hattie Taylor:-

Dear Teacher,

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I seat myself to write to you. We are all well and hope you are the same. Mother is down to Hidalgo, Jasper County. One of my Uncles is dead and my other uncle is bad sick. We heard from Mother Saturday and she said that he couldn't live without a change, and Grandpa is

sick. It is offel sicky down their.

Kittie and me are just crazy to come to final. Kittie is at my house today. Mollie Goodwin's Mother is sick. Be sure and write and let us know if we passed in Mental Examination and send us our standings.

I am in a hurrah for Kittie and me wants to get out and have a good time. I seen Floria Pettit the other day. She is offel down hearted. I wish you would get our summer school. Well, I will close hoping to hear from you soon and often.

Your pupil,
Katie Gipson

P.S. Be sure and wait for us the 30th for if we pass, we will be their and we want to go with you. Kate and Kittie

When you write to us, you write a great Big letter.

* * *

July 1, 1888
Decatur, Ill.

Addressed to Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois c/o Jas Taylor
[When Hattie wasn't teaching in Farlow, she lived in her parents' home in town.]

Dear Cousin Hattie

I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know I am home on a vacation from the city and if I can spare the time, I will come over to see you. Tell Mart that I am home and would like very much to see him. Cannot you, he and Frankie come over the fourth and spend the day? If so let me know.

Give my love to all and tell them I would like very much to see them.

Unsigned

* * *

July 29, 1888

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor at home

Hattie: —

I will be there by about 2 o'clock this afternoon. I can't conveniently go before.

Yours,
Fin

* * *

August 1888

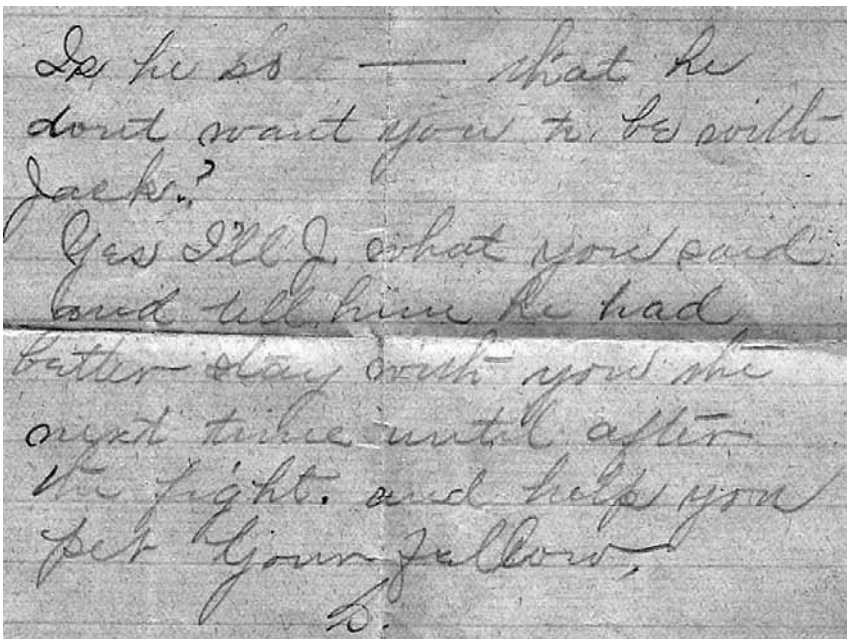
Normal

Miss Hattie

Is he so — that he don't want you to be with Jack?

Yes, I'll [tell] J what you said and tell him he had better stay with you the next time until after the fight and help you pet your fellow.

F.



Is he so — that he
don't want you to be with
Jack?
Yes I'll J. what you said
and tell him he had
better stay with you the
next time until after
the fight. and help you
pet your fellow,
F.

* * *

January 22, 1889

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor

Lovington, Illinois [a few miles north of Sullivan]

Dear Sister:-

I received your letter yesterday and was glad to hear from you. It was so bad Friday we wouldn't send for you but Fin wanted Lee to take Queens and let you ride behind him home; but Ma was afraid to let him go. Fin has been up to see us twice. He was here Saturday and Sunday evening. Said he came Saturday eve. to bring the quilt home, but he come to see if you were here; and a Sunday he brought the overshoes home and wanted me to go to the Hotel with him to see some big snake a woman had.

O Hattie, they are having a big time at the M.E. Church. I have been there four nights. I go over and go with Carrie and Mary Lane. Good to hear that your mumps are well. But I guess John's isn't. I haven't seen him since he took them but I got a letter from him last Thursday and he had just got up out of bed and said he felt awful bad. They didn't think Bert would live but he is getting better. I got a letter from Mattie and she is coming home just as soon as the roads get fit.

Well, Hattie, we had a wedding at our neighbor's Backhouses yesterday. Fin Norman and Lillie Barnhart from Decatur run off from home. Kate Baker is home on a visit.

Hattie, what has Fin been doing or saying? He is a nuisance, ain't he? Ma says tell you she is glad you didn't get home sick for it more than we done. It was awful lonesome Sunday if it is a fit day. Friday we will send after you but you bet we won't send Finny. He has made a mask. Misses Monroe is still very bad. She won't live much longer. Well, I guess I will close. I tried to "write" as much as you did, but I can't. I know you will get tired reading what I have already written. I am writing with a piece of pencil not as long as my little finger, so you must excuse bad writing. Yes, tell Charley he is awful good for making your fires. What has become of Johnnie? Well I must stop or I won't have any paper left.

Unsigned. [Frankie?]

* * *

Jan 30, 1889
Wednesday Morning

Miss Taylor:-

You spoke of a basket supper when I saw you Saturday. I told several around here and they were very anxious for you to get it up, and say they will come.

It would be nice to have it while the roads are solid, next week for instance.

I would try and have one, but I haven't any grown girls at all.

Yours truly,
Ida Powell

P.S. Since writing the above, I have almost concluded to have a basket supper myself next Fri. night. If I do, I'll let you know. I wish you'd send word by Norah Hill how many girls from your school will come.

Ida

* * *

February 4, 1889
Monday Eve.

Miss Taylor:-

You and your school are cordially invited to attend a basket supper at Old Foggy Friday night, Feb. 8th, 7 o'clock.

Respectfully,
Ida Powell

* * *

February 4, 1889
Postmarked Sullivan, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor
Lovington, Ill.

Dear Friend:-

You will not at all be astonished to at last receive an answer to your letter of which there has been so much commenting upon. I write with the very best feeling, because I ought to and because I really enjoy the satisfaction derived from it. You will no doubt wonder why I think that I ought to answer now and not before. You certainly understand why I did not answer sooner, and after those words you so firmly uttered, the first evening I was down to your house, it certainly becomes my duty to relieve your mind of the thoughts of writing to some one and not getting any answer. Perhaps I should [have] answered sooner but, really, if I possess any earnestness, or honesty at all my conscience could not see it in that way.

Maybe I misconstrued the meaning of the object you wished to impress upon me by both your excess and absence of words which form an admirable letter. I only hope that I did. If so I did wrong and am sorry for it, but I don't believe you think that I did not want to answer your letter. Suppose that I did not intend to answer it. It would have been disrespecting you in an indirect way. Even that be true, compare that and its results with the treatment I have often received you and the results.

Never did I tell you that you would not have a chance to repeat the same. You may decide whether I ought or not.

Never did I receive a pen's mark from any person that I appreciated more than that of yours. On the other hand should an apparent pointer be gathered from the countenance. It has the same striking effect.

If every letter you might have written to me would have caused such a confusion as the one did, it is the best thing that you won't write to me any more.

Among your many correspondents of whom you so often speak, I will by my own fault take a permanent position in the rear.

It took no coaxing with myself to write this but it would have taken a great deal of coaxing to get me not to answer it.

I would rather write a score of letters knowing that I would not get any answer than write a single letter knowing that I would get an answer if it was written contrary to the will.

I hope you got home all right without having to walk. I mean to your boarding place.

I walked home Saturday night after I closed the house up and oh! My! It was rough. I had company the most of the way that did not help the roads any. I ran against a barb wire fence and tore my clothes. When I got up the next morning with my eyes red and my torn clothes, they said I looked I had been on a drunk.

I was at church Sunday night. The house was so full that they decided to

transfer it to the Armory hall. They wanted everybody to come and bring their chairs. I have no chair so I did not go to-night.

The show came today and is showing now. I did not go to night at all. I think I will go a while at least tomorrow night. I brought my team in Sunday evening and turned them over to that Serving machine man. He took them to George Birchfields barn. I told when he got ready to hitch them up to let me know and I would help him the first time till he got used to them. He said, "Ah! My son, never mind me. I'll get along all right. I've been through the war, I don't get scared at any thing like that." So I went to school and never thought of him any more, and about ten o'clock somebody knocked on the door of the school room and asks if he couldn't have me a while. Mr. McClelland said if it was absolutely necessary he could. He said, Well! If there is any thang necessary in God's world, this is." So I came out and he said, My G – boy, those horses will kill a man. They kicked me out of the barn and then tried to follow me in the streets."

I went down with him and he said to me, if you go in there where they are, they will kill you. I told him that they never did. I went in and harnessed them and helped him hitch them up, and went with him all day. We went 7 or 8 miles southwest of here. He is perfectly willing for me to help him start in the morning.

Alas! Hear comes the show people. One says it was good and another says it was no good. What then was of it?

The church people report a full hall and are excellent sermons by the Beth-any evangelist. John was in town tonight. I don't think he has gone home yet for I think he would been around hear before going home.

Certainly you could organize a debating society. Yes! When I come out and speak I will appoint you Judge.

You remarked on the evening that I took you out to your school the first time, that the girls would be satisfied now since you was gone. I suppose they are. I haven't gone with one since you said it. I expect I know more about the weather about this time than you do. It is blowing and snowing a little. I don't think I would admire going out with that sewing machine man tomorrow if he goes.

You know by this time that I did not come after my buggy yet. If the weather continues the way it is now, I will leave it there until next summer. I will appoint you to take care of it. You may use it anytime you want to. I guess there is nobody out there very heavy.

Conigisky put on the boxing gloves with Wade Hollingsworth Sunday evening in Eden's livery barn, and while sparing fell and broke his leg. Drs. Johnston and Sted – I can't spell it – dressed the wound. He sent a telegram to his brother at Peoria to come and attend to his business. His sister came. She just got hear a few minutes ago. He would not tell her what was the matter with him. She call

me in her room as I was going by and just begged me to tell her what was the matter with her brother. I told her to ask him or someone else. She said she had and he would tell nothing was the matter, so after she told me she was not excited, I told her that he had broken his leg a little bit.

I saw Wm Kellar Sunday. If the roads are good next Sunday week we will make that deal that Mat. was talking about I expect. I red once in a book that it was best not to write too long a letter to a girl or it would tire her to read it. I am minding well.

Surely by the time you get this letter read you will wish I never would write again. I expect you think that I will write this one and no more be-en as you won't write any more. I will. I never told you I would not write any more and I didn't care if you would not. I could not and tell the truth. Of course that is one of [unnearnous ?] again.

I cannot blaming you in the least. I think you did just right – for I am shure I don't want you to devote any of your time writing to me. I know you meant a great deal more than you said. I surely must close for my very extended hope has almost expired. I will write again by the time that I think you have got all of this read. That is all – hope I may see you soon.

Fin

* * *

February 12, 1889
Envelope sent from Lovington, Illinois
Addressed to Miss Frankie Taylor,
Sullivan, Illinois

Dear Sister:-

I told you when I left home Saturday that I would write to you if I thought I would have a supper. I am going to have it Friday night if the roads stay good. Fill your basket and make two neckties. If you come, make me a couple of ties out of my yellow dress and bring them to me.

Frank, I write so much to you I don't know what to write to you now.

My month was up yesterday so I will soon get some money. [Perhaps a month of teaching work in Lovington.]

Charles and I was mad ever since Sunday until this evening. I couldn't get enough ink so I will finish with a pencil. I thought before I went to church I would have my supper, but Mr. Burus east of me is going to have one, so I have put mine off awhile. I wrote a letter to Mattie. Maybe I will be home Thursday

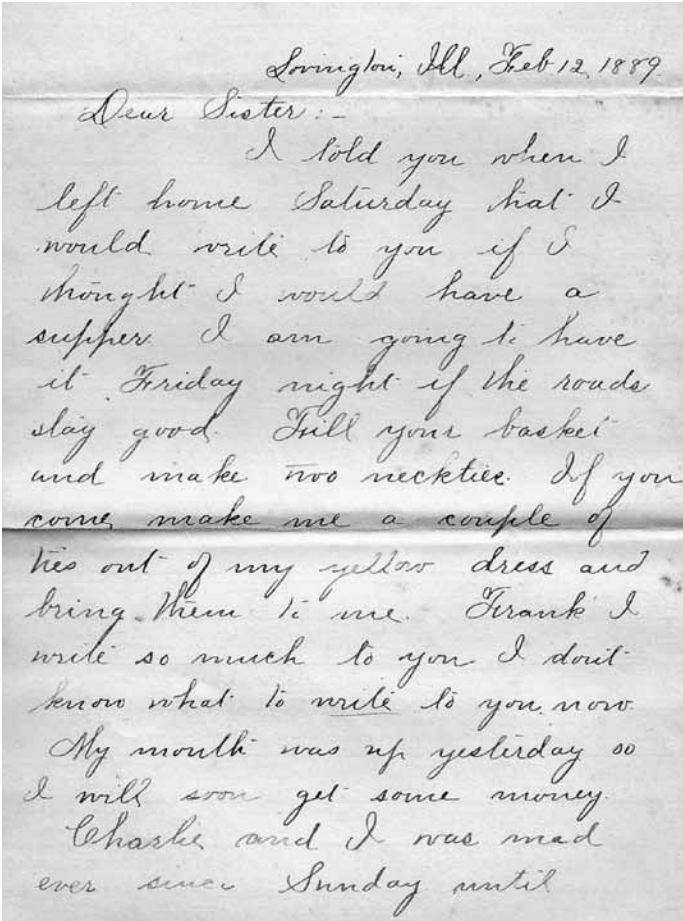
night if the roads stay good. I was in Lovington again Sunday and stayed all day. My board costs \$10 a month.

Well Frank, I am sleepy so I will close and go to bed. Let some one come after me Friday if they want to. Fin said maybe he would come but I don't believe he will when I come in Thursday night. A fellow was down to see me last night. He staid until 11 o'clock.

Good night:

Hattie

[This is the first letter written by Hattie that was saved in this collection, so I reproduce it below. At the time she wrote it, she was less than a month past her 21st birthday.]



Lovington, Ill., Feb. 12, 1889

Dear Sister:-

I told you when I left home Saturday that I would write to you if I thought I would have a supper. I am going to have it Friday night if the roads stay good. Fill your basket and make two neckties. If you come make me a couple of ties out of my yellow dress and bring them to me. Frank I write so much to you I don't know what to write to you now.

My mouth was up yesterday so I will soon get some money.

Charles and I was mad ever since Sunday until

This evening I couldnt get
enough ink so I will pruss
with a pencil. I thought
before I went to church I
would have my supper
but Mr Burns east time
is going to have one so I
have put mine off awhile.
I wrote a letter to Mattie
Maybe I will be home
Thursday night if the
roads stay good. I was
in Lovington again Sunday
and stayed all day. My
board costs \$10 a month.
Hell Frank I am sleepy
so I will close and go to
bed. Let some one come
after me Friday if they
want to. I'm sure way
he he would come but

I dont believe he will when
I come in Thursday night.
A fellow was down to see
me last night. He staid
until 11 o'clock.

Good night:

Halls

* * *

February 20, 1889

Postmarked Sullivan

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Lovington, Illinois

Dear Sister:-

I will try and answer your letter as I promised. We finished your quilt yesterday and you bet we were glad of it. I went to church last night and one got converted – Will Elder. And night before last there were four – Ed Morgan, Jim Hoke, Warren Rovere, Forest. Gorman Roney has got converted too.

I saw Fin last night but he didn't bring my hair pins down. I need some awful bad. Hattie, I made some lace to go on your new breeches and it looks awful nice.

Hattie, if it is nice Friday evening, I will meet you at Cushman and we will go out to Mattie's. John said he would meet us. So if it isn't raining or isn't too bitter cold, I will be there and will bring you clean clothes except your skirt as you have a clean one. Bring your dirty ones to Mother's and I will bring them home.

Ma has been feeling awful bad but feels better at present. She took some pill and that will make her all right. Give Charley my best wishes and no more. Did you and Fin have a split up or did he make it all right like he always tries to?

Well, Hattie, I will close for I haven't anything to write about and if it is pretty or not, too bad. We will go to Mattie's Friday evening. I will come up on the freight. So good bye,

Frank

[separate note next page]

February 21

Hattie, send to Lovington and get me a number 20 thread to finish your lace on your draws [sic]. I can't find that number in town and I will get it when we go to Mattie's. She is coming home tonight to go to church. They had 7 converts last night. Well, be ready to go to Mat's Friday evening.

Frank

* * *

March 2, 1889
Postmarked Sullivan, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Pifer
Lovington, Ill.

Dear Friend Hattie:-

Tired, lonely, worn out and out of patience, I will endeavor to answer your welcome letter which [I] received Monday. I am tired because I was out home to day and walked back lugging a shotgun. Lee went home with me and plaid hunt coming back. He killed three rabbits and [I] killd one, but I did most of the shooting and all of the missing. I am out of patience because I started to write to you last night and my Dutch friend Hause—and a number of such fellows commenced on me and are repeating it tonight. One says, "Tell her George Washington is dead." Another says, "Tell her I need thee, Oh I need thee." Another: "Tell her you would send her a cow but you can't get the horns in the envelope." Etc.

Last night I quit but to-night I am not agoing to. I imagine you did not look for me very hard last night. After I got your letter I went down to the south side flour store and took a seat, then proceeded to read. Presently I looked up at H—and said, "hear is a lie." He replied, "you should not speak so plain. You should say it is a mistake, but what is it"? So I read it again and found it was some one else that I told I was not going out there anymore. If I did you will find out that I have l—.

I don't understand why you think I was out of humor that night. You acknowledged that you was not alright. I thought so but was not positive of it. You seem to be very certain that I was out of humor so I will not attempt to prove to you that I was not - I could not imagine what you had of mine until just a few minutes ago. John was here and told me. I can't imagine what gave you the blues so quick after you got back. I am glad you gave me a remidy for them. I guess I will have to try it myself.

That man said he was going to Lovington the first day the roads got so he could travel again. He said he would tell me when he went. He isn't driving my team any more. I took them home today. The company sent him a team. I was just thinking, if you had as much mud on yourself as I had, that I pitied you. I did not have the blues when I got back, but I caught such a cold that I well remembered the trip for the most of the weak.

Yesterday the senior class read essays. The house was full of company. The debate between Charles Nathworthy and Dell Hesket was decided in favor of Dell by the visitors. I don't think they decided right. Bell Burchfield is teaching hear now. I think in Miss Workman's place.

I will take care of that quilt so Mrs. Read will not go up. The man drove over to Arcola Wednesday. He said he came very near throwing it out but he will not now. I never once thought of it when I left out there or I left it.

I did not find your veil. I don't think it was left in the buggy. I got the hair pins the next day. I still have them. I have never been down there since I saw you. I will give them to her some of these days.

Hausmeyer wrote his girl a letter the other day. I ask him to let me write some too; he said alright if I would let him write to you when I wrote. I told him I would do any thing to get to write a verse so he let me write one. He got an answer today and let me see part of it, which said if he ever let that fellow write again, he would get fired for she was completely gone on the handwrite (I don't know what she was gone on) if it appeared again, she would write to me and perhaps forget to write to him. He says he won't let me write anymore in his letters. I guess I had better not let him write in my letter or I might receive the same and of course I wouldn't like that. He took Lo Green to the lecture Tuesday night. I wish you had been hear. I have a ticket which bears the incruption "Admit one and lady." If you had been hear, I would [have] disposed of it.

Effie Green is oh oh completely gone on Hau —. But he has not gone with her yet. I am a going to get him to take her to church Sunday (tomorrow) night if I can. I told Lo she was a going to lose him for he was going with Effie. She said to me, "you are no good. Why do you give her up to him for." What I told you about her wanting to go with me I told for the truth. I believe it in fact. I almost know it. She can't think I want to go with her very bad or I would not have tried to get HO- to go with her and her with him. I must either close or commence on another sheet of paper. I will stop for tonight and consider that later.

[break]

I come again — Sunday night. I passed the day off by going to Sunday school twice, and I expect you will hear passed the rest of the time away by promenading the west part of town with the Harris girls. After the parade, I came down to the Hotel and had the blues. I tried some of your medicine to the extent of three glasses. It cured me for awhile at least. I am getting to be a regular tough. Don't you think so? You did not tell or intimate to me that you did not want me to go those ducks but I know you don't want me to and I don't blame you. It was a very queer happening which I will reveal later. H—was with me, or I was with him, I mean.

H— asks Dora to take her to church but he got the G.R.D.J. I was surprised at him asking her. If I have any influence over him he would not let him ... even if she had said he might. He said he would take Effie from church but

when the time came, he did not have the nerve.

I went home last Sunday and helped put up ice all day except about an hr –then I fell in the pond and quit. Which Sunday did I do the worse?

There will be a protracted meeting commence at the Christian church next Wednesday night. Mr. Hayse is to be the preacher's name.

It seems as though you took great pains to please me in your letter. I am very glad to think that you do want to please me but sorry you think I am so hard to please and you certainly do think so don't you?

R.S.V.P. I was just thinking last Thursday night that you and I would make two of the best marshals in the organization. Why? –

It is my nature to cut up and have a good time, so is it yours; but put us both together and we are the most quiet person there is to be found in or out of the lodge. Why this is I never could tell. I don't think it is any fault of mine and perhaps you think the same by your selfe. Have I not often told you that I thought you enjoy yourself better with any body almost than you did while you was in my presence. I wish it was not that way.

There was 2 today and 3 tonight of the union converts joined the M.E. Church and 4 joined the Presbyterian.

I have not wrote so much because I wanted to write more than you did. I do so because I have nothing else to pass away the time and I want to write until I can satisfy myself. If you think this deserves an answer and you feel so disposed, I would be pleased to hear from you again. I shall certainly have to close hoping to see and hear from you soon.

I remain your friend, as ever.

They won't recognize the address [?]

Fin

* * *

March 12, 1889

Posted Sullivan

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Lovington, Moultrie Co. Illinois

Dear Sister:-

As I promised I will write, but I can't write a very long letter as we are going to wash this morning. I went to church last night and there was a good many there. There is to be preaching tonight and the rest of the week I guess. I had company last night to church – Kittie Neddle, Lizzie Sears sister. Real nice girl. Misses McPheeters is about to die. Jessie's mother, isn't it.

Lovely weather. You can come to church now. Mat & Fread went just a little while after you started.

Well, Hattie, I must close and hurry to my work. My pen is bad. I couldn't find my pencil. So write soon, from your sister,

Frank

I have those books but haven't fixed them yet but will today after we get through washing. F.

* * *

March 27, 1889

Postcard posted Sullivan

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Lovington, Ill.

Hattie

Dear Sister:

I saw Fin this morning. He told me what you said. I will not come on the train. I expect I will see John tonight. If I come at all I will come with Fin. Fin said he did not know whether he would go or not but thinks he will.

I am washing today.

You wanted this ans. by Friday. I did not get my letter until then myself. I hope you will get this in time so you will not go to meet me. I will come if I can.

No more.

Frank

* * *

April 17, 1889

Postmarked Sullivan

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Lovington, Illinois

Dear Sister:-

I recived your letter yesterday evening and was glad to hear that you are feeling better. I am in a hurry to get this written. We have to wash this morning.

Hattie, the whiskey ticket got there yesterday except two on the temperance side – two aldermen. Church closed. Last night got three friends [?]. Fin

was there I guess. They aren't going to have that party out there so Charley told John. I don't care for I didn't want to go.

Well this isn't what I was going to write about. John says tell you he will take you back Sunday evening and will be after you Friday evening at Reeds so wait for him there. If nothing happens. Well I will close for I am going to work now. Don't forget to wait at the school house or Reeds for John, for he will be after you if it don't rain to hard. You will have to get a lawyer to read this.

So good by,
From your sister,
Frank

* * *

May 1, 1889

Posted Lovington, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Frankie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois, Moultrie County

Dear Sister:-

If you feel like I do just now you can read a letter. This is Wednesday noon. I have just eaten my dinner. I ate too much or feel as if I did.

I am coming home Friday eve. if we can get to the train some way. Pearl is coming with me. If we miss the train Friday evening Mrs. Reed and I are coming down Saturday in the buggy if the old man will let us have it. I can't come home and stay until Sunday. I have no more good friends. Jim and I broke a bolt off of that old cart Monday. These folks think Jim looks like Fin. I told them they missed it a long way. Don't you think so.

If you see Fin tomorrow night tell him I said for him to read on page seventy-four of McGuffey's Fourth Eclectic Reader. It isn't Emulation. If you don't understand, let him read this himself. He will know what I mean. I bet it will be raining hail stones or some other kind of stones about Friday.

O! Frank, I have got a thrice fold cold. I caught the first by changing my stockings, the third by sitting by an open window Monday night at church and the second, Frank, you keep mum, you know when and how.

Reed says if he was a fellow coming to see me and couldn't stay until twelve and one o'clock with me, he would quit pretty quick. I like to went to sleep in school Monday, but I guess that wasn't the reason. [So Hattie was teaching school in Lovington during the spring term.]

Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Hoffman are going out one evening this week to see about the dinner for the last day of school. Frank, you can let the president read

this letter if you can without expense. I am writing backwards or any hand is backward. This letter ought to belong to Fin. You wouldn't get it if it wasn't for his stamp. I guess it is good. Tell Effie that news will stay good until I see her again I guess. If they decide to have a dinner out here, I will send you an invitation and so more of my numerous friends. .

I will be a little more cautious than Fin was. He ate my letter up so no one will see how to read it. Did John say anything about my dime. Tell him to have another letter ready and I will give a penny for it.

Don't you ask anybody to come Vote or cast some ballots for me Thursday night. Well, I guess I will have to close as I want Charlie to take this to town. I came very near coming home yesterday to the doings, but hated to miss school. My Lewis went to Lovington last night and took Charlie but he knew I wouldn't go where he wanted to go. He went to the dance. Well, this is all. I have written this in less than twenty minutes. Beat me.

Hattie

* * *

June 22, 1889

Postmarked Columbus O.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Moultrie Co., Illinois

Dear Friend,

I thought I would send you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along. We are all well and hope you to be same. How is Franie. You know how much fun we often had. Is Martie at home or I wonder if he remembers how much candy he bought for ... and ... one day. I here that you are going to have Street-cars in your part of the town and electric lights too. I suppose you are very proud over it. Are you?

A ... was down Saturday and my Brother Durward Dwight staid at home. He hasn't been down for two weeks now. I want to see him so bad I don't know what to do. I was looking for him to stay and I was so sorry. I don't know whether our school will be out in one more week, and it will be for two months or more.

This week is examination week and I ... not pass. I know I won't. I am in the third reader and B... is in the first reader

I think I will write more the next time, Hattie.

Yours truly,

Blanche Henry

* * *

October 12, 1889

Postmarked Toledo

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois

Friend Hattie:-

As it has been quite a while and longer seemingly [?] since I have seen you and it is my time to write, now is a good time to do so. I will start home this evening and go as far as Mattoon today. I will be in town (Sullivan) Sunday evening some time but perhaps it will not be until you have gone out to your school. I will have to stay at home a while but will try to get there before you are gone.

I have formed lots of acquaintances in this part of the country and had a nice time well contented through the week but when Sunday comes I want to be some where else. I have been in Toledo nearly a week except last night I drove over to Jewett and stayed all night to go to a spelling school. It is now 10 minutes until train time and I must take this letter if I want it to go. I wrote you last Saturday and missed the train, and did not send it at all; neither will I send this if I miss it. I wish I had time to write more.

If I don't get to see you on Sunday, you can write me next week at Centralia, Ill. There is where I go Monday. Don't let me keep you from going out to your school Sunday if you are going for something might happen that I would not get there for I never know one hr. what is the arrangements for the next. Excuse this horrible scribbling.

Ever your friend

[letter torn – name omitted – Fin's handwriting]

* * *

[Typed]

Excuse Missed-spelled words

Very, week, write and others

R.S.V.P.

F.E.P.

Ta- Ta.

October 22, 1889

Posted Toledo, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Miss Hattie Taylor, Esteemed Friend

While practice on a type writer I thought it would be all right to rite to you.

We are still in Toledo yet but will ___ for Centralia day after tomorrow. I hope I will find a letter there from you. Cu b dsrove upweer Mattoon last Sunday I could hardly keep from going the re ... stop the way, it seems as though we will never get through hear.

I traded for a buggy the other day. With a patient driver. I think that will just suit me, don't you?

I expect you will have a lonesome time at your school to-day as it is a raining so hard all day but perhaps you have visitors.

I wish I was there to spend the rasoxery day as usual. It is a dull day for me too.

I don't suppose you will appreciate such writing as this. If you don't, tell me when you write and I will not do so any more. If you have all ready wrote to me when you get this, write again, won't you.

Fin

[Continued on reverse]

Since I have read the other side over, I have decided to quit the type writing business. I am a-going to Neoga tomorrow. I would have gone today if it had not rained. Mr. Custer and I was in the country the other day. When I stopped for dinner, a little girl told me she could spell real nice so I took her on my lap and ask her to spell some for me. She said 'm - a - t. After that resunt, I thought Mr. Custer would hurt himself laughing. I did enjoy it vary mutch. I have not got any mail since I came back here the last time. I suppose no one knows where I am. I don't care so as you know is all I care for. I don't know how soon you will get this. How often do you get your mail, or do you get at all through the weak? I will expect an answer this shure by next Sunday. You can write me at Centralia. Jewett, Toledo or Sullivan and it will be sent to me. I would Pe that you write me at Jewett if you write after Saturday. If you write then or before, write to Cent. I think by the time you get this all read you will be tired. I will be more by holidays. Then I guess I will go to MC. ___ me, won't you? I hope you will not think this so formal or sollem. I can't wrete like I can talk. I am getting stuck on this machine. I tihink I will steel stop. It belongs to the Hotel. My paper is all out gone. I will close hoping to hear from you soon.

I remain your true friend.

Finley Pifer

* * *

[Typed]

October 25, 18__

Posted Toledo, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor

Hattie,

Dear Friend:

We are still at Toledo. I write you to tell you that if you write to me Saturday, to write to Toledo. We will be hear until Sunday or Monday. I am agoing to Mattoon this evening but will return tomorrow.

I have never got any mail since I have been hear. I am vary anxious to get a big long letter from you to-morrow. Don't disappoint me for you know now I take tmem [?] I have been nearly sick for the last few days. I think a letter from you will help me if anything will. There is a gang of Sull. boys in town here. I have not been to see them yet. They are preparing to shell corn.

Tell Lee that this is the place to gather hickory-nuts. I never saw so many in my life. The people down here are like the country no-good. The dinner bell is ringing and I must eat and get this to the train.

After dinner, I was talking to my boss at the table. He says I will be in Centralia by tomorrow night. I don't believe it though, so if you write me direct to Toledo.

I must stop for I have got but 10 minutes to get to the train.

Good by, write soon.

Yours as ever

Finley Pifer

* * *

November 8, 1889

Postmarked Centralia, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Friend Hattie:

I will answer your letter before I get it. It was forwarded from hear to St. Elmo. I send the P.M. there to send it back. Mr. Custer is still there. Perhaps he will bring it when he comes. We are looking for him tonight at 8:30 p.m. It is 8:00 now.

I never got hear until Wednesday afternoon. I have been in several cities but this one is the dirtiest and smokiest place I ever was at –

Later ... Well! Well! Hear is Mr. Custer from St. Elmo with a long interesting letter from you. The land lord brought him up and said “here is a stranger that wishes to see you.” The first I said was, “Give me a letter,” so he did.

I don’t know what to think of it. It makes me feel as though I did wrong, but I had no idea you would think of it as you did. I simply want it for a rebuttal to the ones I last got from you. I think we will have to console ourselves by believing that we both misconstrued the meaning of the others letters. I am willing to stop at that. Are you?

Another quotation: It is a friend who points out to you your errors but a fool that scorns at them. A better one isn’t it?

Certainly I will not laugh at you for I have no desire to cause you to feel bad for anything I do or say. I only intended to keep up my half. If I went to far, and perhaps I did, I am sorry for it. I don’t believe there is anyone that will confess a wrong quicker and more willing than I will. Do you?

No! I didn’t believe you had forgotten the times I took you last winter to school, but I could not understand why you said I wouldn’t have taken you. I don’t think the weather has been as bad yet as it was then, and I never grumbled – Did I? I don’t know Mrs. Penn. Who is she? I was nowhere but to Toledo Mattoon and Sullivan. Don’t know what aunt she could mean. A change of pen –

Thanks for the remark about the kid. What do they call the kid, if you know. I have never heard from home since I left. I wrote them but never heard from them. I guess they have gave me up for gone. Yes, perhaps I would enjoyed the dance you spoke of. I was to one just on the same night but a weak later.

Please explain to me the meaning of “aunt-to-be.” If ... would not live in Cumberland Co for all the real estate, what would I live there for? - - - Red headed school misses? Excuse me from that red headed school misses down there, one at a time is enough, isn’t it? [Hattie Pifer had red hair.] Yes, if I am at home during the protracted meeting, I will go some and take you ...

Tell Jim to go And come out squeezed – Ida Samuel. I am shure I don’t care. I don’t know her in my business.

I had a spendid place to stop at St. Elmo but I don’t like my stopping place. I am boarding at the Park hotel paying \$5.80 per week. It is not half as good a place as I had at St. Elmo for \$8.30. I am stuck on that place. I am going to move there. Put that down and see if does not come true.

I am about to get my Cransberl [?] and patch back. What will you give me for it? I don't want it. I traded for a cow today. If you will come down and get her, I will give her to you. I would just about give a cow to see you after reading that letter.

Mr. Sterick and I started to drive to Odin about 8 miles this evening. We drove hard all afternoon and asked a man where we were. He said we were about 5 miles from Centralia. I said, thanks. I guess we will drive in so we came back and never found Odin at all. He is talking of sending me by myself tomorrow. I don't know how I will make it. Some parts of this country looks like a wild country. We drove through woods today that we never saw a fence, person, or house for 3 or 6 miles at a time. A good country to hunt in. We met some fellows with nearly a wagon full of rabbits they hid killed today. They were northern people who come down to hunt. I want to take a hunt day after tomorrow if I can get a gun. A good day isn't it?

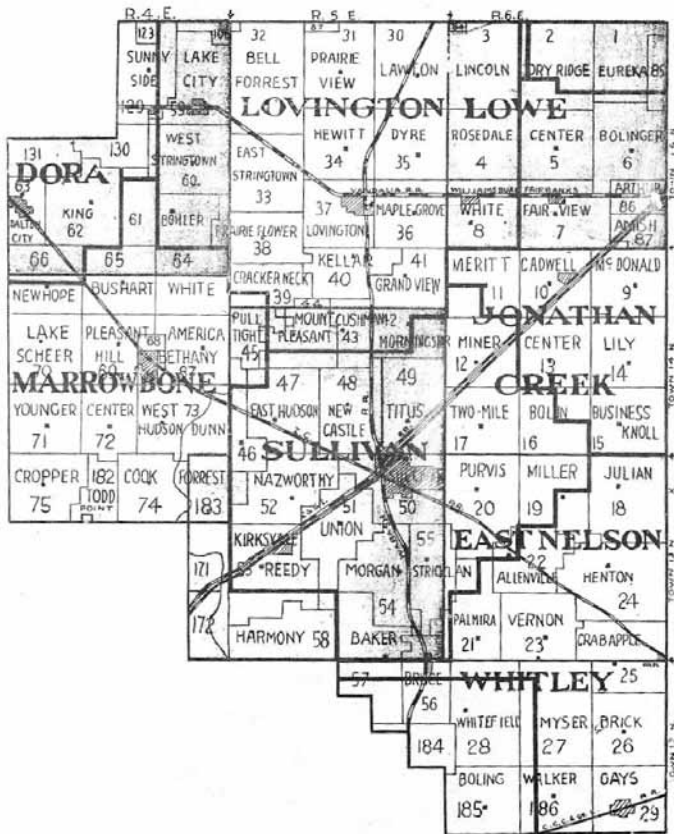
This is a fruit country ... over \$3 now. In this town as been paid for strawberries that were raised within ten miles of this place. One man sold \$10,000 dollars worth, raised them off of 40 acres. I had better put my patch in berries hadn't I.

Strawberry patches are as common and as large as cornfields are in Moultrie Co. I guess I will have to bring you down next picking time you will won't you?

I don't know where I will be when I hear from you again. I expect I will go to Louisville or Mt. Vernon about Monday or before, but you direct your letter if you write and I want you to – to Centralia Mr. Sterick and Mr. Custer will stay here quite a while but I am agoing to move. I don't like this place. My Boss told me to pick my location and skip out where ever I wanted to go. He's real good isn't he. I guess I will pick Sullivan or Miller school house. [Letter continues below ...

* * *

So Hattie was teaching at Miller school. The *History of the Moultrie County Schools* written by Vera Slover, at p. 8, shows that the Miller School was just north of Allenville – earlier called Farlow. It is among the schools Slover listed as being in East Nelson Township.



The Miller School was organized in 1868 (Slover, 18) apparently named after Asa Miller, and was located on the North east corner of J.C. Trevillion’s land in Section 10. The county atlas in 1913 showed S. Pifer and J.E. Pifer owning land just south of the Miller School; and just to the west, in Section 9, F. Pifer and D. Pifer owed other land. The first school building burned in 1882. After collecting the insurance money, local people built a new building – 22 by 32 feet, with six windows, three on each side. The new building opened in 1883. The history continues (p. 19) :

“On June 27, 1895, the board of directors adopted the following textbooks for use in the schools for four years from that date: Harper’s readers, White’s arithmetic, McGuffey’s spell-er, harper’s geography, Harvey’s grammar, Barnes’ History of U.S., Steele’s physiology, and Ray’s elementary algebra.”

“A five-month term was taught beginning in October and lasting through February. Then a two-month term was taught in the spring, usually by a different teacher and usually in May and June.”

Hattie Pifer was teaching there a few years before the 1895 specification of textbooks; but the curriculum in 1889 may not have been very different from the one used in 1895.

* * *

[Letter continues ...]

I am real sorry you had so stiff a neck the next morning after I was there. I will not try to get around that fact – was my fault. I liked to froze agoing to town that night.

It is now after ten o'clock and I have to go about 4 blocks to the post-office yet tonight. Mr. Sterick is wanting to go. He has a letter to mail. You said for me to tell you how much to write. Write as mutch as I do when I have time. For instance this letter. A good way to tell is to count the lines and the number of words in an average line. I have written almost twice as much as you did.

Don't be afraid you will make me tired. You know about how tired you would get reading letters from anyone from home when you was away and never saw any other letters except from the one person. I hope you will appreciate this letter more than you did the last one. Tell me if you do or if you don't.

How is Charley and the rest of the folks. Excuse this paper. I had no more. I never thought of answering your letter before I got it, yet I know you had written for the P.M. and then sent it to St. Elmo. It came allright before I got through.

Ever your true friend.

Fin

I never stopped to read this over. Excuse all mistakes. I composed a piece of poetry. I will send it to you in your next letter if I don't forget it and have room. R.S.V.P.

* * *

Dated November 13, 1889

Postmarked Ashley, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Friend,

A sad disappointment crowned with joy when I went to the post office this A.M. and enquired for my mail. The answer was none. I felt like telling them to look again. Next I ask for Mr. Custer, two letters were handed me. Then I felt more disappointed than ever at his getting two letters and me none. But opening his he found enclosed a letter for me. I had sent to Centralia to have my mail forwarded, but Mr. Sterick had got it and sent it in another letter. Stop for supper – the bell is ringing. I wish I could eat with you tonight. --

After supper – I came hear Monday evening from Centralia. I was over to Odin last Sunday. We were looking for a location. The coal miners were all on a strike there and the town was tore up in general so we did not go there. Was Mart there then? I looked on the hotel register for any name that I might know. I never saw his.

We just now have an invitation to a musical social. I will stop and write more later.

November 14th. I did not get back in time to write any more last night. I think I would enjoy myself as well or better to have stayed away from the social and put in the time writing to you, but I thought the longer I waited, the more I would have to write.

This is a place of one thousand inhabitants, 62 of which are widow women, 25 old maids, 8 grass widows and a host of the loneliest girls I ever saw. There are two dry houses hear – one dry 300 and the other 200 bushels per day, one work 30 and the other 20 girls. When your directors turn you off, write me and I will get you a position as apple pealer. I was down to the largest dry house yesterday. The girls all laughted. I suppose they were laughing at me because I never saw anything of the kind before but one of them was kind enough to take me through the different departments and showed me how the drying was done. I am going down in the coal mines Sunday if I am hear. It was 90 ft. deep. I have saw the top of this country now. I want to see the bottom of it.

Some parts of your letter I did not understand. A quotation “Rest assured that I will never write anything again that will cause you to write as you did in that letter last Saturday.” What do you mean? You certainly don’t mean of the letter if you don’t. I can’t think wh. part of it.

Another – “Perhaps one red-headed school teacher is to much. If so –.” What does that blank mean – quit? That is a fair proposition but I don’t think I will.

I have just got in from the country about two ____ We met with some awful

nice people. They had heard we was out to a musical social in Ashley and gave us very forcible invitation to spend an evening with them. They have an organ, a school teacher for organist, but she is not red headed. Mr. Custer told her I was very partial to red-headed school teachers and ask her to dye her hair for that occasion. He gives it to me like that every chance he gets.

We will go Saturday night – the same night you are agoing to the basket festival. Who are you going to the festival with? Us two. I see I can't get all I want to say on this so I shall take another.

No, I hardly think the folks would let you name the kid. I wrote a letter home the other day in answer to one from ma. She says she is home sick to see me, and give it to me for not coming out when I went to see you. A quotation from ma's letter: "Finley, we have the sweetest baby you ever saw. If you was with it like we are you would rather see it than a car load of Hats." – rats.

Yes, I will come and see you before I move to St. Elmo. I told you wh. I would give to see you. You would not say wh. you would give to see me. You had better not make too liberal an offer or I will be there on the first train. Now! There is a chance for you to write back and say if I don't want to come and see you with out being hired to stay away, isn't it?

If you give it to my kin folk at Miller [school] the way you used to give it to me, I will never kick. I guess they inherit their meanness from me or me from them, which?

You seem to have several chances to find persons to fill my place while I am gone. Go with who you please while I am gone or while I am there, but let me be first when I come back, would you? You said any body received a cordial welcome at your hands. Quite an extensive saying but I don't think you meant it. I think you meant you would receive most anybody.

There is one girl in this town by the name of Hattie. I like the name but not the object. She is a negro. I think you have a better chance for courtan than I have. About the time I get acquainted in a place, I have to leave. A red headed milliner sent me word to keep this bo [?] and work it myself and she would help me. I am afraid I would have the same kind of a time with her as I used to have with you (fuss) so I will not accept the proposal.

The first thing Mr. Custer does when we [arrive] in a place is to inquire if there is any red headed school-mothers in town. He is agoing home after the 25th of this month. Then I will be by myself. I am most of the time anyway. Tomorrow he goes one way to see a man, and I go another way. Mr. Sterick wants me to go into Alaska for him next summer. It would be a cool place, wouldn't it? Go with me, won't you? You can bet if I go I will take [you] there for I will not go, will I?

They are playing the organ in the next room and every little they and

say, Mr. Pifer, you are wanted in hear. I say rats in my mind and so they are calling now, again. The principal industry hear is raising apples and petrified dog ticks I call them, but the correct name is caster bean. We are out of the strawberry section.

I think Mr. Custer and I will go over to St. Louis next Sunday. I want him too but don't know whether he will or not. He said maybe.

I don't understand the Mrs. Ferry business, yet where is she. What's she ... a Miss or a Mrs. As you have it you said she was a busy body if I read it right. Quite an explanation.

If I thought I would worry you patience I would stop but where I can't be with you, it is quite a relief to me to write to you. I was writing to you last night and when I went to sleep I drempt about you. I imagined I was with you at home. I was disappointed when I found it was only a dream.

It is rough and chilly hear to-day. The signal service promises snow to-night here. I hope it will not fulfill it. It is after 9 p.m. and I must take this to the office yet tonight for the train goes 6:30 in the morning and I won't be up. If this makes the connections, I think it will get to Sullivan at 2 p.m. tomorrow. I don't think there is anything in this you don't like, is there?

Write me a good long letter for I never get tired reading them if they are from you. You can direct to Ashley or Centralia either. I don't know whether I will be either one of the places by then or not. One think shure [thing sure], I can't go any further south for all of the ter [territory ?] is sold south of this Co. I am a going to Jefferson Co. to morrow. I guess you best direct to Ashley, if I am going I will leave orders to forward it. Good by

Ever a friend,
Fin

* * *

November 23, 1889
Posted at Saint Elmo
Directed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear friend Hattie:-

Your Centralia letter did very well. I have not been to Centralia yet but I sent for my mail to be sent to me. I am a going there Monday. Do you believe it? I have been here since Tuesday evening.

You spoke of me missing the train because I was hungry. It seems as though you never missed a meal for my comfort. However, the breakfast bell

is ringing. If I don't go I will miss my breakfast, and I will get hungry before dinner for I am a going to the country and liable to not get back before dinner time. They are all calling me so I must go eat --

After A long breakfast and almost time to go to the country. I intended to write last night but my boss said he would beat me playing sevens tonight. I said no, but he did. I was a going to a dance last night about a mile from town but it rained. There was a man a going to be there that I wanted to see. That was the reason why I was a going. Don't you think so?

Yes! If I keep house very soon it will be a batch. You know about how much I will batch. I thank you very much for the presents you might have given me. If you have learned that -- joke. Yet, send it to me won't you?

Tell Mrs. Blacken if she adopts you she will not have me to keep any more than Sunday anyway. No you couldn't if you wanted to. I can get all the country life at home which is far superior to that in my mind at least. You ought to go out and see our kid, they say it looks just like me.

You spoke of John bringing and take you to and from school, and said "You wouldn't do that, would you?" I think you was straining your imagination and forgot to think of the many blustry trips I took last winter. I didn't think you would forget it so soon.

I have always heard that it was a wise person that made no mistakes and fool that criticizes Yes I would like to see all of those monosyllables that I missed in my type writing.

This country is as far ahead of Cumberland Co. as Moultrie Co is. In fact what I have saw of it is a good deal better than Moultrie Co.

I thank you very much for the interest of my well fare you take in me. What did I want with my patch. I can get all the farming I want at home. I wouldn't live in that country for all that is in it -- real estate I mean.

Here comes the team. I must go to the country. I will mail this for I don't expect I will get back in time to write any more. I will write you again when I get to Centralia. I suppose I will be there Monday evening. I hope as soon as I get there I can go to the Post Office and get a letter -- from you. All for this time. Wish I had time to write more. I think this will be harder to read than the type writing, won't it? I am a going to St. Clair Co. before long. Send me Nellie's address and I will cross the river to spend Sunday sometime while there. It would be as near as I could come of seeing you.

Hear I have finished this sheet of paper after all. I like you some one waiting until I get through. Write me a long good letter. -- no! no! Give it to me if you want to -- perhaps I deserve it. I can take lots from you now.

I am stopping at a splendid place. Like it better than any place I ever stopped. I would not stop at the Hotel because it had a saloon in the office. I

am getting real good, don't you think so?

Answer soon Please.
Your true friend,
Fin

* * *

November 27, 1889
Posted at St. Louis

Dear Cousin Hattie

I received your letter last week and was so glad to hear from you. Yes, I am coming over to see you Christmas. Brother Jimmie is coming home also, so you see it will be a family reunion.

Hattie, I told you that if Fin came to St. L. for you to let me know. When he comes then I will tell you where I will see him or when he comes let him drop me a note the same address as you write me. Then I will see him but he could never find any number and street for it is a long distance out.

I have not much to write this time for I am fixing up me a street dress, trying to make one over.

Hattie, if you like to read I will bring you some novels for I have almost a dozen here. Tell Aunt Lizzie I want some of her good peaches to eat when I come over for I am so tired eating city Grub. It tastes flat now and stale. Give my love to all and also to Fin. Tell him – well I do not know what to write and for you to tell him. Tell him I think of him often. That will do. So good by and write soon. I remain as ever, your cousin

Nell

* * *

November 27, 1889
Postmarked Mattoon
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Friend Hattie:-

“Nearer my ___ to Thee.”

Yours received at last. Mr. Custer made sport of me all week for looking so patiently for your letter and never getting it. I tried to conceal my feelings but could not. He said, “She has gone back on you; you had just as well give it

up.” I told him if I ever got another letter from you, I would not answer it for a month, but after I recd your letter, I changed my mind, believing that you did write me last week.

You will no doubt be surprised if I come after the turkey and cake.

I think I will go over home tomorrow with the team. If I do, I will go see you of course. It will be evening or night before I get there if I can get to go at all. Will you keep me company until the 11-11 train comes? I have to make my return on it if I go at all.

Mr. Custer is waiting for this pen. I will close. Tell you more when I see you. If I don't come to see you, write me at Mattoon and I will have it sent to me wherever I go. I am going north from hear. I will go see you shure if I go home.

All.
Ever your friend,
Fin

* * *

December 13, 1889

Postmarked Mt. Pulaski, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Hattie.

Dear friend

I am always glad when it comes time to write to you. I got your letter at Mattoon. It did not make me mad. As you predicted I am close to Menard Co. and perhaps may be in Menard by Christmas or before.

Don't know for certain where we will go from hear but think it will be Petersburg or Delivan. Which do you think would be the best? I don't think we will be here more than a week more if that long.

I was to a show last night. Uncle Tom's Cabin is here tonight. I will put in my time writing to you better spent – isn't it?

I like this place real well. Have the best place to stop I have found since I have been out except St. Elmo. Real friendly people up here. I met friends as soon as I struck the town. A man here that boarded ten weeks at the Eden house last winter while I was there. An old chum of mine. He is gone now. He left the next day after I came. I told him I was always out of luck. He took me around and introduced me to all of his friends, so he left me well acquainted. Scureman was his name – a fruit tree agent.

I got in a dispute this eve with Mr. Nichols, the school Prof. I want you to settle it. He taught in Sullivan in 84 and 85. He said a fiery Red head Greene girl went to school to him, and George Dunscomb was one of his pupils. I told him they were both graduates of 84. He said no no no – he knew better. I want you to write on a slip of paper the names of your Class mates and I will show them to him. He said there weren't but 4 graduates in 84 –.

I wish you was here. We would go to the show. I am in the same notion about my Menard Co. visit as when I saw you last. I can get your letters more direct than when I was at Ashley; if you write them I mean. You will through, won't you?

How is the Miller [school] kids? The old maid and her best friend –“Life.” Charley is with me. He likes it affol well here.

You will find this awaiting you when you come home from school if you get home. I will be mad if you don't – not at you – at John. I don't want to be disapointed in getting your letters any more. Write me a long letter and I will puruse its contents with great pleasure. Be shure and send me the names of the class of 84. Make a complete sentence Ex: the following is the Grad class of Sullivan of 1884 --.

I am longing to see your picture. It would be good company for our Sunday evenings. A letter will help though.

This paper is too small.

Ever your true friend,

Fin

Come and see us Christmas.

[Separate sheet enclosed]

Later

Mt. Pulaski, Dec. 13, 89

After taking a night's repose, I will write some more. I was asked to take a part in a game of sinch [?] last night after I got through writing. I told them I had just been writing and was tired, but I would play a little while. I plaid until 1 o'clock. So I never got up until 9 a.m.

This country is full of Dutch, about 3 to every white man or American. I struck an old friend of mine from Peoria last night – that is, the occasion of my playing sinch. I am smoking. Can you smell my breath? This is an old stub. Here I can't smoke a light – mark I have to write copied out – will spread all over the paper.

It is almost train time – 9:40. I must go to the Depot and mail this scribbling. Hoping you will be home this eve and receive this and answer soon, I remain yours as ever

Fin

P.S. Put a stick of wax on the Christmas tree for me. You know I like it.

R.S.V.P.

* * *

December 17, 1889
Postmarked Ashley Ill.
Addressed to Finley Pifer

Dear Friend

I received your kind letter and was glad to hear from you. We are all well. I am in school today. I have my Grammer lesson and now I will write to you. I intended to write sooner but have not had time. I wanted to write before you left Mt. Pulaski. I am going to church tonight. I wish you was here to go with me.

We are going to have a entertainment at our church a Christmas and also Mr. Santa Clause. Why can't you come down and spend Christmas with us. I wish you could. We will kill one of the turkeys and make Orange pie if you will. The weather is very gloomy now. It makes me feel lonely. We have been awful lonesome since you and Mr. Custer left. I saw Charley Rose and told him that I got a letter from you and told him you said Hellow, and I went to the big city of Rad___ saw a very good time. We are going to close school on the 24th of Dec and commence the 2nd of January for holiday. I have a song for Christmas. Charley girl is getting well. I want to get ma and Charley something for Xmas but don't know what to get. Tell me one thing. They have got very pretty things. Sara Martin still stays in the store. Ma still bakes bread for the store. I would like to see Frank and Dolly but never expect to again unless ma gets Mr. Keller. Don't he live at Sullivan.

How is your red-headed girl getting along. I show the girls your picture. They think you so pretty. They want to take it away from me, but they will never get it while I live. Well ma sent the steamers the same day I received your letter. Mr. Haire wants to know where Mr. Hericks lives. Send his address. He ...

[letter abruptly ends – no signature.]

* * *

December 19, 1889

Posted Mt. Pulaski, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie

Yours of 14th inst. Reced and contents eagerly purused.

I am not at Petersburg yet. What made you write to me the way you did? I wouldn't believe it was you that wrote it if it was not for the familiar writing. You repeated the same as you wrote me at Mattoon and when you saw me before I got it you said, "it would make me mad," and ask me not to get mad didn't you? Then after giving your letter as accurate an interpretation as my knowledge affords. You certainly meant that you did not believe what I told you when I was there and what I repeated in my last letter. Your quotation: You may go to Petersburg and the country too if you want to. I am sorry you did think I was so absent minded as to not know that.

The supper bell is ringing. I will go to supper and then I have to go see a man. I will write more when I get back if it is not to late. Ta ta till later.

Back again. 9:45 p.m. Rather late to commence to write, isn't it?

I made \$16 since supper. Feel better. Maybe my writing will be more agreeable. I told you I was not going to Ptbg. Xmas, didn't I — or I didn't think I was going. You didn't believe I meant it, did you?

When I wrote you last I told you I was going from here to Delevan or Petersburg. I did not mean visiting. Do you think I did?

I saw a fight that was real comic. It was a Negro woman and a white man. The man had the Negro woman's boy arrested and while the trial was going on, the Negro pulled a rawhide strip from under her cloak, gathered the man by the whiskers and lashed him good. I am getting afraid of the female sex, especially if they are black. I didn't know what they could do.

Well it is half past 10. I will close for the night and go to bed. I am writing this in the hotel office. I write a while and talk a while. It takes a lonely time to write much. Good night.

Morning. 8 a.m. I got up to late. The cook couldn't give me any Breakfast. You would, wouldn't you?

I would like very much to see Nellie Bl ____ [?]. Rather see you though. If I go any place on a pleasure trip it will be home. I think Charley don't want me to go any place. I got a letter from Bretia saying Charley Purvis said those fellows were not going and wanting me to go. I told her I would write and tell him by tomorrow. If you see him, tell him he will get a letter on the noon train tomorrow.

I was just going to write something and looked on your letter and saw the something. Guess wh. it was. I ___ ___ it was the best part about the letter. No, it wasn't. I would rather have a letter from you, if it is a good one, than a ____.

I can't think who that cousin of mine is. The first time since I have been writing to you that you said you may write if you want to, isn't it?

I hope that that Chris. letter will be a good on. Don't wait until Chris to write it though.

There was quite a change in the weather they say. A change of weather makes a change of person. Do you think I have changed much?

Answer soon, please.

Your friend,
Fin

P.S. I leave here to day. Don't know where. I will Direct to Lincoln. If I am not there Charley is and he will send it to me where I go. I think I will go to Latham or Selivan. Write tomorrow.

At P.D.&E. Depot.

Ever yours,
Fin

* * *

December 21, 1889

Posted Latham, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:-

If you have not all ready written me, direct to Latham instead of Lincoln. If you have written me at Lincoln and it went today, I will get it Monday. A.M. for I was there this A.M. and told the P.M. to send my mail here. That P.M. Post-Master – not Past noon. Charley is going home to spend Christmas. He can't be contented away from home like I can.

I don't like this town much. No good hotels. I like to stop at a hotel that has an office. This one has none so I have to write with a pencil. I have no ink. I hope you wrote me a good letter. Did you? I wish I knew something to get you for Christmas. You better tell me. I'll have to leave this town before I could get anything that is any good. I would like to have your picture for a Christmas present.

How are you getting along with your big kids at Miller? I would like to spend Xmas with you. Don't be surprised if you see me slipping in on the 11

A.M. train about that time, but don't look for me until you see me. I forgot to write to Charley Purvis until the train was gone. I don't forget to write to you, do I? If you are agoing to be home all next week, write me in the middle of the week, won't you. It is a long time to wait until next Friday and Saturday in these important times. I am entirely by my self now. I will close. Hope your letter was a good one if you wrote. I won't get mad next time. Wish you a happy Xmas. Write Wednesday or Thursday or before.

Fin

* * *

December 24, 1889

Posted Latham, Ill. Postmarked Peoria & Evansville R.P.O.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie,

Yours of the 20th inst. Recd yesterday from Lincoln. This will be one that you will not be expecting. Will you? Yes, I am all right now and was when I wrote you Friday. I wasn't cross either.

Tell Emmet Bracken he need not be afraid of me keeping him from going to Petersburg. You better go to Decatur with your ma and I will go see you. I am sixteen mi from there but I can see the electric light from here. They are agoing to have two Chr. trees and a dance. Here a shooting match today. I am going win a turkey. Come help me eat it, won't you?

I don't remember what it was I intended to write that was in your letter. I haven't the letter with me. I am writing this up town. The letter is down to boarding house. Yes, I think the change of weather changed you some. This last letter was a good one. Certainly I feel sorry if my letter kept you from sleeping but I don't see why it should. The next item down your letter says. Don't open that box until Christmas. I guess I won't. I have never seen any box. Where did you send it. How did you send it. When I left Lincoln I ordered any mail sent to Latham. And your letter was forwarded from there here. I wrote the Lincoln P.M. and ask him if there was any mail package there for me. Also wrote two express agents. Tell me where you sent it and how you sent it and I will get it.

P.S. from your letter. Wait patiently and I will be in the other side some-time. I don't know what that means. This is rather a dull Christmas place for me. Tell Nellie I would like to see her would like to see you too. Tell her not to make too large an orange bill. John Brosem don't know where I am at. He can't send me any duns this time. I suppose you got the note I sent you by Charley. If you get

this in time to answer on the two train today do so. So I can hunt up my package. You ask me about the stamp flirtations. Hear is a copy of them that a little school girl sent me from Ashley where I boarded. You may copy them if you want them. Better send me the copy and you keep this. I think I could read them there. I can't hardly read these. I would copy them myself but it would not better them any. I am glad you have plenty of company Xmas but wouldn't be if I was their. Evry nearly is going to Decatur from hear. I don't know but I will go too. This is the third letter to you without an answer. Something unusual isn't it. I will close.

Happy Christmas to you.

Write, please soon,
Fin

Latham, Ill.

P.S. The paper they have here don't fit my envelop.

* * *

December 25, 1889
Latham Ill.
To Post Master, Lincoln, Ill.
Post Master

Dear Sir:

Take from the enclosed stamps the necessary postage and place on a package which is there for Finley Pifer, and forward it to Latham, Ill.

Yours truly,
Finley Pifer

Latham, Ill.

* * *

December 27, 1889
Posted Latham, Ill.

Hattie

Your letter of yesterday, Christmas night, rec'd. Sorry you spent such a dull Christmas. You remember you wrote me to have a good time Xmas for you was going to? I am glad that fellow told you to go home and write to me. Who was it?

I'll send them a stick of wax.

I guess that package will be a New Year's present instead of a Christ. if I get it at all. I wrote the P.M. at Lincoln again. Enclosed you will see his answer. I suppose you have rec'd your box by this time. Yours was a little late as well as mine. I intended going to Decatur or further so I could get something nicer than that – but as I was at the Depot awaiting the train, a message came for me to go to Hartsburg. So I went the other way. I was in Mt. Pulaski Xmas night until 9 P.M. I was to a German Xmas tree there a little while, long enough to hear the little Dutch folks say their peace. The folks where we boarded was offal glad to see me like home. I don't mean home for "that home in the country" is the loncomest place I can find. They wanted to know where Charley was.

No! Susie did not come to see me. I wish she had if you had come with her. In your other letter you ask me, "Could you come home if you wanted to?" I would hate to think that I could not. Of course I don't mean that I didn't want to. Next question in your letter is: Ashley Girl. I don't know any better way to answer it than send you her whole letter and let you Judge again. I will if I can find it.

No! No! I didn't mean that – what that stamp signifies of course I didn't – I never noticed what that meant. I nearly always put them there. I won't do it any more though. I meant – the way this one is.

Take good care of that doll. You weigh 2 lbs more than I do with my over coat on. You are not getting very little.

Oh! I will be home some of these times to stay. I haven't run off. Through looking for me, are you? I fool you some of these days – or nights. I mean about 11 !! Look for me when I tell I am coming. I will cancel that up there now. I had forgotten about that. Oh! I didn't mean to make that last long mark.

I was showing the natives of this town some puzzles and tricks. I am afraid it will spoil my business for they said to one another, "By G___, he is the slickest man ever struck this town." I am afraid they will be afraid to trade with me.

I haven't heard from home since I have been gone the last time. I guess they know where I am, don't they? Don't give all that treat to the Miller kids. Keep some for me. You never gave me any of what you got. Care Christmas. I think you had better send that lock of hair and I will put it in that locket when I get it – if I ever do. If it isn't at Sullivan I never get it.

I would enjoy very much to attend your supper. Don't know where I will be – mebbly there. I say mebbe that way in the paper. I can't think who that letter is from down south. Tell me.

Train is coming, I must quit –

Answer soon,
Fin

* * *

January 2, 1890
Latham, Ill.
11 a.m.

Dear Hattie

The first letter to you this year, and if I carry out my intention it will be as you requested, a long one. I don't know as to the quality. You may judge that when you receive it.

Why didn't you write so I could get it soon. I bet cigars with a fellow I would get a letter Monday. I was sure I would get one from you. I went to the Depot and helped carry the mail up but none in there for me. So they had the Joke also the smoke on me. I told you to write now. I didn't say by when. Although you would surely write before you went to your school anyway, and you did but didn't send. Why didn't you?

I have never got my Xmas box yet. I guess I will have to give it up for lost. I hate to though. I guess some mail man is wearing it. No matter if I did not get it. I appreciated your kindness just the same as if I had received it. But I feel very badly disappointed after it being sent. That is what I get for not coming home, isn't it? When I am at home, I always go away some where or nearly. This time I was away so I stayed away. I wish I hadn't now.

I am going to leave this town Saturday eve or Sunday morning. I will be through hear then. I don't know where I will go yet. I think to Delivan. Tell your ma I said for her to quit putting nonsense in your head. I am not tired reading your letters.

Oscar Harris [?] is in hard luck asking you go with him when you can't. That was twice that I know of. I guess he is trying to beet me. I have too much confidence in you to believe he can do so, but a fellow showed me a letter the other [day] of how suddenly things could change. I don't envy you your trip out to the old maids. I wish I was there to go to your supper with you. Wm is going to take you? I think you might give me your basket if I was there. I don't want the old maids. I guess you will have to give that treat to somebody else or save it until I come ____ give it to the one who is kind enough to take you to the supper or take you home.

A quotation from your letter: "I am sorry to say, after what I have said, that your letters (reading them) were the best Christmas pleasure I had." A stranger interpretation of that would be: they were not much pleasure. I won't look at it that [way] now. I have now the time I would. That isn't what you want is it? I know what you meant. You meant you didn't have lots of fun Christmas and

you did like to read my letters. That's it isn't it?

I am shure that reading your letters was the best pleasure I anticipated. So I was not disappointed.

I wish Dora Bargher had not been there and you had gone [to] Decatur. I would [have] gone shure. I would gone to Hartsburg. I would telegraphed back and told them "rats." I was going to Decatur to see my best girl. I would send a substitute not to see you – I meant to Hartsburg. I am glad you are pleased with your present. I would have got a nicer one had it been in this town.

The average weight of an American man is 141 ½ lbs while that of a woman is 124 ½. You weigh more than the average man. I told you that you was getting fat.

I didn't make fun of you. What made you ask that? No, I'll not send you the wax.

Listen now, this is the truth. A proposal – I will quit smoking again if you quit chewing wax. What you say?

I haven't smoked since the night before New Years. A young fellow hear by the name of Frank Taylor and I are seeing which can quit the longest. It hurts him worse than me.

Alright, I will send you that letter this time. I would sent it the other time but the train came before I was ready. I wanted to write more too. I didn't have time to look for it. I will hunt it up this time. No, you will not be disappointed in seeing me every time. You will be disappointed the other way some of these days. If you could have answered that which was mailed so easy, why didn't you do it? You can tell Effie that I am obliged for her liberal consent but not get her bonnet on until I get there.

Everything in your letter is answered and I have some paper left. You quit writing like you was going to write more later. You said paper is scarcest present. I guess I had better send you some. Your last Christmas present would been more appropriate for this and this one for last year, wouldn't it? I have a friend hear (Taylor). I ask him if he had a sister. He said, "Yes sir, a daisy." I said, "bring her out, I want to see her. It would be quite a comfort to me to see a Taylor girl." He told my land lady she was stuck on me. But when I saw her she didn't appear very Taylorish.

I was in the store where the P.O. is last night and the people got to talking about marrying. I told them a wife was the last thing a young man needed and was the first thing they got nearly. The Post Master said yes, I bet you will be married before 3 months. I said, all right. I'll bet \$10 in your partners' hands that I will not be married in a year. He came very near taking it. He said that girl at Sullivan that you get so many letters from is not going to keep that up long. I told him he didn't know you as well as I did. I have known of people los-

ing just such bets, haven't you?

I got a letter from Mr. Sterick that cooberrated what you said he said. Tell John I will be down and help him pick the burs out of Charley's tail next Christmas. I had turkey stuffed with oysters for New Years. What did you and the old maid have?

Jan 3, 8:30 A.M.

After a night's repose I will continue the good work. I have about concluded to Sunday in this town again. When I leave hear I am not going to any place as small as this any more. A gang of boys are going to Peoria from hear today. They want me to go offal bad because I used to live there, but I am not going to go. I report I would like to be there to go with you to the supper tonight. Don't put enough in your basket to make some one sick for I saw a fellow yesterday who was sick eating too much bananas. Not a very pleasant feeling, he said.

One of the boarders told me this morning that he heard the landlady telling her sister that I was a offal nice young man. She ought to make a mark on that – I would beet her John. I don't know who John is. I know I don't want to beet him.

I am in an offal good humor this time, don't you think so? You said you wanted me to be in a good humor and write a good long. I think I have complied with all three of the requests, don't you? I hope you will have more people at your supper than you did the last one you had. If you buy novels for the school, send me one. You know I like to read them so well. I haven't smoked yet. I have had several fellows offer to treat me, but I decline. I declined drink out of a jug last night too. I always do that though, don't I?

A fellow just came in and said the roads are real rough. If they are rough here, I don't know what they will be between Sullivan and Miller [school].

Well, as my paper is about gone, I will bring my letter to a close, hoping to hear from you tomorrow (Saturday) sure and a long good and wide letter. Wishing you a splendid time at your supper and a exceedingly Happy New Year, I will close. I won't bet this time when I will get an answer.

Ever your friend,
Latham
Fin

* * *

January 7, 1890

Posted Lincoln Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie.

Yours of the 4th recd and read with intense interest. Tried the pen and none of them will write. I will use a pencil.

Never have I received a letter that I would have been more disappointed than would I have been had it failed to appear. I thought the supper might have something to do about stopping it. As you said, one did before. I am glad you had an enjoyable time but wish I had been in Mr. Boise's place. If I had gone to your supper it would [have] made me feel bad seeing him enjoying the pleasure that I claim. Claim too much, don't I?

No, Charley had no business taking my present out and not saying a word about it. I am going to write home and have them send it to me. I haven't wrote home since I have been gone. It has been about a month. I would hate to be that long and not [write] to you.

I just had a thought before I commenced writing. For the first time I will write it to you. I was thinking what I would do if I wrote to you and did not get any answer or if you quit writing to me. Go right home or get mad and not want to go home at all. Which do you think? I don't want you to try me.

You said last Sunday night was the first Sunday night you had company since I went away, then said you believed you beat me. I don't know what you mean. In what way? I should think you have. I haven't went with a girl since I left Sunday night – or any other night. Honest. Do you believe me? I have had several chances. Christmas night I had a girl ask me to take her to the Xmas in Mt. Pulaski.

You did not say who you company was Sunday night. Who? Mr. Boise? Certainly you must see some pleasure. I never kept you from going with anybody only when I find somebody that wants my whole place. Then I unwillingly accommodate them.

It is snowing here. I guess you can take sleigh rides now. I expect I will get homesick when the sleigh bells begin to jingle. I herd some today.

I haven't smoked yet – have you chewed? No. I guess that letter isn't lost – I will send it this time shure. I forgot the other time. I forgot to rub those pencil lines of the letter I wrote too.

Your matrimonial bet won't amt. to much. You can make it in the bargain for him to pay that before you promise. I can't imagine wh. would fill that blank about Art B—. Tell me next time. If you want to put it on a separate slip and I will burn it. I am anxious to know. As to that fellow at Purvises' girl catching

your fellow (if it is me – is it?) I can tell you once for all, “her hair is not red enough for that.”

I never wanted to see anybody as bad in my life as I do you. I am going to see you too some of these days. I have a date in my mind when I will be home. I won't write it to you for now for I may not go then.

8th I got a pen now. The snow is all going off. I guess you won't get that sleigh ride this time.

I intended to send this on the morning today but did not get it wrote in time. I saw several persons I knew at while I was at Latham. When I see anybody from Sullivan it makes me want to see you more than ever.

I will go from here to Atlanta. Don't know when though. About Monday I think. I guess I will surprise ma [?] one of these days if she wants to see me.

I hope this letter will find you home Friday evening and be followed up by a big two sheet dinner Saturday. If you are not at home and send for your mail don't forget to send an answer before the next time you come home. To long to wait. Be sure and write as soon as you can.

Yours Finley + only
Fin

* * *

January 17, 1890

Posted Menier Ill.

Addressed (by typewriter) to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:

One day to late. I have not got but 35 minutes to write if you get it Saturday. Not long enough. I want plenty time when I write to you.

I came hear from Atlanta yesterday. I wish I could be the one take this to you at the supper. I will be by and by. Many thanks.

Yes, I remember the first time I was at your house. With Kate Backhouse, wasn't I?

Many thanks for you appreciating my company Mr. Boise's. No, you never wrote any thing to me about not writing nor I don't want you to.

Yes I meant – I hadn't gone with a girl since I was home the last time. You was the last one I went with and will be the next one or it will be no fault of mine. Do you believe all that?

I can only imagine what your other resolution is. I will find out when I come home. I think I know. Don't you think I do. Yes, I knew you never feed Taffy. I

didn't think you ever fed me any. I never did you. Never even told you my true feeling lots of the time. Don't you believe that?

I guess it was my fault that I did not get any Christmas present for I got a letter from ma at Tuscola forwarded from Latham. Said they got a nice present out of the office for me and would send it to me if I had wrote home so they know where I was at. They knew I was not at Lincoln at that time for Charley was with me when I left there.

No, I do not write to that Petersburg girl. I have the letter yet that I told you I had in the showcase at Mattoon and you told me not to send it. You didn't think I would mind you so well did you? Yes, it is easy for me to supply the blank or would be if I was there, wouldn't it?

No, my part of that Bracken story is not so. Do you believe? I hope you won't go to Moshure (Moshun ?] I didn't say that – the other time you was going, did I. I meant it though. If you go, I am too. Could I?

I must close ... for it is almost train time and I don't want to miss the train shure. I have got the La grip. A man here will die tonight with it, they say. I hope it won't serve me that way. I am just taking it.

I have not wrote all I want to. I will take this to the train (real close) and write more tonight. You may get it Saturday but I don't think you will. I will tell you in it when I will be home if I can study out when. It won't be long – not over two weeks might

Answer both letters whether you get them or not by Sunday

In hurry

Your
Fin

P.S. It didn't take me all this time to write this, but part of the time reading your letter. Must stop

If I miss the train this won't be sent at all.

Fin

* * *

January 17, 1890

Posted Mercier, Ill., Tazwell Co.

6:15 P.M.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear esteemed friend.

About 20 minutes ago I was writing to you. Now I pursue the same pleasure. I wrote until the train whistled, then I ran to the depot about 1 ½ blocks just in time to meet my expectation. I wrote in such haste that I really don't know what is in it. So if anything appears in this that is in the other one, that accounts for it.

I haven't received a bit of mail since I have been here (one day). When I left Atlanta, I told the P.M. to send my mail here. He put a slip out for me to write my address on. I wrote my name Mircer Ill. – misspelled this place and spelled a town in LaSalle Co. Very unalike aren't they? I wrote then for them to send it here. I think yet if this is properly carried you will get it tomorrow at 10:30 at Sullivan from the north – it will go to Chicago to at 8:30. The other one left here on a train bound for Denver Col. See wh. one you get first. It will be this one if carried to best advantage.

I never had as good time since I have been out as I did last Sunday night. I laughed until my sides ached. I made a bet with a man at Lincoln that I could find a man that could walk 100 yards before a man could run 150. We put a \$25 forfeit on a \$100 bet. So I sent for my man. He came to Lincoln disguised Sunday. He enquired at the hotel for a steem cooker man. They bought him in. I was playing dominoes. I couldn't help but laugh right out – nearly. So after supper we went to the Salvation Army and he joined. Told them he fell offal good. They ask him wh was his sins. He told them he was working for a man and he broke his rules to ride on Sunday. You can imagine the time I had laughing at him. They withdrew their bet on a provision they had that if they could not get their man, it would be a draw. It will go later I guess.

If the roads are as rough there as here I am afraid you will not get home tomorrow after the supper. I can't think when you suspicion me being home. To acknowledge the real truth, I am not going to do without seeing you much longer if I half to quit this business. I recall something to my mind that Viola Michles told me once while we were out riding. I realize now she was right. I told her I never enjoyed going to see Miss Walker or anybody on Sunday eve just to pass away the time. Told her I would rather go buggy riding or Church or some place of that kind or stay at home. She said, "You never loved anyone then and if you ever do, you will be glad to be with them any time and alone with them too." That is the first time I ever wrote anything like that to you, isn't it? It came so true I couldn't help but tell her words. She was speaking from experience and I was guessing. [Emphasis supplied.]

I think I will be home by next Friday or Saturday night. I will leave here at

morning and the soonest I can make Sullivan will be on the 6 P.M. freight from Decatur. I will come then if I can.

P.S. Don't look for me until I tell you sure I will come. Then I will come. I never tell you that though, do I. Write me a good long letter – put the co. on it so it won't go to the other place.

Answer soon please,
Finley Pifer

* * *

January 24, 1890
Posted Latham, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:

I will fool you this time sure, won't I. You will think by getting a letter that I am not coming. I am though. I will be at Sullivan on the freight at 6 p.m. tonight. I am on my road now. I left Minier homeward bound day before yesterday evening. Stayed in Atlanta night before last. Last night here. It does me good to stop and see the people I have stoped with and dealt with. They are all glad to see me. Evry patent right man can't say that – though and tell the truth.

I hope you will be home. I am almost sick. Ought to be in bed. I will go to Decatur from here a 10 a.m. will accompany this letter that far. Stop there until the evening freight. It may be late but I will go see you if it is. That will be all right won't it?

Some people here want me to go back to Minier for them on business but I won't do it today. I don't think. I do hope you will be home for if I have to go out to the old maids to see you even ___ one night and then go home in the cold, it would make me clear bedfast sick. Don't you think so? I am almost that way now with -- Grip. You may look busie this time.

Fin

P.S. Excuse this paper and envelop. I never thought of writing but I was sitting at a desk where his was, so it tempted me to write.

Fin

I wish you would have Jim or Lee to ask for my mail at Sullivan eve. They may send it away before I can tell them not – if there is any – for the office may be closed before I get there.

* * *

February 6, 1890
Posted Lincoln, Ill.
To Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:-

It seems very odd to endeavor to answer or write to you with out having one of your letters by me. I haven't got a single letter from anywhere since I left home. I got through here the next day after I came in the evening so instead of having my mail come here, I had it sent to Greenview, Menard Co. Instead of going there, I went to Menier and Atlanta again. I returned here this A.M.

I have been loafing all day. I sold out here and had nothing to do but could not get away from here until late eve so I will go early tomorrow if I don't miss the train as I did this A.M.

I got offal lonesome the first day or two after I left Sullivan, but I am becoming naturalized by this time. I am among acquaintances here that I have found by being here so often. It seems like home (not like your home) but I go to a strange land to me tomorrow.

I saw Rachel McGuire of Bethany today. She goes to school here. I guess I will change my mind and move hear instead of St. Elmo sure. No, I don't think I will stay any place, do you?

The salvationists are just now marching. I thought I would go tonight but concluded I would put in the time writing to you. That's the best, isn't it?

I have been attending coart nearly all day to day for pastime. I made \$55 the first day after I got here and haven't made anything since. I must go somewhere else and get to business or I will blow it all in loafing.

I suppose you are still intending on going to Mo. I am about to get a partner to go with me there. So if he goes with me I guess I won't take you (rats). No danger is there?

If I get down to Greenview and there is no mail for me, I will ____ No I won't? I will get your letter about 6 P.M. Saturday if you get it started on that 2 o'clock train. You will if you are at house, I know, won't you?

I am first going up to the P.D.&E depot now to see a man that is going away on it. (I mean the train, not the depot.) Will finish after I come back.

It is $\frac{3}{4}$ mi – a good walk isn't it? BK 10:20. It is later than I thought it

would be on my return bed time, but I would rather write to you than sleep any as writing being the next best pleasure to being with you in person. My staying so late when I am there proves this to be true, doesn't it (about sleep).

I was up last night until 11 o'clock and got up at 4:30 this morning. Getting smart, aren't I? Yes but when I got to Lincoln 6 o'clock I went in the parlor and reclined on the sofa and slept so long I missed my train for Greenview.

How are the Miller kids getting along? Teacher too? The roads are better. I think you will be in home this time so I will expect a long letter tomorrow at Greenview. When your school is out, come see me, would you? If you won't do that, send me your picture. Don't wait until school is out to do that, though.

This is 4 sheets on one side. I will finish on the other for fear they make you pay extra postage.

I have written home every day since I came here. I am getting good aren't I? I wasn't writing for pleasure but business. I will close for this time or for tonight at least – I will leave this unsealed and I may want to write more in the morning. I leave here at 7:23 – have to get up early again. I will read this letter over for the first one and correct – Good by __ for the night.

Fin

Morning Ah! You will get this –sleigh note now. It is poaring down now – it is 7 o'clock. I hope to leave in 31 min and must go to the train.

Write more.

Arrive soon

Fin

Greenview Menard Co.

* * *

February 13, 1890
Posted Greenview, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:-

Your last I will endeavor to answer.

Whenever you get ready to come to see me I will leave this Co whether I am through or not. I am not a bit stuck on this country. Lots of nice people in this town though. I commenced their this morning. It is now 8 P.M. Getting

along well (aren't I)?

There is a masquerade ball here. The girls at the Hotel are going. They want me to go. If I did I wouldn't get to write to you much tonight and this is all the time I have if you get it in time to answer Saturday. You stayed at home to write to me so I will do the same.

You don't wish I was through here any more than I do. Yes, I wish I could loose sleep by being with you tonight rather than writing.

Uncle Ben isn't right about the sleep. I wouldn't die. I would sleep in the daytime. Don't you think so?

Yes, I am glad to say it is no body's business how late I stay if you are willing for it used to be out at Nelson I had to vacate the room when Dave Stewart wanted to go to bed. Then it was some body's business how long I stayed. Not so at your house though, is it? --

After supper I have just been down to the P.O. Got a letter from George Kercherall. I wrote and told him if he wanted me to make those people a visit with him, he had better come while I was here. He wrote me he wasn't coming. I don't care. I would rather see him than the Menard folks. I saw them Monday here in town. They wanted me to come out next Sunday. You write me a good long letter to keep me company a Sunday and I'll not go. I would rather read your letters any time than go out there.

The reason why I don't want to go is because you don't want me to. Yet if you were in my place, you would not hesitate for that reason. Would you? I know by past experience for you have gone with persons when you knew I would rather you would not. Don't you think so? But I shouldn't centure you what you have done. Should I? When I don't anticipate a continuance. I wouldn't have Sunday if George had come. (Explanation.)

Min and Art were in town Monday. I told them I had written George K. and thought if he came at all he would come Saturday. Min told me she would have company Sunday but if I would care to come ahead. You know me well enough to know I would not go. I wouldn't want you to do me that way, nor do I want anybody else. If I would come home to you and you would see that I wouldn't go see you. Don't you think so? I often find persons who are ready to take advantage of my rights but that is no reason I should take advantage of any one elses, is it?

[Final sheet of this letter written on stationery of Chamberlain House, Greenview, Illinois, "Everything First-Class, Rates \$1.50 per Day."]

It is poaring down rain. I am afraid you will not get home tomorrow so you can write me Saturday. I hope you will enjoy yourself at the supper at Stricklin. I only wish I was there to go with you. Would I?

Who is going to take you? If it keeps raining he will have a trip like I had

when I took you out to your school when I was home. I get my mail at 7 o'clock P.M. That leaves Sullivan at 2. I think I will go to Petersburg a Monday. I don't like this Place.

I see in your letter that Stricklin is the last basket supper you are going to. A poor place to quit upon my notion. I can't aminagine what you have learned about me not believing all you say. Who has been telling you any such as that. I never said it. I don't think you write stories.

George Kerchevall said he was going to Stricklin. I think I will answer his letter. If you see him there, tell him to go to P.O. and get a letter. Art told me something to tell him.

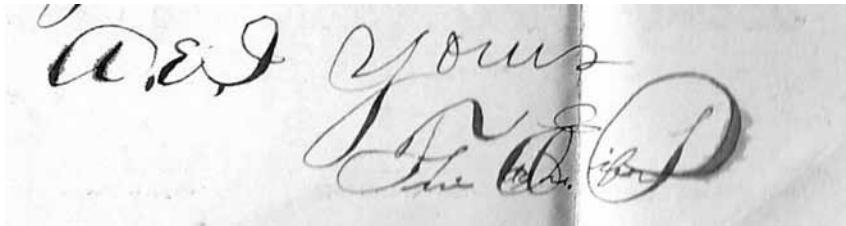
This letter is much longer than yours was. The paper is wider and longer than yours I know I

Many thanks for the paper. Send it again and I will return the postage. I haven't any stamps here or would enclose this time. I have to seal this tonight and leave it for the hotel runner to mail on train in the A.M. The train goes at 6 o'clock. Before I get up.

I hope you have got out of the notion of going to Mo. by the time you get this. When is your school out?

The Masquerade people eat supper here (at the hotel) at 11:30. It is after 10 now. It is poaring rain – they will have a time coming from the hall over here. I will close hoping to receive a long letter from you Saturday night. So

Good by, answer Saturday sure, please
A.E. I yours,
Fin E. Pifer



Excuse paper

* * *

February 17, 1890
Posted Petersburg, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dearest friend:-

Your last received, contents purrused and obeyed. I did not go to the country. Your letter was company, plenty.

I just came here today. I have just came in from taking a stroll sketching the Burg. A poor opinion I have of this place sure. It is situated in hills, hollows, woods and scattered all along the Sangamon River. The court-house and square is down in a whole with hills all around it. The Sullivan Jail is a larger building than this court-house. I have been making fun of this town ever since I came here. If I do any business here I will be surprised. I am better acquainted here already than I am after being in towns a week. I got acquainted with several from here that were over to the Masquerade ball at Greenview. They say that everybody that comes to this town gets stuck on it so bad they can hardly leave it. I hope it won't be so with me. I don't think it will sure although I like the people splendid so far.

A nice set of young sociable fellows more so than any place I was ever at. They say I must go to the faith cure meeting with them tonight. I guess I will for it will be something new to me. You beat me. I never got a single valentine. I never sent but one and that was to Charley Purvis. Don't tell him.

I quit school once too on account of being changed in seats. Mr. Hollingworth changed me so I quit — and went to Lovington to school. If there case was like mine, I don't blame them. I wanted to go to Lovington anyway and I knew if I said I wouldn't go to Stricklin after my seat was taken, they would send me. So they did.

[The Stricklan school was directly west of East Nelson, a few miles southwest of the Miller school where Hattie was teaching.]

Changing of seats will cause a disturbance in any school almost. My advice to teachers is to give the pupil sufficient notice that if he don't stop his mischief, a change will be made. Then if he continues it, change him and he can't kick.

They have just turned on the eclectic light. It makes quite a nice view. Where Sullivan's water works tank is on an immense tower, this one sits right on the ground on a hill. They told me to go upon the hill and take "birds eye" view of the city. I did. On my return they ask me what I thought of it. I told them it was the best place for coasting in winter and ____ in summer I ever saw. So it is.

You can get farmers in Illinois. No need going to Mo. for that. Don't you think so? No, I don't think a farmer would suit you. The farmer might but a farmer's life wouldn't. It wouldn't me if I was a girl.

This paper is almost gone and I am not half through so I will just take another whole sheet. — Not the same size and a good deal drity [?]

After supper.

You accuse me wrongfully too when you say you learned by me that I don't believe what you write. Certainly I know all these things are true about you having gone with persons that you knew I didn't want you to. I am believing or hoping at least that some of them will not occur again, but the only true way to estimate or predict the future is by the past, isn't it? Until actual experience shows otherwise. Don't think by that, that I don't believe what you say for I do think you meant what you said. But knowing your disposition as well as I do or think I do, and knowing that you enjoy company and a good time is the reason why I think you would not refuse to spend an evening or go with anyone you wanted to knowing that it would not hurt me any and thinking I would not know. I am not and have no reason to blame you if you do a privilege of your own. I did not mean in any other letter to ask you not to go with persons that I didn't want you to. I only meant that I did what you did not do by me when you was tried.

I will go down to the place where we were to start from in the faith cure. I will write more when I come back. Will learn more about the town by then.

18th 5:30 P.M. Well, I was to the faith cure meeting. Was you ever to one? If you weren't the nearest I can explain it is: The people just drop over apparently lifeless and stay that way for hours. They have a long bench to lay them on when they tremble. I saw 5 of them stretched out at once – a show indeed. They scare me. One country woman stayed in a trance all night. They had to haul her home that way. I stayed at the meeting until half past eleven and they were still tumbling over. I left afraid it would come my time to tumble. Don't think I would tumble though.

A glance at your letter. No, I did not go to the ball after supper. I went to as soon as I saw the mob. Half dumb.

I don't think I will get a chance to tell that girl what you said. I haven't saw or heard tell of her since I told you. If I see her I'll tell her sure. Don't think I will see her again.

Measure again my paper was all a little under and lower than yours. I measured.

I don't think any more of this town I did. I found another patent right man here – been here a week and done no business. He curses the town. I won't do that. I see in the news that Martin Taylor married Rachel Blackwell. I guess not our _____.

I got up this AM at 9:30 – later than I intended to sleep. I will do better tomorrow.

Yes, I will come home after your school is out for I don't think I will before. Thanks for the paper. Send it again and again. No, I guess the postage won't break you up. I didn't think it would but if Hausmeyer can furnish office

postage to write to him, I certainly ought to furnish postage for printed matter for you.

I hope sure you teaching school will not keep me from getting my usual mail. I wrote early in the week on purpose so you can get it if you send you ought to write any way hadn't you?

Write soon a good long letter please. This is a long one isn't it.

A.E.I. your Fin

* * *

February 21, 1890

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie,

On Train,

I can't be home until Monday or Tuesday. I have to go to Jewett on some business that - I don't know really when I will get through, but can't be there Sunday ____ The train is stoped now. I can write better. I saw Mr. Stence. He was offal glad to see me so he said. Well I so wish I could be home some day.

Fin

Near Greenough

* * *

February 27, 1890

Posted Peterburg, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:-

Still in this place. I guess what the people told me is so. They said everybody got so stuck on this place they couldn't hardly leave it. It seems as though I have become naturalized but when I get through, if I ever do, I will not be here after the first train leaves. This train is full of patent-right men. If I sell it will be an exception to the rule but I think I stand an equal chance so I will stay with them.

I was in hope you would answered my last so I would have it by this time. Talk about weather this beats anything. I haven't been around the square today. Never went out of the hotel only to the P.O. this forenoon and not much more this P.M. It is raining and sleeting here terribly. I do not know how you will

get home tomorrow. I hope you will though to write to me.

I got a letter from home today. They want me to come home. Don't think I will go though verry soon. No, I would rather stay away until it moderates than go home and wait for the weather. I want it to be good weather when I come home, don't you. We can go to the picnicks then.

No, you did not lose your Bracksen bet. I saw that girl in town last Saturday. I clean forgot to tell her what you said. She came to the Hotel and took dinner with me. Clever wasn't she?

Is it tomorrow your school is out or the next Friday? I think you are having a time with you seat changing business a bad thing to commence a school if it can hardly be avoided. Don't you think so by this time?

I like my place so well that I am stopping at – it seems like home or I am getting so every place seems like I don't know which. The girl here goes to school. She gets me to show her how to work her problems. She has never had any yet that I didn't get – but I don't know how ____ she may for some of them are pretty tough. The last mail that can get to here from Sullivan today has just arrived. No mail for me from there.

Saturday:- Cold and the ground is covered with snow and sleet. I will stay indoors today sure. I [intended] to finish this last night but while I was writing, a man came to see me so did not get to write any more until this A.M. It can't get to Sullivan today now. I think it will get there at 5 A.M. tomorrow.

I suppose you are glad your school is so near out. I would think I would be. That Bracken girl will be married in March her sister told me so last Saturday. May Joy go with her for I "can't." Don't think I want to. Do you think so? Like you I will just write one sheet – not for that reason but because I haven't more to write. I will fool you next time I write. See if I don't. I wish you would fool me the same way in your letter. Hoping I will get a letter from you tonight, I remain,

Yours, as ever

Fin

* * *

March 6, 1890

Posted El Paso, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear

I will fool you this time for you are expecting to be foold and you will be surprised to not be, won't you? Not the way I intended to fool you though.

Wait until next time.

I finally got through at Petersburg and Menard Co. all over. I don't know as I will ever see it again although I have some acquaintance that I would enjoy seeing again, but like all the rest of new found ones, will soon be forgotten.

I got through Monday morning but the folks where I [am] at wouldn't let me leave until after Tuesday night. They said I had to stay for the show so they hid my grip to keep me from going before. I would got it though if I had tried hard enough I expect. I don't like my hotel as well here but I like the [] a little better. It is a place about as large as Sullivan with all the business houses on one side a long street. You can never guess what kind of town Sullivan would make if streets laid out in that way ____.

I sold Menard Co. to a cross Widow woman. I don't want to go on a trade with any more women. She heard of me and sent for me to come see her and then it took me 4 days to talk her out of \$30.

A glance at your letter. Thanks for such a long letter. I only hope it is to be continued. No, I did not intend to fool you by writing a long letter. You will see the next time. You won't be very much fooled now couldn't be could you! For you are expecting it.

You shouldn't be out dores so long on such cold nights and you wouldn't get sore throat. I guess I will have to write to George what he did to me. He said for me not to make a mark [?] on his girl and talk to much sweet talk to her while I was over to Menard Co. No I won't. Let the good work go on. There is a good chance to get you Jolly young farmer you talk about without going to Mo. I don't want you to take him though. George was wrong and you was wright about the country business. Write that girl, Bracken, a matrimonial congratulation the 28th of March and it will be very appropriate. I am going to. Write one with me, will you? I saw her in Peterburg Tuesday. She told me a final farewell good by. I told her what you said. She said tell you she sent her best regards to you and tell you she thought you going with a offal nice little boy. Rats where does she go to get her hau__ hands.

I didn't tell you that you storied. You are thinking of some one else. Quotation from you letter -- "What did I say that you do believe I meant?" I don't know what you mean. I believe you mean all you say if you say it in earnest. All of this kind of paper I have here ... use another sheet that I have. ...

[new sheet of paper]

If I get through in this co very soon (I mean in a few days) I will go to Merser Co. N.W. corner of the state. If I don't get through until it gets nice warm weather, I am coming home first. I think it will be that way. I am going

to be at home about 3 weeks when I come if it is nice weather. And you will be there. You will won't you? If you are not there I won't go at all very soon. It is cold here. I guess there too. I haven't been out of the house today and it is almost noon.

No, it wasn't by a long letter that I wanted you to fool me. You fool me like I fool you. I was very agreeably fooled by the long letter though. You can write more than every Saturday when school is out, can't you. Is that asking too much? Because I appreciate your letters so is no reason why I should impose on good nature so much. If you are ever out away from home you will know how to appreciate letters often as I do.

I left a part of my things in Menard Co. I don't know when I will ever get them. I will send for them. Or forgot them. I don't want to go back sure. I will stick my Petersburg chums picture at the top of this sheet. How do you think he looks? He wants to go to Mo. with me next summer and help sell patent rights. I guess I will take him. Creech took them for him. I sent his picture to Sullivan while I was there. He was stuck on that one I have of mine in my locker. You said some day you would be on the other side. When? I am waiting patiently. I am afraid you will ware my patience out if such could be done.

After dinner – I don't like your new name. O there was a fellow in Petersburg that somebody said looked just like me. I met his girl one evening. She said to [me] Why how do you do. I was surprised and she was more so when she discovered her error. I don't know anyway that a letter can come so the connection will carry it the same day. So I can't expect a letter until Monday, if you write Sat.

Fin

[PS] if the 3 o'clock AM train takes mail out of Sullivan I could get it on the same day but if it don't, I can't – Answer soon please.

Ever your friend,
F.E.P.

* * *

March 10th, 1890
Posted El Paso, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear friend Hattie:

You are worthy of a whole truth [?] certainly. A few words will explain. I was writing where there was a crowd of people who would gaze on if any chance so I left it unfinished at start expecting to finish after I was through the letter but forgot.

Up to Sunday I had never recd. but one letter since I came here. Quite at my surprise Sunday when I called at the office I got an abundance of mail. A letter from home, one from Mr. Grider, a card from Lincoln, your letter and paper, and some photographs from Petersburg, all of which were opened and read, leaving your letter until the last, expecting as usual "quite a feast" as I term it. I must say that I don't know how to take it. Aren't you surprised, getting an answer so soon? I don't get mad as easy as I used to – try not at least.

After supper quotations from your letter: "You can take your choice: a long letter once a week, or shorter letters more than once a week." Not what I expected. Further on you say: "Write if you wish and I will do my best" "All will be answered." Different meanings can be taken from the above but in any way: thanks are due you for such a liberal offer.

Notwithstanding the vast appreciations I have for your letters and the many dark lonesome hours which have been crowned with pleasure to me by reading and re-reading them, I would rather receive a letter from you once a month or even two months written for your own pleasure, together with mine, than two a week wrote for my pleasure alone, as your letter intimates that your future letters would be.

It is poaring down rain here lonesome for me sure. I would rather strike a town that I don't like than people that I don't like. I thought I would answer your letter tomorrow or next day but the rain makes me think of being at your house, as I usually am rainy times when I am there, so I thought I would write as the next best. Pleasure to me and won't send it until tomorrow night at 8 P.M. so I can write more tomorrow.

I am glad you are not going to Missouri. Yes I will take you with me when I go and leave my chum at home if you will go. I guess you won't.

What makes you think that girl at P-burg knows all about the fellow you are going with? She don't know enough sure for what she said. Tell you some time.

You think more of the "Old Maid" than I do sure. Don't you believe for a minute that George Kerchevall is going to marry that "south down girl." I have heard that before and hair saw the girl. Oh! So have you out there in the woods one night – by the old saw mill. Don't you remember? You would have a time getting your face washed now unless with mud or watter of course. Keep your mouth shut when you have your picture taken so that – broken tooth won't show. I don't imagine it makes you prettier. I guess you will get my picture yet before I get yours. That is how I intended to fool you the other letter but

they had not come yet. I had them taken at Petersburg. Not much fooled though now, are you. If you rather have one with a light back ground I will send you one. I like the light ones the best. I was mad when I had them taken. Looks like it, don't it. I am not that way now though – sure do you think it. I will close for tonight – and write more tomorrow.

g-- n--.
3-11th 1890

I saw in the Chicago news today that another murder is supposed to be committed near Sullivan. Wm Wily and Dave and they were in jail. Is it true?

Another bad day this has been sure. I sent the picture before I sent the letter. I guess you have it by this time, haven't you. I sent a man from Greenview to rent the hotel. I see in the Progress he did it. A good man but he is hard of hearing. I answered my letter I got from Mr. Grider and got an answer from him this A.M. Aren't we prompt? How did he find out where I was at. Did he ask you. He wants me to send my clothes to Sullivan to have them washed and then come there to vote the 13th of April. I will send a bunch tomorrow I guess. I had better send them to you. Will you wash them? Don't you look for them until you see them though.

After supper I only have 13 minutes to finish this and get it to the P.O. I hope nothing in this will be otherwise than pleasant for surely it is meant so. My wishes are not like yours. I wish I was through here now. I could come home from a far off as well as from here anyway. I think I will go to Peoria from here if I don't go home instead of going to Merser Co. How do you think my picture is. I don't think it a bit good. Too dark. I guess now you see how I wanted you to surprise me. Don't you? A letter that leaves Sullivan gets here the same night at 8 but is not opened until next morning. I will close hoping you will write when you feel so disposed to do so.

Yours as ever,
Fin

* * *

March 14, 1890
Posted El Paso, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor

Dear Hattie.

Had I written when I felt disposed to, I would have written before I got your letter. You did find something to write – didn't you? Perhaps my letter produced subjects for you to write upon.

Taking your letter as a whole I couldn't appreciate anything better. But you seemed to doubt my honesty as to me believing myself what I write. I think you took my letter wrong as well as I am willing to admit, since your last, that I did yours. I never said or thought of saying that your writing to me was not a pleasure to you. I do think that they have always been pleasure to you, and my object was to hear them remain so by not insisting on your writing more perhaps than your desires would admit of.

You have always been a faithful correspondent of mine and one whose letters were longed for, depended upon and as regular as any thing could be. They always contain items of interest and pleasure to me. Now all this being the case and you being at home now where all your home pleasures and work is, and me being away, how easy it would be for me to write more (often I mean) than you perhaps would enjoy answering. Saying nothing about the contents of your letter. For that reason I ask you to write when you felt like it. I think you understand, don't you?

Yes, I do think you ought to write more as a pleasure to me than yourself considering everything. As you ask the question I will answer it, but do not think I had any right or should ask it of you to do so. Do you?

I did appreciate your letter but not as well as this one, I admit.

No, I don't think you are any more changeable than ever.

A penny is to small a bet – to about George K. I'll bet you 40 cents. I will go to bed now as it is late and write lots more in the A.M. This must leave here at 7:30 so I will have to get up early tomorrow sure.

Morning – Cold last night wasn't it. I liked to froze in bed. I have lots of time yet to make my words good. It only take ½ day to from here to Sullivan. But don't know whether they will be made good or not. Would like to sure.

Yes, I will be a member of their O.O.G.F. lodge if they start me. Don't you think you will to. I think the folks at Sullivan would believe me if I would tell them your home for when I come back I am there most of the time. I am going to the next town, Penola [?], to see a party today. Will be back here tonight again.

A little girl here wanted to write to you to so she did. I will send it to please her. Only 11 minutes until train time. I wanted to write more but have no time for I want you to get this today. You will have plenty of time to write Sunday, won't you.

Fin

[Two separate sheets enclosed in the same envelope. Here is the first:]

At my surprise I got a letter from ___ Bracken yesterday asking me if any way at all she wanted to see me to tell me something before she got married, 2 weeks, and in three places ask me to burn the letter as soon as I got it. Show it to you some time. She had to ask the Petersburg P.M. to find out where I was at. I can't think what she wants. I think she don't want to get married. She will not get to see me sure. I am going to answer the letter though. Wouldn't you? I must close – only 4 minutes.

Answer

Fin

[Here is the second:]

Later – I have just finished writing home for the first time since I was home. I told ma I would be home to see her in 3 or 4 weeks. That will please her won't it? I would like for your school to be out before I come home. When will it be out. I don't like to go see the old maid. She don't build fire enough for this kind of weather.

I have just finished a harty supper. Ate so long I will have to hurry or I won't get this on the train in time for it to go on the train that gets at Sullivan at 11-11 p.m. I wrote this sooner than I usually do so if you don't come home you can send for it Thursday or Friday. So you can't answer by Saturday. Don't stuff those Miller kids to full of knowledge nor Mr. Bone to full of taffy.

I have not gone with a girl for so long I have almost forgotten the idea. It will soon come to me again when I come home, won't it. Don't let that fellow get too solid for it would hurt him to give up to me when I am there and of course it would me to give up to him.

Morning – 9th. I did not get your letter off on the last night train. This time I found that letter. I will send it. I first red it over it reads a little sweet for a little girl. I never answered it. We left some of our cookers down there that we could not haul and I sent for them is how I came to write and had promised her one of my stamp pictures so I wrote to her. She is about the size of Susie hasn't got as much ___ though if she is 17 yr. old. Answer sure soon.

Ever yours,

Fin

Lincoln

P.S. My stamp answers yours – Don't it?

* * *

March 16, 1890
Posted El Paso, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan

Dear Hattie:-

Two letters to your one. You need not mail your letter to me if you haven't kept it and give it to me. I will be there tomorrow night on the 11 P.M. train. Will get through at this Co. tomorrow morning but I can't leave here until 2 P.M. I won't get to Decatur in time to catch the local there to get to Sullivan at six P.M. unless it is late. I hope it will be late for I would like to see you tomorrow night because I leave on the 12 o'clock train the next day for Newton, Jasper Co., where my boss is. I am offal tired of this place. Glad I am about through. Don't like it as well as Petersburg. I guess you won't be up that late. If you are when I go by will stop if there is a light. Don't stay up and wait on my account though.

"Mr. Black" – I have a new name too. How do you like it?

F.E.P. B.B.W.S.

St. Paterick's day in the morning. 1890. I almost changed my notion last night after I went to bed to go north instead of south but guess I won't this time so I won't - atone [?] to you as you call it. I will get there tonight at 11 o'clock if not sooner.

Fin

* * *

April 17, 1890
Posted Vernon, Ill.
Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Sister

I am going today to write that long promised letter and the long looked for one too, I suppose. The fact is I have very seldom been in a writing humor of late and then for only about two minutes at a time and I think I only imagine that I am in that humor this morning but nevertheless here goes, and I will begin on the weather first.

We have had it considerably mixed this spring. One day of fairly pleasant weather then two days of miserably bad. It has ben raining all the morning and from appearances, it seems as though it might rain all day. The strawberries are beginning to bloom and so are some kinds of apples. The prospects for fruit of every kind is very good. I shall send you a couple of crates of strawberrys if I remain here this spring but it is not recorded yet just what I will do.

This one thing I do know – that if I leave here I shall go west. I can get a splendid class if I want to stay.

How did the election go at home? The temperance folks gained almost every town in this county. When did you get a letter from George? Tell Pa I have turned Prohibitionist. I spent several days in Mulberry Grove week before last and while there I met Sam Wilson. He married Mr. Bowman's girl. I took several meals with them.

Well, I must close. Please answer promptly for you know that of all things in the world I admire promptness in answering letters. Tell me all the news you can think of. Oh yes! How are the Pentecost folks getting on?

Good bye, from Your Brother

M.B.T
Vernon, Illinois

(Per Rufus Baldwin)

[The 1870 census lists "Mack B" Taylor age 12 as living in the household of James T. Taylor, along with Martha, Frank and Hattie, then age 3. So M.B. Taylor must have been Hattie's older brother – in 1890 about 32.]

* * *

April 24, 1890
Posted Vernon, Ill.
Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Sister,

I received your letter day before yesterday and will try and answer before I forget it.

Say what is the matter with you folks up there. Have you had a snow storm? It has turned about ten degrees colder here since last evening and the prospects are the ground will freeze up if it gets cold enough.

What is the matter with that fellow of yours? Couldn't he make his steam cooker go? I was very sorry to hear of Flora losing her mind. Still I am not a great deal surprised for I don't think she ever was too evenly ballanced.

So you are running a nursery this summer are you? That's right. When you get to living in the brick house you won't have to learn how.

Is Mamma's health not as good this summer as usual? Yes I will go to St. Louis in June if you wish to. Please let me know positively in your next letter if you will go and I will try and save two cents and half for my share of the expenses. Try and get the society to appoint us as delegates to the convention. Ascertain the names of the Committee on arrangements and either write to them or send me their names. I think it will be best to secure a boarding place before going. Perhaps we could engage one for us. The rates must not exceed one dollar per day for each.

I begin teaching next week. Will have all I can possibly do. It is time to feed my face so good bye. My Post Office will be Vernon Ill. for the summer.

Your Brother,
M.B. Taylor

(Per Rufus T. Baldwin)

* * *

May 9, 1890

Posted Vernon, Ill.

Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois

Dear Sister

I will try and answer the letter received week before last. You will have to be content with a short letter this week as it is only about a half hour to train time and I have to go to Patoka. I have to clean an organ there today for the M.E. Folks. I have an organ to clean tomorrow and two on Monday. That will make five within a week at an average of three dollars each besides giving twenty-six lessons. I believe this is excuse enough for not writing sooner.

Thanks for that paper whoever sent it.

Well, I must close. Love to all.

Your Brother
M.B. Taylor

Well Mifs Taylor, as your brother is gone I will write a little more about him. He is boarding at the hotel but when in town and not busy, he spends most of his time either in the P.O. with me or at the house with my folks. He calls our house home. He has a room fitted up at the hotel and has an organ in it and his pupils take their lessons there. He has about all the pupils he can manage. He has a class at Shobonier, one in the country and they want him to get up a class at Patoka but he says he don't want to be worked to death this summer.

M.B. Taylor's friend, R. T. Baldwin

* * *

May 23, 1890

Posted Vernon, Ill.

Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Sister

I neglected writing last week partly because I was too busy and partly because I had nothing to write. The former excuse is still good. I have only given twenty six lessons this week however.

There are three or four jobs of work which I could do if I wanted to, but I am in no hurry about doing them. I am going to play for the G.A.R. Decoration exercises [Grand Army of the Republic] next Friday. The services will be about ten miles from Vernon.

It began to rain about half past four this evening and at half past seven it is still raining. I am very sorry you cannot go to St. Louis in June. I may spend the Fourth at home but cannot say positively. What are the two boys doing this spring? How is Flora Creach getting? Who did Dr. Pickering marry?

I will close for this time and try to write next Friday evening again.

From your Brother,

M.B. Taylor

* * *

June 8, 1890

No envelope.

Posted Sedalia, Missouri

Dear Father, Mother, Bros and Sisters,

This home's all well. Hoping these few lines may find you all the same. I

am almost ashamed to write now it has been so long since I got your letter that I have almost for got it. I will try and tell you why I did not write sooner and it is this. I was going to move and did move but I did not get to move as soon as I expected, and that is the reason I did not write sooner. But I will try and do better next time.

You all will find my house now at 306 West Johnson, St. Sedalia, Mo. I have bought me a house and I have got me a nice place you bet. My house has got four rooms and three porches and a bay window. It cost me \$500.00. cost _____. I sold my place at Lamont for \$300.00 and owed \$48.87 taxes on it. I was lucky to get shut of it at all. I have got all the work that I can do. I am working for my old boss again, W.P. Chusly – the same man that _____ and I worked for before I left Lamont the 3 day of March and I have not saw the Place since, and I don't care if I never see it again. If it was not for uncle George and Aunt Sida I would never go back up there. Tell the Old Man ford to come out and stay with me the rest of his days. Tell Ed that Naney has got a baby allready. It is now 9 _____ and I have wrote all that I can think of at the present time. I will close for this time and will do better next time. So write soon and Direct as Directed

306 West Johnson

St. Sedalia, Mo.

[no signature]

Love to all

[Must have been one of Hattie's brothers. But which one? Probably Mack B. – see above.]

* * *

September 11, 1890

Posted Poseyville, Ind.

Dear Sister:-

Rec'd your letter at Grayville last week, and was glad to hear that you were all well. Please don't let picnic interfere with your writing any more. I am at Poseyville, Ind., but will leave tomorrow; we will go north from here until we come about opposite Louisville Ky. Will go into Kentucky and Tennessee for the winter. I like the work splendidly, so far. We have not done a great deal here for it has been raining ever since we came; but I like the people splendidly; address my letter to Princeton, Gibson Co., Ind. Write first; then go to the picnic.

From Your Brother,

M.B.T. [Mack B.]

* * *

October 22, 1890
Posted Vernon, Ill.
Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Sister

After all my waiting I don't know what I will write about. I would have written sooner but our route was so uncertain in that I did not know how to tell you to direct a letter to reach me.

The last letter I received from you was at Princeton. We only stayed in that town one night. We left Indianna about two weeks ago and came straight west on the O&M. I cannot tell just where our route will lay this winter. Mr. Hoffman has the making of the route and he is very changeable, but there is one of two things I will do this winter. Either have a definite route or quit. The trip paid us better than I expected.

I arrived in Vernon last Saturday and found everything just about as I left it except that I think the folks wanted to see me a little worse than when I left. I want to come home if I can before we go out again, but am afraid I will not get to. I will give an entertainment at Salem tomorrow evening. When you write, address me at Vernon. This is a very poor letter but it is all the material I have.

Good bye.
From Your Brother
M.B. Taylor.

* * *

December 25, 1890
Written on Letterhead of Eden House, J.E. Eden, Proprietor, Sullivan, Illinois

Hattie
Dear friend:-

After having carefully examined the display of Christmas goods that could be had in this place, I selected for you what I thought would be a desirable present. Certainly, if it is not such I am not to blame for the feeling which I possessed was the same as if it had been appreciated.

Ever Yours,
Fin

* * *

Undated note from about this time.

Hattie:

To me no duty becomes a more pleasure than the acknowledgement of thanks to a friend for a token of friendship. Your present, though unexpected, I assure you could not have been more appropriate and acceptable should I have made the selection myself. Many an unpleasant occasion may be made pleasant, comfortable and memorable by the article presented. Therefore, you will please accept my sincere thanks.

Truly yours,
Fin

* * *

August 5, 1892
Wednesday Morning
Miss Hattie Taylor,
Crabapple School

Dear Friend:

I would be pleased to have you come home with Nina from school some evening and remain all night with me.

I have not much work to do, so will talk my jaws tired or help you with your school work, if I can, just as you desire.

If you will come, please try to send word what night, so I'll be at home.

Your friend,
Clara F.

[The Crabapple School was located in the southeast corner of East Nelson Township and northeast corner of Whitley Township, a few miles south of the Miller School where Hattie had earlier taught. Probably named after the nearby Crabapple Creek, the school was thus very close to the old Whitley Point settlement.]

* * *

September 23, 1892
At home, Friday night

Hattie:-

I have been expecting to write to you for these two or three days but kept waiting, thinking there would be no use. You ought to see me now. The head looks as big as it feels. One of my eyes is swollen almost clean shut. I have the pink-eye, I gess. Don't know what else it can be. It has been that way now since Monday. I have done everything that could be thought of to relieve the swelling and pain but all in vain so far. I just said tonight that I was not going to have any more eye water put in it if ___ out it hurts so bad. Pa said for me not to say that for I didn't know what I might have to do.

I don't think I will be in a fit condition to take you to your school Sunday unless my eye makes considerable change (for the better). I intended writing you before you came down but I thought my eye would be better by that time but I don't think so now. If it does get better I will take you. I think I can tell in the A.M. I have never stoped working yet but I ought to have to work with only one eye to see the other is blinded with poultices.

May got a letter from Jes last night. I read it. He thought she was going to run off from him Sunday. He wrote different from wh. I would under same circumstances. Tell you when I see you. I will close. Hope I can get to see you with both eyes very soon.

Yours,
Fin

Enclosed is your watch. It won't run but a little while at a time.

Sat. noon

I intended to send this by Pa this A.M. Waited until ___ and send you watch by Same. My eye was swollen worse than ever this A.M. but is better now. Doesn't [hurt] near so bad.

Answer is ready. Ta ta. [?]

Fin

* * *

September 29, 1892
Posted Sullivan, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Coles, Ill.

Handwritten on back of receipt: "Bought of U.I. Pifer & Sons, Manufacturers of Brick, 3 ½ miles south-east of Sullivan, Illinois." [This establishes that the father, Uriah, went into the brick business with his sons, including Fin.]

B.yard Sept 29/92
Hattie

My eye is considerably better. Will be all right by Sunday. I hardly know wh. to do about taking you to your school Sunday eve. I promised to burn that kiln of brick up by Lovington. I got a cart – to come 4 of Oct – that would be Monday. I ought to go Sunday eve. You come home anyway. I wrote him to watersmoke it himself if I don't hear from him again I would go Monday. Make arrangements for a place to stop at Coles in case you should go in the train.

Fin

We will go to Loving Sat: night anyway if I can get through to start in time.

* * *

October 5, 1892
Sullivan, Ill.

Hattie:-

I am on my roat to Lovington now to burn that kiln of brick I could not get out of. Not most or any. I will try and be back and see you at the rally Friday night week. It will take a good while to burn it. It is now a clay kill like ours – nothing but common casing [?] so it will take longer. The fellow is standing by me waiting. I haven't time to write more. It is 5 o'clock now and we hav 14 miles to drive yet and a kil fire tonight.

Yours,
Fin

Ferguson said he mailed that note.

[This letter confirms that by the fall of 1892 Finley had shifted his work from traveling salesman to making bricks. The absence of letters from Finley on the road after March 1890 suggests that he changed occupations in the middle of 1890. Perhaps the change was gradual. His business envelopes show on the front side that he was in the brick business. On the reverse side of the envelopes, there is an additional advertisement – which suggests that for a time Fin moonlighted in the sale of gargling oil liniment which cures everything from scalds and frost bites to “crownsab” and “farcy.” Also good for “frost rot in sheep.”]:



* * *

October 8, 1892
Posted St. Louis

Addressed to: Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan Illinois
1900 Olive Street [Odd street address written on the envelope. Might be where the James Taylor home was located; but the 1896 Atlas of Moultrie County does not show such a street in Sullivan.]

Dear Cousin Hattie

Your most welcome letter received and read with pleasure. This leaves us all well at present. Mother has been here since last Monday. Just went home this morning. Tell Aunt that Bertie is very sick at Mother's with his lungs. He is in a pretty bad state. We are very uneasy about him now as he coughs all the time.

Well, Hattie, has Frankie or Mattie had any more babies? I am doing pretty

well. Married going on two years and none on the way. Lottie said that she would ring its neck if any come to our home. I suppose Frank will almost take a fit when his baby is born. What does Aunt and Uncle think about it.

Now you are the only girl home. Don't let Lee and Jimmie get ahead of you. Tell Jim I think it too bad he cannot get married and I only wish I had of only waited for him. I would of pulled his eyes open.

Well, Hattie, enough nonsense now. More next time. I've had a lovely time this fall. I took Mother everwhere I could think of and places I did not think of. She enjoyed her visit very much. I send you my picture. How do you like it. Every one thinks it splendid. Now form your opinion of it.

Now I will close by saying give my love to all the folks and keep a portion for yourself and answer soon. I am as ever your most affectionate cousin,

Nell

* * *

October 10, 1892
Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Sister:

I received your letter last week and thought I would answer it.
John is coming after you next Friday evening.
All of us are well.
Uncle Joe, Aunt Mary and Aunt Julia came over today.
I expected to see a different person altogether but I was mistaken.
I will get you your money when you come home.
I do not know any more to write so will close.

Lee

* * *

October 10, 1892
Monday Evening

My dear Miss Taylor:-

How will it suit you to spend Wednesday night with us? We are invited out to Miss Vie Munson's that evening and will be pleased to have you accompany us.

If you would rather not go there, then come tomorrow evening, but I think you will enjoy the trip.

Now, be sure and come one evening for I shall expect you.

Truly your friend,
Clara

* * *

October 18, 1892
Tuesday morning
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor,
At School

Hattie:-

Come down tomorrow evening, if you can, from school.

Ed Libotte is intending to bring a few young folks in, including the crowd at Vie's, and I want you with us.

If you don't want to stay all night, will provide a way for you to get home, but stay if you will.

Please don't mention this to the girls, for I fear some one will get mad —. Clara.

* * *

November 4, 1892
Posted Sullivan, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan

Dear Hattie:-

I just got your letter a few minutes ago. Pa got it out of the office and forgot to give it to me until I started to bed.

Yes, I went to the rally, never looked for you vary mutch after it commenced raining.

I haven't fired that kiln yet.

We have had a time nearly all of the brick we had on the yard took all the rain. All except what we took care of Monday morning before breakfast. Nice for me to jump out of my bed Monday morning and run to the yard after being out so late, wasn't it? I was the last one there though.

I am writing this expecting you will be home tomorrow. If you want to

stay I can take you back Sunday if the roads are not to offal bad.

I promised Charley Purvis to go with him to a rally at Lovington tomorrow but if those brick will do to set at all I am not going for I want to get fire to the kiln and get brick and care off my mind. I have the whol shooting match to myself. Charley hasn't been here this week. He is working at his house. If I do go to Lovington I will see you and go though if you stay. We are not going until after you if we go at all.

If I had know you was coming home, you and I would have gone but Charley would scotch ___ over home waiting for us to come by if I would go off with some one else.

If I don't go to Lovington I will be in town Sat. night. Then I will see you. I could very truthfully repeat the "Old Story."

My pen is poor, my ink is fail. So it goes and I will close.

Yours,

Fin

Traded pens with Susan. She beat me didn't she.

Saturday A.M.

As the day is going to be a nice one I will finish the kiln and set fire and not go to Lovington.

Fin

I will send this by Ed Dunlap. Maybe he will do better than Ferguson.

* * *

December 31, 1892

The Eden House, Sullivan, Illinois

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, at home

Hattie

I will be down about 8:00 to go to the show. Perhaps you don't see the point to this note but it has one.

Fin

* * *

February 2, 1893

The Eden House

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Coles, Ill. [probably where she was staying while teaching at the country school]

Dear Hattie:-

It is no use for me to undertake to come out there on that freight – for I have been noticing it very close this week and the earliest it has got in this week was last night – and that was 10 o'clock. If I go out then I will have to go on the passenger. Tomorrow if the weather is not too bad I will come out – on the noon train – and go out to your school and come back to the station with you.

Everybody here is having a gay old time shoveling snow off their roofs. The roof of the I.O.P.F. [?] Hall leaks so bad that all the plastering in fell off the entire 3rd story and it is also damaged on the second story. They say the Furniture is all spoiled. Away goes our carpet and your organ. I will come tomorrow if it is not too bad for I want to go home next week.

Yours,

Fin

* * *

May 2, 1893

Posted Sullivan

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Coles, Ill.

Hattie

Dear friend

Instead of coming over to see you this week, I will write and relieve you from waiting for me to come. We just got through burning this evening. I am almost worn out – If it weren't for swearing, I would say we have had one h___ of a time with this kiln. Worked too much on Sunday getting it I guess.

If this letter has any object, it is the following:- Cretia [?] and Oran were up Sunday trying to get our school for a teacher down there that boarded with them last winter. I had never said any thing to pa about you wanting the school so he told Cretia to tell her to write to the other directors that he was willing and would try and secure the school for her. To avoid a debate I listened to it all and never made a kick until they left. Only telling Cretia that she wouldnt get the school. When I gave Pa a case of talk which resulted in him telling _usa to write her, being a confident of hers, that they had concluded to hire a first-grade teacher. She holds a second.

Pa said he was satisfied that he would have no trouble in securing the consent of at least one of the other directors to give you the school, but said for you to put in the first application as soon as you conveniently could. The reason why I wrote you is I think it would be a good idea for you to see them Saturday. Pa said for you to see Jake McGulley before seeing Hoke and if he says allright, it will be sufficient without Hoke. Notice then: A good idea would be for you to have Lee or Jim come after you Friday if you intend to apply this week and the directors will be properly in line on your way home. See the point? Hoke would think strange if you would go by his house to see another director and not stop to see him until you go back.

Pa said you need not see him at all. I think it best not to say anything to him before seeing the others. They might think it too much in the family. Then if they ask you if you have saw him or said anything to him about the school, you can tell them, No! He said that would be the best.

I think the directors have agreed to hire a teacher for a 7 month term with a very small vacation about March. You can make your application at what ever price you want to, but I will tell you what they expect to pay: \$40 a month for the first five, and \$25 for the last two.

It takes a long space for me to tell you what I want to and explain my reasons why. I suppose you notice I never got in to see you Sunday Eve.

I must close. I have got to write a letter to Lyn Lyme's girl yet tonight and it is now about nine. It won't be as long as this one though.

Ever Yours,
Fin

* * *

[Undated letter written on business stationery like others of this period.]
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, City

Wednesday A.M.

I got your letter last night after so long a time.

It is o.k. with me for the J. Creek excursion.

Just got up. The ice wagon is coming. I must hustle and send this.

I told you when we went to Windsor we would get done burning Wednesday about supper time if I remember. I think that [I] will catch it about. I haven't saw the kiln this a.m. I may extend that time a day when I see it. I guess you know by this time whether I earned that cigar or not. That was a snap. I wouldn't have done if you had gave me a box to do so.

Fin

May 30, 1893
Sullivan, Ill.
At Night

Dear Hattie:-

From the appearance of the weather at present it looks as though the roads would be pretty bad to go to the show. Walter stopped to see Maye and she would not go. I think she is a little sorry she refused now. I am going to see him tomorrow and get him to take Fell Hoke. We will go if it isn't to bad – if no one else does.

Instead of me coming home before breakfast Monday, it was about nine o'clock. I found my box all right. Rhoda did have it.

I was so mad last night over your application for our school that I could not sleep. I think you will be all right – though yet will tell you when I see you.

[Perhaps Hattie did not get the job. Perhaps she decided not to apply because of Fin's political maneuvering, as described in the preceding letter.]

Wednesday morning. Well! It didn't rain. When I was writing last night – it was thundering and lightening ready to rain any minute. If Fell goes I will try and write you again. So you can prepare of our lunch. If she don't go, I will not write and you need not take any lunch. It is time for me to go mould brick.

Good by until Friday,
Fin

* * *

June 2, 1893
Posted Sullivan, Ill.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Coles, Ill.

Dear Hattie:-

The roads are so bad and a prospect for still more rain this A.M. that I don't think we had better venture going to Mattoon in the buggy. I wish I could see you this morning. I would try to talk you in the notion of going on the freight and staying all night.

I have taken a rest and came to this conclusion.

I will go to Mattoon myself tonight on the freight – if it leaves Sullivan before 7 or about that time. If you think you would like to go and I would be pleased to have you, get on the train. You will shure then find me there.

I will take good care of you of course if you decide to go. Back on the 3:00.

Yours,
Fin

* * *

June 18, 1893

Sullivan, Ill.

To: Miss Hattie Pifer

Don't put this in the fire until after you read it because it was sent in this envelope – all I have.

Hattie:-

Your letter arrived in due time to make preparation to attend your cream social. Thanks for the invitation. You will not be no less surprised to know that I won't be there than I was to hear that you was going to have it.

In fact you would be surprised if I was to go, and by reflecting back to a similar occasion ___ gave no reason to believe that it would be an agreeable ____ . I would have to enjoy myself a great deal better than I did when I was out to your school last winter if it would be very agreeable to me.

You better put plenty of crystal flake in your cream in this time. It will be better to keep for the show.

I would ___ the best kind to see you today and give you that chance to get me promise to go to you cream. You ought not wrote me that letter. It changed my plan. I hope you will have as good a time as you did at the close of you Whitley school. I will give you all show on earth if I was a school teacher and my desires were as yours are. I would not tax my patience by waiting until the close of each term of 3 or 5 months but would divide the usual term with a series of short terms and have a reception for myself at the close of each term.

I was to town yesterday but can't go today for I must go to the kiln now. We are not near through burning yet. I never expected your letter until next week.

Yours,
Fin

* * *

August 30, 1893

The Eden House stationery

Posted Sullivan

To: Miss Hattie Taylor, City

Dear Hattie:-

As you said, "I would change my plan about going to the fair" – not in the way

you said, though. I have gave all the boys a good talk and made them to believe the fair would not be any good until Friday and got them all to agree to work until then – by passing them the remainder of the week. So now I am all right – if I can make you believe and I did the boys and give you a stand off until Friday P.M. instead of Thurs. I will mould until noon and come early after dinner.

Yours,
Bed time

* * *

March 6, 1894
The Eden House

Hattie:

I can't come down tonight – Bus went to Springfield this A.M. and left me in charge. I intended to let Judge stay and come down awhile anyway but Just as I was thinking about telling him, he came and said: Fin, I am going to lodge so that settled his staying. I will be down soon though.

I send this so you won't be waiting for me.

Yours,
Fin

* * *

June 3, 1894
Posted Mattoon
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Normal, Ill.

Dear Hattie:

No, it was no surprise to me when I got your letter. It would been a surprise if I had not got it. You must misunderstood what I said about writing as you sometimes do. Now look at this and see if this is not what I said and what you said about it. You said all the time that you did not know whether you would be back Saturday – yesterday – or not, but thought you would. And when I went to go home I ask you if you knew yet whether you was coming home Saturday. You said you did not – and I told you to write and let me know whether you was or not. Criticize that if you can. Good thing you wrote or I would give it to you when you come home.

This is almost like Sunday to me – more so than to you I bet.

I was to town yesterday afternoon. Come home about sundown. Did not want to stay if you was not there. I never saw any of your folks. Saw Frank and John pass the yard in the A.M.

I am going over to Mattoon to hear Davis preach tonight. I think I will stay all night over there.

I have quit moulding brick. I could not stand it. I hate to have to quit it for I never done work that I liked as well. I have not moulded any since Monday when it hurt my heart so I had throw it up.

Better come home and go to J. Creek with me next Sunday to the basket meeting.

I wish you was here to go to Mattoon with me tonight.

Don't get so bad stuck on that teacher that you have to stay up there all summer or bring him home with you. Tell him you have a little country mud dobber down here that keeps you awake one or two evenings each week until bed time. Don't show him this paper that I write on though. All I got. I won't offer any excuse for you done no better. You wrote with a led pencil.

I suppose you have heard by this time that Bell Hoke had succeeded in getting a position in the school in town. I have got something to tell you about your Whitfield friend and Hattie Lemon when I see you. I think I will beat his time now and see if he can cause her to do with me what I had you to do with him. Come home and see me if that Teacher can ___ you. I am anxious for you to come home soon but I can stand this all right for you don't go away very often and I don't want you to either. So if you are having a good time, stay until you get your stay out, but write.

I will and start to Mattoon now. I have already got my team hitched and waiting. If I stay all night at Mattoon I will write some more after I go to church and tell you how Davis is getting along.

So by by
Write,
Fin

Mattoon after Church

Well, I bet I heard a better sermon tonight than you did. There was a big ___ off at the M.E. Church hear tonight but Davis's house was crowded. I was a little late as usual. Never left home until 4.

I am going to town tomorrow and to Lovington next day. I have never heard from those fellows since I was up there. I am going up to see what is the

matter with them. They told me they would be down to receive that kiln of brick as soon as it was cool. Can't believe any body now days but you.

My paper is all you. I will close and go over and see my patent right friend Curt awhile and then return. Good night Write quick.

Lonely,
Fin

* * *

No Date – same business stationery as several of these letters, but could have been written any time.

Hattie

Dear Friend,

I will not be in Thursday night as I said, but will come Friday morning and bring my team, and we will go to church at Allenville Friday night. Stay all night at Father's and go home Saturday A.M. or P.M. Eusee and I are going to night.

Yours,
Fin

* * *

August 27, 1894

636 So. Arno St.

Albuquerque N.M.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear friend,

I will write a few lines and let you know that we got home all save, but we have both been sick ever since we got here; but I am feeling better today. Mamma is just about down in bed. She has an awful bad cold.

We arrived here last Thursday night and found the folks here as well as common. They seemed glad to see us but we came one day before they expected us so we surprised them a little.

I expect you will soon be starting to school. Ours don't begin until the 17th of next month on account of the fair. It always interfered with the schools so bad.

I have ate so many apples, peaches, pears, plums, and grapes since I came home that it's a wonder that I'm alive at all.

Does Lee still work in the restaurant? Has it been very warm there since we left? It has rained every day since we came home – just a little shower but it has cooled the air so it is quite comfortable.

The day we left your house and got to Coles, uncle Jo wasn't there to meet us and we couldn't imagine what the matter was for he ought to have got Mamma's letter Saturday. But we waited a while and he didn't come so I went over to the post office and asked for his mail and they gave me the letter. So we had to walk out to Uncle Jo's and take his letter. It has been missent and so he didn't get it Saturday. I thought we would die before we got there, it was so warm.

Did you and Lee go over there the next Sunday?

Has Uncle Jim finished work on the house he was building for Mr. Rose?

Well, I must close for this time because I want to get this into the afternoon mail and I will have to hurry a little.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain,

Your friend,
Hattie Henderson

* * *

September 26, 1894
Posted St. Louis
Addressed to Miss Hattie Pifer

Dear Cousin Hattie,

I am so mean I do not deserve to hear from you. I got your letter all o.k. but if you knew how I do hate to sit down and write – Now it seems such a burden to me and I cannot put my mind on it, but here in the future I will try to do better and not forget to write soon.

I suppose Jim and his wife are so proud of their baby. I know I would be. Hattie, I am coming over some time in October if I can. I am trying to get ready now, but will only stay a couple of days for I cannot leave home any longer than that. Will tell you when I start so look out for me any time.

I wrote to Mother and told her to write and tell you, but as I did not hear from her, I suppose that even you have not.

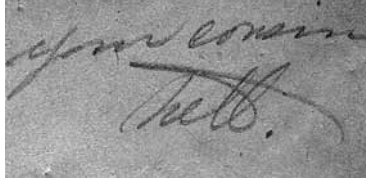
Oh, Hattie, I wish you could come here this week or next to see the V.P. and fair. We are agoing to have a regular worlds fair. You just ought to see the different nations coming in now. Can't you come? You know they run excur-

sions from Decatur and you could come over there and start from there and maybe Mother would come with you.

I suppose she has already told you Bert was married. If not then you know it now.

Well, Hattie, I will close. Give my love to all and count Fin in. So by by and answer soon. I am as ever, your cousin,

Nell



* * *

September 30, 1894

Posted Albuquerque, N.M.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan

Dear friend,

Rec'd your most welcome letter the first of the week and was very glad to hear from you and that you were all well.

This leaves us all as well as usual. Mamma has had very good health since we came home and has gained a pound and a half a week right along.

Well, I started to school two weeks ago and like it ever so much for we have a real nice school of nearly fifty pupils. Every seat in the room is full. I have the same teachers that I have had ever since I went in the High School. I am taking Geometry, Algebra, Rhetoric, Spanish and Themes, and I have four teachers for the lessons.

I had invitations to three parties last week but I only went to one and that one I had a lovely time.

Mamma says tell Jim she is still looking for that picture and I say tell Florence that when she gets the baby's picture taken, I want one of them.

The wind is blowing so hard I didn't go to Sunday School but I am going to church tonight I guess.

Mamma has canned about seventy five pounds of fruit since we came home so I guess there is no danger of our starving this winter.

Tell Lee I would like to be there just long enough to see if I could torment

him a little. I don't expect I could but I could try anyway.

Well, I must close for this time. Hoping to hear from you soon, with love, from

Your friend,
Hattie [Henderson]

* * *

October 17, 1894
Posted St. Louis
Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill. P.O. Box 87

Dear Cousin Hattie

Did you answer my last letter or not. If so, please let me know.

Your cousin forever.
Nell

Love to all and a kiss for you and Fin.

* * *

December 19, 1894
Posted St. Louis
Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois
P.O. Box 87

Dear Cousin

Just got your letter and will not write much, but will say when you come let me know sure and it will be much better for you to come at 6 P.M. Then I will be sure to meet you. And now don't you disappoint me so by by with love to all. I remain yours,

Lovingly,
Nell

* * *

February 12, 1895
Posted St. Louis
Addressed to Mifs Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Illinois P.O. Box 87

Dear Cousin Hattie

Your most welcome letter came to hand and carefully read. Yes I might of run your way while I was at it but I was with another cousin and I thought they would not find me. If I had of run your way they would have been ___ to have found me then. Some people do not know every thing that happens in one's married life. I just got tired getting so many meals aday for two persons and then mother says to me wait for Will and eat with him. Does she think for a moment I am agoing to wait all the way from 7:30 up till 11 or 12 for my supper. Well I guess I will not. If any one knows himself.

Hattie, I am so tired this morning. I wish you were here or I with you. It is snowing so hard and it is so lonesome and gloomy away out here and my head hurts me so bad. I wonder if I have got wheels in my head. They tell me I have.

Well, dear, I have not much to write today so please excuse me and I will try to do better next time, so answer soon. I remain your loving cousin,

Nell

Will said tell you he ought to have written but he kept waiting for me to write to you but he would answer the next time you wrote.

* * *

June 3, 1895

Posted Sullivan, Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor

On business letterhead – “statement” form

To balance 100 cigars, which you will please remit and save cost.

F.E. Pifer

* * *

July 25, 1895

Letterhead of C.O. and F.E. Pifer, Hand Mould Brick

Hattie

Dear Friend,

I guess I will let you be boss this time and I will stay from Chgo and go to the picnic with you. If it is so we can set brick tonight. I won't be in to the band concert.

Will be in Saturday night –

Yours etc.

Fin

* * *

July 29, 1896

Posted Sullivan, Illinois

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, 1415 S. Grand Avenue, Sedalia, Mo.

c/o Wm. Taylor

Dear Father and Sister:

I received your letter this morning and thought I would answer it right away as I won't have very much time for the rest of the week.

Dean is not very well, nor hasn't been for a week. I guess it is this hot weather that ails him. I think your house is the hottest place in the state. We haven't slept any to amount to anything for three nights now.

Florence said she was awful glad you were enjoying yourselves.

There is not much to write about. Peadros have a baby at their house, born yesterday.

Lee was hitched [?] all night Wednesday night. I don't know what he is going to do. He is not going back. I don't think he has the money to get back on. Lee went out to John's yesterday and he and John got one or two contracts to build houses, and Lee told me he had rented a house out in the country and was going to move out there, but he has told me so many fibs since he came back that I don't know when to believe him. I will bet anything right now that he is sorry that he "spoke."

Tell Pa that F__ Logan has come out for Bryan and Sewall. [William Jennings Bryan, campaign of 1896.]

Hattie, those grapes are ripe and what shall we do with them? How do you want to put them up? Answer right away for they will be ready to pick the last of the week.

Tell Pa there was a lot of potatoes in "his bottom." I dug 14 hills and got about a half dozen little potatoes.

Those black plumbs won't be ripe for a month.

Well, this is all for this time. Answer right away for we want to know what to do with the grapes.

Your bro and Sis.

J M and Florence

* * *

November 4, 1896

From: C.O. and F.E. Pifer – statement [bill]

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, City

R a/c of one box of cigars, one pair shoes, one hat and one lb chocolate candy is now due and unpaid. You will please attend to the matter at once.

Resp. Yours,

F.E. Pifer

P.S. Bicycle due Mch 1st 1897. You will take due notice thereof and govern yourself accordingly.

F.E.P.

* * *

November 18, 1896

Letterhead of Glines & Baugher, Real Estate

Durant Miss.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie,

This will be another letter like the one I wrote you in Mo. Nothing in it. We have been here about an hr. Just long enough to get dinner. I only have a few minutes in which to write or I can't send it until tomorrow at this time. All the rest of the fellows are writing so I did likewise.

We are agoing to start for the wilds tomorrow A.M. at 6. Will be 25 or 30 mi from any P.O. I was very much surprised coming out of Memphis this A.M. after eating my breakfast. Of course I went in the smoker to indulge in my usual habit and in there was Charley Bongart, bound for Canton Miss. about 85 mi further on. He is looking at Miss land.

We had a good time coming down. We left Mattoon at 2:48 and went to Cairo and waited for the through New Orleans Limited. And by the way, I am going to New Orleans as soon as we get through hunting. I have already purchased my ticket – 120 days ___ is the occasion.

I don't like this country so far. There is 11 in our party and 4 or more [?] will join us here as we go to the woods early in the A.M. I don't expect you will get a letter soon again.

Write me at this place in care of Scott Glines and Baugher and they will get it to us if possible. Send me all the good news you can ... [illegible]

Fin

Every body is writing so I had to use pencil.

* * *

November 19, 1896 10:30 a.m.
Letterhead of Wilson House, Tchula, Miss.
Posted Tchula, Miss.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie,

I know of nothing more except that we will get our mail brought to us from Durant Monday or Tuesday. Glines stayed back here and will join us about that time and bring all mail.

We left Durant at 7:30 this a.m. for this place about 25 miles distance. We have a person from there with us – 3 coons [sic] and a white experienced hunter for guide. We join another man here. (The man I came to see who has provided conveyance for us for the wilds.) We go about 16 miles from here and stop until Glines comes. Then we go about 25 farther in the swamps. There are about 4 coons to one white person down here. I stopped at Lexington and saw a cotton gin working this a.m.

Write me so I can get it by Glines when he comes. If we make any other provision for mail, I will let you know of it. We will get all the mail when we get back to Durant anyway before going to New Orleans. There is no one going to N.O. but Brosens [?] and I. I like the country a little better there. I did but don't like so many coons.

This country don't look very much like a wild hunting ground but they all tell me we will strike it soon. I will close. Hope to hear from you by the time Glines comes ...

Fin

* * *

November 23, 1896
Posted Buras, La.
On City Hotel stationery, Durant, Miss. [crossed out]

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Unlike where you expect, I am somewhere between New Orleans and the gulf on board a Miss. river steamer. Hunting was a complete failure so far. We left the woods 20 mi. from Tchula, Miss. Sunday morning on sickness in camp. Some of the boys went home, all except Brosens, Thos Monroe and myself. We came to New Orleans Saturday night, where Tom and I left Brosens and put out for the Gulf of Mexico. On board this boat is a captain of another boat that runs out in the Gulf 20 mi. He has taken a fancy to Tom and I and has invited us to go out on the Gulf with him tomorrow. Of course we will go for we are out for a time. Don't it seem so?

We left New Orleans today at one o'clock p.m. and are due at the Jellys' tomorrow at 7 a.m. but it is a bad night – the wind is high, the river rough together with rain in as our boat runs very slow. I am going hunting with another party about 25 farther in the swamp than we were next Monday. I am not coming back until I find some game if there is any in the State of Miss. The remainder of the fellows will go home unless I persuade Tom to stay. We will get back to New Orleans Thursday night or Friday morning. Others going to start for Durand where I will again get off and will then receive my mail up till Monday a.m. The only mail I have received since I left was the record of some penuckle games which Jim Steele sent me. The cause of the sickness was Brosens and Cox (from Lovington) got lost and stayed out and walked all night about 40 mi. Brosen wore such sores on his feet that his leg swelled to his knees and can hardly walk. Cox caught cold, took tonsilites and his recovery is not certain. 7 p.m.

Fin

12 o'clock am

Nov. 25 [separate enclosed sheet]

It was La. where I wrote the commencement of this letter. I learned I couldn't send it until today so I will add more.

Yesterday was a red letter day in a great many respects. We spent the day and night at the Pilot station at Port Edes with about 18 or 20 Sea captains. They treated us like kings. Each one done everything they could to make our visit a pleasant one. Everything went well until we went out in the Gulf (about 9 p.m.) which was a exceedingly rough. The boat heaved and pitchd and so did I. I am hardly over it yet.

Today we came up the river 40 mi in a boat and took the train at this place

for N. Orleans. While waiting here about 2 ½ hours, we went out in the orange orchards which are as thick as apple orchards at home and a great deal fuller. I filled that grip full of yours and will start to buy them [illegible] but don't know whether I will be able to keep them that long for ... would get to N.O. about 7 p.m. and will start for Durant about tomorrow night. Flowers are in full bloom. I will have to wait until I get home to tell you. It will be more interesting. I don't know when that will be. Tom Monroe will leave us tomorrow. I will try it alone a while. I will leave Durant next Monday for a hunt.

* * *

December 6, 1896, Sunday 2:30 P.M.
Posted Durant, Miss.
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:-

My ticket is in Chicago, my overcoat in Jackson, my laundry in Memphis, and I am here and as the hunt is over as soon as I can get there all together, I will start for the land of my birth. I have had a splendid time and have made all kind of promises to return next winter for a nother hunt. We had plenty of turkey and venizen to eat all the time and a splendid cook, so you know I was all right. I never went bear hunting at all. There is plenty of them here though. One don't find bear while hunting dear. It is an entirely different manner of hunting.

I have an invitation to go with another hunting party next week but I have been deer hunting enough for our time. I wouldn't mind to take a small bear hunt but I am not acquainted with any bear hunters. I could get acquainted easy enough if I wanted to very bad. I guess I killed a deer. Two of us shot at it and we each claimed the honor, but the rule is who kills the deer gets the hide and I got the hide as I was the first to nock it down.

I sent my ticket to Chicago to get it renewed. It hasn't returned, as usual. I left my overcoat on a train that I got off of.

Your letters were received. The composition on professional treatment for the blews was par excellent. As I have destroyed them I have forgotten what they contained. I still have your oranges. Miss Tuberty was right. I am stuck on the south now.

Haven't time to write more as it is ____ Not much news but a little real warm here.

Fin

* * *

November 24, 1898

Posted Decatur

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

St. Mary's Hospital, Room No. 9

Dear Hattie.

According to agreement – and perhaps to your surprise – but I assure you to my pleasure I am writing you a letter. I have endured a great many hardships in my time such as working night and day for 8 or 10 days at a time, yet up in the middle of the night, in the midst of sweet slumbers after being up late to bake brick, only to get up the next morning to see the sun come up clear and bright with ought a drop of rain during the night. I have made long drives on cold winter nights, had breakdowns and calamities. I have even stood behind barred doors when I was wanting to take my departures. But this place caps them all.

I would rather be in Jail out right. If you and Bury come over Sunday on the morning train and stay all day, you will understand that I am right. Guy [Pifer – Fin's brother] is getting along nicely, better than I am. He can make all the fuss he wants to. Also all the dirt and he is a kid and a patient and with a little grumbling it is all right – but I am suppose to set here like a bump on a log all day, not make any dirt or noise, mess up my bed, nor smoke a cigar, nor say a word to the good sister, or go outside and Guy won't have that. So I have to take my medicine. Guy eats like a pig and is getting as fat as one too. We have dinner at 11 o'clock, supper about 5 and are supposed to be up washed and dressed ready for breakfast at 5 in the morning and you know how I like that. And if I should lie down during the day they look like an old hen with a heard of young chickens when you go close to see when they come in which is about every 15 minutes. But a policeman is the one to tell troubles to. I will let up on this strain.

We have the promise of turkey tomorrow. You might come and share with us as well as a part of our lonesome hours. The worst part of your coming over is that you will have to leave at 8 o'clock p.m. about 2 ½ hrs before the train goes. Perhaps Bury can take the good Sister that she liked so well and who she would admire less if she had stayed longer to one side and make some catholic ___ to her and get permission to stay longer, but I have my doubts of her success even if she can get Lucas permission to have a chance to try it. Let me know if you come and I will steel away from Guy long enough to meet you at the train. You had just as well come yourself if Bury don't come. Visit your ___ Lee!

Fin

* * *

November 26, 1898

Posted Decatur Ill.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie

Yours of yesterday at hand and in answer will say: I will certainly be delighted to have the monotony of solitude broken by your coming although for your own convenience it would be better if you could get Bury to come with you for you will surely have to leave before 8 p.m. so long before the train goes. In that event you can go to your Aunt Ann though.

Guy is pretty sick this a.m. with some kind of stomach trouble. He eat too much I suppose. This is the second attack of this kind since we have been here. I will meet the morning train tomorrow and meet you and we will have a scrap with the nurses or have them suspend the rules made known by the bulletins on the outside which says "visitors only admitted between 3 and 4 p.m." It will be alright – though I think as you live out of town. That I think applies to Decatur people. There was a little boy across the street coming over to play with Guy but he is too sick to play with him this a.m. I will close hoping to see you tomorrow.

Fin

Room 9 – St. Mary Hospital

* * *

August 16, 1900

11 p.m.

Posted Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.

On stationery of the Falls Hotel. "Two blocks from park and falls, rates \$2.00 per day."

Dear Hattie

According to promise, I will drop you a note which of course you don't expect to be of any consequence. We came here all o.k. this A.M. at 6 about 1 ½ hrs before we were due owing to a very com sea. I suppose I never got sick at all but felt queer. Just a little bit, but the breeze occasioned by the speed from the top deck fixed that alright. The falls are all that I expected, even more.

The trip around the belt was several hours. We intended going to Toronto tomorrow but there is no excursion so as we have not been over to the Goat-nor 3 e_rten [?] we will go there in the a.m. and to Bufalo in the P.M. We have all had a little tough luck, mine being the worse for a while. We took a strole outside in the little park after supper to recuperate and I lay down on the lawn to rest my game leg when George ask me how much money I had. ___ so for I removed my watch from my watch pocket to get at my green money and on counting found that the expenses had been very moderate. A couple of hours later while ___ down mine we saw a clock that "said standard" so when I went to see if the standard time was correct I remembered I had decorated the lawn with my regulator so we went back and found the watch in the midst of a big crowd ___ listed and unhurt and I am so far the luckiest fellow in the crowd of 4, including a fellow from Findlay. Of course the drinks were on me. We all took "soda" and went on up main [?] for answering papers pet leg has caused me some trouble but not as mutch as I expected. I pulled the core out of it at noon today which was the first time I _____ it since I left.

I told the boys I was going to go with them to Toronto tomorrow and start for N.Y. City or Sullivan Saturday but I don't know whether I will make it stick or no. I think I will go to Toronto tomorrow or not at all, excursion or no excursion. That is a change of mind since I started this letter as you will see.

We can't get any excursion rates to N.Y. but I am for going anyway. George is through writing and wants to go to bed so I will close and be home soon and tell the balance. Tell Leda I hope she is having a good time buggy riding and feeding the horse. We all decided that we wanted to go back vai the like as we came.

So good night.

Fin

I've been real good.

* * *

August 19, 1903
Posted Colorado Springs
Addressed to Miss Hattie Taylor, Sullivan, Ill.
On The Elk Hotel stationery

Dear Hattie

I feel very much tonight like I would like to be home. I have been walking and climbing mountains all day nearly. We got to Denver Sunday night at 6:30,

had our supper, and went out to a park – a very beautiful one. The next day we went out about 50 miles to Longmount where Judge Minor lives. He took us a drive out in the country so we never got back to Denver until night. That night we went to a show and the next morning we took a trip to Cripple Creek, a grand trip – it was over the mountains. We stopped at this place on our way back where today we took a trip on Bouros up Cheyenne Canon four or five miles and then walked to the top of the mountains to Hellen Hunt's grave, Seven Falls, etc. So I am very tired.

This is after supper. George has gone to call on some of the Duncans that live here and when he comes back, we go to bed and if he don't get back pretty soon he will find me there when he comes.

That is a pretty good description of what we have done. Now for what is to follow for I know you will want to know when we will get back home. Tomorrow am about 9 we will take the cog railroad for the top of Pikes Peak, get back about 2 p.m. when we will take a drive for about 2 hours through the garden of the Gods, then we will take the first train for Pueblo, where Chas Pifer lives and where we will visit the mineral palace. Also where will get our return tickets for home, starting from Denver not later than Saturday or perhaps Sunday night. When we have the program completed that I have named, we will have learn what many people do ten days or two weeks at. So you see we are hustlers.

The Rockies are everything that we expected to see and a great deal more. We were in a snow storm yesterday on top of them. Enough to make the ground look white. We can look out here and see the snow on top of them from any old place. The country is irrigated and the towns are watered by the melting snow water.

I hope that everything is o.k. at home. I expected to come back at your house before I left but it rained so I could hardly get back from Charley's. I had to borrow his coat and umbrella. Then I got wet. I think I will get back Sunday perhaps by noon or 4:00 when I leve Pueblo there is no stop over allowed, only to make connections when we have to take the first train. The worst feature of our trip is the long tiresome ride over almost a barren country, especially Colorado and western Nebraska. My paper is about out. So good night ... I will go to bed – alone I smoke a cigar as George is not here yet.

Fin

* * *

Hattie Taylor and Finley Pifer were married in Chicago November 18, 1903.

* * *

[Undated letter from Hattie to Fin apparently written after they were married.]

Dear Finley

Lots of business at home for you. A letter from Pana stated that your coal couldn't be shipped for two weeks so we had to get some. Got it from Power's. No one else had any.

A man from the west came to see you this A.M. Wouldn't tell me anything but said he would be down tomorrow again to see you about noon.

Seass is looking for Mc Kibbin today. He started from home Wednesday. Lucas talked as if he didn't like your being away at this time, Keel also being away.

You had a phone call [first reference to a telephone] this morning from Bement. When they couldn't get you, they asked for Keel. Neither was in town. I only found out his name – Brananberg. That is the way it sounded when central told me. [Refers to the operator at the central telephone switchboard.]

Dell went home yesterday. Mary and Roe were still here. Mary has sick headache today and Roe has the common headache. Roe felt very bad all day yesterday.

Let me know some way if you can what time you will come home tomorrow so I can answer some of these people as to your whereabouts.

We are expecting to get out to the farm tomorrow when you get home. So make your arrangements to go if possible.

Stains is going to throw out the ashes tomorrow. The load of coal over the walk didn't hurt it at all.

Bought a load of cobs today. Good bye. Come home sure tomorrow.

Your
Hattie

P. Bland came home this morning.

* * *

June 15, 1904

Posted Springfield, Ill.

Addressed to Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:

I will not be home Thursday as I thought. We will perhaps get through Friday if nothing new occurs. We are going to have our pictures taken tomor-

row so I will have a souviner of my trip. I attended the State Convention. It was
offal rotten.

Fin

* * *

May 17, 1905

Postcard posted Minneapolis, Minn.

Addressed to Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:

We spent the day hear and St. Paul as I said we would. Dr. Kell wrote Mrs. Miller that we would leave hear this A.M. but he could not go until 8:50 this P.M. on his ticket. He also wrote her that our P.O address would be Northcote. He was wrong in that also and ask me to correct it. I like the part of Minn. we saw after day light this A.M. fine. It is pretty cool here today. We were to see Indianapolis and Minneapolis play ball and nearly froze. I have no writing material but this [card] this time. The object of this is to correct mistakes in our address. Orleans, Minn. As ever, your boy, Fin.

* * *

August 10, 1906

Postcard posted Kansas City

Addressed to Mr. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Fin,

We got the berth alright to Kansas City, also one to Denver. Arrived there at 9 A.M. Behind time one hr. At Kate's now for dinner and Nora not at home. Don't think we will get to see her this time. All the folks are well. Will write from Denver.

Hattie

* * *

August 12, 1906

Posted Colorado Springs

Postcard addressed to Mr. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Finley:

We are all o.k. at the "Elks." Will stay over Sunday here. The cheapest

we've been in yet. Paid a boy a nickel to carry our grips a block. Saw Nora alright in Kan.C. Got here to late to get check tonight. Am going to vaudeville. Good bye,

Yours, Hattie

Be sure and write soon.

* * *

August 14, 1906

Postcard posted Colorado Springs

Addressed to Mr. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Finley:

Came over to Colo. Springs this morning again after trunk check and got it this time. It had been in the office since Sat. and I had asked two to five times daily. I had to pay 25 cents a day for storage. Gee I was mad. More at myself than anyone else for forgetting check. We had planned a trip up William's canyon today but I won't get back to Manitou now before dinner. Had to get a ticket to get my trunk over so I am going back with it, instead of the street car. Warren Norvell is a brakeman on the C.M. but I haven't seen him yet. Roe's little note with the check read pretty good. First thing we have heard from home. With love, write soon,

Hattie

* * *

September 8, 1906

Postcard posted St. Paul, Minn.

Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Manatou, Colorado

Dear Girl,

Just a minute to change cars in St. Paul on my return from the north. Well I think I have made that thousand dollars on this trip and perhaps more. We will be the owners of 6700 worth of property in Findley at a cost of two thousand dollars. Of course there is always a chance that a woman won't sign a deed but we have Wallace under contract. We will have a man up there that I feel shure will buy very good for the first trip. I will write you more from Chgo. Will get home Monday P.M. Good by for the present.

Fin

* * *

November 15, 1906
Postcard posted Orleans, Minn.
Addressed to Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie

We arrived today. All o.k. Roe likes it fine. We are going to drive over the ____ this p.m. We are going to go to the RoZo county hunting about the last of the week so I won't be home as soon as usual. Will let you know so you can meet me in Chicago if you want to. As ever, Yours,

Fin

* * *

March 18, 1907
Postcard posted Sullivan, Ill.
Addressed to Mrs F.E. Pifer, Tuscola, Ill. c/o J.F. Blomquest

Dear Hattie,

I will be up Tuesday. Several going up from here. As ever,

Fin

* * *

October 1, 1907
Postcard posted Martinsville, Ill.
Addressed to Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Northcole, Minn.

Dear Hattie:

Received your letter and card, also Jim's letter. Your letter contained the news such as it was so keep them coming. Don't expect to start north this Tuesday. Can't tell when. Tell Jim to hustle up those papers. The Dr. wants his opinion on the abstract. Also, I am going to the country this A.M. with Banham but I don't think there is any thing in sight for today and this is the last excursion for two weeks. But we may come any way if we think it worth while. This is all – will write letter tonight if I have any place to write and have time.

E_____ not back yet.

Fin

* * *

November 12, 1907 [?]
Postcard posted North Cole, Minn.
To: Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:

I wrote you a letter today and it was left. I don't understand why for I had it with the whole bunch of outgoing mail. Roe seems decidedly better today and we are now figuring on when we can start back with him. It is thought by all that 3 or 4 days will decide the matter. We think he will be as well as he will get by that time. I may get a chance to send the letter yet today. The weather is better today. Snow nearly all gone and _____. Send regards to all home folk and love to all.

Fin

* * *

April 11, 1910
Posted Hallock, Minn.
Addressed to Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.

Dear Hattie:

For fear you are broke and you seemed to be worried about the expenses, I am sending drafts for \$2200 which you will sign my name on the back of it and take it to the bank and deposit it. I wish you would give a check for the paving tax. I forgot it before I left.

We just got through with this today. Tomorrow we are planning to get away. I won't wait long on Jim now if he is not ready I will go over in South Dakota for a day or two and then start for home making a stop or two in southern Minn and Iowa.

As ever,
Fin

* * *

March 28, 1921

Posted Kansas City, Mo.

Addressed to Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Illinois

Uncle John

Return address: M.E. McNees, 3734 Brooklyn Ave, KC. Mo.

Dear Cousin Hattie,

Your kind and welcome letter received and was sure glad to hear from you and was surprised. Yes I live here and have been for 8 years. Well the first thing I will try and give you a few addresses. All my sisters that are living is Julia Crawford, Madison Kansas. Nannie Cronin 903 South Larime St., Sedalia Mo. Laura Paige 1614 South Ohio St., Sedalia, Mo. And my Bro lives at LaMonte Mo. His name is G.M. Taylor.

I have already sent the Fowlers names in as the man that tends to the Estate wrote me. So did Jamie Taylor but I thought only the Fowler Heirs were interested in the Estate. Hiram Taylor lives here some place in K.C. but I don't know his address.

Kinney Knowes as my son in law said he saw Hiram Taylor and Kinney on the street car and as to Jim Turney's folks wrote to his neice that lives in Brownington Mo. Her address is Mrs. L. Thompson and she will give all of their names. Oh yes, my sister that is dead, Dora Dell, has three children: Guy William and Laura Odell. Laura lives in Sedalia and is married. My sister Laura Paige can give their addresses so that is about all I know and my sister Maggie Duncan is dead and her children live in Texas, have some one to write to Mrs Earl Russel, Devine Texas. So that is all I know.

Say you must let me know what time in June you are coming as I don't want to be away at that time. As some time in June I am going to Mcalster Okla and Wichita Kan. on a visit – one of my boys works for the Rock Island RR and get me a paid and some times in a few months I was thinking of getting a pass to St. Louis, then get half rates to Windsor Ills, then if any of you folks will see that I can come over to see you I will come. As I can not go very much when I pay out much money as I have three boys, one 12, one not quite 16 and one almost 19. The two older boys makes a living for me as my Husband is dead. You knew him. He boarded at our house when you were here.

Well I will wait and write more next time if you will answer. I owe Jim Taylor a letter so I will close with Love to you,

Your loving cousin,
Mollie McNees
3734 Brooklyn Ave.
K.C. Mo.

* * *

March 31, 1921
Posted Barefoot, Ky
Uncle Will
To: Mrs. F.E. Pifer, Sullivan, Ill.
1208 Jackson

I was glad to hear from you all. I have heard Uncle Jim speak of you and Lee is all of you that I can remember. Jane Florence was heard yesterday, that is the youngest sister. She lives about seven miles from me. She remembers you well. Sister Mary Harnby's husband died yesterday. I guess we will all be together to morrow at the funeral. Leaves heard one going doctor at home. My father's name was William B. I have a Sullivan Progress paper with Uncle Jim's life in it when he was a Solger and a Ky. I keep both me and one boy. My wife died twenty years and eight months ago.

I will close. From your cousin.
J.R. Taylor
Barefoot, Nicholas Co., Ky.

* * *

Finley Pifer died January 13, 1922.

IV

RUTH'S LETTERS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes letters written to or by Ruth Pifer that were saved in our Sullivan home at 108 East Jackson Street until the house was sold after Ruth's death May 30, 1996. Most of the letters Ruth wrote to others have not survived – so far as I know. However, many letters from Hattie to Ruth – and a few letters Ruth wrote to Hattie – have survived.

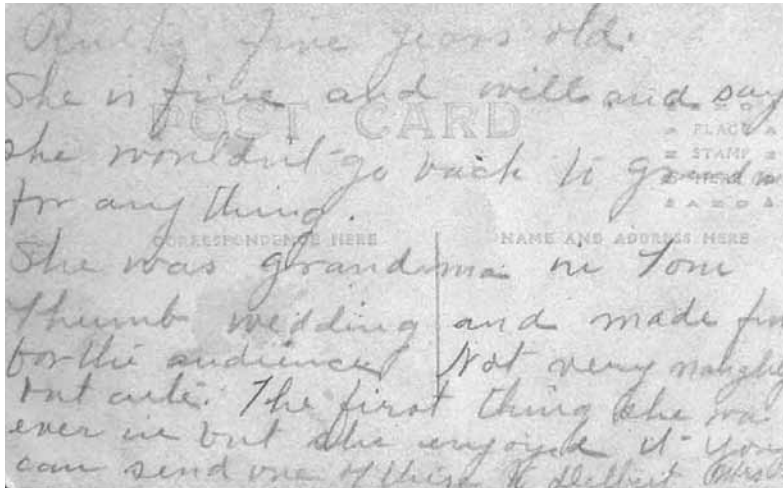
The letters from others *to* Ruth occasionally refer to – or even quote – what she wrote to them. The notes below do not transcribe the complete texts of letters her correspondents sent her; instead, they extract those parts containing responses to what Ruth wrote to them – fragments of information about where Ruth lived, what she was doing, her school work, and her social life.

A few pictures were also saved; they are reproduced in the appropriate chronological place. Here is one taken at the time of Ruth's adoption in 1914.



The picture below was taken about the same time, according to the note on the back. In that note Hattie Pifer wrote that Ruth had played grandmother in Tom Thumb's wedding. In her note, Hattie suggests that a copy of the picture be sent to Ruth's brother, Delbert White.





After the Sullivan house was closed, I kept two boxes containing the saved correspondence in our home in Glencoe, but only recently – as I was nearing retirement, at the end of 2010 – started to put the letters and cards in chronological order. In most cases, the letters themselves are not dated, though envelopes bear postmarks with dates. The dates shown below are generally those appearing in the postmarks.

I also reviewed a separate but large packet of letters to Ruth from Bill Bland, her first serious boy friend. Bill Bland, son of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Bland, was two years older than Ruth; he graduated from Sullivan High School in June 1925 – a senior when Ruth was a sophomore. References to another family of Blands – appear occasionally in the correspondence. They are Perry and Ethel Bland, and their children Wade and June. The Perry Bland family at one time lived next door to the Pifers on Jackson Street.

Here are a few relevant dates, for background:

On November 18, 1903, Finley E. Pifer and Hattie Taylor were married in Chicago. Both Finley and Hattie were born in 1868 – making them 35 years old when they were married. Hattie and Finley had no children of their own.

Ruth White, born March 3, 1909. She was adopted by Fin and Hattie in 1914. Finley died in 1922.

Ruth graduated from high school in 1927 and from the University of Illinois in 1931.

She married Robert W Martin June 9, 1935, which is the point at which this correspondence concludes.

1917-1923 – GRADE SCHOOL YEARS

Ruth was 8 years old in the fall of 1917 when she entered the third grade in the Sullivan school. Whether she attended school before that – and where – are not clear from the preserved documents. Her report card shows that she had excellent grades in all subjects, and that she was promoted to the fourth grade.

Ruth kept a scrapbook of photographs from grade school and high school days. It is now in Philip's library in Sullivan. Here is one of the pictures from the grade school period – 1915 – when Ruth was 6 years old. She is the dark-haired girl in the middle on the lower step. The snapshot appears to have been taken on the front steps of the house at 108 East Jackson Street where the Pifers lived – and where the Martin family later lived.



The first letter to Ruth preserved was mailed February 20, 1920, from Louisville, Kentucky, by a girl named Virginia. She writes to thank Ruth for sending her a valentine. Ruth was almost 11 years old at the time.

A year later, Ruth, age 12, was invited to a birthday party by William Heacock, the party to occur on June 10, 1921.

On January 23, 1922, **Malcolm Bryant** wrote Ruth a letter from Portland, Oregon, saying he had received her Christmas present, and refers to a picture of Ruth also received (perhaps the present). Ruth was 12 years old. This was the first, but by no means the last of the letters Ruth saved from her male admirers. The letter from Malcolm includes this sentence: "I am very sorry to hear that you lost your father." This refers to the death two weeks earlier of Finley Pifer.

March 3, 1922 – Ruth’s 13th birthday.

Malcolm wrote another letter, mailed March 14, 1922, from Portland. He refers to having received Ruth’s letter, and says “I like your papers very much and I like the hand painting on it. “ Ruth later exhibited talent in drawing and painting. This is the earliest evidence we have of her artistic interest.

November 15, 1922, Ruth’s brother Delbert wrote a letter, signing it “Delbert White, Methodist Sanatorium, Albuquerque, New Mexico.” “Dear Ruth, we arrived here Monday at 7:30 p.m. – had a nice trip.... “I sat up all through the day time and watched the country...” “I haven’t saw a Dr. yet. They thought I had better rest a couple of days first. ... They don’t have a regular Dr. here like they had in Springfield.”

December 3, 1922, Delbert wrote again, and enclosed two picture cards, one of the hospital where he was being treated. Had a fever. Has a room of his own. For Christmas “would be pleased with anything you send me.”

On January 7, 1923 – Ruth is still 13 – Malcolm writes saying, “I received your two letters right in succession. The others you mentioned in your letter must have went astray.” He adds, “You must be very bright in school to be the first one.”

March 3, 1923 – Ruth’s 14th birthday.

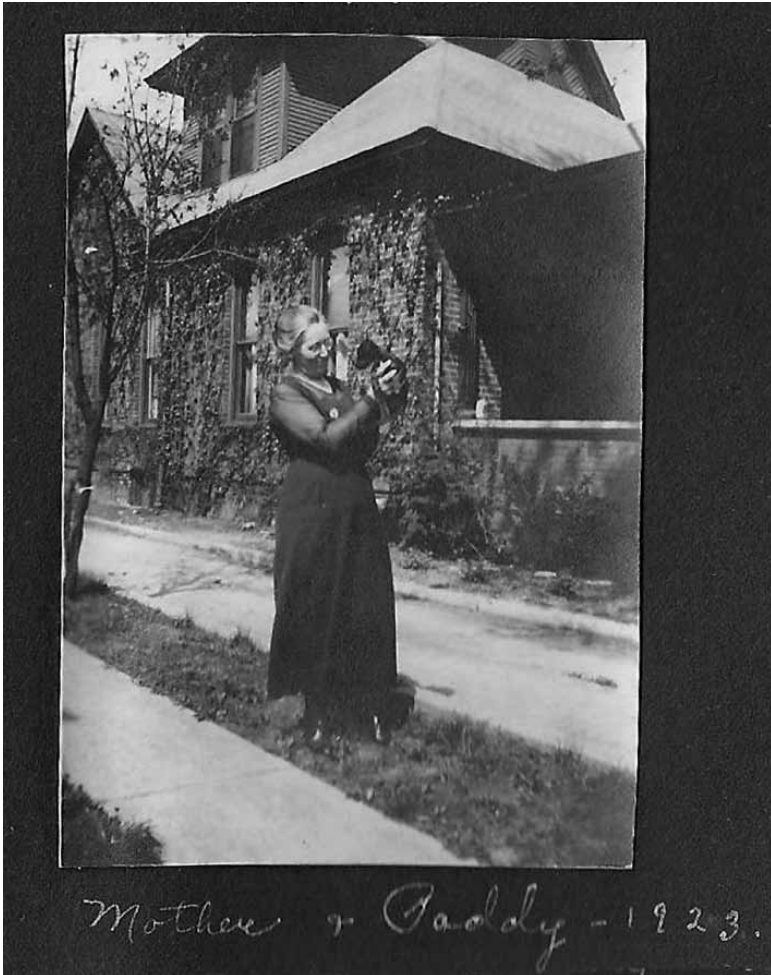
In early March 1923, Ruth received a letter from Martha [Elder] in Hampton Iowa. She writes, “Say! That is some nice little paper the grade schools are having. It is very interesting and I certainly enjoyed reading the “Echo” of your school.” Then: “I’m glad you and Jennie M. were first in your class but Jennie tells me you two are going to have to work mighty hard the next semester to be ahead.”

On March 7, 1923, Marguerite wrote Ruth a letter from West Palm Beach, Florida – the envelope containing the return address of the Gibson Baking L& Ice Cream Co. Marguerite asks, “I want to know if you are the artist who fixes your stationery so pretty?”

On June 23, 1923, Martha [Elder] wrote Ruth from Coulter, Iowa. “We take the County papers from there and I saw your average in the paper. Meda didn’t beat you very much did she? Didn’t it make you feel good to get those good grades. Did you have to study much? Jennie M. said she would have to, to beat some of the girls and I guess she did.”

July 31, 1923: Martha E. Elder wrote from Coulter, Iowa. "I think you made very good grades at school . . ." Edward Elder also wrote an uninformative note.

Hattie and Ruth had a dog, Paddy, during Ruth's high school years. When Ruth went to the University of Illinois, the dog moved to Champaign with Ruth and Hattie, as the letters below will show. A picture of Hattie and Paddy was taken – perhaps by Ruth – in 1923 when Ruth was 14 years old.



Perhaps about the same time, pictures were taken of Ruth with one of her dogs and also, separately, with a cat.



1923-1927 – High School Years

Freshman year 1923-24

Ruth commenced high school in Sullivan in the fall of 1923 at the age of 14.

Several pictures of her were taken in a photography studio about this time.





On August 4, 1923, “Hicks” sent Ruth an uninformative post card from Kansas City, Missouri.

On November 28, 1923, Edward Elder wrote her a letter from Hampton, Iowa. It included a separate letter from Martha, evidently Edward’s sister. He asks, “Are you getting as high grades in high school as you did in the 8th grade?”

March 3, 1924 – Ruth’s 15th Birthday.

Ruth’s report card from 1923-1924 survives. First semester grades were 92 in Algebra, 97 in English I, and 95 in Latin I. She received a 97 in Physics, and a 95 in music. The *Sullivan Progress* reported in its issue of February 23, 1924, that Ruth Pifer had the highest grade average for the first semester – 94.5 – of any student in her class. In the Second semester, she received a 95 in Algebra, 98 in English, 98 in Latin, and 97 in Physiology. Also 95 in music.

On August 6, 1924, one of Ruth’s teachers – Edna M. Church – wrote a letter replying to one from Ruth. Edna refers to Ruth as “a dear little helper,” and says “I appreciated your very pretty as well as interesting letter.”

August 6, 1924, Hattie Pifer to Ruth, 1801 Jackson Blvd, Chicago, home of Ruth’s cousin, former Juanita Taylor, married Henry Unser. “Your last letter did not please your mother very well. You are entirely too young to be playing cards for money, whether you lose or win. And I am afraid you kept Juanita from going home with Henry. Didn’t you?”

Undated letter, Hattie to Ruth, 1801 Jackson Blvd., Chicago. “No, Honey Bunch, you needn’t write every day.”

Undated letter, Hattie to Ruth, 1801 Jackson Blvd., Chicago. “I missed you more Sunday than any time. Went to the stair door to call you for Sunday School.” “When I ask Paddy where’s Ruth? He runs to the door and looks a long time.”

On August 9, 1924, Meda Harris wrote to Ruth at 1801 Jackson Blvd, Chicago Illinois. The letter was then forwarded to Ruth at 1208 Jackson, Sullivan. [See reference to Meda beating Ruth in grades, above, June 23, 1923.] [The family home I grew up in bore the address 108 E. Jackson Street. It was the same house, owned by Hattie Pifer, as the one Ruth lived in as a child. At some point the numbering system for addresses changed.] Meda asks, “Have you had your hair shingled yet?”

Sophomore year – 1924-1925

January 16, 1925, from **Bill Bland**, Sullivan, to Ruth, Sullivan. [Ruth is 15; Bill is in his senior year in high school.] Ruth had turned him down when he asked her to a dance. “I heard that you can’t go to any more dances. Your mother told Gladys’ mother that anyway.”

Here are two pictures of her mother, Hattie, taken in 1920 and 1925.



On January 25, 1925, June [Bland?] wrote from Portland Oregon, thanking Ruth for the handkerchief. She says she is 8 years old now – so 7 years younger than Ruth.

On January 24, 1925, Mildred wrote from Urbana, Illinois, “I surely wish that I was as lucky as you are to get a saxophone, from your description I know it must be very pretty.”

March 3, 1925 – Ruth’s 16th Birthday.

Several pictures from Ruth’s album taken of her and her friends in 1925 appear below:





Ruth with father Leonard
White and brother Herschel White
Edwardsville, Illinois, 1925



Ruth and brother Herschel
White, Edwardsville, 1925

On March 6, 1925, a letter was posted to Ruth – now 16 years old – from Edith in Decatur. Not much in it.

On March 22, 1925, Malcolm Bryant wrote from Portland, Oregon. “I am very sorry to hear about your sickness” Ruth noted that she answered April 18.

April 28, 1925, Katie [Catherine Pape] writes to Ruth from Mattoon, reporting on Katie’s social life. Ruth notes – answered.

May 13, 1925, Bobbie writes from Mattoon, referring to visit to Sullivan, and “especially enjoyed Saturday night.” Asks, “have you made up with Gladys yet? She wrote to Kate and said she was sorry for causing the trouble.” “Kate and I are sure looking forward to your visit.”

May 18, 1925, Katie posts letter to Ruth from Mattoon. All about Katie’s social life.

May 22, 1925, letter posted to Ruth from Danville, signed by “June” [hard to read]. “Love to you and Pie” – referring to Hattie Pifer, Ruth’s Mother.

May 24, 1925 – brief note to Miss Pifer from John Gibbler asking when would be convenient times for “the girls” to come for visit.

May 25, 1925 – letter from Katie to “Dearest Ruthie.” Postmarked Mattoon. Hopes Ruth can come over to dance on June 5.

On June 2, 1925, Sullivan High School held its commencement. One of the graduates was **William W. Bland**. A formal printed announcement with Bill Bland’s card was mailed to Mrs. F.E. Pifer and Daughter.”

The High School *Retrospect* for 1925 provided individual pictures of all the seniors – including Bill Bland. Next to his picture, in Ruth’s yearbook Bill wrote: “So long as we love we serve and as long as we are loved by others, I would say that we are indispensable, for no man is useless while he has a friend.”

corn, building fence and a little bit of everything. I just killed one of those owls that picks chickens eyes out. It was flying around at Martha while she was shutting up the chickens.”

June 9, 1925, another letter from Kate in Mattoon. More about her social life, then ... “How did you and Bill [Bland?] make out. Have you talked to him.”

June 16, 1925, Bobbie wrote from Mattoon. Social chit chat.

June 17, 1925, Kate wrote again, more about her social life. Then, “Has Bill come back yet?”

June 19, 1925, Gladys Lewis writes to Ruth from New Richmond, Indiana, a typed letter. Evidently an older friend – perhaps a former teacher. She says, “I think that DePauw would be a fine place for you to go to college.” Says she stopped to see her on Monday night, “and you were out swimming and were going to be at Jennie Margaret’s all night.” Ruth answered June 26.

June 19, 1925, Juanita Unser (wife Henry Unser) writes to Ruth from Chicago. Letterhead is Postlewait Co., Undertakers; Henry F. Unser is Secretary. [Juanita was a niece of Hattie Pifer and a lifelong friend of both Hattie and Ruth. Henry and Juanita later moved to Richmond, Indiana, where Henry went into the undertaker business. When we were young, Hattie would take periodic visits to Richmond to visit the Unsers.] In this letter, Juanita invites Ruth to come to Chicago for a visit. “So you have a real man now, have you? I am glad you have some one nice to help you have a good time.”

On June 22, 1925, Lena K. wrote to Ruth from Clinton, Illinois. Return address is “L. English.” Reporting her own news. Ruth answered on July 8.

Also on June 22, 1925, “Ferne” wrote to Ruth. [I remember from childhood the name of one of Mother’s friends, Fern Moore. No idea of this was the same person, though “Ferne” is an unusual name.] No envelope – no indication where Ferne lives. She writes, “I saw where you and J.M.C. had a party. I know you had a good time.” (Jennie Margaret Cummins?) Then: “I have seen Bill and Stubbie several times too. How are you and Bill coming. He is still jealous I suppose.”

Undated letter, Hattie to Ruth, addressed to her in Shelbyville, c/o Mrs. P. Bland. “My dear little Girl, ... “I have planned for you to go to Chicago with Winnie [Sentel] the first of July. George [Sentel] is up there holding court and

will be there until the middle of July. I will write to Juanita to see if she can have you.” “Tell June the girls are making the tea towels . . .” “be a good girl and don’t act naughty in any thing. Lots of love and kisses. Mother.”

June 29, 1925, Hattie writes to Ruth, at 18 Maywood Place, Danville, c/o Goodloe Moore. “William never phoned you or if he did, I didn’t hear it. . . . Now would be a good time to write him a good letter . . .” “I sat by Gertrude last night in church. Of course she asked where you were and when I told her she wanted to know if William went with you. Then she asked me if you knew the Blands before you did William. I told her the Blands were the first people you knew in Sullivan. She seemed much surprised.” . . . “Be careful to whom you speak or smile while on the train. . . . Do not get me a dress or anything while you are there. If there is a music house there, you might ask for some music for your sax. Be sure and know if you can play it before you buy it. Your shoes came today . . . seventy five cents more. It doesn’t seem like the heels are cut down any to me. They are still too high for you. You might look for a black pair in Danville. Do not pay very much for them, tho. Be a good girl.”

June 30, 1925, letter posted to Ruth from Montgomery, Alabama. From “Guy.” Envelope contains initials “GR.” Works with Don at ice cream maker. Refers to Louise.

July 14, 1925, Katie writes from Mattoon. “How is Bill? I sure think he’s cute.”

July 16, 1925, Malcolm Bryant, writes from Cannon Beach. Thanks Ruth for the picture. “With love to you and your Mother.”

July 17, 1925, Catharine Butler, writes from Boulder Colorado.

July 21, 1925, Bill Bland, Sullivan, to Ruth, Sullivan. To “Ruth Sweet-heart.” Asks for date.

July 25, 1925, Juanita Unser writes to Ruth from Chicago. Juanita invites Ruth and Hattie to come to Chicago for a visit.

July 27, 1925, Drucila Whitman writes to Ruth from Blytheville, Arkansas.

July 27, 1925, Marguerite Roodman, of Cerro Gordo, Illinois, writes to Ruth. “The girls have also written about your ‘steady’ William B – I’m glad

you're having such a nice time" Also asks, "Why are you taking Latin this summer?" Ruth notes that she answered on July 28.

July 28, 1925, **John H. Schoemaker** wrote to Ruth from St. Louis. Refers to Ruth as his "country cousin." Says he misses the porch swings in Sullivan. "But most of all he misses a certain girl that he had the pleasure of meeting while in that growing city. No kidding or fooling. Who was the girl? Egad, m'dear, after all these years. And then you should ask me such a question! Maybe she thinks I'm lying. (again?) Far from it, old dear." ... "Maybe it was just as well that I didn't go to church last Sun. evening, as I hear that W.B. was there." ... "Can't seem to realize that I only spent two weeks up there. And yet, I did. My only regret, is that I didn't meet you the first day I arrived." ... "Ruth, dear, our correspondence has opened, so please continue same by writing to me." Ruth answered on August 7, 1925.

July 28, 1925, Gladys Lewis writes to Ruth from New Richmond, Indiana. Newsy.

July 29, 1925, Louise and Guy write from Montgomery, Alabama. Louise: "William has a terrible time getting mad, doesn't he? But that's good for him ... Guy: "Don't pay any attention to Bill, he'll get over his babyhood ways some day."

July 30, 1925, Marguerite Roodman, writes to Ruth, "No one exactly told me about your having a steady, but too many times the girls mentioned who they were with and who you were with, and it always seemed like it was William; so I took it for granted he was steady. If I were you I'd be glad I had a nice friend."

July 30, 1925, Ruth writes a thank-you note to Mrs. Walter, Mattoon. Was returned to sender. So one of the few examples of Ruth's writing from this early period – 16 years old.

August 1, 1925, from Dru, using stationery of Dr. J.H. Hamner, in Blytheville, Arkansas. Says: "Too bad about the car wreck."

August 1, 1925, from John H. Schoemaker, St. Louis: Received letter from Ruth. What were you doing in Chicago? "Poor Wm. I can see where all of his spending money goes now. Meeker's ought to give him a commission on all the candy he buys there." "I have 'heart burn' for a girl friend of mine. Oh yes, she lives in Sullivan. No, no, her name is not Bernice." ... Bye, bye, midear ... "Ruth, mi'love, have you a snapshot of yourself, alone. May I?"

August __, 1925, Hattie to Ruth, 1801 Jackson Blvd, Chicago. "Am sending you a letter from someone."

August 7, 1925, Hattie to Ruth, Chicago. Learned from Homer Wright that Seass v. Pifer trial would commence August 24. Says Ruth is with Juanita.

August 9, 1925, Bill to Ruth, Chicago. Bill working at railroad depot.

August 10, 1925, Hattie to Ruth, Chicago. You'll have to take American History in your junior year. Writes that her "eating at all times" has caused the rash. Also hoped she would have her tonsils out. Virginia had "a date with William Sat. night to the show. That is the only date I know he has had but then I haven't seen any of the boys or girls. I saw Wm in his car Sunday evening. ... Aren't you going to write to Wm? ... June and her mother are in town at Millers."

August 13, 1925, Hattie to Ruth, 1801 Jackson Blvd., Chicago. "The Chautauqua is on in full blast. The first member is fine." William phoned.

Undated letter from Hattie to Ruth, 1801 Jackson Blvd, Chicago. "Doesn't Juanita make any suggestions about you coming home? Of course you can stay as long as you want to but don't wear your welcome out."

Undated letter from Hattie to Ruth, 1801 Jackson Blvd, Chicago. "My dear little girl: Your letter was very welcome this morning because I didn't sleep very well last night thinking that maybe some one kidnapped you." ... "Have some bad news for you. Thomas Hicks was found dead under McCarthy's front porch. You know he had been in a fight but the hole in his side looked to me like he had been shot. All your animals are all right."

August 12, 1925, from Bill Bland. Refers to his job – 6 am to 10:45 p.m. for \$4.35 a day.

August 13, 1925, from Berenice Lawson, daughter of Dr. Lawson: "Your mother said that you were going to have your tonsils taken out. I sure do feel sorry for you." ... "Bill had a date with Virginia Sat. and Stub was with her Tues. eve."

August 13, 1925, from Bill Bland. Refers to Ruth going out with other boys. Says Hattie says Ruth will have tonsils taken out when she comes home. Passes on news: Stub, Ed and Purvis went to Springfield today. [Purvis Tabor,

Nina's father, was a member of the SHS class of 1925, along with Bill Bland.]

August 17, 1925, from Bill Bland. Illegible.

August 24, 1925, from Berenice, from Springfield, Illinois. Another from Jennie Margaret, also Springfield.

August 25, 1925, from Catharine Butler. On stationery of Drs. Butler and Butler, dentists, Boulder, Colorado. [When we were growing up in Sullivan, Dr. Don Butler was a prominent dentist in Sullivan, and he and his wife and family lived next door to us to the west on Jackson Street. He must have been related to these dentists in Boulder.] "Jennie Margaret wrote that while you were in Chicago you had your tonsils out."

August 31, 1925, postcard from Hicks, Duluth, Minn.

Junior year, 1925-1926

September 6, 1925, from Edward and Martha Elder, Hampton, Iowa. Refers to Ruth taking Latin.

September 6, 1925, from John Schoemaker. "You said your cousin bought an undertaker's parlor in Richmond." [Refers to Henry Unser, Juanita's husband.] "It was real sweet of William to come up and see you while you were in Chi. But then he's a sweet kid. Isn't he going to college this year?" ... "And now B is mad at you. What next?" "... how are you and Wm. getting along? Have you received any more candy from him? I hope not, for that would mean that Wm. is not 'being himself.' Still there is a lot of 'fun' in making up, isn't there? Wm. no doubt thinks so."

September 9, 1925, from Bobby in Mattoon. Social note.

Undated card from Virginia Eden, Louisville, Ky.

September 15, 1925, from Bill Bland, Chicago. Got job as usher in a theater in Chicago. [Gushy stuff omitted, and will be in subsequent letters.]

September 15, 1925, from Katy, Mattoon. "Has Bill gone away to school? You'll sure miss him if he does."

September 17, 1925, from Bill Bland.

September 17, 1925, from Bill Bland.

September 19, 1925, from Virginia Eden, in Pendleton, N.J. "Did you have a good time in Chicago? I bet you did, and can you do the Charleston now ... the girls said that in your letter you wrote that the Charleston was all they were doing." "How's your dear Billy boy?" Ruth answered on December 6.

September 20, 1925, from John Schoemaker, St. Louis. "How empty life must now be for you! And why? Sweet Wm is in Chi." But cheer up, Ruthie, ol'dear, he'll soon be back and then, and then – well!! Absence makes the heart grow fonder." Thanks her for picture. "Your speaking of lights reminds me of one Sunday evening I spent in your parlor. Will never forget that nite, Nay, never. I hope and pray that I will have the same pleasure again. May I?"

September 20, 1925, from Malcolm Bryant, in Portland, Oregon. Ruth notes she answered, October 10.

September 21, 1925, from Bill Bland, working in theater in Chicago.

September 22, 1925, from Bill Bland.

September 24, 1925, from Bill Bland. Received Ruth's "long, long letter." Refers to his sister and his brother, both unnamed.

September 25, 1925, from Bill Bland. Wants to go to the U-I next year; needs money.

September 28, 1925, from Bill Bland. Misses letters; despondent.

September 29, 1925, from Bill Bland. "I knew you'd be going with **Tom** steady after I left for you always did make over him more or less, but I won't scold you dear as long as you hold your own and be true to me dear. ... I knew you would get to going to dances, parties and wiener roasts thru the week if the kids would insist."

October 2, 1925, from Bill Bland. "Please practice hard with your music and saxophone ..."

October 3, 1925, from Bill Bland. Chatter about Ruth having dates with others.

October 4, 1925, from Bill Bland.

October 5, 1925, from Bill Bland.

October 6, 1925, from Bill Bland.

October 10, 1925, from Bill Bland. Her letter just received “broke my heart. I cried myself to sleep and cried most of the night Didn’t know I’d been so awful ... never meant to scold you....” Is jealous.

October 12, 1925, from Bill Bland. Worried, sick, no letter.

October 14, 1925, from Bill Bland.

October 17, 1925, from Bill Bland. Frets about Ruth seeing **Stub** so often: “I thought he would be the one to step in, in my place after I was gone, instead of Tom.”

October 18, 1925, from Bill Bland.

October 21, 1925, from Bill Bland. Indicates Ruth is coming up to Chicago for a weekend.

October 22, 1925, from Bill Bland. “Please don’t tell me you’re not coming ...” Can see her if she stays at the Morrison.

October 27, 1925, from Bill Bland. “Your visit made me want to come home ... I just couldn’t talk without crying Sunday night because I knew I had to let you go.”

October 31, 1925, from Bill Bland.

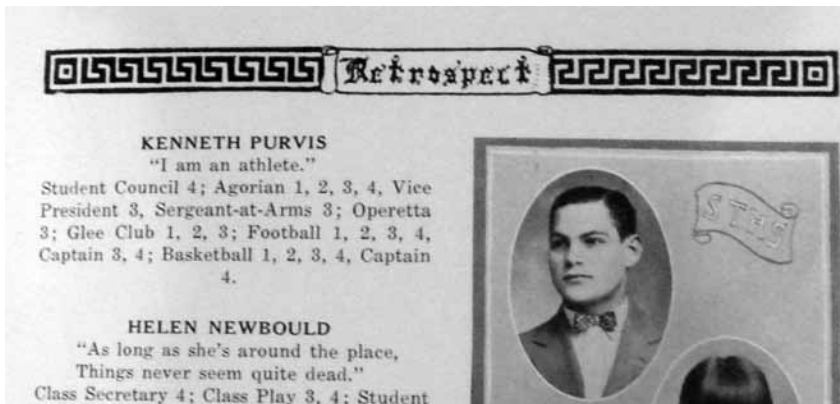
November 2, 1925, from Bill Bland. No letter for 2 days; can’t stand it. “You can’t even imagine how much I’ve done just for you dear since I’ve been here. I never go anywhere and write to you every time I have a chance. ... Last night was Halloween ... and I stayed home just for you because I love you.”

November 3, 1925, from Bill Bland.

November 5, 1925, from Bill Bland. "I see you and **Tom [Purvis]** have made up again as I already knew. I hear everything you do and maybe more from Claudia indirectly through Shorty. I'm glad you like someone there that you can go with, but please dear don't let him mistreat you. I never did care much for him even if he can play football." [Kenneth Purvis, captain of the football team, was known by the nickname Tom, according to the 1926 *Retrospect*. His brother Carleton Purvis was also on the team, and his nickname was Collie. Tom Purvis also played on the basketball team and put the shot for the track team.]

November 6, 1925, from Bill Bland. Mad because Ruth wrote in a letter that she'd heard Bill had been out late one evening, at a dance, and had been drinking. The "lies" came from Bill's friend Stub who'd been home from Chicago for a visit.

November 7, 1925, from Bill Bland. "You always write anymore ("We"!!) are going somewhere, of course I know you mean **Tom** so you don't need to ever use his name. You sure have got it bad haven't you. I'm awfully sorry and don't know whether I ever need to go home, for my sweetheart is the one I'm coming home to see and if someone else has her, I don't care what happens to me."



November 10, 1925, from Bill Bland. "I'm glad Tom gave you those things since I haven't sent you anything. He can afford to better than I can and you don't care."

November 13, 1925, from Bill Bland. "Got your letter ... I've been a fool ... broke down ... can't stand it ... I deserve it ... not in my right mind ... cried ... why did I say such things ... Haven't meant to scold ... "Forgive me ..."

November 13, 1925, from Marjorie Walton, Mattoon, Illinois, signed Bobby. Social chat. Ruth answered December 6.

November 16, 1925, from Bill Bland. No letter, please forgive me, been sick

November 18, 1925, from Bill Bland. Received her letter and box of candy. Then phone call.

November 20, 1925, from Bill Bland.

November 28, 1925, from Bill Bland. Back in Chicago; had been in Sullivan.

[Brief articles in the *Sullivan Progress* containing squibs about activities at Sullivan High School show that Ruth was playing saxophone in the school orchestra and performing in the junior class play. Her reported grades were also very good: she was listed among the "STHS Honor Students" with 15 points for the second six weeks of the fall semester. (The top point score was 19.)]

December 1, 1925, from Bill Bland.

December 2, 1925, from Bill Bland. "I didn't suppose your mother would change her mind about you going to the dance especially so much as to let you go with Purvis. You know how to take care of yourself and I'm glad to for most girls don't know what's good for them. Has Purvis gone home yet?"

December 4, 1925, from Bill Bland.

December 5, 1925, from Bill Bland. "Do you and Dru still run around together. ... I know you're not that type and don't ever let people think it either. If she still goes with Fred Lee, please don't run with her or sleep with her, for I don't want a sweet innocent little girl of mine to get that awful syphilis ... It is absolutely incurable to you know, and their body rots away and it always kills them. Please keep away from it; you can't imagine how awful and dangerous it is." [A little 19-year old innocence here on Bill's part. Perhaps a parent had told him not to "sleep with" anybody or he would catch syphilis, and he took it literally.]

December 10, 1925, from Bill Bland.

December 15, 1925, from Bill Bland. Would like to be there for your class play.

December 17, 1925, from Bill Bland. Awaiting a letter. "I'd love to buy you something nice but I can't afford to." "How did you and Tom come out with your last squabble, as thick as hops again? Why won't you tell me about your troubles if you love me dear. ... You said awhile back you didn't speak."

December 18, 1925, from Bill Bland.

December 21, 1925, from Bill Bland. "I didn't mean anything by asking about Tom. ... I'm sorry you think it's none of my business." "Yes, I know your play was wonderful ..." Was standing at attention in the movie theater today: "Someone walked up at the side of me and said, 'What are you so damn stuck up about, Bill'? I turned around and it was **Purvis Tabor** and Hubert Kingery..." Saw a good show: The Phantom of the Opera featuring Lon Cheney. [The 1926 *Retrospect* reports, with respect to the previous year's class of 1925, that Purvis Tabor, is at Marquette University, Wisconsin.]

December 22, 1925, from Bill Bland. Disappointed you can't come to Chicago.

December 23, 1925, from Bill Bland.

Various Christmas cards. One was from Wade C. Bland, from Kewanee, Ill. (June's brother.) Another was from Virginia E. Eden. Also one from brother Herschel, Agnes, and their son Robert in Edwardsville.

December 25, 1925, Leonard White, Ruth's father, wrote from Decatur. Agnes and Robert (Herschel's son) came up to Shelbyville. "You see her Mother lives there." Thanks her for her package to Agnes. Also for snapshot pictures. "I told you about having [one] of Delbert taken in New Mexico."

1926

January 2, 1926, from Bill Bland. [Ruth must have visited in Chicago at some point over the holidays.] “I sure am blue; it seems like I hadn’t seen you since last year. You know dear I couldn’t stand it when you left me without kissing me goodbye. I broke clear down and cried out loud, and stayed awake all night thinking about it.”

January 5, 1926, from Bill Bland. Has read her letter a lot. “Do you mean dear heart that that is all, that you won’t write any more? I’m awfully sorry that you look at it that way; and I’m sorrier yet that I’m not peppy enough for you.”

January 6, 1926, Katie writes from Mattoon regarding visit Ruth might make to Mattoon.

January 18, 1926. Letter from Agnes, Herschel and Robert, with picture of Agnes holding Robert. Thanks Ruth for Robert’s sweater and cap. Reports trying to call on the telephone, “but central said you were out of town for a few days.”

January 20, 1926, from Bill Bland. “I would like for us to go on just as we were – but you know it takes two to make a bargain of a thing like this.” Begs her to write.

January 25, 1926, Malcolm Bryant posts a letter from Portland: Thanks Ruth for the “beautiful and useful gift that you sent me.” Says he took a girl to a dance and “had a great time dancing the Charleston. Can you do it? It’s all the rage here.”

January 26, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received Ruth’s long letter. Not sure where he stands.

February 1, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received Ruth’s letter. “I sure am proud of those grades dear ...”

February 2, 1926, from Bill Bland. Asks her to send telegram to him at the theater, saying: “Come home at once, mother is very low,’ and sign ‘Ruth.’” Would be better to sign it “Dad.”

February __, 19__, a letter was posted to Ruth from Chicago, signed “Ethel.” (not clear.) She refers to a “newsy letter” from Ruth about the “lovely

things you were getting and doing. ... It's nice indeed – a pretty fur, a gorgeous ring and a car – all your own. I'll wager the girls envy you.” Refers to a letter from June, who says: “Ruth is a darling flapper.” (From position of letter in the batch, it appears to be from 1926; but the reference to having a fur and car suggests it may have been later.)

February 14, 1926, Virginia writes from Pemberton, N.J. Nothing of interest.”

February 16, 1926, from Bill Bland. “Got back all safe and sound...” [– so had been to Sullivan. Perhaps Ruth sent the telegram, and got him the time off from work.] “Yes, you have changed lots dearest; I didn't know you did have such a sweet disposition, and you seem so much older and nicer.”

February 19, 1926, from Bill Bland. Refers to the Charleston: “I can't do it near as well as you can ...”

February 23, 1926, from Bill Bland.

February 26, 1926, from Bill Bland.

March 2, 1926, from Bill Bland. Can't afford to give Ruth an expensive birthday present.

March 3, 1926 – Ruth 's 17th Birthday



March 4, 1926, from Bill Bland.

March 8, 1926, from Bill Bland.

March 8, 1926 (2nd), from Bill Bland. Glad you had a nice birthday.

March 11, 1926, from Bill Bland.

March 13, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received letter and candy from Ruth.

March 19, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received her letter. "I was happy until I came to the part where you said that it was your last letter. Oh God!... I only meant dear that I didn't want to keep asking you to write so often, if you are busy." ... "If you want to go with **that cute!!! Martin boy**, you don't have to stop writing to me to do it." [Clearly not Robert Martin, who in 1926 was 31 years old. Perhaps Ward Martin; see below. July 16, 1926.]

March 26, 1926, from Bill Bland. No letters from Ruth. "Sorry for it all ..."

March 27, 1926, from Ethel in Shelbyville. Refers to Perry being in hospital and June worried about it.

April 3, 1926, from Bill Bland, postmarked Batesburg, South Carolina. Sets forth dates in May and June, and cities in South and North Carolina where he will be, apparently on theater business. Also refers to scarf he sent her.

April 7, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received Ruth's letter. Thanks. Lonesome and blue. Still loves her; wants her to write. Applied to U-I.

April 10, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received Ruth's letter. "Oh God, how can you say I don't love you any more!" "Well, I guess our friend Fred Lee is there in jail by now. They arrested him here Thur. or Wed night and sheriff Ashbrook came up after him Thurs. night." ... "Perry Bland came in the theatre and asked for me ..."

April 17, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received your sweet letter this morning.

April 19, 1926, from Bill Bland. "I'm glad you're having a good time now ... but I'm jealous."

April 21, 1926, from Bill Bland. Going to Atlanta. Left job as an usher in Chicago. Tore up all Ruth's letters. "Of course I want you to have a good time, but please don't forget me."

April 27, 1926, from Bill Bland. Batesburg, S.C. "I am sorry however that you look at it all in such a light, and if I would have thought you cared so much, I certainly wouldn't have decided to come." Redpath isn't an amateur outfit: "classed the highest of them all." "Why should you hate it so and give me up altogether? Others don't. "

May 6, 1926, Lou Jean Hutchinson writes from Milwaukee: "How are Jenny M. and Ed? Are they still quarreling as much as ever?" "You can send me Purvis Tabor's address if you want to. I might get up nerve enough to go and look him up or even call him up." (Nina Tabor Martin's father.) Ruth noted that she answered a few days later.

May 4, 1926, from Bill Bland, Batisburg, S.C. Working for Redpath Chautauqua. "Why are you always saying you won't write anymore, when you know it makes me feel so bad?" "Glad you liked the scarf."

May 10, 1926, from Bill Bland, Lake City, S.C. Begs her to write. "What do you think is harmful about playing billiards? There isn't a boy in the United States that doesn't know how and plays sometimes."

May 12, 1926, from Bill Bland, Lake City, S.C. Received her letter. "You sure had a nice banquet too. I'm glad you enjoyed it and I'm glad you had a date to it even if it was with your cousin." "There's too many negroes down here to suit me though; we're not bothered with them in the tent as they're not allowed, so that helps some."

May 14, 1926, postcard from Bill from Lake City, S.C.

May 15, 1926, from Bill, Lake City. "You asked me Ruth dear if I had had any dates. I will give you my word of honor that I haven't had a one." "You asked if I was jealous of John; do you mean **John Fleshner** or some new John? ... I think he's awfully dumb though if he can't take a hint. No, I hope you never do treat me that way, Ruth." [John Fleshner was a senior, graduating in the spring of 1927 – a year older than Ruth.]

May 18, 1926, letter from Bill Bland, Laurinburg, N.C. "Got your nice

long letter this morning.” “Yes, Ruth, it certainly was news to me to know I’d been writing and sending rings to Clara. . . . Such a thing has never even entered my head as writing. I don’t care anything for her . . .”

May 21, 1926, Bill Bland, Laurinburg N.C. “Have you been having any heart trouble or bad colds to make you worse?” “That’s just who I imagined the John would be – **John Bupp**. It’s all right I guess if you like him. . . . You won’t go with him very long without getting serious.” [John Bupp was class of 1925 – same as Bill Bland – so had graduated the previous spring. The *Retrospect* says he is “home, Sullivan.”]

May 23, 1926, from Bill Bland, Laurinburg, N.C. “I thought John Bupp was going to school or business college in Decatur; when did he come back? Is he going to stay? Do you like his car or him? . . . If I scold you, you get mad so do as you like . . .” . . . “Yes, Ruth, I’ll promise you again that I’m not writing to Clara.”

May 26, 1926, Juanita Unser writes from Richmond, Indiana, on letter-head of Jordan, Unser, Hunt & Waltermann, funeral directors. Encloses picture of new automobile – “a new Paige, seven passenger.” Invites Ruth to visit.

May 26, 1926, John Schoemaker writes flirting letter from St. Louis: “When I recall that first nite I met you, at the square, walked up to the dance with you and then took you home, I remember it was then that I told you that neither I or the other fellows in the ‘gang’ had a ‘steady.’” Reports he now goes out “once in a while” with Gladys. “I’m sorry that you’ve written to Wm for the last time. I hope you’ve changed your mind. I’m quite sure he likes you if he writes three and four times a week and he seems to be a very nice boy, outside of that one fault of his, which I’m sure he has outgrown by now.” “You, without a steady! Now if I wasn’t so attached . . . I would take the next train for Sullivan.” “Poor Jennie and Ed! And I thought everything was fixed. S’too bad they can’t get along.” . . . “Clara R. doesn’t like you to go with Ivan W.” (Perhaps Ivan Wood, my classmate Steven Wood’s father.) “. . . I’d like to take you to the show, church or any thing that may be doing at the time, if I may. I enjoyed the few times I was out with you last time, I really did. . . . If course if you have a ‘steady’ I would not impose on you.” “I’m getting old now, in my early twenties.”

May 27, 1926, from Bill Bland, Walhalla, S.C. Why are you going to Richmond?

May 28, 1926, Bill Bland, Walhalla. "I think you misunderstand what I said about John [Bupp]. I didn't say anything against John because I always did like him, in fact I ran around with him quite a bit before you knew me."

May 31, 1926, from Bill Bland, Walhalla.

June 4, 1926, from Bill Bland, Lenoir, N.C. "Got your sweet letter last night." ... "Why is it, Ruth, that you're so afraid I'm writing to someone else when you know as well as I do that you write to boy friends of yours. Don't you? You used to. ... You asked me if I was mad at you for going with **Ralph**; you know I'm not dear.... He's awfully old though, isn't he? ... I'm seeing all my old Decatur friends on this trip so I don't get quite so homesick."

June 6, 1926, Jean writes from Marinette, Wisconsin: idle chat.

June 7, 1926, from Bill Bland, Lenoir, N.C. Received your letter. "I guess it's sweet enough for some other guy to kiss now, isn't it Ruth? I guess I shouldn't say that either, for you wouldn't kiss anyone else would you? Please tell me and I'll believe you. When I get back, I won't have any trouble at all; but after you've been going everywhere and with so many different ones, you'll want to keep on doing it. You really deekle me about your dates, how they're all accidental, and you'll not go with **Tom** again and you'll not go with **Ralph** and then the next time I hear from you you've been with both."

June 9, 1926, from Bill Bland, Lenoir, N.C. On the train.

June 10, 1926, from Bill Bland, Ashville, Tenn. "No, Ruth. I'm not interested in Drucilla's birthdays ... Do you still write to John Schoemaker? I thought you didn't care for anyone else or write to anyone else."

June 11, 1926, Hattie writes to Ruth in Edwardsville, where she was visiting her brother Herschel and his family. "Dear Honey-bunch, ... Do you think you are treating your mother fairly when it would take only a little while to write me? ... I think I won't let you go away again by yourself." Refers to Ruth's friends – Clara, Berenice, Ed, Henry, Maxine. "I see in the paper that Purvis has come too." [Tom Purvis? Purvis Tabor?]

June 13, 1926, from Bill Bland, La Follette, Tenn.

June 16, 1926, from Bill Bland, La Follette, Tenn. Got your letter from

Edwardsville yesterday. “I suppose you are having a good time; you seem to be always having one, don’t you.” Sister wrote him letter about Ruth. “I’m glad you like my sister anyhow. Ha!” “I suppose when you get this, you’ll be home. Then you can have **Purvis** and **Henry** and the rest of the boys that are just home, to entertain you.”

June 16, 1926, separate letters from Agnes and Herschel. Herschel: “Sure is sad about you being kidnapped. Ha, ha. Nice conductor to entertain you on your trip but most anyone would like to talk with you, even a brother.” Agnes writes about material Ruth sent for an outfit for Robert.

June 19, 1926, from Bill Bland, Nicholasville, Ky. Received two of Ruth’s letters. Saving for school – has saved over \$100 since he’s been with Redpath.

June 21, 1926, Agnes writes from Edwardsville. Home news.

June 21, 1926, from Bill Bland, Nicholasville, Ky. “Tell me will you please, Ruth, has anyone ever kissed you since I left you? I believe what you say, but please tell me the truth.” Will be home last of August.

June 25, 1926, Agnes writes again; more home news.

June 26, 1926, from Bill Bland, Nicholasville, Ky. Haven’t heard from you in five days. “Has Tom Purvis ever left for Michigan; I hope he stays, do you?”

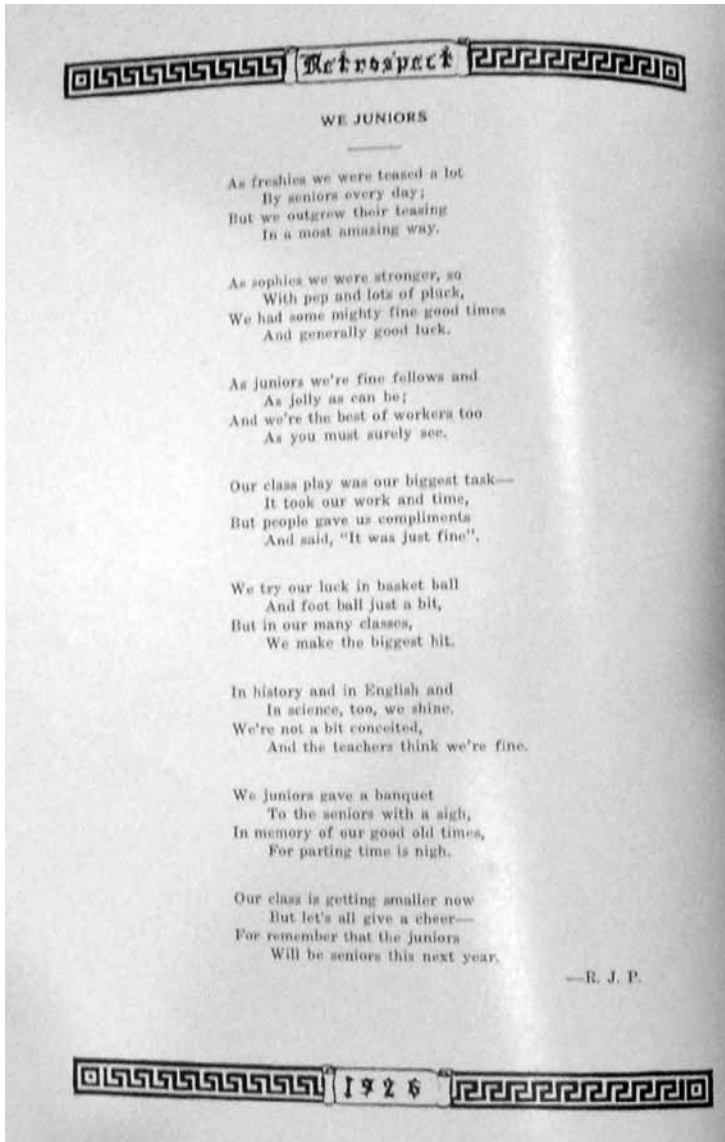
June 29, 1926, from Bill Bland, Lexington, Ky. No letter from Ruth.

June 30, 1926, from Bill Bland, Springfield, Ky. Received her letter. “I’m quite sure that was a nice way to answer my question in your last letter even if it was personal.... If you didn’t want to answer it, just tell me in a polite way at least. ... I’m not hurt in the least. Maybe I shouldn’t have asked such a personal question but you know how foolish I am.” Ruth had sent him a picture of her with her brother Herschel. “I know you don’t care if I have dates ...”

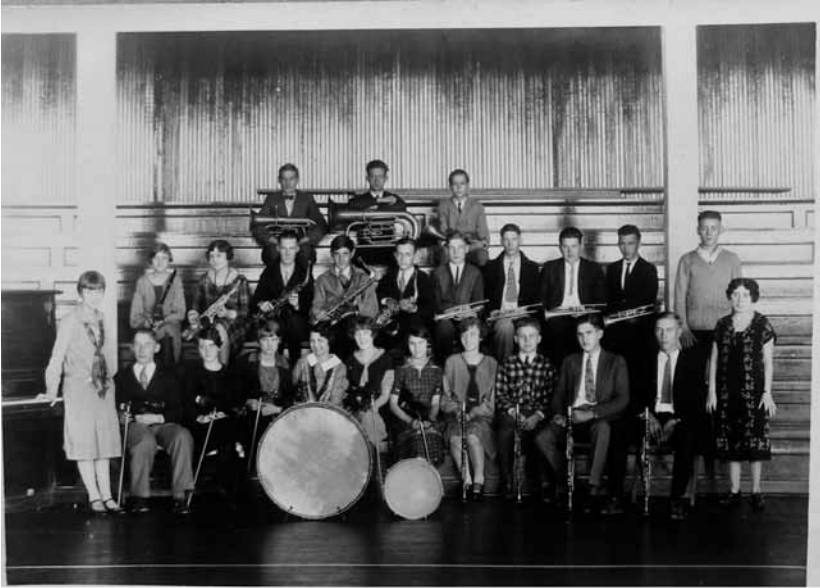
June 30, 1926, letter from Katie in Mattoon. Empty letter.

The 1926 School yearbook – the *Retrospect* – contains more information about the graduating Senior Class than the Junior Class, of which Ruth Pifer was a member. But there are nice fragments in it.

Before the class picture, there is a long poem, "We Juniors," written by "R.J.P." Ruth Juanita Pifer was the only junior in the class with those initials, so the poem must be hers. Ruth is also identified as a "Junior Editor" of the *Retrospect* staff. She was a Vice President of the Aeolian Literary Society. (One of the judges of literary and music contests sponsored by class organizations was Mrs. Mabel George, sister of Robert W. Martin.)



Ruth played saxophone in the High School orchestra in 1925-1926. She is standing in the second row, second from the left end.



She was also a member of the student council:



And the *Retrospect* staff:



Ruth was also listed as a member of the Girls' Glee Club.

In the Junior class play – “All of a Sudden Peggy” performed December 17, 1925 – the part of the Hon. Millicent Keppel (daughter of Lady Crackenthorpe) was played by Ruth Pifer.

One page contains humorous quotations. One reads as follows:

“Over in our yard, boasted Paul Dolan, we have a lilac bush fifty feet high. Gee, chimed Ruth Pifer, I wish I could lilac that.”



The *Retrospect* contains a Junior Class picture. Ruth appears to be the girl standing in the back row, fifth from the left.

The *Retrospect* also lists the members of the Class of 1925, the prior year's graduates, and offers information as to what they are doing. It lists William Bland as a “worker in theatre, Chicago.”

July 1, 1926, from Agnes in Edwardsville. “Sure hope you are all over your ‘crazy’ spells, as you call them. Sure funny the doctor can't seem to tell you exactly what's wrong.” ... “I know from the way you bite your finger nails that your nerves are not as steady as they should be.” “I am still getting compliments on your ‘banquet’ dress, so when you make your will, leave it to me, unless you forget to remember. How are your 2 new dresses coming along?”

July 2, 1926, Bill Bland, Springfield, Ky.

July 4, 1926, Juanita Unser posts letter to Ruth from Richmond. Refers to upcoming trip by Ruth to Richmond. Will meet train. Thinks “the Wabash from Decatur to Logansport and then Pennsylvania to Richmond is the best route.”

July 5, 1926, from Bill Bland, Kalamazoo. Describes travels.

July 6, 1926, Hattie writes to Ruth in Richmond, c/o H.F. Unser. “Dear little girl ...” “Just got home from the picnic.” Yesterday in Mattoon, “I got me a pair of shoes (\$2.47) and a good pair of black hose (\$1.65).” “I haven’t finished the ironing yet. Will do that this evening ... then clean up the house ...” “Yesterday on your train was the first time I ever saw a negro matron in service. And I have been on lots of good trains, too. I think it is fine.”

July 7, 1926, from Agnes. “How are you and Wm. getting along by this time? No more spats, I hope. But don’t let him put anything over on you dearie.”

July 8, 1926, from Bill Bland, Marshall, Michigan. Received her letter.

July 9, 1926, from Bill Bland, Marshall.

July 9, 1926, Herschel from Edwardsville. “Say, you are having too many dates with too many different fellows – go ahead and laugh. You always do at my advice. But at that, you are a wonderful little Sister.”

July 12, 1926, Bill Bland, Marshall.

July 13, 1926, Bill Bland, Marshall.

July 16, 1926, Bill Bland, Niagara Falls, Ontario, to Ruth, Richmond. Denies he’s been out on dates. Doesn’t drink or smoke. Refers to her dates. “I knew you would be going with that **Ward Martin**, you had talked so much about him being so sweet; it’s none of my business though.”

July 17, 1926, Bill Bland to Ruth, in Richmond, from Niagara Falls.

July 17, 1926, Hattie writes to Ruth in Richmond. “Just got both of your letters this morning. Do not know what delayed your first one. I was getting anxious about you but it is alright now.” Refers to a girl getting a “permanent”

for ten dollars – “the price is good only for a few days. Just advertising.” Says “Jennie is driving a new Dodge sedan. Some car ...” “Two cars are one too many for Henry [Unser] so you can get him to give you one. Can Juanita drive?” “Poor Mike Finley got three fingers on his left hand cut off in the ice cream machine yesterday.” “Yes I will take anything you paint. You should do pretty well as you have a little talent along that line.”

July 18, 1926, Hattie to Ruth in Richmond. “I went through the regular Sunday program: Sunday school, church, dinner. Today we ate dinner at Hawbacker’s on the south side. The fried chicken was fine. We had green beans, mashed potatoes, cabbage salad, ice cream and cake.” Writes that she sent William a birthday card. “If you write him in Niagara, tell him to call for it. I can hear you say, ‘Why did she do that?’ Because I wanted to.” Writes that she is going to church tonight. “Bro Hopper preaches tonight.”

July 19, 1926, to Ruth, in Richmond, from Bill Bland, Niagara Falls. Describes the falls.

July 20, 1926, to Ruth, Richmond, from Bill Bland, Niagara Falls. Complains – no letters.

July 20, 1926, letter posted to Ruth in Richmond from Sullivan, signed simply “Doc.” Refers to buying myself a dress.

July 20, 1926, letter posted to Ruth in Richmond from Sullivan, signed Drucila. Says she went to dance on Thursday night, and Vails orchestra from Decatur played. Then next day she went to Arthur to the carnival. Refers to friends going home to Sullivan from Arthur on the train.

July 21, 1926, Hattie to Ruth in Richmond. “Yes, I’m lonesome some of the time, but you get your visit out as it is the last one you will make before school commences.” Refers to Wm travelling in Niagara and Kitchener, Ontario. Talked to Wm’s mother. Wm. wanted to know where Ruth is – had sent letters to her in Richmond, Illinois. William “also asked his mother what you meant by you saying that his mother didn’t like you. You must stop writing those things as you know he will tell her. Mrs. Bland says she don’t know what makes you think that for she surely does, and she tries to treat you fine.” “Mrs. P. Bland was down from Shelbyville today. ... Perry is sending for her [to come to Chicago]. ... June doesn’t know when she can come home.”

July 22, 1926, Hattie writes to Ruth in Richmond. Hattie has decided not to come to Richmond because “no one is left home to care for your menagerie.” “Mrs. Dolan will take care of the chickens but says no dogs or cats for her to take care of.” “Come home when you get ready. Write to Katie and stay with her in Mattoon until the evening train or all night ...” “PS Hadn’t you better send Mrs. Bland a card? (Wm’s mother)”

July 22, 1926, **John** writes from St. Louis, letter forwarded to Ruth in Richmond. Refers to letter from Ruth: “It would seem as if you have a machine, inasmuch as you drove all the way down to Edwardsville from Decatur.” ... “quite agree with you regarding your policy of going out with several fellow instead of keeping steady company. You say it is more fun. ... I know who Tom Purvis is, but I’m not sure about John Bupp or the ‘drugstore cowboy.’ John Bupp is not the terribly stout (fat) John that I’m thinking of, is it? ... So you won a Charleston contest.” Refers to expectation that William Bland will be in town in August. “If you are so kind as to give me a couple of nites, I sincerely hope it will cause no trouble as it seemed to have done last year. I’m glad to hear he is going to Ill. U.”

July 22, 1926, Jennie Margaret writes to Ruth in Richmond. Reports social news.

July 23, 1926, Bill Bland, Kitchener, Ontario. Wrote 6 letters to her at Richmond “Illinois.” Wrong state.

July 24, 1926, Hattie writes to Ruth in Richmond. Reports talking to Mrs. Bland. William has received no letter from you. “Said you had quit writing. I told her he was none behind you, that you hadn’t heard from him either. I don’t know what she meant when she said ‘from all indications he has quit too.’” “Had roasting ears and peach cobbler for dinner. Good too.” “Think Paddy has a touch of mange. Gave him a bath and he doesn’t scratch so much.” “You say Henry thinks you are still a kid. Well, what are you but a kid. We all think that and we are not wrong.”

July 26, 1926, from Bill Bland, Kitchener, Ontario, to Ruth, Richmond. Received the ties she sent for his birthday.

July 26, 1926, Gladys Wood writes from Sullivan to Ruth in Richmond. “Ruth, you are going entirely too much, the idea of a girl your age running around and having dates n’everything.”

July 27, 1926, from Bill Bland, Kitchener, Ontario, to Ruth, Richmond,

forwarded to Sullivan. Received Ruth's letter – first in 12 days. “I miss your letters. I know you've been busy having a good time, but if you love me, like you say you do, couldn't you have found time?”

July 29, 1926, from Bill Bland, Kitchener. Received her letter. Will go to Richmond, Michigan next. “You said I must have spent some money on girls at Niagara Falls to spend so much. If you want to make yourself think that – all right. I can assure you that you are mistaken.”

July 31, 1926, from Bill Bland, Richmond, Mich.

August 1, 1926, from Agnes, Edwardsville. “Your no account brother will be 24 years old Wednesday.” [Ruth was 17.]

August 2, 1926, from Bill Bland, Richmond, Michigan. Complains about lack of mail. “I don't think you're a bit anxious for me to come home, at least you don't seem like it. Are you anxious to see me Ruth?”

August 3, 1926, from Bill Bland, Richmond, Michigan. Just received two letters from Ruth. “You have said you loved me Ruth, but since you denied it in your last letter, I guess you don't. If that's so, I guess I don't need to bother coming home before school starts.”

August 5, 1926, from Bill Bland, Richmond. Received her letter – “makes me feel so good to think you really did miss me and wanted me to come home.” “You bet I know my little girl is a good cook.”

August 6, 1926, from Bill Bland, Kalamazoo, Michigan, on the railroad train.

August 7, 1926, Freda Hicks writes Ruth in Chicago, signing letter “Mr. and Mrs. Hicks.”

August 9, 1926, from Bill Bland, Paw Paw, Michigan.

August 10, 1926, from Herschel. “If you can come and I sure hope you do, I suppose you will go to Decatur and down on the Wabash [Railroad]. Here is the time: Train no 11 3:15 p.m. 6:10 p.m. St. Louis Union Station. ... I will meet you ...”

August 12, 1936, Bill Bland, Paw Paw.

August 13, 1926, "O.L." writes to Ruth in Sullivan; letter mailed in Chicago. O.L. gives return address in Cicero. Social chat.

August 13, 1926, Jennie Margaret writes to Ruth, addressing her as "Rufus." Social chat.

On August 27, 1926, shortly before the commencement of the new high school term, Jennie posted a letter from Evanston on Evanston Hotel stationery. Writes about her vacation.

On August 27, 1926 (same day), Jennie Margaret writes again, to Ruth in Chicago. "Weren't you glad to see your Mother and Wil'um." Social chat.

Senior Year – 1926-1927

September 3, 1926, to Ruth from Marguerite, posted in West Palm Beach. "I hear you and William are still ok. Tell me all about it and how it feels to be in love so that I will know when I am in love." "Ruth, don't you remember how you used to put on your father's trousers and stuff pillows in them?"

September 15, 1926, to Ruth, Bill Bland, Champaign. Back at U-I –had been in Sullivan. "It seems like a dream me even being there – it was such a short while, an awful time though, wasn't it, sweetheart?"

September 18, 1926, to Ruth from Clara – CMR – Knox College, Galesburg. About being in sorority rush.

September 18, 1926, to Ruth, Sullivan, from Bill Bland, Champaign. Busy with university registration. Glad you are taking up the orchestra again.

September 20, 1926, to Ruth from Bill Bland, Champaign. Writes about coming to Sullivan over the next weekend. "You ought to see me in my new green frosh cap, it sure is a _____. Mine has a white button on it to show I'm in the Commerce College; there's a different color for each college."

September 21, 1926, posted to Ruth from Marguerite, West Palm Beach. "I'm glad you and Bill have made up your tragic quarrel for I'm in a position to feel sorry for you?"

September 24, 1926, from Bill Bland. Received Ruth's long letter and pictures. "I'm proud of you making such good grades ..." "Of course my mother

isn't mad at you ...I didn't need to tell her we had made up; she could tell it by my actions."

October 2, 1926, from Bill Bland. Got two tickets for homecoming football game – one for Ruth.

October 7, 1926, from Bill Bland. After football game, the boys "are figuring on going to College Hall to a dance ..." "... was promoted to first captain in the cavalry..."

October 10, 1926, from Bill Bland. "You asked me about the dance. I don't know as yet what I do about you getting home ..."

October 12, 1926, from John Schoemaker, St. Louis. "Well, when I left, you said you were just starting in a cooking class at school and that you were going to bring home the junk ..."

October 14, 1926, from Bill Bland. Arranged for ride back to Sullivan after the dance.

October 20, 1926, from D.H. White, Springfield. "I hope you have a good time on your visit. I am sure I would have had one if you had been staying for the week end. But promise me that it isn't the end of the date, but that it is merely postponed until a better time."

October 21, 1926, from Dru, Wyandotte, Michigan. "I hope your husband will be as sweet and good as mine."

October 21, 1926, from Bill Bland. After I left you the other night, I drove back to Decatur. Then, next morning, back to Champaign. "That visit was short but it sure was sweet ..."

October 24, 1926, from Bill Bland. Lonesome; can't get along without you... "You always said you didn't like to get this kind of letter. I'm sorry but it's the way I feel and I just have to tell someone. You can tear it up anyhow if you wish." "I'm glad you had a good time sweetheart ..."

October 29, 1926, from Bill Bland.

October 31, 1926, from Bill Bland. "You made a lot of friends around here with that cake you brought up."

November 3, 1926, from Bill Bland, Champaign. Got your letter and “kicked myself for not going home. I’m awfully sorry I didn’t, but you generally do have a date for the dances so I supposed it didn’t matter. I know you had a good time and got to dance with everybody like you wanted to, and didn’t have anyone to boss.” ... “Don’t let my coming home bother your plans now, go ahead and have your dates.”

November 4, 1926, from Agnes, Edwardsville. Writes about her health.

November 10, 1926, Bill Bland. “I enjoyed my visit lots ...”

November 12, 1926, from Drucilla, Wyandotte.

November 13, 1926, Bill Bland. Asks her to come to U-I for some unspecified event – he purchased tickets.

Uncertain date, letter in French from Mselle Marie LeFeuve, Chartres. Letter in French.

December 1, 1926. Bill Bland. Enjoyed visit home – too short. Refers to “interurban” between Champaign and Cerro Gordo. Another letter earlier had referred to “interurban” from Bement to Champaign. [Philip remembers this as single or two-car service, like street cars.] Will get out of school on December 22. “Don’t you think you worry too much about your lessons, Ruth. You can’t stand to have anyone ahead of you.”

December 4, 1926. Bill Bland.

December 9, 1926. Bill Bland. “About your Christmas, I sure appreciated your suggestions. Since you’re going to get a car, I’ve decided on a quart of oil.”

December 15, 1926, Bill Bland. Thanks her for box of candy.

December ___, 1926, Bill Bland.

December 18, 1926, Bill Bland. “You never write as though you cared anything for me, Ruth dear, I always try and make myself read between the lines and figure it out, but I can’t always.” Will come to Sullivan when classes end.

December 22, 1926, from Drucilla at Wyandotte, Michigan.

Christmas cards. One from Wm Bland, Champaign. "My love, Bill."

Two letters, no envelopes, from "K.P." No date. Pencil and illegible.

1927

January 1, 1927, Bill Bland. "I appreciated you bringing me to Cerro-Gordo... The car was awfully slow, as it stopped at every place, and it was just packed."

January 5, 1927, Bill Bland. Got your letter – "bewildered. I'm so sorry you don't believe me sweetheart... You know I love you lots, don't you Ruth?" "I won't ask you any more to tell me your feelings and troubles, I guess you don't like to confide in me."

January 5, 1927, Bill Bland. [Not first time two letters postmarked the same day.] Asks her "to try a little harder not to be cross with me for everything I do."

January 9, 1927, Agnes writes. Health problems. Got a radio for Christmas – "a 6 tube Metrodyne, and we certainly are crazy about it. ... We have got stations all over the country – all but California ..."

January 13, 1927, Bill Bland. Received her long letter and box of candy.

January 15, 1927, Bill Bland. Expect you next Friday.

January 17, 1927, Agnes writes from Edwardsville. Herschel worried about throat operation for goiter "and lose a lot of work with no pay days while he is off. But if he could just get to feeling fine again, I wouldn't care if we are poor the rest of our lives, paying for it."

January 20, 1927, Bill Bland. "I wondered if you got home all right Sat. I sure hope nothing happened so that your mother won't be mad because you came."

January 24, 1927, card to Ruth from ____ Banks, Portland. Your pictures come to hand ...I think you have grown to be quite a pretty girl ..."

February __, 1927, Bill Bland. "... Sweet of you to bring me to Cerro Gordo in your car ... read most of the way up on the interurban yesterday

evening ...” Dreamed about what she would wear to the Ball.

February 12, 1927, Bill Bland. Going to be measured for tux. “I have it all fixed for you staying with Lena’s sister ...”

February 16, 1927, Bill Bland. I have “it all fixed for you and mother ... to stay at Walkers’ ...” Written Wednesday: “come Friday ...”

February 20, 1927, Bill Bland. “... so happy you got to come to the Ball, dear ...” “... Been in a sort of a trance ever since you left ...” “If I could have only had you alone with me after we left mother, I could have been happy. ... I know she doesn’t understand, she forgets when she was young, and times have changed.” “I know you’ve always said you didn’t like to speak of love, but I don’t see how you can help ...” “I don’t want you to feel bad about what my mother and I fussed over ...”

February 25, 1927, Bill Bland. Received her two letters. “I feel lots better about it all now ...” “... mother has tried to get me to go with someone else. I would never have told you ... She’s fought and begged me to, for a long time, but she doesn’t know how I love you” Went horse-back riding that morning as part of his military class.

February 29, 1927, Bill Bland. “I got a letter from mother today and she seemed rather sorry about what happened I think she likes you better than she used to, maybe its for me.”

March 2, 1927, Bill Bland. Birthday card. Has pneumonia, but almost cured. “I hope you’re not still angry. Your letter made me feel sorta bad.”

March 3, 1927 – Ruth’s 18th Birthday.

March 4, 1927, Bill Bland. “I hope you haven’t had any more fusses or anything on account of me. I’d like to know what mother has said ...” Have you finished reading Tess? ...”You don’t get mad near as often as you used to, sweetheart ...”

March 7, 1927, Bill Bland. Writing Sunday night, “just 5 minutes after I left your car. . . . I’m not asking your pardon or forgiveness I had no intention of taking a date for tomorrow night ... I felt awfully bad that you wouldn’t kiss me goodbye.”

March 10, 1927, Bill Bland. Happy to get her letter “after all I said.” “... beg your pardon if I hurt your feelings ...” “... when you said I kissed you because I was used to it.” “I’m sorry you think I’m changing in my attitude toward you ...” “... we’ve been heart friends and pals for about 3 years ...” “... you say I seem like a distant friend.” “I ask you Ruth not to let this affair [?] mean any more to you. I will let it drop if you wish to.”

On March 17, according to the *Sullivan Progress*, the high school students presented an operetta – “The Wishing Well.” The part of “Maureen McGibney, a designing coquette from Dublin,” was played by Ruth Pifer. (Another participant in the production, playing the part of “Lady Mary Donnell,” was Rose Eden Martin, “soprano,” the daughter of Joel Neely Martin and thus granddaughter of I.J. Martin.)

March 17, 1927, Bill Bland. “Surprised at the nice letter ...” Has a date Friday night “since you won’t come up after I asked you “I haven’t had a date with anyone but you Ruth for some 6 or 7 months ...”

March 20, 1927, Bill Bland. Received your letter ... “I suppose you think I’m mad now, but I’m not.” Bill had sent a picture to Ruth; his mother asked whether she liked it. “I said ‘yes, she seemed to like it but you know she never says much.’ Was that anything so bad?” Delta Sig asking him to pledge.

March 24, 1927, Bill Bland. Will try to come to Sullivan over the weekend. Doesn’t know whether he can pledge – waiting for Mother’s consent.

April 5, 1927, Bill Bland. Refers to skating at the derby this afternoon. “It sure was some event. Everyone was a skater, even Dean Arkle Clark ...” Now living at the fraternity. [Dean Clark was Dean of Students: “matriarchal, patriarchal, Tommy Arkle Clark.”]

April 9, 1927, Bill Bland. Received her letters. “I know you are awfully busy with your play ...” “I don’t know of anything that my mother has against you ... I don’t know why she won’t talk to you as she always did, Ruth.” Asks her up for a house dance on May 13. “I’m awfully proud of you learning to cook so well ...”

April 19, 1927, Bill Bland. Sorry he didn’t get to see her today. His Father brought him back early.

April __, 1927, Bill Bland. Received her package – a cake. Uncle Xerx died. Sorry I won't be able to see your class play.

April 25, 1927, Bill Bland. Some girl called the house. "You wouldn't come up here without seeing me would you, Ruth? I'd feel awfully bad if you would. Please, tell me if you were here." "I suppose your play went off great and you made lots of money ..."

April 27, 1927, Bill Bland. "I felt awfully bad after I got your letter, because you didn't wait to see me Sunday. ... You can't even wait to see me when you are in the same town." "No, I don't care for you going with **Ed**, Ruth, ..."

May 9, 1927, Bill Bland. Sunday evening. "I hope you got home all right without any trouble with your brakes ..." "I enjoyed the dance with you so much." "I think it funny that you didn't recognize the girl as a Jewess and the boys at the house as Jews." "You don't know Jews. He's a nice fellow though, but I can't run with him too much, you understand." Loves her, etc. "You've never even told me that you loved me, Ruth, why is that?"

May __, 1927, Bill Bland. "I was so glad that you got to come up to the picnic ..." Received her invitation. "I don't care whether mother thinks I should come home so near exams or not." Took summer job – has to leave for Detroit after exams. Hard to get summer job. "I'm sorry you don't like what I do ..."

May 16, 1927, from Agnes. Acknowledges commencement announcement.

May 19, 1927, Bill Bland. Received her letter...You never write so soon after you go home ..." Picnic is on the Sunday the 22nd. "Yes, I wanted you to take a date to your banquet; it's no more than right that you should."

The class yearbook – the *Retrospect* – was published by the class of 1927 in the spring. Ruth Pifer was the Senior Editor. The high school building that Ruth attended is the same building attended by Philip and me 30 years later. Ruth's activities are listed near her picture.



ROLEY
to the nearest star,
near or far."
Valley Contest 3.

WILLIAM RHODES
"Safe shall be my going."
Agorian 1, 2, 3.

RUTH PIFER
"With the sunshine on thy face."
Class Play 3, 4; Junior Representative
to the Retrospect Staff 3; Senior Editor
of the Retrospect; Student Council
; Aeolian 1, 2, 3, 4, Vice President 1,
2; Secretary 2; Orchestra 2, 3, 4; Glee
Club 1, 2, 3, 4; County Oratorical 2;
Home Economics Club 4, Vice President
4; Operetta 1, 2, 3, 4; Okaw Valley Or-
atorical 3.



In the literary section of the *Retrospect*, one finds a short essay entitled "The Canyon," by Ruth Pifer. It reflects her experiences on the train trip she took with her family to the West Coast:

The Canyon

Clinging close to every twist and turn, the train proceeds. There is scarce space betwixt wall and river for the single track. The narrowest portion of the passage is the wondrous Royal Gorge. The Red granite and crystallized walls, sparkling with mica, tower aloft on either side. The sky is a thread, almost obliterated by the jagged cliffs, and the stars may be seen at mid-day. The road has been built out over the water and the river boils madly through. The engine sways now to the right, now to the left, dragging the train. The view ahead, momentarily blocked, opens

again; a way is always found. And ever there is the ruddy granite in huge broken masses, the green stream foaming against its boulders, wild and weird canyons of enchantments and enclosing walls, sculptured richly, cut in fantastic figurations and oddly flexed and tilted. Here and there a gray, gaunt shape overcaps all its fellows, rising with an abruptness that is almost startling, rearing its head high into the blue fleecy clouds. The canyon changes hue and shape with every rod; everywhere it offers menacing boulders.

Among these matchless mountains, we see nature in all her grandeur—of snow-clad peaks and glittering glaciers, picturesque mountain lakes and spacious valleys with enchanting streams. The mountains are clothed with odorous pine woods, at their freshest and best, shrubs and delicate flowers, nestling snugly in the stillness. There is a world of sunshine and shadow and a clear bracing air. Myriads of sheep are seen in the distance, a hazy group on the blue-gray crest of the hills.

There is the glory of the sunset, the solitude of the forest vastness, the stillness of the majestic lakes and the sweep of the rivers. We are fascinated—we are impressed with the grandeur of nature—a dreamland is ours.

—Ruth Pifer, Senior.



[Ruth graduated from High School with a strong academic record. When I visited the office of the Superintendent of Schools on February 10, 2011, I was shown an early record book consolidating the grades of graduating seniors. Here is the record for Ruth Pifer. All her number scores were in the 90's.

		Jesumita					
		Name	Ruth Pifer		Name		
		Name of Parent or Guardian	Mrs. E. Pifer		Name or Grade		
		Date of Birth	March 3, 1909.		Date		
		Date of Entrance	Sept. 4, 1923		Date		
		Entered from	Sullivan Grades		Enter		
		Date of Graduation	May 30, 1927		Date		
Units Credits	SUBJECTS	Record Book Work	Grades		Credits		
			1st. Sem.	2nd. Sem.			
1	Agriculture I					Agrie	
	Agriculture II					Agrie	
	Algebra I	5	92	95	1	Alge	
	Algebra II	5	95		1/2	Alge	
	Arithmetic, Com.					Arith	
	Bookkeeping					Book	
	Botany	7		95	1/2	Botan	
	Civics	5	93		1/2	Civics	
	Chemistry					Chem	
	Cooking	10	94	93	1	Cook	
1/2	Drawing, Freehand					Draw	
	Drawing, Mech. I					Draw	
	Drawing, Mech. II					Draw	
	Economics	5		93	1/2	Econ	
1	English I	5	97	98	1	Engl	
	English II	5	97	96	1	Engl	
	English III	5	95	92	1	Engl	
	English IV	5	74	91	1	Engl	
	English, Business					Engl	
	French I	5	90	92	1	Fren	
	French II	5	91	90	1	Fren	
	Geometry, Plane	5	93	98	1	Geo	
	Geometry, Solid					Geo	
1/2	Geography, Commercial					Geo	
	Geography, Physical	5	97		1/2	Geo	
	General Science					Gen	
	Grammar					Gra	
	History, Ancient					Hist	
	History, European Mod.	5	97	95	1	Hist	
	History, American	5	95	90	1	Hist	
	Latin I	5	95	98	1	Lat	
	Latin II	5	90	90	1	Lat	
	Latin III					Lat	
	Latin IV					Lat	
	Law, Commercial					Law	
	Music, Vocal		Cr.	Cr.	1/2	Mus	
	Music, Vocal		Cr.	Cr.	1/2	Mus	
	Music, Instrumental		Cr.	Cr.	1/2	Mus	
	Physical Training I		90	90		Phy	
	Physical Training II		95	98		Phy	
1/2	Physiology	5		97	1/2	Phy	
	Physics					Phy	
	Public Speaking					Pub	

May 20, 1927 – the Junior-Senior Banquet was held at the High School. On May 27, the “Senior Picnic” was scheduled to be held at Mattoon. Ruth noted on her invitation card: “Much rain. Didn’t go.”

May 29, 1927, in the High School auditorium, the Baccalaureate program was conducted, consisting of hymns, an invocation, reading of scripture, a sermon by S.D. Robertson, and benediction. The Commencement Exercises were held the next evening at the auditorium at 8 p.m.

Pages 216 through 331 omitted.

* * *

June 9, 1935, Ruth and Bob were married in Sullivan in the Pifer home at 108 E. Jackson Street. Judge J.L. McLaughlin, Circuit Judge, performed the ceremony. The marriage license states that the witnesses to the marriage were Hattie Pifer and I.J. Martin, Bob's father.

* * *

June 10, 1935, to Ruth, Sullivan, from Nancy Querrey, Chicago. Responding to her letter. "I know you are just all in a whirlwind right about now. I just know you are going to be awfully happy Ruth, and I think Bob is an awfully nice fellow."





Ruth and Bob Martin, June 1936. Taken in Richmond, Indiana.





Ruth Martin. c. 1936



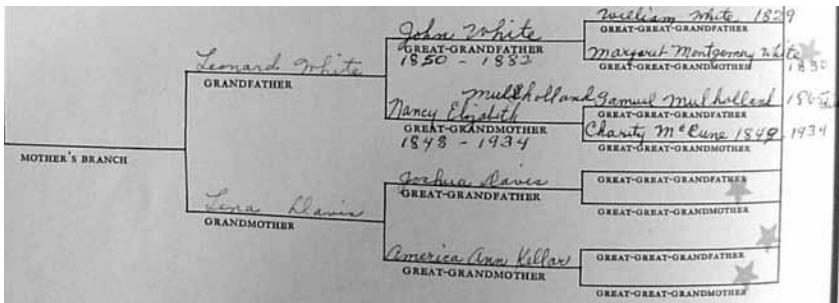
Ruth Martin, c. 1954



V

RUTH'S WHITE & DAVIS ANCESTORS

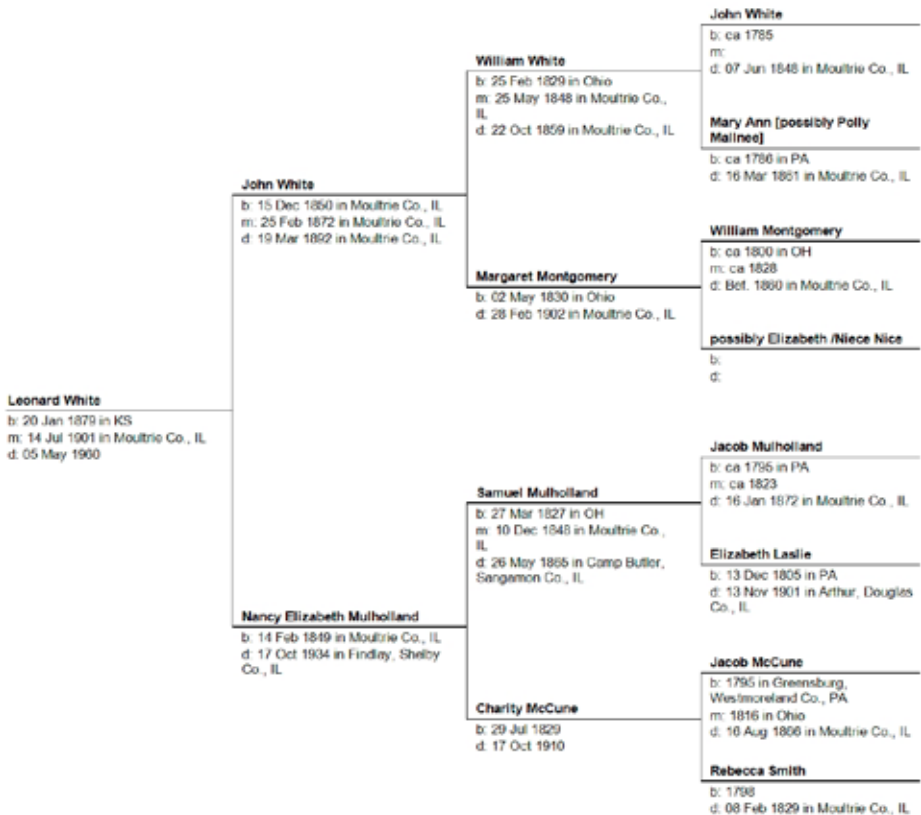
Ruth White Pifer Martin knew very little about her parents or their ancestors. The following notes were included in Eden's "baby book" of records compiled by Ruth Martin in 1940. They show that Ruth knew the names of her four grandparents, but not much more.



Recent research – most of it done by Eileen Bridges, a brilliant volunteer historian at the Shelby County Historical Society – has helped fill out the picture.

I. THE PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS OF LEONARD WHITE – WHITE, MONTGOMERY, MULHOLLAND, MCCUNE

Pedigree Chart for Leonard White



WHITE

- I. **John White** (b. about 1785; died June 7, 1848, Moultrie County, buried Camfield Cemetery) and **Mary Ann Mallnee** (?)(b. about 1786 Somerset Co., Pa. ; died March 16, 1861, Moultrie County, buried Camfield Cemetery). Children:

- A. John White – (born?) married Nancy Hull, September 7, 1831.
- B. Charles White (born about 1819, Ohio; died December 28, 1883, Moultrie County) – married Rebecca Jane Timmons, July 8, 1841, Ross Co., Ohio; probably second marriage to Mary Margaret Montgomery White.
- C. Nancy White (born September 14, 1825, Ohio; died September 30, 1862, Moultrie County) - married Samuel McCune (born February 14, 1817, Ohio; died January 31, 1877, Moultrie County)) on March 9, 1845, in Moultrie County.
- D. **William White** – (born February 25, 1829, Ohio; died October 22, 1859) married May 25, 1848, **Margaret Montgomery** (born May 2, 1830, Ohio; d. February 28, 1902 Moultrie County.)

This John White – let’s label him “John White Sr.” – and his family, including 11-year old William, were living in Salt Creek Township, Hocking County, Ohio, in 1840, according to the Federal Census of that year.

Adjacent to Hocking county was Ross County, where lived William Montgomery and his family – including 10-year old Margaret.

Based on the later census records, which show dates and places of birth of the children of these families, it appears that the Whites and Montgomerys moved from Ohio to Illinois between 1840 and 1843. William and Margaret married in Illinois in 1848. They were part of the pre-Civil War generation – the generation of immigrants. Our White ancestors came from the East – from Pennsylvania and Ohio, across Indiana, and ultimately settling in Illinois. By contrast, we will see below that Lena Davis’s ancestors (like the Martins) came to Illinois across the southern route – from Virginia and North Carolina, via Kentucky and Tennessee, into Illinois.

Related families often lived near each other, and not surprisingly, the children of neighboring families tended to marry their neighbors. Leonard White’s ancestors illustrate this tendency. The families of his four grandparents – White, Montgomery, Mulholland, and McCune – lived near each other and were acquainted and connected in ways now impossible fully to discern.

II. **William White** (from above family) and **Margaret Montgomery White**. Leonard White’s grandparents on the White side were William White (born 2-25-1829, Ohio) and Margaret Montgomery (born 5-2-30, Ohio). They were married May 25, 1848, in Moultrie County. Their children:

- A. James (born February 15, 1849; died September 25, 1916) – married Emma Pierson February 21, 1877; they had eight children; three of

whom died in infancy; spent 10 years in Kansas.

- B. **John** (born December 15, 1850; died March 19, 1892) – married on February 25, 1872, **Nancy Elizabeth Mulholland** (born February 14, 1849; died in Findlay, Illinois, October 17, 1934) (went to Kansas about 1876, returned to St. Louis area about 1886, and to Sullivan in 1888).
- C. Samuel (born May 20, 1854)
- D. Jeremiah (Jerry) (April 10, 1856; died February 17, 1935, Scotland Co., Mo.)
- E. Wm. Wesley (born March 5, 1858; died August 10, 1901) (the “constable”)

The 1850 Census for Moultrie County lists Wm. White, 21, from Ohio, farmer, with wife “Mary,” 20, from Ohio, with son James 1, and an older lady living with them – Mary Ann, 64, from Pa. Despite the age difference, Mary Ann was almost certainly William’s mother.

The 1850 Census lists the families by “dwelling houses numbered in the order of visitation.” Thus, if families are listed together, they presumably lived near each other.

Not far from William and Margaret White in 1850 were Sam McCune and his wife Nancy – sister of William White. Sam and Nancy had married on March 9, 1845. Sam McCune was also from Ohio. By happy coincidence, a man named Ezekiel Hull, newly arrived in Moultrie County in 1850, wrote on November 11, 1850, to a relative back home in Ohio, and reported that he had just visited *William* White and Mary Ann White. (Letter on web site: “Moultrie County Letters from the Frontier, 1850.”) He found them living “on Samuel McCune’s land in the same yard with him.” William owned 60 acres but had no improvements on it. Ezekiel further reported that he knew “but little about William’s circumstances but from appearances they have not [much] conveniences about them.” Ezekiel also reported that he and his wife had been in Sullivan to a meeting and “took an excellent dinner with *Charles* White and then he and his family came home with us and staid ... till next day; they have had five children, three dead and two living. Charles works at the carpenter and joiner business. He makes a great deal of money and they take the good of it.” He had also heard “that *John* White was doing well and making money fast but was too stingy to take the good of it ...”

Not far away from the Whites and McCunes we find Jacob Mulholland, farmer, 55, from Pennsylvania, with 650 acres, and his wife Elizabeth 44, also from Pennsylvania, with a son born in Ohio, and younger children born in Illinois.

Next door to them we find Samuel Mulholland, 23, farmer, born in Ohio,

with his wife Charity, 21, born in Illinois. Samuel is the son of Jacob – who probably gave him some land when he got married. That hadn't been long ago either, for he and Charity have an infant daughter, Nancy Elizabeth – “6/12ths” of a year old. Samuel served in the Union Army during the Civil War and died during the war – but whether of wounds or disease is not now known. Two decades later that infant daughter will marry John White, and one of their children will be Leonard White.

Next door to them we find Jacob McCune, 55, from Pennsylvania, with 500 acres – one of the old settlers of the county – with his wife Rebecca, 60, from Ohio. Charity McCune Mulholland is Jacob's daughter and Sam McCune's sister.

So here we have two Jacob patriarchs, both 55 and both from Pennsylvania – Mulholland and McCune – with their two married children (Samuel and Charity) living between or adjacent to them.

And next door to Jacob McCune we find William Montgomery, 50, from Ohio, and his wife Elizabeth 33, from Illinois – his second wife. William's daughter Margaret, by his first (deceased) wife, had recently married William White. One of their children will be John White – who will marry Nancy Elizabeth Mulholland (the infant daughter of Samuel and Charity Mulholland living nearby, age “6/12ths” of a year at the time of the 1850 census).

We know these families lived near each other, but we don't know exactly where. The 1850 census does not tell us, and the first Atlas we have for Moultrie County was not published until 1875. However, the 1860 census does tell us that several of them – those who were left in 1860 – resided in Township 13, Range 5 East – which places them all just south of the City of Sullivan, in Moultrie County.

William White died in 1859 at the age of 30. Counties reported “mortality schedules” to the State. The Moultrie County list for 1860 reported that William White, from Ohio, died in October 1859, was a farmer, and the cause of death was “cold from measles.” (*Moultrie County Heritage*, Vol. IX, No. 3, August, 1982, p. 62.)

The families still there in 1860 include one of the patriarchs, Jacob Mulholland and two of his teenage children, Margaret White and her son John, 9, and one of the McCune families. Mary A. White, age 73, is listed as a “boarder” with the McCunes.

This is Mary Ann – wife of “old John” White. She had moved west when the country was young. Mary Ann and her husband and family were part of the tide of west-bound American settlers: she was born and probably raised in Pennsylvania, lived for a while in Ohio (where her son William White was born), and then – after her husband died -- she moved to Illinois around 1848. She lived long enough to see the start of the Civil War and to watch her grandchildren playing in

the neighboring fields. For her, the tide stopped in Moultrie County.

These interrelated families lived together and many of them rest in peace together in the Camfield Cemetery, which is located about two miles southwest of Sullivan: you travel west on Eden Street (named after John R. Eden) and then curve to the southwest.

But back to William White. He must have been a good carpenter as well as farmer, judging from the carpentry tools that were sold as part of his estate. William died young— just 30 years old —on October 22, 1859. The appraisal contained in his probate records shows how he made his living:

Appraisal dated 29 Nov 1859, by Peter Brown, James Kirkwood, and Henry Miller 1 white cow, 15.00; 1 red cow, 14.00; 1 calf, 3.00; 1 sorrel horse, 65.00; 1 roane mare, 70.00; 1 bay mare, 80.00; 1 hogs, 36.00; 1 white sow, 7.50; 1 set of harness, 15.00; 1 sow and pigs, 7.50; 1 sled, 3.00; 1 cultivator, 1.50; 1 one horse plow, 4.50; 1 spade and pitchfork, 1.40; 1 set doubletrees and single trees, 2.00; 1 cradle and scythe, 1.00; 2 axes and one iron wedge, 2.00; 1 two horse plow, 7.00; potatoes, turnips and cabbage, 4.00; 1 rifle gun, 15.00; 1 saddle and bridle, 7.50; 1 saw, 2 augors and drawing knife, 1.50;

1 set carpenters tools, 11.00; cooking stove, 10.00; cubbard ware, 2.50; buckweat, 2.50; sacks, .30; salt and barrels and flour, 2.00; dried apples, 1.00; 1 mantle clock, 3.00; books; 2 chists, 4.00; 2 beds and bedding, 15.00; 1 trun-del bed, 1.00; 2 G. geese, 3.25; 3 chairs and chickens, 1.50; 1 barrell molasses, 8.00; 12 acres wheat in the ground, 24.00; first lot of corn, 30.00; 2nd lot of corn, 25.00; 3rd lot of corn, 1.50; 1 sow, 3.75; winter aples, 2.40.

Appraiser's bill of specific property allowed to the widow... Necessary beds, bedsteads and bedding for the use of the family, 16.00; necessary household kitchen furniture; 12.50; one spinning wheel, 3.00; one loom and its append-ages, 10.00; 1 pr. of cards, .75; 1 stove and necessary pipe therefor, wearing apparel of the widow and family, 70.00; One milch cow and calf for every four in the family, 17.00; one horse, 40.00; one womans saddle and bridle, 15.00; 2 sheep for each member of the family and fleeces, 24.00; provisions for one year, 116.00; food for the above stock, 6 months, 35.00; fuel for three months, 24.00; other property, 64.00.

The probate records show that Samuel McCune and Chas. White each purchased equipment and tools from the estate.

In 1860 the census lists Margaret White, 30, "weaver" with two sons, James 11 and John 9. (This nine-year old — John — will later be the father of Leonard White.) In 1865 Margaret is still listed separately in the 1865 Illinois census with a household including 5 males under age 20 and owning livestock valued at \$455, grain products valued at \$220 and 32 pounds of wool. However, she is not listed as owning real estate.

The widow Margaret apparently later remarried her deceased husband's brother. In the 1880 census, a "Margret" age 50, is listed as wife of Charles White – likely the brother of the deceased William. By 1900 this Charles was gone too as Margaret is listed in the census as a widow. She died at age 71 in Sullivan, February 28, 1902.

III. **John White** (from above family) and **Nancy Elizabeth Mulholland White** (had 8 children, two died in infancy).

- A. Julia (b. 1/13/1873, d. 1896) ; married Alva Edward Andies.
- B. Stella White (b. 6/20/1874 d. 8/19/1874)
- C. William White (b. 9/29/1875; d. 7/24/1876)
- D. Elmer (b. 9/4/1876; d. 10/4/1942)
- E. **Leonard** (1/20/1879; d. 5/5/1960)) (born Little River, Rice County, Kansas) married Selena Davis 1/14/1901
- F. Cora (b. 5/8/1881; d. 6/10/1986) married Tony Verbryck
- G. Gillespie ("Giss") (b. 6/11/1884; d. 5/15/1970)
- H. Edith (b. 10/9/1888; d. 1/11/1993) married Grant Shadow.

My great-grandfather, **John White**, was born December 15, 1850, in Sullivan (according to pages in the Shadow family bible, copies in the possession of Ruth Shadow). John's father William had died October 22, 1859, when John was only 8 years old. His mother continued to farm, according to the 1860 federal and 1865 state censuses.

In 1870 John was listed in the census as working on the farm and living in the Isaac Monroe household, along with Samuel White, 16 – no doubt John's younger brother.

On February 25, 1872, John White married the daughter of a neighboring family, **Nancy Elizabeth Mulholland**, born February 14, 1849 – ("Mullhollan" on Leonard's birth certificate). Her father was Samuel Mulholland (born March 23, 1827, died March 26, 1865, buried in Camfield Cemetery) and her mother was Charity McCune (born July 25, 1829, died October 17, 1910, Camfield Cemetery).

Sometime around 1876, John and Nancy Elizabeth moved to Kansas. In the 1880 census, John is shown as a farmer in Rice County, Union Township, Kansas, with wife Nancy E, daughter Julia 7, son Elmer 4, and son Leonard 1. (This Nancy E. White is the "Grandma White" – with the "crippled right hand and arm" – with whom Leonard and his three children lived after Lena died in 1911.)

The Shadow family bible record lists the following children of John and Nancy Elizabeth White:

Julia White (b. January 13, 1873; died January 18, 1896). Married Alvie Edward Andies. Stella White, (b. June 20, 1874, died August 19, 1874). William White (b. September 29, 1875, died July 24, 1876). Elmer White (b. September 4, 1876, died October 4, 1942); married Zelah Johnson. **Leonard White** (b. June 2, 1879, died May 5, 1959). Cora White (b. May 8, 1881; died June 10, 1986); married Tony Verbryck. Gillespie White (b. June 11, 1884; died May 15, 1970). Edith White, born October 9, 1886; died January 11, 1993. Married Grant Shadow, August 4, 1907.

The 1880 federal census also shows nearby Absolom Adams, farmer, with his wife Charity. Charity was Nancy Elizabeth's mother. (Charity's first husband had been Samuel Mulholland, who had died in 1862; and she had remarried Absolom Adams in 1868. So when John and Nancy E. White moved their family to Kansas, Charity and her second husband had gone with them. Or perhaps it was the other way around.)

When John White and his family moved back to Illinois, Absolom and Charity came too. They're listed in the census for Moultrie County in 1900 and 1910. That move back to Illinois occurred about 1888, as recalled by one of John's daughters, Edith (see above). Charity McCune Mulholland Adams outlived her first husband Samuel by almost half a century. Yet she lies in Camfield Cemetery in a common resting place with Samuel, under a stone inscribed with the names "Samuel Mulholand" and "Charity Adams."

John White died in 1892, not long after his family's return to Illinois. His wife purchased his coffin from the Corbin funeral home on March 18, 1892, for \$27. (*Moultrie County Heritage*, November 1995, at 110.)

A few years after his death, his widow – Nancy Elizabeth – remarried. A Shelby County marriage certificate reveals that on October 13, 1896, she married Samuel Neideffer or Neitaver, resident of Findlay. It was a second marriage for both of them. The bride is identified as Nancy Elizabeth White, having the maiden name of Mulholland, of "German descent." Her age next birthday was reported to be 46. Her father was Samuel Mulholland and her mother Charity McCunn – so the bride is clearly the widow of John White and the mother of Leonard White. Leonard's older brother – "Uncle Giss" – was one of the witnesses at the marriage.

Nancy Elizabeth's marriage to Neideffer apparently did not last long. The 1900 census shows Nancy E. White living in Findlay, Shelby County, 49, a widow, with 5 children, and her occupation appears to be weaving and washing. In 1910 she was still there, still a widow, identified as a weaver, living with her son, a house carpenter, and daughter-in-law Lena. In 1920 she was still there, still listed as a widow, but now living with her son Leonard, a brick mason and widower, and with her grandson David H., 17, who worked for a

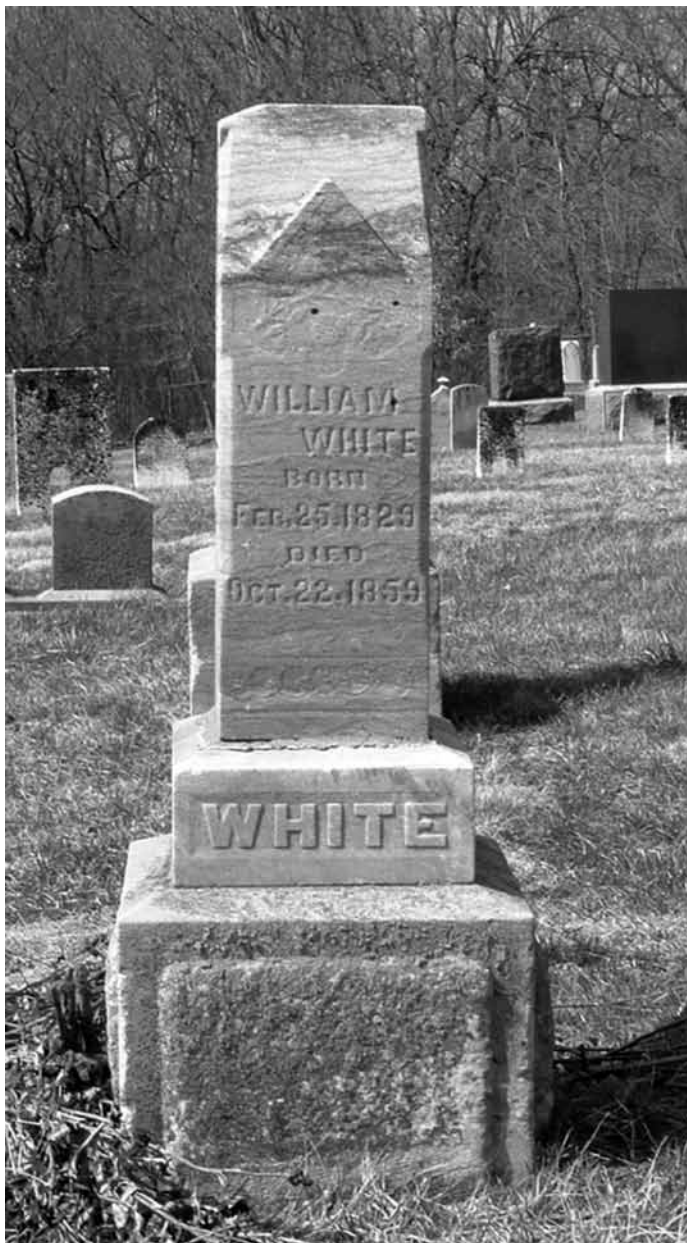
railroad in a freight yard. "David H." was Ruth's brother Herschel. By 1920, of course, Ruth had already been adopted by the Pifers.

Nancy Elizabeth lived to be 85, dying October 17, 1934. She was buried near other Whites and Mulhollands in Camfield Cemetery, southwest of Sullivan.

The White family graves in Camfield Cemetery run from north to south, with old John White (d. 1848) the farthest north.



Next comes his son William White (d. 1859 and then – almost a half century later – the son’s widow, “Margreat” (Margaret Montgomery White) (d. 1902).





Just to the south of them is a stone for William White (d. 1839). And just south of that stone rests Mary Ann White (d. 1861). Her stone is difficult to read, but it may bear the inscription “wife of John White.”



Not far away are the Mulholland stones. The family name is given various spellings. On the stone for Jacob and his wife Elizabeth, it is spelled “Mull holand.”



On the stone for their son Samuel, who served and died during the Civil War, and his wife Charity (maiden name McCune), the last name is spelled “Mulholand.” Charity was 81 when she died in 1910. Her second husband, Absolom Adams, survived her by two years – dying in 1912 at the age of 94.



Also nearby are the stones for the McCunes – including the patriarch, Jacob McCune, Charity’s father, and Charity’s mother Rebecca.



Just like paper and memory, the stones are deteriorating with the passage of time. Soon some will be unreadable.

MONTGOMERY

- I. **William Montgomery** (b. 1800 Ohio - ___) and possibly **Elizabeth Niece** or Nice; then second wife Elizabeth, b. 1817, Ill.

Margaret (b. May 2, 1830 Ohio)

Catharine (b. 1836 Ohio); married John Hook, born in Ross County, Ohio. Reportedly came to Moultrie Co. in 1840.

John (b. 1844 Ill.)

Elizabeth (b. 1844 Ill.)

Ternessa (b. 1846 Ill.)

Barbary [Barbara] (b. 1846 Ill.)

The father of Margaret (the “weaver”) Montgomery White was William Montgomery. William was first married to Elizabeth Niece (or Nice) – mother of Margaret. After her death, William came to Illinois and remarried a woman whose name is given in the census as Elizabeth.

* * *

MULHOLLAND

Now we turn to the ancestors of Leonard’s mother, Nancy Elizabeth Mulholland.

- I. **Jacob Mulholland** (b. 1794 Pa.; d. 1/16/1872) married **Elizabeth Laslie** (b. 12/13/1805 Pa. and d. 11/13/1901 Ill.)
 - A. **Samuel** (b. 3/27/1823 Ohio);
 - B. Jackson (b. 1834 Ohio)
 - C. Catharine (b. --- Seneca Co., Ohio), married William Watson
 - D. Susanna (b. 1841 Ill.)
 - E. Henry (b. 1843 Ill.)
 - F. Harriett (b. 1845 Ill.)

The census reports show that Jacob and Elizabeth were natives of Pennsylvania, and that they moved to Ohio – where Samuel was born in 1823. Another son, Jackson, was also born in Ohio in 1834. Also born there was a daughter, Catharine, reportedly born in Seneca County.

So we go to the census records in Ohio for 1830; and we find Jacob Mulhollon in Seneca County, Ohio living near a Hugh Mulhollon – likely a brother. Sometime after that, according to the ages of other children, the Jacob/Elizabeth family left Ohio and settled in Illinois.

Elizabeth Mulholland's obituary, which appeared in the *Bethany Echo*, 11/22/1901, states that Elizabeth Mulholland was a native of Pennsylvania, where she was born December 13, 1805; her maiden name was **Elizabeth Laslie**; and at the age of 18 years she was married to Jacob Mulholland, who died in 1872. They had come to Moultrie County in 1839, from Ohio (where several children were reportedly born) and were the parents of a family of 11 children. One of their daughters, Catharine, also later reported (patron list, 1881 *Combined History*) that she settled in Moultrie County in 1839.

Like the White family, the Mulhollands illustrate one of the classic patterns of settlement and resettlement: from Pennsylvania, to Ohio, and then on to Illinois.

Here are the 1850 Census details:

Jacob “Mulhollen,” 55 from Pa, farmer
Elizabeth, 44, from Pa.,
Jackson 16, born Ohio, farmer (already)
Susanna, 9 born Ill.
Henry 7, b. Ill.
Harriett, 5, b. Ill.

Samuel (27 in 1850) and wife Charity were listed with an infant daughter “Nancy E.” Also, Catherine – age 24 in 1850 – was separately listed in the household of her husband, William Watson.

By the 1860 Census, the only children listed in Jacob Mulholland's household were Henry, 17, and Harriett, 15. It also shows that the Mulholland and White tracts were in the same township.

II. **Samuel Mulholland** (b. 3-27-1823 Ohio; d. 5-26-1862) married 12/10/1848 **Charity McCune** (b. Ill. 7/25/1829; d. 10-17-1910). (*Moultrie County Heritage*, Vol. IV, no. 4, p. 109, reports Samuel Mulholland, Corp. Co. H., 18 Ill. Inf.; died March 26, 1865 – same month and date, but different year.)

A. **Nancy Elizabeth** (b. 2/14/1849, d. 10-17-1934)

Samuel and Charity married December 10, 1848.

The 1850 Census lists the second dwelling house visited by the census taker on August 14 as that of Jacob Mulhollen, age 55, with wife Elizabeth 44, both from Pennsylvania. The next dwelling visited by census taker was that of Saml. Mulhollen, age 23, and Charity 21, with their infant daughter Nancy E., age 6/12.

Samuel's occupation is "farmer." Incidentally, the Census spells the name "Mulhollen."

The next dwelling visited was that of Jacob McCune, age 55, from Pa., and wife Nancy, 60, from Ohio. This tends to confirm that Jacob was the father of Charity McCune who married Samuel Mulholland.

By 1860, Samuel and Charity are no longer listed in the census records for Moultrie County. Instead we find them in Chariton County, Missouri, nearby several of the McCune family. Samuel served in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was listed as a Corporal in the 14th Illinois Infantry regiment, Co. H. He reportedly died at Camp Butler on May 26, 1862, in Sangamon County. (*Shelby and Moultrie County History*, 1881, at 105.) We do not know whether he died of wounds or of sickness. (*Moultrie County Heritage, supra*, reports his death as March 26, 1865.)

In the 1865 Illinois State Census his wife Charity is listed as head of the household with a single daughter (who we know was Nancy Elizabeth).

Six years after her husband Samuel died, on September 24, 1868, the widow Charity married Absalom Adams in Moultrie County (m. 9-24-1868).

In the 1870 federal Census, Absalom, 55, and Charity, 40, are listed in Moultrie County. Absalom is a farmer, Charity is "keeping house," and they have in their household one "Eliza Mulholland," 21, identified as a "domestic servant." (Oddly, the 1870 also separately identifies a Nancy "Mulholland," age 17, as a domestic servant in the home of Oliver Atchison.)

Charity died in 1910 – almost fifty years after her first husband Samuel. She lived long enough to see her daughter Nancy Elizabeth marry John White, and long enough to watch their son Leonard grow up and to attend his wedding to Lena Davis in 1901 – and even long enough, perhaps, to chin-chuck her great granddaughter Ruth, born in March 1909.

* * *

MCCUNE

Charity's parents were **Jacob McCune** (b. 1794, d. 8/16/66) and **Rebecca Smith** (b. ___, d. 2-8-1830).

Jacob was born in 1795 in Greensburg, Westmoreland, Pa., son of **Lyman Solyman McCune and Elizabeth Ruth Eastman**. Jacob served in the war of 1812 as a private in the United States Infantry, in Capt. Herron's company, and was discharged July 19, 1814 (according to the application for pension benefits later filed by his widow.) Jacob McCune was a prominent early settler and citizen of Sullivan and Moultrie County. He died August 16, 1866, and is buried in Camfield Cemetery, Moultrie County. Jacob and Rebecca had at least seven children, of whom the last was Charity, in 1829 – only a few months before Rebecca died in early 1830.

Jacob was married three times: first to **Rebecca Smith** in Ohio, in 1816; then to Eliza Wood, in 1833, in Illinois; and then to Nancy Howe, May 30, 1841, in Moultrie (then part of Shelby) County.

Jacob's biography and other excerpts from the 1881 *Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties* appear below:

Jacob McCune, was a native of New York, born in 1794. He was one of the patriots in the war of 1812, and in an engagement in Canada between the British and Gen. Harrison's army, he received a severe wound in the thigh; he was also at the siege of Fort Meigs. He lived in Ohio for several years where he married his **first wife, Miss Smith**, and from this union seven children were born. He afterwards moved with his family to Indiana, and thence to Illinois in 1827.

He first settled at Jimtown, now Riverton, a few miles east of Springfield. In the fall of 1828, he, in company with his two oldest sons, Samuel and Abraham, and their families moved to this county. Their first halting-place was at what is known as the Big Elm, on Marrowbone Creek. Here they built a camp-fire in a fallen tree-top, turned their team out to graze, and Mr. McCune started south in search of a settlement. He had only crossed Wilborn Creek when he discovered signs of domestic swine; and on looking a little to his right, he saw at a short distance, on a slight prominence, a small cabin. Upon approaching it, what was his surprise to see a large black dog, which he recognized as belonging to John Wilborn, having lived near the Wilborns in Indiana. He was, of course, received very cordially by his old friend, and after a short consideration he concluded to stop at that point, but he only remained there for a short time, when he moved into what is now Sullivan township.

Mr. McCune was a man well-known by all the early settlers, and admired for his humanity to man. He lived to a good old age, and his remains rest in the Camfield Cemetery. His last wife survives him, and lives with her son-in-law, Finley Jeffries. (page 46.)



Marrowbone Twp - This township is situated in the western part of Moultrie county, bounded north by Dora, east by Lovington and Sullivan townships, south by Shelby county, and west by Shelby and Macon counties. It contains 24,948 acres, 23,224 acres of which are improved - valued at \$243,769. There was originally about one-third of territory covered with timber, much of which has been cleared off and made into farms.

The rich lands are drained by the West Okaw river, Marrowbone creek and their tributaries, which flow south and south-easterly through the township. The name Marrowbone, originated from the following peculiar circumstances: Jacob McCune and Jones Daniels, while hunting in this region, encamped for the night on section 8, town. 14-4, and after lighting their camp-fire, made preparations for supper which consisted of venison roasted before the fire. After eating the meat they broke the bones and feasted on the marrow. The next morning when they had prepared to leave, Daniels asked, "What shall we call this camp?" McCune looking around at the scattered bones with a keen remembrance of the feast replied, "We will call it Marrowbone." Hence the name.

There is no doubt but that the name Jacob McCune, is as familiar to the citizens generally as that of any man who ever located in this part of the country. He was a native of New York, and a patriot in the war of 1812. Mr. McCune came into this vicinity in the fall of 1828, living a part of the time in Shelby county and partly in what is now Moultrie. While in this county he resided in what is now Sullivan township, where he died several years ago, and was interred in the Camfield burying-ground.

Asa Spencer Rice, familiarly called "Dollarhide" Rice, was also an early settler in these parts, but lived farther south, in Shelby county. He and McCune were great hunters, and as the deer and wild turkey were plentiful in those days, the sharp ring of the rifle in the hands of these two daring pioneers might frequently have been heard in the prairie and timbered regions of this vicinity. It was on one of these expeditions that they came to a halt, now within the limits of the city of Sullivan, and Rice remarked, "Of all the country I've seen this is my choice," and

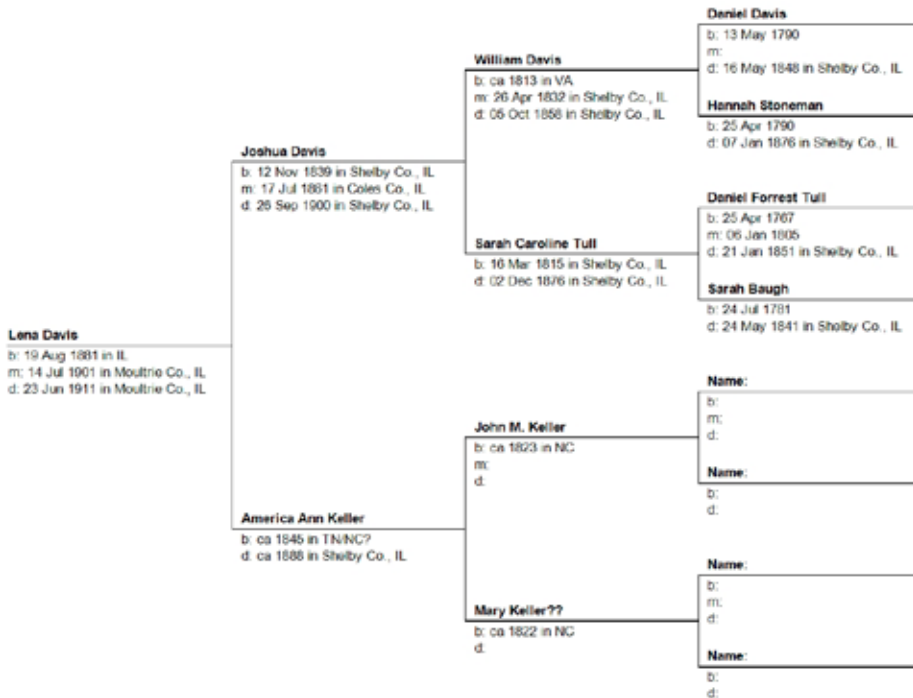
McCune in quick reply said, “This shall be called Asa’s Point.” This is the point of timber in the east part of Sullivan, and has always been known by that name, as also Asa’s Creek that flows by it. (page 181.)

A McCune family genealogy found on Ancestry.com provides names of Jacob McCune’s ancestors going back to Ireland. A brief summary: Jacob’s father was Lyman Solyman McCune, born abt 1765; his father was William McCune, b 9-16-1729, Weston, Middlesex Mass; married Elizabeth Whitney, daughter of Isaac Whitney and Elizabeth Gale. William McCune’s father was Martin McCune, born abt 1705 in Londonderry, Ireland. Martin was the son of Alexander McCune, born abt 1685 in Ireland.

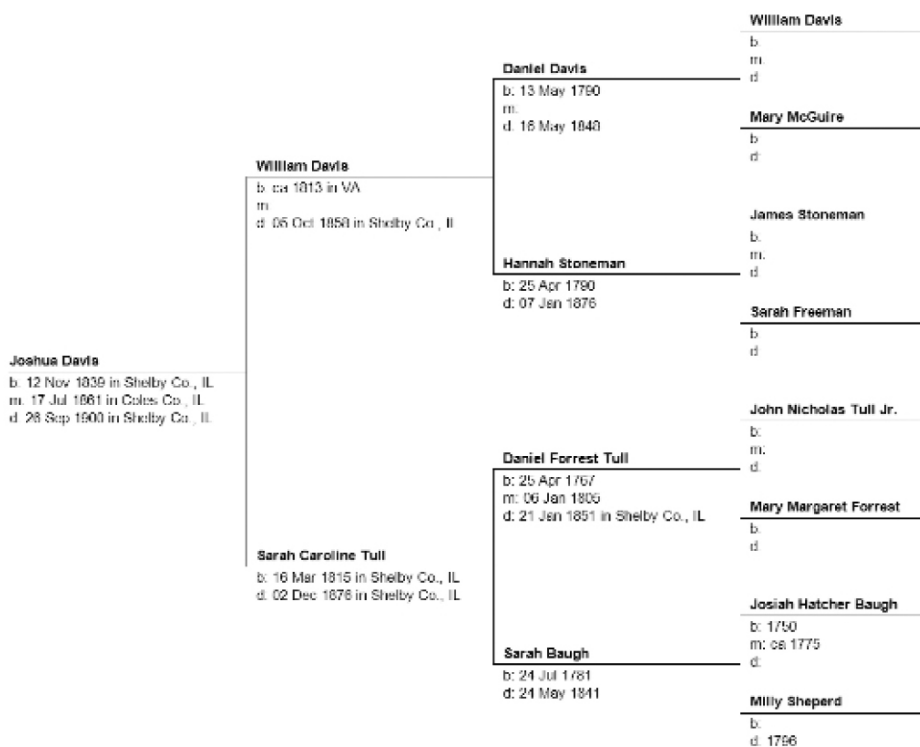
* * *

II. THE PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS OF LENA DAVIS – DAVIS, TULL, KELLER, AND KELLER ?

Pedigree Chart for Lena Davis



Pedigree Chart for Joshua Davis



DAVIS

Thanks to research done by Eileen Bridges in Shelbyville, we can now move back several generations *before* William and Sarah Caroline Davis, Leonard’s grandparents. Some of the information she turned up appears in a Tull family web site, which reproduces information about the Tulls (see below) and also related members of the Davis family. This information was taken from records of Daniel Forrest Tull that were transferred to a family bible in 1849 as well as other family records preserved by the Tulls and Gladys Richey. Perhaps future research will confirm and/or clarify the information in these records.

I. **William Davis** (dates unknown) married a woman named **Andes**.

- A. William Davis (“the second”)
- B. Barbara Davis – marries Elias Walker.

This William Davis may have lived in East Tennessee (Washington and Carter Co.) and had a large number of children. Before living in East Tennessee, he may have been part of a Davis family in Stokes Co., North Carolina.

II. **William Davis** (“the second”) This second William Davis married Mary McGuire. At some point he may have worked as a supply contractor.

A. Daniel Davis was one of William’s children.

III. **Daniel Davis** (born 1790, died 5-16-1848), married **Hannah Stone-man** (born 1790, died 1-7-1876).

The Daniel Davis family came to Moultrie County very early. One of the children of Daniel and Hannah was Hannah Davis, married W.F. Tull. In the patron list of the 1881 *Consolidated History*, it appears that Hannah Davis came from Washington County, Tennessee, in 1828.

In the 1830 Shelby County census, Daniel is listed as a male between 40-50, with a female 40-50, and 8 children.

In the 1840 Shelby census, Daniel is there with his wife and only three children.

The Tull family records indicate that Daniel Davis was a preacher. According to these records, when the Tulls and others came to the Sand Creek area, the Kickapoo Indians helped them build cabins and get through the first winter. Later when the half-starved Kickapoos were being “removed” by the government, they followed the Okaw river from Danville south, camping near the Sand Creek area. Reverend Davis from Sand Creek preached to the Indians through an interpreter.

The 1881 *Consolidated History* identifies Daniel Davis as one of the early settlers of Windsor Township: “Daniel Davis was one among the first settlers at the head of Sand Creek; he was a blacksmith, although not an expert at his trade. He could mend a chain or elevis, and at that time was considered a very useful citizen. He sometimes preached to the early settlers.” Reverend Daniel Davis organized a Methodist congregation in Sand Creek.

Daniel Davis died in 1848. In the 1850 Shelby census, Sand Creek District, Hannah is listed as 60, from NC, with a son, James T., born in Illinois.

Daniel’s probate records show that he was a considerable landowner in Shelby County. His will was printed in one of the Shelby Co. Hist/Gen early publications “Shelby County, Illinois Probate Journal II, 1843, 1845 – 1850” as follows (329-334):

On this day the following will was filed, proved, admitted and is

hereby to record. Signed by David Evey, P.J.P. "In the name of God amen. I Daniel Davis of the county of Shelby and State of Illinois being weak in body but of sound mind and memory, do make, ordain and establish this to be my last will and testament hereby revoking all others and I do hereby appoint Isham Davis and William F. Tull to be the executors of this my last will and testament. 1st – It is my will and desire that all my just debts to be paid and that sufficiency of my personal property be sold for that purpose. 2nd – After the payment of all my just debts and funeral expenses it is my will that my dear and beloved wife keep, retain and enjoy all my real and personal estate free from molestation as long as she should live, or so long as she should remain unmarried, but should again marry or at her death it is then my will that my executors should sell all of my real estate and personal property, be equally divided between all of my heirs. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 28th day of April in the year of our lord one thousand Eight hundred and forty eight." [Seal] Daniel Davis – Witnesses John W. Turley and James Weeks.

An inventory dated Sept. 4, 1848 indicated that Daniel owned the following real estate:

The SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 24
The E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 23
38 acres of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 23
W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24
30 acres of the S $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 16
All in Township 12, Range 5 East, in all 268 acres.

The list of Daniel's heirs includes:

Evan Baker and Sally Baker, his wife, formerly Sally Davis
William Davis, married Sarah Caroline Tull
Isom Davis
Allen Andes and Elizabeth Andes his wife, late Elizabeth Davis
William Baker and Nancy Baker his wife, late Nancy Davis
Leonard Scroggins and Mary Ann Scroggins his wife, late Mary Ann Davis
Hanna Davis, married William Forrest Tull (brother of Sarah Caroline Tull)

Charles W. Davis , born Oct. 1, 1847 in Sand Creek district; married Perlina Elisabeth Trigg. Died July 7, 1944.

James Davis

When the estate was wrapped up in 1852, “**Hannah** Davis widow” received the largest share – \$94.39 – with the children each receiving \$21.42.

In the 1870 census, Shelby County, Windsor Township, James Davis, age 37 is reported as a head of household; and “Hannah”, age 80, is living with him. That would make her born in 1790 – the same age as “Hannah Stoneman Davis.”

Daniel and his wife Hannah were both buried in Wallis Cemetery, in Windsor Township. The record shows: Daniel Davis, died May 16, 1848, aged 58 years, 3 ds, and Hannah, wife of Daniel Davis, died January 7, 1876, aged 85 years, 8 mo. 13 ds.” The Wallis Cemetery is near the Sand Creek Church.

IV. **William Davis** (born 1813, Virginia, died 10- 5-1858) and **Sarah Caroline Tull** (born 1815, Tenn., died 12-2-1876) – or “Sariah” or “Sally.”

The 1850 Census for Shelby County lists their family as follows:

- A. William, 37, born in Virginia;
- B. “Sariah” , 35, born in Tennessee
- C. Hanah, 27 ; married W.F. Tull; came to Shelby Co in 1828 with her family.
- D. Daniel 13
- E. **Joshua** 10
- F. Sarah 5
- G. Charls 2
- H. William T. 3/12; b. April 6, 1850, died Oct. 15, 1918, lived with brother C.W. Davis, according to obit in *Windsor Gazette*, Oct. 31, 1918.

We know from the Circuit Clerk’s records in Shelbyville that William Davis died on or about October 5, 1858. His widow Caroline requested that an administrator be named. When the estate was sold the next month, Joshua Davis – one of his sons –purchased a plow.

The 1860 Census, Shelby County, Big Spring Twp., lists William’s remaining family as follows:

Caroline Davis 43. Tn. Weaver [“Caroline” in 1860 is almost certainly the same person as “Sariah” in 1850. When William’s father’s will was admitted to

probate, "William and Sarah C. Davis" were listed as heirs.]

- A. **Joshua** 20 Laborer
- B. Sarah 15
- C. Wesley 13
- D. William 11
- E. Sena 7
- F. Emma 3

So by 1860, father William having died, the children were left in the hands of his 43 year old widow Caroline. The oldest child – Daniel – had moved on. Joshua – at 20 – was helping support the family.

"Sally C., wife of Wm. Davis," died Dec. 2., 1876, "aged 61 yrs, 8 mo., 15 ds.," is buried in Quigley Cemetery near Windsor.

V. **Joshua T. Davis**, 34, farmer, and Mary 25 [**America Ann Keller**] from "NC." appear in the 1870 census for Shelby County with the following children:

- A. Mary 6 [later Mary Goddard]
- B. America 4
- C. Hannah 2
- D. John 3/12

The 1880 Census for Shelby County shows the family as follows. Interestingly, it also lists the states in which the person, the father of the person, and the mother of the person, were born:

Joshua 40 farmer – from Ill – father from Va. – mother from NC; and
America A 36 wife – from NC – father from TN – mother from NC

- A. Caroline 16 (Mary Caroline)
- B. Anna 13 (America Ann); married Lewis Athey.
- C. Hannah 12 (Hanna Stoneman); married Robert E. Whitacre.
- D. William 10 (William John)
- E. Wesley 8 (Charles Wesley); married Lucia Mondy.

Lena was born two years after the 1880 Census was taken.

The 1900 Census then shows a separate household for Mary, the older sister: David Goddard, b 1846, and Mary, b 1864. They married August 14,

1884. David was the man Ruth Davis/Pifer would later call “Uncle Dave.”

Lena Davis, b 1882 - mother from N.C.

Information about **Joshua T. Davis** (b. ca. 1840, and died 9/26/1900) is sketchy. A news article in the *Windsor Gazette*, 9/27/1900, states that “Joe Davis, an old resident of near Quigley died yesterday and will be buried at Fletcher Chapel this afternoon. He was the father of Mrs. David Goddard. (Grave not marked.)”

Another obituary for Joshua Davis, this one in the *Shelbyville Democrat*, October 4, 1900, stated:

Died last Wednesday, Mr. Joshua Davis. He was born Nov. 12, 1839, and departed this life Sept. 26, 1900, age almost 61 years. He was a son of Wm. and Caroline Davis. He was raised mostly on Sand Creek. Went to Texas with his parents when a boy. Returned to Illinois. Made one trip to Missouri. He died with consumption. He married America McNeeley. To them were born eight children of which three preceded him to the other shore. His wife died about twelve years ago. Leaves one son, four daughters, two brothers and two sisters to mourn his departure. He was laid to rest in the Quigley Cemetery.

Why Joshua’s wife America is referred to as “McNeeley” is a mystery. Joshua Davis married **America (“Mary”) Ann Keller** (b. ca. 1844) on July 17, 1861, in Coles County, Illinois. One possibility is that as America (or “Mary”) had died “about 12 years earlier,” no one left in 1900 remembered her maiden name – which suggests that any of her Keller relatives were gone by that time.

* * *

TULL

The Tull website records are the source of much of the following information. As with the Davis records, it is hoped that further research will confirm, clarify – or possibly correct – the presently-available information:

- I. **Captain William Tull**, married **Elizabeth Fontin**. A second wife may have been named Margaret. They lived in Philadelphia where he worked in the shipping business. Sometime around 1740, Capt. William Tull is said to have been lost at sea in the Baltic.

II. **Jonathan Nicholas Tull**, son of Captain Tull and his first **wife Elizabeth Fontin**. Was born in Somerset County, Maryland. Married Elizabeth Dull from Germany. They lived in Philadelphia where “old John Nick” worked as a cabinetmaker.

III. **Jonathan Nicholas Tull**, – “young John Nick.” Born in Pa. around 1745. Moved to North Carolina, perhaps around 1765. Married **Mary Margaret Forrest** in Orange Co., N.C. Attended the Monrovia Church in Stokes County, N.C.

A. Daniel Tull, born Stokes County, N.C.

VI. **Daniel Forrest Tull**, born 1767, died January 21, 1851, “aged 83 yrs, 8 mo. 27 ds.”, and **Sarah Baugh**. Daniel and Sarah Tull are buried in Bruce Cemetery, Windsor Township.

Daniel Tull was born in Stokes County, North Carolina. Apparently the only church and school were Moravian, and German was the common language. Daniel reportedly attended the Moravian school where he learned to read and write in German, but not very well in English. He wrote his family records in German and then helped the next generation translate them into English.

The following appears in the Tull records, written by one of Daniel’s grandchildren:

The Tulls were all fine carpenters. They learned it from my grandfather, Daniel Tull, and he learned it from his father and grandfather, but I think mostly from his grandfather because his father was gone a lot, traveling as a trader. My grandfather made that beautiful three-sided walnut cupboard that you now have. He had a stand of walnut trees on his land on Duck River, and he made the cupboard. It is a masterpiece, put together with wooden pegs, without a single nail, and it is beautifully beveled with a fancy crown on top. He brought it to Illinois on an oxcart with the frame of the cart cut to fit two sides of the cupboard, and as you know, on the back is branded, “D. Tull 1810 Duck river, Tenn.”

In it the family carried their valuables, which were not many. They also had a six-horse team and covered wagon and a few spare horses, and two cows, a bull, and a few pigs. My father was twelve years old, and his job was to herd the pigs. I know that you have never tried to drive a pig, and I do not know how my father managed it, but

he did. They took the trail west from Duck river to the Natchez Trace and then north. They crossed the Ohio river down near Cairo (Ill), and it took almost all their cash to pay the ferry boatman. Then they traveled east and circled a large swamp and followed an Indian trail up the Little Wabash River to Shelby Co.

My father said that his father, Daniel Tull, left Stokes because the people were too clannish. Daniel also told his children that he “leaved N.C. because he vant his chilren to larn to stand in der own two shous and tie der own shous strings vitout being told vitch vay to tie dem.” He also said that his redheaded grandfather never swore except in German. When he was angry at someone he said “Och! Du bist ein aisel.” (you damned old jackass.)

He had joined the Methodist church and it did not make him popular in Stokes. His mother died about the turn of the century in Stokes, and his father told about the fine land on Duck River in Tenn. A big bunch of people from Stokes, and some from Orange Co., N.C., went to Duck River together, and they were all Methodists. Grandfather’s father young Jonathan Nicholas Tull went back to Stokes and died there shortly before grandfather came to Ill.

The reason he came to Illinois was that the large plantations on Duck river were squeezing out the little farmers, and when some circuit riding Methodist preacher told them about land being free for the taking in Illinois, and on Sand Creek, in Shelby Co., in particular, a mass meeting was held and sixteen families decided to move to Sand Creek, where they homesteaded as soon as possible. There wasn’t even a land office in Shelbyville at that time and the men had to ride horseback to the old capital at Vandalia to file their claims.

The 1881 *Consolidated History* reports that (p. 237):

Daniel Tull, a native of Tennessee, settled on the south side of the North Fork, Sand Creek, section twenty-three, in 1829. He had two married children, who accompanied him to this county: Elizabeth, wife of B. Bruce, and J.B. Tull, his eldest son, who settled at the head of sand creek, between the forks. J.B. Tull only remained here about two years, when he returned to Tennessee. After eight years he came back to this township and settled on Section Nineteen, where he resided until his death. His widow yet lives on the old place; they have three sons living here.

These are the reported children of Daniel F. Tull and Sarah Baugh Tull:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| A. Mary Elizabeth | b. 12 Nov 1805 - m. Benjamin W. Bruce |
| B. Josiah Baugh | b. 15 Apr 1807 - m. Margaret Butler |
| C. Nancy Forrest | b. 1 Jul 1809 - m Jeremiah Dunn.,
her cousin, |
| D. Milly Sheperd | b. 11 Jul 1811 - m. Lewis I. Dunn,
her cousin |
| E. Jincy Rhoda
Clawson | b. 24 May 1813 - m. John Larrimore |
| F. Sarah (or Sally) Catherine | b. 17 Mar .1815- m. William Davis |
| G. Nathan Forrest | b.19 Mar .1817 - m. Rutha Barbara Walker |
| H. William Forrest | b. 1 Feb .1819- m. Hannah Davis
[sister of William Davis] |
| I. Jonathan Daniel | b. 14 Jun 1821- m. Anna Cain |

Toward the end of his life, Daniel F. lived with his son, Nathan Forrest Tull.

The county probate records provide additional evidence. After Daniel Tull died, the Shelby County probate record (probate BK 4, pg 131, dated Feb 1852) lists his heirs – including “William and Sarah C. Davis.” Other heirs of Daniel Tull include Josiah B. Tull, Nancy Tull Dunn, Milly Tull Dunn, Jinsey R. Tull Clawson, Nathan F. Tull, Willliam F. Tull, and Jonathan D. Tull.

William Davis – Daniel’s son-in-law – was one of the buyers of property from Daniel Tull’s estate. He purchased a chest for \$1.25, “3 yds Domestick” for \$.30, “2 1/2 yds do” for \$.25, “1 shade and Mataso” [?] for \$.55, and “1 Barrell” for a \$.05.

William F. Tull was a brother of Sarah Caroline Tull Davis. William was married to Hanna Davis, who was apparently a sister of William Davis. Tull family web site; and *Moultrie County Heritage*, February 1987, p. 14.

If that’s correct, then the connection leads to a bit more information about the Tulls. The *Portrait and Biographical Record of Shelby/Moultrie Counties, II*, 1891, at 557, provides a brief biography of William F. Tull – noting that his parents were **Daniel and Sallie Tull**, both natives of North Carolina, “who married there and soon after returned to Tn where they remained until 1829. At this time they emigrated to Illinois, and settled in Shelby County.” Sallie Tull’s maiden name was probably “Baugh.”

“Mr. Tull ... has a vivid recollection of the trip across the country, with a six-horse team, and often recalls the wild and unimproved condition of the country and the sparsely peopled sections through which they traveled. Shelbyville ... was then a little trading post, composed of a few log shanties.” The article also

notes that William Tull's middle name "is Forrest as he was named for the father of the noted Confederate General, that general being a playmate of Mr. Tull's."

These reported experiences of William would almost certainly have been shared by his sister Sarah Caroline.

* * *

KELLER

The father of American Ann Keller (wife of Joshua Davis, mother of Lena Davis) was **John Keller**, born 1826 in North Carolina, and **Mary Keller (?)**, born 1825 in North Carolina.

Again, we have Eileen Bridges, the Shelbyville researcher, to thank. She found the family in the 1850 census in Claiborne County, Tennessee:

John Keller, laborer, 27 from North Carolina, and **Mary Keller**, 28 from North Carolina, with children:

- A. **America A.** Keller, 5 N.C.;
- B. Nancy M. Keller, 2 N.C.,
- C. James B. Keller, 3/12 Tenn.

Tennessee was a natural stop on the way from North Carolina to the Midwest – just as Kentucky was a natural stop on the way from Virginia. The implication of the above ages, assuming they were accurately reported, is that the Kellers were in North Carolina when their first two children (including American A.) were born – and until about 1848. Then they moved to Tennessee, where James was born in 1849 or 1850.

It appears this is the same family – albeit expanded – that was listed in the 1870 Census in Shelby County, Windsor Township:

John Keller, 54 NC; Mary, 55 NC;

- A. James, 20 Tn;
- B. William, 19 Tn;
- C. Abraham, 17 Tn;
- D. Thomas, 16 Tn;
- E. John 14 Ind;
- F. Rebecka, 10 Il.;
- G. Peter, 9 Il.;
- H. Mary, 7 Il.; and
- I. Martha, 3 Il."

Of course, by 1870, America Ann (or “Mary” – short for America) would have been about 25; she had married Joshua Davis in 1861 and so was in a separate household in 1870.

So James, William, Abraham and Thomas were all born in Tennessee. But John was born in Indiana. Therefore, about 15 years before the 1870 Census – say 1855 – the family made a stop-over in Indiana. By the time Rebecka was born – in 1860 or so, four years after John – they had moved on to Illinois. So America Ann would have been about 15 by the time they settled in Illinois. And Joshua Davis was likely a young teenage neighbor boy.

It is noteworthy that when Joshua Davis and America Ann married in July 1861, America Ann was only 16.

The same family of John and Mary Keller is listed in the 1880 Census for Windsor Township, Shelby County, with children specifically identified as such:

- A. Thomas, son 25
- B. Drura Robert, son 21;
- C. Peter L., son 19;
- D. Mary E., daughter 18;
- E. Martha H., daughter 13
- F. Nancy M., granddaughter 5; and
- G. Francis, son 28.

Who were the parents of John Keller and Mary? What was Mary’s maiden name? Was her real name “America” – like that of her daughter – with “Mary” a contracted version of that name?

The answers are probably buried in early records in North Carolina or Tennessee.

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This “partial index” includes most of the names referred to in the book more than once. However, many other names appear, and to have included them all would have unduly extended this index. For the near future at least, the test of this book will appear in digital – and searchable – form on the editor’s web site: edenmartin.com

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