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My Dear Grandchildren:

You have so often asked me for stories of my childhood and early life that I have decided to write of some incidents and happenings to gratify your wishes and perhaps furnish you some amusement or entertainment. Your grandfather and I had planned to collaborate in writing a little history of pioneer life in Kansas as we had experienced it but he was taken away before it was ever begun so I will try to "cover" it in a simple way without the polish or style he could have given it.

I think I had better begin with my birth which I have been told by my elder brothers was a very important event in the lives of my immediate family. The records say I was born on April 19th, 1856, near a small village in Geauga County, Ohio. The town was called Troy Center but the postoffice was named Welshfield. Just why so small a community should require two names I have never fully understood. I was given the name Mary Maria which were the names of two of my mother's sisters.

Ancestors of my father, Chester Lamb, date back to the War of the Revolution and to King Phillip's War, and originally came from Hingham, England, to Hingham, Massachusetts. I refer to this should you be interested you could look up my records through his line in my Daughters of the American Revolution membership.

My father was a farmer and stockman. He specialized in fine horses, racing and driving stock, but the farm was also stocked with dairy cows and sheep. He followed what we now call diversified farming and made a success of it. He was truly a "self made" man. Left an orphan at the age of eight years, he was brought up by an older brother of whom he learned the blacksmith trade and probably through this kind of work acquired his great love of horses and his success with them. One of my earliest recollections is of a very beautiful horse called "Old Searcher," the pride of the family and whose large lithograph picture I still have.

My father was very temperate -- never used tobacco nor drank liquor. He was strictly honest and by his thrift and industry was able to buy a farm while still young in years and was accounted a prosperous man.

My mother, who maiden name was Anna Crooks, was my father's second wife. He married two sisters; the first one was Mary for whom I was named.

My mother, never very rugged, was in ill health after the birth of my youngest brother, Adelbert, and finally developed lung trouble - tuberculosis - and passed away when I was a little past six years old. My first remembrance of anything is of her sitting so patiently in her chair and cutting long strings of paper dolls out of newspapers for us and

otherwise entertaining her little folks. She was able for many months to take a ride each day behind "Old Kate," the family horse. One of us children always accompanied her and it was a case of taking turns as we all wanted to go. "Old Kate" had her peculiarities -- she would poke along lazily until turned about toward home, then speed up until she nearly spilled us out, but we always arrived home all right.

The children of our family were seven in number and consisted of Henry and Frank, whose mother was Mary, the first wife, and Watson, Harvey, Eliza (or Lida we called her) myself and Adelbert. We were all very fond of music -- all of us sang; some of the boys carried the bass, others tenor, Lida soprano and I alto.

The most pathetic death-bed scene anyone might imagine I think was that of our mother. By her request, sister and I stood by her bedside in her very last hour and sang "I Am Going Home to Die No More;" I yet recall the heart-ache of it all and then of creeping out back of the house and crying my grief away unseen and un comforted. I was only six years old and supposed to be too young to understand, but I did. For many, many years afterward I always felt that Mother could have smoothed away all my worries and troubles, could she have lived. It is such a pitiful thing to lose one's mother.

I felt the same way years afterward on giving up the gentlest, kindest father that ever lived. After Mother's death, Father tried for three years to keep his children together by having different relatives live in our home but it was quite unsatisfactory. He then married a maiden lady who had no experience with children and was quite unsuited for the position of stepmother. The experiment did not work well and a separation followed. Sister and I spent one winter in Chardon with brother Henry and wife. They had a nice home and made it pleasant for us. Chardon was the county seat and brother Henry was the County "Recorder" which in Kansas corresponds to the office of Register of Deeds. We were sent to school and I shall never forget the first day. We dressed alike always, just like twins, and wore on this occasion black alpaca dresses dotted with sprigs of bright flowers and further decorated with black silk girdles braided in red! Our hair was bobbed much like the prevailing fashion now only we tucked the front hair behind our ears. We went into the school ground hand in hand and from the present form of view must have made a funny sight. I think we looked scared -- at least that was the way one of us felt.

There was one very painful incident connected with my school life there which made a deep impression on my whole life and I'm going to tell you about it because of the lesson in it. The teachers had a system of merit cards, rewards for not whispering. One was given each day and at the end of the week, a larger card. It was an awful hardship for me to

refrain from whispering, being of a social nature! I did pretty well though for quite a while but finally fell -- I whispered and failed to get a card. When I went home, my sister-in-law casually inquired, "Did you get your card, Mary?" I answered hesitatingly, "Yes." I was very unhappy about it all evening but finally bedtime came and I went upstairs to my room. When the light was out and all was dark, I began to feel pretty bad -- try as I would, I couldn't go to sleep. I struggled along with my conscience for a long time without getting any relief. Finally I resolved to make a clean breast of it -- go down and tell my sister-in-law that I had told an untruth and ask her forgiveness. This I did and when she had told me I was forgiven, I went back to bed with a light and happy heart. This experience had an influence on my whole life I think and made it plain to me that it is better to acknowledge a wrong, better to square things with oneself and then it is easy to be square with the world.

In this day and age of modern conveniences and easy ways of living, the things I had to do when I was a child and the things we had to do with seem almost matters of impossibilities. For instance, I remember well how we made candles, our only method of lighting. We had tin moulds with a capacity of a dozen candles. Candle wicking was run into each place and held on top by sticks run through a loop, then the tallow melted and poured in around the wick and allowed to cool and thus our candles were made. All stockings and sox and mittens were knitted in those days by the women and children. No knitting machines were in existence. Sister and I knitted all of our own, being required to knit a certain number of times "around" after we came from school and again in the evening before going to bed. We made real gay mittens, red and black striped, blue and white and any combination of colors that fancy dictated. We often spun some of the yarn too. I could go on at length and write of the apple paring "bees," spelling schools and other diversions of country life if I had time.

Our father was a wonderful "provider." The cellar in the winter was full of luscious apples, potatoes, barrels of cider, corned beef, hams, dried beef, sausages, salt pork, etc. Cabbages, turnips, beets and pumpkins were there also. Besides these eatables were the nuts -- chestnuts, walnuts, Hickory nuts, butternuts, hazelnuts. The winters in northern Ohio were terribly cold with much snow so father usually took us to school and came after us; the school was a mile from home. He drove such a spanking team, with sleighbells a-jingling, to a lovely sleigh or "cutter" and we, all snugly tucked in behind huge buffalo robes, I am sure were the envy of many of the youngsters.

I think I was twelve years old when our stepmother left us and sister Lida and I took over the management and duties of housekeeping for father and Della. Our father had gone into the livery stable business in Cleveland and we had an uncle who was very much crippled with rheumatism and without a home, come and live with us. He was not much help in the way of protection to us but proved quite resourceful in an emergency.

The country, though thickly settled and not at all like a frontier, was infested with horse thieves. One night about twelve o'clock, Uncle Galen was up rubbing his aching limbs when he heard a horse walking across the barn floor as if being led by some one. He shouted, "John, shoot both barrels!" Then he saw a man run out back of the barn and escape in the darkness. In the morning we found a saddle on the barn floor where the thief had dropped it.

This uncle was quite a character. He had lived in the West and many were the exciting and harrowing tales he told us of pioneering which later on we were to experience ourselves to some extent though at that time we had not the slightest idea of it. He praised our housekeeping; the credit for it was due almost entirely to sister Lida's industry and neatness. She was a marvel for order and system for one of her age which was less than fourteen. I was sort of helper, though I liked to and did the big showy things like washing, ironing and scrubbing but the endless details of keeping house fell on her shoulders. She was a splendid cook and we several times entertained neighbors and friends to meals when, I remember, we usually had stewed chicken and hot soda biscuits made with sour cream.

It was this same year, I believe, that we had a Christmasless Christmas. It was impossible for father to return at that time, tho he had planned to do so, and later did come and bring us many gifts including a set of earrings and breast pin in the coral and twisted gold pattern. But at Christmas time, our stockings were empty and we felt a bit forlorn about it. The evening before, I went to public Christmas tree gatherings at Hiram, a little college town about four miles south of where we lived -- and by the way, the college head at one time was President Garfield. He was president of it when Uncle Harvey attended. All of my brothers graduated from there. But to revert to this Christmas Eve -- the tree was an immense evergreen and just loaded with gifts for about everybody in the whole country around except just us! Names would be called and the one entitled to the gift would march up proudly to receive the package which would often be gold watches and rings and bracelets and other expensive things. I also remember of feeling a queer little tug at the heart when it was over and my name hadn't been called!

It was the following summer of 1869 that father sold our farm and home and decided to come to Kansas. Brother Henry was already here having come the previous year for his health and stopping in Topeka. He was suffering from tuberculosis, the long lingering kind, and had come west hoping the climate would benefit him which it did. The glories of the Walnut Valley had been enthusiastically held up to him by J. W. Douglass, the founder of the little town of that name, who had become acquainted with Brother Henry on one of his trips to Topeka. My brother's wife had been keeping boarders in Topeka, the only thing she could do to help out on expenses and Mr. Douglass conceived the idea that they would make good hotel people. As Douglass needed a hotel, he induced them to try it out there. It was necessary to have a building of course and so father came out and built a small hotel - the Douglass House.

He also built quite a large barn with the idea of bringing out a number of horses and spring wagons with which he might do some livery work. Father returned for us -- which means sister Lida, brother Della and myself -- in the fall and late in November, we bid goodbye to the old home and friends and civilization turning our faces "Westward Ho!" for Kansas. Brothers Watson and Harvey had preceded us by several months, also lured by the charms of the great Walnut Valley, as set forth by everyone who had seen it and had taken up "claims" very near to the townsite of Douglass. Thus we were all there excepting brother Frank, Ruby's father, who moved into our old home and entered the dairy business quite extensively.

In writing brother Frank's name, I am reminded that I have skipped over the Civil War period entirely. I just want to mention that Frank enlisted as soon as our mother passed away which was in August 1862 and served until the close of the war. He used to write to us the most wonderful letters while in the service. They were real love letters and I suspect now that he might have been practicing on us as he wooed and won his wife by correspondence while he was in the war. The day he came home after being mustered out, some one brought him up from the station about sundown, just as sister and I were going down the road to the cow yard where the milking was done. We had our tin cups with us and were going to "strip" the cows -- three guesses! Anyway it was a joyful meeting with our big soldier brother and we were mighty glad to have him home again.

Among the passengers on this never-to-be-forgotten journey was a woman who proceeded to tell us the most harrowing tales of narrow escapes from drowning of several people in crossing the streams. When we dashed into the Neosho River near Emporia and heard the splash of the water we naturally but fearfully thought not only our days but our minutes were numbered. We were terribly frightened; the combination of the stories told, the utter darkness at that time of night and the strangeness of our whole surroundings made us so. We had never crossed any kind of a stream up to that time however small that was not bridged but we were not long in getting used to that as no creeks or rivers in Kansas had bridges. A few years later, after I had become a teacher though, I had a very narrow escape from drowning in one of these bridgeless rivers. I was teaching my first term of school in Little Walnut Township, just north of Douglass, in the spring of 1872. I had gone home to Douglass to spend the weekend and crossed the Little Walnut in safety though there had been heavy rains and high water a few days before. On Monday morning brother Della started to drive me back to my school but when we reached the Little Walnut crossing, just at the top of the hill, I remarked that the water looked much higher and didn't seem to be running much. I told him I was afraid to drive in and he proposed to see if it was fordable. He did so and the horse swam all the way across and back. The condition of the stream was caused by backwater from the Big Walnut which had been on a rampage. This was really a narrow escape as the banks

were very steep and road narrow and once we had started down hill we could not have turned and gone out.

Here I am clear off my subject again but memories will keep bringing up some other little incidents which I feel I must tell you about. Now I am back to the time we began our trip to Kansas. We took the train from our nearest station, Garrettsville, for Cleveland and from there the Lake Shore to Chicago; then the Burlington to Kansas City and from there the Santa Fe to Burlingame, the terminus of the road. From the latter place we had to "stage it" to Emporia. This was a night trip arriving in Emporia about midnight. The old stage coach was built along the lines you often see now in frontier pictures -- two wide seats inside facing each other and a driver's seat high up on the outside front of the vehicle. The baggage was carried on racks at the back and on top. The bottom of the coach was sort of rounded and hung on springs that caused it to rock back and forth in a swaying motion. It was drawn by four horses which were changed every twelve miles at stations along the way.

Brother Harvey met us at Emporia with a covered wagon, just the same type you have seen in the picture, "The Covered Wagon" and other western stories only his was new and clean and he had a good team of horses to drive. We had never seen an outfit like this before and while the novelty appealed to us, at first, it began to wear off before the trip ended. We traveled about 25 or 30 miles each day, stopping when we found a comfortable place to stop over night as we did not attempt to camp out. The first night, we were fortunate in finding a new home where we were taken care of comfortably but the next day it rained and we were long after night in finding a place to stay. We finally saw a light flickering in a window and when we reached it, we found only a one room shack occupied by two men who looked mighty rough to us. We all slept on the floor, no beds in the house, and sister and I imagined we might be in the hands of robbers, thieves, bandits and such. We were much relieved when daylight came and we found our bodies all intact and no one missing. The sun shone next morning and in the later afternoon we drove into El Dorado and to the home of Mr. and Mrs. D. M. Bronson. They had invited Uncle Harvey to bring us girls to their home when he was on his way to Emporia as the old El Dorado Hotel was not considered a quite fit place to take us. I can hardly do justice with mere words to the hospitality and kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Bronson who gave us their bed and themselves slept on the floor that we might have a good rest after our tiresome journey. I remember too the delicious supper of hot biscuits, plum jelly, etc., that was served on our arrival and other little attentions that meant much to two rather homesick young girls. We felt very far from home and hardly knew whether we could like a country so new -- without trees except on streams, without fences and where roads zigzagged just anywhere across the country.

The Bronson home of two rooms was located on North Emporia Street in first block and south of the Arthur K Herbert house. They afterwards built additions to that and later built a very spacious home in the block west of it. Mr. Bronson was one of the earliest attorneys to locate in El Dorado and Mrs. Bronson a very public spirited woman who particularly worked hard to raise funds with which to make a suitable display from Butler County to the Kansas Building at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. We sent from El Dorado a beautifully hand carved walnut china cabinet made by J. T. Oldham. It was returned to Mrs. Bronson after the fair was over in recognition of her services. Mrs. C. E. Thompson, only daughter of Mrs. Bronson, now possesses the much prized cabinet.

One of the things I recall having seen on this first visit to El Dorado was the school house the town had just built. It was made of stone, one story, one room, and was located at the corner of Washington and Ash, across the street east from the home of Mrs. S. E. Black. This was the first school house built in El Dorado.

The day following our stop-over in El Dorado, we arrived at Douglass which was to be our home for many years. I have mentioned the hotel -- "The Douglass House" -- which father had built for Henry and wife and which was to be our home for awhile. It was a small affair of course but had its "parlor," bedroom, office, dining room, kitchen and family bedroom on the first floor and a few sleeping rooms above one of which was quite large with several beds in it occupied by the regular boarders. The single bedrooms were reserved for transient customers. In the office was the postoffice with C. H. Lamb as postmaster. I assisted him a good deal and got a lot of fun out of it, watching the correspondence of the young men about town though we were deprived of reading postal cards as there were no such things in those days!

Life on the frontier was bound to be eventful and exciting and some of our experiences in the early seventies seem more like fiction than reality to me now as I get further and further away from them. But they were very real at that time. Like all new countries, Kansas and especially this part of the state had to deal with the tough element, the forerunner of civilization one might say. Here the horsethief organization infested the country and had to be combatted by another organization, an anti-horsethief or vigilantes association. The horsethief element had worked its way pretty well into politics, at least to the extent that the sheriff and constables were interested and failed to arrest or prosecute anyone charged with the crime; hence convictions by process of law became impossible. This condition apparently was the justification for the drastic measures taken later on to exterminate the outlaws. Whether the end justified the means some to this day have grave doubts. But on the principle that desperate diseases require desperate remedies, after the loss of many

horses, about the only asset the early settler had, the vigilantes hung five and shot three of the most active men in the gang. The first of these tragedies occurred in November, 1870. A man by the name of Crawford with his family and two sons came from Illinois driving three teams. They took claims between Douglass and Wichita. In one night, all three teams were stolen. A day or so previous to this Jack Corbin, who posed as a government detective, had accosted Mr. Crawford who was riding a mule to town, claiming it was a government mule. He knocked Mr. Crawford off the mule and took it to Wichita where later the sons found it. A few days later Mr. Crawford was in the Douglass House where the election was held and recognized the man who took his mule as one of the voters. He asked his name and was told it was Jack Corbin. That night Corbin was hung and two brothers by the name of George and Louis Booth were shot and later in the night Big Jim Smith, supposed to be the ring leader of them all, was shot as he was on his way to the Booth home. It was said that Corbin confessed and implicated others.

The night of the election I remember very well as Jim Smith, all booted and spurred and armed with his two "six shooters" ate his supper at the hotel. There was quite a rush in the dining room owing to the election and I was helping to serve. It fell to my lot to wait upon Smith. He had been drinking but was civil enough in his behavior. I overheard him mutter to himself, "They are after me. They are after me." I of course didn't know what was on his mind until afterward. Smith was a powerful built man. He always rode a mule into and out of town on a "lope" which was the prevailing gait for riding. The mule was shot from under him and his own body riddled with bullets, on the banks of the Little Walnut just north of Douglass. About midnight the stage coach came in bringing mail and passengers. The driver, with teeth chattering, told us he saw a dead man on the river bank as he crossed. This gruesome news at that hour of the night set my teeth chattering too! It was part of my job to get up in the night and help my brother "change" the mail and look after any passengers who might come in. After the old coach and driver had rattled on, I went back to bed but not to sleep -- my teeth wouldn't let me -- until I got into bed with my brother and his wife.

These lynchings might have ended the trouble had not other men who were interested in receiving and secreting stolen stock tried to work up vengeance on the supposed vigilantes. The persecution of prominent citizens brought matters to a crisis in December when four arrests were made for complicity in horse stealing and put under heavy guard. These men were James Quimby and his clerk Michael Dray; Dr. Morris, a druggist and his son. Great excitement prevailed. Reports were thick that the horse thief bands were coming to liberate the prisoners, burn the town and murder the citizens. The town filled up with men from surrounding country, all

heavily armed, to stand guard over the prisoners and town. Every man wore a brace of pistols, a knife and carried a shot gun. I think all told there were about 200 of them. It was a busy time for the hotel folks as they had the job of feeding these men and with the limited equipment and shortage of help it was quite a task. It gave me a thrill, or a chill as the case might be, to see the men march into the dining room stacking their guns as they came. This condition remained about four days at the end of which time the prisoners were taken to the Big Walnut about a mile south of Douglass and hanged to trees. I personally do not know anything about what evidence was had against these men. It was said an underground stable was on the farm of one of them which was reached by following down midstream a distance of a hundred yards or thereabout. The stolen stock was secreted there until excitement subsided, then the animals were quickly run out of the state into the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Notwithstanding all the facts and rumors, it was certainly a deplorable act whether they were innocent or guilty. I afterward knew Mrs. Quimby and children well; the children were pupils of mine in public school and I was especially fond of them. Mrs. Quimby was a refined woman and perfectly devoted to her family. But never could she quite get away from the shadow of this dreadful tragedy.

Before this time it had never been considered safe for a woman or girl to go anywhere alone unarmed and so we always carried a small pistol in our riding skirt pocket. A description of our costumes may be interesting since I have mentioned riding skirts of which you have probably never heard. Ladies and girls in those days rode on side-saddles -- saddles with two horns, with the right knee resting between the horns, throwing the body of course all on one side of the horse. Don't you wonder how we ever balanced or "stuck on?" The skirts were usually made of black calico and were long, only clearing the ground by a foot or so. In cold weather any kind of black jacket was worn with the skirt. Everybody rode horseback as there was no other way of conveyance. My father had the only spring wagon in the country and it had three seats. He had three good teams and sometimes drove traveling men and other passengers to El Dorado, the county seat. We all preferred horseback riding. A common way of entertaining ourselves was to get up horseback parties and ride for miles, on Sundays especially. A race or two added to the fun of the party. I have forgotten to tell you that there were no fences in those days and the roads went zigzag all over the country. The first roads were made by the first wagons which tried to take the shortest line from ford to ford or place to place and other wagons following the same trail made a well defined road. We had dances on great occasions like the 4th of July and other diversions besides horseback riding, but not many.

The principal one was the "sings" we had almost every evening and Sunday afternoons. About these I want to copy and excerpt from an article published in the "Pink Edition" of the Times,

which was written by Walter H. Douglass, about the "sings" at the Lamb Hotel. He says: "I cannot forbear referring once more to the old Douglass House, its hospitable host and hostess, and the many kind receptions they gave us. The objective point for all of us homesick mortals who had no place to go to and tired of eternally looking at each other, was the old parlor at Lamb's Hotel. The sings we had there when Joe and Walter Douglass, Watson, Harvey, Henry and Kittie, Lida and May (Mary) Lamb joined in concert! We for a time imagined we were back in America and went home wishing it were time to go again."

We did indeed enjoy those occasions of getting together and though our voices were untrained and we had to sing to the accompaniment of a melodeon, still we made the "welkin ring" just the same. There were no pianos in the country then but the way I longed just to hear one made me nearly sick at times. I used to dream of it which sounds strange in these days when such numbers of musical instruments including radios make pianos seem commonplace. The melodeon I spoke of belonged to brother Henry who had it shipped from Ohio. It was a six octave instrument in a sort of small square piano case and wasn't half bad. My brother was really a fine organ player, having been church organist in Chardon, Ohio, for years before coming to Kansas. We as a family were all musically inclined which often served as a bracer when homesickness attacked us and spirits sank low.

In thinking over the days spent at the Douglass House I am reminded again and again of the careful oversight and protective attitude of our elder brother, Henry, to us. We young girls were more or less thrown into contact by living in so public a place, with men of all sorts -- traveling men, of whom we were often warned, and local men of whom we could know but little. They came from all parts of the world, nearly, to this new country. Class distinction was unknown save the line drawn by outlaws, cowboys, etc. Brother Henry was always on the lookout, charging us to be careful, be prudent, be friendly, but not too friendly, all of which was so necessary to our guidance. I so much appreciated his counsel in after years more than I did at the time as I was much like the young people of today, somewhat irked by advice of homefolks.

The first preacher to come to Douglass was the Rev. Saxby, a Methodist minister. His first sermon was preached in the hotel office after he had deposited his gun on a bench there!

It was in the fall of 1871 that Miss Alma Henderson came to Douglass to teach school in the first organized school district in Douglass township. There had been a subscription school the previous summer taught by Miss Agness Livingston, afterward Mrs. George Fox. Miss Henderson came from Vermont to Kansas in search of health. She was a woman of rare attainments and culture and seemed very much out of place in the crude surroundings she found there. A vacant store building was utilized for the first school house, being fitted up with long benches and desks, everybody sitting in rows on each side of the room.

Miss Henderson boarded at the hotel and becoming acquainted and interested in me finally persuaded me to enter her school. I hesitated several weeks from sheer shame of exposing my ignorance to her. I felt I had forgotten all that I had ever known and felt very diffident about the matter. Another drawback was the lack of books. We were hard up financially and I didn't want to ask anyone for money to buy them. Father had about gone broke building and equipping the hotel. Living expenses were terrifically high and money scarce. But a way opened for the purchase of the necessary books. Just at this time one of our old Ohio friends who had also come west and lived north of Douglass on a claim got sick -- I mean the wife did, Mrs. Ed Nash. They could get no help and I offered to go help them out. I remained two weeks, doing all the house work, etc., besides waiting on the sick. When I left they paid me in real money instead of gratitude, four dollars and a half. This was a real "find" for me and with this money I had no excuse for not going to school.

The things I had forgotten quickly came back to me and with the careful and painstaking tutoring of Miss Henderson, I know I made rapid progress. She was then and for years afterward my counselor and friend and all through my early life an inspiration to greater efforts and achievements. She later married Neil Wilkie of Douglass, another pioneer, and together they lived happily many years. Their bodies both lie in the little cemetery east of Douglass where so many of my pioneer friends and relatives rest.

I have mentioned some of the hardships and deprivations we as early settlers had to undergo but I have not mentioned the "eats" situation which, as youngsters, you may be able to appreciate. We had no fresh fruits -- everything was of the dried kind, mostly apples. Then we had little milk and less butter, not much flour -- mostly corn meal -- and sorghum molasses was a staple article of diet. We had few eggs but plenty of prairie chickens and in the winter always a liberal supply of buffalo meat. We always had a hind quarter or two hanging on the shady side of the hotel brought in by hunters.

A buffalo hunt every few weeks was great sport. Buffaloes were found probably within fifty miles or less west of Douglass. All the dry goods, groceries, hardware, lumber were freighted in wagons from Burlingame, the terminus of the Santa Fe and nearest railroad point. A trip there and back took at least eight days which made transportation we would now think rather slow, wouldn't we?

The spring of 1872 brought another turn in the road for me. After the close of school, Miss Henderson began making plans to attend the Second Teachers Institute which was to be held in Autusta for one week. She insisted I should go, that it would be a great opportunity for me to acquire a little learning and experience. The teachers and those students attending were to be entertained free in the homes of the

citizens which made the proposition attractive to me, of course, and so I accompanied her. She also wanted me to take the examination at the close of the institute. I thought that would be folly but I did it to please her.

Miss Henderson and I were assigned to stay with Mr. and Mrs. C. N. James. I think he was postmaster then and was one of the founders of Augusta. The town was named for his wife. They were charming people and had a comfortable home. In another home was located a friend of Miss Henderson, a Mrs. Buchanan from Chelsea Township and with her, Miss Mollie Sheldon. The two older women decided they would like to be in the same home and so they changed about which left Mollie Sheldon and myself at the James home.

Alvah Sheldon also was attending the institute. He was teaching in the Chelsea neighborhood where his mother and family lived. It was a very natural thing for Mollie's big brother to take us, the two girls, home from the evening sessions of the institute. The acquaintance begun there ended in a five years correspondence and courtship for it was in 1877 that we were married.

I mentioned taking the examination at the close of the institute but forgot to say I received a third grade certificate for three months. You may know the standards weren't very high or at least I know it; but be that as it may, I went home and had the courage to apply for a school in Little Walnut Township -- and got it! I taught three months (which was as long as I could on that certificate) for \$30.00 a month. I paid \$10.00 a month for board which left me at the end of the term \$60.00. That \$60.00 I am telling you was the biggest sum of money I have ever seen. It meant a new white dress, all trimmed with blue ribbons, for the Fourth of July, and a few furbelows besides.

That first schoolhouse in which I taught was just a shanty which had been vacated by some bachelor squatter on the claim. It had just long benches without backs and desks and a blackboard. It had a door of course and only one window but that didn't matter as it was warm weather and the open door gave light enough. The first two weeks of my school I boarded with a Miss Baker and her brother. I had a nice room and the first week Miss Baker insisted on serving my meals in my room on a tray. I felt this was too much trouble so begged her to let me eat with the family. The second week I did but that ended it for me. The table was covered with oilcloth instead of a tablecloth and had for a centerpiece a big crock of clabbered milk into which everybody, hired men and all, dipped their cups and drank. This was a little too primitive for me and I proceeded to find a place with a Mr. and Mrs. Manley who kindly took me in and were lovely to me in every way the rest of the term.

In the meantime Douglass had built a new school house. I decided to enter school again for the fall and winter term. The next spring, 1873, I again took an examination, this time receiving a six months certificate.

I went farther from home to teach this time. The school was in the Rosalia district about eight or ten miles east of El Dorado. The district was as large as the township and had four school houses, one in each corner. I first taught in Number Four and the following fall in Number Two. I still drew the munificent monthly salary of \$30.00. Wages in those days were at low ebb sure enough. I was 35 miles from home and only made one home visit in three months. It took grit and courage to stand it.

My experiences in pioneering were still trailing after me. There were some better homes in District Two but none near enough the school house so I took up my abode with a family by name of Keener that lived in easy walking distance of school. The family consisted of husband and wife and two small children. The house had one large room with a stove in one end and a bed in each corner opposite. Mr. Keener would politely retire to the out-of-doors while I was disrobing for bed and again in the morning when I was dressing. That was in the days of coal oil lamps and they had but one. When the last chimney was broken which put the lamp out of commission, we resorted to the burning of a rag in a saucer of lard for lighting purposes. It was by this sort of light that I had to sew evenings after school. I had ridden into town, El Dorado, one Saturday on a borrowed pony and bought a dress pattern of red plaid silk, of Gardner and Tolle. This dress I made after school hours, sewing by the light of a burning rag! I was particularly anxious to finish it on a certain date as I wanted to wear it to the dedication of the Methodist Church, now the G. A. R. Hall.

Your grandfather was was still my escort came after me one cold November Friday afternoon, earlier than I had expected him. How to make my toilet with him in the house was a problem. He fortunately sat facing the stove with his back to the beds. I took a double shawl, got up on the bed and stretched it corner-wise leaving a fair sized dressing room behind it. I took my bath in a basin, changed my clothes and appeared on record time ready for the trip to town. I often since have thought what dreadful responsibilities rested in those tacks.

I have forgotten who preached the dedicatory sermon but think it was presiding elder Mitchell. Some of the people present at the services are still here or living at least. Among them are Mrs. E. D. Stratford who was Miss Jennie Long, Mrs. Jerry Conner of Wichita then Miss Mary Petrie, Mrs. Ed C. Ellet of California, and the writer. Among those absent are the names of A. L. Redden and his mother, Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Clark, Mr. and Mrs. N. F. Frazier, Sr., H. F. Brown, George Tolle, S. E. Black, Alvah Sheldon, C. H. Selig, H. M. Logan, Dr. J. A. McKenzie and others whom I cannot now recall. This church building was the first one erected in El Dorado.

After my school closed in Rosalia in December, I entered El Dorado High School for a few months in 1874, later returned to Douglass and took special work under ex-superintendent S. L. Shotwell who was a wonderful instructor and educator.

His was a peculiar personality -- very quiet and stern exterior, but underneath a warm heart and a great desire to assist a struggling pupil. I preserved for many years copies of his own rules and methods of teaching which had been valuable to me.

The next spring of 1875 I took over the school, a mixed one with 58 pupils enrolled. I was at a loss to know by what name I should have the children address me. Having been a pupil with them, I felt I should maintain a little dignity since I had been promoted to "teach," so I appealed to Mrs. Wilkie for advice. She answered me by suggesting they call me "Miss May" as "Miss Lamb" would sound most too formal. So "Miss May" it was for a couple of years. In the fall of '75 the school was graded and divided into two grades of which I taught the primary and J. W. Shively the higher grades. This school year was the pleasantest experience of all I had. Mr. Shively was an original and progressive instructor and superintendent and a delightful co-worker. We were warm personal friends for years after both of us were married and out of the profession.

I have neglected to mention the fact that I secured my first grade certificate, good for one year, in the spring of 1875. This had been the aim and height of my ambition for years.

I have written at too much length probably of my school activities but have wanted to show you in detail one of the meanings of the Kansas Motto, "Ad Astra per Aspera."

I have overlooked some events which may interest you in writing this too hurriedly, events which took place during these early years. I will turn back a few years to the first fair held in Butler County. Towanda was the place and 1871 the year. It was more of a horse race than anything else. My father was one of a few men who formed an association and the subsequent fairs were held at Douglass where more pretentious exhibits were made. Father drove the winning horse at Towanda. "Champion" was his name and he really was a beautiful bay animal. I think he may have trotted in something less than a 2:40 gait but that was not half bad at that time. Father afterwards traded him for a quarter section of land two miles from Douglass. Sister Lida was riding at Towanda and her ankle was severely hurt when her horse threw her. We were all stopping at the Towanda Hotel owned by Rev. Isaac Mooney, father of V. P. Mooney. I remember well of meeting Frank Mooney, wife of V. P., and Miss Viola Wait who later was Mrs. R. S. Miller. The fair at Douglass the year following had, besides the race track, a small building for agricultural products and fine arts, and stables for the horses. A ladies riding contest was one of the features in which I won second premium of \$10.00. Ladies still rode sideways. The astride form would have been considered very immodest.

It was about this time in the early seventies that father, sister Lida, Della and myself moved on to a claim about six miles west of Douglass that father had filed upon. One of the requirements in securing a title to land was that the preemptor and family must live at least six months on the land. We took a few

household goods and began our residence in a one room shack. The prairies were covered with a rank growth of native grass. On the bottom land especially it grew to great height -- so tall it would easily hide a man on horseback. We had our first real experience with a prairie fire while on this claim. You have probably seen in moving pictures scenes greatly resembling this one. We were sitting at the dinner table one day when we noticed the room was getting dark. We began to notice too an occasional cinder sifting in through the cracks. On rushing to the window, we could see a prairie fire coming by leaps and bounds in a regular gale of wind. When we first saw it the fire was probably a mile or two away and across Eight Mile Creek. In a moment more we saw it had jumped the creek and headed our way. Then our activities began in earnest, knowing that the road in front of our shack would be no barrier. Father instructed us girls to take the two horses to some plowed ground near while he and brother and a sick cousin who happened to be there grabbed the old clothes and soaked them in barrels of water which had been hauled for house use. They then were prepared to beat out the flames as they came to the short grass around the house. The men were nearly suffocated with the smoke as were sister and I on the plowed ground. We laid flat down, however, and saved the horses while the men saved the shack and wagon. The hay stable though went up in the flames. This same fire swept over miles and miles of territory and did great damage in many places.

A long way back in this story I referred to different forms of entertainment and diversion which we took part in and enjoyed in these early days but I forgot to mention one which helped to make early history more complete. This was the organization of a musical society which met in convention once a year for three days sessions, closing with a public concert or recital. I think the first one was held in Augusta in 1873 and thereafter in El Dorado. Professor F. C. Buck of Augusta was the conductor. Singers from all parts of the county belonged. It was a wonderful season of getting together. A sort of community spirit prevailed though we didn't know it by that name. Some of those taking part in it were the Dutton girls, Josie and Mattie, the Newberry sisters, Addie and Esther, the Lamb girls Lida and May, and "Tiger Bill" Cambell, now of Wichita. Sister Lida, who had, as Mrs. Murdock said, "a marvelous voice," and "Tiger Bill" were the star performers. There were no traveling show companies in the "airly" days so we made up our own shows. These consisted usually of farces, tableaux, songs, recitations, etc. I remember well one of these little plays had a character of a French maid who thought she had taken poison by mistake. I took the part and went through all the contortions and paroxysms supposedly required in the situation. I afterwards rehearsed it just for fun for your grandfather's benefit -- but it was too realistic, I imagine, as he begged me to quit.

In these days there were no movies, no theaters, no circuses, no golfing, no tennis, no victrolas, no radios, no clubs no amusements, except the homemade variety. Is it any wonder we made the most of those?

As I am nearing the close of this sketch, I think I should mention for history's sake the marriages, at least of the members of the family, which took place after coming west. Watson, or Dr. W. M. Lamb, was married in 1869 to Emily A. Douglass, sister of J. W. Douglass, the founder of Douglass. They went to New York to her mother's home for the wedding. Harvey D. Lamb returned to Kendallville, Indiana, for his wife, Mary E. Pitkin, in 1870. Watson had an M. D. degree and Harvey a law diploma from Ann Arbor but neither followed their professions closely.

The next marriage was my own which took place at my father's home two miles southwest of Douglass on January 28, 1877. We were married Sunday evening with Reverend J. B. Iver, a personal friend, officiating. It was a simple affair with a few intimate friends present. Instead of "refreshments were served," we had a wedding supper following the ceremony. Our wedding journey was a trip to Arkansas City in a spring wagon for a weeks visit with Uncle Tom and Aunt Olive Manter. On our return to Douglass, we transferred from the spring wagon to a lumber wagon and journeyed on to Wichita to buy and haul our furniture to El Dorado. The lumber wagon wouldn't hold all the goods we bought so the bridegroom hired a smaller conveyance to bring me and the other most precious articles over in! We hadn't gone far from Wichita when it began to rain -- and then it poured. But from the time we reached the Whitewater River about 4 o'clock p. m., the mud was appalling. The team which was unevenly matched and in poor physical condition to say nothing of its mental attitude, got stuck in the mud on the banks of the Whitewater. This was the last straw for me. I climbed out of the wagon and walked in the mud to Towanda, I suppose about half a mile. I fortunately was just in time to catch the stage for El Dorado. Thus ended our unusual and unique wedding journey! We set up housekeeping in the Shotwell house, later owned by the Robb family on North Vine Street. It was one of the most pretentious homes in town.

Your grandfather was County Superintendent of schools on the munificent salary of \$50.00 per month. We lived, and saved a part of his salary. We had rented some farm land near his mother's in Chelsea Township and had it sown to wheat. This crop paid for a little three room house which we built in the spring, two doors north of the Robb property. In this home which we thought so fine and dear, the following children were born: Bertram Benjamin, on June 29, 1878; Mary Myrtle August 17, 1879; and Chester Conkling August 30, 1880.

The last of December 1881, we bought the property at 215 North Star Street of George W. Clark. The house was small then, five rooms, to which we added others as necessity demanded. In this home Lida Lou was born on September 3, 1882; Bernice Barbara on July 19, 1885 and Marjorie Jane on October 14, 1890.

This story of my pioneer days and early life has been written quite at random and the facts not very consecutively arranged but you will have some idea of the early struggles and history of this little corner of the world and of the part some of us pioneers played in the making. I have greatly enjoyed liver over again, in the retelling, the experiences and the associations of the long ago.

Lovingly,

/s/ Grandmother Shelden
(Mary Lamb Shelden)