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Title Page by Frances Tranbarger

You have to stand beneath the great Hartwick Pines to understand what this area once was. Isabella County, along with all of Michigan, including the Thumb of the Mitten, across the Straits and beyond into Wisconsin and Minnesota, was stripped of the virgin white pine by lumber men from the East, after the Maine forests had been cleaned out.

The migration of timber men and Maine lumberjacks began as early as 1836, when Charles Merrill of Lincoln, Maine, bought a vast block of timber on the St. Clair River. "It was the first sign of things to come," as author Stuart H. Holbrook remarked in "Holy Old Mackinaw", a sometimes lewd but acknowledged authentic history of timbering in the United States. McGeorge Bundy was among the original lumbermen, and bought land on and around the sizable hills which are called "Bundy Hills" today.

Lumber men paid \$1.25 per acre for the land, buying it outright from the government. A dollar and a quarter an acre was the standard price of Michigan land, forested with trees like those at Hartwick Pines, according to author Holbrook. Saginaw and Bay City were sawmill towns, and they grew like Jack's bean stalk--big and lustily. The Bancroft Hotel was built in Saginaw in 1859. Lumbering for white pine was still going on over the Lower Peninsula, and the lumber barons took only the giant white pine, leaving lesser trees for other timber men arriving later.

John S. Weidman was born in St. Clair County in 1852, and came to central Michigan with his parents, Evan and Harriet Weidman, when he was 14. The family settled in Hinton Township in Mecosta County, and John S. lived with them until he was 25 years old. He worked on the family farm, as a river boy for logging companies, and attended country school.

When he was 26 years old he bought 40 acres of land in Hinton Township, and went on lumbering jobs for seven months. Then he settled on a tract of 80 acres as a homestead. He married Margaret Mitchell, sister of Floyd Mitchell. He built a frame house on his 80 acres and spent five months clearing his land. He returned to lumbering on the Muskegon River. He continued with this combination farmer-lumberjack life until he had acquired 600 acres for his farm.

During those years he ran a small sawmill on his farm, hauling lumber to Lakeview. He became well known among lumbermen. Among his sawed-lumber customers was a large manufacturing plant in Belding. A company in Big Rapids bought ten million feet of lumber from him.

He wore the rough clothes of the lumberjack. He was unabashed when talking with the sleekly-dressed affluent timber barons.

A story was told of his dickering with two well-dressed representatives of a refrigerator company at a railroad station, trying to sell them a contract for lumber, but they could not agree on the price. Finally one of the refrigerator men offered to flip a coin for the decision; a silver dollar, which men carried in quantities in their pockets.

The flip was made and John S. Weidman won the toss and the contract.

Luck was one of the ingredients of his lifelong success; but there were also the brains to recognize opportunity and the stamina to carry through on tough projects.

The day came when timber on his Mecosta County 600 acres was all cut; and the lumberman in him sent him restlessly looking further.

A man named Miller living near Remus told him of huge tracts of hardwood, hemlock and cedar in western Isabella County. Several other men had heard of it, and had passed it up as too difficult and too risky to try.

John S. Weidman recognized opportunity when he looked at the junction of the Coldwater River and Walker Creek.

All of this territory, the west half of Isabella County, had been lumbered for pine by the big-time operators. But they wanted only pine; good, big and perfect white pine trees. They left lesser pines and hardwood, and a cedar swamp stretching from the present town of Weidman to Littlefield Lake, and westward along Walker Creek.

In 1893 there was a "panic", as financial depressions were called then. John S. Weidman's parents were not moneyed folks. They had whatever money they made. Today it seems incredible that a man could make a million dollars in Weidman, Mich.

The 1893 "panic" was felt by John S. Weidman's lumber business. Nobody was buying lumber during those two years, 1893--94. John S. ran into

financial difficulties, and we're told it was only the loyalty of the men he had hired that saved him. They waited for their pay. Later, when all the timber was cut and John S. closed his mills, he deeded 40-acre tracts to many of his hands, those who had stood by him when he needed them.

John S. Weidman came here and proceeded at once to build a sawmill. For the mill he had to have "holding water", the Millpond. He began work immediately on building dikes necessary for creation of the millpond, as the work was done by men's hands, and horses and wagons hauling rocks and earth. The pond was strictly for the purpose of holding logs in reserve for his mill. The mill used steam power, the boilers fired with heat from burning bark, slab wood and some log-ends or log wastes.

John S. found a band-saw mill for sale and moved it to a site on the west bank of the millpond he was creating. He put in a wooden dam after he had built the dikes. There were no bulldozers, no earth-movers, no power machines of any kind. He had no engineer to plan the Millpond. Yet his dikes stood all those years, not giving way at any point until 1969, when the east side washed out, draining the millpond. The east bank had been dredged out by Willard Searles with his huge machines, cut through in two places, to drain the Pond for stump removal, to create "Lake Weidman", a recreational lake for speed boats and water skiers. John S. Weidman was not making a lake for recreational purposes. There was no usage of the word recreation in those days. He was creating a pond to float his logs to supply his sawmill.

There was no need to clean out stumps and debris from the pond's bed. That would have been a foolish waste of time, in that era.

John S. Weidman bought his saw for his mill, built the mill, and then built his house. The Weidman family lived in that house until their departure for Mt. Pleasant in 1908. The house is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Gary Sprague, and is enjoyed as a solid-beamed, enduring and comfortable home. Eventually, John S. operated a sawmill, a planing mill and a shingle mill, all on the banks of the Millpond.

There were men working in that first sawmill who lived on homestead farms in the area. But they had to be fed at noon dinner time. Mrs.

Weidman cooked for the mill workers that first year, but as the mill prospered and grew, and more men were hired, a cook house was built to the east side of the Weidman home. Mildred and Evan Weidman were born in the Weidman house here.

Stories about successful men, true or false, are bound to circulate. One such story went the rounds:

A farmer took a load of logs by horse and wagon to John S. Weidman's mill.

"This is the last of it," he said. "I've cut every tree on my forty acres."

John S. looked at the man a moment, his eyes twinkling.

"Did you ever hear of a 'round forty'?" he asked.

"You mean--?"

John S. nodded, grinning. "You take a quarter-circle of land beyond all four sides of your square forty. It's being done all the time."

The man left. A few weeks later he was back with another load of logs.

"Why, this is prime timber," John S. marveled. "Where'd you get it?"

"Oh, from a quarter-circle on all sides of my land, like you told me," the man said happily. "My 'round forty'--the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter, Section 21."

"Why, hell, man!" John S. exploded. "That's my land!"

Charles W. Pierce came here with John S. Weidman, and was his foreman and adviser in the matter of acquiring lands and laying out a village. For 16 years he had charge of all woods operations. His job was to see that the sawmill always had in its pond and yards an adequate stock of logs. He also helped John S. lay out a village plat, in 1894. That plat stands valid today.

The first business building was that of Mills & Scott Brothers, who made a deal with John S. Weidman to put up a store with Weidman furnishing the lumber. No stipulations of size were discussed, and the huge building still stands on the north-west corner of Woodruff Road and Mill Street. While John S. furnished more lumber than he'd planned, he cheerfully furnished it.

In 1894 John A. Damon came here from Hubbardston and built a store on the corner of Third and Main Streets. The wood building burned in the fire of 1897, with stock of general merchandise (dry goods, groceries, some hardware and drugs) totally destroyed. Damon immediately purchased new stock and moved his store to a small building about where the Masonic Hall now stands.

By the middle of August John Damon had completed the building of a brick store-building, later to be occupied by the Middlesworth family and business, and now by the Jim Clarks.

John Damon was elected county treasurer in 1906 and moved to Mt. Pleasant, and thereafter was active in politics the rest of his life.

A letter from J. Stanley Weidman (John S. Weidman, Jr.) to Leon McArthur, dated Jan. 6, 1959, mentions this:

" . . . For years I operated the Weidman Lumber Company at Trout Creek of Upper Michigan in days prior to mechanization in the woods operations, and horses were used in the woods and sawmill activities.

"Father had large Percheron and Clydesdale horses shipped by carloads from the stockyards in Chicago for this work.

"It was the fashion then to have your own cow in the country, and I recollect he included a cow in a car of horses. The horses were similar in size to the Annheuser-Beusch Brewery horses.

"Those were the golden days of the good living and lumbering in the north woods."

In later years, when "the Roe kids" were assigned the task of gathering pine knots for Ma's kitchen stove, our back fields were littered with giant rotting pine stumps. We picked out the pine knots, still intact, filled flour sacks and lugged them home. Nights after school and Saturdays we were assigned the chore of gathering pine knots, filling the wood-box behind the kitchen stove and piling the rest near the kitchen door.

Rolla Roe had a mania for growing food for his crop of kids. There was the Older Batch, married or "away on jobs", and the Younger Batch, beginning with Winnie, then Connie, then Bob, Allys, Paul, and Frances, the baby.

A word about Rolla Roe. His mother died when he was born, and Grandfather Harvey Roe immediately married Della, his housekeeper, to care for the baby. Harvey Roe owned a jewelry store and watch-repair shop in Buchanan, plus half a dozen houses he rented for good money. He was considered a rich man.

Young Della took the infant Rolla and cared for him as her own. More than that. Anything Rollie wanted, Rollie got. His father bought him a train set, complete with track; he had all the playthings then available for young children.

Della made tallow candles (this was before Thomas Edison came along). She had a long table in the big basement of the Roe home in Buchanan and set her candles in rows to "cure". Young Rollie was allowed to go down there and light all the candles poor Della had made, only blowing them out after she had offered him better amusement.

Della contracted tuberculosis, and Grandfather took her to Georgia, then the popular spot for ailing moneyed folks. (Georgia! Of all the steamy-hot and humid places I've ever been, that's it.) Arizona had not yet been discovered as a place for t.b. patients.

Rolla Roe was a sophomore at the University of Michigan when Della died, and Grandfather Roe immediately married Carrie, something of a town character. Grandfather died of locomotor ataxia.

Almost immediately after his father's death, Rolla received a letter from Carrie, saying "The money's all gone, Rollie. Your father's illness drained everything." Dad never protested that; but we kids always wondered--and do to this day. Carrie sold the jewelry store and the rental houses and went to Georgia.

Grandfather Roe had bought a set of type material and a toy printing press for little Rollie, and from the day it arrived he became a printer. So did all his kids--not through choice.

In due time after his marriage to Minnie Huyck, the babies started arriving. Charles was the first; then a girl, Marjorie; another, Dorothy; then Mildred, and Lois.

So--that's the background for "the Roe kids", a set of young-uns over-educated and under-gifted in practicality, like their father.

We came to Weidman from the "farm" (guaranteed blow-sand) in Clare County, where Dad was obsessed with the thought of "raising our own food". In the spring, late frosts or early rabbits got the young potato plants. If a few plants survived, they were pocked by "blight". But we dug enough potatoes to get us through the year; and our daily diet up there on that farm was johnny-cake and potatoes. With butter. (Oleo had not yet been invented.) "Go easy on the butter!" was Dad's thrice-daily admonition to us ravenous kids.

Dad always had a type rack full of type-cases, big wooden type for featured words, and a job-press, foot-pedal motivated, in the living room. There was also a reed organ and his guitar. The family had wandered from one town to another in southern Michigan, starting up newspapers where none had ever prospered or ever would. Finally Big Brother Charles, by now working on the Harrison weekly paper, put a ten-dollar down-payment on a 40-acre tract in Greenwood Township.

There was a two-room log house with a lean-to clapboard kitchen, a ladder against a wall leading to the attic where we kids slept, and a tumble-down barn. For years Dad cherished a conviction that he could "get rich" raising baby chicks and selling them as broilers, or selling eggs.

That first batch, on the Clare County farm, was killed by a weasel in one night. Dad bought a cow for ten dollars, and she gave us a quart or so of milk night and morning; then one day the family discovered her dead in her stall in the log barn. Dad bought a horse to "work the land", but it too dropped dead the second week we had it. Thereafter, as long as he lived, he was obsessed with the conviction that he could make money raising chickens. Even after we moved to Weidman, he had an elaborate chicken house built, bought baby chicks, and got them half-raised before they started sneezing. He didn't recognize the signs. He lost the whole flock to coccidiosis. He hired Myron Earl to pull stumps and plow up five acres of blow-sand across the creek on our place, and we kids planted raspberries, grapes and currants there, and strawberries on the front piece. Disease got the plantings before any crop could be realized. But he never got over his urge to get "free" food from the land.

Dad was recovering from a nervous breakdown, and had a "bad back". He was in bed nearly a year, there on the Greenwood farm, and got back on his feet through daily doses of "Dr. Miles' Nervine".

"Ha!" a neighbor snorted, though he knew nothing of the contents of Dr. Miles' concoction. "That's half alcohol!"

Whatever. It got Dad out of bed and back to work.

Through the Publisher's Auxiliary, Dad learned that a town called Weidman was without a paper. He walked the four miles to Harrison, got a train to Rosebush and hired a "livery rig" to go over and talk with merchants in Weidman.

We all walked to Harrison, on occasion. I remember walking it with brother Bob, a year younger than I, on a dirt road with sand so deep and pervasive there was no escaping it. A four-mile walk for kids was considered normal in those days.

From Harrison Dad caught the gasoline-propelled short-run train to Rosebush, and hired a rig to get to Weidman. He had the livery-man wait while he made the rounds of stores. He came home jubilant.

"They want a paper there! They WANT A PAPER!" We had the last of Ma's Sunday-baked cake for supper, and applesauce, a rare treat.

Dad "went on ahead", finding a boarding place, while Ma stayed with us kids up there on the farm. He came back, still jubilant, walking from Harrison, and started packing his printing apparatus. Dad had rented the "yellow house", a two-story frame structure on Main Street, and we moved in. Our "goods" were hauled from Rosebush to Weidman by Lant Boyer's dray--a sturdy team of horses and a wagon. The printshop was a rented one-room building next to Mrs. Schmidt's shoe-repair shop.

Weidman seemed an "awful big place" to us. There was M.D. Rand's Furniture and Undertaking building; Leon Smith had a jewelry store in the north half of a building that housed the post office, run by Leon's wife, Daphne. There were Rau's Hardware, and Woolworth's Harness and Carriage Store, with a marvelous life-size wooden horse to display harnesses, in front of the store; later, Woolworth sold the first cars in the area, all Fords. There was the barbershop, owned by John Otterbine;

Mills & Scott Bros.' general merchandise and farm implements; George Drallette ran a successful grocery and "dry goods" store; John Damon, later Schauppner & Kew, then George Middlesworth, groceries and dry goods.

The Weidman Banking Co., in one of the few brick buildings, was managed by Floyd Mitchell, who also managed the Weidman Lumber Yard and the grist mill. The bank displayed a large sign, "Solid as a Rock". Blacksmiths were Lou Frantz and his father, Asa. The Holmes Milling Co. took farmers' grain and ground it for them, or bought it. Later, under Floyd Mitchell's management, the mill made Log House pancake and Klondike flour, and had a fleet of trucks to transport it far and wide. There was a large room upstairs in the mill where local women were hired to sort beans to be sold by the mill.

At the lumber yard, Blondie Miller was manager; Lant Boyer had a "dray" --a team of horses and wagon; Charlie Johnson ran the saloon--with a pool table. Fred Bartlett raised and bought potatoes and stored them in a warehouse west of the bank building, next to the railroad tracks, and used part of the warehouse to store ice that had been cut from the millpond in winter.

The railroad depot took care of daily trains which hauled freight for the stores, and mail, and salesmen; Ott Robinson ran a junk yard; Erie Thompson owned the drug store. The Masonic Hall took up the entire second floor of the Drallette building. Anna Schmidt, widow of Karl, had a shoe repair shop; 'Dolph Flower was a self-taught mechanic, and had the first automobile garage and the first gasoline pump in Weidman. Another blacksmith, George Briggs, rented the "hall" over his blacksmith shop for dances and high school basketball games. There was one exit, the narrow stairway to the ground floor. Weidman was blessed with doctors: Dr. Gillette, M.D. and Dr. Clark, Veterinarian; Dr. Rondot, in Sherman City, and Dr. McRae in Two Rivers.

The Odd Fellows had their own building; there was the Methodist Church, and across from it, the Free Methodist Church; and three-and-a-half miles away, the Beal City Catholic Church. And, of course, The Weidman Messenger, published weekly by R.E. and M.I. Roe.

Leon McArthur came to Weidman in 1908 when his family moved here from near Lake Odessa. Leon was 12 years old. His father was a farmer and blacksmith.

Leon was associated with the Weidman Bank for over 50 years, becoming president of the bank in 1955. His was the first agency in this part of the state for Auto Owners Insurance Company.

Leon was probably our oldest Weidman citizen, having come here and started work at the Holmes Milling Co. elevator as a mill hand, which he worked at for two winters. Summers he worked at the Weidman Lumber Yard, then owned by Holmes Milling Company and Floyd Mitchell. He worked at selling the mill's products, helping build needed things for the mill, unloading and scaling lumber, and helping make cement blocks.

He moved from laboring work at the mill to bookkeeping for the bank, lumber yard and Holmes Milling Company during Floyd Mitchell's lifetime here; to assistant cashier at the bank to cashier, and finally president of the bank. He retired in July, 1970, upon the merger of the Weidman State Bank with the Isabella Bank and Trust, after more than 50 years' service with the bank.

In the "yellow house" there was a bedroom downstairs and two rooms upstairs. The boys had the first room, a small tucked-in affair, sleeping two on a straw "tick". We girls had the "front room", a larger place with unfinished walls and ceiling rafters. It was the first time we had beds. M.D. Rand agreed to "trade out" two beds in advertising, and we were rich.

As long as he published the Weidman Messenger, Dad "took in on subscription" (\$1.00 per year) almost anything: Huge Hubbard squashes, pumpkins, crates of potatoes, apples, pears, cords of wood. His rate for advertising was fifteen cents a column inch.

Dad insisted upon the basics of correct grammar. "Can I go downtown with M'rie?" I might ask, after checking with Mama, who said, "Ask your father." Dad would consider thoughtfully a moment, lips pursed, then he'd ask soliticiously, "Are you ABLE to go downtown?" "May I go downtown with M'rie?" I dutifully repeated. He'd say, "Ask your mother."

Mama usually consented, specifying an early hour for returning home. The fact that we lived about a mile from town didn't faze us. We dressed in our best and paraded with our group of girls, up and down the main street. At eight-thirty we started walking back home. Papa and Mama would be in bed by that time, but she managed to check silently all her brood.

When I was not quite 13, I started menstruating--although we didn't call it that then. It was our "sick time".

We wore "cloths"--cast-off soft materials from old underwear, old dresses, worn-out sheets--squares of cloth folded lengthwise to form a pad, pinned to the top of one's underpants, front and back. We wore the "cloths" and then washed them out in a pail of water in the kitchen. "Sanitary belts" had not yet been invented, much less "Kotex" and "Tampax".

One day I was invited to go to the Richest Girl in Town's home, and she said impulsively, "I got my own room! C'mon! I want you to see it!"

I had my hand on the breath-taking wide banister to start upstairs, when the Richest Girl's mother called out sharply: "Caroline! There's a pail of water down in the basement with some THINGS in it, for you to wash out!"

Caroline started back down the stairs, while I slipped out the front door, marveling. Even the Richest Girl in Town had to wash out her own "cloths"!

We've come a long way, baby!

Bob played "Yoler!" with other boys his age. "Yoler, Yoler, ten times over!" One of them had to be "it", and stand with covered eyes while the group of boys scrambled to find hiding places. The game was for the "It" person to find the first "Yoler" refugee and tag him on the arm. We'd hear them calling "Yoler, Yoler!" from one end of town to the other. I was terrified that Bob might hide in a freight car shunted on the track to the mill, and get carried away. The boys did hide in freight cars if doors were open or ajar.

Bob was the rebel among us. One day, when we were all hoeing strawberries in the field west of the house, Bob threw down his hoe and said, "I'm quitting!" Papa happened to be home with a "bad back" that day, but

he went out to that field, gave Bob a licking, and Bob went back to work.

We were not "deprived children". All the kids had chores to do after school. Storekeepers' kids had to "sweep out" or "wipe off the shelves". Farmers' kids had to hoe in the family vegetable garden, help with the milking, clean out stables, the older ones perhaps riding proudly on some of the first tractors. We just had to set type in the printshop or go out in the field and hoe. Different, but not unusual.

When Bob was not quite 18 he ran away from home, somehow hitched rides to Saginaw, and joined the Navy. The recruiting officer in Saginaw called Dad for permission, and Dad gave it reluctantly.

Bob was sent to the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, where he performed as a common seaman. He spent most of that first year in the brig. He refused to salute those of higher rank. He got through a frantic telephone call to Dad, saying wildly, "Get me out of here! They're killing me!" Dad tried to explain that Bob had signed up a four-year hitch, with Dad's consent, and Bob slammed down the receiver.

Somewhere in that first year, Bob learned to salute, even if he'd just saluted the same officer ten minutes before. Presently the Captain learned that Bob was a printer, and he was jerked out of the brig and put into the printshop under a sailor whose hitch was nearly up.

Bob became head printer (printing, among other things, menus for the Captain's table). Somewhere along the line the Captain took a liking to him (Bob could be charming when he chose) and made him Captain's Orderly; his only duty, to stand outside the Captain's door and be ready to run any errands the Captain might need.

He went ashore wherever the ship docked--which was all over the world. He rode in the mail boat, among petty officers who treated him with respect, as he was Captain's Orderly.

As long as he lived--years after he was out of the Navy--he had a habit of laying his left hand on his stummick and his right on the back of his pants and giving them a hitch, whether they needed it or not. Sailors' dress uniforms at that time were Navy blue suits with tight-fitting waist-bands and flaring bell-bottom pants with no belts.

Dad had rented the yellow house in Weidman for us to move into when we came here from Greenwood Township. After a year the house was sold, and we rented the pink house. (Yes, it was painted pink.)

We kids still slept on straw-ticks, or straw mattresses, even after we moved to the final resting-place for the family. Winnie, Allys and I slept on a straw-tick bed at the east window of the log house in Clare County; the two boys slept on another straw-tick bed at the west window. When we came to Weidman we still slept on straw mattresses.

Those were rented houses, for about six dollars a month. After we'd been here a few years and the paper was thriving, Amanda Flower sent her son David over to tell "the folks" that her house and forty acres of land were for sale--\$800.00, "Ten dollars down, ten dollars a month!" Papa and Mama walked over--about half a mile--looked at the place, and said, "We'll take it!" Dad borrowed the money at the bank on a personal loan. That year, taxes on the place were \$12.65.

That has become the old Roe homestead. There was a living room, a parlor, a bedroom and a kitchen-dining room with woodshed on the north end. Both kitchen and living room had wood stoves, with "shelf" chimneys.

But the boys had their "room"--the hallway at the top of the stairs; Winnie took baby Frances up to bed with her in the front room, and Allys and I slept in the east room. We carried lighted oil lamps up the stairs when we went to bed.

The rooms were not finished. There were bare walls with two-by-fours at spaced intervals. There was one window in each room, but no screens for summer. In fact, we'd never heard of window screens. That first summer, we tacked cloth mosquito netting on the outside of each window, using a borrowed ladder. Ah, heaven! A cool breeze!

Little by little, through M.D. Rand's "trading out" advertising, we accumulated beds, a new rocking chair for Ma, a chair that suited Dad, and a couch.

Wilma Ritchie was one of my Best Friends, along with M'rie Smith and M'rie Rathburn. Wilma's dad, John, "drove the mail" to and from Rosebush, contracted farmers for acreage of pickles and sugar beets, and bought and sold cattle. He also arranged the passage and housing for Mexican field workers.

M'rie Smith's father, Linc, had "retired" from their farm southwest of Weidman, and moved to town. It was customary, in those days, for farmers to retire to towns, and for townspeople to retire to cities.

Mama worked in the printshop Monday afternoons, after doing the washing on a scrub-board, with hard cakes of Fels Naphtha soap; she "set bread" always on Thursdays, baking every week in the wood-fired range, summer and winter. She worked in the printshop all day Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We kids worked in the printshop as soon as we were tall enough to reach the type-cases and feed the job press.

The paper was hand-set (cold type), with individual letters and spaces between words, out of the type-case, each line "justified", or tightened in the typeset; then on to the next line. Dad was probably the fastest typesetter in Michigan. He loved each piece of the stuff, and he made up the forms--steel frames which held the type--justified them, then Ma carried them over to the "big press" because of Dad's "bad back"; and Dad fitted and locked them into the press bed. Mama fed the big sheets of paper from a platform half-way up the press, though she was terrified of the "dratted contraption". The press was run by a gasoline engine kept in working order by Lou Frantz, who had a blacksmith shop down the alley.

We of the Younger Batch did not enjoy the playful moods Dad had showered upon the Older Batch when they were kids. In all, Ma gave birth to 13 children, and apparently Dad was tired of kids. At any rate, he was stern with us, sending us into the printshop or the fields after school and Saturdays. But he still had his caring moments: "I have here," he would say grandly, "fifty cents that says ice cream for supper, by George!"

Saturday night was bath night. Ma put a wash tub in the middle of the kitchen floor, poured hot water from the teakettle and cooled it with water from the hand-pump at the sink in the kitchen. Two of us girls could bathe in it, then carry the tub out and dump the water in the back yard; then two more girls, and finally the two boys; each time emptying the tub and refilling the teakettle on the hot stove.

Sunday was Church and Sunday School day. Mama dressed in her "best" clothes, Papa put on a vest and coat. We kids dressed up as best we could

and went to Sunday School. Papa sang in the church choir, along with Leon and Gladys McArthur and others. Papa and Leon were the only ones in the choir who could read music. Papa had "absolute pitch": he could sing Middle C without hearing a note of music. He could just hit Middle C (or any other note) from the printed sheet and it was on the nose. He sang baritone (he went to church solely because they needed a baritone in the choir). "No, I will not join the church," he told Mama vehemently. "I cannot swallow their dogma!"

He believed, he said, in a Superior Being: "Who created the world and the other planets and sent them spinning through space? Who designed each leaf of every shrub and tree and flower? A force greater than I, but so great I cannot pretend to understand it!"

When we were in our 'teens, we followed the Older Batch's style of addressing Papa--we started calling him Dad. After I quit school Dad insisted I study Latin--reciting to him two evenings a week. "Amo, amas, amat!" Dad was a stickler for proper usage of the English language, which I learned much later from Dr. E.C. Beck, head of the English Department at Central Michigan College in Mt. Pleasant.

Those were my 'teen years. Setting type by hand, feeding the "big press", folding the papers by hand, sticking on mailing labels. And walking to Beal City Saturday mornings for piano and violin lessons.

One Saturday I arrived at the Sisters' House in Beal City, almost overcome by the relentless sun, and walking four miles with my load of music stuff. Sister Philippa (a sweet, young but practical person), said, "You may practice, if you wish," and left the room. Presently she came back with a tray (I'd never seen one before) containing a sandwich, a cookie and a glass of cold, cold lemonade. She left the room while I ate, and when she came back I'd gobbled the food and was ready (almost) to resume my music lesson. But I had to go to the "privy", as we called it at home. Bad. I'd never been instructed in asking to go to the privy; the thought of asking a Sister terrified me. I determined to get through my music lesson. But presently there was a drip, then a small puddle, at my feet.

Sister Philippa noted it and said gently, "Constance, do you want to

go to the toilet?" "YES!" I said in desperation. Sister Philippa led me down a long, narrow hallway with closed doors on either side. Sisters were eating their noon meal in one of the rooms, and I was flabbergasted to hear them laughing, joking, screeching, like any group of women. Why, Sisters were people!

Sister Philippa led me down the long hallway to the back door and then halfway down a hill. "There it is," she said, pointing. Again, I was flabbergasted. The Sisters had a privy, like ours! Except there was a roll of toilet paper, instead of the Sears, Roebuck catalog we used. When I went back, Sister Philippa continued the music lesson as if nothing had happened, and I started the long walk home in the noonday sun.

Wagons and sometimes buggies passed me, but nobody offered me a ride. There was no publicity about molestation of children at that time. The young Hauck Brothers passed me once, in a buggy with a fringe on top (it was!) and a spanking team of "driving horses".

Presently word seeped out that the Sisters at Beal City were good music teachers, and some of the affluent families began sending their children over for music lessons. The Richest Man in Town sent his carriage and a driver to take his daughter to the Sisters for piano lessons.

Sisters wore floor-length and long-sleeved, high-necked robes of fine muslin or wool. Stiffly starched white neck and head enclosures fitted tightly about the face. Black draperies were attached to the head-pieces, like full veils that fell down the back. All I ever saw of Sister Philippa were her face and hands, both exquisitely Dresden-like. I had the impression that she wore layer upon layer of voluminous skirts.

Father Zugelder drove his team of buggy horses from Beal City periodically, to deposit cash money in the Weidman Bank. He'd drop by the printshop, and he and Papa would belt out drinking songs, as from The Student Prince, in German. It would be summer, and windows and the front door of the printshop were open; one could hear the two men harmonizing, all over town; but it was all right: Nobody in Weidman understood German, so the words didn't matter. But the two aging men had a half-hour of pure enjoyment. Father Zugelder spoke "high German"; so did Papa. But Father's flock mainly spoke "low German"; and Father Zugelder enjoyed a half-hour jabbering and singing in high German with Rollie Roe (that's what Father

called Papa--the only man in the county who dared such familiarity).

A couple of my "best friends" in the Weidman school (I was in the seventh grade) dared me to ask Sister Philippa, "Do nuns really shave their heads?" (In those days there was fierce opposition to any religion other than one's own.) I stammered out the question one Saturday morning, and Sister Philippa froze.

"Constance!" she exclaimed finally, "we are here to study music. Let me hear you read this page!"

I never encroached on the Catholic religion again. In fact, I became so accustomed to their beliefs that I took on the Methodist and Catholic creeds in one swallow. (To this day, I can see Father Zugelder coming along the street from the church. "Good morning, Cunstunce!" Father Zugelder exclaimed as we met. He touched his three-cornered hat and walked on, robes flapping in the breeze.)

So--the Catholic Sisters--and Father Zugelder--had a great influence on my life. Not in religion, but in tolerance, intelligence, education, kindness.

At the 1976 dedication of the renovation and rebuilding of the Sherman City Nondenominational Church, the committee had churchmen from as many denominations as possible, each to give a short speech behind the podium. Father Neubecker stood at the side of the podium, without notes, and just talked. He reminded us of the work those Sherman Township farmers accomplished in sawing down the best cedar trees on their places, for shingles; of the two sawmills, one owned by a Catholic family, the other by a Lutheran, where the cedar logs were sawed into lumber, for free; of the endless trips by farmers in their pickup trucks and wagons, hauling the logs, then the lumber. He never mentioned religion.

He spoke of those farm women who cleaned the dusty church's interior, laid new carpeting, washed windows, and then served up a noon dinner as only farm women can, from farm-produced meat, vegetables and fruit. He spoke of people, and some of their payless works.

At the end of his short speech he invited us all to join him in the Lord's Prayer. A church full of people loudly applauded Father Neubecker, and I could say with confidence, everybody loved him.

Father Neubecker died in a nursing home in Gratiot County. He was priest at St. Joseph the Worker's Church in Beal City from 1946 to 1970. While he was in the rest home, Nottawa folks visited him often; the Sisters at Beal City made and sent him a huge cake on his 60th anniversary as a priest. Nottawa school children taped messages to send him.

In 1898 Broomfield No. 2 School District, at the corner of M-20 and Coldwater Road, dished out a teacher's salary in the princely sum of \$270 for a nine-months school term. Ten cords of wood for the school, eight of hardwood, two of pine, delivered, cost the school district \$7.50. "School house to be opened and fire built (by the teacher) by 8 a.m. in cold weather." There was a two weeks' vacation in October, for kids to help parents in potato digging.

In 1902 there were the Sherman District No. 3, the Waite School; Sherman District No. 1, Sherman City School; Coldwater No. 5, the Conley School; Gilmore No. 4, the Case School; Nottawa Public (Hauck) School; Deerfield No. 5 (Two Rivers); District No. 2 (Tinker School), and the Woodin School. These were one-room schools where one teacher presided at classes from Grades 1 to 8. These were besides the Beal City Parochial School (Kindergarten to eighth grade). The first school for "white children" was built by John Hyslop in 1880, near Coldwater Lake on Littlefield Road.

Before there was a school in Weidman, the first school in the area was in the second mile east of town, and was moved in 1898 to a site just off the east banks of the Coldwater River. Early classes were held in the Free Methodist Church in Weidman, and in the "Little School" at the corner of Second and Main Streets. In Weidman School proper, ninth and tenth grades were added about 1902, and eleventh and twelfth grades about 1912.

While I was in the eighth grade at the Weidman school, Katy Schafer had the seat behind mine. Kate was a wiz at math, though we called it arithmetic at that time. Once we had quarterly exams, and in arithmetic--my weakest subject--there was a question, "How many rolls of wallpaper, 18 by 58 inches, will it take to paper a nine-by-twelve-foot room with four openings?"

I whispered to Katie something like, "What in the world do I do with THIS?"

Katie didn't just give me the answer. She showed me how to figure the blasted thing, and Eureka! I got a B in arithmetic exams! I have never forgotten Kate Schafer (Cotter). Don't ask me today how many rolls of wallpaper it would take.

We girls had one dress each for school, wearing the same dress all week. The boys wore the same shirts and short pants, or knickers, all week. We changed to "work clothes" the minute we got home.

In winter we wore one-piece long underwear which became more and more baggy as washing and wearing made them stretch in wrong places. There was a trick to drawing on the long black cotton stockings we wore over the bulky underpants. We folded the stretched-out cuffs and carefully rolled up the stockings over the bulges, finally pinning the stockings with safety-pins to the upper legs of the long johns. But with all the walking we did, the sitting in class, standing to recite, and more walking, we had lumpy legs before the day was half over.

At school, half a mile east of "downtown", there was a hand-pump at the back of the schoolhouse, with a tin cup hanging on the top. We all drank from that cup, pumping our own drinking water. There never was an epidemic from that schedule, as I remember.

There were two double-seated "privies" at the south end of the school yard, one for girls, one for boys. There were torn-up Sears, Roebuck catalogues for toilet paper. I never saw a roll of toilet paper until that day Sister Philippa sent me to the toilet back of the nuns' house in Beal City.

A few "Nottawa kids" walked to the Weidman school for eighth grade classes--the Beal City Parochial School had no accreditation for seventh and eighth grades. Katie Schafer, Gerald and Louise Grewett, Minnie McGuirk, and others from the Nottawa area walked to the Weidman school for the "higher" grades.

Our recreation was adequate, for our times. (Today, you'd have a batch of rebellious kids hollering, "What can I play with?" There wasn't even radio, those days, much less tv--and no cars!) We had the Fourth of July fireworks, visible all over town; Weidman Day, a big deal in our

lives; the Lanshaw tent shows; an occasional small circus; and swimming at the "High-banks". We pre-teens walked the railroad nearly a mile south of town, turned off at a bend in Coldwater River, and lo! There were the High-banks! We girls went behind bushes and changed to thin dresses, while the boys just stripped to their under pants and we all dived in. All this without adult "supervision".

Back of our 40 acres was Walker Creek, which we were skeered of--it was so cold and ran so swiftly! Talk about cold water! We didn't know until years later that Walker Creek rises from springs just northwest of Brinton, up in "the hills", and it's artesian water, cold as ice.

We skated, in winter--yes, we had two or three pairs of clamp-on skates--on our own little pond. We built elaborate snow houses in the drifts throughout our fields.

Always, we had music. We played the foot-pedaled organ, Dad strummed his guitar, and we sang. We read scads of anything we could lay our hands on: Lady of the Lake, Evangeline, Knights of the Round Table, and--sneaked upstairs and read by lamplight--a few Horatio Alger rags-to-riches books.

Floyd Mitchell and his family first lived on Second Street; then he built a "mansion" across the road from what is now Mitchell Memorial Park. The house had electric lights and flush toilets, with power provided by a mill-wheel under the mill. Later, Mitchell had lights installed along the one business street of town, still powered by that huge wheel in the water.

Some years later, while I was still taking music lessons and practicing religiously, I was working on a paper in Wyandotte when I caught my left hand in the "jaws" of a linotype and smashed it, especially the forefinger. The company's doctor wanted to take the finger off, but I said firmly, "No!" He patched it up as best he could--and that was that for the Wyandotte Record--and violin and piano.

I spent my adolescent years studying music to have all that serious sawing on my violin, practicing on piano, those walks in hot sun, in numbing cold--to have it all nullified by a single moment's malfunction of a linotype.

I had worked as a linotype operator in Minneapolis, Chicago, New York;

but in 1937 work began falling off and I was out of a job. I took the Wyandotte job at reduced pay. I hired Ed Lynch, a lawyer in Mt. Pleasant, to represent me in court. He got me compensation of \$800. There were no compensation laws at that time.

Allys said, when the check finally came, "Goody! Now we can pay that Grand Rapids paper bill!"

We had ice cream for supper, and that was my compensation for a crippled left forefinger. To this day, I couldn't get that finger down to produce F-natural on the violin. There went all those years of walking to Beal City, of practicing endlessly, of dreams of fame and riches.

In between city jobs I always came back home to Weidman. There were always changes: new homes, new stores; recently, mobile homes.

Web McCall offered me a job on his Mt. Pleasant Times weekly paper, as a linotype operator. Young (college student) reporters brought their copy to my machine, saying as they laid it on my copy-table, "Fix up the grammar and spelling for me, will you, Connie, there's a good girl!" I "fixed up" their copy, sat through endless hours of operating the linotype. "Progressive Education" had come in, and the English language was one of the casualties.

In 1898 John S. Weidman declared a "celebration day" and Weidman by then was coming along as a town. Fey Middlesworth and Fred Bartlett were in charge of affairs, and tents went up all along the unpaved, dirt business street, which was roped off. Horses and buggies were parked solid as far from town as the farm where we lived, on what is now Airline Road. The tents contained rigged "games": knock the nigger off his perch; shoot down ten wooden ducks and win a big teddy-bear; ice cream, ice cream, fresh from the barrel! Weidman Day continued for years as one of the main events of our lives.

In the late 1940s the Weidman Business Association was organized, specifically to buy a fire truck and organize a volunteer fire department, over the dead bodies of two or three of the merchants. The WBA took over Weidman Day, and it developed from a street-carnival affair to a pig roast at the Elwood Miller farm.

Later, after emerging from the pig-roast at the Millers', there were

soft-ball games, soft drinks and ice cream at the park. Some of us still gather to visit old friends, to talk of old times and about Mr. Lanshaw and other highlights of our youth.

And a word about Mr. Lanshaw. He was tall, handsome, well-dressed at all times; and all the teenage girls in town were head over heels in love with him. Not until I was grown up did I recognize his deliberate posturing, his fancy manners. We attended the Lanshaw Players dramatic and comedy shows to feast our eyes on Mr. Lanshaw. He had a wife, but nobody in my set of friends noticed or cared about that. Mr. Lanshaw was always leading man in all the "dramatic" shows, with his wife as leading lady. She didn't matter. The fact that Mr. Lanshaw was impelled to act, on or off stage, made no difference. The advent of the Lanshaw Players was the big annual event in Weidman, for all the young girls. His tent was always filled, at that, and not just with teenagers.

In exchange for featured writeups in the Weidman Messenger, Mr. Lanshaw gave Dad press tickets; that is, he scrawled a note on a piece of paper saying, "Admit the Roe family."

As we filed into the tent on the big nights, the ticket-taker counted us all carefully, sometimes asking, "Are you sure you're all Roe kids?" We slunk into the tent and climbed up on bleacher seats. We never thought of being deprived of reserved seats, down on the ground at the front of the stage, close to the actors.

So we grew up with slightly inferior complexes. Except Bob.

Bob said belligerently, "I'm not going to be a printer! I'm going to be a carpenter!"

He worked after school hours lugging sacks of potatoes from Fred Bartlett's ice-and-potato storage building to box cars waiting for the train, whenever it came in. He studied a radio kit he'd bought with money he'd earned, and spent hours up in the attic above the kitchen, trying to get it to work. I don't think he ever got anything through those head-phones he wore on "radio work".

On the paper, we'd have to "fix up" some of the country correspondents' copy, as Dad didn't have time to edit each one. "E. Wonsey had compy Sondy." "John Ritchie in our aira last wk buying cattle." "Geese in V's heading south winter soon."

The patents--ready-print four-page sheets--came in on the train, and Iant Boyer was faithful in getting them to the printshop on his first deliveries of shipped-in goods. We printed four pages of an eight-page paper; four pages "patents" (carrying ads for patent medicines), four pages of local news and ads.

Type was set by hand, "out of the case", one letter at a time, held in place in the typestick by the left thumb, while the rest of the left hand held the typestick. A "pied line" (jumbled) was bad; a pied stickful was tragedy. Each letter had to be picked up, put in its proper box in the typecase, and you started over when you got it "cleaned up". "Throwing in" the type was the weekend job, after the paper was printed and mailed. Each letter was separate, a very small piece of lead alloy; each letter had a "box" to rest in, and no Roe ever mixed up the cases or even a type-box or two. We were "good printers". We worked for three meals a day, a home to sleep in, a place of our own.

Papa and Mama walked back and forth to the printshop, as indeed all of us did; walking back home for noon dinner, even when we were in school across the river east of town. Sometimes on stormy winter days, we carried our lunch--usually bread-and-butter sandwiches. On our walks to school we were joined by the Bolinger girls; Wilma, Gladys, Johnnie and Keith Ritchie, Marie Rathburn, the Middlesworth twins (boys); Ken and Wendell Drallette, the Clark kids, Marie Smith, Frank and George Schmidt, and Sam Solomon, a full-blooded Indian.

One of the school kids learned that Sam's father's name was Solomon Jackson. We teased poor Sam until he told us how come. "I am named for my father, Solomon Jackson," Sam Solomon said with dignity. We all hooted, and Sam tried to explain, but couldn't make us understand. Years later we learned that Sam was indeed named for his father, Solomon Jackson. Indians at that time took only the first names of their parents. Ergo, Sam Solomon was the son of Solomon Jackson.

We girls in the seventh grade played baseball. The boys had their own diamond, we had ours. One day I was at bat, with Arabella, one of the richest girls in town, as catcher for the opposing team. The pitcher tossed the ball, I took a hefty swing, hit a two-bagger--and threw the bat

behind me as I started for first base. The bat landed on Arabella's shin.

She grabbed her leg and danced on one foot, moaning. The "folks" hadn't taught us to say, "I'm sorry." Ma was too busy with house cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking, baking, sewing, between hitches at type-setting at the printshop, to instruct us. Dad was uninterested, attempting to read aloud to us from "the classics".

In 1967 the State of Michigan ordered all small country schools to consolidate into big schools, and Beal City wanted to go in with the Weidman District. We had some hot-headed Protestants then, and they put up a fuss. ("Why, we'll have them Cat'lic nuns over here teaching our kids, and the priest coming in and out at will!") No matter that this made no sense. Rabid Protestants hollered so loudly that Beal City said, "Hell with you, too!" or words to that effect, and stayed independent, building an impressive new high school with lower grades included, complete with one of the biggest and best-equipped sports-fields in the area.

By this time, the old school east of Weidman had been torn down and a two-story school, with grades K through 12, had been built at the west end of Main Street.

So Weidman went into a hodge-podge of schools, the Chippewa Hills School District, which included Mecosta, Barryton, Remus, etc. "Your taxes will go down, now. With all that recreational land, just look at the tax-base!"

But our taxes went up instead--and continue to climb. True, we have a huge school near Remus, plopped down in a conglomeration of hills and wild acres, just off M-66. We had to buy more buses, hire more drivers, more teachers. We had to hire athletic supervisors to make sure the kids got exercise, as they did no walking any more. But--we have a spanking new school. So does Beal City; and Beal City people have not (outwardly, at least) held that fracas--and it was a nasty one--against us.

The town did not develop as originally planned by John S. Weidman. Main Street, running east-to-west, was supposed to be the big business street. But Third Street (now Woodruff Road) became the town's business

area, and still is. At the corners of Woodruff Road and Mill Street stand the modern postoffice and the beautiful and efficient Isabella Bank and Trust building. Recently, the business street has extended to the north, with Keith Baumann's huge IGA store, the Drive-In and the new Health Clinic on the east side, and Lou Fiorillo's Pharmacy and Dick Curtis' CarWash on the west.

Presently, there were lake developments all around the town. Most of my forty acres are under water, but there were a few choice lakeside lots that brought a rather pretty penny. I paid up all debts and had a bank account! It was the first checking account I'd ever had. Bills were paid in cash, before that, with receipts dutifully handed over.

Today most of my lots have been sold, and evenings I can look out my windows and see a blaze of lights across Lake of the Hills, from homes built on 50-foot-frontage lots in fields where we planted grapes and currants as kids. Later, the Department of Health forbade the platting of any more 50-foot-frontage lots.

I reserved a few acres of land for "personal use", and my home and grounds are not edged by "Lakers", as townsfolk call them. I have my own place, intact so far.

Weidman Town burned down twice: Once before the turn of the century, and again in 1941. Stores and office buildings--even the bank--were built of untreated raw pine lumber, before the first fire, and any fire starting would sweep through like--well, like wildfire.

In the last fire, I was working on the Bay City Times, when a young reporter came dashing out from the front office.

"Connie!" he exclaimed. "Do you know your town is burning up?"

I left my linotype machine, got permission from the front office, and called Dad.

"Should I come home?" I asked breathlessly.

"No," Dad said. "I don't think the Messenger building is in danger. The fire is on the east side of the main street."

Storekeepers frantically carried their goods out in the street. Our only fire protection was a "bucket brigade", composed of any able-bodied men who might pitch in.

In the late 1940s, sparked by the Weidman Business Association, the Nottawa-Sherman Volunteer Fire Department was formed, composed originally of all Weidman business men and those of Beal City. With some help from Sherman, Nottawa, Coldwater, Gilmore and Broomfield Townships, plus a sizable amount from insurance companies, a used fire truck was purchased, housed in George McClain's garage.

The men built a fire barn across the alley from the Idle Hour Bar. But as more equipment was added, the structure became inadequate, and the men added to it and built a water-storage tank at the top, to facilitate filling the extra tanker truck.

Today we have one of the state's best-equipped and best-trained fire departments. Firemen attend "schools" regularly to learn more about prevention of fire, life-saving techniques, and putting out fires. Our firemen wear "beepers", and when they hear their "beepers", they run to their phones or short-wave radios, drop anything and everything they were doing, and scam for the fire barn. The trucks carry oxygen tanks and chemical fire extinguishers, besides tanks of water.

We have two fire trucks, a water-tank truck, lesser vehicles and a Jaws of Life. The only "pay" our firemen get is a yearly steak-fry. Today, our firemen get funds from Sherman and Nottawa Townships, the annual auction and Firemen's Ball, and \$200--300 for each fire run. The two townships pay the fire run charge for those not insured or who cannot pay.

When that old si-reen or the "beepers" go off, business men and all other firemen drop everything and run to the fire barn to man our first-rate trucks and "water wagon". (It's kept filled from the huge tank atop the fire barn or, on calls, from the nearest source of water.) These are ordinary men, mind you. Fire calls are routed through to the sheriff's office in Mt. Pleasant where a button is pushed, and a voice describes the location and extent of the fire.

They pile out of bed at two a.m. or whenever, grab some clothes, and run. They can handle any manageable blaze with the best of professional fire-fighters.

Floyd Mitchell had promised the Weidman Business Association a good tract of land between town and the mill pond, for "Mitchell Memorial Park". But Floyd Mitchell died, and the estate was handled by Bernard Woodruff, his son-in-law, of Mt. Pleasant. After a year or so of prodding, Bernie gave the WBA the deed, and we have Mitchell Memorial Park, complete with a softball diamond, lights for night games, bleacher seats, children's playground equipment, and a beautiful, modern community building, completed without government grants, where noon meals are served to Senior Citizens and Bingo is played one night a week.

Now the Firemen carry the financial load themselves. They put on dances in the Weidman School gym or the K.C. Hall in Beal City; they began a few years of pig-roasts on the Elwood Miller farm west and north of town, always in February, when there was plenty of snow for riders of snow-machines, from all parts of the state. Elwood and Iola graciously turned over their pasture acres on the Chippewa River banks, for the occasion. Farmers of Nottawa and Sherman donated pigs which were roasted over fires out in the open; Evelyn Hackney made monster vats of her famous bean soup, firemen worked long hours in preparation; and the firemen's wives provided home-baked bread and country butter (yum!) and ice cream.

There was a very small gate-charge for entry, but most people handed over five and ten-dollar bills and proceeded to have a wonderful day, riding their snow machines over the Millers' rolling acres, crossing "Li'l Mac", a suspension bridge built in order to transport snow machines across the river.

We're a totally different town from what John S. Weidman envisioned. We're a modern, thriving country town, with stores offering everything you'll need except automobiles and clothing.

Weidman is surrounded by recreational lakes. We always had Coldwater Lake. Dick Tilmann of Beal City dredged out Lakes Windoga and Manitonka, northwest of Weidman, deep in the woods; the lakes are fed by Walker Creek. He sold lots to retired auto workers and others who flocked to this area to live among "the country folk".

Alton and Ivan Allen dredged out Lake of the Hills, flooding two-thirds

of my poor sandy acres, among other areas. They personally built the dam that holds back the waters of Walker Creek.

Lake Isabella, fed by the South Branch of the Chippewa River, was started in 1967 by Leo Gatehouse and Dick Tilmann. Hugh Burghouse, from Grand Rapids, now heads the corporation which owns and manages unsold lots. Lake Isabella is a city in itself, with a swank restaurant, golf course, pro shop, and landing strip for planes. It's a beautiful place.

The Lake Isabella residents could not understand living "in the country" with the nearest doctor fifteen miles away. Under their insistent leadership, they bought the marina just north of town, rebuilt it into a full-service "clinic" and now we can call a doctor or dentist any time during office hours. True, most of them live out of town, so night-calls are routed to them. But we have a very well equipped and beautifully furnished clinic, with all services here instead of Mt. Pleasant or Remus. Dr. Kowaleski of Remus will still make a house call if necessary; but our "lakers" and most of the townspeople depend on the "clinic".

A man came up from Detroit and built a huge building for a pharmacy; no more driving to Mt. Pleasant for prescription fills or refills. Lou Fiorillo is a licensed pharmacist, and he can fill your prescription no matter how exotic. And now we have a veterinarian, Dr. Pol, five or six miles south of town, on Jordan Road.

So: Weidman Village has grown from a wood-built hamlet that burned, to a prosperous and "modern" little town. Lake Isabella folks shop in Weidman stores. So do cottagers from Lakes Windoga and Manitonka, Lake of the Hills and Coldwater Lake, besides the "regular" town folks and their farmer-neighbors.

In the 1930s, oil was discovered in the south tier of sections of Sherman Township, dubbed the "Sherman Oil Field". Today, across the line into Broomfield Township, closer to Bundy Hill, drilling for oil is going on, and there are a number of new wells producing. A few of the original wells are still pumping oil.

Oil and gas were discovered in the north-west corner of Sherman and the south-west corner of Coldwater Township, known as the Coldwater Oil

Field. The wells pump 24 hours a day, and gas is transported via pipeline to the Weidman and Mt. Pleasant areas. The oil is trucked by tankers to Farwell, where it goes into a pipeline to the Total Refinery in Alma.

Naturally, the discovery of oil helped the town of Weidman. A farm couple on whose land oil had been found might say to a Weidman merchant, "Let me see your best refrigerator." "I want an electric stove." Or, when there was a car dealership here, "I'm ready to buy a new car-- your best."

We're doing all right, for our size. We've grown immensely, since John S., as the town like to call him, sold groceries from a side-room at his sawmill.

The original gristmill, built by E.C.Holmes, still stands, and has been improved with additions and modernizations. But the water-wheels are gone, replaced by electric power. No more flumes under the mill; no more roar of mill wheels, inside or out, at the mill. It's just the sound of feed-grinders and loaders for farmers' trucks of corn and wheat. No more Klondike flour. We've gone Modern with a capital M.

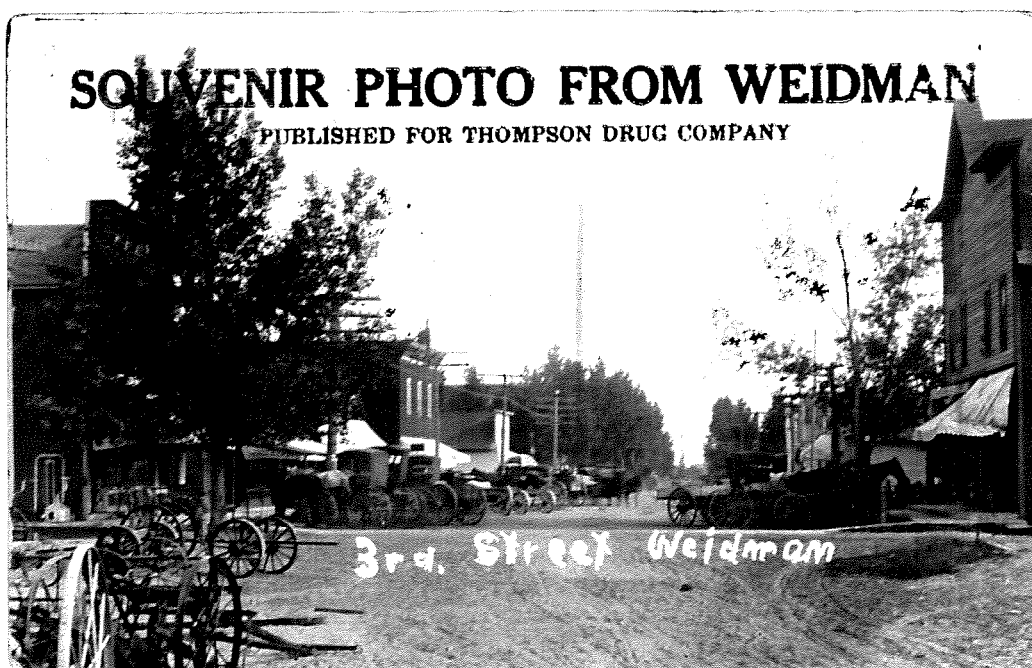
The business street, too, has kept up with the times. Store-fronts are decently attractive, supplies adequate for anything you may ask for.

We're a recreation area now; Lake of the Hills, Lakes Windoga and Manitonka, Coldwater Lake, and the huge and swanky Lake Isabella-- they're our satellites.

But we old-timers don't forget where we came from.



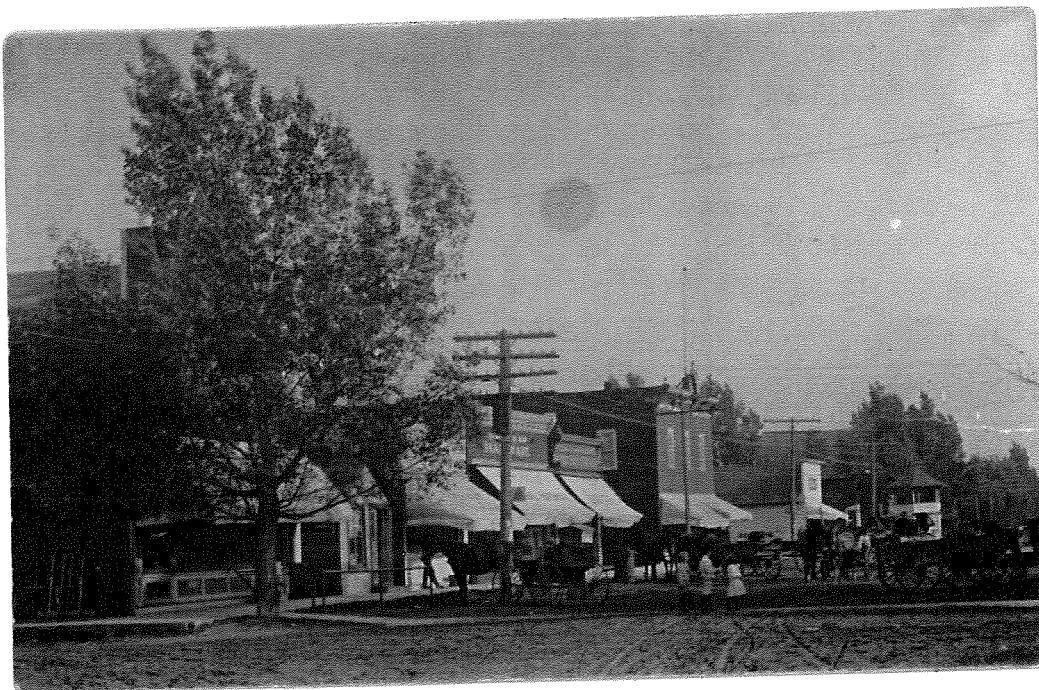
CORNER MAIN AND THIRD, ONE CENT
STAMP. SEPT. 22, 1909.



SEPT. 12, 1912. ONE CENT STAMP.



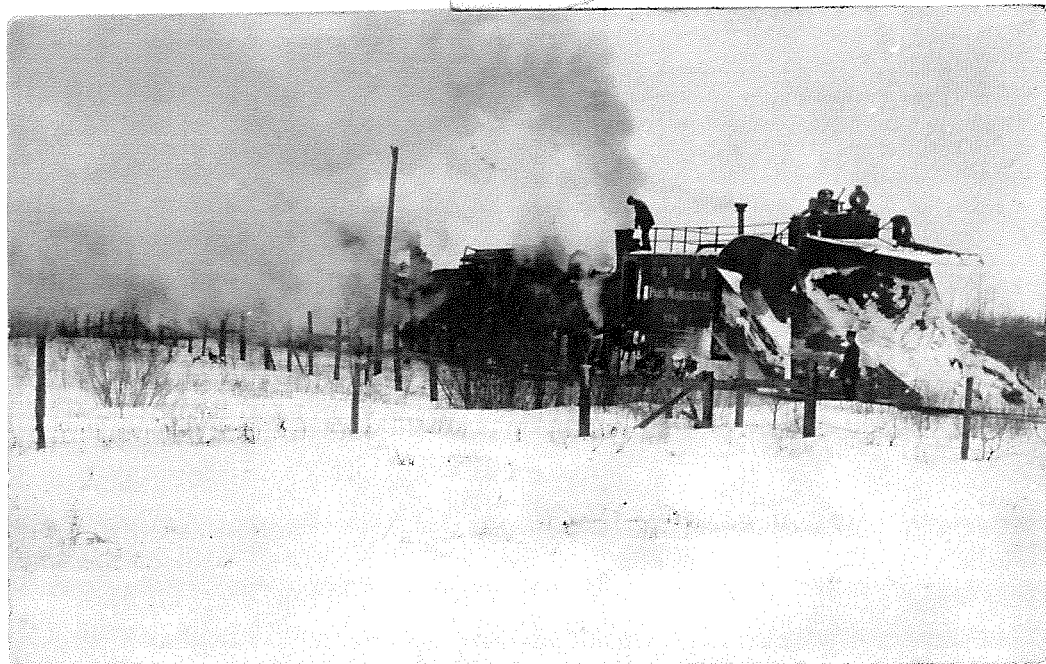
1913, BUSY 3rd. STREET, AND THE STAMP USED.
DIRT ROAD.



BAND STAND AT SOUTH END OF THIRD STREET



WHEN WE HAD
A RAILROAD





CATTLE BUYER TAKING THE GIRLS FOR A RIDE
IN HIS NEW CAR, 1911.



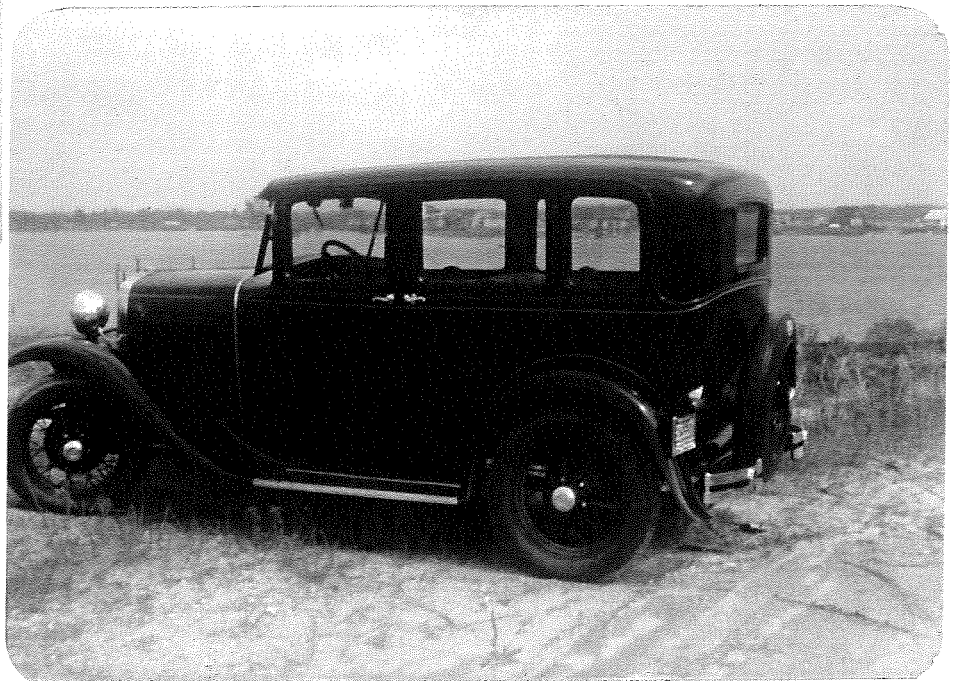
CLASS OF '14, FRANK MORRISON, TEACHER



HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS, 1922



1909



NEW MODEL "A" SEDAN



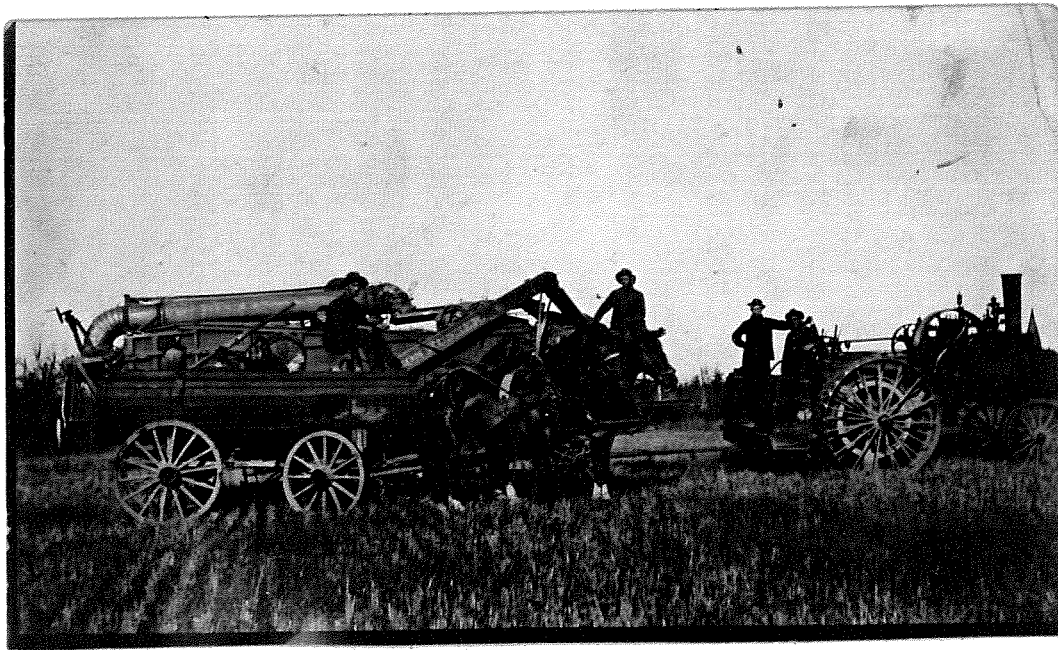
FLOYD MITCHELL BUILDS
HIS "MANSION"



1902. "MOTHER TOLD TEALEAF FORTUNES"



1910. MEN OFTEN "WORKED OUT" THEIR TAXES
BY WORKING ON ROADS.



STEAM ENGINE AND SEPARATOR (THRESHER)
1912.



HAIR STYLES, DRESS STYLES,
1910.