

“Recollections of A Busy Life”

By Eli Fayette Ruggles

H. L. Ruggles & Co., Publishers

(published circa 1904)

Transcribed by Peggy Barriskill Perazzo, December 2005

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(Please note: This copy of the book was sent to my great grandmother Augusta Florence (Ruggles) Sears/Wallace/Sears to Esparto, California, where she was living at the time, from H. L. Ruggles, 142 Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois. August's parents were Fernando C. and Leanna (Kinkle) Ruggles who lived first in Placerville, El Dorado County, and about a year later in Woodland, Yolo County, after migrating from Michigan in 1850 with other family members. Augusta first married Albert Bascom Sears, then Joseph Mansfield Wallace, and then Albert Sears again. Other towns that our past Ruggles families lived in include: Luzerne County, Pennsylvania; Milan, Ohio; Norwalk County, Ohio; Berrien County and Van Buren County, Michigan; and Placer County and Yolo County, California et al.

The book contains the photographs of Eli Fayette Ruggles and his wife Viola Ruggles. If you would like me to send you a jpeg scan of the photographs, let me know. Peggy B. Perazzo)

Dedicated to My Faithful Wife, Viola who has been my companion and helpmeet through storm and sunshine; loving and kind, she has been a most faithful and devoted mother to our children who love, and adore her.

Eli Fayette Ruggles (1833 - 1904)

On the 19th day of August 1904, after a brief illness of ten days, Father Ruggles was laid to rest in the beautiful Forest Home Cemetery, at Oak Park, Illinois. It is a beautiful spot - an eminently fitting place for one of the noblest characters the world has ever known.

Father Ruggles was a good, upright, honest Christian man, one of God's own sons, and to know him, was to love him for his sterling qualities.

Always ready with a kind word and a helping hand for those in distress, and ever charitable to the hungry wayfarer that knocked at his door.

He uncomplainingly and willingly sacrificed his own prospects and aims, so that his children might secure that education and those advantages which would so well fit them for the battle of life.

The inheritance that he leaves is the riches - the knowledge of his pure character, the remembrance of his unfailing devotion, and his lasting love.

Chapter 1.

The journey of life has been likened by some one to a man beginning to climb at the base of a double ladder and at the top, forty-five years later, is in his best manhood - then begins the descent, and when at its base is an old man, and the grave receives him.

This view of life may do for an old bach. or maid, but does not meet my case - for on this journey I have taken a companion to share my joys and sorrows, and I call her my wife - Viola - and at the time of reaching the top of the ladder we are surrounded with five children, and have buried one on the way. And now you, my children, want to know of my life from earliest recollection to this time.

My beginning in life was just the same as yours, so far as life is concerned. Somebody found us a little bundle of humanity nestling close to a fond mother, and she turns a light covering back and somebody looks and looks again at that infant face and tries to reason about that baby. What does the little thing know? - nothing. Where did he come from? - and you can't answer your own question. Neither can the wisest man that ever lived. Your only source of information is what is revealed in the Bible, and even that is but faintly told - for that is of God's secrets. There is nothing in God's creation that so fully reveals the wisdom of God as a baby.

When I was 21 years of age my mother gave me for a birthday present a little lace nightcap that she said I wore when a baby. That is my mother's evidence that I was once a baby. That baby, as he grew in stature and strength to hear it, received the name of Eli Fayette Ruggles. How the name of Fayette was chosen I can only surmise. LaFayette was not of this country, but came to it in her hour of greatest need, and found in many a hard battle till its life and existence was safe, and then returned to his native land. So as he was but a part of us I received but part of his name.

I had a chance of seeing other mothers as they came to visit and take tea, and the earliest reasoning I had was that of all the mothers I had seen mine was the quickest. How quick, she would whirl the table into the middle of the floor and make the dishes rattle in their places! You see, I had an interest in that.

Then, as I grew to be quite a boy, I noticed the cat and dog were lying with their hind feet close together, and, a string being handy and a little fun wanted, I tied their hind feet together and soon the dog concluded to be off - and such a yelling of dog and cat and rattling of chairs as they tumbled pell-mell - and mother was on hand quick, I assure you. She grabbed me up and put

some good, solid spans on me as quick as I had ever known her to do anything in the way of business.

One day father said to mother: "I guess I shall have to get some glasses, for that cataract is affecting my sight so I see but dimly," and mother looked in his eye and said, "Surely it is growing, and I fear it will spoil that eye." Father was both carpenter and farmer.

Father had been hewing timber in the woods to build a barn, and it was on a side hill. One very frosty and slippery morning he was driving the cows over this spot to prevent their going to the prairie and picked up a chip and threw it at the cattle; his feet slipped from under him and he fell face down, striking the affected eye directly on a dry stub or stick that was standing directly upwards, penetrating the eye - forced the eyeball out on his cheek and broke off, leaving a piece some eight inches long outside the face, beside what was in the head. A doctor was called, and can you imagine what must have been the agony when that stick was pulled from his head? Then the torn flesh was stitched up after the eyeball was replaced, but father always carried the scars.

But another baby boy has come to our home, and he is named Joseph Westley. This home and of what I write is in the country, not far from Milan and Norwalk, Ohio.

To speak to you about a railroad, you think of long trains of cars being whirled over a nice smooth track at the rate of forty or sixty miles per hour, and the passengers in perfect ease and comfort. About the days of old of which I write the first railroad was then building through our vicinity. Straps of iron nailed on long timbers and car or large box with four wheels under it - three quarters of the car for freight, and drawn by a span of horses - that was our railroad.

Later steam began to be the power, but uncontrollable. No person dare ride on or with it save the experimenter, and it took years to perfect it and control it safely.

Living not far from our house was father's father and mother. I was full of boy antics when I could see grandpa and grandma come to our house. Grandma was blind, but she always brought something good to us children, and grandpa was always so good-natured that I came to love them both. Grandma would knit and mother spin. But grandpa got too old to do his work, and it was arranged that one of his sons should have his property and care for them as long as they lived. But they lived longer than this son thought they would, and the son and his wife (they laid it mostly to the wife) figured it out that they had kept them as long as they ought to have lived, and they could not afford, and more than that, they would not keep them longer. They were adding farm after farm to their home farm, and were becoming idolaters to wealth. It is said that they would skim milk the third time and then give it to their hired men to drink. Uncle Eli, living in Milan seeing that his father and mother were so unwelcome by his brother, told him to bring their parents to his house and he would care for them, which was done, and there they remained content and welcome till they died, at a ripe age of near 90 years. All honor to Uncle Eli, after whom I was named!

Recollections of A Busy Life, by Eli Fayette Ruggles (ca 1904) - continued

In this vicinity lived most of father's brothers and sisters, and here I give their names:

Sara. Married Josiah Drake. One son lives yet in Norwalk and has a livery stable.

Daniel. Became a rich farmer, and his children still live near Milan.

Polly. Married Benjamin Jackson. Moved to California about 1858. Joel, their son, went with Fernando and Lyman, 1849.

Peter. Moved to St. Joe, Mich., about the time we came to Michigan. Later he built a saw and grist mill ten miles south of St. Jo. Sally and Emma were his daughters.

Martin was a ship carpenter. Worked in Milan and Sandusky.

Salmon. Ship carpenter.

William. Carpenter. Moved to Chicago. Burned out by the great fire of 1871. Later moved to and died in California.

Eli. Carpenter and wheelwright at Milan.

A disease called bloody murrain has been very fatal with horses and cattle in all this portion of country for a long time, and father has lost some of his, and he has a pair of beautiful black horses with a star in each forehead, and he has been giving preventives - but those fine blacks have to go just as others have gone, and father is very much discouraged.

Fernando has been in Michigan the past year and writes a glowing letter of the blessings of good health, rich soil, etc. Father decides to move to Michigan, and arranges accordingly. Gets canvas and bends long strips of wood over two wagons, puts on the canvas, sells off furniture and makes ready. But here comes a wagonload of folks and stops in front of our house, and here is grandpa and grandma and Uncle Eli and Auntie and many others of the relatives. Well, Joseph, I hear that you are going to the far west. Well, I can't blame you much, but we are awfully sorry to have you and your nice family of boys leave us. See how many have you now - Fernando, Freman, Martin, Lyman, Lewis, Eli and Westley - seven all told. Well, they are a nice lot of healthy fellows, too. But how about mother? You ask where did she come from. Mother's people lived just across the state line, in Pennsylvania. Father, when a young man, was teaching school and also singing school in that vicinity, and became acquainted with and later married Sylvia Brown, that since became our mother.

Now, let us have some singing - and grandpa and the older boys take the bass and Grandma takes soprano and father the tenor, and they sing, "The morning sun shines from the east and spreads his glories to the west." Then Sherborn was called for, and again they sing, "While Shepherds watch their flocks by night."

Oh, it would have done you good to hear that soprano and tenor. Grandma sat with head thrown a little back and her sightless eyeballs raised as if seeing the unseen - hands clasped together and her thumbs playing round and round each other. Oh, it was grand singing. Then grandpa and all the rest knelt before God while he implored the Good Shepherd to be with his son Joseph and his family as he journeyed to the far west. And here I wish to say that I sadly regret that I did not long years ago write down what I have heard father tell when on the old farm in Michigan about his people from his earliest recollection to the time of which I now write when he was to leave Ohio. My father was of the fourth generation of Ruggles'. Joseph Ruggles the first was from Scotland, and the name was transmitted from father to son. My father being the fourth, I will here give part of a clipping from a Chicago paper of the past year.

[NOTE: It has been documented by Ruggles family researchers that the above information on the ancestry is only partially correct.]

“Havana, Ill., Feb. 9

“General J. M. Ruggles, an old settler and veteran of the Civil War, died here this morning at the Hopping Sanitarium. General Ruggles was born March 7, 1818, in Richland County, Ohio, and was of noted ancestry, his great-uncle being Brigadier Timothy Ruggles, who was president of the first congress which ever met in America in New York in 1755.”

Another great-uncle, John Ruggles, was three times elected United States Senator from Maine, and another uncle, Benjamin, was first United States Senator from Ohio, serving eighteen years, from 1818. His father, Judge Spooner Ruggles, was State Senator in Illinois from Ogle and Winnebago counties in 1842. General Ruggles came to Illinois in 1833 with his parents. From 1852 to 1856 in the State Senate. He drafted the first platform on which the Republican party of Illinois was organized. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was appointed lieutenant of the First Illinois Calvary by Governor Yates. When mustered out, in 1864, he was lieutenant-colonel of the Third Illinois Cavalry. He was Master in Chancery for Mason County for several years after the war. This record tells us that we have relatives in Illinois, if we wish to hunt them up.

The two wagons have had their white canvas tops for a few days and some neighbors have called to say good-bye, and Aunt Aurelia, father's oldest sister, that married Mr. Whitford, and Aunt Sarah, that married Mr. Drake, and Aunt Polly, that married Benjamin Jackson, Uncle Martin and Salmon and Orrin and William and Uncle Eli all live in this vicinity, and called to see the family off to Michigan.

One wagon takes the family, the other the household goods, such as bedding, etc. To the outside of one wagon box is attached a chicken coop. Good-bye to associations of many years to father and mother, good-bye to Milan and Norwalk, and away we start for the then far west.

It was slow traveling with muddy roads and oxen. We sleep in the wagon, and that is all right, but I wish they had left those chickens at the old home, for every morning long before day that

rooster is calling - time-to-get-up-up. I wish he would shut his yaup. But the older members of the wagonhold said it is all just right, and they feed the cattle and build a fire out of sticks and brush, and mother gets us a good breakfast for good appetites.

When near Kalamazoo, Mich., Lyman says to father, what prevents our locating here? See this small prairie of about 300 acres surrounded with timber. Take 160 acres about half prairie, then all we need to do is to get a home started and then hitch to a plow and your land is already cleared, and fine land it is, too. I knew by the looks of the road.

But Fernando had been writing home about the fine streams of water and springs boiling up clear as crystal, and such beautiful black walnut and white wood, and sugar maple trees, where you can make your own sugar and cattle can live all winter on browsing the brush, while you clear the land. So on we go, and in a two week's journey arrive at a farm three miles southwest of our destination. But that three miles is through an unbroken forest. It will take too long to cut a road through for the wagons, so a tree is selected that has a forked shaped crotch, and this is, when made, about eight feet long, with stakes at the three corners - the front rounded up from the bottom so as to run over any small logs and dodge around trees anywhere, and on this is piled part of the goods, with mother and Baby Westley on top.

We came to Mill Creek, and here we had a hard time to cross. But it is finally accomplished, although there is more water on board than is for comfort. But mother is crying, and I don't recollect to have ever seen her cry before. What is the matter, mother, that makes you cry? To think of going away into this forest to begin life over again? 'Tis a hard prospect, that is a fact. But we finally arrive at a log house, and are made very welcome by the good people, who say we can spread our beds on the floor and make ourselves as much at home as possible. After we had been refreshed with a good supper and the fire played antics around the logs, sending up ten thousand sparks to cheer us, we quite forgot the hardships of the day.

During the evening stories were told of this new country - some laughable, some fearful. Next day was spent in selecting the eight acres selected by Fernando. Then a place was chosen near a boiling spring, pure and cold, and near by was running a small creek. Here they cut away the brush first, then the trees, till enough was cleared on which to build. Then a road was made, and the wagons brought in. There was a road through the woods to the east and north, but none to the southwest till these wagons came in. One yoke of oxen and wagon was sold as payment on the land. The land is on record as the E. ½ of the S.E. ¼ of Sec. 31, Township No. 3 South, Range No. 16 West. The township was then without a name, but later was called Hartford, in Van Buren County, Michigan. The oxen just sold were named Dime and Jerry; the oxen we kept were Maje and Brady. Maje was a docile fellow that would let anything be done with him that the occasion required. When the farm was partly cleared father made a yankee harness for Maje and used him as a horse to plow corn.

First Settlers of Hartford

There was at this time but four settlers in the township, namely: Ferdino Olds, Henry Hammond, B. A. Olney and Thomas Conkling. My older brothers have been traveling through these woods some - have been to these neighbors' houses, and each evening as the log house is being built they tell of what discoveries they have made during the day. These hard-beaten, winding paths all through the forest are made by the deer. Nearly every day some of the family have seen the white flags of the deer as they bound away, and are soon out of sight. Last night Fernando brought home a fine buck, and we younger chaps had to wonder at and admire his beauty. One large tree was noticed, being but a shell of a tree, and the bark all scratched and torn, that proved to be where bears lived. The howl of the wolf was often heard. Then a path was commented on that was a little wider than the deer path, but not trod so deep and hard. That proved to be an Indian trail leading from one settlement to another.

Chapter II.

The Log House Home.

The first requisite in building a log house is a man or men filled with a hearty dinner, such as a new country gives. Then determination - grit - pluck - perseverance. You must go five miles through the woods and get the only blacksmith there to make your axe, hammer, butcherknife or frow. Then when your axe is ground you have used up one day at least. Your axe is the principal tool for such carpentry. Straight trees are cut into logs and rolled up one above another, the corners hewed together till the house is high enough, and now the roof. Long poles are placed on top three feet apart, then short logs cut three feet long and split into shakes six inches wide, one inch thick; these laid on the poles and fastened by laying another pole on top; this, when put together with right pitch, formed the roof. Then openings are cut in this crib - for doors and windows, and you make the first floor of split logs, and when you sweep it with a splint broom made from a hickory bush two inches of more in diameter. You have now, strange to say, a house without the sound of hammer or the driving of a nail. Later, at Waterford, a few boards were bought for the upper floor. The family are now in the house, and the men are chopping the trees down just outside. One large tree leans but a trifle from the house, and as it is near ready to fall the wind springs up towards the house and a great yell comes from the men to get out of the house quick for your lives. Spring poles are cut in a terrible excitement and placed against the tree in this fashion. Two are placed, and when the wind is stillest the men pull down on the poles, then lift up the center of the pole, the victory is won, the house is saved; but we had a big scare, I can assure you. But a boy likes the new country life - to cut down the brush and pile them up and play they are little haystacks; then when a little dry to set them afire in the evening and see the bright flames leap and dance and the sparks, like the stars on the great flag, are glorious to look at, and so numerous.

Soon as a clearing was made, the spring of 1839 was made so gladly welcome, potatoes were planted with fine sticks and leaves and a little dirt for a covering, and a garden of all the

vegetables were planted and no weeds to be subdued for the entire season, and in the fall such potatoes, and such vegetables and watermelons - it makes my mouth water now to think of it. Potatoes when baked would pop open - white and soft, like flour - no potato bugs then to hinder their growth or spoil their flavor.

In the autumn of this year father and Martin were felling trees near by, and father's eyes were getting dim, and Martin had put his arms around the tree, putting his hands in the chopped place on the opposite side. Father, not seeing his hands, began to chop, his axe cutting Martin's left wrist half off. Oh dear, oh dear what shall be done now! But one thing can be done - doctor, hospital and nurse are all within the family or nowhere. Martin was seated in a home-made chair about fifteen feet from the door and Freman was nearest to being a doctor. Sticks were taken, bandages applied and tepid water was the medicine for the first day; then an ointment of mutton tallow and spignut root completed the healing.

That evening, while mother was caring for Martin and the rest seated sadly around the big fire, a hew-ou-ou-ou! Hear that wolf howl, will you! He smells blood, and there is another, far away they seem at first, but they come nearer - yes, they gather near and now we hear the young whelps whine and snarl; yes, they are at our very door and licking up the blood where Martin sat, and they quarrel for the best chance. Fernando says, "now, I will put an end to your fun." He picks up a fire brand with the tongs, opens the door quickly and hurls it among them, and such a scampering and rustling of leaves you never heard. To protect against wolves Fernando bought a large white dog. When, after that, a wolf would howl Bose would mock him. But not a rod did he go in pursuit. When pigs had grown to hogs in a log pen was built with a floor above and corn put on the upper floor. One day Fernando told Bose to drive a pig from the door yard, but would he do it? Not much; he just dropped his long, bushy tail to the ground and trotted off back of the house to enjoy the shade. Bose was a perfect coward. Fernando started in pursuit with blood in his eye. I'll fix Bose, old chap, see if I don't - grabbed Bose by the nap of his neck and started for the hog pen; raised the trap door and pitched him in headlong among a lot of Michigan Shark hogs, shut down the door and said: "Now, Bose, you fight or die." Bose yelled and bounded from one corner to another, and yelp, yelp goes Bose. Finally the tune changed and the swine began to squeal; here and there the strife rages and the hogs squeal lustily. Fernando raised the trap door and called, "here, Bose" and out he jumps a conqueror.

* * * * *

You are fond of the pure maple sugar, but may not know how it is made. Beginning with the first thawing in February the troughs, or buckets or pails, are placed one to each maple tree. Then spiles are made one foot long, with a small hole burned in the center; then a three-quarter inch hole is bored in each tree, the spile driven in tight so that the sap is forced out the burned hole, runs down a groove in the spile and drops off the end of the spile into the bucket. After the trees are all tapped you may have to hurry and hitch the oxen to the sled, on which is placed a cask that holds, say ten barrels, and with a pail in each hand and perhaps a yoke on the neck and shoulders the sap is gathered, then emptied into a large trough; then away after another load. But while one man gathers sap another must be boiling the sap. Two or three large kettles are hung

on a pole and logs rolled up on each side, the fire started with small wood, and soon the sap is boiling, and as the sap boils away it is replenished by more being poured in by the pail full, or better make a yankee device and have a small stream running into each kettle all the time and the fire hot enough to keep it boiling. Keep this up twelve hours and the kettle of sap is getting rich, and then boil down till it is syrup, empty, let cool and strain. Then occasionally you will enjoy a sugaring-off party, either in the sugar camp or at the house. Boil the syrup till thick, then pour it on snow for wax, and set your teeth in it and try to talk, and see what ridiculous work you make of it. Then dip the warm sugar into scallop tins, tea saucers, eggshells, etc. Then play snap and catch 'em, and promenade four, and see your gal home through the woods, or that may be a sled load drawn by Buck and Star. If it does not freeze nights the sap will keep running and the boiling must be kept up all night; many a night have us boys changed at midnight, and that is always just when a fellow is in a sound sleep. But precious sleep must depart and heavy eyes must wake up and the tired sleeper must go out into the dense forest and may have to work till the next midnight. Yes, sugar is sweet, but it is often obtained by weary bodies and sleepy eyes. Mother was mixing bread one day and a faint rap was heard on the door. Mother told me to open the door; I pulled the latch-string, opened the door and slammed it shut and said, "Mother, there are Injuns at the door." But mother was not so scared and opened the door cautiously, and then a squaw says, "Buzhoo, buzhoo (how do you do, how do you do)?"

And there were two squaws and three papooses, and they had baskets of all sizes and colors, so mother exchanged flour, pork and beans for baskets.

Chapter III.

First School.

Education is a natural characteristic of a Ruggles, find them where you may. But no school for many long miles. This is a result of one day's work by father. Mrs. Thomas Conkling agreed to teach the children of the neighborhood at a price named, and the children came to her log house, and there I learned by a, b, ab's.

One day father said to us boys, "You may do your chores early to-night, then go and stay all night with Mr. Manley's boys." "Good! Good! we said, "won't we have fun." We met Mrs. Manley going to our house. Returning next morning, we met Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Ferdino Olds. "Good Morning, boys," and they laughed, "you can't guess what you will find when you get home." But we started on a run and rushed in at the door, but stopped short. "Oh, mother are you sick?" "Not very, my boys." "But you are so pale." "Come here, boys," and she lifted a light covering and there was just the nicest little baby we ever did see. And mother said, "that is your little sister." "Sister! we all said at once." "Isn't she nice, though; we never had a sister before, did we?" The reader may ask, but where is the doctor? No doctor to be had, and nobody thought it necessary. And this was repeated at intervals of about two years, when our family numbered seven boys and three girls.

Labor a Blessing.

Most men at the present time look with pity on the man who has to chop down the trees, pile up and burn the logs, split the rails, (all honor to Abe Lincoln, the rail-splitter!), build the fence, plow among the roots. Ha! ha! keep your pity to curl your hair with; he might not accept your kindness if you offered to exchange places with him. He has a pleasure you may be a stranger to. Enjoys a hearty meal and needs no aid to digestion, and his laugh rings out on the morning air as clear as the robin's song.

Larger Family - Larger House.

More room is needed for so large a family, and we have help enough of our own, so let's build another house while the logs are near by. Yes, yes, and another log house is built, ending against the first house and ten feet distant, and then a leanto built back of both, and under that cellar dug that was always dry, for only a few rods back ran the creek, and the houses were on the bank, some twelve feet above the creek bottom.

This house is built near the center of the farm, north and south, and some twenty rods east of the west line. Freman had bought land west of us and had one piece cleared and fenced, and Lewis was plowing there, and was stopped by the terrible squealing of a hog in the edge of the woods - a bear has got that hog, I believe. He ran to the house, got dog and gun, and before he got near here comes bear and dog after him in full speed. They passed in front of him, but too far to shoot. Dog gains on bear, and Mr. Bear leaps up a tree. Lewis runs, but as the bear sees him coming he loosens his fore paws, swings head down at the dog. They have a rough and tumble battle, but dog gets a terrible cuffing, and just as Lewis was near, ready to shoot, away goes Mr. Bear. He was one of the lean kind, and could both run and fight. But the dog's head was bloody and sore, and he would not give chase.

A neighbor has moved in joining us on the east and south, and he lives by hunting, while his wife and children do the little farming. Lewis told him of the bear. "I'll get that bear," he says. "Tomorrow about 2 o'clock he will return to finish his meal of that hog, then I shoot him." George Springer was his name. He climbed a small tree where the hog was in plain sight, and at the time stated Mr. Bear appears very cautiously, stops, looks around and proceeds to help himself to pig meat. Springer takes, as he always does, a good aim, and bang goes the gun and away runs the bear, not so much as touched. Bear fever. Even though a hunter his nerves were excited. You may think that no boys or girls had good times till you lived. But how would you like to go into the woods after the first heavy frosts and gather a pail full of fat beechnuts? Then go down the creek bottom and gather bags full of butternuts? Then go to the higher land and fill more bags with walnuts? Then let the long winter evenings come on and crack the dried nuts, throwing the shucks into the great log fire, and see the sparks go upwards as the meats go downwards. Then sing, "Let the wide world wag as it will." After the second log house is built -

in place of a piano is a spinning wheel and instead of the library a loom, and in place of some rich picture with gold frame is the gun and powder horn.

Barn Built.

In the winter of '41 and '42 logs were cut and hauled to Waterford, and the lumber drawn home to build a barn. Black walnut logs were cut six feet long, stood up endwise, and on these the barn was built, and in the gable end was cut in the boards and is still there the year 1842. The first going to a grist mill was at Paw Paw, twenty-miles; also the first wool carding machine. Sheep were necessity, and every farmer had his flock.

Father, Freman and Martin were charter members in the organization of the Town of Hartford, and are so on record there now, and always will be. Father was the first supervisor. Later he was a justice of the peace. Father has one blind eye and the other has a cataract started, yet he does pretty good work on the barn and farm.

Chapter IV.

Mother.

I wish you to know more about mother, and as the sheep have been sheared and the wool washed and she is to begin the making of garments for the family it will be a good time to see her at work. She is small or of medium size, weighs 120 pounds. Not pretty, but looks good; hair curls on each temple - says they are her scolding locks; brown hair, and she has a double right to that, for her name was Brown before marriage. She takes a chair and then picks up some cards. What you say? She isn't going to play cards? Yes, watch her and see if she don't. She takes a card in left hand with handle from her and covers it evenly with wool, then takes a card in right hand, cards the wool till both cards are even full, then with a reverse motion the wool is taken from the cards and made into rolls some two feet long. It takes some days, besides the housework, to card the wool into rolls. And it is not uncommon for her to work till midnight, while others are snoring in bed. Now she brings out her spinning wheel and gives it a whirl, puts on some coon's oil, tightens the band, picks up a roll, and, placing one end on the spindle turns the wheel slowly till the wool fastens to spindle. Then the wheel begins to sing as only a wheel can sing when driven by a master hand - energy, vim, satisfaction - all expressed in look and action, for she knew full well that no one could excel her at her work. When the spindle is full of yarn it is reeled off into skeins, then spooled, then when the warp is in the loom and the spool placed in the shuttle the weaving begins, and right and left goes the shuttle and bang, bang, goes the loom as yard after yard is made - some in square checks of red and blue for dresses or brown satinette for pants and coats (roundabouts). So on the farm is produced and in the house is made all the wearing apparel, for mother does the cutting and making without a sewing machine, for none are yet made. But each and every last one of us boys have served our apprenticeship in helping mother indoors.

Many at time have we boys been glad to see company come, for then we could go out to work with the men on the farm.

But I want you to see her more as she prepares to feed that throng of men that raise our barn. The great loaves of bread, the Johnny cake bread, the pies, etc. Then a fatted pig is dressed clean. Then the oven is made ready. Not a stove oven, for that was nowhere but an oven built outdoors on top of two short logs made of split pieces of wood and fastened together with a clay mortar. Size, 4 x 5 feet, 2 feet high, with door at one end and opening at back end to give draft. The fire is built inside and kept going till it is a white heat, then the wood and ashes are removed and the oven swept clear. Then in goes that pig, standing in a large tray, a pan, with a cob in his mouth (just for fun), and stuffed full of dressing, and the door is shut. Later in goes the bread, pies and cakes, and when the men sit around that long board table they have a feast fit for a king.

Our Spring.

The men are at the table this hot day and send me to the spring for a pail of that pure cold water. A log some five feet long, very hollow, only a shell, and some two and one-half feet in diameter has been sunk at the spring with a hole cut in the middle so it is half full, then the water runs out to the creek. I placed my knee on the edge of the curb and was just reaching to opposite side when a hawk flew among the hens and their furor caused me to look to the scene of trouble and my hand failed to reach the opposite side of the curb, and do you see how nicely I pitched, head first, into the spring? The next knowledge I had I was standing up in the spring. I realized the cooling sensation of the water as I took my first dive, but I did not reason about how to get out; the law of nature went to work when reason failed. I went to the house like a wet rat and my hair filled with dirt instead of taking a pail of water.

Martin and the Hard Winters of 1842.

Martin was a runaway boy. Ran away several times in Ohio. This autumn of 1842 he slyly tied up his belongings, went to Waterford, engaged to go up north with Mr. Moffat, and sailed from St. Joe to Muskegon, Mich. When it was known where he had gone father and mother wrote him a very affectionate letter to return home, where a warm welcome awaited him. When Martin received the letter the last boat of the season had just sailed for St. Joe. That was just as Mr. Moffat intended, for he wanted to keep Martin all winter. But Martin was just as determined then to go home as he was to go from home. He again tied up his belongings, and with food, blanket, flints and punk started on foot through forests and plains, over and through rivers alone. At night he clears away the snow in a fallen tree top, strikes his flints together till the sparks fly into the punk and soon has a fire. Matches were not yet made. Next day got in with two men that in his sympathy helped to materially lighten his lunch box. Bade them good-bye and trudged ahead through the snow that was falling every day, and fast at that, so it is getting to be hard work to travel. Nearing night, he comes to three men in a hut, who urge him to stop with

them. It's a hard looking crew, but he stops, and is again relieved of nearly all his lunch, and the men are near starving. They urge him to stay and trust to luck, but no, we will all starve and I shall go ahead. That day he sighted a very large bear not far away. Luckily the wind was right, and Bruin did not see or smell him; and Martin had a good view of him, but says, "I would feast on his flesh, but if we should meet I am not sure which would have the feast," and he is willing the bear should pass on without a knowledge of his presence.

Again he builds his fire, and another night passes with the whistling wind and the moaning trees for music, but not a mouthful to eat and clothes not dry, for he has already waded and swam several rivers, and there are two more yet, but this bitter cold may freeze them over. The snow has now reached a depth of three feet, and it is slow, hard work. It is getting dusk and the storm is wild and furious, and he comes to a haystack, so weak that it is an effort to get ahead in the deep snow. He digs a hole into the stack, but that is slow work, and he reasons, if I go to sleep will it not be my last sleep, and it is now dark; but joy, oh joy, in the dim distance is a light. Starts for the light and it is across a large marsh, and the storm of wind and snow, and such biting cold; he moves but slowly, and now he begins to feel warmer. But why do I feel warmer? I'm freezing, I'm freezing, that's why I do not feel the terrible cold. He stops and stamps down the snow to make it hard, jumps up and down, wraps his arms around him with all his might. But now on he goes lest those people go to bed and the light is put out, and what then? Almost exhausted and reason almost gone, he comes to the door and falls against it, and reason has fled. The door is opened and the unconscious boy drawn in and restoratives applied. It was late in the night before he became conscious, and then told of the men he left in the woods, that must perish if not rescued. I remember well when Martin came home and how excited we were to hear of his terrible journey from Muskegon. That was his last *runaway*.

Chapter V.

Part of a New Country Song.

This wilderness was our abode some fifty years ago,
and if good meat we used to eat we caught the buck or doe;
For fish we used the hook and line, we pounded corn to make it fine;
On Johnny cake our ladies dined, in this new country.
The Indians sometimes made us fear that there was danger nigh,
And the shaggy bear was often where the pig was in the sty;
The rattlesnake our children dread, and oft some fearful mother said.
Some beast of prey will take my babe in this new country.

At the time of which I write the Indians were still hunting in these woods and had settlements in Silver Creek Township, south of us, and in the north part of Hartford Township, where there is now quite a colony of Indian farmers. Simon Pokagon was their chief when I moved from there, and it is that same tribe that yet lay claim to some land on which Chicago is built.

One day four Indians came to our house and made signs that they were hungry. The pot was soon on the crane and they soon were motioned to our home-made table, where milk and the steaming mush was ready. Chinese made a terrible supping noise when eating any liquid. But these Indians made no noise, and with bows for thanks and in their moccasins they moved away to the woods as still as though they were but embodied spirits.

Marriage of Fernando.

Fernando had bought the eighty acres joining ours west and Freman the next west of that. Fernando has cleared some of his and is building a house, and that looks suspicious, and is the cause of many a joke, for there is yet to be the first wedding among seven boys. But he took the horse one day and four days later he drove up to the door with a tall lady that he introduced as his wife, and showed his certificate, that stated that Fernando Cortez Ruggles was married to Leonna Ringleton* at Niles, Mich., January 14, 1842.

[Please note: The name Fernando's wife was known by was Leanna Kinkle not Leonna Ringleton, as noted above. Peggy B. Perazzo.]

Conscience Not Always Obeyed.

You have heard the story how the enraged Quaker took off his coat and laid it on the ground, saying, "Lay there, Quaker, while I lick this man." 'Twas Sunday morning, but the sound of the church-going bell these natives and woods never heard; but Lewis heard the quack of turkeys near the field that Freman had cleared. Lewis hesitated a moment. Father can't see much, and mother is upstairs making beds, and somehow the gun got into his hands and we shied around the house till on the west side, where the stick chimney is built outside; there is no window. Now we are safe, and away we run. We near the lot and can hear the turkeys call; that is well. Lewis creeps low and as still as possible comes up behind a window and I keep back a little. Lewis raises slowly and brings the gun to his face. *Bang* goes the gun, and away fly turkeys.

Lewis is all excitement, and said, "I just believe I killed three turkeys that shot, for they were sitting on the fence and one rail was just in line with me, and a lot of turkeys on it." Here is one, anyway, and a minute later here is another, and I believe there is another somewhere, and we kept hunting. I heard a little stir in the leaves under a bush and there was the third turkey, not yet dead. "Ain't those nice fellows, though, and won't we have a big feast?"

"Here, Eli, you carry the smallest and the gun and I'll carry the two. Jolly, but ain't they heavy, though? But what will pa and ma say? I don't know, we'll have to run the risk. I don't think it's awful bad; we didn't disturb anybody, and I guess nobody heard the gun." The gun was stood near the chimney outside and we laid the turkeys near the door and mother saw us. "Why, why my boys, what have you done, this is Sunday?" Lewis eagerly presents his arguments - that

he heard the turkeys call and thought we might better have one to eat than have them scratch up the wheat that had just been sown.

Well, lucky for our hides we didn't get tanned that time.

Sister Melvina.

I have mentioned the little sister that came to our house. She was named Sylvia Mariah; the second, Alvira Melvina; the third, Lucretia Ardilla.

Mrs. Williamson, living some five miles east of us, often came to our house to visit, and had a great liking for Melvina, and often took her home with her, but said Melvina will not live to womanhood; she is too mature for her years, or, in other words, too good for this world. She was the red-head of the family, though all except Fernando and Lyman had more or less the red shade. But it was nearer right than to call it auburn. Red hair is now the desideratum; then it was brown or black.

Melvina was near seven years old when taken sick. Doctor Sikes came from four miles south with his pills and herb medicine bag strapped to the back of his saddle. Took a bowl of blood from her arm and poured out on half a dozen papers a pile of medicine and another pile of pills, telling mother, one side, that she might have to hold her nose to compel her to take the medicine, and he would come in two days, and continued to come for a week. Mother had watched with a mother's care as she saw her darling growing worse and weaker every day. She said, "Doctor, I fear you have made a mistake in diagnosing her case," and explained wherein. The next day the doctor came and after watching the little one in her fever and delirium said, "I guess you are right about her case."

It was a sad home then as we saw life ebbing away, and knew that those beautiful eyes would soon be closed to this world and to us forever, the gentle sister that captured all our hearts would soon be gone. Her eyes were fixed and the expression that speaks when the voice cannot tell us that she saw something, a somebody just out of her reach, and all were sobbing as though hearts would break, and I took a pail and went to the spring for water, for I didn't want to see sister die. As I started back I thought of what I had read and heard, that spirits left the body and went up to heaven and I kept my eyes on the housetop, hoping that I might get a glimpse of Melvina as she took her upward flight. On entering the house I found that the spirit had flown, and I had not seen it.

The New House.

About the time of which I now write father and Freman had built a new frame house near the center of the farm, and a little later, after Melvina's death, they had a well dug twenty-two feet

deep and stoned with a thick stone wall from bottom to top. Father could do but little now, for he was getting quite blind.

One thing connected with living in the log house you may think a little *chilly*.

A shake roof may be water-proof, but not snow-proof at all. The wind will drive the snow up under the shakes, and we boys got accustomed to sleeping with the bed quilt over the head, except the nose and mouth, and in the morning be careful to roll the quilt back so the snow would not get into the bed. Then the floor was all very white and nice, with snow to stand in while we put on our pants.

Chapter VI.

Hurrah For the Railroad.

One day surveyors were crossing our farm and driving stakes. Yes, a railroad is to be built from Detroit to Chicago via St. Joe, and a depot will be built not far from our farm. Hurrah! won't we be rich? But weeks later we learned that St. Joe was so sure the railroad would come there that they wouldn't give favors or money. Niles did both, and got the Michigan Central, and St. Joe was left with bleak winds of Lake Michigan for company for many years later. Then Dowagiac and Decatur came into being, among oak stumps, trees and brush.

Log Houses Go Up in Flames.

Very soon after moving part of the goods from the log houses I was partly awakened in my sleep and looked out the window just enough to see great flashes of light and heard what I thought to be distant thunder. I covered my head with the bedding, in hopes to get to sleep again before the great storm reached us. Westley was the first one outdoors in the morning, but soon came running, all excited, saying, "Oh, mamma, the log houses are all burned down." The lightning was the flames, leaping high; the thunder was the falling of the logs. Soon we were all at the scene of our desolation, for but little had been moved out, and there was the loom, and wound around the beam with the cloth that was to make our wearing apparel for the whole family the coming winter, that was near at hand - fifty bushels of potatoes in the cellar half burned, tallow, lard, butter, all gone. But father says, "Westley, there is a potato pile out near the barn, that will keep us from starving," and says, "Mother, let's bring water and save some of that barrel of pork."

First Stoves.

Well do I remember when stoves were first talked of. Some believed they were safe and some believed they would burst. About this time horses began to take the place of oxen on the road. Lyman took a load of wheat to Dowagiac (eighteen miles), and brought home a cook stove.

Most of us stood well back when the match was applied, and we almost held our breath, but - but it didn't burst.

The Eagle's Upward Flight.

An eagle one day attracted Lewis' attention by sailing round and round and going up, up. He called my attention to it, and we both declared we had never seen the like before, but it was hard on our necks. So we lay flat on our backs, and still he circles round and up, up, as if he had bidden good-bye to the earth and thought to soon be to the sun. He passed beyond my vision. "Lewis, can you see him yet?" He answered, "I can almost see him."

The Building and Growth of A New Country.

You have perhaps read "The Building of a Nation." And that was done by an accumulation of the littles. So has it been in this great forest. Families have bought land and made their beginning here and there. The roads have been chopped four rods wide and cleared two rods wide. School houses have been built here and there, and ministers or messengers of the Gospel have come to us and taught us of the God that created and the Savior who redeems. Brothers and sisters have attended school here, where at first was the log school house with but one room and a row of seats around three sides, the door and blackboard occupying one end. Back of the door was usually three beech gads. Scholars sit on a high seat made out of a log with stakes driven into a bored hole for legs; all small scholars could not touch the floor, their feet left to swing like the clock pendulum. Bench runs whole length of one side of the room. Scholars sit with back to the center of the room and teacher face to the logs and in front, and fastened to a log is a long board, on which the books are placed.

This log house has had its day and given place to the frame schoolhouse and its improvements. As we grew older we took our turns in being sent out to Paw Paw or Niles or Ann Arbor, not only to get what the schools could do for us, but to rub off some of our woods' habits and put on a little refinement as well.

Wealth in 1848 Versus Wealth in 1902.

One Sabbath day at a meeting at the school house a stranger was present, large, portly and attractive in appearance. Who can he be? For we knew every man for ten miles round. Why, that is a Mr. McNitt, and they say he has got *ten hundred dollars* in cash.

"Oh, he can buy everything he wants to, can't he?" *Ten millions* now would attract no - not so much attention.

The Pretty Cub.

The table was surrounded by the men who were clearing land. I was helping mother and was sent out to get wood and chips (chips were a great feeder to a fire in those days). I heard a man hollering with all his might far away in the woods; the evening was then approaching, and what little air was stirring came from the same direction of the calling. I reported at once, and out came the men and listened - yes, yes, that man is certainly in great trouble and a long way off. Martin, Lyman and Rus Parker took dog, gun and axe and away they ran. there was a wagon road in that direction to Waterford. About twenty minutes later the hollering stopped and an hour later the men returned, saying they could not find him, that they got near to his calling, then the calling stopped, and they called and hunted, but to no avail. Next day from school we got the report and later got this statement from Gilbert Conkling: "I was returning home from Waterford on foot with a bundle of groceries tied in my bandanna (silk handkerchief) when a smallish animal came into the road in front of me, and I said to myself, what kind of a chap are you, anyway? It's a little cub, sure as you are born, and a pretty cub you are, too. I believe I will catch you and take you home with me. So as I grabbed him he ran, took a short circle in the bush and just crossing the road again when I grabbed him. He squealed, and then I heard a rustling of the brush and leaves a few rods ahead, and there sprang into the road the mother bear, coming with mouth open, showing two rows of sharp teeth. Now, it's fight or die with me, and no club at hand and not a second to lose I sprang up a sapling; climbed with vengeance, and a bear climbing for vengeance was tight at my heels. I thought to kick her head, but she might grab my foot in her mouth; then I broke off a limb and pounded her head, but she only climbed a little closer to me. I yelled a long time, but only echo answered. Finally the bear tired of hanging to so small sapling and climbed down, went two or three rods distant, stood up on her haunches, opened her mouth, reached out her fore paws as if to say, 'I'd just like to hug you.' Her eyes shone like balls of fire, for it was then getting dark. She then climbed a maple tree that rent right over the road where the cubs had preceded her. Then I climbed down, but dare not go that way home, but took to my heels for Waterford; every moment would look back to see if that black brute was on the chase. Next morning men with guns and dogs returned with me to the scene of battle. There was the much scarred sapling, there was shreds of my red bandanna handkerchief, but where are the groceries? The dogs took trail and the bear was killed not far from Coloma. I arrived at home a tired man, with stiff and sore legs."

A New Country Fourth of July.

It was agreed that the Fourth of July should be celebrated in our neighborhood. Ground was selected in Thomas Conkling's woods near the road. We all met there and cleared away the brush and rubbish and built the platform for orator and singers. The farmer men and boys and girls, some mated and some mis-mated, in four-horse and two-horse wagons; occasionally a gentry with his best gal in a buggy, some afoot and cross lots, but they came, and the cannon came clear from Paw Paw.

Philotus Haydn (sic) was orator, and he orated as well as it is done even in this enlightened age. The cannon had announced the rising sun, the coming of the orator, and now salutes the thirteen states. On the stand, attuning their voices to "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," and "Hail, Columbia," are three Conklings, two McNitts, five Ruggles' and five others. Sisters Mariah and Lucretia are there. P. J. Adams leads with his clarinet.

The orator had got down to earth again from his flights of fancy, and again bang goes the cannon, and a cry is raised, some one is groaning, and it proves to be the gunner, the tallest man in the crowd, George Washington Williams; his thumb is gone and hand badly mangled. But in a little while all is glee again, so long as it is not me or my son John.

Freman and Our Blind Father.

When Freman came home from his carpenter work in Hamilton Township he would occasionally bring one or two apples in his pocket; these were paired very thin and divided to each his or her share, and soon there will be apples in abundance here, for large orchards are set. But father is in total darkness - cannot tell daylight from the darkest night.

There is a noted oculist in Rochester - Dr. Munn - and Freman takes father to him. Father is seated in a common dining chair. The doctor sits astride his lap, so they face each other, then takes a needle, inserts it in the side of the eyeball till it reaches the center, then works the needle up and down till the cataract is cut away from the retina, then withdraws the needle and the work is done.

In two weeks they return, and Freman is not leading father, but has to walk lively to keep up with him. "Oh, father can see us; the Lord be praised," and hugs and kisses and tears intermingled. And father says that Sylvia looks natural, but these, my girls, have grown so fast. It has been over a year since he could see them to tell much how they looked. By the aid of an eyeglass father read his Bible through and the Morning Star paper once a week. About a year later father took a severe cold that affected his head, then settled in his eyes, for many days his eyes were so inflamed that dark bandages had to be used, and when the inflammation subsided and dark bandages removed sight was again a blind man for eighteen years.

The Breaking Team and Plow.

Fernando sold his farm west of ours and bought a new farm in Keeler Township, and I want you to see him among oak grubs and trees and how a farm is cleared there. We drive eight miles, and what kind of panorama is this approaching us on the left? "Well, I declare, that is the longest string of oxen that ever I did see," you exclaim. Yes, or probably ever will see again. You count till you find there are sixteen yoke of oxen attached to that one plow. Oh, such a monster plow, some twelve feet long, and cuts a furrow two feet wide and seven inches deep. the sharp steel shier will cut off a grub four inches in diameter and not stop the onward march of that string of

oxen at all. It has been said that grubs six inches in diameter have been cut with that team and plow. but I question the statement. These oxen belong to the farmers surrounding, and each take their turn to break, as they call it.

The Result of a Fever.

Martin has been working at Waterford (now Watervliet), and has come home with a severe fever. Martin was the boss man to drive the piling for the grist and saw mills and two bridges at Watervliet, and built the bridge. But now he is sick and needs attention all the time. So Lewis is sent to find some girl to help through his sickness. He brings a girl home and introduces her as Miss Sarah Ann Taylor. But mother wants to know whether she is called Sarah or Ann. "Oh, they call me Ann." Then mother explained that it was all she could do to care for the men and the housework, and that Martin was very sick.

By what followed I am able to give you this recipe for love and match-making: let a young man have a fever; it will be violent for nine days. In that time the head must be cooled by cold cloths dampened, the hands and wrists the same, the room darkened, little dainty bits of food fed to him, when the fever is off for a rest. The hair slightly dampened by wetting the hand and rubbing over the hair, and as he improves he can be braced up in bed a little while; an egg on toast is given, then his hair can be combed, and after washing the face and hands and rubbing the arms till dry and a good circulation of blood is obtained. Yes, Yes, they were married later, and that recipe is sure.

Chapter VII.

The Stone Well.

Stillman F. Breed was teaching our school and was present when the following happened, as was later written by him, and I give it as he wrote it:

A Sketch of S. F. Breed.

It was in the month of February, one beautiful clear Sabbath day, and only a few scattering clouds hovered over the scene. The people had returned to their homes from that Christian assembly where the acts of the pious had been blended into one united prayer to their God who rules on high. There they had talked of the goodness of God in prolonging their lives and sustaining their health. But little did any of that happy number think that ere that day should close they would approach even to the gate of death. But such was the case of one youth about the age of fifteen, who was the pride of his parents and beloved by all who know him. Eli, for that was the lad's name, went to the well for a pail of water and lost the bucket. His mother had gone to the nearest neighbor. A younger brother and sister, Westley and Mariah, went to the

spring for a pail of water, while Eli, by the assistance of his father, who was a large and athletic man, but blind, by means of a rope and windlass was lowered into the well, which was twenty-two feet deep, to recover the bucket. Reaching the bottom, he placed his feet on opposite sides of the well, when one of the stones dropped into the water, then another and another in rapid succession. When Eli called to his father to wind the windlass, and himself sprang up the rope with all his might. When half way out the stone closed in upon him to the depth of three feet above his head. With position erect and both hands above his head, in which the rope was clasped, stones below, above and all around, he was firmly held in their cold embrace. The news was soon conveyed to the mother, who hastened homeward. Westley mounted a horse to convey the news to the neighbors. I was seated by the fireside of a neighbor when I heard the voice of some one hallooing. I went to the door and Westley told me with a stifled voice that Eli was in the well, buried beneath the stone. Taking my cap, I hastened to the place, which was a mile and a half distant. Many teams were soon on the road, hastening to the point of danger. When I reached the house I was met by the mother with her hands clasped and said: "Oh, Stillman, we have a trial now." Who can imagine the anguish of that mother's heart, the love she felt for her dear son? It cannot be described by the pen of man.

I saw, too, a father that was blind and could not behold the scene; how great must have been his anguish of heart! Eli's little sisters were weeping bitterly, for they feared he would die. Great, too, were the fears of all lest he would die before we could remove the stone sufficiently to relieve him from his perilous situation. The poor boy was groaning under the pressure of those large stones. There was yet a circle of large stone at the top of the well, held there by the frost, and those lay projecting over the inside, and there was danger of their falling every minute, and any person would have been in danger of his life to venture in there.

Mr. Gilbert Conkling proposed knocking this stone loose and letting them fall in, but Eli cried, "don't let the stone fall, for my head is holding the stone apart." Mr. Robertson went into the well and commenced handing out stone, but seeing they could not work in that way he came out, and we tore away the curbing. This being done, and several more men having arrived to help relieve the victim from death, which seemed to be his doom. It was enough to melt the most stubborn heart to hear the groans and cries of the boy and his prayer, which was, "O, Lord, have mercy on me." And with it the prayer of the father and mother to save their son.

Ancel Reynolds went in and worked till the boy's head and shoulders were uncovered, but the blood on the stone was too much for him, and he was helped out. Mr. Samuel Robertson took his place, and soon seeing the danger that both were in, he cried out, "O, for God's sake bring something that we can get these stones out faster with! Let us save the boy." Men lay on their breasts around the well trying to hold those stones from falling, but the sun was shining and those stones were thawing, and fall they must.

One says lay boards over him, and another says build a stage around him. "Some board, some boards, for heaven's sake! Here are boards in this leanto," and down comes the building quickly, and the boards placed around the boy at the outside of the well circle, coming together at the center, and then the stones loosed till all were down. Then stones were too heavy to be raised by

any means at hand. One says, "Mr. John Olds is digging a well and a rope and tub are there." Away flies Husen Taylor with his horse and cutter the mile and a half, and soon the windlass was erected, then the stones were soon removed. As we neared his feet the boy was in great pain from the blood beginning to circulate again. We got almost to his feet. "Can't you get out yet, Eli?" "I might by leaving one boot," and a laugh and a ringing shout went up and a dozen pairs of boots were offered. Only come out, come out, anyway to get out; but we are glad to see you.

Lyman the Choice.

There was greater expectation for Lyman than any other of the sons. High forehead, wide jaws, giving evidence of a stern character. Had the best chance at school, was well educated, very attentive to his business. Taught several schools, always had a big exhibition at the close of each term; taught singing also. Had brown hair and very curly. We believed he would some day be the choice for some big office.

Chapter VIII.

The Little Preacher.

About the year 1849 the teacher told us to tell our parents that there would be preaching at this school house to-night at 7 o'clock. Very seldom was such a notice given out, and we did not forget. Old and young, big and little, were there at the hour. A little fellow entered the door, took off his overcoat with vim, walked briskly into or behind the desk and gave out a hymn, and we tried to sing, but we had to giggle - he was such a little chap and every move was energy, as though there was a small steam power somewhere propelling him to action. He began to preach, and as he advanced in argument and earnestness and warmed with his thoughts and rapid flow of words he pulled off his coat, laid it on a chair, not stopping a moment in his flow of words. Then, as he farther advanced, off came his necktie and collar, and wicked as it was, we had to giggle in our sleeves. But evening after evening his earnest presenting of Gospel truth to us was so convincing that we forgot to notice his being little, and expected to see coat, collar and sometimes vest, laid aside as he talked to us of sin, of righteousness and judgment to come.

Yes, he was little, but he was big enough to hold up Christ before us, and through him, as in a mirror, many of us saw ourselves as God saw us - lost unless redeemed. I cannot answer for another's experience in seeking forgiveness for sin, any more than I can answer for another at the judgment bar. I can only say that I wanted to know that I was an accepted child of God, and know what it was to be redeemed. On my way to and from school, following the winding path among the great, grand trees, many were the time I knelt in solitude and asked God to forgive a sinner like me. I was never more in earnest, and for two weeks did I plead and all nature never seemed so sad. The woods seemed only to moan and mock me. Many others were being converted and so happy, while I was most miserable. One night I determined not to go to the penitent's bench, but first I knew I was on my feet, going forward. We were kneeling in deep

contrition, while earnest prayers were offered to the good Savior who had said he would hear the prayer of the penitent. Suddenly, it seems, that a great load lifted from my shoulders and joy unspeakable and full of glory filled all my being. I leaped, I shouted, I praised God with all my being. I could then sing. Jesus all the day long is my joy and my song. In my nature I am not demonstrative - far from it - rather bashful or timid, but never put myself forward. But now joy was on the throne and love was supreme, and I but obeyed the voice of my God. Soon there was a Freewill Baptist Society formed there.

In the spring time the question arose where could the right of baptism be administered? There was no lake nearer than seven miles and with Baptists there is but one method, immersion. Meetings had been held at Hartford and some converts. A temporary dam was built across Pine Creek, one and one-half miles west of Hartford, and one Sabbath there gathered on each bank the people from the whole surrounding country.

Brother Eastman, our little minister, was too small, and Elder George Fellows (a former teacher of Lyman's at Niles) took some fifteen of us, one at a time, into the stream and there, in the name of the Father, baptized us in that faith, saying, "Ye are buried with Christ in baptism." Three brothers and two sisters were of that happy number.

Sixty-eight years have now been allotted to me, and my hair is white, and many a time have I been on the mountain top and too oft in the valley, but when I have looked back to that anxious bench, and if temptation besets my way I say, with authority, begone, for I knew my Savior met me there on my knees and redeemed me, and spake peace to my soul. It has been my lighthouse since in time of storm.

More of Brother Martin.

Martin has been carpenter, boss builder of bridges and mills, several terms of school, studied law at home, and is often called on in that line. But we now see him on his farm one and one-half or two miles west of Hartford Center, on the Watervliet road, at a three corners. House on north, barn on the southeast and school house on the southwest corner. He has three boys and one girl, namely: Abina, Wells, Lyman (or Lima, so-called), Lillian, the daughter. Martin taught this school several winters. Mr. Norton Hubbard's boy was so very disobedient that Martin punished him. Hubbard was mad and looked ugly.

Soon after this, one Sunday evening about 9 P. M., as people were going home from church by sleigh-loads, they saw a bright light that increased fast, and everybody came to the fire crying, "Fire, fire!" But it was a sad sight to see, - two oxen, three cows, two young cattle burning alive; wagon, all farming tools, all gone. It was noticed, and very emphatic, that Hubbard was not there, and yet the house was in plain sight, and the fire must have made his rooms light as day. Later Hubbard was arrested on circumstantial evidence, but released, though even the judge knew he was guilty. That spring Martin was elected county clerk by an overwhelming majority. About this time the War of the Rebellion began. That I will mention later.

Fernando and Lyman and the Gold.

You went with me once to see Fernando breaking up the oak openings with the big plow and the long string of oxen. But the gold fever is raging and Fernando reasons to himself, why should I toil so hard for a meager living, when there is in California gold to be had so easily? He decided to go. Lyman was teaching school in that neighborhood. Fernando was school director, and his oldest son was in his a, b, ab's. Lyman thought he would go, then concluded not to go. One day at home he stood at the bureau writing; turned quickly around and said, "Mother, I am going to California." That was not joyful news, for that meant the going away of another son where she might never see him again. That meant six months on the road passing through the Indian's dominions, and already we had heard of many horrible murders by the Indians and Mormonites. But the wagon was covered, the oxen and cows hitched to the wagon, the stove, cooking utensils and eatables, and, lastly, the wife and children helped in, and away they go at the crack of the whip, and a harrah for California, but this levity was to keep back the tears that would well up in spite of all. To all this I was witness, as I drove there the night before with mother to say good-bye and help them off. I hurried home, for we were just having the great run of sap, and the fires must be kept going all night, as well as all day.

Excepting one visit, that is the last we ever saw of Lyman and Fernando. They guarded against Indians as best they could, and then the Indians got one ox.

Cousin Joel R. Jackson went with them to California. They were successful in digging gold, and Lyman was to go home in Michigan. As they were going out they came to some miners in quartz rock who convinced them that they could make a much larger pile than they then had by investing there. They invested, and it is invested yet. Not satisfied to return home without his pile, Lyman and Fernando took farms - Lyman one and one-half miles southeast of Woodland, Fernando the same distance northwest of Woodland.

Father a Prophet.

Father, being blind, did not prevent his talking. We read to him all the principal events that were transpiring in this country, and he was a good listener. Being blind, his mind was intent on what he heard. Well do I remember an election day at the polling or voting place; he had Martin write him a ticket that was then in use in Massachusetts, but not yet in the far west. Mr. Olney was supervisor. Reaching out his ticket and feeling some hand, he asked: "Is this Mr. Olney?" "Yes, sir." "I want to say to you, Mr. Olney, that I suppose that is the only ticket of that kind that will go into that ballot box to-day, but mark my word, the principles contained in that ballot will yet govern this nation."

That was at the beginning of the anti-slavery agitation which resulted in the freeing of every slave in America by a pen wielded by the hand of Abraham Lincoln.

Another instance where father was first to advocate a great principle, but was then thought by many to be unjust. Schools had so far been supported by the men who sent children to school. At the end of each term of school the pay-roll was made out. The man who sent five children paid, say fifteen dollars, the man sending one paid five dollars. One man might be rich, have no children and no payment for schools, and yet his property is made valuable and salable because of schools.

Father claimed that all real estate and other property should be taxed, because all property was equally benefited by schools. The strife between neighbors was most bitter, for the matter was to be settled by vote in the school district. Our school house was filled and before the vote was taken both sides of the question had been freely aired. Adrian Manley said he would like to tie Mr. Ruggles to a tree and let him stay there till the woodpeckers pecked his blind eyes out of his head. Another said, "I had just as soon have a man put his hand in my pocket and steal my money as to steal it in this way." The vote was taken and the tax carried the day. From that day to this schools have been supported mainly by tax. You may read this little episode and enjoy a government, not half slave, but all free, and schools comparatively free, can hardly realize what free schools and free government have cost.

Chapter IX.

Sisters Mariah and Lucretia.

I have mentioned of our sisters who have each been growing to be young women, and each in turn have helped mother, just as good daughters should, and both have had their allotted time in school, and both have been kind to lead father to church or prayer-meeting, and to read to him the Morning Star paper and the Bible. Each have had their admirers and each their beaux. Mariah has become the more prominent in music and sang sopranos (sic) with Westley in two presidential campaigns, and also was with Schuyler Colfax when he stumped the State of Indiana for the vice-presidency. Lucretia has her best fort (sic) in wielding the pen. We all take our hats to her there.

School in Niles and its Results.

A small house was rented in Niles and Lewis, Westley, Mariah and Lucretia kept house and attended school. Here they formed new acquaintances, and some of them have proved to be the acquaintance of a lifetime. Within this circle of country, in Bierdsley's Prairie, lived the family of Josephus Baldwin on a large farm, known far and wide as Jo Baldwin. His brother Bill was still farther known as the best auctioneer to be found anywhere. He would make you laugh and make you bid whether you wanted to or not. When this school closed and each took a review to see what they had learned they found that their knowledge was not confined to books, but had reached out, and included humanity in new acquaintances that stopped not with that school.

Lewis, Westley and Mariah were wanted as teachers in that vicinity, and among, to them, mostly an unknown people. Lewis taught near Indiana Lake and Pokagon, Westley nearer Niles, Mariah to the south, near Bierdsley's Prairie. Later Westley becomes a note in the musical circle with his patriotic songs, and he, with Sister Mariah, are billed to sing through South Michigan, Northern Indiana and Ohio at the war and political gatherings and mass-meetings, and all this time Cupid has not been asleep, but has shot his arrows that have taken effect.

Westley has decided that Lucena Baldwin, daughter of Jephus Baldwin, and sister of his friend, David S. Baldwin, is the girl he wants, if he can win her, and when the proper amount of courting has been done they are married. This courting and marriage has often brought Mariah and D. S. Baldwin together, but D. S. Baldwin is taken violently sick with typhoid and brain fever, and the family are getting worn out, and where can we get help is the question. That Miss Ruggles is teaching school several miles away, and I wonder if - no, her school is nearly through, I believe, and, well, I don't know - but says one of the boys (Cy, I believe), "I'll go and try, and I believe I will get her," and soon the dust is flying over Beardlsley's Prairie and soon the boy arrives at the school house, and explains his call and their need, and hoped, if possible that Miss Ruggles might make terms with the district for the few remaining days of school and come to their aid in this their time of greatest need. "I'll see what I can do," but it took time to see the officials, but they consented and the school stopped short, and then and away they flew to the saddened home. Mrs. Baldwin met her at the door and said, "How very kind in you, Miss Ruggles, to come to my relief, for I am rather frail, and the household duties demand all my abilities, and the boy needs constant attention, for he has studied till he has overtaxed his brain and brought on this brain fever, and some of the time he is now delirious, and I fear greatly for my boy." But days of anxiety pass and the struggle 'twixt life and death is very trying to the whole family, but finally the fever slowly yields to good care. Each day brings slow improvement, the bathing of hands and face, then rubbing till dry, the turning over of the pillow to cool the hot head, the airing of the room, the reading of something pleasant - let me see, did I not give a recipe once before this where cupid does his work at short range? Yes, they became engaged, but took some two years more to spark in. Lewis has taught school for several winters and worked with me on the farm summers, and has bought seventy acres joining ours on the east. Has got part of it cleared and draws sawlogs to Freman's mill, and is building a house. That looks suspicious. I said before that Lewis taught near Pokagon, and now regular every two weeks he wants a horse and buggy, or, if it is too muddy, he gets on the saddle, but go he must, in some way.

Wonder what kind of a loadstone it can be that attracts to the south? It certainly can't be the north pole this time. One day all of us brothers and sisters were invited to go with him on a ride to Pokagon. A three-seated carriage was hired and a jollier crew you never saw as we rode to Pokagon. Arriving at a house about one mile southeast of Pokagon, Lewis introduced us to Mr. and Mrs. Bronner, their son and four daughters. It did not take long to tell which was the loadstone and only person of much account with Lewis. By the way, there was a little hugging and kissing on the sly. Oh, yes, the wedding came off all right, and the feast, too. I didn't blame Lewis then, nor do I now, for choosing the one he did.

Sister Lucretia came home from the Niles school and somehow, somewhere, among all this going to school and teaching, and sparking, and love-making she had also met a young man, and was very shy about saying much on the subject anyway. One day Westley came to our home with a young man that he introduced as Mr. Young, and that he knew. I wanted to help in my work and his friend, John he called him, wanted a steady place for the season, so terms were soon agreed on and John proved an excellent worker and was agreeable in the house and very handy, and like to please mother by doing any chore for her that made life agreeable. This same John proved to be the same fellow that Lucretia had met in the Niles-Pokagon school puzzle. He was a good bass singer withal. He worked a long time, long enough for Cupid to put in his shots in the love line, and, yes, of course, they were married at our house. Later he enlisted, was in the war some time, and was taken very sick. When well enough he came home a mere skeleton.

Moving the House and Bar.

Freman and father built the first home house near the center of the farm and west of the orchard several years ago, when father could see a little. The house was built close to the ground, on wooden blocks, and they have decayed and the house is getting damp and unhealthy. It must be raised and put on stone, or both house and barn moved to the road at the southeast corner of the farm. I counseled father and mother what to do; they said we can do but little, and for me to do as I thought best. I was then in the prime of manhood and loved work - not alone for work's sake, but to do better than others had done before me. But to keep that farm running without neglect, move those buildings and build a new house was a big work to tackle. I was the only boy at home, and if I had help I hired it. During the winter then approaching I drew sawlogs to Freman's mill, and in the spring the lumber was in shape for drying and handy to where the new house was to be built. The nearest moving tools was at Dowagiac, owned by Mr. Hall. I went for the tools near springtime, but no Mr. Hall yet. What to do is the question. I must use my help now or never. "Well, boys, we will see what we can do with these tools, for Hall will be here soon surely." The barn was raised, those six-feet walnut posts removed, the barn lowered into the rollers at night. Morning came just as certain as the sun rises, but no Mr. Hall. "Hitch Doll to the capstan, boys, and *see what we'll see*. Get up, Doll," and round and round goes the sweep; the barn creaks and trembles, and we almost tremble in our boots, for this is new business to all of us. But "she moved, she moves! we shout"; the barn is nothing but what we can handle after all, and the rollers carried forward and pounded this way and that to keep on the track, but we did it, and that made us heroes. Four days we have kept up this round of duties and the barn is near its destination, when lo, and behold! here comes Mr. Hall. A more puzzled expression on any man's face you never saw. "Why," said he, "there isn't one man in fifty that would dare tackle that barn without experience, standing, as it did, way up on those posts. I was even dreading it myself, and I am glad the barn is here; you have done well; keep right on, and I'll carry rollers." No, no, Mr. Hall, you are boss now, and I'll carry rollers." There was a slight lowering of the ground a few rods in front of us, and first Mr. Hall knew he couldn't get a roller under the front. We had to hitch to the wagon and go to where the barn started to get two screws and raise the front of the sills. Oh, how the boys did want to hoot Mr. Hall. Soon the barn was placed where it stands to-day on a stone foundation. Then the house was moved with the family

in it and placed where it stands today, for a house barn. Then the L post was moved and became the kitchen and woodshed of the new house to be built. A cellar was dug and a stone walk built, and on this the new house. A well was dug and bricked forty feet deep. Then two carpenters went to work and right jolly fellows they were, too. Each evening we had so much fun in joke and song that we had something to think of while at work. But the crops grew finely and so did the house, and is to-day a credit to the builders, Charles Simmons and Frank Nelson. By the time winter returned the house was completed and most of expenses paid. I sold that season near nine hundred dollars' worth in grain and stock; that was the best year of my life, for often after that I have said, "My dish was wrong side up when it rained." With my hands I set the maple shade trees along the road and around the door yard. Set another orchard near by, built the door yard fence and big gate that still remain. I was then 28 years of age and said to father and mother that they were then in good shape to live either with or without me. It was then decided that I should have the farm and care for father and mother as long as they lived. Martin was called in and made the necessary papers whereby I was to have the farm, and they had papers for their maintenance through life.

Chapter X.

Looking for a Wife.

I have not mentioned about anybody's sisters but my own, and yet I have been looking out of one corner of an eye for some years past, with about this result: One girl about two miles distant is good-looking and smart, but has red hair; that won't do with my tendency in the same way. One taught our school and I was school director, so I had a good chance there. Beautiful eyes, black hair, witty, smart as a whip, but her neck was very short, her forehead low, rather small. I'm afraid you are not a very healthy girl. She married, later, had two children, died ten years after that and was buried in Kansas. Another girl lived four miles distant, and she and Mariah were great friends. She was decidedly pretty, rosy cheeks, auburn hair, well educated, good singer, but her mother was slightly insane. I'm crazy enough for one family, tain't safe. Another, a farmer girl, perfectly healthy, black hair, but not refined, rather coarse, not much talk - too much that way myself. A young lady late from York State, tall, yes, a little bony, lightish hair, well educated, very lady-like, but I said, "I guess you are most too nice for a farmer boy, and I guess you would enjoy entertaining company better than to cook and sweep." Mother gave me her opinion free, by saying, "If I was a young man I believe I would as soon hug a basket of chips as that girl." That settled it. Yet another girl middling tall, dark hair, good size and good form, apparently healthy, good company; took her riding twice; maybe I'd get the mitten, for another fellow is looking that way. I'll wait and see. Joining my farm is another farm owned by a young widow. She had moved on the farm some four years before with her husband. They had been married but a short time, and this was their first housekeeping. He was consumptive, but worked at his trade as carpenter. He failed fast, and they soon returned to Ohio, where he died at his old home. Four years later she returned to her farm with her mother and sister and two brothers. They were now our nearest neighbors. She was medium size, black hair, good

health, a fine singer, good housekeep, played the melodeon, and that sounded so good, not only when any of us called at the house, but when I was at my plowing or dragging or cultivating, or in haying and harvest that melodeon could be heard in sweet melody and that young widow singing - "Sitting by Thy Side, Mary, Mary Aleen."

Strange Freak In Nature.

One day father was sitting at the back part of the room and mother betwixt him and the window, threading her needle. "Sylvia," said he, you are not as handy at that work as you was years ago." "What do you mean, Joseph, you can't see me, can you?" "You are trying to thread your needle, aren't you?" "Yes." "I saw the shadow as it were before the window, the moving of your hands." And that was the first he had seen for fifteen years. Father had mentioned during the past week that it wasn't so dark, that it seemed lighter. Soon he could see us as shadows, moving around the room. Thinking it might aid sight or help its return, he used kerosene oil, and soon it was talked far and near that kerosene oil was restoring sight to father Ruggles, as he was generally called then. Sight kept coming to one eye till father could go where he wished to; read the papers, read his Bible and took great delight in seeing again. But just as unlucky in his first loss of sight after blindness he took cold that settled again in his eyes and he was again a blind man.

The Oncoming Strife Between Freedom and Slavery.

You remember that I started that father had a ticket written containing his anti-slavery principles - that when he handed out his ballot he said, "The principles contained in that ballot will yet govern this nation." That was the leaven hidden in the three measures of meal till all was leavened. Bitterness was rife between the North and the South, between the free and the slave states. It had been the law that a slave getting into a free state became a free man, but the slave states having the majority in congress passed a law that a slave fleeing to a free state was not free, but men in pursuit could call on any man to help catch the fugitive, and if he refused he could be fined and imprisoned. Then there was no freedom for the slave till he reached Canada. This being made a bloodhound to catch black men, and help get them in chains again, terribly enraged the whole North, and they just wouldn't do it.

Men like Wendell Phillips and Charles Sumner argued the rights of free men and the wrongs of slavery till Sumner was felled to the senate floor by a heavy cane in the hands of Mr. Brooks. Kansas has been having a bloody time - Southerners determined that it should come into the Union a slave state and Northern men just as determined it should be free. Many men were being shot down on the border line in this terrible strife. Seven states had declared themselves out of the Union, and had formed a Southern Confederacy, and had chosen Jefferson Davis for their President, and other states were going. Slavery was their chief corner-stone.

Well I do remember attending the Republican convention at the wigwam in Chicago when Abraham Lincoln was the choice of that convention for the next President. How the flags were

waved, the handkerchiefs, like snowflakes, waved everywhere, and the shout rang out till the wigwam fairly trembled with the ringing shouts of free men - and men to make others free.

To reach the Capitol at Washington Lincoln had to go in secret and on a train not known to most men. For it had been declared he should never go alive through Maryland. Fort Sumter was fired on by rebel cannon, and all the North as well as South was eager for the fray. Abraham Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand men, and there was a war meeting called at Hartford, and Julius C. Burrows was then the Michigan young man orator. There was no lack of volunteers, and when I got home I told father how I felt, that I thought I ought to enlist. He said, "This war, just beginning, is not the little breakfast spell that some think it, but will probably last for years, and it is just as necessary that the army be fed and clothed as it is for the men to go to war. If you go to war then the farm may be run by some hired man, it will soon be in bad condition." Later I went with others to see the boys in blue in camp at Pokagon, just before going to the field of strife.

Only a few weeks later and there was a call for three hundred thousand men. Then originated the song, "We are Coming, Father Abraham, Three Hundred thousand More." And they came, and another three hundred thousand from the South met them, and they fought like brave men, long and well; they piled the ground with brothers slain.

The Decision.

During this spring and summer was my period in life when eyes speak love to eyes which speak again. There was to be great doings at Paw Paw, and I thought of that musical young widow across the way. But I have heard that she has said that she should never marry again. "Well," said I, "she don't look that way. If I ask her to go and she says *yes* then I am petty sure that I ask another question she will say *yes*. If she says no then I need ask no other questions." So as blushing, and bashfully as a young man will ask such a delicate question I asked for her company to Paw Paw. Yes, we took the ride to Paw Paw; what we saw at Paw Paw I can't tell, but I recollect the ride and the talk. We took another ride later, but just before going all of my people met all of her people at her house and Westley at the melodeon sand this song. "Oh, Happy, Happy Be Thy Dreams." Then the minister bade us rise and join right hands, and in the presence of these witnesses pronounced us husband and wife, September 24, 1861.

Then Westley, Mariah and Lucretia rode with us to Pokagon, and Ben Thomas came home with the team and we went on our way rejoicing to see Uncle William and Aunt Rosina in Chicago. Yes, we had a good visit and planned to return across the lake, but the lake was so rough the boat did not go till two days later. So I suppose we made uncle and family twice glad.

Chapter XI.

Brother Freman.

Freman lived to bachelorhood in his carpenter work, then went into the forest two miles southwest of our home and built a water sawmill. Freman generally felt well and would enjoy a joke or laugh heartily. And yet his life was one of toil. But he knew something of the secret of a happy life by taking enjoyment in labor.

The mill was sawing logs, and it was all work, work, work. The farm was chopped and cleared by work, work.. The roads were built by hard work. The log house was replaced by a new and good frame house by work - hard work. How, where or when I cannot tell at present, but he met a good, smart, sensible woman, a school teacher.

They were married at her father's David Woodman, just east of Paw Paw. The Woodmans consist of several families in that vicinity, and among the most prominent families in VanBuren County. Have held most of the prominent offices in the county and some in the state. J. J. Woodman represented the Agricultural department of the State of Michigan at the great Chicago Exposition. Fremont took his bride to his new house, where they lived many years, till they sold out and moved, with the addition to his family of one son and three daughters, to Hartford Centre.

Martin and the War.

The war is being waged in terrible fury. Fathers, sons and brothers are being shot down on battlefields that never before had their equal. Neighbor is estranged from neighbor, for one is Union, the other is at heart disunion, though he dare not say so. I have stated that after Martin's barns were burned that he was elected County Clerk. Then he moved to Paw Paw, the county-seat.

As the war progresses he is called upon to make all sorts of legal papers outside of his regular office work, and he keeps so closely applied to his desk that he is failing in health. He has served one term of three years and has been elected again for another three years. He is now in his fourth year of doing, as some have said, two men's work. But it is killing him. Instead of stopping to recuperate - pride and ambition led him on - and to keep going he has his tea strengthened and chews more tobacco, till finally, when compelled to stop writing, his system was so filled and poisoned by the strong tea and stronger tobacco that medicine could not have its natural effect. Then he moved back to his farm and as often as once or twice a week he rode over to our house to visit the old folks. One day he asked if I would go with him on a trip on the lakes - said the dry, hot atmosphere was killing him here. In a few days I went with him to St. Joe, took boat to Chicago, then stopped to see Uncle William. Uncle wanted his doctor to see Martin; then the doctor was called, and said that if Martin would stop here about four days he might then go on the lakes and be benefited. So we stopped there. At the end of four days

Martin was placed in a coffin, and alone with my dead brother I sadly returned. Sent telegraph message to meet us at Dowagiac. It was a large and sad funeral, for Martin's friends were numbered by thousands. The minister stated in his sermon that Martin Ruggles, at the age of 41 years, had virtually lived longer than most men at double that age, for he had accomplished much. Martin is buried just west of the village of Hartford.

A Birthday Party.

One day there was a few women gathered at our house. Well, you say, but that is not unusual. Very true; usually I keep right on at my work (just the same). But this time I was interested as never before in a visit of neighbors. They did not remain so very long, but when they left for home they left more than joy with us, for unto us a daughter was born, and the doctor said that all was well. Of course, there was never baby like that one. Soon after her Uncle Seth named her Minnie Alice. Not many months after I was going to a neighbor's with horses and wagon, and wife says, "Can't I go, too, and call at such a house till you return?" "Certainly be glad to have you." Soon after starting a fierce wind and rain sprang up, and in raising the umbrella I slacked on the reins; the wind caught the umbrella and away went the horses at full speed. I regained the lines, but the horses were large and felt gay, and I pulled their mouths close to their breasts, but still they ran with vengeance. Ahead was the home of the little preacher. He had built a heavy gate with large square posts. That was my only chance to stop them. You must stop at that gate or have broken head, thought I. Wife and Minnie were sitting on the bottom of the wagon box, the wagon bounding like pop-corn, but the gate stopped the runaways.

Finding a Waif.

I was driving with horses and sleigh north and east of Hartford Centre and overtook a lad and said, "Jump in and have a ride. What's your name?" "Henry," he said. "Where do you live?" "Don't live nowhere," Where is your father?" "Haven't got none." "Where is your mother?" "Mother's dead." Where do you stop to-night?" "Just ahead, in that little house." I called and questioned about the boy. They were caring for him as a matter of mercy, and they were not able to care for him. "Do you want to go home with me, my lad?" Yes, I believe I'd like to mighty well." So his very poor belongings were put in the sleigh and I divided blanket with him and on the way found him to be of Irish descent, witty, clever, small of his age, rather bright withal. At home he was made quite welcome, as there was no boy around, and after an evening spent in scrubbing him, burning up some things he brought, making over some clothing, in a day or two he looked very different, although the freckles on his face showed plainer than before. He lived with us some three years.

Sold the Old Farm.

It occurred to Viola and I that we might sell and buy again nearer a railroad, for we had tired of going fourteen to twenty-one miles to get to town. We sold and bought in Hamilton Township, four mile east of Keeler and six northwest of Decatur. Here a baby boy came to be company for his sister Minnie. He was a good specimen of a healthy fellow, too. I took no little pride in improving the farm, for all my neighbors were passing, in going to Decatur. Set a new orchard in addition to the old, set pine trees in front of the house and made it look like a different farm.

The Going Home of Minnie.

Minnie was now nearly three years of age, a fine, healthy girl, and usually lively and happy. I often took her with me on the farm wherever and whenever I could. The last time outdoors for her I took her in the wagon when drawing wheat, and when the load was on I took her up on the load and she wanted to drive, which I allowed her to think she was doing till we reached the barn.

Then there was a call to supper, and, going to the house, she done as she had often done before, ran ahead of me, laughing and saying, "Minnie beatie pa pa, Minnie beatie pa pa." Bloody flux was then very prevalent and very fatal. The doctor was called (for a good doctor lived but a short distance away, one-fourth of a mile. He said, "No danger, no danger; she will soon be all right." He came for three days and was then taken with the same disease, and very nearly died. When came a doctor from Decatur, saying, "Only be diligent; she will soon be well." That pleading look and pleading call still rings in our ears. "Some water, ma, ma, please, ma ma a little water." But she is still now, and we close those lovely eyes and once more curl those ringlets of hair that come to her shoulders, and on a beautiful Sabbath day we lay her to rest in the Hamilton Cemetery, where later we erected a tablet to Minnie. September 10, 1864, date of Minnie's death.

Last Wednesday Henry was taken with the same disease, and on Sunday, one week after we buried Minnie, I thought he was dying. He lay on the lounge by the window and I was sitting in the middle of the room, when Henry raised up quick, as if to go. I quickly got to him and said, "Where are you going Henry?" "Oh, just out there a little ways, to play with those boys." His eyes were then very large and looked wild. I picked him up and laid him back on the lounge. His eyes closed, could discover no breath, could feel no pulse; guess he is dead; no, no, he opens his eyes, but the wild, large eye is changed to a mild, soft, happy expression. "Oh, what a beautiful place that is," he said. "Where, Henry?" "Just a little way up there; can't you see it? Oh, there is mother, and she wants me to come." "Where is your ma ma, Henry?" "Oh, she is out there, a little to one side, and she is talking with some others, and she has on white, loose clothes. Oh, such beautiful winding walks! Oh, what a pretty place that is! Oh, there is little Minnie." "Where is she?" Ah, she is out yonder farther, playing with a lot of little girls, and she has something queer on her. Oh, yes, she has got little wings." "How is she clothed, Henry?"

“In white; they are all in white.” Then there was a tremor or starting again of life forces and Henry was natural again; but he did not know then of what had just passed. Seemed but spirit.

Abraham Lincoln is Shot.

It came as an electric shock. Can it be possible that any specimen of humanity can be found to shoot so noble a man? I was working in my garden by the road when a neighbor halted on horseback and told me the terrible news.

Next day a man rode on horseback into Decatur and there learned that Lincoln was shot. “Good! said he, “I’ve got five dollars in my pocket that I would like to burn in powder to celebrate that event. A soldier heard his remark and quickly turned, walking fast down the street, muttering between his teeth, “I’ll get my Winchester and, and - but the rest was not heard. *The fire in the rear man*, as such were then called, noticed the soldier just as he started and heard him muttering something, and said to a bystander, “What was that bluecoat grunting about?” “He said something about his *Winchester*, and he will put a bullet through you if - there he comes now with his gun in his hands. That fellow lost no time in mounting his horse, and he hat fell off, but he did not stop for hat, but with hair flying in the wind away he galloped at a John Gilpin speed. “Is that man riding yonder the fellow that wanted to celebrate the shooting of Lincoln? “Yes, that’s the fellow. Well, his action is much wiser than his words. You must be cowardly men here or no man would dare to make such a speech as that. I’d just as soon shot a rebel here as down South - in fact, I have more respect for an open enemy than for a sly, sneaking enemy, that puts on the garb of a friend.

Chapter XII.

Freman and Family Arrive.

Yes, I know those horses as far as I can see them - Doll and Selim - and here comes the whole family. They have been to Paw Paw to visit Aravesta’s folks and are on their way home and will stop with us to-night. They have two little ones and we but one. But each was made to stand or sit as if on exhibition. And you ought to have heard the comments of those mothers as they would turn them over and around. But here is some *red hair*, don’t you see? No, no, that isn’t *red*, that is only *auburn*. But with a good sleep and a good bye, away they go to the farm and mill. A few weeks before Willie Lincoln was born we bought at Dowagiac a large clock, which is still our family clock.

Decatur was going to be a large place and having much of the trade clear to Lake Michigan. Long strings of teams were passing our house every day, and speculators were buying up lots fast, and some of my friends said, “Why don’t you sell your farm and invest in Decatur and make a living easier?”

That sounded well and tickled my pride, and most Ruggles have plenty of that, so we talked that idea at home and soon had a buyer. We received the forty-five acres in Hamilton, since known as the Almond A. Olds farm, and two thousand dollars. We bought eight lots in Decatur just east and north of the Union School-house on the corner; rented a house, cleared the lots of brush, logs and oak grubs, built a square house, moved in and here Myrtie was born. Went into the woods three miles north, cut and drew logs to a mill there, got lumber home, began building another house on the corner. Lewis wanted the forty-five acres to put a hop garden on, for fortunes were being made in hops. His brothers-in-law were getting rich at it. It was contracted to him and I helped financially to build the hop house, etc.

The hops matured as nice a crop as one could possible expect to see. The crop was gathered and beginning to dry, when the price began to lower, then worth 45 cents per pound. Our anticipations were high. Lewis could pay for the farm that year and money left in bank. I could go ahead and build more houses. Next day price of hops lower, and so on day after day, lower, lower, lower, lower. So Lewis held the crop till afraid it might mold sold the crop at 7 cents per pound. Lewis lost all he had and I lost what I invested. The large house on the corner in Decatur was then mostly inclosed. We had joined the Methodist Episcopal Church when we first moved into Decatur, and it was not long before I was chorister, then later superintendent of the Sunday School. I was superintendent for nine years of the fourteen that I lived there. The Sunday School grew from eighty or ninety members to one hundred and eighty or one hundred and ninety.

At that time of building the large house and at the time of the hop failure, Viola was taken very sick with typhoid fever. I did not leave the house, but stopped the carpenters working. My dish was getting wrong side up fast - yes, *very* fast.

The carpenters demanded their pay, and I said just as soon as I can leave the sick I will get it for you. They knew of the hop failure, and next morning a constable came and levied on all lumber to be seen. Soon as I could leave the house I paid the carpenters. I did not know that my head was being so terribly wracked till in combing my hair or run fingers through it, comb or fingers were covered with loose hair.

J. W. Young came to me to trade a mortgage he had on a saw and grist mill on White River for the forty-five acres. I went and saw the mills and the man that owned them. He wanted then to let me have four span of horses, wagons and harness, all complete, and offered them at a very reasonable price. Said that he had lumber on the way to market to pay the mortgage. So I exchanged with Young.

Then there was a farm for sale across the swamp. There was then a mortgage on the farm. I could get possession by paying or trading in this mortgage on White River. If land goes up, then I can sell and make. If it goes down, I lose. I put the mortgage in there and tried hard for two years to sell it and save something, but land went down and in that farm I sank the last remains of the forty-five acres.

Doing much of the work myself, the house in Decatur was finally completed, so that I moved in. How to live became a serious question. Sold sewing machines, organs, sold one piano, sold farming implements, reapers and mowers, threshing machines, clover hullers; sold one year nineteen reapers and mowers. No I have a good thing and I'll just stick right to it. But could I keep it? No, my dish was wrong side up and would not right. I was generally notified when the agent would come to arrange for the next year. First I knew the state agent had been in Decatur and had contracted with Lyman Rawson. I learned later that Rawson had written the Champion Company for the agency, stating that he would pay cash down for all machines sold instead of their taking the farmers' notes. Rawson owned the grain and warehouse, bought and sold wheat, and everybody knew him. They knocked me right between the eyes, and what to do I didn't know. An agent came, wanting me to take and sell the Russell machine. I took it and traveled and traveled and finally sold just one machine at *cost*. Rawson sold just the one machine he had. The Buckeye gained greatly by my loss. My whole year's work was of little avail, save the garden and some slight repairs on sewing machines. I was *thoroughly discouraged*.

Soon after selling the farm and just before moving to Decatur Viola, self and baby Will went on a visit to her people in Pennsylvania and New York State. When we were nearly ready to come home Willie was attacked by indigestion and came near dying. When he was better I came home, leaving Viola to come later.

Father and Mother Transferred to J. W. Young and Wife.

I should have stated that previous to my last writings that Westley's wife's health failed and father and mother went to live with Sister Lucretia, then living near White River, near the saw and grist mill that were later wrecked by water. I took father and mother with horses and sleigh to White River. On my way home I experienced the hardest storm of my life. The wind blew a hurricane - snow flying everywhere and covered the fences part of the way; and some of the time no road at all. I had to stop till the storm subsided.

Mother Goes to A Better Country.

Within a year after they came to Decatur mother was taken sick. We often called to see her and bring something she might like. One Sabbath day, instead of going to church, we went to see mother. I was greatly surprised to see how much she had failed, and she was near her time to depart.

We all sat in silence as she rolled her head from one side to the other and was unconscious. The motions grew fainter and fainter, till life went out. Father had asked questions about her, but now all was still. Father came to the bed, put his hand on her brow, then her hands, then again her face, forehead and eyes.

Recollections of A Busy Life, by Eli Fayette Ruggles (ca 1904) - continued

“She’s gone; she’s gone!” and then cried aloud, as only a strong man can, who seldom cries, and then realized that he was left alone.

J. W. Young and family moved to Farwell, Michigan, with father some time later than the death of mother. Six years after the going home of mother I received a telegram saying, “Father is dying.”

I took the next train to Kalamazoo, then changed to G. R. & I., passed Big Rapids, then changed east to Farwell. Found father a little better.

He said: “I want to go home with you, Eli, and die where mother died.”

And I said, “You shall go, father, to my house.”

I was then living again in the large new house. We made a cot for him to lie on on the road, and left with father the next morning.

I sat or stood by his cot in the baggage car all the way and made the jolts as easy for him as possible. Had water and a stimulant to help keep him alive. Arrived home at 4 p.m. and that evening I told him of his being in my house and the room that he was in, and it seemed he understood by the joy that is in expression but not told. The children were playing around and he would turn to listen to them.

I slept while others watched that night, and at early light of day was called. Yes, too true, father was going from us. His sightless balls look up as though sight were given them; then raising both arms as though clasping some loved form, then a smile crept in, even in the presence of death, then his arms fell at his sides - and father was at rest.

Myrtie and Harry were born in the square brown house and Lena and Iva in the large house.

I have stated that we moved to Decatur to speculate and make money easier. We *didn't* do it, but lost *all we had*. Soon after going to Decatur the C. & W. M. L. S. R. R. was built through Hartford. That stopped all the travel from towards the lake. Then the air line from Niles to Jackson - that stopped the business from the south. Then one from Lawton to Paw Paw and Lawrence. Decatur was then left with but little territory to support it. Property went down almost equal to the drop in hops. Houses and lots could be bought for a song. After losing the reaper and mower trade and running in vain for one year after that, I then bought a set of tools to move buildings and used those for two or three years. This was hard work, but it paid expenses.

Very unexpectedly here comes John Young, that I have not seen for years - not since I went after father at Farwell. But he moves around quick and seemed a little excited, and soon told me in a business way of how I could make some money. And he had come from away up north to tell me all about it. At Houghton Lake was a farm of 200 acres on a state road in a pine lumber region; a very large double log house; all the boarders that we could take care of at good prices,

and all I could raise was wanted at big prices; and I was just the man with my family for that place; and we would have to go soon, so as to go on sleighs, as the snow would soon be going up north. Like the old maid praying at the foot of the tree for a husband, and the owl hoots in the treetop - hoo, hoo - and she answers, anybody, Lord, I'm not particular," so we, in our dissatisfied condition, said, "Praise the Lord for any deliverance."

So I talked to everybody and tried every way to sell our home. Finally I sold it for enough to pay debts and move us to Houghton Lake. Mr. Edee wanted me to take him and family with me. I should need both his help and also his very amiable wife. So it was arranged for them to go with us.

Chapter XIII.

Off for Houghton Lake.

Just before going we were invited to Mr. Parkhurst's to tea, and of course we accepted the invitation. Returned home about 8 p.m., and what does all this mean? Our house alive from top to bottom with men, women and children; and it was truly a great surprise. A good many said, "We shall miss you and your family greatly in the church and Sabbath school." I have been some years before presented with a ten-dollar bible from the Sabbath school. This evening they presented me with Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. Truly, the work in the Sabbath school has been a grand success, of which any man might well be proud. The school has more than doubled in numbers and also in interest. The school has never been as large since I left it. But Decatur has been my financial ruin. I came to Decatur a conqueror in all the business affairs of life that I have had to meet. I go out defeated at as many points and to a great degree disheartened and discouraged.

But off for Houghton Lake is now the order, and at the depot we wave a good-bye to Decatur people and away we go. Mr. Edee, wife and daughter are with us. At Farwell two span of horses take us and goods for two-days' sleigh ride to Houghton Lake, J. W. Young and man going with the teams.

On the way we looked back as did the Israelites on their bondage, and having passed the Red Sea they sang their song of deliverance; and we were all happy in body and mind, for we had just been having a grand revival, and to us winter was as pleasant as May.

Arriving at Houghton Lake, we drove up in front of decidedly the largest log house I ever saw. It was truly a hotel, and the first inhabitants to greet us was a string of eight cats sunning themselves on a rail. Our coming was not very welcome, for there were others that wanted the same chance.

Next day at night Mr. Hall came (the owner) and contracts were signed, and we were in for work and lots of it. But the sound of the churchgoing bell this lake and its shores never hears, nor sighed at the sound of a knell, nor smiled when the Sabbath appeared.

But the first Sunday we started a Sunday school and the next a mid-week prayer meeting, and then we found there were lamps that had been hidden under a bushel, because of the overpowering presence of great sinners. Everyone treated us civilly and with respect, but when in their own company it was swearing, smoking, chewing, *drinking*. The beautiful lake was just in front of the farm, only the road between; and such great, nice fish I never saw before or since. And the venison, too, reminded me of earliest Hartford days. The farm was a two hundred acre sea of stumps. The barn was low but warm. But the housekeeping. An inventory is made of the barrels of flour, pork, crackers, etc., sugar by the barrel. When these are gone I drive to Roscommon, twenty-five miles and get a load of groceries and grain for horses. When the autumn is past I settle and pay in hay what is not paid in boarding men. Myrtie taught this district school when fourteen years of age. Thousands of stumps were pulled and burned. Bought mowing machine and horse rake.

Mr. Hall's horses ran at large ever summer, and it was provoking to find that horses had broken over the fence and were in the growing crops. One day Will and Mr. Edee were driving horses out of the growing oats when all at once one horse had a broken leg. Maybe he broke his leg by *running*, who knows? Edee was lucky at fishing or after a deer, and a good worker, but the *natives* did like to worry him in every way possible.

Ran two logging jobs two winters and made some money at it. Mr. Hall came and settled with me the first year, and kept promising to settle after that, but never came. Will went to Ann Arbor to school. The last year here Harry taught school. But most of the time the boys are at home and the girls are getting larger and life at Houghton Lake begins to have serious objections.

The men who come and go are having their influence - tempting in every way possible to get the boys to take a drink - just a little, just a taste; offers of cigars to smoke. Swearing was common talk. Viola was, at the end of four years, breaking down under the nervous strain, and I began to lay plans to get away and save the children and wife. I could meet all these ills without harm, but the rest could not.

I went to Cadillac and bought a small house and lot, and Viola and the girls and Harry were moved to Cadillac and the children entered the school. Will and self stayed longer at the farm to sell and finish up. I should have stated that I had been unable to see Mr. Hall and could get no settlement, and there was a thousand dollars my due. Then I learned that Mr. Hall had swindled a Mr. Thompson of Chicago out of fifty thousand dollars on a sale of pine lands, and Hall had made an assignment of all he had to the Hall Lumber Company, and I could get nothing. So good-bye to the most we had earned at the Houghton Lake farm. One day a telegram came from Cadillac saying diphtheria, signed Viola.

That forty-five mile ride seemed a long one to Will and I. I thought it was Lena that was sick, for she was not as rugged as was Iva, and we were in suspense till I drove up near the house and Viola came to the door, saying "Iva is better."

Well, that was a joyful relief, for it might have been death instead of life. An allopathic doctor had said he could not save her, and Viola called a homoeopath, and in a few hours she was improving.

Settled up all business at Houghton Lake and joined family at Cadillac. Raised the little house, filled the lot, built an upright in front, painted, set shade trees, kept a good garden. Traded for forty acres one mile out from town and fooled away lots of time on that. Found that I could not live at that poor *dying rate*, and went to Chicago to see what I could find. Found D. S. Baldwin living at Ridgeland, a western suburb of Chicago, and carpenter work was in good demand, and I bought a hammer, square, saw, chisels and a set of bits and then said, "*I am a carpenter.*" Found work and did my best to earn my wages, and didn't get *discharged very often*.

And yet I knew what a pleasant feeling comes over a man to be told, "I guess we haven't work for you any further." But I was soon at it again for another man. sent for my family and we were soon living at Oak Park, in a house on South Kenilworth avenue, where we lived three years, and the children in school with good surroundings, and every Sabbath good church privileges. I soon bought a cow and later had four cows. Lived one year on South Grove. Had good wages and plenty of work, especially, to do a full day's work and milk and care for four or five cows and sell the milk to my neighbors.

Sold the property in Cadillac to Mr. Edee. Bought two lots at an auction sale of lots on Wenonah avenue, south of Madison street.

Rent was very high because of the Chicago Exposition, and we determined to get under a roof of our own. You recollect that I said *I was a carpenter*. So, of course, I could build my own house. The first of May came and the house we occupied was wanted *that day*. Our goods were stored in the basement for a few days. That night came the heaviest fall of rain we ever had since I came to Oak Park. That basement was filled with water. Most of our best things were spoiled. I had but part of the house up and half roofed, but the goods had to be taken out of that basement or all would spoil. The prairie was so soft that the team could not get to our half-house, so were unloaded nearly a block away (no paved streets at that time). But the sidewalks were all built in this new subdivision, so we wheeled and carried goods on the cement pavement and piled them in part of the to-be-house. We all said - and still say - that we never enjoyed life better than when building up this, our new home, in this very primitive way.

Willie Lincoln found employment with the C. & N. W. R. R. Co., then later received his diploma from the Medical College in Chicago as M.D. Harry worked for Mr. Weed in the grocery when not in school. Then for a Mr. Clark in the laundry business. Then in school at Evanston College. Then began soliciting for a printing firm in Chicago. But he can tell his own story.

I worked at carpenter work for about five years, when I increased the number of cows and bought milk, and that took all my time.

One day I received a telegram that Brother Freman was very sick. Crossed the lake to Benton Harbor; then Lewis went with me to Hartford. Freman was conscious most of the time and was glad to see us, but said he could not stay here long. He mind was with his boyhood days, and he would talk and sing songs of the long ago. We returned home, but ten days later a telegram told of his departure.

Then Lewis and I attended the funeral and Freman was laid to rest in a new cemetery on the hill south of Hartford. Two years before this I received a letter telling of the death of Fernando in California. Then one year later came a letter telling of the death of Lyman.

Westley was at this time sick at D.S.B.'s in Oak Park and doctoring in Chicago. He improved some and Westley and wife returned to Iowa City, but soon began to fail rapidly, and D. S. went and helped to bring him again to his house on a cot, and here he kept failing till life went out, and that was the fourth brother that had gone to the spirit world in the past three years, leaving Lewis and I of the seven brothers.

Brother Westley was laid to rest on the bank of the Desplaines River in the Forest Home Cemetery.

In the spring of 1901 I found that some of the nails in the roof near the chimney were rusting off and shingles getting loose, so I went on to the roof with shingle, hammer and nails to repair around the chimney. Just before finishing there came a quick spring shower, and soon the roof was thoroughly wet. I finished the repairs and stepped on the short ladder that I had placed the foot of in the gutter. The ladder slipped off the wet roof, taking both feet from under me, and threw me back on the ladder, and then shot off that roof in an instant, and I stopped only when I arrived at the earth again. The concussion was sufficient to spurt blood from mouth and nose, and ankles, hips and shoulders all had a great strain, and a continued lameness in both hips is the only reason I offer for having time to write this, my thoughts of my busy life.

Review.

I have written but a small part of what I have experienced in my journey of life. And now, as I look back, I cannot say that it is a misspent life or a failure, for much has been accomplished and much good done, and I can truly say the world is the better for my having lived in it. One writer has said that he is a philanthropist who causes two spears of grass to grow where but one grew before.

Many acres have been cleared, many miles of road built, many acres of grain gone to help feed the world. Many houses and barns built by the labor of my hands. A family of children have been reared that are now hewing their own way in life.

But the mistakes of my life have been many. The failures, to judge right, have been more. And were I to again start in life without these years of experience to guide me, I should be again making *mistakes*. As I now see it, it was a mistake when father and my older brothers, in moving from Ohio, did not stop near Kalamazoo, buying a part prairie and part timber, and hitch on the plow and at the start have a cleared farm of rich soil, instead of plunging into the great unbroken forest of Hartford, where it took half a lifetime to get a start.

Those great walnut, whitewood and ash trees may have looked grand and beautiful, but they were of no value at that time. One walnut measured nine feet in diameter at the stump. There are walnut rails on that old farm to-day, split out of walnut logs that in later years were worth ninety dollars per thousand feet. The stumps from those trees were in after years blown out of the ground with dynamite and brought more money than was paid for the tree. Beautiful carved wood gun stocks, etc., were made of those stump roots.

One mistake was when I sold the old farm where I had lived twenty-four years, and the time came to move out, and I came to the clock and opened the door, and stopped the pendulum - it seemed like an electric shock, and it came to me as an omen of ill. Years later, when it seemed that fates were against me, I wished that I had allowed the clock to keep on ticking and I had kept it company. Had we remained there we could easily have added the Carey farm, making 230 acres. The War of the Rebellion came on at that time, and for several years prices for all farm produce were very high, and just at that time we were in Decatur buying our living at those high prices. At this time, when I realized my financial loss, was when I prayed most earnestly that God would yet enable me to give to my children a good education, and to be self-supporting, which prayer has been granted, and for which I praise His all glorious name to-day.

Chapter XIV.

California - Westward Ho!

It has been as a dream or a desired possibility for some years past that I might yet see California. And it has seemed nearer till in the summer of 1902, I, with the good will of my family, arranged to go. On October 29th, with grips packed and in company with the Doctor and wife, Harry and wife and Lena, we went to the Northwestern Depot in Chicago, and after waiting in line for a long time, and it being decidedly cold, we finally were admitted to the car and shown to my number of seat and berth. And now I have bidden and kissed good-bye to those who came with me, as also those left at home, and I am in a cold car, curtains all along the bunks drawn, for it is time for sleep to those who can find it; but outside is plenty of noise and tumult. Soon as the porter can fix my bunk I got under cover in search of some warmth, and here and then I thought of my children on their way home to warm rooms and my wife at home in her warm bed, and here I am in this cold car and not a soul near that I ever saw. Yes, I was petty near homesick, and not yet started. But at last the cars are moving and I go to sleep. I awake at early dawn, raise my curtain, bolster up with both pillows, and in the twilight see farms, barns, houses, cattle,

sheep, swine, and now they are coming out to milk, and it is a fine morning of sunshine, and the car is now warm, and I am just having a good time.

Everybody in the car is up, curtains all out of sight, and really, here is a car full of pretty good looking people. Some are children, and just opposite my seat is a family of six. They give me a cup of tea as we take our breakfast, and I give the children some bananas; that pleases them.

Farm scenes follow each other as we cross this beautiful prairie country, till we come to Council Bluffs and Omaha, and as these names are called out, I begin to think of the letters that used to come to our old farm home from Lyman and Fernando, after they had been a long time on their journey to California in 1850. Then our letters cost 25 cents each, and took weeks to reach us. And now I begin to see what I have only heard before. Some miles of barren plain, sagebrush, gophers, prairie dogs, skeletons here and there, one of horse or ox of the years gone by.

We are approaching the mountains, but the grade upward is so gradual we do not perceive it. And now I begin to see where our cattle, sheep and hogs come from by the train loads. For here, as I look out on either side, I see the rancher with teams and gang plows, and here is a genuine cowboy on his pony with a coil of rope hanging over the horn of his saddle. Two or three dogs are in attendance, and with his wide wool hat it is all true to picture. Here we are at Denver, to remain for all the afternoon. We all leave the cars to see Denver. Go through and to the top of the courthouse, where I have a fine view of the Rocky Mountains. Then to the State Capitol, and at the top from the observatory we have a fine view of the city, the Rockies, Pike's Peak, seventy miles away; then down to earth again, where an observation car takes us all around the city, and a guide tells us all places of note. Back to our car and about dark we start again on our journey. We passengers are getting quite well acquainted now and all enjoy the journey, except one lady, who has to worry about her pet *dog* that is in the baggage car. She tells the conductor and the superintendent of the train and the porter all about her pet *dog Fannie*. She has paid the baggage master to feed and water that poor dog. Oh, how that poor dog will cry with loneliness! I believe I can hear her cry now. She never was away from home before, and now to be away from her bed and where all are strangers. Oh, dear, I fear poor Fannie will *die*. Some of the passengers who have been over this road before are saying this evening that during the night we will pass through some of the finest scenery in this mountain gap. With a good night's sleep, I feel as well as when I started.

At early dawn I raise the curtain to see, but I must be short-sighted, for only a short distance away I can see but a black wall. But when it is full day, I have to repeat what I hear said all around me. "Isn't that *grand*?" I get close to the window and look up and up at those massive rocks, great and grand and sublime.

Then to look down to the rushing, raging, foaming river, as we have to follow its winding way. Sometimes we are nearly on a level with the river; then again we are far above it. Again here is a little town - a health resort. Isn't the scenery fine? The wagon road leading back into little circular park, with neat cottages facing the central circle and railroad, and there is their country schoolhouse. But where do they come from or how can any one get here, only on the railroad?

This day has been full of wonder scenes, and as night is with us again, I get to my rest of pleasant dreams. Early in the morning I am using my eyes again to view new and grand scenes that it may never again be my privilege and delight to behold. Each mile of the way is different from any other mile. And I say, "Oh, isn't that grand?" and say it till I am tired of looking and wondering. Here we are on top of the Rocky Mountains, at the highest point of the railroad, and yet on either side the mountain peaks rise much higher, and we appear as in a valley or ravine, with a forest of small trees all round us, and the snow is gently falling. The train stops for fifteen minutes. The boys swarm out of the cars and have great sport snowballing.

We passed through Salt Lake City at earliest dawn, the street lamps lighting up the wide streets, bordered with their shade trees, many of which were the ----- popple. In full day we rounded Salt Lake (the railroad now goes through it), then we pass over scenes of desolate land and rock, and here we are more on a level with our surroundings.

And this is my birthday, November 2d, and age sixty-nine. And I so informed some of my neighbors, and we were then having our noon lunch. One good lady said, "Why didn't you tell that before, and I should have invited you to our table?"

It is a long and elevated birthday ride up in the mountains. But night has succeeded the day and the new day is a change from any other; our train is running swiftly, and the outlook is improving for one who cares for the agricultural part of life, as is my nature. We stop at a station and out all hands go and we get grapes, apples, oranges - yes, some fruits that I was stranger to. As on we go, seemingly flying light, we pass such cozy little cottages, and each one surrounded with fruit and vines and flowers. Isn't that cozy and neat? No dust, no dirt, nothing old or decayed, but all in fresh young life, in virgin soil.

Yes, I begin to comprehend, we are going down the western slope from the mountains and are nearing California. The train stops and we are in Sacramento.

Sacramento Los Angeles.

Familiar sounds greet the ear of busy humanity all round - engines passing, screeching, screaming, and our train signals all aboard, and we see but little of this city from which Lyman and Fernando used from forty to fifty years ago mail us their letters.

It was just at evening as we entered this city, so we see but little of it. Now on to Los Angeles, and the ride all night has been, I judge, over a level country. First morning light reveals here and there a rancher with a cheap house and plenty of stables for horses and pigs and chickens, two dogs, fruit trees and vines; so I do not pity him; he is monarch of all he surveys. *His* rights there are none to dispute. But here our train stops and they fasten one more engine in front and another in the rear. And now my bump of wonder begins to expand, for I supposed we were through with the mountains, till my return. But not so. Right in front of us are lofty mountains, and we begin to climb. We are following up the very winding ways of some creek, and often we

pass cattle that here find both food and water. But the train is often going so very slow - a good walker could keep even time or beat it. And now beauty is everywhere. This is a rare treat - more than I bargained for in my ticket. At times we are quite shut in by the massive rocks that tower above us; then again, on our left we look far away over the fertile fields of California, the garden of the world. But how is this? And my bump of wonder expands to solve this problem. Another train is ahead of us on this same track running north, while we run south, and they so much higher than we. I see, I see now. This track is cut in the side of this circle basin mountain, makes an entire circle, crosses itself at a greater height, and thus we climb this mountain. And now look out on our right and behold where we are. Our track dug away up in the side of a mountain and away, away down lies a long zigzag lake; our train has turned many a horseshoe curve and just ahead is a snow shed or tunnel, and we pass through many of them. Now we pass over Blue canon, that lies fathoms below, and is a beautiful blue and green.

Some time in the evening we arrive in Los Angeles and go to the Palm Hotel. Next day was in the park, where were plenty of men, women and children, with nothing to do but to sit in some shaded place, chat, read the papers or stretch themselves on the lawn, or play hide and seek with children. But, restful as it is, I must see what I can see.

Take electric car to Santa Monica. Not much town, but a few boarding houses for tourists. And now, as I stand on the bluff, the broad Pacific lies before me, and I think of the weeks that my daughter Myrtie was crossing it to China with her husband, Mr. House.

But down the long flights of steps or stairs I go till I stand at the water's edge to pick pebbles, and as my back was to the waters a larger wave rolls in and I am wet nearly to my knees. Well, good-bye, old ocean, if you are to treat me that way.

I return by another line that takes me by the foothills. All the land I have seen to-day is in farming or fruit or vine or flower. And these palms, aren't they grand? This five acres all to peas. Some just planting, some growing in all stages to the peas that are being picked for market. Next I go to Pasadena, that paradise on earth, where kings live, attended by the nobility.

And now, as I have seen something of Los Angeles and its surroundings, I will away to the place of my destination, and arrive in Hanford, and inquire for one J. W. Young; my winter and with sister and relatives near Hanford.

"The old gentleman, isn't it, you mean?"

Well, that took me back some, for in my mind he was yet a young man. Yes, perhaps he is getting old. "Is this the residence of J. W. Young?"

"Yes, sir, and you are Mr. Ruggles, are you not? They are expecting you. Walk in."

Yes, and here is J. W. Young, sure, and I guess they were right in saying *the old man*.

Recollections of A Busy Life, by Eli Fayette Ruggles (ca 1904) - continued

“And my sister Louie, where is she?”

“Oh, she is up to Ed’s; they have a little boy; but Merle, Art Young’s wife, will hitch Dot to the buggy,” and in a jiffy she is in my presence - *yes, immediate personal presence*.

Well, we did hug just a little to part make up for what we hadn’t done for the past twenty-two years. But she is just as jolly as ever, and says there is the room all ready for you, and you are to occupy it all winter.

“You will remember that, won’t you Eli?”

Well, that seems homelike to be called Eli. It is always Mr. Ruggles or Brother Ruggles ever since I left the old farm. Now I am a boy again, and can go or come as the boy Eli.

Every few days Dot is to draw us to town or out in the country - or my good niece Mollie comes and takes me or us home with her; or I often go to Ed’s pleasant home, where I can sit by the fire and read from his fine library or play with Yvonne, a bright little girl of three, or rock the baby to sleep, or go with Inez to the piano for a little music feast. Across the way from Ed’s lives Jo Dopking and his brother and sisters are near here and at Woodland. This family lived in Keeler Township, joining Hartford, and we were in the same school district. Days and weeks pass too swiftly by, and I must again pack my grips, and so have to say good-bye to those I have learned to love - the Gallops, the Farmers, Clarence, Birdie and Sister - and away I go for Woodland.

My Visit at Woodland.

Here Cousin Amander meets me with horse and buggy and takes me to his house, where I found a warm welcome in a very pleasant home of his own for two weeks, and I was escorted around the country by my cousin and others, to my great delight. Cousin’s family are all married, and I have met all of them, and found them to be intelligent and agreeable.

At the Ranch Home of My Niece, Molly Cox, and Husband.

From Woodland I was taken to the home of Eben Cox, ten miles away, through a rich farming country, without a foot of waste land. Here I remained two weeks, being taken to the many relatives in this vicinity. My niece Molly and Mr. Cox have a valuable and pleasant home.

At Winter’s, Cal.

But time is up, and Mr. Cox takes me to Winter’s to my nephew Jesse Ruggles’ home, and again I repeat my stay of two weeks, and I have had two additions to mountain scenery, and I have been taken up one canon to the northwest, and another most beautiful and romantic of all - the

winding, circling up and down ways, fruit of every kind, lemon trees, hanging full and fairly yellow with ripe lemons, grapes in abundance.

Then south and east for many miles and all the way is fruit, fruit, fruit. I have become quite attached to this large family of Jesse's, for though not rich, they take more pleasure in each other than most families, though in riches abundant. Here I met some twenty of my relatives. But now I am off again and arrive safe at my Cousin Byron Jackson's office, 411 Market street, San Francisco.

In San Francisco.

He takes me in his automobile to his residence, where I met his amiable wife and son Byron of nine years. My room looks out on San Francisco Bay and waters of the Golden Gate. How nice it is that again I can spend two weeks in this interesting city. I go to the Presidio with cousin in his auto and he takes me through the soldiers' camp grounds, with its clean, winding roads, closely filled with slim saplings about 25 feet high, and so thick you could hardly crawl through them. Then to the Forts, where cannon are ready to defend the Golden Gate pass. Four times I visited Golden Gate Park, and then was reluctant to leave it. Here in San Francisco and Oakland I found Cousin Amander's daughters. Then at the Cliff House, where is a fine view of the ocean and seals on Seal Rock.

And now I board an ocean coast vessel for Seattle. The first part of the ocean ride is very pleasant, the passing through the Golden Gate (the only one I know of on earth), keeping in sight of shore most of the way, but finally many of us passengers seemed to be attracted to the side of the boat and most of us contributed to the feeding of shark or whatnot we neither knew or cared. But I knew I was glad when the whistle blew for Seattle. Here I boarded a new trolley car line to Tacoma, where I soon found my daughter Iva's home, and would you believe it, here I met my wife, who had come with Iva from our home in Oak Park some four weeks previous, and next day was born to Charlie and Iva Olcott a son, healthy and fair. When I was a schoolboy I learned that this was a country of much rain, and in fair view from this city stands Mt. Rainier. But citizens of Tacoma call it Mt. Tacoma. Viola and I went out to different places of interest on trolley cars, boarded the little steamer to Seattle, where we visited Charles Congleton and wife, and had a fine view of the city; had a pleasant day, and returned at night to find that it had rained all day in Tacoma.

Off For Home.

On May 4th I started for home via the Canadian Pacific, leaving my wife to come later, as she did via Salt Lake. I took trolley line to Seattle, where the steam cars took me north to a junction connecting east from Vancouver. This is a new country. Much has been heavy pine where now great stumps and brush hold sway; here and there a few acres are cleared, and in that is somebody at home very likely happier than most kings. The approach to the mountains is very gradual. Little farms here and there, and some are homes of Indians. Often a papoose is on the

fence; their straight, black hair and the dogs and pony tell the rest. The thicket becomes more dense, the river is more rapid, and we begin to see the foothills. To follow the windings of the Frazer river, as in a few places it glides smoothly along as if resting for the next great battle with rocks that lie just ahead, and then goes leaping and dancing as if a life force lay beneath. Now we are climbing, and an engine is placed at the rear. Most of the mountains stand out separate and are covered with evergreens; they are pretty for a landscape picture, yet not so majestic as where I crossed going west. Occasionally we go between almost perpendicular rocks that reach skyward, but lack the beautiful colors. Now our track is cut in the mountain side and on our right we look away, way down to a small stream, and now our train turns to the right, crossing this deep gulch, and we are suspended in air on trestle-work till we cross to the opposite bank, where, for a short distance, we are going westerly, where we come to another deep chasm coming from the south, and cross this twice before we are again on our eastern way. We are nearing the top of the Rockies. Here is snow and a health resort, and they are shoveling out some snow to get down to the ground, and the snow is piled high and is deep. Cold? Yes pretty cold. Soon after leaving this locality we find that we are following up one of these deep chasms; the stream of water is now on our left, and away way down it dashes and foams furiously. Now two engines have been placed in the center of the train, and we can hear the four engines puffing with all their might, and yet the train goes very slow. The grade is so steep that we notice it perceptibly. But the stream of water is now much nearer and is fast nearing us, or, in truth, we are nearing its source. Now the engines have easy work; the tiny creek is on a level with us; often we cross the little brook, and now we are at its source, a wee bit of a lake on the top of the Rocky Mountains. Now three engines are removed, and we glide along so easily on the eastern slope.

It was just at dark when we left this summit, and no doubt we passed most beautiful scenery, as we must have done, the past two nights. Daylight finds us gliding over a smooth plain, with no more in sight than as if in the boundless ocean. Not a tree or shrub or even a sage brush. Barren as a desert yet seemingly solid ground, awaiting, it is said, the irritating ditch to make it fertile. But with the thermometer at 55 degrees I beg to be excused.

The second day begins to show signs of life - a few shrubs, a shanty and here a herd of cattle, the rancher getting ahead of the season and other herders for the summer grazing, but not a sign of grazing is here. They ship hay by train or carloads. And now we have here and there a little town, and gradually getting to a better civilization.

Stop at St. Paul over night and have an interesting ride next day to Chicago, and arrive at Dr. Ruggles' home at 10 P.M. all safe and sound, and I have enjoyed much of beautiful scenery and met many friends and relatives that will be a pleasant memory while memory endures.

[END.]

The accompanying song was sung by Father and Mother Ruggles on the occasion of Father's last birthday. It had always been the custom for Mother to give a Birthday Dinner in honor of each

Recollections of A Busy Life, by Eli Fayette Ruggles (ca 1904) - continued

member of the family - and good dinners they were, too. Mother was always noted for being a good cook, and on this particular occasion there was a goodly number of friends present, and everything was jolly and bright.

After the congratulatory speeches a song was called for. Father stood by Mother's side, his arm about her waist, and as they sweetly sang this good old song there was scarcely a dry eye in the room. I realized for the first time that there would not be many more, if any, meetings like this. I felt that I would not hear his dear voice much more, and such was the case - he scarcely sang again.

Harry Lyman Ruggles.

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We're Growing Old Together.

Allie Toland Criss. E. F. Miller. Last Verse by E. F. Miller.

We're growing old together, wife, Our heads are silvr'ing fast;
Our race of life will soon run, All cares will soon be past;
For years we've helped each other, wife, Thro' rough and stormy weather,
But soon the clouds will disappear, For we're growing old together.

Chorus.

For years we've helped each other, wife, Thro- rough and stormy weather,
But soon the clouds will disappear, For we're growing old together.

Ah! well do I remember, wife, Those happy days long flown,
When we together crossed the fields, Where the hay was freshly mown;
Those summer days flew swiftly by, And winter crossed the heather,
But our love is just as strong to-day, Tho' we're growing old together.

It seems but yesterday, dear wife, I stood with manly pride,
In the village church close by our home, And claimed you for my bride;
And solemn were the vows we made, And said we'd both endeavor,
To cheer each other day by day, While growing old together.

But best of all to me, dear wife, We know our Savior's love,
His Word has cheered us all the way, And leads to realms above;
We soon shall gain our mansion fair, Our home beyond the river,
Where we shall see our Savior's face, And reign with Him forever.
Chorus - Last Verse.

We soon shall gain our mansion fair, Our home beyond the river,
Where we shall see our Savior's face, And reign with Him forever.

Recollections of A Busy Life, by Eli Fayette Ruggles (ca 1904) - continued

Introduction & Brief Descendant Chart for the families mentioned in this book:

Recollections of A Busy Life, By Eli Fayette Ruggles, H. L. Ruggles & Co., Publishers, (published circa 1904), by Peggy B. Perazzo, (925) 754-8460).

This copy of the book was sent to my great grandmother Augusta Florence (RUGGLES) SEARS/WALLACE/SEARS in Esparto, California, where she was living at the time, from H. L. RUGGLES, 142 Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois. August's parents were Fernando C. and Leanna (KINKLE) RUGGLES who lived first in Placerville, El Dorado County, in 1849 and about a year later in Woodland, Yolo County, after migrating from Michigan with other family members. States and towns that our Ruggles families lived in include the following: Luzerne County, Pennsylvania; Illinois; Milan, Ohio; Norwalk, Ohio; Berrien County and Van Buren County, Michigan; and Placer County and Yolo County, California et al.

(The book contains the photographs of Eli Fayette RUGGLES and his wife Viola. If you would like me to send you a jpeg scan or photocopy of their photographs, let me know.)

(Note: The following family material is not documented or verified. I am presenting it first so you will see the structure of the family.)

Partial List of Descendants of Eden Ruggles

(1) Eden RUGGLES (1766 - 1855) b: 13 May 1766 in Brookfield, Connecticut, d: 19 Jan. 1855 in Huron Co., Ohio; Number of children: 11; married Artemesia JACKSON (1771 - 1864) b: 12 Mar 1771 in Brookfield, Connecticut, d: 02 Feb. 1864 in Huron Co., Ohio, Number of children: 11.

(2) Joseph RUGGLES (1792 - 1875), b: 04 Oct. 1792 in Brookfield (near Hartford), Connecticut, d: 02 Aug. 1875 in Decatur, Van Buren Co., Michigan; Number of children: 10; married Sylvia BROWN (1800 - 1870), b: 30 Aug. 1800 in Wilkes Barre, Luzerne Co., Pennsylvania.

Children of JOSEPH RUGGLES and SYLVIA BROWN:

1. FERNANDO CORTEZ RUGGLES, b. 26 Apr 1819, Luzerne Co., Pennsylvania; d. 13 Mar 1896, Woodland, Yolo Co., California. Fernando married Leanna KINKLE (1820 - 1900), b: 05 Dec. 1820 in Delaware Co., Ohio, d: 04 Oct. 1900 in Hanford, Kings Co., California. Number of children: 9.

2. FREMAN D. RUGGLES, b. 14 Jan 1821, Pennsylvania; d. Abt. 1898, Hartford, Van Buren Co., Michigan. Freman married Aravesta WOODMAN. Number of children: 3.

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- 3. MARTIN L. RUGGLES**, b. 20 Mar 1823, Pennsylvania; d. Abt. 1864, Chicago, Cook Co., Illinois. Martin married Sarah Ann TAYLOR. Number of children: 4.
- 4. LYMAN BROWN RUGGLES**, b. 03 Apr 1828, Pennsylvania; d. 30 Oct 1896, Near Hanford, Kings Co., California. Lyman married Martha Ann DEXTER (1838 - 1887), b: 13 May 1838 in Illinois, d: 08 Aug. 1887 Near Hanford, Kings Co., California. Number of children: 6.
- 5. LEWIS RUGGLES**, b. 27 Jul 1830, Ohio; d. Abt. 1902. Lewis married Laura BRONNER. Number of children: 4.
- 6. ELI FAYETTE RUGGLES**, b. 02 Nov 1833, Ohio; d. 19 Aug. 1904, Oak Park, Illinois. Eli married Viola (?), b: 1836 in Pennsylvania, Number of children: 7.
- 7. JOSEPH WESTLEY RUGGLES**, b. 02 Dec 1837, Ohio; d. Abt. 1898, Oak Park, Oakland Co., Michigan. Joseph married Luana BALDWIN, d: Aft. Mar 1922. Number of children: 2.
- 8. SYLVIA MARIA RUGGLES**, b. 16 Apr 1840, Michigan. Sylvia married David S. BALDWIN. Number of children: 3.
- 9. ALVIRIA MELVINA RUGGLES**, b. 1842, Michigan; d. 05 Dec. 1849, Decatur, Van Buren Co., Michigan.
- 10. LUCRECIA ARDILLA RUGGLES**, b. 06 Apr 1845, Hartford, Michigan; d. 19 Mar. 1922, Hanford, Kings Co., California. Lucretia married John Westley YOUNG, d: 16 Oct. 1914 in Hanford, Kings Co., California. Number of children: 4.

Recollections of A Busy Life, by Eli Fayette Ruggles (ca 1904) - continued

Peggy Barriskill Perazzo

4109 Isabella Court, Antioch, CA 94531

(925) 754-8460

pbperazzo@comcast.net

Yolo County CA USGenWeb Project Coordinator

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<http://www.cagenweb.com/yolo/>

Stone Quarries and Beyond: Quarry Workers - Stone Cutters & Stone Carvers - Historical

Dealers of Stone & the Finished Products

<http://quarriesandbeyond.org/>