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HENDRICKS COUNTY

HISTORY BULLETIN



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THE HENDRICKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DANVILLE, INDIANA

HENDRICKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

ORGANIZED 1967

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There is no doubt that it is around the family and the home that all the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of human society are created, strengthened and maintained.

Winston Churchill

PRESIDENT'S SUMMER MESSAGE

HENDRICKS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On May 1, 1988, we had a good crowd at the Danville Junior High to hear Mrs. Wean talk on "The History of Central Normal College". It was amazing for me to watch your faces as Mrs. Wean talked about many of the memories you all share.

We owe a special thanks to Judy Pingle and her group for the refreshments. Many people stayed around and toured the school. You can sure tell Mr. Jim Disney is proud of his school and job. Mr. Disney stayed with us after having conducted the Junior Class Prom at school the night before. We all appreciate his efforts.

Remember August 7, 1988, at 2:00 p.m., we will have Leslie Olsen from Channel 8 TV, and Gary Ellis, State Archeologist, present a program entitled UNEARTHING INDIANA'S PAST. Music will be furnished by the fine Sextet from the Pittsboro Christian Church.

We will meet at the Pittsboro Christian Church on North Meridian Street, across from the grade school. You can park on the west side of the church. A reception will follow.

I have recently learned that Mr. Bob Boyd, Principal of the Danville South Elementary School, has received a very interesting grant. Mr. Boyd will be videotaping places and things of historical interest in our County and will be interviewing people who know things about our County history. We should follow along what he is doing. I am sure he will share the results of his work with us. When more information about the project becomes available, I will pass it along in this column.

I hope you are all having a great summer. I am looking forward to seeing you at the Pittsboro Christian Church on August 7, 1988, at 2:00 p.m. Maybe by then we will have gotten some rain and be back on track with what the weather should really be like for summer. Years from now we don't want to be talking about the drought of '88.

See you in August.

Jeffrey V. Boles, President

MAY MEETING

On May 1st we gathered in the old CNC - Canterbury Gym, now the Danville Community Schools Junior High Gym, to hear Blanche Wean give the history of that beloved old school. Since 1931, when she became Head of the Business Department, she has been an intrinsic part of that institution. It can be said that she still is, for, since those doors were closed for good, she has been the guiding spirit in the still - active Alumni Association. Central Normal College sent teachers out to every county in the state, and to every state in the country and its influence can never be measured. It was an impressive story and the history of that small but mighty school makes one of the most interesting and important

chapters in the history of Hendricks County.

We enjoyed coffee, punch and cookies while we browsed over school memorabilia.

AUGUST MEETING

We will meet again, August 7th, at the Pittsboro Christian Church where a fine program has been planned. Leslie Olsen, from Chanel 8 TV, and Gary Ellis, State Archeologist, will present a program Unearthing Indiana's Past. Music will be furnished by the Sextet from the church. If you have heard this group sing, you know they are well-worth coming to hear.

The Pittsboro Christian Church is on N. Meridian St., across from the Grade School, and parking is on the west side of the church.

This meeting promises to be just another interesting one such as we have become accustomed and I promise you it won't be any hotter than it has been! So don't miss it.

MUSINGS FROM THE MUSEUM

Last time, we griped about the weather. We're still griping about the weather. Ma Nature and her mood swings!

The museum has been seeking a kerosene chandelier. We notice that there is one right about the foot of the stairs. It looks like it has a round wick and it is decorated with flowers. Just because electricity was not in use didn't mean homes didn't have pretty lamps. We have several. There is the bracket lamp in the kitchen that is far from plain; the little parlor lamp on the melodeon and an even smaller one on the parlor organ. We have some plain ones too. There is one on the fireplace mantel, on the stand-table and another on the piolian.

The museum had a table of Central Normal-Canterbury College memorabilia at the recent college reunion.

The Hendricks County garden Club planted periwinkles in the flower bed after the tulips finished blooming. The project has kept someone stepping to keep watering, but the periwinkles are blooming nicely.

Among the items received by the museum was a lard press. We already had a sausage grinder. I expect if we'd look around we'd find some butcher knives. There's a "how-to" book on butchering up in the library that tells all in detail from locating a proper spot for the fire to cleaning up afterward. We're in no hurry to start! We also received a crank-type telephone. It hasn't been installed yet but it would have to be in a handy place so it wouldn't take very long to get there when it rang--either for that number, or any other ring on the line. One way to get on the spot news. There was one thing certain--there was no privacy. One talked before an audience unless everyone was out. Listen to the receivers go up to tell how many there were on the line. There was one thing that is a pet peeve today--teen-agers using the line to excess that was not a problem then.

Just notice an item stating that a Sears Roebuck Catalog published in 1902 cost the customer 50¢. Look at their price today!

THE CHILDREN'S ROOM

A child's delight, one could almost hear them squeal! We're greeted by Teddy Bear in his high chair (we start our docents young). The pictures on the wall are of assorted subjects. Here's a cradle, or rather there are four cradles of assorted sizes, with dolls to fill them. The quilt on the bed is made up in tiny squares. A seventeen year old girl made it. The bed also has a new feather bed. We notice a child's size roll-top desk. Makes a good place to work on coloring books. A rocking chair from the 1920's was just the right size to get one's feet on the floor. Here are three doll buggies. Look at this fancy one! It is not a doll buggy, but made for a real life baby. It is made out of reed and has high wheels and looks pretty delicate. The window-well has an assortment of toys and a couple of dolls. Over here are two miniature displays of old-time homes. One is in the 1880's when "home" was over the store. This day bed is not restricted to children's use. This wash stand with its pitcher and bowl was the closest thing then to a bathroom. This washstand also has three tiny lamps on it. This folding seat was used in buggies to provide more room and was used by the children and those adults whose rheumatiz hadn't caught up with them. A wardrobe filled with children's clothes, lots of fancy ruffles and no permanent press. As we go on toward the door we see games, tricycles, a fancy oil lamp, a baby basket, tiny shoes. As we are about to leave, we notice a tiny desk with a slate and slate pencil. All this had the makings of noise but those below knew that was okay until all was quiet.

Jewell

CENTRAL NORMAL BOOK WELL RECEIVED

Approximately one half the books "Central Normal - Canterbury College 1876 - 1951" have been sold. This book contains over 400 pages of materials including the story by Dr. W. Lawson on moving the college from Ladoga, through the Trustee's minutes, articles about faculty and campus leaders with campus activities of athletics, music department, business department with special articles about Sam Williams and Miss Watts. About 10,000 names of persons who attended has been of special interest to families interested in genealogy.

Books may be secured from CNC-Canterbury Office, Box 128, (249 S. Wayne St.) Danville, Indiana. Price \$25.00 per copy. Add postage \$2.00 if mailed.

THE ROBERT H. KING BRIDGE FAMILY

Home base was at Danville, Indiana, in Hendricks County. Robert H. King (1893-1964) began to contract for bridge construction in the early 1920's so these dates set the time frame for our story.

I have always thought it exciting that I was a bridge builder's kid. I was born in 1924, so when I was a little girl Mr. King's mother lived in the house just west of Ellis Park. Down under the hill was a barn and long lot. This area was used for storage of extra lumber and machinery and the barn provided a warm, dry work space. Sometimes my father took my little sister and me with him to spend the day. We visited with Mrs. King and enjoyed looking at her bird books.

Most of all we loved to play across the swinging bridge, swing in the wide swings and roller skate in the shelter house.

If you take an Indiana map and circle all the spots where bridges were built by the King Construction Company, you touch every part of our state. Three bridges were built in Illinois also, in those early days. Meredosia, Illinois, was a long way from Hendricks County. There I attended first grade and the next summer we were at Vergennes, Illinois. A bridge was also built at Little York, Illinois, according to Hazel Lothridge who has helped me collect data. Bill Lothridge (1904-1975) worked for Mr. King for a total of 38 years.

My father, Paul Clark, his brothers, Earl and Beuford Clark, James Weddle, Thomas Pritchett, Robey Russell, James Hayes, and Malcolm (Mutt) Lotheridge along with wives and children were the nucleus of the King "bridge gang". Work crews were hired from local laborers.

Paul Clark spent all of his working days with Mr. King except for the time of depression between 1931 and 1935 when he worked for the Hendricks County Highway Department, and during W.W. II when both Paul and Mr. King served with the Navy Seabees.

Earl Clark was away during those same periods of time but then continued in bridge construction as long as his health allowed. Beuford Clark died from appendicitis in 1936.

Robey Russell was the semi driver and hauled materials where needed. Mr. King usually had two bridges in different localities going at the same time.

We always waited anxiously on contract letting day to find out in which direction we would be moving. All of the families involved had permanent homes and only moved the barest of necessities in those little two-wheeled trailers with their wooden side racks.

Wooden packing boxes became kitchen cabinets when stacked and with the addition of print curtains. Regular open bed springs had home-made wooden corner legs attached to become portable beds. Canvas cots and chairs, card tables and folding chairs were essential and utilized. The heaviest article was the coal heating stove. A small laundry stove and/or kerosene stove was used for cooking.

Perhaps the new home was a summer kitchen on a farm near Fairland. My sister and I shared a tent bedroom close by. That was the only time in my life I lived on a farm and that summer, when I was seven, was a real learning experience. Perhaps the new home was half a house; rooms upstairs in a house or even up over a grocery store. In Charlestown we had the old fashioned well with bucket, rope and wooden crank. The next move was to Seymour (that hot summer of 1936) and there we were blessed for the first time with a real bathroom. Seymour also had three air-conditioned movie houses and a dairy store that sold three dips of ice cream for a nickel. Sand, melons, tramps at the door, baseball games at the park and Ruth and Jimmy Hayes expecting J.B. and sharing our house--all memories of that famous summer.

During the 20s and 30s we sure couldn't be choosy about living conditions when several bridge families descended on small Indiana towns all at once. Before we moved to Eaton, in 1938, house trailers came on the market. They were about 27 feet long. Couch in one end, convertible table and seats in the other. Ice box and a little gas stove; a closet and a few cabinets--that's all. Not modern,

but how nice they seemed. They were parked in private yards where we shared a pump for water and the out-house with the family.

Those trailers eliminated all the disinfecting, scrubbing, packing, unpacking and the worry of finding a place to call home. They were a great boon to construction workers. The brand of our first one was Covered Wagon.

When the bridge was located on a new highway, there were often great stretches of mud and rutted dirt. This was next to impassable during bad winter weather. At Charlestown my mother's legs were frostbitten when she accompanied my father out to the bridge location. Her wool skirt picked up the snow then slapped her legs on that long one mile hike.

At Seymour it was just the opposite. Loose sand everywhere just like a desert. Unions were causing trouble and it was here that my father got a gun permit and had a gun in his car. Here also that robbers came and stole gasoline. My parents bravely caught them.

We always spoke of the temporary bridges where daddy had to light the lanterns each evening. I just recently found out that some of our group referred to these as the run-arounds. At Morgantown there were four to build. I well remember the smell of the lumber and the rattle of the boards. What fun to hunt for the prettiest rocks in a pile of gravel.

At La Crosse, up in La Porte County, we were close to the Dunes Park and to the Field's Museum in Chicago. At Marion we got to see the famous Easter Pageant in one of its earliest performances. We were often close to a state park and took advantage of learning all we could about this great state of Indiana.

What is it like to go to two or even three schools in one year? Well, I liked to meet new people, have new teachers and make friends but it wasn't that easy for my little sister. She mostly stayed in my shadow and my friends were hers. When I reached high school my parents decided that during the school year mother would stay at home, in North Salem, with us girls and daddy could live in the house trailer during the week and come home over the week-end. Cars were better by this time and it worked out.

Wherever the community we made friends, attended church and school activities but most of all had our family. Yes, we led the gypsy life but we had our roots--our home and extended family back here to come home to. Our bridge family enjoyed the simple life and there was a closeness that was precious.

James Hayes is the only living member of the old bridge workers and he lives in Danville as does Hazel Lothridge. Bonita Clark lives in Clermont. The rest are gone but the heritage lives on. Larry Lothridge, son of Bill and Hazel, is in construction work as is Charles Clark, son of Earl and Charlotte. Robert H. King married Martha Harvey and we all know that the George Harvey & Son Construction Company is headquartered in Danville. My job is just to help you all remember how it was.

Mary Ann Clark Moore
310 S. Jefferson St.
Brownsburg, Indiana 46112

CENTRAL NORMAL COLLEGE CATALOGUES
NEEDED BY DANVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Danville Public Library needs the following Central Normal College Catalogues. Would you check around and see if you have one you could donate so the Danville Library will have a complete set.

- 1937 - 1938
- 1940 - 1941
- 1941 - 1942
- 1942 - 1943
- 1943 - 1944
- 1944 - 1945
- 1945 - 1946
- 1946 - 1947
- 1947 - 1948
- 1950 - 1951

PLAINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

Registration is underway for "Genealogy Resources at the Indiana State Library" with Diane Sharp at the Plainfield Public Library from 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, August 10.

Ms. Sharp, who holds a B.A. and an M.L.S. from Indiana University, has worked in the State Library's genealogy division since 1968 as reference librarian. She is currently assistant to the head of the division and is familiar with many aspects of family history research.

The Heritage Committee of Plainfield's Hoosier Celebration '88 is sponsoring the program in connection with the Plainfield Roots Project.

Any person with Plainfield or Hendricks County connections is encouraged to sign out a packet of information and forms at the library, complete the genealogical information and return it to the library for inclusion in the Project files as a permanent historical reference source.

In addition to current Hendricks county and Indiana residents who are participating in the Project, Plainfield Roots packets have traveled as far as Kansas, Missouri, Arizona and Idaho as former residents document their roots.

Upon completion and submission of the genealogy forms, participants will be given a certificate of recognition for their contribution to the library's local history files.

Certificates will be presented at the library's Heritage Celebration open house on Saturday, October 1 from 2 to 4 p.m.

The Heritage Celebration will be one event in Plainfield's town-wide Hoosier Celebration '88 Homecoming Weekend, September 30 through October 2. The open house will feature a concert by musicians from the Central Indiana Folk Music and Mountain Dulcimer Society and refreshments courtesy of Marsh Supermarkets.

The library will be open for touring and special exhibits with historical emphasis will be on view.

For further information on the Plainfield Roots Project or the Library's local history collection, phone the Historical Librarian Susan Carter at 839-6602 or write Plainfield Public Library, 1120 Stafford Road, Plainfield, IN 46168.

County Seat Society Promotes Genealogy

The County Seat Genealogical Society - Primary Sources, met recently at the home of Mrs. Henry Cox, to prepare the third edition of the quarterly, the County Seat Scraps.

The Society was formed April 12, 1987, for promoting and aiding research in the field of genealogy. The primary aim is to "copy" primary source records and use them as the basis of the quarterly publications.

Excerpts of records which appear in the publication are: wills, deeds, probate records, marriage records, miscellaneous records, original land entries and any other available county records. The society will occasionally publish records from other areas, as they become available.

Membership to County Seat Genealogical Society-Primary Sources, is open to all. The publication of the Society, County Seats Scraps, is free to members.

For further information for becoming a member, or submitting queries please contact Pat Cox, 745-2628 or write 310 Urban St., Danville, IN 46122.

Death, again, entered our ranks and took two faithful members - Geraldine Scott and Martha Every - Clayton. Both had taught school for many years and, at retirement, returned to their native Hendricks County. We extend our sympathies to their loved ones.

"Cast all your cares on Him" 1 Peter 5:7

NOTICE -

Family newsletter - BREngle BRANCHES Concerning all branches of Brengle/Bringler/Pringle surnames and allied lineages. Published quarterly - \$15 per year - free unlimited queries.

Charles Bringle - Editor
6619 Pheasant Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21220

This letter came from Joan L. Robinson, 8531 Barr Lane, Garden Grove, CA 92641.
We are printing it because it is so interesting and explains the letter she enclosed.

May 8, 1988

Dear Mrs. Baker,

I have been working on my husband's family history for several years. The first Robinson came from Virginia in 1830 and settled in Putnam County. My husband's grandfather was Dr. Josias H. Robinson who practiced in Putnam and Hendricks counties. This letter I have enclosed was written by one of Josias' younger brothers, Dr. Lawson D. Robinson, to his wife Mollie. They were married in Hendricks County in 1860. One interesting thing is Lawson is listed in Putnam, Floyd Township census in 1860, as a medical student. He then turns up in Hendricks 1860 census with wife, Mary, and is listed as a doctor.

I thought this letter might be interesting to some one in Hendricks as he mentions several people he had heard from there. It also gives an interesting account of the war where he was. The little girl, Aggie, he mentions was his first child, Agnes. He later had three sons, Josias Arthur, Oscar James and Lawson Jr. Lawson Jr. died very young and is buried in West Branch Friends Cem. For some reason then Lawson left Hendricks and went to Brookfield, MO. and died there in 1872 at only 32. I have no evidence that Mollie and the children went with him.

I have other letters written by him to Mollie and one to his brother-in-law. This letter was written on small slips of paper about 5 inches by 6 inches and someone taped them together, so where the tape is it is almost impossible to read, that's why there are some blank spots.

You may print this letter if you would like to.

This line of Robinsons were also related to the Matthews family. The children of James and Lavinia Robinson were - Ahijah who married Sirenetta McClintock (from Hendricks) - Josias, Anderson, Cassandra, Julian, Eveline, Lawson, Jane and James.

I have just about finished my research and will try to get it printed this year. I will try to donate a copy to your library.

I will also be back there in Sept. and will try to visit your museum this time. I am also trying to get Josias Robinson's medical bag to donate. My sister-in-law has it and she wants to put it someplace like that.

Sincerely,

Jean Robinson

Moscow, Tenn.
April 19th 1863

My dearest Mollie,

This beautiful Sabbath evening just after I got tired writing in my daily journal and tired of reading my new numbers of the Herald and Era and Chicago Medical Examiner and tired of talking with everybody your very interesting and affectionate

letter came to hand. And now you can't imagine how much good it does me. I shall answer immediately as it adds new life to my pleasure and causes my heart to beat with as have had a time since your last visit to Hendricks County! But I don't like to hear of your sporting with young folks parties in my absence! I am afraid the same law will have to be past (passed) in Indiana that they were compelled to pass - Ky. viz. A law 'Army Widows' should not marry until they had official notice of the death-their husband in the Army! There they were marrying on every mere rumor of the death of their loved (?) husband, where often the rumor is false and the husband is still living!! I guess though, as I have not been gone very long yet that you could wait, if you were to hear of my untimely 'end' until it was confirmed second time! But there is no harm in your having the one you want picked out in case such a thing should happen!! Hal Hal Hal But enough of this. Enjoy yourself the best you may dear, it is alright with me for I know you must have a lonely time of it. Anyway conduct yourself my dear with an eye single to the mutual benefit, happiness and comfort to yourself, Aggie and myself in future times. You know what course of conduct on your part during my absence will be most conducive to that end and I need not here say anything further about it. I have the fullest confidence in your judgement.

I wrote mother yesterday and in that letter I told her that our regt. had from here to Miss. to take a 'twist' with the rebels. They left about 130 sick and convalescents here in my charge together with all the camp equipment and C&C. I was not here when they left, but was absent by R R on official business pertaining to the regt. Drs. Butterfield and Russell went with it. I would liked the best in the world to have went, for they are sure to have a fight. I do not know whether they come back here and continue to guard this ward or whether we will be ordered to join them in a day or a few days. Will let you know and only if we leave here finally. I rather dislike to leave a railroad and go off again away from any mail facilities and connection with you as we did before. But I am ready for anything our country's good requires at my hands. Nothing in this world could please me more to have you come and see me, but as I said in my letter last Sunday, difficulties seem unsurmountable. And just now, as all the time, it looks as though this enemy were going to attack this road somewhere and cut us off from Memphis and the river. I should to have you and Aggie here when such a thing occurred. As before said, we will patiently await for course of events for awhile and trust to king providence. I have a new Testament dear, and it gives me great pleasure to read it's lesson. I am becoming quite a Christian. Our sick say I am worth 400 of the chalains even as a moral advisor. They don't know I have is very as soul doctor. Probably a little of both. Oh! yes Dear did you get a medical journal with a letter in it which I sent you!! Tell me. Yesterday the good people of New Elizabeth sent the boys here a box of good things and among others, Mrs. Richardson sent me a nice can of green peaches and Mrs. Ger a nice cake of maple sugar and some other good woman, I know not who, sent a can of 'tomato catsup' and one of nice apple butter and a lot of cakes! I think it was Mrs. Dr. Matthews of Clayton as it came from there.

Some moths ago when Bill Richardson wrote to me his lady sent a letter also and so did Mrs. Hull when Oscar wrote. I answered them when I wrote to their husbands. Then when sisters Jane and Julian wrote me Mrs. Cleman wrote me a very lovely, friendly letter which I answered sending her letter in one to Julian. I thought I would mention these things so that no one might lie to you about it and cause you to think I was secretly corresponding with married women! I shall never do an act, Dear in your absence that I would not be willing for you to witness rest assured of this. I am truly glad you have got moved and have left Mrs. Wilson's rat harbor. I gave you my sentiments on that subject a day or since and will not repeat it.

Our boys are gone without any tents or anything to shelter them and last night it stormed and rained torrents all night the poor fellows suffered and were thoroughly drenched to the skin. Oh dear! how I would like to see you and sweet Aggie this evening. Last night I dreamed and vividly of you both. I dream of you almost every time I go to sleep and what is remarkable I always have sweet and cheerful dreams about you! Well, dear be a good and faithful Christian and I will do likewise and God will take care of and bless us all. You improve very fast in writing, my dear, and write very interesting letters. Continue my love to write often and long and you know I will. I am keeping a daily journal for you to read when I get home. I will make it as interesting as possible for you. Give my love and kisses to all and tell Aggie, bless her, that Pa wants to see them bats 'awful bad' ! Rest assured Dear that I will be to see you as soon as a half a chance offers itself. My love and a 1000 kisses to you and Aggie and all. May God bless us all in the constant prayer of your affectionate and devoted

Lawson

THE KOO-KOO KU KLUX KLAN

One of the darkest chapters in the history of Indiana and Hendricks County, was during the reign of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was organized by Confederate veterans in Tennessee and was directed against newly franchized blacks after the Civil War.

The second version of the Klan was organized in 1915, and its circle of hate was widened to include Jews, Catholics, the foreign born, radicals and labor unions. By 1920 it claimed a membership of 5 million and Indiana was in the throes of its power.

D. C. Stephenson, in 1924, became the grand Dragon of the Klan in Indiana and practically dominated the politics. It was reported that Stephenson made more than \$2 million dollars in 18 months selling Klan memberships and regatta. Stephenson boasted he was the law.

His reign of terror, however, came to an end when he was arrested, charged and convicted of murder in a sadistic sexual attack on Madge Oberholtzer. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Harvey Jacobs, Editor of the INDIANAPOLIS NEWS, where I read the above information, found a song, published in New York in 1921, which proved that, as he said, in spite of the tensions of the times, there was still some redeeming humor. The title of the song is THERE'S A BUNCH OF KLUCKS IN THE KU KLUX KLAN, and the lyrics go like this:

In the daily papers, there's a certain society,
That gets notoriety now.
I've read all about it, and between you and me,
They seem looney somehow.
There's something wrong no doubt,
And here's how I figured it out.
Chorus: There's a bunch of Klucks in the Ku Klux Klan,
And they're all KooKoo, that's true.

With their awful hoke,
They're an awful joke,
When you watch the things they do.
We ought to pile 'em, in some asylum
And never let them out.
Kause we don't know and they don't know,
What the deuce it's all about.
There's the grand high punk with his grand high bunk
And his grand palace, too.
But I've just found out how he got that palace, and I'll tell you,
Each little Kluck pays one little buck.
But he's out of luck, Kause he'll get stuck,
When he finds out they're all Kuckoo,
In the Koo-Koo Klux Klan.

The following article came from The Plainfield Messenger. The Messenger nearly always prints an article or two that takes us on a trip down Memory Lane. Thanks, Messenger.

Plain And FANCY

From Periwinkle Porch

Go back, if you can, to 1958. Now define: acid rain, compact disc, food processor, frequent-flyer program, condominium, major credit card, floppy disc, media conglomerate, cocaine cartel.

Do you ever wonder, as you go through your daily routine, what your forbearers would have thought of some of today's concerns and conveniences, today's priorities and preoccupations?

We do - often. The musings usually take the form of a fleeting thought which flashes through the mind when we see some new fashion-of-the-minute, witness a landmark building being destroyed or simply prepare a no-muss, no-fuss lunch in the microwave.

"What would Grandmama think of this?" Or, on the other side of the house, "What would Grandmother say about that?"

Sometimes the answers are simple. The Grandmother who knew that everyone's knees were unattractive would be no happier to witness the return of the mini-skirt than she was to see it break on the scene the first time around.

(This same lady would be appalled to discover that in 1988, no downtown Indianapolis department store has a fabric department - or a sewing notions department. But then again, few of her six granddaughters are inclined to sew at all, much less make each season's fashions anew for the family as she did.)

Grandmama, who was a milliner before her marriage and who told of her shoes sliding down the train aisle on a buying trip to New York, would no doubt be amazed that her granddaughters are veterans of multiple trans-oceanic flights. Grandmama never boarded an airplane, and we now regard train rides as a novelty.

Some of the conveniences we all take for granted would, we suspect, be gratefully adopted. To name a few, the availability of antibiotics and vaccines, the prevalence of air conditioning, easy-care fabrics, modern washers, dryers and dishwashers.

Not to say that the women might not view some or all of the above as frivolous luxuries. Certain to fall in the "frivolous" category - and found in our households or workplaces - are TV, stereo and video recorders with remote control, electric coffee grinders, pencil sharpeners, typewriters and answering machines.

And then there is the category labeled "Downright Baffling." Here we find UPC scanners at the grocery, home computers, cars that talk to their drivers, automated teller machines, self-cleaning ovens and satellite dishes... .. and microwaves. Yes, microwaves. Mr. Coffees.....Push-button phones that sound more like birds chirping than telephones ringing.

The disappearance of drug stores from the downtown area would surprise them. So would picking up a prescription along with a mango and a set of dishes in the vast marketplace of today's superstores.

Grandmother, who learned to drive late in life, would be shocked to find that most places these days there's no "man with a star" on his cap to pump her gas. If she wanted her car's oil changed, there's a place up the street which specializes in that process (and not much else).

Today's service station attendant, mail carrier, firefighter, police officer, doctor, lawyer, banker - titles which almost surely brought to Grandmother's mind a male presence - are likely to be women.

What would the grandmothers think of women's increased opportunities in the work world, they who fried the bacon their husbands provided?

Is it possible that one of them would applaud the progress of the women's movement or would they both prefer that their granddaughters be old-fashioned girls?

This we cannot tell.

Since Grandmama's death in 1958, much has changed. First grader then, we're now the mother of a first-grader and sure of one thing. There've been a world of changes in 30 years. We could never begin to explain them to anyone from 1958.

