



# Orleans County Historical Association

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- father: Solomon Stisser
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(Mrs. Harry Ricker)
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- children:
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1884-1988



M.A.

# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT - INTERVIEW

Mrs. Claudia Stisser Young  
North Gravel Road  
Medina, New York

Claudia S. Young was born August 28, 1884. Her age is 95 years.  
Mrs. Young is interviewed by Miss Ethel Willis of Medina, N.Y.  
The interview is conducted at the home of Mrs. Young.

Y Mrs. Young

W Ethel Willis





# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

Claudia Steiner Young  
Signed

October 17, 1977  
Date

Understood and agreed to:

Ethel M. Miller  
INTERVIEWER

October 17, 1977  
Date

Y I was born on the Platten Road, Lyndonville, N.Y. August 28th, 1884. My father was Solomon Stisser.

W He was a farmer?

Y He sure was! My mother's name was Donna Houseman Stisser.

W Did you have brothers?

Y I had three brothers: Wellington, Harvey and Bruce.

W And did you have sisters?

Y One sister: Ellen Edna. She married Harry Ricker.

W And your husband's name was?

Y Arthur Leo Young.

W When and where were you married?

Y December 24, 1906 in the village of Lyndonville.

W How did you meet Mr. Young?

Y You really want to know? (Yeah). This is the story: I met him at the little lake resort of Shadigee, July 4th, 1904.

W How did you happen to be at Shadigee?

Y I went there with my people to a big doings of some kind. I don't know; a 4th of July celebration.

W And how long after that was it that you were married?

Y December, '06. Two and a half years.

W ... And your husband is now dead? (Yes). When did he die?

Y He died January 6, 1966.

W You had children?

Y I had one boy and four daughters.

W Are they still all living?

Y No, I lost one. Three daughters are living, and my son.

W How many grandchildren do you have?

Y Seventeen.

W Do you have great grandchildren? Too many to count, eh?

Y I have seventeen great grandchildren. There are five generations.

W Do your children live around here?

Y Some do and some don't.

W Where did you live as a child?

Y I lived on the Platten Road east of Lyndonville, N.Y.

W In the house where Harvey ( a brother) later lived?

Y The same one.

- W I'd like to know something about what that house was like. What was the kitchen like? Tell me what was in it.
- Y The kitchen was a big 12 foot room. It had a cook stove, a large table and chairs, an iron sink and a hand pump. (The water) was pumped up from the cistern
- W Did you have linoleum on the floor?
- Y A bare floor.
- W What kind of stove did you have?
- Y We had an iron cook stove and we used wood for fuel.
- W Tell me about the reservoir on the back of the stove.
- Y There was no reservoir in those days.
- W There was no reservoir? Alright. You got your soft rain water from the pump by the sink. What about your drinking water?
- Y That come from the well. The grandchildren taught me this idea: they lived in a house where the well was outside. They said they had running water because they ran out to get it, and ran back with it! (laughter).
- W That's cute!... Now, you said you used wood in the stove? Was the wood cut in your own wood lot?
- Y They trimmed their apple trees and we used apple tree wood and peach tree wood. Oh, it made a hot fire!
- W How was it cut up? Tell me about the buzz saw.
- Y It was done by hand, I think. My father had a cross-cut saw, and I guess they cut it in the barn. They had two men on a log. Then they cut it up in chunks and they split it with an axe.
- W Did they have a chopping block?
- Y They had a chopping block when they cut it for kindling, yes. They had what they called a wedge. They put that in these big chunks, you know. They used to drive it in and then they split it, on that block.
- W Beside the cross-cut saw that they used to cut the tree down, how did they saw it up?
- Y It was already sawed. They cut it down with a cross-cut saw and an axe, using sawhorses. Then they had it in chunks about that long (demonstrates). Chunks was burned in what we called the chunk stove, to heat the living room.
- W Oh, you had a stove in the living room too?
- Y Oh yes. The wood was cut up in pieces and put in the cook stove.
- W I suppose the boys of the family brought the wood in and put it

in the wood box in back of the stove?

Y My father and the two older boys. We all did that. There was what we call a treadmill. It worked with a big belt; a great big long belt. There was a big saw, that big around. About 15 inches across I guess. That was run with a belt... Then they put a team of horses in this thing. You see, it was what they called a horse treadmill... The horses kept treading, treading, and that powered the saw.

W And of course the saw had deep teeth all around the edges?

Y Yes. They used to file it. I remember seeing them with a file.

W It must have been a tricky thing to handle; dangerous?

Y It was dangerous. He would have to watch what he was doing!

W I suppose it would be especially dangerous if it hit a knot! Might throw it off.

What kind of carpets did you have on your floors?

Y Well, we had rag carpets. I remember my living room had a rag carpet on it.

W Tell us how rag carpets were made.

Y They were made on a loom. You sewed the rags about an inch wide and you rolled them in balls and took them to the loom. They would make the carpet, see?

W Sewed the ends of these pieces?

Y Oh yes, sewed them together; made them in balls. Then we took them to a loom. She - the woman made the strips of carpet and you would sew the strips together so the strips would match.

W That would cover the whole floor? And it was tacked down?

Y Yes, around the edges. But you know we put straw underneath, on the floor.... That was to get it warm.

W Besides the house and the barn, what other buildings were there on the farm? Did you have a spring house?

Y You mean before I was married?(Yeah.) No, there was no spring house.

W Was there a smoke house?

Y Yes, where we smoked our hams.

W And then there was another "little house." And what was that called?



- Y Mrs. Jones Locker, I guess. Or Lockup. (much laughter)
- W Describe it to me. How big was it, for example.
- Y Well, it was a little square house; perhaps six or seven feet square. I could tell you if you turned that thing (tape recorder) off. (more laughter) It had three holes. It would be called a rest room now. But it had three holes: a little one and two big ones. Then there was a cover for each hole.
- W A little one for the children; was that lower down? (No). That must have been an interesting place.
- Y At that time everybody had one.... And some of them had a vine or a trellis over them, and some of them didn't. Some sat right out in the open.
- W It had a little window, a hole cut in, for ventilation?
- Y You didn't need ventilation; that come up from the bottom! (laughter) I tell you what: you didn't set there any longer than necessary!
- W It must have been kind of cold in the winter time.
- Y Cold? I guess it was! Snowbanks all around.
- W You had to wade thru the snow to get there?
- Y The boys would shovel a path out in the morning when they did the chores. They shoveled that and they shoveled snow to the barn. Had to shovel snow to the barn to get to the horses and cattle, you know. And had to shovel out the driveway.
- W So they made a little detour over to the "little house".
- Y They made a little detour. (much laughter).
- W What kind of animals did your father raise on the farm?
- Y Horses, cows, sheep and pigs. Chickens and some times ducks and geese.
- W Did you tell me that you had a goat at one time?
- Y Yes, and a cart too. "Harve" could have told you lots of things about that goat!
- W I expect so. But tell me about the cart.
- Y They made carts, and they made harnesses out of old pieces of harness that Dad had; broken pieces, and hitched (the goat) on the cart. The goat was stubborn. How you could get him to pull the cart was to lead him along and push the cart behind him. (laughter). Oh but we had oceans of fun with that goat!

W I suppose you sheared the sheep and sold the wool? You told me the other day what you did with the wool from the black sheep.

Y Oh, my parents did that. They saved the wool from the black sheep. My father and my grandfather raised lots of sheep, my mother said. They saved the wool and sent it away. I remember my mother telling me what she used to card with. It (the card) had little wires in it. She told me she spun the wool and then had it carded, washed and carded. Then they brought it and they'd spin it up in the skeins in the spinning wheel.

W And what was that yarn used for?

Y That was used for the stockings and mittens.

W I suppose it wouldn't show the dirt like the light wool, for mittens.

Y Well, the mittens were colored. They used to color them.. I had a pair of mittens that my mother had made. I believe they was red and gray and brown. I remember I went to school and lost one. Whatever came of the other, I don't know. Then the time came that everybody bought their mittens. There was no one knitting.

W You raised most of your own food too, didn't you?

Y We never bought anything; only sugar and salt.

W And flour? Did you have your own?

Y Oh yes. My father used to take the wheat to the mill and then bring home sacks of flour. He used to bring home a barrel at a time. Sometimes two barrels at a time! That would be 90 pounds!

W Where was the mill?

Y In Lyndonville, right down across from the pond, north of the bridge.

W You made your own butter, I expect? (Yes). Churned from your own milk?

Y We had cows; made our own butter. And we had our own cottage cheese and used the sour milk, and milk for cooking.

W Drinking?

Y We had a plenty! We had all we wanted of it.

W Of course you had eggs from your chickens?

Y We had chickens.

W All the eggs you wanted to use?

Y We had ducks. Lots of duck eggs and custards and



puddings.

W What was your churn like, that you used?

Y My first churn? Before I was married or after? (Both). Well, it was a dash churn. My mother had a barrel, a wooden dash churn.

W With a handle that you pushed up and down?

Y It was like a handle. On the bottom it had four pieces nailed on. Four pieces, and you dashed it up and down in the cream. And pretty soon, you had butter.

W It would take quite awhile sometimes?

Y It would all depend on the temperature of the cream. The hot weather would turn it more quickly. Even I have churned it in a two quart can. Put it half full of cream when we didn't have enough to make a churning. I'd put it in a two quart can and shake it, and pretty soon you had butter in there. I've done that many a time.

W Is that right? I didn't know you could make butter that way!

Y Why sure you can. You can make butter by whipping cream. The first thing you know, you get butter.... Since I've been married I've done that. I did that before, too.

W You made your own bread, I'm sure.

Y Made our own bread. Did all our own baking.

W The other day you told me something about once in awhile you'd get baker's bread and then store it.

Y Yes. Yes, once in awhile Mother would go up with butter and eggs, to the store, and get her groceries, see. They'd pay you so much, maybe a penny apiece for your eggs; and maybe eight, ten or twelve cents for your butter. You didn't get much in those days. Everything was all the same, see. A loaf of bread would be five cents, a pound of sugar 5¢ or 10¢; a spool of thread would be 5¢ each. I think everything was cheap; cheap! What you sold was cheap. You didn't get much for it. And when a man worked, he didn't get much for it. He worked all day for 75¢.

W That's right.

Y Mother would get us a loaf of bread. Oh, that was a treat. Baker's bread was a treat! But, everyone did all their own baking: Johnny-cake, corn-meal. We used a lot of corn-meal in those days.

W From your own corn of course?

Y From our own corn. But I think we bought corn meal in bags at the store. I think that's how we got corn meal, and oat meal.

Do you want me to tell you about the time of the First World War? (Yes). 1917, the First World War. We got into this barley flour: corn-meal, barley flour, oatmeal. You had to buy your equivalent in pounds. If you got 25# of flour, a sack of flour at the store, you had to get 25# of this other kind of stuff: corn-meal, oat-meal, barley flour. I can't remember; I don't know what we did, but I know we bought it. We stocked up with it. You couldn't make good pie crust out of barley flour.

W Was it too sticky?

Y I don't know what the matter was. You couldn't use it. The pie crust was hard.

W So what did you use the barley flour for?

Y Oh we used it for cakes, but the cakes wasn't right and nice. Well, we'd mix it in I guess, with our white flour, to make bread and biscuits and stuff like that. But that was just for a certain time for the First World War, on account of sending the flour to the soldiers.

W Speaking of flour: did you used to have one kind of flour for bread and another kind for pastry?

Y We did at times. We had what we call spring wheat flour. That was for bread. The other flour was for pie crust.

W And that was made of winter wheat?

Y Of wheat that was raised in Kansas. I remember the first flour we ever got, before I was married. It was called Angelus. That was what they called spring-wheat-flour. We didn't raise spring-wheat around here at that time. Then the other kind was called the Rose-of-Kansas. That was another kind of wheat flour. It made nice bread and some people would mix it, you know; half and half.

W And use it for either one?

Y No; half and half for the bread. You had bread flour and you had pastry flour to make it go farther. Some thought it wasn't quite so sticky. But that made nice bread.

- W How did you prepare food for the winter? For example, what vegetables did you grow to store for the winter.
- Y We had potatoes and cabbage.
- W Beets?
- Y We pickled the beets but we never stored them over too much at that time.
- W Any turnips?
- Y Yes, we had turnips, rotabagas as they called them.
- W Parsnips too, to dig up in the spring?
- Y Yes, parsnips in the spring. Then we had onions. We raised carrots, but they was raised for the horses and the sheep. We didn't cook carrots in those days the way you do today. I remember the first time we were going to have a boiled dinner, with the ham bone and hocks you know. Dad said, "Try the carrots". So we did. But you know we didn't stock them like we did cabbage.
- W Oh, carrots are the main food almost (today). That's interesting.
- Y They said "If you eat carrots, you'd have red hair!"
- W What about fruit for the winter?
- Y We always canned fruit.
- W You didn't have a pressure canner in those days?
- Y A pan on the stove; we'd can our peaches that way. Peaches, pears, plums, quinces with apples.
- W Did you make cider?
- Y Yeah. We had a barrel of cider, and when it turned into vinegar we'd just take it to the store and sell a barrel of vinegar.
- W Did you use any wild fruits like elderberries or wild raspberries?
- Y Oh yes! We used to go and get elderberries by the bushel basket 'cause they grew on one of our farms, all along the fence line. There was stone fences in those days, and there'd be all those elderberry bushes. We'd go and get elderberries and bring them home by the bushel. And what a job to pick them off! Go out doors and shell the things.
- W You used those for pies? (Yes). Did you put anything with them?
- Y Mother used to put plums with them. We had a Niagara plum, I guess. Kind of a tart plum. It made good pies. It certainly did. Today, you'd use prunes. Mother'd make jams and preserves. Cook them down thick, you know.

W You didn't have any fruit pectin in those days?

Y No! No, we made the jell with quinces. If she made a jell, she'd take the skins, rinds and cores if she could, and boil that down and put sugar with it to make jell. Then cook it, and cook it, and cook it until it was thick. When it cooled and thickened, that was enough.

W Yes, but you had to know how long to cook it too. I expect once in awhile it didn't turn out just right?

Y No, it didn't. That's right. It didn't turn out just the way we'd like it.

W Now what about your winter meat?

Y Well, we raised our pork and of course we had chickens. We used to go to the chicken house and get a big fat rooster anytime. We didn't sell our chickens. But at one time there was a man in Yates Center. Do you want this? It's interesting because now no one knows about it. His name was Walter Tuttle and he had what they call The Chicken House. He'd buy chickens. This man would go out with his big cart and wagon and carry chickens in, and go from house to house where they had some old hens to sell, or some young chickens that they didn't need. He'd take them to that Chicken House. The women in Lyndonville went down and picked the chickens (removed feathers), see. Then he shipped the chickens to Rochester.

W Did you say his name was Tuttle? Was he related to the Walter Tuttle that's an undertaker (in Medina) now?

Y I don't think so, dear, 'cause that was years ago. That was before I was married. That was back in 1888.

W Well, that's a long time ago! You had your chickens and your pork. Now tell me about butchering.

Y Well, we fattened the hogs. We raised the little pigs and then they'd grow all summer, and we'd fatten them. Sometimes we'd keep over some pigs; to keep over for an increase, you know. Then in the fall and the winter time, maybe in January, a good cold bright snappy nice day, we'd heat up the water in a great big old kettle. I don't know how many gallons the thing would hold. Of course there'd be two or three men.

W To build a fire under the kettle?

Y Us kids would do that. They'd stab the pigs and put the water

in a big trough, and douse the pig up and down. They couldn't use the kettle. They used a trough, see. They put the water in this big trough and scalded the pig, then they'd scrape him with scrapers. That was a round thing about that long; a round piece of metal, and they'd scrape.

W I saw one on the television the other day; a pig scraper.

Y They scraped them to get the hair off, and then they butchered them.

W Then they cut it up?

Y They butchered them first. Then they took the entrails, they call them, in the house and my mother would make what they call "riddle". Take off the lard. They would get a lot of lard. ... Then they hung the pigs up. They had what they called hog hooks that hooked in the hog's throat, I guess, and hung up on a big long rod. It fastened on the end, see. It hung up there all night, cooled. In the morning they'd take them down. Maybe night they'd take them down and take them in if it was cold weather.

W It was always cold weather when you butchered, wasn't it?

Y It would have to be, really cold, freezing weather. But they generally butchered on a nice day and we got on the sunny side of the barn. Then of course, they generally had some to sell to the butcher, the meat markets. They cut it up. When it come time to take it down, they'd cut it up. There'd be the hams, the shoulders and the side pork. Then there'd be what they called the spare ribs. The spare ribs were left whole. We'd roast them. Mother used to put what she called summer-savory in; a little herb we raised in the garden. Summer-savory, and slip that in; sort of flavor like. Same as you put sage into sausage, see. And spare ribs. Oh my, it was good!

W You smoked the hams and the shoulders?

Y Smoked the hams and the shoulders and sometimes we canned. We never did canning at home but after I was married I did canning. Canned the hams, some of them. We smoked them and then they hung up in the smoke house. Built a smokey fire with cobs.

W The side pork you made into bacon, did you?

Y Well, not at that time. We didn't make bacon before I was married.

W You used it for salt pork?

Y Salt pork, yes, and then there was little strips with the lean. That was used for beans. I told you the other day about putting



strips in the beans. A piece about that big.

W How did you salt-cure it?

Y We made a brine and put it in the brine. There'd be a big stone on the top to hold it down in the brine, in a 30 gallon crock. I've got some down cellar now.

W The brine would have to be quite strong wouldn't it?

Y Yeah, enough to hold an egg. Take a pail of water and put salt into it and put an egg in it. If it held the egg up, it would be alright.

W Oh, I see. I've heard that expression "strong enough to hold an egg" but I didn't know how it originated.

Y Then we'd freshen the pork in with the potatoes. Mother would take it out. That seasoned the potatoes you see. Then she'd take it (the pork) out and roll it in flour and fry it. She'd make gravy in the same spider (frying pan). I did that too. I carried that idea right along. Then she'd put some sweet milk in and make a little thickening from the flour, you see, and make a cream gravy. Oh, wasn't that licking good!!

W Now, how about the lard. How did you get the lard out of the fat?

Y I think they trimmed it out some way. It was on the inside.

W The fat was around the inside of the pig? And they tried it out on the stove, at a low temperature?

Y No, we got it hot enough so it would run. But not too hot. You had to be careful about that. And the lard you took off the entrails, you'd put in salt water and then wash it, and wash it, and wash it. It was stored in gallon crocks, two gallon crocks and put in the cellar.

W You made sausage, I expect?

Y Yes, we made sausage.... Sometimes she'd take what they call the tenderloin, that big muscle along the backbone. Then sometimes she'd make it right out of the spare ribs. Between the spare ribs there'd be nice chunks of meat and we used to like that; what we called the tenderloin. Then she'd try out the lard and put it in the cellar. Then she'd take the trimmings of the hams, you know, where you trimmed the hams to clean it up.

W Did you grind up the meat for sausage?

Y No, father would take it into the meat market and they'd grind it at so much a pound.



- W But you seasoned it yourself?
- Y Oh yes. Mother would put in salt and pepper and sage. She'd work it all in good, then she'd pack it in the big pans. Pans, and bowls I guess, and put it upstairs in a room where there was no fire (heat). Every once in awhile she'd go up and cut some off; kept it as cool as possible; take some down and fry it.
- W Did you ever make head cheese?
- Y Yes, we made head cheese. They took the head and it was cut up in pieces and then she'd boil it. When that was done, she'd take all that meat out and then chop it up. What would she season it with; I don't know; salt and pepper. She put something else in. I don't remember.
- W Did they have any sage in it?
- Y It might of, I couldn't tell...
- W Oh, head cheese was good!
- Y We used to put that in for sandwiches; then we had it for meat for supper.
- W Some of the meat you used to make mince-meat? It would be cooked?
- Y Cook it first, and then I'd sit and chop, chop, chop it in a chopping bowl.
- W What was a chopping bowl like?
- Y It was a wooden bowl. You've seen butter bowls? A chopping bowl is smaller. I used to chop in that. And I had a chopper; what we called a chopping knife. It was purposely for chopping.
- W What was that knife shaped like?
- Y I tell you what mine was like. It was two blades, like that, see. And that come up with a piece of metal up here, with a wooden handle; and you'd chop, chop, chop.
- W The blades were curved at the bottom?
- Y No, they were rounding at the bottom, and then they were bolted to this bar that came up. It came up like a chicken wire, a wishbone wire. The one blade - bar, and then that had a little wooden handle on it; a little wooden piece.
- W What else did you put into the meat to make mince-meat?
- Y Oh we put in apples and raisins and Mother used to boil down sweet cider. She used what we used to call sweet apple cider apple sauce. She boiled sweet cider quite thick, you know. Then she put apples in there, sweet Tallman apples. I think we used brown sugar. I don't know about molasses.

- W I expect you made a lot of different kinds of pies?
- Y Oh, pies! Everything! We made all kinds of pie. Well, everything that you raise on the farm: pumpkin and custards. We used duck eggs. Mother would make a custard pie every day. We loved custard pie! Just lived on them one summer. The ducks was laying; and berry pies: berry pie, cherry pie, apple pie, prune pie, elderberry pie.
- W I love elderberry pie. I could eat a piece right now.
- Y So could I if it was made with some fruit in it, like prunes or plums. It gives it a little tart. Prunes also give body.
- W Did your mother use herbs, or did you use herbs in cooking?
- Y Yes. We had sage bushes in the garden and we had a summer-savory bush patch along side the garden.
- W Any mint?
- Y I don't think so, nor dill. Not in my mother's time.
- W Basil, or marjoram? Those things of course were modern.
- Y You use more today. You hear about them. Summer-savory and wormwood. Yes, parsley And catnip.
- W Catnip?
- Y That was for when we had a cold: catnip tea. We pulled it when it was just nice. After a rain when it would be nice and clean. Just about the time that it would be in blossom. We used to pull those things and tie them up in a bunch, hang them in the closet and let them dry. Mother would get her sage and roll it, on the table.
- W Did you use some of the herbs for cooking and some for medicine? (Yes)
- Tell me how you were taken care of when you were sick.
- Y Well, we stayed in the house and stayed at home from school, of course, when we was all sick with the mumps. Everyone there with their faces all swelled up, and a big rag around their head. I remember looking in the looking glass to see how funny we looked!
- W But you couldn't laugh; it hurt too much!
- Y Oh, to eat; oh dear! And whooping cough. We had that.
- W How did you take care of the whooping cough? What did they give you?
- Y I don't know. We didn't have a doctor for those things. We never had the doctor for whooping cough.
- W When would you call a doctor; how sick did you have to be?
- Y The only time I remember going to the doctor, it was Doctor

Fraser, the older man. The first time I remember about me going to the doctor was when the horse stepped on my toe. I've got one foot with half a toe. The horse stepped on my toe and broke it. I had to go up to Doctor Fairman. And Doctor Fairman and Doctor Fraser cut it off. Of course they had to take that piece off. It began to turn black. I had it on Saturday night. On Monday morning it swelled up quite big and was pretty black. I was only 12 years old.

W Twelve years old before you ever went to the doctor?

Y Uh-huh. I don't remember any doctor before that time. I had a tooth pulled out, but it was after that.

W Of course babies were born at home. Did they have a doctor when the baby was born?

Y My mother had a doctor when I was born. The only one. A neighbor would (usually) come in. Some of them would come in and take care of her, you know They did that kind of work. That's the way they did with all my babies. My babies was all born at home too.

W Of course we had no hospitals then. The nearest hospital would be in Buffalo or Rochester then.

Y Yeah. They had a hospital here in Medina, on the corner of Eagle and Prospect. That was there before I was married. Because my husband's father got hurt on the canal bridge, with a load of coal, in the winter time. The ice on the bridge was spillery you know. As he come over the bridge there, the road was icy, slippery you know, in the winter time. When he went around to go over the bridge this way, his sleigh full of coal tipped over and tipped onto him and hurt him. And they took him in there (to the Medina Hospital). Who was that woman that had that house? I can't tell you. He went in there and she took care of him.

W So, you were sick at home, born at home, and died at home. When somebody died, did they call the doctor then?

Y Well generally. You see, when the doctor was doctoring them. If they had to have a certificate of death, I don't know...

W Did they have a regular undertaker? (Yes). To lay a person out?

Y Oh no! The family did that.

W I remember Mrs. Ball. Do you remember her? (Yes). She told me once that she had laid out many a neighbor.

Y Yeah, they used to call on the women to come. They'd call on the neighbors to come in and sit up with them at night when they

were sick because there was nothing else they could do. They would go, take turns.

W Now, tell me how the laundry was done.

Y Our laundry was wash tubs, a rub board and no wringers. My rub board is made of glass but the frame is wood. Where you rub your clothes is glass and it's corrugated.

W The one I have at my home, that corrugated part is zinc.

Y I had one too, but then it broke and I got a glass, and then accidentally poured hot water on it and broke my glass. Then my husband went and got me another one. I rubbed the clothes on this board; put them in some cold water and rinsed them up. Sometimes I'd put them in a boiler so we could boil them up.

W What was your boiler like?

Y Mine was a copper boiler. It would hold, I don't know how many pails of water. It's about two feet long; two and a half, I guess. It would reach clear across the stove. You put the water in it. You got the boiler hot and when it was hot, you put some of it in the tub and put your clothes in there and soaped them. We bought laundry soap, bars of soap.

W Did you ever make your own soap, or did your mother make some?

Y Yes, my mother used to make soap; what you call soft soap. I've made hard soap with lye. You buy it in a can.

W Fels Naptha soap wasn't it?

Y Yes, we used Fels Naptha. Then there was some other kinds we used.

W As I remember, my mother used to shave that soap off the cake and put it into the hot water and soak the clothes in it overnight. At least I think she did if I remember rightly. Now, didn't you have a washing machine?

Y No, not when I was home. We didn't have a washing machine. Not until after I was married. Not until a long time after that even. And that was hand powered. It had a big tub, on legs. It had a top on it and this top had a wheel on it, and this wheel had a handle to it. This wheel worked with some kind of - in the bottom with a paddle. Mary and I was talking about it the other day. A piece come down like that, and it had a flat piece on. The flat piece has four forks, four pieces sticking down on it, see. Mary said it seemed to her like a cow's bag. That's as near as I can describe it. You know how that worked: we turned this



handle over and over and when that came around, it rubbed the clothes on the side; swished them all around in the hot water and soap in there. Then pull the plug out and let that dirty water out, and put in some more.

W Some different from the way they wash today.

Y I guess so! And of course you hung them on the line outside. In the wintertime you'd let them freeze-dry.

W They must have been kind of cold to handle?

Y It was cold hanging them up. Had a lot of clothes on....

W Well, when you did the ironing; how about that?

Y We had irons.

W What was the flat iron like?

Y It was a piece of iron, square at one end and run to a point. It had a handle on it. You het it on top of the stove. You put your ironing sheet on the table and ironed on the table.

W When that iron got cool, you went back to the stove and got another?

Y That's right. We generally had two or three of them on the stove.

W With all the petticoats and things that you had to iron, must have taken a long time.

Y Let me see; there were the dresses and the boy's shirts. Dresses, petticoats and bloomers. ...

W They were made of white percale weren't they, or white cotton?

Y Well, we didn't used to get bloomers. My babies had petticoats made of outing flannel, I guess. I don't know what they were made out of. Probably anything I could get ahold of.

W And it wasn't one petticoat; it was several petticoats, wasn't it?

Y Two or three, and the underwaist with buttons on it.... Our underwear we'd hang out on the bars, and then they'd dry good. There was mending to do, and stockings to darn.

W Oh yes, plenty of work for the mother to do wasn't there?

Y Took a bath in the wash tub. The bath tub was the wash tub.

W Where did you put the wash tub to take your bath?

Y Why, in the kitchen by the stove where it was warm. The oven door would be open and a nice fire in the kitchen stove. Even my children took baths that way.

W So did I when I was a little girl.

Y I used to give my children baths that way. Never had a bathroom

and never had a tub. Children didn't have a bath tub until they got married.

W Where did you live when you first got married?

Y I lived on the Lyndonville Road. A little house on the east side of the road. There was something more I wanted to tell you about the sheep. Can that come in now?

W Oh yes.

Y My father raised a big flock of sheep. In the springtime when they sheared the sheep, the little lambs would come in. They was a lot of ticks on the old sheep. Sheep had ticks on them, you know. Those ticks got up on the little lambs. Us kids used to pick the - this was back in the 1890's - we used to catch the little lambs and pick the ticks and stuff out, and kill the things. So, up here on the Ridge (Road), east of where the schoolhouse is, you know, well, there was a greenhouse there. It was around the corner and there was a man by the name of Bruce Britt.

W Was he related to the Britts that are around here now?

Y Well they might have been, way back. The Britt in the store was related to Harley Britt and his family and he raised tobacco.

W Oh, I didn't know they raised tobacco around here!

Y Yes, they raised it. Mr. Britt raised tobacco and I heard my mother tell about she raised tobacco years and years ago. It would come in great long leaves, probably about that tall. They'd go and get quite a little bit of that. I don't know how much; several bunches maybe, bring it home and stew it up in this kettle of hot water. See?

W Make like a tea of it.

Y Make a tea. Then he'd put that in the big trough and he'd dip the sheep.

W Oh that's what you used for sheep dip: tobacco!

Y Dipped them, to kill the ticks. You'd take and dip the sheep before you turn them out (to pasture) in the spring time. Of course the little lambs would be there with them. You'd have to get the ticks from the little lambs. I remember that. My husband had sheep too, but we never did that.

W People didn't have a doctor and neither did the animals, did they?

Y No.



- W When the calves and colts were born, didn't they have a vet come?
- Y No, the little colts would come in the night and the lambs would come in the night. I remember my father used to go out at night sometimes and look after the little lambs at lambing time. Then sometimes he would bring the poor little things in the house and put them by the kitchen stove, in a bushel basket or an old box or something. He'd wrap them up in an old piece of carpet or something. Sometimes they'd revive and get frisky and then he'd take them back out to the barn. But sometimes, so many times, they died.
- W Then sometimes wouldn't an ewe reject her lamb at birth?
- Y Yes, she wouldn't own her lamb. Sometimes an old ewe died.
- W And you'd have to feed the new lamb with a nursing bottle?
- Y Yes, we had a bottle. Not a special bottle but any bottle that a rubber nipple would fit on the end. The nipple came from the drug store. And that's how Harvey had his three lambs. "Harve" took care of the three lambs that the old sheep wouldn't keep. Sometimes there would be a pair of twins. I remember we had these little lambs. Those lovely little sheep.
- W We liked to raise ducks and fuss with ducks and chickens, and things like that. We had geese too. We used to pick the feathers off the geese. There was a time when they'd shed their feathers so we'd catch them, get them up in the horse stall some way and catch them. Mother would take and put one of our man's socks over the old fellow's head (the goose) so he wouldn't bite you. Sometimes they nipped, you know. Then you'd take them and pick the feathers off and put them in a big basket or something.
- W The goose feathers made especially nice pillows, didn't they?
- Y And use them for pillows.
- W Did you use hen feathers for pillows too?
- Y Yes, hen feathers for pillows too.
- W Did you make feather beds?
- Y I've got a feather bed. Mother had it. Whether she made it or not, I don't know. (Mother passed away in 1929). She sent it away to some factory; someone came and got it. She had it made up in the winter, see. There's a winter-side to it, and a summer-side.

W Where did you go to school?

Y On the Platten Road by the four corners. The Greenman Road goes north. It's right on the southeast corner..... It's a cobblestone building and built in 1848 I think. The number's up on top of the schoolhouse. The Woodworth's live in it. They made it over into a house.

W How many pupils were in the school?

Y Oh, 25 - 30 of them. All the children in the neighborhood. I walked to school summer and winter.... Wintertime with all the snow, we couldn't get through sometimes and my father would take us. We'd be about the last one on the beat, going from the east on the Platten Road.

W Did he take you on the bobsled?

Y Yeah, on the big bobsleigh and the kids would come. When they were ready to go, they would all pile in if we hadn't already gone.

W Do you remember your teacher's names?

Y ... I remember two teachers was from Medina and they would board at the neighbor's houses somewhere.

W How many grades did they teach?

Y Well, they taught up to the 8th grade, and then we'd go to Lyndonville and try Regents (examinations).

W Where did you go to High School?

Y Lyndonville High School. There was also grades in there too. The High School goes back to 1901.

W Yes, but you didn't go to grade school in Lyndonville. You went to grade school down there.

Y I went to grade school down there until we moved in 1901. My family lived up on the corner, as I told you. I went to school that fall in 1902. I had the grades and I had the high school.

W There used to be an Academy at Yates.

Y Yes, there was an Academy at Yates but that was taken away years ago and moved way down east to some kind of a historical business, I guess. (moved to Binghamton, N.Y. to the John A. Davis Bible School grounds).

W That was quite an institution at the time, wasn't it?

Y It was. My mother didn't go there to school. She could have gone but she didn't. My father went to the Academy but I never heard him say much about it. He never said much about his life anyway.

W Where did you go to church and Sunday School?

Y At the Methodist Church in Lyndonville.... We had Sunday School and a Sunday School teacher.

W Did you go to the Presbyterian Church?

Y Not regularly. I have been there to different doings going on there, but not to attend church. Our church was Methodist. Our parents went to the Methodist Church, so I did until I was married. After I was married I didn't go anywhere 'cause we had our children, family. My husband wasn't brought up to go to church. Until 1923. I went back to church.

W I notice you have a very lovely organ over here. Did you play it?

Y I took ten lessons. It was when we lived on the Platten Road. When we moved to Lyndonville there was so much to be done at the house, housecleaning and one thing and another, I just got away from it. So I never played again. It's an old timer.

W Now, for the sake of people who may be reading this years from now: this is not an electric organ, or a pipe organ.

Y It was made by the Chicago Organ Company with pedals at the bottom that you pushed up and down (with your feet) to make the sound. There was a bellows in it somewhere. Then there's the knee swells. Then you pulled out the stops.

W That knee thing made it softer or louder, didn't it?

Y Yeah. You pushed them out with your knees and that made it loud. As I say, it was a lovely sounding organ, but some of the stops are broken. ...It sits right there, ever since we come here in 1946.... It's made of walnut I think.

I've got several pieces of furniture: I've got a bed that's made of cherry, a beautiful bed. Carvings on it, you know. And upstairs, I've got a great big chest of drawers made of, I don't know, black walnut I guess.

W What did you do for fun when you were young?

Y Oh, we just run around all day and chased each other; played ball. That's what we did in school. Played hide-and-seek.

W Did you used to play pom-pom-pull-away?

Y On the school yard, yes. And we'd play what you call - look behind your back. They'd get in a circle, little kids. The big

boys, of course, would be playing ball. Us little kids would get in a circle and someone would take their handkerchief and you'd close your eyes. Someone would say,

"Roast your meat behind your back.

If you don't pick it up before I get back,

I'll give you an awful crack!"

Then somebody'd come along and they'd drop the handkerchief behind someone's back. But nobody knew it and they'd have to feel. By that time, he'd got back to where he left the handkerchief.

W Did you used to have picnics, sleigh rides and things like that?

Y We didn't go for sleigh rides much when I was home, unless you went with one family or something like that, and went to church. We didn't go to the stores very much. Our folks did the trading: bought our shoes, took our measurement on our feet. It was quite a long trip with the horses, to Medina, in the early time. Dad would buy the clothes and things.

W The other day, you were telling me about a train wreck that happened down at Ashwood, almost a quarter of a mile east of Ashwood. Tell me about it.

Y You want to know the whole story? (Yes). Well, this is what my mother told me because it was the summer before I was born, in July. "Harve" was a little boy. He would have been a year old in September. She (Mother) said there was a big excursion coming from Ashtabula, Ohio. A man by the name of Mr. Bostwick lived on the corner, four corners east of us, south of Ashwood. And he took his son to Lyndonville to take the train 'cause he's a traveling agent. They wouldn't stop at Ashwood. They stopped to Lyndonville and took on water. I understand she said there were 13 coaches. He told his wife, "Now", he says, "When you hear the train coming, get up on a chair and look out the north door and you'll look right down at Ashwood. You can look right down there". So, Mother stood at the north door, where Mary lives now (Mary lives on the north side of the Platten Road) and she looked out 'cause there was no trees or anything between there and the railroad. You could see the cars go by plain as be. She said they went through. The windows was all lit up; all the bright lights. It was beautiful, all those lights going through. They got east of the depot in Ashwood, and it (the train) struck



a boxcar on the tracks. That's what wrecked the train. It was going at full speed. Mother said there was an awful, awful crash. She said you could hear the people crying clear up here on this side of the road. There was 18 killed, I think she said. I think our paper said 18 was killed and a lot was hurt. Mother said they cried and begged the people to take them, with a team of horses, back to Ashtabula (Ohio). They didn't want to go back on the train. I think they must have taken them to the depot, and then took care of them some way. I don't know. Friends came and got them, no doubt. My father went and sat up with an elderly man down on the Kendrick Road. They took him way down there on the Kendrick Road. They took care of people there until he was able to go back home. My father would go down and take care of him at night, and gave him his medicine. She said they give him - now this is funny - they gave him Epsom Salts every so often. Cool his bowels and so forth, for a fever or something like that. He was an elderly man. But oh, she said it was an awful thing! The cars all wrecked. You know, people - .At one time I had a piece of glass that come off the window, but I don't know what become of it. My folks picked it up. My father did. And Mother said there was a week or two weeks people would go by, went over to Ashwood, to see the wreck. By horse and buggy, of course. That was in July.

We've had other wrecks since then, on that track. There was a wreck there. It was a freight train came through from the east. And after they got out over the track, the cowcatcher or snowplow or whatever they call it, on that old engine fell off. That wrecked the freight train. There was no people on it, only just some workmen. And they had a wreck out of Lyndonville, I remember, one time. It was on the crossing east of Lyndonville there; the Alps crossing. A neighbor man had a cow and his cow got on the track. I don't know whether it was a rope or a chain that he was tied to, or whether he struck the cow, I don't know. But they (the owners of the cow) were immigrants. They were going way in the west. They was Italian people and they were going way in the west to take up a home. I remember that accident because I was down there. I seen the stuff: boxes of clothes and cheese - great big cheeses, you know - laying there. People picking it

up you know, and carrying it away.

W Well, they didn't have airplane wrecks in those days but they did have accidents, didn't they? Just like we do now. Well, what else would you like to tell me?

Did you buy your clothes ready made in those days?

Y Oh no. We used to buy our coats. Mother made our clothes, I think, while we were little, out of some clothes of her own. I think she made the underwear. I think she got what they called cotton flannel. On one side of it was a kind of twill, and the other side was flannel. We had shirts made out of that; used for cold weather. We didn't have flannel sheets on our beds in those days.

W How did you dress in cold weather to go to school?

Y We wore long underwear and we had our petticoats and the thick dresses, heavy coats and all like that. And thick knitted stockings. I think Mother bought the stockings and the high topped shoes. The boys had felt boots. (When they'd) get to school, (they'd) take off the boots and go around without shoes. Some of them did.... We wore leggings. They'd come up to your knees. Over the knees. Oh, we just had to dress warm in those days.

W You were really bundled up!

Y Well I tell you, we were right in the open. On the road we rode in an open sleigh and we bundled up with shawls besides our coats.

W Did you have a soapstone?

Y My mother didn't have one but my Aunt had one. My Aunt would heat the soapstone and put it in the buggy when they went away. Heat it in the oven and when we went away we always had a lot of blankets and robes and such to bundle up with. At night, she'd warm our beds with flat irons, hot flat irons. Come up and put them in our bed for our feet. When the flat iron got cold in the night, us kids would take it out and put it on the floor.

W But it warmed your bed, for you to get into.

Y It warmed the bed. It was cotton sheets and pretty cold to get into. Then you had your nightgowns and I guess the boys slept in their underwear too. In those days, everybody did.



- W Your father used to have felt boots?
- Y My father and the boys had felt boots.
- W I should think they would have gotten wet.
- Y Well, they did. Their feet would sweat, and they did get wet. Sometimes their boots would leak and that would make your feet wet. ... They'd bring them in, right by the kitchen stove and dry them . . . .

We'd go to Sunday School picnics, and then there's what we called the Pioneer Picnic at Olcott. I believe Olcott was in Niagara County. The Pioneer Picnics we used to have were at Lakeside. A man by the name of Bruce Hoag owned Lakeside then. That was quite a popular summer resort I guess. People from Lyndonville and Albion (and other places) had their cottages there all along the lake. Stayed there in the summertime.

Then there was the Albion, County Fair. They had it in Albion, right(near the Correctional Facility) near all those large brick buildings. There'd be races and big parades. Eleven o'clock we just had to see that parade@ That was the main thing with us kids. All the things - the cattle -, you know. I remember the big beautiful team of horses, and in behind it was a little pair of goats, and a little cart too. The name was the Burrows children.

- W Did you used to take things to the Fair?
- Y No we never took anything. People would take it and leave it. There'd be a whole big, what you call a Floral Hall I guess it was. A great big building and in that building there was great long tables. You go down there and get a place for fruit. One section would be all fruit. There would be pears, plums, peaches and apples in order. Then there'd be vegetables. There was, I think, about three on a plate, and they told who got the prize.
- W How long did the Fair last; how many days?
- Y Three days: Thursday, Friday and Saturday. So we always went on a Saturday because that was the day of the parade. At eleven o'clock was the parade!
- W Did they have a band for the parade?
- Y Oh yes, the band would play (music) of course. They had Sousa's Band. Do you remember Sousa's Band? That was half a mile around

the track. Then there'd be the horses; the beautiful horses. And the cattle. Lead the cattle around there. They'd have ponies, and they'd have horses all decorated up pretty, you know. They'd have people riding them, and buggies.

W Harvey should have taken his goat and the goat cart! (laughter)

Y Maybe it wouldn't have worked because the goat wouldn't have walked.

I remember one old bull; they had a ring in his nose and a stick on the ring. That's the way they led this old fellow, and they got to the track. You know they was right there at what they call the grandstand, where the people got up in there. I remember we were down here hanging on the fence, two or three thick. And we looked across and this old bull, he got it in his head that he wanted to do something! Get moving or something, and he broke the fence and got through the fence! So the fellow had to - was with him, I guess. But they went on just the same. They rescued him after awhile. Then they had the cattle, the teams of beautiful horses. And they'd have different organizations.

W I suppose they awarded prizes for the best teams?

Y Yes. Cattle, sheep, hogs. ... They were all judged you know, and given the prize. They had a building where they had chickens, ducks and geese, and like that. They had guinea pigs and white rats and white mice. All those little things. Then they had a big building where there was flowers, beautiful flowers. Then they had these buildings where the merchants would have a stall: selling washing machines or sewing machines or something like that. They'd give away pretty cards advertising what they were selling. Lots of people would line up to get the cards. So, there was a man there to pass them out.

W I have, at home, a little card advertising the Singer Sewing Machine. I wonder if that could have come from there?

Y It probably could.

W It folds and it is round.

Y I got one I saw the other day, a beautiful card. It's got a picture of a house and of course, on the bottom of the page the card was stamped with a name (Hanlon Bros. Hdwe., Medina) and that explained the card. Outside of that, the card had beautiful pictures on it. They was very pretty pictures on it. One picture I remember, on one card I had once, it was advertising round oak stoves and here was a little verse; let's see:

The Queen reigned so long, she must be wet.  
We're taking her a round oak stove to dry her up!

- W Well, that was quite an event, to go to the Fair. Did you go every year?
- Y We went every year if it was possible; if there weren't any troubles, sickness or something. And Saturday was the day!
- W You went with a horse and buggy?
- Y With a horse and buggy, and we lived in it. Mother cooked a lot of chicken and she baked pies and cakes and cookies, and we'd have other vegetables in the garden; radishes or something like that. Cucumbers, and stuff like that. Then we'd have our two quart can, or maybe two of them or a gallon jug, with cold tea in it, or something like that. We'd take our cups and our dishes, and make sandwiches. We'd tie the horses and get the food out of the baskets and sit down on the ground. Sometimes we'd put cushions on the ground and set on them and eat our lunch. That's what we did in those days.... One year my father had twenty acres of beans down on his farm, where Mary lives. Owned both of those farms at that time. "Now", he says, "You get those beans all in, you can all go to the Fair on Saturday!" Well, twenty acres of them. He would go out early in the morning when the dew was on, and the boys would get up and do the chores and get the horses ready, harness on, and eat their breakfast. Dad would come in and get his breakfast, and by that time, the dew was off and then we'd go out and fork beans. The whole caboodle of us! Mother would stay in the house and get the work arranged for dinner, and then she'd come out. We took those twenty acres of beans and we had to fork them up. You know how to fork them up? How they cut them? Cut them with a bean cutter, just like two blades. Two blades coming along like that cut off two rows at once, see. And then that would be a big row of beans. The boys had forks and we had forks and we put them in piles. Fork them in piles. My, how the crickets would fly out from under those piles!! Then when they (the beans) got all nice and ready to take in the barn, the boys and Dad would come with a team of horses and pile these beans on them and take them into the barn. Twenty acres of them!! We got the 20 acres in, but something happened. Some of us girls was sick or something and we couldn't go (to the Fair); but Dad and the boys went with

some of the neighbors.

W You grew your own beans for baked beans, didn't you?

Y Oh yes. They were Navy Beans. We raised them and then we thrashed them with a thrashing machine. A big thrashing machine would come thrash them just the same as they did the grain; then into the barn in the bins. Then we had what they called a fanning mill. The beans would be put in that fanning mill, and we shook them. We turned the handle and that thing would go back and forth, back and forth, and shook out all the dirt and lumps of dirt and stones. The beans would go out one place and this rubbish would go out another place. Then we'd take the beans and bag them up. We had to hold the bags. Dad would put the beans in and sell them. But we always saved out enough to eat and for seed.

That's the way we did with wheat; clean up the wheat for sale. The oats and everything like that were all cleaned like that. He generally kept all the oats for the horses, for grain. Then they was barley. Then he ground and sharpened his mowing machine knives, to cut the hay you know. We had to turn that grindstone. Oh that was hard work! Dad sharpened those little blades. You probably know how they work.

W Yes, a grinding wheel; a big stone.

Y A big stone about that big around (demonstrates), and about that thick. It stood on a frame and we turned that thing and it would grind the knives for his mowing machine, or his axe, or his hoes, or anything like that.

W I can remember seeing my father sharpen knives that way. We used to have an old grindstone....

W You lived on the Platten Road until you were married?

Y No. Well, I was born where Mary lives. I was born down there in that house and then we moved up where "Harve" is. I must have been a year old 'cause my sister was born there and my brother was born there. Then in the year 1901, the year of the Pan-American (Exposition) - I didn't say a single thing about the Pan-American, did I? - that spring we moved up to Lyndonville, on the four corners. That house on the southeast corner. Then I went to school there, that fall and winter. Then I worked in the Petrie Dry-House. George Petrie had a dry-house where he



dried apples. I never went back to the Platten Road. I got married and lived out there, then I come back to the Lyndonville Road. Then from the Lyndonville Road, Dad wanted us to come down on his farm and live where Mary is; and we did. We were there a couple of years or so. From there I went down to the Stockwell Farm on the Alps Road. I think David Newman lives there. Then from there I come back to this little house on the Lyndonville Road, at the end of the year. Then Dad sold the farm to us and we come down in 1912. Leona was a baby. We lived in the orchard; the old house in the orchard. It's gone now. We lived there for three years. Dad and my husband, they rigged it up and we lived in it. It was right in the orchard, but it was warm there. We didn't have any water; we didn't have any well; we didn't have any cistern. We had a rain barrel. A rain water barrel. We got our water from the spring to wash with, and carried our water from the neighbors. Let's see. We come in 1912 and moved in 1914. Yes, Arnold was a baby. Arnold was born there.

W You didn't have running water there, probably!

Y Well, we didn't; we run out to the neighbors and got it! Then we'd take a washtub and a boiler on what they called a slip-boat, and go down with the teams to the spring. The spring is there now.

END OF TAPED INTERVIEW

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The original transcript was done by Luther Burroughs, Albion, N.Y. This transcript was checked by interviewer, Ethel Willis, Medina. This was then edited and typed in final form by Helen McAllister of Medina, New York.

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Children of Arthur and Claudia Stisser Young:

- Frances - Mrs. Lewis Bentley; then Mrs. Robert Wirth
- Leona - Mrs. Wilbert Bentley
- Arnold
- Mary - Mrs. Walter Ecker
- Ruth - Mrs. Richard Carsell

Jan  
20.  
1977

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## Orleans Memories

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By County Historian Arden McAllister

By 8:30 on Friday evening on July 27, 1883, a driving rain storm was at the height of its fury. The little railroad depot at Carlyon (now Ashwood) was deserted and quiet except for the howling wind, the strongest, people around there had ever heard. Intermittent flashes of lightning revealed a solitary freight car creaking in the wind on a siding. Powerful gusts rocked the empty boxcar. Then, like an invisible hand, the wind nudged it ahead a bit and a bit more until it went off dead center and rolled ominously onto the main track and stopped.

Meanwhile the Thousand Island Excursion train was being flagged down at Lyndonville to pick up a passenger, who emerged from his father's buggy and boarded the train. The father, Mr. Bostwick of Carlyon, then headed back home through the storm and train #54 chugged east toward its doom. The train had eight Pullman sleepers, one coach, a baggage car and two locomotives. Engineer, L.J. Boynton in the lead engine, peered ahead along the tracks. Just as he passed the empty Carlyon depot he spotted the derailed boxcar. He had only time enough to pull the reverse lever before the crash at full speed. The box car literally exploded into splinters. Three of the sleeper-cars were crushed. The lead locomotive tipped over and the second one was thrown across the track, killing its engineer and fireman. By the time all momentum had ceased, several persons were already silent in death. Others screamed in terror and groaned in pain.

Soon farmers from miles around came with lanterns to help in the rescue work amidst the twisted mass of wood, steel and humanity. The depot became a morgue. Local homes in Carlyon became hospitals, since there were none in Albion or Medina then. Doctors were summoned from the Lyndonville and Albion areas. As Mr. Bostwick drove into town, he was told of the terrible wreck. Knowing his son was aboard he hurried to the tragic scene, arriving just as Bernie Bostwick was being brought out of the wreckage. The young man was placed in his father's wagon but never made it home.

The rescue work continued all night and the next day. Telegrams to and from loved ones never arrived because of an operators' strike. A Mr. Lefevre of Bay City, Michigan, arrived on Sunday at the home of George Handy in Carlyon, there to find his wife dying, his daughter badly hurt, and, among the dead at the depot, his eight year old son. As Mr. Lefevre identified the little corpse he broke into tears and cried, "Great God. My poor boy. My poor boy." Eighteen people died including an ex-mayor of Chicago. Twenty-three were seriously hurt.

It was indeed an ill wind that ravaged Orleans County on that summer night. But out of all the tears and suffering came some benefits from the "Carlyon Calamity of 1883". The Railroad Commission recommended that henceforth all railcars should have airbrakes, safety switches and more frequent checks of the tracks.

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