

# HENDRICKS COUNTY

## HISTORY BULLETIN



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H C H S

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H C H S

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GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT.....

Recently a friend of mine said "Isn't it a shame that our grandchildren will never experience the things that stand out in our memories?" I started thinking about what some of these experiences were and these are some things that came to my mind - things that are probably gone forever. A sleigh ride behind a high stepping trotter with bells ringing with every step, hauling in loads of loose sweet smelling hay behind a team of horses, then riding the horse to the rope that pulled that loose hay on its big fork, up to the track in the hay mow where it was dumped and spread. After it was in the mow then there was the fun of jumping into the soft piles, if no one caught you doing it.

There was the huckster who came every Thursday with his groceries on the shelves and egg crates in the back and chicken coops below. Here Mother did her "trading" which meant selling her eggs and perhaps an unproductive hen or two for enough groceries to last until next Thursday. Of course there was always a penny stick of peppermint candy for each child. This was the treat for the week.

Another memory is the horse drawn "school hack" with seats along each side and the little charcoal brick foot warmers down the center. If your feet were little and the fellow sitting next to you had big feet sometime it was hard to get your share. Then there is the memory of riding to church on Sunday in the two seated carriage, driving a spirited team over a dusty road.

A thrilling sight was also in store as you watched that old threshing machine belch black smoke, and listened to its shrill whistle and watched ribbons of golden grain pour from its spout while the straw piled up in that great golden mountain. This also meant sweet new straw for the "straw ticks" or mattresses on the beds.

I'm sure you all have golden memories that will not be repeated. If you aren't old enough to have experienced these things you still have your own.

This gives us a great advantage as story tellers. Have you told your grandchildren or young friends about your childhood? I haven't, but believe me after thinking this over I'm going to and won't it be fun!

Marian Worrell

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On a beautiful November 2nd, 59 members and guests gathered at the Corinth Church in Brown Township. The theme of the meeting was Fall ... things can be better at the end than at the beginning. After the secretary's report and the treasurer's, Mrs. Wean reported that new indexes for the history book have been printed, so plenty are available at \$2.00 a copy. Dorothy Kelley gave an interesting account of the more than 200 visitors at the museum during the holidays.

All officers were re-elected and it was agreed that we would now meet the first Sunday of the months of February, May, August and November.

Harold Templin gave an informative and detailed discussion of the history of the postal service and the display table was piled high with interesting memorabilia concerning the postal service, including stamp collections.

A delightful social hour followed.

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FEBRUARY MEETING

HA HA HA HA HA HA

Don't you sometimes think we take ourselves too seriously? Don't we some times blow things clear out of proportion? Don't we sometimes frown when, with a second thought, we could get a good laugh out of it? I'm sure I do, and I think most of us do. Without a sense of humor, life would almost be unbearable at times.

So the HCHS is going to take time out for fun. At our February meeting..... and it will be the very FIRST day of February ..... it is going to be a fun meeting. I just can't wait! (Make allowances for your Ed. for she is of Irish extract and she can laugh at almost anything)

CHUCKLES FROM THE MUSEUM is the subject of the program, and Dorothy Kelley, the major domo, the gal who has worked the hardest and put in the most hours to make and keep the museum what it is today (and it is something to be proud of) will relate some of the lighter side of her work. The display table, too, will be light hearted. Bring anything for a laugh. For once, let us forget about inflation, taxes and the Russian buildup of arms. Let us remember, that our ancestors, in spite of their difficulty in keeping body and soul together, could manage to have some fun. If they could, we certainly can.

The meeting will be at the Danville United Methodist Church, West Mill Street. And, incidentally, it is easily accessible. Have your chauffeur drive you to the west entrance, and there is not ONE STEP to climb. (Kinda nice for us old folks.)

Grace Cox and her committee of Center and Marion Township members will cook up some goodies and brew something to warm our insides. SO COME FOR FUN.

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DANVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

The DANVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY is fortunate in recently acquiring the services of Betty Bartly as Historical Librarian. From all reports, she is doing a great job and reigns over the INDIANA ROOM. She is most co-operative and we were delighted with the following contribution she has made to our HISTORICAL BULLETIN. We shall look forward to other articles which will be of interest to our members.

--NOTICE--

The Indiana Room of the Danville Public Library has undergone some changes lately: from a small room, into packing crates and boxes, finally emerging as a spacious room in our new addition. I'd like to bring members of the Historical Society up to date on changes made and material available.

Our cemetery transcripts have been arranged in notebook form and are located in the reference section. The cemetery index, located in the card catalog now contains all names found in the transcripts, arranged in alphabetical order.

An obituary file has been started. Death notices have been taken from some of the early Danville papers: 1866-1868, 1874-1878, and 1881-1886. We have the original issues of these papers at the library, but some are not bound and must be handled with great care. We hope to have them microfilmed in the near future so the original papers can be preserved.

Our collection of genealogical material is expanding. Some recent additions include early marriage records for Boone, Hendricks, Marion, and Morgan counties, 1880 Parke County History, 1887 Putnam County History, and the 1850 mortality schedule for Adams through Posey counties.

The following magazines can be found in the Indiana Room: The Tri-State Trader, the Genealogical Helper, Boone-Your County Magazine, Montgomery Your County Magazine, and of course, the Hendricks County Historical Bulletin.

The Indiana Room is open to the public during regular library hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. and on Tuesday and Thursday from 9 A.M. to 8 P.M. I will be available to answer any questions about our material on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday until May 1st, and after that date, on a full time basis.

I welcome any suggestions you may have for services or materials you would find helpful.

Betty Bartley  
Historical Librarian

Abstracts of Obituaries from the Hendricks Co. Union  
1866 - 1868

ARNOLD, William d. July 30, 1867; killed in the explosion of a steam thrasher at his farm near Brownsburg. HCU Aug 8, 1867 p3 c3

ASTLEY, Jackson d. June 20, 1867; of spinal affliction; b. Dodge Co., WI Sep 26, 1850; age 17. HCU July 18, 1867 p3 c3

CALL, John C. d. Jan 20, 1867; at the residence of Charles Sopher; former pvt 51st Indiana Volunteers. HCU Feb 14, 1867 p3 c3

CAMPBELL, Matilda d. Apr 21, 1866; b. Sep 19, 1837 near Belleville; wife of Leander M. HCU Apr 26, 1866 p2 c1; p3 c4

CAYWOOD, Simeon d. July 30, 1867; killed in the explosion of a steam thrasher at Wm. Arnold's farm near Brownsburg. HCU Aug 8, 1867 p3 c3

CLEMENTS, John d. Jan 26, 1868; b. 1787 Montgomery Co. KY; came to Hendricks Co. 1855; husband of 1) Nancy Highland, 2) Rebecca Johns. HCU Feb 13, 1868 p3 c2

COFER, Vinnie P. d. Dec 8, 1867; of congestion of the brain; dau of T. J. & M.S.; age 15m 7d. HCU Dec 12, 1867 p3 c3

COMINGER, John A. d. July 7, 1866; age 84. HCU July 12, 1866 p3 c1

CULBERTSON, Jerry d. Feb 1868; died suddenly at his home in Marion twp. HCU Mar 5, 1868 p3 c1

DEPEW, Dr. Jeremiah d. Sep 14, 1867; b. 1804 VA; began practice in Danville 1834. HCU Sep 19, 1867 p3 c4; Dec 12, 1867 p3 c3

DINWIDDIE, Lizzie P. d. Dec 30, 1866, wife of William H.; age 25y 1m. HCU Jan 10, 1867 p3 c3; Jan 17, 1867 p3 c3

FLEECE, C.N. d. May 6, 1867. HCU Aug 5, 1867 p3 c2,3

GREGG, William P. d. Apr 14, 1866; b. May 30, 1836 Danville; attended Asbury College 1852; Deputy Prosecuting Attorney at Danville 1858-59. HCU Apr 12, 1866 p3 c2; Apr 19, 1866 p3 c3

HADLEY, Mrs. Ara d. June 13, 1866; mother of Enos. HCU June 14, 1866 p3 c3

HADLEY, Mary d. Sep 6, 1866; at the home of her brother, John V. Hadley; age 22. HCU Sep 20, 1866 p3 c3

HAMBLÉN, George W. d. Feb 19, 1867; son of Vincent; age 24y 8m 9d; former member of 54th Indiana Volunteers; 117th Indiana Volunteers. HCU Mar 7, 1867 p3 c3

HAMMOND, Samuel E. d. Mar 10, 1867; age 25. HCU Apr 4, 1867 p3 c3

HAYS, James H. d. Jan 22, 1867; age 60. HCU Jan 24, 1867 p3 c1

HIGGINS, Daniel d. July 11, 1867; killed when he fell from a train near Sidney, O. HCU July 18, 1867 p3 c2

HODSON, Matthew d. Sep 4, 1867; son of Eli; died of Hydrophobia. HCU Aug 22, 1867 p3 c1; Sep 5, 1867 p3 c3

HORNADAY, Edwin M. d. Aug 4, 1867; of cholera, near Lawrence KS; son of Simon Hornaday of Cartersburg. HCU Aug 5, 1867 p3 c3

HURON, Henry Lincoln d. July 27, 1866; son of George A. & Mary F.; age 5m 2d. HCU Aug 2, 1866 p3 c3

JEFFERS, Linsey d. May 20, 1866; b. Feb 5, 1811, Madison Co. KY; married Eleanor Nichols 1855. HCU May 24, 1866 p3 c4

JENKINS, Joda d. Aug 30, 1867; of Cholera Infantum; dau of William P. & Anna; age 1y 2m 21d. HCU Sep 12, 1867 p3 c4

LITTLE, Clara Bell d. Sep 22, 1866; at the residence of her parents near Knob Noster, Johnson Co. MO; dau of James A. & Corrilla; age 1y 10m 25d. HCU Oct 4, 1866 p3 c3

McLEAN, Mary d. Dec 25, 1867; at the residence of Aaron Harlan, Eel River twp; b. Sep 27, 1779 Cumberland Co. PA; married Samuel McLean 1791. HCU Jan 16, 1868 p3 c4

McPHETRIDGE, John I. d. May 23, 1866. HCU June 7, 1866 p3 c3

MINTON, E. H. d. Mar 16, 1868; b. Apr 17, 1831 VA. HCU Apr 9, 1868 p2 c3; Apr 19, 1868 p3 c1

ODELL, Elizabeth d. 1867; at the residence of her son-in-law, V. H. Finch, Louisville, Clay Co. IL; age 64 HCU June 20, 1867 p3 c4

OHAVER, Vashti West d. Oct 11, 1867; b. Feb 11, 1814 Harrison Co. KY; wife of 1) Jeremiah Terry, 2) Cornelius Ohaver. HCU Nov 14, 1867 p3 c3

PHILLIPS, Janie d. Aug 17, 1867; of Erysipelas; dau of Joel & Anna J.; age 5m 28d. HCU Sep 12, 1867 p3 c4

PRINDLE, John d. Mar 14, 1866; former resident of Eel River twp; killed by falling under a freight train at Stanford Station in Terre Haute; was moving to Cass Co. MO; former member of 117th Reg. Indiana Volunteers; age 23. HCU Mar 22, 1866 p3 c1

ROSE, Mary B. d. June 30, 1866; wife of Dr. M.H.; age 23; b. at Logansport, IN. HCU July 5, 1866 p3 c3

STEPHENS, Charles E. d. Apr 15, 1867; died in Marion twp; age 35; b. Hendricks Co Feb 3, 1832; former member of Co A, 7th Indiana. HCU May 2, 1867 p3 c3

STEWART, Laura L. d. Apr 4, 1868; of Consumption, near Cartersburg; dau of C.W. & L.J.; in her 14th year. HCU Apr 19, 1868 p3 c2

TARR, Willie Richards d. July 24, 1867; of flux at Star City, IN; son of Rev. C.W. & J.R.; age 10m 1d. HCU Aug 1, 1867 p3 c2

THOMPSON, \_\_\_\_\_ d. 1866; student (male) at the Danville Academy. HCU Dec 6, 1866 p3 c3

WATEROUS, Eddie d. July 10, 1866; son of G.C. & E. J.; age 9m. HCU July 12, 1866 p3 c1

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY wishes go out to Joe Davisson who will mark his 95th February 15, 1981. Through the years, Mr. Davisson has contributed many fascinating tales of the past and has added a lot of zest and sparkle to both our BULLETIN and our programs. He is recovering splendidly from a recent broken hip.

And congratulations to Claire Sellars, a member of THE LAST MAN'S CLUB which met recently at Plainfield. The club was founded in 1938 by 61 area World War I veterans. Twelve are still living and eleven attended the meeting.

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The following article was clipped from the November 24, 1980 issue of the HENDRICKS COUNTY FLYER. An editor's job is to condense. But how could I condense this? After all, Clark and Carolyn have been most beloved and revered members of the HCHS since its inception. There is no way to cut anything out of this article.

#### KELLUMS COME OUT OF 'CLOSET'

Every once in a while someone asks why there is a closet in the meeting room with a lettered plaque on the door stating that this is the "Clark Kellum Closet."

The story behind the plaque was told in one of the early Library Lines columns, but we think we can't mention Clark too often! He has been one of our library's staunchest friends and supporters for many years. So when he built some sorely needed shelves in the closet, Mary McMillan, our director, and the staff decided there should be some visible recognition. Clark and Carolyn Kellum were invited for an after-hours surprise party in the meeting room, and the plaque was unveiled amidst much laughter and applause.

More recently Clark built the wheeled "dollies" for the stacked meeting room chairs. Every time I pull out chairs or put them away, I bless that man!

But Clark Kellum's most enduring contribution to our library--and perhaps to Plainfield--is our present building. Clark was appointed to the library board of trustees, and being the conscientious person that he is, he began to attend the state library conferences.

One time he found himself in a small group of library trustees at one of these conferences. Now, Clark went to that meeting feeling pretty proud of Plainfield's Carnegie library. He chuckles as he recalls how one prominent-delegate "jumped all over" him for being satisfied with a tiny, 50-year old building.

So Clark began comparing the library with all the new school and bank buildings springing up around the county. He encouraged the other board members to expand their library horizons by attending the state library association conferences. And he visited new libraries in the area. It wasn't too long until plans were under way for a new library in Plainfield.

As in any project of this size, it took vision, information, and team work to make things happen. Clark refers proudly to the "Building Board"--Ray Ramsey, Virginia Dunigan, Foster Jensen, Jane Parker, Paul Myers, Carolyn Reisinger, and himself.

When the architect's design was put out for bids, the money required was higher than the bonding power, which was then 1 percent of assessed valuation. While the contractor held his bid, the board swung into action as lobbyists. Making use of their connections in the state legislature, and advised by State Librarian Lucille Foote, the board was successful in having the limit raised to 1 1/2 percent, an action which benefitted libraries all over the state. (The bonding limit has since been raised to 2 percent.)



The Friends of the Library carried bond petitions around the town and township to gather signatures, and succeeded in collecting almost 40 percent of the local taxpayers' signatures in support of the bonding program.

Clark served on the board for many years after the new building was completed. Even after leaving the board, he has continued to perform his quiet acts of kindness--and to make frequent use of our services.

Obviously many people in our county feel the same way about Clark and Carolyn that we in the library do. On the afternoon that I interviewed them in their home, a steady stream of callers stopped by on errands, or just to chat a while.

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The following article, written by Betty Lane, comes to us through the courtesy of Ruth Pritchard who can always be counted on to come up with something interesting for THE BULLETIN:

FANNY, THE CAPTIVATING HOOSIER WIFE  
OF AUTHOR ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

By Betty J. Lane

A sedate old house on an eminence with a sweep of surrounding countryside just northwest of Indianapolis once echoed to the laughter and chatter of an Indiana family destined for a bit of international fame. It was to achieve this recognition through the fortunes of its eldest daughter.

The family was the Jacob and Esther Keen Vandegrift family. The daughter became Frances (Fanny) Matilda Vandegrift Osbourne Stevenson, the quixotic, captivating wife of Scottish-born author Robert Louis Stevenson.

Fanny Stevenson never claimed permanent residence at the Hendricks County home between Clayton and Danville, although she and her first husband were joint owners of the home with her parents for almost a year. However, she visited there many times, and stayed there with her children during an estrangement from her first husband.

The Hendricks County house of Jacob Vandegrift was apparently built in the 1840s by one Richard Martin and wife Sarah. The road loops around the house, indicating the building was there before the road was surveyed. The Vandegrifts occupied the home from about December 1861 until widowed Esther Vandegrift left there in the 1880s to live with another daughter in Danville.

This arresting landmark is still privately owned, is not open to the public, and some surrounding residents are unaware of its intriguing past.

Olive-complexioned Fanny Stevenson was born in 1840 in a red brick house "with a lawn and maple trees" on Indianapolis Monument Circle. Later her Pennsylvania-born father, who dealt in lumber and real estate, built a two-story brick "row" house four blocks north of the Circle.

When Fanny was 2 she and her mother were baptized beside the National Road bridge of nearby White River by the subsequently famous Henry Ward Beecher, in the presence of several thousand spectators--Mrs. Vandegrift by immersion, her daughter through "sprinkling" Indianapolis' Second Presbyterian Church still has a meticulously written record of this ceremony in its minutes.

Fanny Stevenson had four sisters--Josephine, Elizabeth, Core and Nellie, and a brother, Jacob. She attended Indianapolis public grade and high schools. A tomboy who loved to roam the woods, ride horses, and search for arrowheads, Fanny was a free spirit. Playmates recalled her sitting on the outside cellar door after supper on warm summer evenings regaling them with fairy tales and grisly ghost stories.

She was an avid reader from an early age and friends were alarmed that she read "whatever came to hand". A local editor is said to have been amazed at her scientific knowledge at the age of 6. An amateur painter all her life, Fanny is said to have produced two paintings as a youngster which graphically depicted the evils of drink, they may have been presented to a local temperance leader at a public meeting. Her favorite subjects in school were composition, drawing and painting.

AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT Fanny turned out in later years titled "A Backwoods Childhood" portrayed her growing-up years in the Hoosier Capital as beset with pioneer hardships. She wrote of menacing Indians, and her coonskin-capped father lying in canebrakes in readiness for their assault. This was not exactly the truth. The Indianapolis of the 1840s may have been rough, with a goodly complement of loose women and rowdy taverns, but it had 3,000 inhabitants, more than 100 retail stores, and no threatening savages.

When Fanny was only 16 she met the tall, blond Kentuckian who was to become her first husband, Samuel Osbourne, who as then secretary to Indiana Gov. Ashbel P. Willard. Osbourne took college preparatory work at DePauw University (then Asbury College). Legend has it that the first time he saw Fanny she was cavorting around on stilts.

The couple was married on Christmas Eve, 1857, in Fanny's parents' row house, with "a large and happy party" of guests present, including the governor. Fanny wore a white satin dress "stiff enough to stand alone" and her bridegroom sported brass buttons on his jacket and fawn colored trousers.

The Osbournes set up housekeeping in a nearby house built by Jacob Vandegrift which was evidently a wedding present. Sam became a deputy clerk in the office of the Indiana Supreme Court and nine months later their first child, Isobel (Belle), was born.

Life may have been happy in the Osbourne cottage at that time, but stability began to evaporate in January 1864 when Sam Osbourne offered to accompany Fanny's ailing brother-in-law to California for his health. When Josephine Vandegrift Marshall's husband George died in Panama en route, Osbourne continued on to San Francisco and to silver mining camps in Nevada, in pursuit of riches.

WHEN FANNY AND BELLE boarded a train for New York the following June to join Sam, the young woman born on Monument Circle would step into a future that would include criss-crossing the United States many times and residence in both Europe and the South Seas, as her fortunes followed those of the two men she loved.

Apparently Fanny Osbourne made heroic attempts to save her first marriage—through months in rugged mining camps, through weeks without Sam in rented rooms in San Francisco where she supported herself as a seamstress, through years of off-and-on-again residence in a cottage they occupied in Oakland, Calif.

There were separations—it was in 1868 and 1869 that she and her two children (Samuel Lloyd had arrived on the scene by then) were with her parents in Hendricks County. And there were reconciliations, for a third child was born in 1871. Sam Osbourne and Fanny were married more than 20 years, but their marriage probably never regained its health after it first became obvious, when they were living in Nevada, that Sam enjoyed the company of other women.

History has not been kind to Sam Osbourne. But his daughter apparently worshipped him. Later she recorded with obvious affection the day he returned from a protracted absence in "boots and breeches" shouting, "Is that my little girl?" complete with his unending "resilience, charm, frailty, and all." Vandegrift family members have also noted Osbourne's charisma and kindness.

FANNY DETERMINEDLY changed the course of her life in 1875 when she packed up her three children and their governess and started for Europe with the announced intention of studying art. She had been pursuing the arts in San Francisco. Stopping in Hendricks County en route, it is said the odd menage traveled on to New York in a "country omnibus drawn by two stout horses."

Indiana was flooded at the time. At one point they crossed a bridge that was washed away 15 minutes later, or so the story goes.

Fanny was in Europe three years, meeting Robert Louis Stevenson in Grez, a French hamlet near Fontainebleau. The witty, gentle son of a Scottish lighthouse engineer, Stevenson had been plagued with ill health all his life, probably tuberculosis, but was already showing the genius that was to mark his short writing career. Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson became lovers, not only seeing each other in ensuing months in Grez, but in Paris, where Stevenson said the winter was "set aglow by Fanny's presence," and in London.

Ex-Hoosier Fanny nursed Stevenson through repeated health crises, reinforcing his spirits and creativity at the same time, a pattern that was to continue until his premature death. Their romantic involvement resulted in her divorce from Osbourne in California in December 1879 and subsequent marriage to Stevenson six months later. Stevenson followed her in an arduous trip across the Atlantic and the U.S., a journey resulting in his "The Amateur Emigrant" and "Across the Plains," fascinating chronicles of the period.

IT WAS DIFFICULT for Stevenson's proper Scotch Presbyterian parents to accept his marriage to a world-traveling divorcee - hard, too, for the Vandegrifts and Osbournes to accept the relatively short interval between Fanny's divorce and remarriage - but they did. When the couple returned to Europe some months later along with Lloyd, patriarch Thomas Stevenson became enchanted with his son's non-conformist wife, who made family history by chastising him soon after they met.

For the next seven years the Stevensons resided in Switzerland, France and England, ever in quest of more healthful climates. During this time Robert Louis Stevenson wrote some of his most time-honored books, including "Treasure Island," "A Child's Garden of Verses" and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Child loving Stevenson and stepson Lloyd Osbourne became fast friends, a friendship that was to last until the author's death.

In 1877 Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson gathered up his recently widowed mother and Lloyd and returned to the U.S., where they lived briefly before sailing for the South Seas. They lived for five months in Hawaii, then settled in Samoa. Stevenson died unexpectedly in their beloved Samoan home of a stroke in December 1894. His doughty widow spent the remaining 20 years of her life in Samoa, California and Mexico, trekking to Europe at least twice more before her death in Santa Barbara in 1914. Her daughter placed her ashes in Robert Louis Stevenson's Samoan tomb.

Fanny must have been at her parents' farm home in 1863 when her sister married George Marshall. She may have lived there between the time Sam Osbourne left for Nevada and she left Indiana to join him. Her visit when en route to Europe the first time was followed by a Hendricks County stopover upon her return, when she was saddened by her father's recent death.

SHE MUST HAVE been back in Hendricks County in 1899 when she stopped in Indianapolis upon a return from France and greeted childhood friends at a Claypool Hotel reception. Author Booth Tarkington later recalled that visit:

"I once walked across the lobby of the Claypool Hotel in Indianapolis with her. The proprietor of the cigar stand came excitedly at me...and said, "Excuse me, Mr. Tarkington, but, my God, who was that? Effect of, visibly, a personage."

Throughout her life Fanny Stevenson made references to the old "House on the Hill Road" in correspondence with family members. From Nevada she wrote wistfully, "If you ever move away take some of the flowers with you that I used to love so much. Did the blue bottles ever come to anything? And were the white lilies really double? And were there any sweet scented tulips? Have you any tube roses yet? Or any Canterbury bells? And I want to know about the gooseberries and the strawberries and the grape vines I used to help water, and all those little fruit trees that Pa set out."

Her sister Nellie Sanchez wrote of the home lovingly in her "Life of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson" and daughter Isobel Field devoted an entire chapter to life on the farm in her "This Life I've Loved," a chapter based on the visit she made to Hendricks County with her mother and brother in 1868 and 1869.

Robert Louis Stevenson apparently never visited Hendricks County himself, but he wrote to both of Fanny's parents, and copies of Vandegrift-Stevenson letters in the Plainfield Public Library include a warm letter to a nephew whom Stevenson regretted never having seen, but to whom he apparently had sent some music. It is clear the author coveted the friendship and approval of his wife's family.

FANNY'S DAUGHTER Belle married a California painter, whom she later divorced. More than 20 years later she married Edward (Ned) Salisbury Field, a successful playwright and the son of a founder of Bobbs Merrill Publishing Co. in Indianapolis, whose wife was a former schoolmate of Fanny's. Mrs. Field lived into her 90s and was also a successful author.

Fanny's son Lloyd collaborated with Stevenson on three books. Twice married and divorced, he lived with his sister in Santa Barbara the last few years of his life.

A great-niece of Fanny Stevenson's lives in Indianapolis today and treasures Vandegrift Stevenson letters in her possession. Occasionally, in quiet moments, she rereads the letters. Each time the personalities and character of the

writers become more vivid to her--charming, impetuous Sam, reflective Louis, plucky Fanny, who, in an affectionate sketch by Stevenson, was "infinitely little, had a handsome waxen face like Napoleon's, insane black eyes, boys' hands and tiny feet."

To this he added, "She loved to doctor everybody, but could not be doctored herself!"

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#### MUSEUM MUSINGS

The weather cooperated better this year than it had done for some of our open houses. It was on the frigid side but not wet. We nearly drowned one year and had to slice fog at the same time. Another year we were buried in snow. But this year we came out smelling like bayberry.

The tree was decorated by the Little Hoosiers (Jr. Historical Society) from Avon. The decorations were in keeping with the era. There is one thing to be said of decorations of that day. One didn't have to watch the wires, or have bulbs burn out! Toys that delighted children many years ago were under the tree.

Marcia Mussman, Danville, was here both weekends demonstrating spinning and weaving. She used real home grown wool. She demonstrated the art of weaving on the loom in our primitives room, and wove some nice place mats which she contributed to the craft shop.

Mary Elizabeth Bray, Pittsboro, played her dulcimer and sang. The dulcimer is of American origin, having been made by people in the Appalachian Mountains. Mary was sort of "got" when Dorothy Kelley sneaked around and taped one of her songs and, just as she finished, played it back to her.

Enough Christmas records were brought along that the Victrola in the parlor was kept busy. There was everything from "Here Comes Santa Claus" to selections from Handel's "Messiah". Carols were sung too. The violian is a great help there. All one needs to do to play it is to be able to play a piano and have a great pair of legs! Where have we heard that before! Well? Yes, it takes a bit of coordination. The brain has to be three places at once. Somehow the player has to try to read the printed page, get the fingers to do what they are supposed to do, and ride herd on what the feet are trying to do. Takes a bit of endurance.

The Christmas season is ushered in in Danville by the Christmas parade. There are floats, bands and all the trimmings that go with a great parade. Our part was in keeping the museum open. Ladies of the Historical Society baked cookies and Dorothy Kelley made her delicious spiced cider punch. If you haven't tasted it, you'd better get in line the next time!

On January 13, 1981, Miss Myrtie Barker, columnist for the Indianapolis News--she writes "My Window"--paid us a visit. She found out about us when Florence Obenchain, Pittsboro, had bought a book Miss Barker had offered. She told her about the museum and invited her to come see it. Miss Barker got in touch with her editor and told him that there was a museum out in Hendricks County that she ought to see. Arrangements were made for a time a week earlier than her visit, but the weather was so bad that it was put off until the 13th. Those who were privileged to meet her enjoyed her visit.

Around Christmas there are several school classes touring the museum. Clubs have their Christmas meetings there too.

The craft shop always has lots of gift ideas. The 1976 History Book is available along with its Index, a must when one has the History Book. There are quilts, decorative pillows, wall plaques, magnetized decorations that grin down at us from refrigerator doors, they include corn-cob faces, birds, mice, butterflies, you name it. Then there are all varieties of pan-holders. They run all the way from the conventional round ones to those that are oversized butterflies.

Yes, there is lots to see in the museum. One can hurry through and glance through rooms, or take time and spend an afternoon.

Jewell

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