

Sister of my Father, Herbert Wyborny

Your Mother can probably remember when we did not have a bath, but we had a path. It was a place we did not linger in the winter and a Sears Roebuck Catalog served as our tissues do today. I'm sure she does not remember when our water pail froze over in the night and sometimes the bedroom chamber.

We girls as well as the boys wore long johns all winter long, not only during the day, but we slept in them. And we wore the one suit all week. Saturday night we would get our bath and get a cleansuit. If we had B. O., it was O.K. for everyone else did. Our bath tub was a young galvanized wash tub and the same water was used by several children. The long legs of our underwear stretched so much we had to wrap them around our legs so we could pull the long black stockings up over them and each day they stretched a little more so there was more to wrap. And our black stockings faded until they became an ugly green. When we went to school, we didn't have a different dress each day, but wore the same one all week. The minute we got home that dress was taken off and hung up and our every day dress was put on.

The day I started to school I was sent home with a note saying "Do not come back to school until you see the eye Doctor and have glasses." That of course, meant a trip to Mason City, which was an all day trip. We would have to get up early and do some chores before daylight. Then with horses and buggy, sometimes a team, sometimes a single horse, we arrived in town late in the forenoon. Putting the horses in a horse barn and feeding them feed we had brought from home, we were on our way to the eye Doctor, where we would be until noon. After testing and more testing, until late afternoon, before we started for home. We arrived home after dark with chores to be done. And every time we went, I would be sick all that night. The trip had to be made every month for the first year of school, and I missed about six months of that school year. Doctors don't test eyes like that anymore.

One thing I remember so well were the gypsies that used to travel through the country. I was so deathly scared of them, all of us children were. They would come down the road in covered wagons. One time they stopped at our place, and a man was getting out of the wagon hollering and pointing to a horse in the pasture "I want that horse", expecting Papa to give it to him. Papa said to him "Get into that

wagon right now and leave or I'll get the gun". They left and went on their way. We had been told "sometimes they steal children". One time coming from school I was tagging along behind the rest of the kids on our way home. Our cousins, Keziah, Hubert and Orpha, who lived a quarter of a mile beyond our place, was always with us. Callie come running back to me yelling at me to hurry up and come with the rest of them. I never could see good and couldn't understand why I should hurry. Callie had run back to the others and they went hurrying on. But when the gypsies were almost on me and I saw them, I understood the need to hurry and did I ever run as hard as I could all the way home.

We didn't have basketball and football or jennis rackets, but we played lots of games. We always chose up sides and I was such an excellent player, but somehow I was always one of the last to be chosen. We played "Pum-Pum Pull Away, Come or I'll Pull You Away", "Ring Around the Rosy", "Drop the Handkerchief", "Blind Man's Bluff", "Prisoners Goal", "Steal Sticks", "Hide the Thimble", "Button, Button, Who's got the Button", "London Bridge is Falling Down", "Hide and Seek", and many others games.

When Mama would be gone for the evening with Uncle Tillman and Aunt Mary to Lodge meetings Papa would take care of us (it wasn't called baby sitting then). He would play games with us. He always played "Hide and Seek" and Papa would hide behind a broom stick. That we really liked. One thing I remember so well was that one of us would sit in a chair in the kitchen, another one of us would grab the chair and swing us around and around. I don't know how we had any chairs left and what must that wooden kitchen floor have been like.

It was my job to wash the cream separator on a table outdoors. Probably because I was the youngest girl. One day I dropped the heavy bowl on my foot and was crying when Papa came outdoors, where we washed it in the summer time. Papa saw me crying and went back into the house and scolded the older girls because they weren't out there washing the separator. I think I was a badly spoiled girl.

We were exposed to the measles in school. That is all of the children, but me. The folks thought I hadn't been exposed because I was absent when one of the school children came down with them. Because of our baby sister Leola Lucille all of the children, but me, were taken to Uncle Tillman's and Aunt Mary's home, so she wouldn't be exposed to them. She was born with a weak heart and had had pneumonia a couple of times. A few days later Mama had gone outside to do something and

I was to take care of Leola. When she came in I was lying on the couch crying. I had the measles and so did Leola. She got pneumonia again with them and it caused her death.

We had a hard coal heater. It had isinglass doors. And it was was so cozy and pretty when it was cold outside in the winter. The bright red coals shone through the little isinglass windows in the door.

One time Hervert and I wanted bread and butter at the same time. We both grabbed for the knife. He got the handle and I grabbed the blade. We both held on for dear life. He pulled the knife from me while I held on tight for I wanted that knife. Well you know what happened. I quick wrapped my hand as best as I could and ran outside behind the out house and prayed. I finally told Mother (I think the hired man found out and took me to her) she rewrapped and took care of it.

One man who was at our home a lot was one who did tiling. He did some on our farm and also for the neighbors, but stayed at our house. He would be gone for a few days every once in awhile. When he came back someone would bring him from a drinking spree. But he was pretty well sobered up when he came and was always so sorry and apologetic about it. Many times he came bringing candy etc. to us children. One time he came home when the folks were gone. We met him at the screen door and he handed us a big sack of candy. We hooked the doors so he couldn't get in, and Zella wouldn't let us eat the candy. She said it could have poison in it and we agreed and was afraid to eat it. We sneaked out the back door, so he couldn't see us and dug a hole in the ground and buried it, sack and all. When the folks came home they laughed at us. We dug the candy up and we really enjoyed it because we didn't get candy often.

Each year we had new mattresses. We had straw ticks for mattresses. Every fall when the thrashing of the oats was done we had a straw pile of nice clean straw. We emptied the old straw out of the ticks and washed them and refilled them with the bright new straw. Our beds had straw mattresses with feather beds made of ticks filled with goose or duck feathers on the top of the mattresses, then the sheets or blankets and comforters and quilts. They were comfortable and warm in the winter.

I remember when the boys got their first long trousers. Boys always wore knickerbockers or knee pants until a certain age. How

proud we were when the boys got their long trowsers.

One thing I remember about the boys was ~~how~~ they hated to see Ebben and Everett Wherry come to play with them. They lived just a quarter mile east of us. One of the boys would climb the windmill and watch for them. When they were seen coming the boys would run and hide and not show up until they were gone.

Verna Bahnsen

Age 74

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