

We Were Pioneers
Elbert E. Satterlee
1949-50
Transcribed KMJ 2/2004

Foreword:

Dear Satterlee relation,

As most of you know, my grandfather, E. E. Satterlee, wrote a memoir entitled "We Were Pioneers." Part of it was published in Goldie Satterlee Moffatt Fowler's Satterlee genealogy, Vol. II, p. 107a-107g. In a footnote Goldie said, "There are several more pages to this story by Rev. Elbert Elroi Satterlee, written in 1950 (a year before his death), but his youngest daughter, Henrietta Satterlee Misbach, has not sent them to the compiler as of August 1972."

Well, now I know why Mama never got around to it. There are more than "several pages" more. I recently had occasion to dig into the trunk full of family keepsakes in my garage and found the manuscript, which runs well over 100 pages. It turns out there is both a rough and a final draft of most of it, but it is still over 60 pages of text, plus there are several unfinished fragments that may or may not have been incorporated in the final draft. Until I finish transcribing it, I am not even sure it is all here; the final draft appears to end in mid-sentence, but there may be rough draft material that goes past that point.

I have started transcribing the manuscript and thought I would distribute what I have done so far, rather than waiting until it is all finished. There are about 40 more pages of the final draft, which I hope to get done in the next few weeks. In the meantime, you can enjoy the attachment. I have not yet transcribed the part of the manuscript that was published in Goldie's book, but eventually I will get the whole thing into electronic form.

A bonus is that much of the rough draft is typed, with characteristic thrift, on the backs of carbon copies of letters that Grampie wrote to various family members and others in 1949. I hope to transcribe those for circulation as well.

Please feel free to forward this document to anyone else you think would be interested in it. I hope Bill Satterlee will be able to post it on his web site, www.satterlee.org.

Katie Misbach Jaques

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Fragment 1

[The sheet that appears to be the first page of this fragment is typed single-spaced on onion skin; the second two pages are double spaced, and there seems to be a missing word "of" linking the first page to the second. I am not absolutely certain that this page 1 originally connected to this page 2 and 3, although the text appears to flow reasonably well.]

The name Satterlee is the anglicized form of the Norwegian farm name "Satherlie." It designated a "sather" or sheepfold in the "lie" (pronounced "lee") of a mountain. Evidently this farm was adopted as the family surname whatever the Christian name of the sire was. He and all his became Satherlies.

There is some evidence, though I know not whether it be reliable, that the descendants of this family reached England via France where the name became DeSoterle; but in England we first meet the name in the person of the Rev. William Satterlee of the Church of England who had his "living" in Suffolk where the manor house and the Satterlee church until recent years has been identified. What the past fifty years might have done to the ancient buildings I am not prepared to state; but it is significant that the church has his name.

By a "grapevine" sort of route there was handed down through John Satterlee, my father's first cousin, the son, I believe, of Doctor Franklin Satterlee and through my own first cousin, Marion, son of William Wilson Satterlee, the information that very early in the English colonial settlement of America there were three Satterlee brothers emigrated to America and settled, probably within a circle not more than 100 miles in diameter of which the centre was New Amsterdam (now New York) including parts of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. To one of these brothers, Nicholas, our family line leads; and probably as to time, to the early part of the 17th century (counting three generations in a century). My great-grandfather, Elisha, was a son of the third generation of American Satterlees. He was the father of nine sons: Milton, Ora, William Irving, Curtis, Ossian (my grandfather), Manlius, Zenas, Doctor Franklin, and Cyrus; and of two daughters, Olive and Maria. It is my plan to append a copy of the complete American line to the account I am now undertaking.

My father had only one brother and no sisters; but he did have a double cousin, a Mrs. Speenburg, whom it was my privilege to meet while visiting cousin John in Chicago about 1910. I do not know by which of the brothers she was sired and I do not remember her Christian name but she went by the name [*handwritten in blank: Emily*] Satterlee Speenburg. Her husband was a physician practicing, I believe, in Rockford, Illinois.

[Emily Satterlee was a daughter of Milton Satterlee and his first wife, Rebecca Pease, who was a sister of Elbert's grandmother, Susan Washburn Pease. Thus the "double cousin" relationship. Emily's and Richard Baxter's fathers were brothers, and their mothers were sisters. Milton and Rebecca had 9 children, of whom 8 survived to adulthood, so Ossian and Susan's two sons had a bunch of double cousins. Emily was b. 25 Apr 1843 at Waddams Grove, Ill. and d. 22 Dec. 1931 at Sumner, Wash. She was m. #1 in 1862 to Robert Marsden Delapp, and had a daughter, Lilla Delapp, b. 1 Aug. 1863, m. Dr. Brundage. Emily was m. #2 in 1869 to Peter Speenburg, and they had two daughters, Carrie Artimicia Speenburg, b. 2 Dec 1870, and Julia Ione Speenburg, b. 25 Aug 1873. See Goldie Satterlee Moffatt Fowler, Vol. II, p. 125.]

Our meeting was arranged by John. He said simply "We are going out to Rockford to meet some friends I want you to know." She lived at the home of a brother whose name I have forgotten in the city of Rockford. We arrived in the evening rather late – about ten, or maybe it was earlier. After I had met the Satterlees of that home she came in and John introduced me to her as a son of Richard. She seemed dazed for a moment; then she came to me, threw her arms around me and kissed me, her face wet with tears and said: "The son of my own dear cousin Richard! I had never even hoped for a privilege like this." To say that I was embarrassed and a bit confused is putting it mildly. I was totally unprepared for such an event; but as the conversation proceeded I recalled I had heard Father speak of her and even the name "Speenburg" began to seem like a familiar name. I suspect I had heard him speak of her by name.

Father's brother, Wilson, as he was commonly known, began his life as a homeopathic physician; self-educated, I believe, in the village of Elysian, Minnesota, where he had, in connection with his practice, a drug store. Being of Wesleyan Methodist

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extraction it is not surprising that he drifted into the Methodist Episcopal church and in the 1860's became a member of the Minnesota Conference of that church. Some old Conference minutes which I now have show him to be pastor of that church in Waseca. Later, I believe, though it may have been previously, he was pastor of the church in Saint Cloud, and still later of Seventh Street Church in Minneapolis. He was deeply interested in the temperance and prohibition movement which culminated in national prohibition in 1920. In the late eighties and early nineties he was professor [of] Political Economy in the U.S. Grant Memorial University of Athens, Tennessee, which conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity about 1888. After his retirement from active work, which came early because of impaired health, he lived on his fruit farm at Eureka, Minnesota during the summer and spent his winters in Athens, dying in his 57th year at the home of his daughter, Mrs. James Pye, in Minneapolis early in 1892.

My father was Wilson's younger brother. He was born at Lena, Stephenson County, Illinois, April 25, 1840. That was then frontier country and educational privileges were crude and uncertain. If a child of six were in school at all it was only because his parents insisted upon it if there were any available schools. If not he just picked up what he knew of the "three R's" and since there was no grading it was not uncommon for a child just to stay in a room, maybe two or three years, partly because he chose to do so or because his attendance was so infrequent as to require several years to meet the instructor's idea of his ability to proceed. Accordingly my father's education was largely picked up along the way of life.

While I am not sure of it, it is my opinion that he was born into a Wesleyan Methodist home. His later affiliation with the Quakers or "Friends" was probably due to his marriage, since Mother's family were all of this faith.

I never knew how it happened that grandfather Ossian Satterlee moved from Illinois into Wisconsin; but I do remember Father's speaking frequently of such towns as Richland Center, Ironton, Cazenovia at dates and times which lead me to think that likely they moved into that section about the middle of the 1850's, though it might have been more nearly 1860, and that it was there the two families, the former Mrs. Jones, my mother's mother who was married to Bailey Pearson [date unknown], and the Ossian Satterlees, became neighbors. Father's mother, Susan Pease Satterlee, died there and was interred in a cemetery at Ironton which Father and I visited in the summer of 1886, at which time we believed we had located her grave. Another reason for the migration of these families to Ironton, Wisconsin lay in the fact that iron ore in paying quantities had been discovered there and Father was employed for a time as a teamster who hauled ore from the mines to the smelters. It could well be that this fact of lucrative employment was the motive leading to the change.

Mother was born Eunice Jones at Amboy, Miami County, Indiana, November 6, 1837. Her father, and I think her mother too, were of Welsh parentage as the name indicates. I do not know whether her father died in Indiana, or was still living when the family moved to Ironton or to that vicinity. In fact I do not know that I ever heard his Christian name mentioned. I know she had two sisters, Annie and Mary, and that the former married Rubin Overman of Amboy, and Mary, George Overman of Marion, Indiana. I do not know – perhaps I never did know – whether these two Overman men were brothers; but I assume that they were; and also that their wives were both older than my mother. She also had a brother, Francis, Uncle Frank we called him, who lived in Valton when I was a child.

They were married March 13th 1859 by a Justice of the Peace in Ironton and lived in Cazenovia where their first child, Julia, was born on December 10, 1859. The record of her birth shows simply, Richland County, and I am presuming that the place was Cazenovia since the iron industry included that town. But Mary Jane (Jennie) was born March 9th 1861 in Sauk County, presumably at Ironton. The remainder of the Wisconsin-born children are all recorded as having been born in Sauk County: Susan Alice, Aug. 3, 1862; Charles Wilson, June 3, 1864; George E., Jan. 31, 1869; Elbert Elroi, Sept. 5, 1871; Mabel Gertrude, June 5, 1873; Herbert Bird, October 14, 1875; Ora Ossian, March 2, 1878; and Denna [sic] Valentine, February 14, 1880. The only child born out of the State of Wisconsin was Emma Eulella, who was born at Elysian, Minnesota June 25, 1866.

When the Civil War began there were two small children and Father was 21 years old and a Quaker. The Quakers have always been anti-war and have been excused from military service as "conscientious objectors." There was no draft law until it became evident that the Union could only be preserved by [end of this fragment of manuscript]

Fragment 2

[This fragment begins with a page numbered 4, and ends with a page numbered 7. It obviously starts at the beginning of a section.]

Childhood Home

The first home I remember was the final home in Wisconsin which we left June 2, 1880 to go to Howard Lake, Minnesota. The events of this trip will be given in their proper place at the end of this section of my story.

[On the draft the two paragraphs set off below are bracketed and marked "Omit – Personal."]

I have been back four times. The first time was in the summer of 1886 when father, mother, Alice and the three young boys, Herbert, Ora and Dennie, were returning from a visit to Indiana to see mother's people and stopped for several months with Julia and family who were living on a small farm near there. The details of this visit will also be deferred so as to fit into the story chronologically.

The second visit was in 1924 when your mother and I drove back from our first auto trip to Minnesota via western Wisconsin with brief visits to the Goldens at Hudson, Mrs. Wilkowske at Chippewa Falls and Uncle Frank Jones's at Valton. Alma and I visited the old home site together on this occasion twice, I think. The third visit was in 1932 with your mother and Uncle Charlie and Aunt Mamie. The fourth was in 1935 when Charlie, Herbert, Ora and I went together from Charlie's home in southeastern Minnesota. This will be followed with more detail in its proper place.

It was located on the eastern slope of what we called the "west field" where we had our garden and Father raised wheat enough to provide flour for our bread, biscuits and pies. There were also cakes and doughnuts, though I do not remember any of the cakes, except buckwheat cakes, with any sense of nostalgia. The buckwheat cakes with homemade butter and maple syrup; the memory of Mother's apple, blackberry and rhubarb pies, still causes my mouth to water.

To the east of the house was a grassy plot about the size of a city lot as I remember it, was shaded by either four or six mid-size maple trees. I do not think they were of the sugar-maple variety since I do not recall their ever being tapped. The path leading to the spring which was perhaps ten feet beyond the farthest tree east from the house ran alongside a bank with a drop of three or four feet to the small spring-fed creek which took its rise somewhere in the next section across the line south into Richland County. It was not much more than fifty or sixty feet from the south door of the original house to the spring and, when we had cows and made our own butter, Mother kept her milk and butter in the water just below the spring.

We must have moved onto this place before I was a year old since I have no remembrance of the event. I know that my sister Gertrude, who was to the day 1 year and 9 months my junior, was born on that place. Neither have I any recollection of any building enterprise until about 1876 or maybe it was 1878, when the kitchen was built on. I am inferring that the original house was built probably while we were still on Grandfather Pearson's place.

I definitely remember clearing operations on the "west field" and practically all of the work of preparing the east field which was across the little stream east of the house. The slope of that field was not quite so pronounced as the west nor, perhaps, more than half as large. Probably three acres would be a liberal estimate; and ten acres including the west field would account for all the cleared land as it was when we left it. Among other things the great gaunt red oak trees which had been banded with an axe and left to die and which were on their way to the "log-heap" there to await the burning; and the burning logs themselves are all distinctly in the picture; and the smoke scented air and the glowing embers at night combined to give me a feeling of loneliness even at the tender age of probably not more than three or four years. I remember a day, not a beautiful one, when I could see pieces of bark blown by the south wind clear from one of these trees, and a sense of relief that came when the tree was gone.

I remember also at least two harvests, or it might have been three or four merged into one, probably those of '78 and '79. The wheat was cut with a cradle which was a scythe which was fixed on a snathe to which were fastened wooden fingers. The cradle would take a bite into the standing wheat which, when cut, would be gathered in straight bunches and then laid out on the ground in a neat windrow. To get the proper swing of the cradle and be able to lay a nice, straight, even swath was an achievement of which many a middle-aged man boasted. The binder with his rake would follow, raking the straw into bundles and binding them with a double band made of the same, heads all the same direction. When a boy of seven or eight learned how to make a "double band" he had reached one of the heights in the educational process surpassed only by the honors of his first "Commencement." To follow that with the binding of his first bundle was something to be talked about the whole harvest and threshing season through. As a practical pioneer farmer I got no farther than raking the windrow into bundles for brother Charlie to bind.

After the crop was in bundles it was then put into sheaves with a cap sheaf to shed the rain; then into a stack. It was thought that wheat was never just right for threshing until it had stood several months in the stack. The threshing was done by horse-power machines. From a central hub, four, six or eight long sweeps extended out to a point where there would be room enough for a team to be hitched between each two. As I remember it most of these horse-powers, as they were called, were sixteen horse; that is, they had eight "sweeps." The driver had his seat in the centre. Underneath the platform on which he sat a large flat cog-wheel passed over a pinion to which was attached the "tumbling-rod" the other end of which was geared to the separator cylinder and the bundles, after the bands were cut, were fed into the cylinder by the feeder passed over sieves where a rapidly rotating fan blew out of the grain the chaff and small pieces of straw; the straw and much of the chaff being passed on to the "straw-carrier" and the wheat to the ejecting chamber where it was ejected from the separator by a large rotating screw to an elevator and thence down to bag or the half-bushel measures where men sacked it and kept track of the amount. These separators seemed very large to me though I suspect a 24 inch cylinder was about the standard. The coming of the "Dutch machine" or the "Norwegian machine" as the two doing service to our part of the country were lovingly called because of ownership I suspect, was a great occasion and my father's most tremendous crop of possible 100 bushels was all threshed and stored – I do not know where – in a single day.

[Ink notation here: "This should be preceded by an account of the sowing."]

Subsistence

Mother made our clothes. For the boys blue or brown denim heel length pants, and jackets, the former buttoned to the latter, comprised our suits – and our Sunday suits became our second-best or work-day suits as they became worn and patched; or our under-pants in winter; and for the girls calico and – rarely – gingham for dresses with "cotton-flannel" or, probably more properly, "Canton-flannel" for under garments. These dresses for girls and suits for boys were all home made and in the case of some neighbors, may even have been home-spun and woven, though Mother had no spinning-wheel or loom nor sheep to bear the wool.

As for socks, mittens and stockings, they were all home knitted. I could not even venture a guess as to how many pairs of socks and mittens Mother knitted for me. The yarn was supposed to be wool and I guess it was. It was bought in skeins and wound into balls before the knitting process began. I can remember rather frequent experiences of holding a skein on my two arms while Mother wound the yarn off into balls. If we boys lacked in anything necessary to keep us warm in winter I do not remember it; and we had our boots to wear out in the snow. They came well up toward the knee and we could navigate the deepest snow and keep our feet dry. How Father ever got money enough to keep us all shod for the winters I do not know. In the summer we went barefoot.

[End of Fragment 2.]

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Fragment 3

[This fragment consists of four double-spaced typewritten sheets numbered in ink, A, B, C, D. There is also a single-spaced page headed "Additions and Alterations" which contains footnotes to this material, which are reflected in the transcription.]

Children – then War

Father and Mother began their home life either in Cazenovia or Woodstock – or possibly Ironton, Wisconsin. It is to be noted that a little more than three years after their marriage grandmother Susan Satterlee died at Woodstock and my eldest sister, Julia Elizabeth, was born there December 10 (11?), 1859. A strange coincidence at least resides in the fact that my father was a bit under 20 years when he became a father; and that his brother, married three days under nine months, became a father. Also their grandfather was a youth of 20 years, 5 months and 10 days when my great aunt Moriah, his first daughter, was born. Therefore when I recall that our first child was born when I was 21 years, 3 months 17 days old, I have ruined what I thought must certainly be a record in the family for earliest fatherhood – and I have ruined it by this study. 'Twas ever thus; what was it "The Preacher" said about vanity? "Vanity of vanities; all "vanity" is vanity."

And then came Mary Jane (Jennie). How the atrocity of making Jennie out of Jane ever came to be I do not know; but I have been told. And that, again, is another part of my story. And then Susan Alice came to stay with them August 3rd. And then the first son, Charles Wilson¹, June 3, 1864. These last three are recorded in Father's Bible as having been born in Sauk County, Wisconsin. And then came the war.

Of course the war between the States had been in progress four years before the draft that caught my father. Whether he was a Quaker before his marriage to Mother I do not know; but I know his sympathies, according to his convictions, were with them in his attitude toward war. He was an abolitionist in his attitude toward slavery, but he was against war. More than that he had four little children, the eldest in her sixth year; the youngest a babe in arms. If ever a man had a right to wait until his going was imperative it was he. When, according to the will of his country that time arrived, he did not plead "conscientious objection" as a reason why he should be excused. Accordingly he entered the Union Army _____ [date and place to be filled in in final draft]. He served nine months of the year which the draft covered and then came the end of the conflict. I have often heard him say that he was glad that only once did the occasion arise for his firing upon the enemy and they only one shot the effect of which he did not know and was glad he didn't. He agreed with Lowell in the "Bigelow Papers" who has Bigelow say:

"Ez fer war, I call it murder
There ye have it, plain and flat;
I don't want ter go no furdur,
Than my Testament fer that.

Ef ye take a sword and drawr it,
An' should stick a feller through,
Gov'ment ain't ter answer fer it,
God'll send the bill ter you."²

And yet he hated slavery and agreed with Lincoln who in his second inaugural said (I have heard him quote it frequently):

¹ Charles Wilson, who was nicknamed first Charlie and later Charley, which latter form was familiarly used in the family permanently, was born June 3, 1864 are recorded etc. [sic]

² Bigelow Papers, J. Russell Lowell

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Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills it that it shall continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said that "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."³

(Several excerpts from letters written to Mother while he was in the South with incidents on the "march to the sea" will either be inserted here or in some other place relating to other particulars of this story.)

It was a long, hard nine months. He was separated from his young wife, his three little daughters and his infant son; but it can be said of him in this as in many another circumstance in life that he "kept the faith."

On his return from the war came the necessity of making a great decision. The U.S. Government was offering a homestead to each of the Union soldiers who were willing to "go West." Father was hardly in position to qualify for that. His father, Ossian, had moved to Janesville, Minnesota in 1864 where he was operating a saw mill and his brother, Uncle Wilson, was living in that vicinity (at Elysian) and there was work there. Probably this prospective taking of a homestead entered into his going; maybe family ties majored [sic] in the change. I do not know whether they went that summer or waited until the spring of 1866 to make the change; but at any rate they were in Elysian June 25 1866, because their fifth child, Emma Eulella, was born there on that date.

While at Morrystown, Minnesota I became acquainted with the Kisor family who lived at Elysian (or Okaman as it was originally called) at that time and knew both families. Dr. William Wilson Satterlee was their family doctor and owned a drug store in the town and Father worked in the Buckhout saw mill at the same time.

From my sister Jennie have substantially this story: Before moving to Minnesota Father, Mother and their four children went to live, at the end of the war, with Mother's stepfather, Bailey Pearson, and her mother whom he had married after her father's death [date unknown]. It is barely possible that Mother was with them at least part of the time while Father was away in military service.⁴ This place of Pearson's was about two miles from Valton and perhaps not more than a mile E.N.E. of the home I first knew. I remember George and I essayed to cut across through the woods one day going home from Valton and lost our way. It was an anxious hour or two with us, all the stories we had heard of panthers and bears came back to plague us with fear, but we stumbled along and finally came out where we had planned to. There was a small log cabin on this place where they lived, apart from her mother and stepfather.

Grandfather Pearson had a son, Steve. The same came one day to his father and said unto him, "Father, I don't like these intruders, the Satterlees being here at all." So the old man sent his stepson-in-law, the same being my father, and my mother, being the daughter of his wife, away from him. Thus he went to Minnesota. Now it came to pass, as it most always does in cases of two families trying to live together, that Steve told his Dad quite plainly that he was dissatisfied with his stepmother (the same being my mother's mother). And so he said, "Father, I don't give a hang for my inheritance; stake me just a bit," or possibly in other words, "Give me the portion of thy goods which fall to me." And straightway he took his journey to parts unknown.

Now it came to pass when Steve was gone that Grandpa Pearson repented himself and he sent post-haste to Elysian and summoned his stepdaughter and her husband (the same being my mother and father) to come over into Wisconsin and help us. And there was a promise which Jennie said was made that the farm, which to my father meant a chance to begin easily for himself, should be Mother's at his death providing only that Grandmother Pearson should have certain rights as long as she lived. And so in 1867, or maybe it was 1868, they moved back to the little cabin from whence they had been ejected not so long before.

³ Lincoln, Second Inaugural

⁴ Though Father's asking her to remind his father he would appreciate a letter from him would seem to indicate she was with or near his father, at least part of the time. (Well to pause here and decide finally as to the probable location he advised Mother either to sell or mortgage.)

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Now it happened on a certain day that this modern prodigal, Steve, repented himself and said, "I will go back to my father and will offer to serve him and when the right time comes I will demand my title to the farm." The which thing he did. Then my step-grandfather disinherited his stepdaughter, my mother (nee Eunice Jones) and offered her in return eighty acres of timber and stone land, the same being the home of my childhood.

In the meantime my brother George was born in the little log cabin on the Pearson place on January 31, 1869; and again, two years and six months later, came another son into the same family, Elbert Elroy (Elroi), September 5th 1871; and but for him this story had never been written.⁵

[*End of Fragment 3.*]

⁵ Nor you, my children, had ever been!

Fragment 4

[This fragment consists of two double-spaced typewritten pages. Much of it is repeated in the "My First Home" section transcribed below.]

I was born September 5th 1871 in a little log cabin on grandfather Pearson's farm in Woodland township, Sauk County, Wisconsin. Never having been told any of the details of that "party" I judge there was no doctor in attendance – probably just a neighbor woman, not even a licensed midwife. I recall that in each case of the birth of my two youngest brothers a country doctor, Dr. Thompson, was called; but not being at home, just farmed out over night at a neighbor's or at Uncle Frank's, I never saw the doctor on those occasions as far as I know.

My brother George was born in January 1869 in the same cabin. My father having gone after the close of the Civil War to Elysian, LeSueur County, Minnesota with his family of wife and four children probably with the idea of eventually taking a homestead in that new and growing state (my fourth sister, Emma Eulella, was born there), his plans were upset by the urgent plea of Grandfather Pearson to return to Sauk County and take the management of his farm with the promise that the far should eventually become the property of my mother. It seemed like a good deal for them and they accepted it, moving back, I believe, in the summer or fall of 1868 and taking over the new job.

Grandfather Pearson had a son by a former marriage who had left his father and practically renounced all claim to anything belonging to his father; and so the foregoing arrangement. It seems there was nothing on paper that my parents could use to hold mother's stepfather to his bargain; accordingly when the prodigal son returned after my father had become established, the old man relented and sought an arrangement by which the son could be restored to his position and his father's heirship. Pearson owned 80 acres of timber land which he deeded to my parents in the stead of the home place according to the previous arrangement. And so, before I was two years old we had moved to another log cabin on the eighty which was about two miles, as I recall it, from the Pearson homestead.

The house being wholly inadequate, with the help of Pearson the log house which was to be my home until I had almost completed my ninth year was built. It was 16 x 24 as I recall it. About ten feet of the north end of the building which faced south was cut off, the west half to provide sleeping quarters for the older girls; the east, an alcove opening into the living room, was used for my parents' bed with a trundle bed slipping under it during the day. Thus as I recall it, we had one sleeping room entirely enclosed with a board partition about 10 x 12 and the alcove of the same dimensions, leaving a room for all other purposes, including cooking and eating, 14 x 16 for a family of parents and eight children when my sister Gertrude (making the eighth) was born on June 5th 1873.

There was a loft above the ground floor which was reached by a ladder. The second floor was probably not more than eight feet above the first so that the ladder climb was not difficult for Charley and George to negotiate, while in those early childhood years Gertrude and I slept in the trundle bed. There was a partition across the center of the "upstairs," as we called it, and the two boys had one room and Alice, Lella and Jennie (Janie) slept in the other while Julia and Elza were with us. After they left which was, I think, about '76 or '77, Janie and Alice occupied the girls' room downstairs, and after Janie went out to Minnesota to live with Uncle Wilson Satterlee that left the room for Alice and Lella. But since Alice was part of the time working out for the neighbors, Lella and Trudie (Gertrude) graduated to the downstairs bedroom, leaving the loft to we three boys, and finally before going to Minnesota in the spring of 1880 Father had built in a stairway leading to the second floor. The three younger boys, Herbert Bird '75, Ora Ossian '78, and Dennie Valentine '80 thus found room as they came on, the latter being a babe in arms when we left the place in June 1880 for Minnesota.

[End of Fragment 4.]

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Fragment 5

[This is the beginning of the major portion of the manuscript. There are two drafts of most of this material, a rough draft typed double spaced on onion skin (mostly the backs of carbon copies of letters written to various family members and others during 1949), and a final draft typed double spaced on 8-1/2 x 11 typing paper. The final draft begins with a page numbered 12, and no doubt originally included some of the material in the fragments transcribed above, which appear to be rough drafts.]

The rough draft of the section titled "My First Home" flows directly into Page 12 of the final draft. I have transcribed only the beginning of "My First Home" and then picked up the final draft where it fits in.]

My First Home

There were two incidents in my early childhood which I seem to remember; but when I declared that I did, as a boy, Mother always assured me that I had had the stories repeated in my presence so many times that I had probably a mental picture only.

The first was a runaway ox-team my father was driving. Oxen were not driven as we drive horses. There were no reins, no bridles, no bits. They made the required turns, "gee" for the right and "haw" for the left when spoken by the driver and accompanied sometimes by the dangling lash, and rarely did they get in hurry enough to walk fast, say nothing of running; but for some reason or other, possibly because of the cold for it was winter, they started off for themselves; and much as modern car drivers do now, they got into trouble at the first turn, the rear runners of the bobsled skidded, hit and obstruction and tipped the sled over with my mother and I in her arms. We landed in the soft snow much more frightened than hurt.

The second was having my picture – my first one I believe, a tintype⁶ with my brother George; and I remember something of the antics played by that artist to get my attention on the spot.

[End of Fragment 5 in this transcription. However, the rough draft continues, encompassing 46 double-spaced typewritten pages. The remainder of this transcription is from the final draft, which encompasses 62 pages (though missing the first 11) and ends in the middle of a sentence.]

Sometime between my birth and that of my sister, Mabel Gertrude, on June 5, 1873, the events hereinbefore stated took place. The Richard B. Satterlee family moved into the cabin on the 80 acres awarded them for services rendered, and my father began life on his own place. The house was habitable; that was about all. The clearing was a big job and needed the help of a strong man. While my father was able for ordinarily hard work, he could not clear up the place alone. Accordingly, he employed Elza Hutchins, who later married my eldest sister, Julia, and as payment gave him the west forty for his own. As values went in those days, it was ample pay but far from exorbitant.

And so it came to pass that, in the summer of 1872 and the following winter, Father and Elza cut out the tie timber – trees large enough to make a railroad tie with a six-inch face – and made ties. The tie was cut first, the proper length; then it was shaped by chopping into what was to be the face, at distances of about 12 to 16 inches apart. The part between was then split off; then the tie was finished with the broadaxe, the expert tie-maker hewing it down smooth, two six-inch faces opposite each other, and five inches thick. A man could make four or five ties a day, I suspect; but even that may be a high estimate. At the station at Wonewoc the railroad paid 25 cents for each tie which met their specified standard. "Culls," as the below-standard ties were graded, brought considerably less, and some were rejected entirely. But even some of the rejected ties were used in railroad construction. Since hauling them back home for firewood would be like carrying coals to Newcastle, the railroad had the advantage. I have heard Father complain bitterly of the grading which had cut down the total amount he hoped to get from a load of ties, after hiring them hauled to the railroad.

⁶ Still in my possession

The first year also saw the getting out of logs for the new house, which was built, I think, sometime during the summer of 1873. Gertrude was born on this new place but in the old house, as I have the story from Jennie. I have heard Father tell the story of the "raising" on which day the neighbors, perhaps a dozen of them, more or less useful, came and spent the day. When night came, the logs forming the outside walls were all in place, as were also the pole rafters to carry the roof. I was too young to note any of this operation, but I do have slight recollections of the following winter (probably) when the lumber came for the floor, all of which was planed and sandpapered on one side, tongued and grooved, by hand on a bench set up within the walls of the new house. It may have been after we had moved in that Father had his "cooper's horse" in the door end of this first house, where he shaped the hoops which had been cut out of the forest previously. These hoop-poles, as they were called, were of hickory large enough to split, so that each pole would make two hoops. The art of splitting and shaping, and making the tie-ends so they would fit a barrel of specified size, was a fine art indeed, and Father prided himself on the exactness and finish of his hoops. His woodcraft provided also split rails, usually of small red-oak or ash or other straight-grained timber, for fencing the fields.

The house above referred to, and for which the logs were cut probably in the winter of 1872-73, was the first home I remember. The original building was 16 x 24 or thereabouts, faced a low grassy plot to the south and a gentle slope toward the spring on the east end, as stories went in those days, was full two stories high. It is not likely the first story had more than an eight-foot clearance, and probably the second considerably less. There was, in addition, a loft under the roof hardly worthy the name "attic."

There was no fireplace in this building. Stoves had come into rather general use by the time of its building. There was an alcove in the north end, probably eight to ten feet deep, where Mother had her bed and the trundle-bed for the little folk which, when not in use, was shoved under the parental couch. I can remember sleeping there when I was one of them and later when there was company and we had to "double up."

At the first there was only a ladder reaching to the upper floor. I can remember, as my first clear recollection of building enterprise, Father's building the stairs, probably a year or two after the main building had been put up.

The alcove was half the width of the house, so that there was barely room enough at the foot of the bed to pass to the north side of it. Extending on the west wall of the house there was first a curtain hung and later, I believe, a board partition forming a room where our older sisters slept. We older boys, and Lella and Gertrude, graduated from the trundle bed to the "upstairs" for our sleeping quarters. This large room was divided to make two rooms, not too completely enclosed.

The arrangement left us a living room, dining room, kitchen and laundry combined in a room no more than 14 x 16 at best. Yes, and we entertained guests, "believe it or not." There was a winter when we had Dennie and Nathan Overman, sons of Joseph and Annie I believe, with us pretty much all winter; and it marks the period of the most tedious waiting in all my experience. I got hungry in those days, and I can attest the truth of the following:

"Every one of us is waiting,
Watching early, watching late
For our tardy ship of treasure
For the droning sands of fate;
But the weariest of waiters
(In their minds, at any rate),
Are those hapless, hungry urchins
Who at meal-time have to wait."

But the Overman boys were good company and I loved them; and I guess I could have been glad had they stayed always with us – at least with the then prospect of it.

It was probably in the summer of 1878 that the kitchen addition was built. It was, I suppose, about 10 x 12 and had doors and windows both north and south. Thus the cooking and washing were taken out of the living room and done in their proper place. We also ate in the kitchen. When this house was finished, it was reputed to be the best log house in that part of the

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country; and for the kitchen addition the logs were cut, if he remembered correctly, by Charlie when he was certainly not more than fourteen years old.

The whole building was roofed with poles to which home-made shingles, split out of white oak timber, were nailed. As I remember them, they were about thirty inches long and six inches wide, and were laid about half or a little less to the weather, with the joints broken as in ordinary shingles. They were probably somewhat more than half an inch thick. Among the experiences I shall never forget were the night thunderstorms, the almost deafening roar of the rain just above me, the lightning which turned night into momentary day, and the peals of thunder which echoed among the valleys.

The place was wild and beautiful, the slope of the hills mostly gentle; and a grassy plot to the east of the house shaded by six (or maybe it was only four) middle-sized maples, provided an ideal spot for Mother's clothesline. The girls claimed those trees, and since there were four of the girls at home, old enough to know what it was all about, there was a tree for each girl.

But there was something frightful about the whole place as first impressions were made upon me. The place where the west field was carved out was originally the home of some mighty red oak trees. The line in Gray's Elegy returns as an expression of what I saw when, speaking of the pioneer fathers, he says: "How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke." The great trees were banded in the spring, and in the fall the great gaunt things shed their bark as the autumn winds blew strong. Later they were cut down, but in convenient lengths, rolled together in what we called a log-heap, and set on fire. Thus they burned day and night, dying down to embers during the calm of the day, and whipped again in to flame as the morning wind arose. The death of those great trees haunted me and entered into my dreams. What a find such a piece of timberland would be for furniture makers of today; yet then the trees were a liability rather than an asset.

Subsistence

[Note, under this head Father's corn-husking trips to Hesper, Iowa]

I do not know much about the manner in which our food came to us, but I can well believe that it was fraught with problems. Raw materials were at hand; railroad ties, hoops, and barrel staves were in demand. And there were wild bees in the woods and ginseng in the valleys. The bees with their honey were anyone's who could find them and carry away the honey, or, after plugging their entrance at night, cutting into the tree below and above their entrance, take them home "gum" and all. Where Father got his first bees I am not sure, but I suspect it was after that fashion. Then, when they swarmed, he captured and hived them with hives of his own handiwork. He was an expert bee hunter and knew how to take care of them in his own apiary. So we had honey.

The ginseng green, just after being dug, would bring ten to fifteen cents a pound at the store in trade. Well dried, it would bring as much as a dollar. There was scarcely enough of it to make its digging an industry, though I do remember a few times when the older people went out together after it and came back with quite a load, maybe as much as eight or ten pounds, and it could have been more. We boys, led by brother Charlie, kept ourselves supposed with ammunition for our little single-barrel shotgun from our own private "sang" (as we called it) industry. Whenever we had enough to buy "one quarter of a pound of powder, a half-pound of shot and a box of percussion caps," we were hot on the trail of a trade at Lester Clemens's general store in Valton.

There were squirrels, nice big gray squirrels and equally nice little juicy red squirrels. A current story concerning the latter is illustrative of the agility of this little animal. One day while an unnamed hunter was in the woods he saw a red squirrel up a nearby tree. He was just about to shoot when a bolt of lightning headed for that very tree. His nibs the squirrel saw it, ran down that tree and up another, hollering: "Split it! Split it! Split ..." and before he got the "it" out, it did just that thing. There were a few fox squirrels, and rarely a black, and they were all good eating. So that in season, and sometimes doubtless out of season, Charlie mostly, George sometimes, and I – taken along to go about on the opposite side of the tree from the gunman to shake the bushes or maybe throw a stick to scare the squirrel around on the hunter's side – kept the table fairly well supplied with that dainty of the forest. Yes, and there were also pheasants or partridges, and we sometimes got one. But Father, with his rifle, was more certain to return with the fruits of the chase than were we.

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The guns we knew and the rifle were muzzle-loaders, and Father had molds for making the rifle bullets. I knew nothing about the breech-loading gun until I was well along in my teens.

In the forest there were also nuts, butternuts and hazelnuts in plentiful supply. We used to gather both kinds and store them in the house after drying – the hazelnuts on the roof because sometimes there were wormy ones, and the butternuts upstairs or in the loft. Then we shelled the former out of their burrs and stored them for the winter. We climbed the smaller butternut trees and shook the boughs to dislodge the nuts. After the first frost the big trees would shed most of their nuts, and we would gather them from the ground. Occasionally we would find a squirrel storage and get a bag full all in a heap. We never thought of the ethics of such predatory acts.

There were also berries in the woods, blackberries, raspberries both red and black, gooseberries and, in season, strawberries in unfinished clearings, so that we did not lack for sweets. And Mother had her “pieplant” (rhubarb) and her garden with all the summer vegetables. We always raised potatoes in sufficient quantity to last us from the digging to the new potatoes of the next year. Father always thought highly of the “peachblow,” but we raised also the common “early rose” and sometimes the red “mercer.”

I think we always had one cow, though I seem uncertain of the last year or two, and we had chickens. I recall that for some time we had two cows, their names “Peggy” and “Rose.” Mother made her own butter most of the time; but I can recall once when we seemed to be short and Mother for a time, it seems, had to ration it. We could have two helpings, and she must have served our plates. It happened on a day when Lella was about ten. We were all at the table together. Now if Lella was anything besides a lovely little girl, she was also truthful. So it happened that she had already gone beyond two helpings, but, poor kid, she needed more. So she piped up, “Mother, can I have some more butter? I’ve only had twice and a little more.” We all laughed, but Lella got her butter! How I used to go for Mother’s buttermilk! It was a delicacy we all greatly appreciated.

Then we always had our maple syrup. My folks did not essay to make sugar, and I dimly remember Mother’s boiling down the sap on the cook-stove, and I believe my folks teamed up with the Bunkers at least one season. The trees were tapped with a small bit, and spiles [sic] made of split sumac were driven into the tap and a pail set below. The pails were emptied as needed. Some days the sap flowed more freely than on others, so the pails had to be watched, especially after a “sugar snow.” “Sugar bush,” as the maple groves were called, were plentiful; and land owned by nonresidents was anybody’s, so far as sap was concerned, who got there first. The trees were unharmed.

Bread was the “staff of life” then as always, and our small clearing afforded sufficient acreage for possibly five acres of wheat. We raised only the winter variety, and it was sown in late September or early October by hand. So far from the scene, I can still see Father seeding:

Across the field with rhythmic tread he went,
 With open bag of wheat over his shoulder slung,
He cast his handfuls with the master’s bent;
 So evenly, so plentifully flung,
When sprouted seemed a velvet carpet green
Nor here nor there a widened space between.

What if some fall beside the way where birds
 Predatory, feasted greedily upon his toil;
Or what if depth of soil too thick for herds
 To seek for grazing, left the sun to spoil;
Or stones or thorns hilarious mocked his way?
The good ground did for him a harvest hold;
Some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold.

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Come July next year, came harvest; came the cradle, expertly swung to lay a straight swath; and rakers, binders following, and then the shockers, eight, ten, maybe a dozen bundles in a shock, with a cap sheaf or two to shed the rain. Left so to stand for weeks, then stacked in a place convenient for the cows for straw for winter forage and for filling beds for us. Then came either “Dutch” or “Norwegian” horse-power threshing-machine. Either one or the other, sometimes one and sometimes the other. It was only a part-day job. From fifty to a hundred bushels at most. Then it was taken to the grist mill, where it was traded for a brand of flour no modern housewife would think of using, except perhaps for muffins or gruel, and perhaps a bag or two of corn meal – enough to last us till another harvest. The pig or two, or maybe three sometimes, bought in the spring and fed for growth and fattening were “processed” in the early winter. We had fresh pork all winter and some salted down for use to fill in when chickens or wild game were scarce.

Our clothing was homemade, Mother being both seamstress and tailor for the family. We boys were denim, part blue and part brown; coats, jackets, pants; the girls calico, or maybe a Sunday dress of gingham. Some of the better-to-do had “cotton-flannel” underclothes. We Satterlee boys were content to wear two pairs of pants for winter, and maybe an extra coat, handed down by an older brother who had “grown out of it.” When we went to school or out into the woods to get firewood (seemed we never did have enough brought in in the fall to last us all winter), we were warmly clothed. Neither my first suit purchased at a clothing store, nor my first overcoat, nor my first store “underwear” do I have any recollection of. They must have come so gradually as not to have made any impression on me. (Her sewing machine)

Mother knitted all our socks, the girls’ stockings, and mittens for us all. She bought the woolen yarn in skeins at the store, and I guess all of us except the three youngest had our turn of holding the skein on our hands while Mother wound the yarn into a ball convenient for knitting; and she would knit while resting. As the girls grew older, they also learned the art.

Mother also, with the help of the growing girls, did all her washing on a washboard and hung it out to dry, summer or winter, hot or cold. No one had to argue in those days that “a woman’s place is in the home.” To be a wife and mother in those days was a lifetime job. It was out of such experience we got our couplet:

A man’s work is from sun to sun,
But woman’s work is never done.

Then there was the soap-making. The wood ashes were saved, as were also the fats from cooking and the table. “Soap-grease” and wood-ashes lye were the ingredients used. I don’t know how it was done, but I have seen the process. And the soap made, “soft soap” they called it, served every purpose: laundry, scrubbing, washing dishes, bathing, hands and face – everything, I guess. I never saw what Father used for shaving; I think probably that was one exception.

We had no electric lights, no party line on the telephone! Dear me, no! Mother did have one small kerosene lamp, and it was not reserved just for “company.” I recall seeing them light it on long winter evenings to read by; but there was little reading matter except the Bible, Janes’s Almanac, and the “Toledo Blade.” We mostly read by candlelight. And we did have the neighborhood gossipers.

Mother had candle-molds. They were made of tin and fastened together at top and bottom. She used a refined tallow, I believe, or maybe just tallow. She could mold six candles at a time. She would set the wicks (cotton yarn, I believe) in the center of each mold, then pour in the melted tallow, and set the molds out on a stump in the front yard to cool. When they were ready, the process of removing them from the molds was simple; but I confess I don’t know how it was done; yet I presume it was by the simple process of immersing the whole thing in hot water, whereupon the candles would easily slip out. I never saw an electric light in a residence until after I was married. How could I ever do without one now?