

In the Fall of 1980 I asked my parents to write their memories. It was fortuitous. My mother had cancer and by Spring of 1981 she could no longer communicate by speech or in writing. She died Aug, 1981. Dick Bernard.

THE "IN-BETWEEN" YEARS:

Henry Bernard and Esther Busch Bernard recall the college and teaching years between high school graduation (1927) and marriage (1937)

By Esther, recalled January, 1981: [Editor note: JAMES TOWN]
Esther graduated from St. John's at age 17] Ruth Willy was a senior in my class at St. Johns Academy and she knew of a teaching vacancy in her district. I applied and got the job. I left about the first of October - it was an eight month school - and went by train to Rugby. The Willy's met me at the station and I stayed with them for the first six weeks. When the weather got cold we decided that I should stay near my school as the car was hard to start and not too dependable. I went to board with a family of eleven who lived about a half mile from the schoolhouse.

That first year of teaching was a disaster and the school board members asked me to resign at Christmas time so I did and went back home. There were thirty pupils in the school and five of them were boys about sixteen years of age, much taller and bigger than I. I would ring the bell after recess and nothing happened until they were good and ready to come back to the classroom. I might add I weighed under a hundred pounds at that time so wasn't too impressive size wise.

I helped at home the rest of the term but was determined to try teaching again. Besides money was tight as we were nearing the stock market crash of 1929. Jobs were scarce but I finally got a contract for a seven month school near Wishek, North Dakota. This was another German-Russian settlement and there were 32 pupils. I decided not to let the students get the upper hand although they were about as big and unruly as the first bunch. I managed to hang onto that job for the seven month term and signed a contract to teach in a smaller school in the district the next term. The people I stayed with the first year couldn't talk English and I tried to teach Mrs. Brosy by asking her what the German name for the object was and then I would tell her the English name. The second year I stayed with the Link's and they were an English family. I stayed with them for two years. Both were seven month schools and when school was out dad would come after me in the car and I would spend the summer at home.

One thing I remember about the Brosy household at Wishek was the smell of burning cow manure in the house in the morning. They used cow chips for fuel and the children went through the pastures with buckets in the late fall to gather chips for at least part of the winter fuel. Meals were very simple but always wholesome. almost every morning for

Napoleon
Nov 14 - 1932

Dear Lu

Here's the dope!

I'll be seeing you

Saturday nite unless

you say nay! Lots of

love and take care of

your cold -

Esther B.

A letter from Esther Busch to her sister Lucina in November, 1932. What was up??? The note was written on the back of the letter which appears on page 118-

(Should the copier fail, this is the letter: Dear Lu, Here's the dope! I'll be seeing you Saturday nite unless you say nay! Lots of love and take care of your cold. Esther B.) A note: Esther's handwriting never did change very much!!!

Dear Esther:

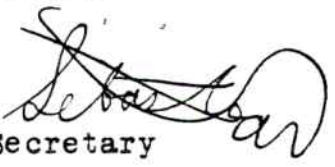
STRICT ORDERS GIVEN BY
Ignatious Schaffer & Jack

Just a brief explanation about our diplomatic communication which was among us last night. Here runs the wording _____ Ignatious Schaffer likes to take in a dance at Wishek this coming Sat. and he will take Jack and me in case we get a woman for him And he start to talk about your sister _____ Well I told him I'll do the surveying if he likes to take your sister so bad but I'll be in the same car so i aggeed with him and Jack of course made a practice of taking you SO I'LL BE neutral I--guess, which usually happens to the chauffeur. That is if Jack and Ignatious consider me to be of some benitif to them. I really helped to dope out this plan.

IF THE ROADS ARE PASSABLE

Yours with LOVE
Schaffer, Braun and Ich incooperated in

Please run those incredible words to your sister "Lu"
this morning, because I don't ^{K'rrw} the station


Secretary

breakfast Mrs. Brosy made a kettle of oatmeal and heated a container of milk. We had hot milk on our oatmeal and in our coffee. She always seemed to have prunes or other dried fruit for breakfast too. Sleeping rooms were never very warm and I shivered plenty when I got up to dress and wash a bit in the morning. I had a downstairs bedroom, which was the warmest bedroom in the house, but even that was plenty cold.

Brosey's were not Catholic but always saw to it that I got to the country church on Sunday. Sometimes they waited for me but other times Catholic neighbors would bring me home after church.

By Henry, recalled February, 1981: [Editor note: Just before Henry graduated from high school in 1927 both the source of his families livelihood, the Flour Mill where Grandpa was chief engineer, and the bank in which the family held their savings, went bankrupt.] The spring of 1927 was a gloomy one. Here I was graduated from high school. Jobs were very scarce and the folks were existing on a meager pension that dad had from the Army and the nighwatchman work he did at the closed mill. **CRAFTON**

In July I saw an ad for a porter in a bakery in Grand Forks. I went down on a Friday night on the train. Applied for the job and got it. \$15 a week with board. On Saturday I was a trainee and the fellow whom I replaced showed me the ropes. Mother's cousin Ernest Collette helped me find a room about ten blocks away on Chestnut Street. I had stayed in the hotel the Friday night and paid for my room with the last money I had, a \$2.50 gold piece that my uncle had given me the Christmas before. The Sunday was a long, long day. I had no money for food so I did not eat until Monday when I reported to work at the bakery. The smell of food was overpowering but I managed to get enough food so that I did a passable job on that first day. Had to report at 6 a.m. and work almost constantly until about 7 in the evening. Usually we had a break in the afternoon for an hour or so but not always. Scrubbing the hardwood floors from the front of the store to the doors of the firebox of the oven was a daily occurrence. The boss insisted on hot water, not from the tap but boiling hot water that we heated in an open kettle. Also frequent changes of water. "You can't wash clean with dirty water" I was told over and over again until I got the message.

I worked at this job until about the middle of January when I took sick and went home for a rest. There were several things I can recount about this time at this job. I bought a record player and brought it home on Christmas eve. I took off from work in time for the evening train and then came back on the evening train on Christmas day. I had to do my mopping and cleaning up after I got back to town. I

did the same on New Year's eve and had to mop up after I got back on New Year's day. The bakery was not open on these two days.

During the month of August I was told of the death of my Uncle Joe Bernanrd and borrowed one of the fellows car to go to Grafton for the funeral. I had done my mornings work and then did the cleaning after I got back to town about 6 in the afternoon.

In the fall I joined the Knights of Columbus and made use of the club rooms in my off hours. I maintained my membership through several councils in the state and had my last active membership in the Minot Council. I had planned to join a Canadian council while we were up there but the transfer was so slow that we were back in the states before it came through. That was the only secret society that I ever joined. I was not and am not a joiner.

While working at the bakery I decided to take a bookkeeping course at a commercial college in Grand Forks. I never did finish the course. I also took a correspondence course in railway mail and finished it and took a few examinations for postal service. I was appointed to three but by the time these appointments came through I was already committed to school teaching.

I went into teaching in a rather unusual way. My cousin Ernest Collette had a growing family and sometimes they would have me babysit the kids while they went out on the town. Apparently they were sufficiently impressed at my ability to babysit that they suggested I apply for teaching.

By summer school time I had recovered from my failing physical health and after a stint at working on the railroad and cutting potatoes I had enough money for a quarter at Valley City Normal.

We chose Valley City over Mayville because a friend of the family had gone to Valley City so she went with Mother and Dad and myself to Valley City on a Sunday morning. We left real early and were able to get to Valley City for the 10:30 Mass at St. Catherine's with Monsignor Baker as the parish priest. I was able to get a room in the third floor attic room of a house about three blocks away from the college. There were two double beds and I had three roommates. Thus began my college life.

We were told by the older students that we should get to the auditorium early to get front seats so that we could enroll early. That meant the crack of dawn - 4 a.m. Someone found a window of the auditorium open (on purpose?) and we started to crowd in. I imagine that 500 students were in their seats before the doors officially opened. The

faculty was surprised ???? but good natured about it and we enrolled.

At that time we could start teaching after one quarter of college provided that we had taken our senior reviews in high school I hadn't and even though I had a contract to teach a rural school near Grand Forks [Allendale] I had to (THOMPSON) give it up because I did not get in the number of required courses necessary to begin teaching that fall of 1928.

I did the usual class work during this summer quarter. There were 1200 students enrolled and classes were large. I took the first psychology course from Mr. Kolstoe that summer plus the senior reviews I should have taken in high school.

At that time the summer registration fee included the tickets to the Chatauqua that was held each summer in Valley City. It was near the end of the Chatauqua era and I believe that was the last big one held in Valley City. We used to walk the distance from the college area to the park every night for the various educational entertainments. I do remember that many people from the area would come and camp out to take in the activities. It was the custom.

I don't remember many of the events that took place. I do remember Billy Sunday, a fire eating evangelizer, who preached fire and brimstone for about an hour. I don't remember much of what he said but his antics were sometimes bizarre. He would start his sermon very calm but as he warmed up to the occasion he would take off his coat and tie, jump up and down on the stage and sometimes as a climax he would get up on the table and shout. No microphones so they had to be leather lunged in order for the audience to hear. I think most people were more impressed with his antics than with what he said.

I started playing tennis that summer and also many of the other intermural sports that the athletic coach brought out for us. I must have impressed him as later in the early fall he asked me to come to the training session for college football. I did not go as I did not have the money to go back to school that fall quarter.

There were few cars with the students and very few married students going to school. The married student time had not yet come. The dances were populated by mostly girls. Ten to one was the average so we fellows had plenty of chances to dance or learn to dance. We had little dances in the little gym which was the third floor near the auditorium area. Can't remember what kind of music we had but we were very strictly supervised. These were in the afternoon.

I ate at the dormitory that summer. We had three meals a day. Usually there were few for breakfast. Lunch and dinner were very formal. We had table assigned to us with either a faculty member or some mature person at the head of the table. Two were named to bus the food from the kitchen so if we were at the far end of the dining room we were handicapped by the distance. Sometimes we tried to get a head start so as we were singing the doxology we would try to move up into the area between the two halls and then make a mad dash to the kitchen for the food. Sometimes we were successful.

Sunday dinners were special and it seems that we most always had homemade ice cream. We were also given a sack lunch for supper as there would be no dining room meals at that time.

All in all I learned a lot that summer in the classroom and out. It was the first great experience I had with the outside world. I made a lot of friends but only two stand out in my memory now. Miles Stanton and John Jonkman. Wonder if they are still living and where they are now? I did meet some of the girls but nothing special developed. I had been a loner for a long time and still had that tendency. Would rather go along by myself than with anybody.

At that time they had full summer quarters so we got out of school the last part of August. Harvest was in full swing at home when I got there so I had a chance to work on a bundle team for a threshing crew. We got \$5 a day and board and worked from before sun up to after sundown. We had to take care of our horses before breakfast, have breakfast and the boss expected the first bundle to go into the machine by 7 a.m. Long hours of work often times practically freezing in the early morning and very warm during the day. We did not work on Sunday but we were expected to care for our teams on this off day.

After this was over we went out picking potatoes for ten cents a bushel. This was piece work and the more you picked the more money you got. I averaged about 100 bushels a day. This work ran out and then I had a job at the poultry house feeding chickens to get them in shape for butchering. We had many thousands of chickens in batteries that contained about six levels. Several chickens were put into each pen and we gave them a high powered mash for several days before they were ready to be processed. This was not so good in pay but I don't remember exactly how much we got. This ran out about Christmas time. Then I loafed around home until after Christmas and then went back to Valley City to school again. they gave me a birthday party and presented me with a suitcase for my travels to school. I thought and everyone else thought that I would be on to school until I finished

the course. I had enough money for a quarter and so in March I came back home and got part time work until summer school started again.

At the end of the summer quarter I got my first elementary certificate and was qualified to teach school. This was in 1929 and luckily the school I had to give up the year before was again open and I was ready for school. The quarter ended in late August and dad came down after me and took me directly to my boarding place at Jack Bennett's about two miles from school. School started on the following Monday, so I had just Saturday to prepare to receive the pupils.

The Bennett home proved to be my home while teaching the first three years. It was a modern home complete with indoor plumbing and hot water heat. I had my own room and was well taken care of. The Bennett's were living on just about hand to mouth existence and I am sure that the \$25 that I paid each month for room and board made the difference between extreme want and comfortable living.

The Wall Street crash came that fall [1929] even though I didn't realize that hard times were upon us. I got \$80 a month and thought I was in luxurious living. I didn't save much money, enough so that the next summer I could go back to school for more schooling and being with the new friends I had made in college. I just didn't realize it was necessary to save.

Usually I got back to Bennetts just before school was to begin and lived a spartan existence the first month until I got my first check. I remember that the church always had its fall supper before the first month of school was out and I had to scratch to find the necessary dollar to pay for the meal that was a big part of this bazaar. I didn't learn from year to year. I spent everything I had. Sometimes I had to borrow on my watch for the \$5 or \$10 I needed to tide me over until the next payday. I really didn't learn thrift until I was married and from then on we didn't live up to or beyond our means.

I was naive and didn't bother checking on contracts. The second year I got it later in the fall and so it was the third year. I was stuck on \$80 a month for nine months. I didn't worry about it and just came on year after year. However, in the early spring of the third year I had a visit from one of the board members. After preliminary greetings she came out with this startling statement: "We hired our new teacher last night". Quite an unusual way of being fired but I did not think much of it at the time.

I can mention that near the close of that third school year the Bennett's lost their farm and had to move out. I stayed there until the last day that they were there. I did