

[Excerpt]

Children: Stella b: 7 Feb 1871

(2) C. F.

(3) Charles b: 22 JAN 1874

(4) Mary b: 30 OCT. 1875

(5) Cecil Vernon b: 6 JUN 1877

[written: ca 1955?]

(By C. F. Pearce )

Claud Fountain Pearce

In the beginning, William A. Pearce was born in Decatur County, Indiana, on August 11, 1848. Miss Elizabeth A. Hall was born in Boyle County, Kentucky, on June 24, of the same year. They were married on December 31, 1868, in Hendricks County, Indiana.

Having been born and reared on a farm, and having done nothing but farming, they rented what was known as the "Pigg Farm," and began life's long pull together. This farm was near Lizton. On February 7, 1871, their first child was born, a little auburn haired girl. She always said she was born in a pig house. That fact may have given her the skill to fight off a pet pig which later attacked the person of the writer and will be narrated later in the story.

The next move was to Grandfather Hall's farm where I have been told I was born, evidently, to become the Old Patriarch, for that I am today, at 83, the oldest male Pearce descendant, although father lived to be 91. It seems that I had arranged to be born in the Spring about the time the May Apples were in bloom. So, promptly, on time, here I came on May 17, 1872. At that time, I was quite young and inexperienced and did not say much until I could get my bearings.

I do not remember all that was said about me but I can imagine how the old ladies raved about that "beautiful and lovely little boy baby," of William's. Also, I can imagine many other nice things that they must have said and done. At least, I can't think of one single detrimental thing that they possibly could have said. I know they must over and over rolled up those long flannel skirts to see "my little cute feet."

I think perhaps Charles, the next boy was born while we lived on grandfather Hall's farm, on January 22, 1874. He was a husky chap and ready to surmount all difficulties. His hair, too, was auburn but so far as I know, no one ever called him "Red." There is much to be said about him later.

About the year of 1875, we moved to the Hickman Farm, a short distance N. E. of Lizton. It was there that Charles swallowed the "woolly worm," and they said that was what turned his hair red as it was a red worm. However, I really don't think he swallowed it at all. I think it got stuck in his throat and they got it out and saved its life. I must have been about three, or a little more. Uncle Douglas and father were building a board fence. I was out with them, sitting close to the fence. Their hammering jolted a hatchet from the top of the fence. It fell with the edge down, across my right foot, cutting a deep gash. They carried me to the house. It bled profusely and I remember they finally got the bleeding stopped and bound the foot in lineament. To this day I carry a scar on that foot three inches long.

This was the second tragedy that had befallen me. The first one was when a pet pig that was running about the yard, got me down when I was crawling out on the back porch. That day, I was wearing a pair of those old-fashioned three-cornered pants, held in place with three sturdy, unbreakable pins. The pig had hold of my apparel right where I sat down and was dragging me backward, in reverse, when sister Stella valiantly grabbed a scrub broom and furiously beat off the assailant and saved my life and my pats, for they were still intact. For this, she should have had a congressional medal, but at that time, I could not contact my congressman.

Mary, the second girl was born October 30, 1875, on the Hickman place. In 1877, we moved to a farm near grandfather's little brick school house and Stella and I started to school there. Charles, only about four years old cried to go but they said he could not. After Stella and I had gone, they found Charles with an old book under his arm climbing over the rail fence, bound that he was going to school too. They headed him off and brought him back to the house. The next year he could go and he did go and made things interesting for everybody concerned. A boy his age, Lee Overstreet, fought Charles all the way home from school every night. He would call Charles, "boot heel" and the fat was in the fire. Because of his firey disposition everybody teased Charles.

Charles was husky, muscular and became, later, the neighborhood athlete. He got a lot of training all along the way. One day in school, the teacher tried to give Charles a whipping. Charles grabbed the switch, broke it to bits and when she tried to hold him, he kicked her on the shins until she had to let him go. Charles never told the true story of that incident, at least, I never heard it until Charles was 80 years old. He said Stella had been to class and in returning to her seat, dropped her writing book in the aisle. Charles saw it, knew it was hers and took it to her and laid it on her desk. The teacher saw him and ordered him to bring the book to her. Charles would not take the book to the teacher because, he says, he knew the book was Stella's and he did not propose to give Stella's things to that teacher. He refused in loyalty and in defense of his sister's property. Of course, the teacher did not know the boy was reasoning to himself in this way and she proposed to punish him for what he thought was his duty.

Because people teased Charles so much, he developed a belligerent disposition and would take nothing from anyone. There was a big old bull dog, down the road that claimed the same privilege of self defense and was ready for a sdrap at a moment's notice. His name was Bose. Someone compared Charles to the old fighting bull dog and called him Bose. The name stuck and for years Charles went by the name of "Bose." At this same school, while in the first reader, I spelled the word ~~ff-l-yank~~ <sup>and</sup> there was a picture of a fly on the page. I thought the picture was a bumble bee, so I said, "bumble bee" and the school just giggled. I remember it just broke my heart to be laughed at and I just cried and cried.

While living there, an epidemic of diphtheria swept the country and many children died with it. Mother watched over us day and night and we were all terribly scared. Some years before an epidemic of cholera had taken my mother's mother and two of her sisters. Father and mother had it but survived. Seemed like there was always something, measles, whooping cough or chicken pox.

In 1878, we moved to the Gorge Baker farm, about 2 miles s. w. of Lizton, where the cedar trees were in the yard, rather, they were Pine trees. The farm belonged to father's brother-in-law, the one that married mother's sister Mary. It was a very pleasant place to live, and a fairly good farm. We children always stayed close to home, especially at night. We were surprised, therefore, when father told us we could go over to grandpa Hall's and stay all night. Stella, the older girl would have to stay at home, as mother was not very well and she would have to do the work. Charles, Mary and myself went over and they told us to stay until father came after us. We thought that was strange, but we were glad as we always liked to go to grandpa Hall's. They had an upstairs and we children used to go up there and swipe beeswax which we found in an old chest, and used it for chewing gum. We thought they would never know it but we left our tooth marks on it when we nibbled it off, a dead give away.

When father came after us the next afternoon, he announced that the doctor had come to see mother and brought a brand new boy baby with long black hair and that they were going to name him Cecil Vernon. This was on June 6, 1879. It seemed that the baby got all the attention and we just naturally resented it and began to gang up against him.

From there, we continued to go to school at the little brick school house, a half mile north of Grandpa Hall's. It was a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mile walk, partly in the road but most of the way in and through pastures, paths through the woods and brush. We did not mind that walk for we had so much fun going and coming. Many interesting things attracted our attention, flowers, birds, bumble bee nests, hornets, often a snake, nuts of many kinds in the woods, berries, Hawthorn berries, Paw paws, and many, many other attractions.

A crowd would leave the school with enough pent up energy to build a world, eager, running here and there, boys teasing the pig tail girls, or climbing trees, wrestling, running races, jumping, sometimes swapping some left-over dinner from their buckets, all this and much more, made school life a veritable picnic. As for brother Charles, he always had a fight on and there were usually two or three bleeding noses as a result.

AS I look back on those halcyon days, I pity the poor modern child who must ride a school bus, eat school cafeteria style and absolutely no opportunity to enjoy a meal that comes after 2½ miles of jolly, rollicking fun. I presume it can truthfully be said of the modern child that they have never been really hungry or thirsty. However one of our modern children would be a helpless stranger in that environment, in which we grew up. No, I would not bring back those primitive days, except for health and happiness.

About once a month, we would go up to grandfather Pearce's on Saturday afternoon and come back Sunday afternoon. Sometimes I could stay a few days for a visit and then they would bring me home. One time, I stayed a whole month. I remember sleeping with aunt Eliza. She was real fleshy and when I lay up close to her, the covers would not touch me at all. One time she went over to Uncle Peter Baily's for the day and said I could go with her. She went on horseback, side saddle, and I rode behind. She was so big. I could not see anything, but just held on as the horse jogged along the 4 miles.

My great grandfather, grandmother's father was living with grandfather, in their home. He had palsy very badly, practically helpless, long white beard and looked, indeed, like an old patriarch, and yet when he died, he was five years younger than I am now. Grandfather had constructed a fish pond and stocked it with some large carp. He fed the fish bread scraps from the table along with other food. One Sunday afternoon a crowd was there and we all went down to the pond to see the fish as they would come to the surface to get the food. Uncle George, knowing that I could swim, picked me up and threw me away out in the pond. A scream went up from the women for they did not know I could swim. Of course, I went under and the those (gentle) women talked to uncle George was something to remember. I of course swam out as Uncle George knew I would do, but the women never forgave him.



We children always enjoyed going to both grandfather Hall's and to grandfather Pearce's place. Grandfather Pearce had only 40 acres but it seemed like a large place. Uncle George had built a house on the rear side of the farm and lived there. Grandfather Pearce was a great hand to have all of his children just as close to him as he possibly could. A long lane led back to uncle George's house and there were some large wild cherry trees which we boys climbed and ate to our heart's (stomach's) content. Both grandfathers kept bees out in the orchard with always plenty of honey.

We often visited uncle George Baker who had a store in Lizton. One of mother's sisters had died at childbirth and left a little baby boy, whom them named Hickman. We always called him Hick. Hick Adams was six months older than I and a big husky boy, much larger than myself. One time we were visiting at uncle Georges. We boys were out in a back alley with a gallon coal oil can having some fun. We put water in it, built a fire under it, put a wooden stopper loosely in the spout. When steam arose, the stopper would blow out and sometimes go quite a distance. It was great fun until we put the stopper in too tight. Then instead of the stopper blowing up, the can blew up, struck Hick on the forehead, knocked him down and left quite a gash. That ended that affair.

There was a pile of brick and by getting up on the pile, we could almost reach some peaches. We tried and tried but could not get them. Finally, we dared Charles to reach them. Charles would never take a dare, so reached and stretched with all his might when he lost his balance, toppled off the pile and struck his head on a brick, on the ground cutting a deep gash, so, another casualty to be taken to the house and bandaged. Hick lived in town and naturally we had it in for him. He had a pair of new red top boots with those brass toe protector and bragged they would not leak. We dug three holes, two shallow and one deep. We filled them full of water so when Hick came, we'd fix him. We dared him to put his foot in those holes of water to see if his boots would leak. He tried the first two, then came to the last and down he went over his boot top and got it full of water. So, he had to go to the house and get some dry socks. --(6)--

It was about this time that a very crewel and frightening thing happened to Stella and me, especially, me. Mother had sent us to Lizton with some butter and eggs to sell and get a few things for her. We had to go through a pasture where were some horses and other stock. We saw a man coming down the path toward us with a rope in his hand, evidently, going to catch one of the horses. We had caught a young bird and I had it in my hand in my pocket. Mother had taught us it was wrong to bother young birds and as we met them man, I felt very guilty and that he knew that I had the bird in my hand in my pocket. As he neared us, he flourished the rope and said, "Which one of you kids wants to be hung first? I was terrified with fright and the man had quite a time to get me to understand that he was only joking. Strange how frightened I became, but I thought he really meant it. However, I did turn the little bird loose as soon as the man got away.

Also, about this time, perhaps a little later, My mothers' youngest brother Douglas Hall, with three other young men made a trip to Texas, where they spent a year on "Uncle Hickman's" ranch learning the ways of ranch life. They went through in a covered wagon, taking four horses with them. I remember well the day they started from grandpa Hall's. It was a long and dangerous journey in those days and the kin folks all gathered to see them off. They were musicians and I remember how they played "Home Sweet Homw," on their violins and how all the women wept and some of the men. After a year, they returned and had many "tall tales" to tell. They had learned to throw the lasso rope and would have us boys run down the road and on horseback they would lasso us.

One day, we boys were playing along the road and just over the fence, we saw an orchard of ripe apples. We crawled over the fence and got a bucket full. We knew it was wrong, for mother had told us never to take anything without asking for it. But the apples were on the ground and going to waste, so why shouldn't we get some of them? Mother and aunt Mary decided to teach us a severe lesson. They pretended to cry, for the sheriff was coming out and take us to jail. They allowed us to worry and fret until bedtime and then said if we would never do that again, they would stop the sheriff from coming, and we solemnly promised. It taught us a great lesson.

In 1881, father rented a farm in Boone County, near Jamestown, only about five miles from grandfather Pearce. It was a pretty place to live, on the bank of Eel River which was not very large, but an overgrown creek. There was a wagon bridge near and also a R. R. bridge. The train ran up a pretty steep grade and often the freight trains stalled, had to cut the train in two parts and take one part at a time. It was very interesting to watch the trains. We children were not allowed along the creek very much but could fish, wade and play along a certain sandbar and shallow place. The farm buildings were very poor and old, which did not exactly suit father.

On March 6, 1881, Maude F. was born but lived only a short time. This was the first death and mother grieved and took it ver hard. For months, she sorrowed for her baby. She now had five children, Cecil was about two years old and Stella was just past ten. Father came into the house one day, looking very downhearted. Mother asked him what was wrong. Kate, the mare had found a little colt, but it had died. Bad luck he said for it had been contracted to sell at weaning time for \$40, and that was going to help pay the cash rent that must be paid in the Fall. Now, where would he get that \$40 ?

Not yet being large enough to do much work, I spent some time at grandpa Pearce's. One time, I went with him to Lebanon, eight miles, the county seat and the biggest town I had ever seen. It took all day to make the trip. When peaches were ripe I went with him with a wagon bed half full of peaches, to Jamestown where he had to almost give them away. Grandfather was rugged, the very soul of honor,, saved every cent. On neither of these trips did he spend a cent for candy, gum, pop corn, drinks or anything of the kind. We took our dinners with us. (Lunch had not yet been born, it was dinner.)

While visiting at grandfather's, I went over to my cousin's, Raymond Woodard. Father's sister, Edna, had married Will Woodard and Raymond was the oldest boy, about a year older than myself and larger. We had a good time at Uncle Will's as he played the violin and we enjoyed his music. Besides, he was sympathetic and lenient toward us boys and helped us out of our little scrapes, in many ways.



One day aunt Edna sent us to the little country store at Milledgeville, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles away, with a bucket of eggs and to buy a few little things that she needed, especially some cinnamon bark. We started pretty early in the morning expecting to get back by noon, but we were delayed. The first thing, we found a bumble bee's nest down between a pile of logs. We knew by the way they acted that it was a big nest and it was the time of year for honey, and we wanted that honey. So, we got a pry-pole and began to pry the logs apart. It was quite a job and took some time. At last, we got to them and they began to pour out by the hundreds and every one of them had his stinger ready for action. When we saw there was so many of them, we broke and ran. Raymond let the pry-pole drop on the bucket of eggs and broke about half of them. We salvaged what we could, cleaned out the bucket and started for the store.

We saw several ground squirrels along the rail fences and what kind of a boy would it be that would not stop and chase a squirrel on the fence? First thing we knew it was almost noon and we had not yet arrived at the store, for we had found berries and some nuts to eat as well as many other attractions to take up our time. At last, we came to the store, and you know that store-keeper found every cracked egg in that bucket even though we did put them in the bottom! We didn't have enough eggs to get half of the things aunt Edna had sent for. However, we did get the cinnamon bark, but it tasted so good we ate it nearly all before we got home.

One place, going home, there had been a pond of water along the road. The water had dried away leaving a thick black mud. We waded around in it for awhile, bare foot, of course, and then began to make different out of the mud, with our hands. Raymond said, "Let's make a big black snake." I said, "All right and let's make it right on that little bridge, like it was crawling over it." We made the big snake with its head over in the weeds like he was crawling. About the time we got it done, we saw a wagon coming down the road and we hid to see what the man would do. His team came trotting along, then all at once the man saw the big snake and shouted "Whoa." He stopped the team, went out to the fence and got a piece of a rail, crept up and struck that snake a terrible blow, right where he thought the head ought to be. And was he chagrined as that snake went all to pieces. We did not show up but stayed hidden until the man was out of sight.

Father did not stay long on the farm near Jamestown. The baby had died, he had lost some stock and the crop was not good and they were glad to move. They moved about 15 miles to a cozy little community called Needmore, about 10 miles S.W. of Lizton and west of Danville the county seat, about 5 miles. The house and barn were back from the road and through a big gate and across a small pasture we reached the house. We children were delighted because a creek flowed through the pasture, not too large and not too small, but just right for wading, swimming and some pretty good fish could be caught in the two deep holes. There was no S. S. or church services in the community, so we children spent Sundays wading, swimming, catching tadpoles, crawfish and generally having a good time. I do not know when we learned to swim. Seems like I could swim as far back as I can remember.

It was really a good place, a very large barn, a meadow of clover and some timothy, and the pasture was dotted with sugar maple trees that supplied many gallons of sugar water as we called it. (Not sap) This made us a lot of work every Spring, to tap the trees, insert the spiles, made of elders, as a rule, get the troughs, buckets and the mudboat to bring it in to the big kettles, three of them where the sugar water was boiled down to maple syrup and sometimes on down to sugar. This kept us all very busy for the children could do a lot of this work. In fact, my visiting days were ended for four of us were getting big enough to help on the farm.

In addition to all this, father undertook to clean up 15 acres of back pasture for all the crop he could raise on it. Brush, stumps and roots had to be gathered, piled and burned. It was really a bigger job than father had figured., and the land did not produce as he had anticipated. From early morning until sundown we children worked very hard to pile the brush and gather up the roots, with an hour and a half for dinner. At five o'clock in the afternoon, father left the team standing in the field and we went in for supper, then back to the field until sundown, and they never had to rock us to sleep at night. This for six days in the week.

The sugar camp was opened early in the Spring and from that time until corn planting was done, there was not a minute to waste. Corn planting was the big event for when it was done, father broke the big maple sugar cake that had made molded in a cake pan and saved for this occasion. It was a great day for us children seldom got any candy or sweets to eat. Usually, also, we went fishing and father let us go to the creek for another half day. Then it was soon time to go to the meadow to put the hay in the barn. I was 10 years years old but was driving the team and loading the hay on the wagon like a man. (I mean loading the wagon after father pitched it up). At the big barn, there was a big hay fork that took it up into the barn.

We were very happy and busy as bevers, full of ambition and hope. Uncle George and his wife with their little daughter came to live in a couple of our rooms so Uncle George could attend the Teacher's Normal School, that summer, as he was a school teacher. It was five miles to the school, at Danville, and uncle George walked to school morning and night for 8 weeks. He loved to walk, took long strides and walked very rapidly. His ambition was to teach the Needmore school, but I believe he failed to get the job. He secured a better school instead, for he was a good, conscientious teacher.

We went to school at Needmore and had a good time as it was only about a half mile from our home. We crossed the creek on a foot log bridge that had banisters to keep us from falling off as it was quite high. In winter the creek was frozen and supplied good skating, for those who could afford ice skates. Most of us boys managed some way to get a pair of skates. Very few of the girls had skates. There was a Christmas tree at the school house but the presents for the most part were home made. We children always hung up our stockings at home and usually got a little cand, fire crackers and something home made that we could use. We missed the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mile walk home from school as now we had to hurry home and work after school. Always plenty to do. Get the apples out of the orchard, dig the potatoes, gather the pumpkins for the milk cows and put them in the barn and always cut wood for winter.

There was a school house and an old Civil War veteran kept a P. O. in his home. There was no store of any kind in Needmore. Two miles from there the "Toll Road," a good gravel road, for which people had to pay a toll, th use it, led to Danville, the county seat. The toll keeper kept a little store, a few necessities, and when father ran out of chewing tobacco, I was usually sent to the toll keeper to get some, for that was one thing that was never to be found lacking. I usuall rode old John (Kate and John were the team) who jogged along in a slow walk. Sometimes, I had to walk. Father usually went to Danville on Saturday, once a month. Once, he allowed me to go with him and he bought us each a bottle of soda pop. It was my first and was fine I though but when I burped, I thought my nose was gone. I did not know the pop had caused it, and pretty soon, I burped again. Father laughed and laughed, and I have always believed that father did not out of the goodness and benevolence and kindness of a fatherly heart do this, but rather to observe my reaction.

We children, as I have stated, worked very hard from sunup to sundown. only about an hour at noon to play, and again from sundown until dark, about another hour. There were four of us to play, for Cecil was only about three years old. We found some clay that made vary good marbles when they had been burned like brick. We had a play house in the back yard, in the shade, kept store, traded and sold marbles, had rag dolls, stick horses, swapped and trad-ed like any other thriving community. Until dark stopped our activities, that play house was a bustling market place.

The only extra time we boys ever got was when father went to Danville. He was gone all day and always laid out our work and task for the day. After we had done all of that work, then we could go to the "crick." That crick was our paradize, swim and fish, but we must get the work done first. So, father usually gave us about twice as much work as we would normally do on the days he went to Danville. But we would sail right in, hurry, hurry and get the task done about 4 or 5 o'clock, then hurry to the creek, with a couple of hours of pure delight. We usually caught some fish weighing around a half pound and up to a pound, sometimes.

My father and mother were concerned only with the children and their work. They were strictly "Hoosiers" (who's here) and isolated themselves from all except our kin folks. I do not recall that they ever visited in any other homes, not even the nearest neighbors. We children stayed at home, never visited the neighbors children, not did any of them visit us. There were four of us at Needmore large enough to work and play together, so we did not need other children. There were weeks and weeks when we were not off the 80 acre farm. One thing in our family that was sorely lacking, that was music. Mother sang some of the Old Kentucky folk songs and hummed them while at her work but we children had no music, except what we learned from her.

As I have stated, about once a month, we went to grandfather Pearce's. It was only 15 miles but sometimes the road was so muddy, the country so swampy, the wagon nearly hub deep in mud, it took nearly all day to go. There were places where corduroy roads were encountered, where poles were layed across the mud holes and the wagon jolted across on these. It was a very hard day's journey when the roads were bad and that was nearly all the time, for the terrain was low and swampy, much of it. When finally ditched and drained, it became the best kind of farming land.

On Sundays, we children often met other children along the creek, wading, fishing and doing the same things we were doing. However, we did not have much to do with them. There was one little girl about the same age as Charles small, skinny and very dark, by the name of Emma Blanton. She took a notion to Charles and tried to play with him. Of course, Charles resented it. We called her Charles' girl and teased him about her and that made Charles ready for a fight pronto. About this time, we were playing in the woods, one day and there were some large black ants running over a stump. Charles caught one of them and said they would not hurt anybody and said he could bite that ant's head off. We dared him to do it. Charles would never take a dare and said he would bite its head off, if we would do the same. We promised but knew we would not do it. Then Charles put the ant in his mouth and chewed it to pieces. Of course we refused to carry out our part of the promise. Charles would do anything if you dared him.

Mention has been made of the Woodard family. They came to visit us once at Needmore. Uncle Will, aunt Edna, Ola, Raymond and Nellie. Ola was 18 years of age, a little older, Raymond just a little older than myself and Nellie the youngest. We had a good time down on the creek, wading, fishing and catching frogs and turtles. At last, we boys wanted to go swimming and wanted the girls to go down the creek and play. They wanted us all to play together and not go swimming. We finally left them and went up the creek, disrobed, put our clothes there on a stump and was having a great time in the water when suddenly we looked up and saw those girls running away with our clothes. The rest of the boys stayed in the water out of sight, but not so with Raymond. Out of the water he ran after those girls. They were not expecting this and when they saw that he was going to overtake them, they threw the clothes down and screamed, "Go back, go back." They ran all the way to the house and would not play any more that day. They never tried that again!

On July 21, 1883, Dovie Alice was born, another auburn haired baby. There were now six children, ranging from 12 years of age down. The year had been fairly prosperous on the farm and by the most rigid economy, father had managed to pay the rent, but with very little left over. We had two cows and mother always did the milking for she said she could get more milk than anyone else. That Spring, old Kate had brought a fine mule colt, \$40 at weaning time. We were proud of it. However it was a mean little rascal and one day nearly finished me. I had opened the gate for father to drive through and that mule ran over me, knocked me down and kicked me in the head cutting quite a gash and the dent still shows. Now you know it all. You can stop wondering. All along, you have known that there was something wrong, but you did not know what it was. Perhaps, if you had known that a mule had kicked me in the head, you would have had more patience and compassion at my manifested ideosyncracies. This is the first time this incident has ever appeared in print, I held it back as long as I could. Perhaps I should have published it sooner and saved your wonderment.



The Spring of 1884 opened late and cold. There was constant rain which flooded the fields, making it impossible to plant the crops. It was very late when the rain ceased, to plant anything. Then, it turned suddenly hot and dry and a drowth was on. Crops were almost a failure and by the middle of the summer, father saw that he was not going to be able to pay his rent which must be in cash. Father and mother became terribly discouraged at the outlook for the future. They had been married nearly 15 years, had worked hard and had but very little to show for all their labors. They were each 36 years old and with six children. Father knew nothing but farming and never thought of doing anything else. They could see no hope for themselves and children in the future as they had been doing. There must be some kind of a change, but what?

I have spoken of the old veteran, Mr. Denny, who kept the small P. O. at Needmore. He had been around the world some and was fairly informed. He enthusiastic over the government homestead land in the West and wanted very much to go west and get one of those 160 acre government claims that could be had for only a \$14 filing fee, but he could get no one to go with him. he talked to father about this and father became interested. They could go through in covered wagons and soon have homes of their own and stop renting.

At first, it did not appeal to mother, to go so far away from all her folks, for that was indeed far away in those days. She had heard of the dangers involved in that kind of a frontier life, Indians and all. But they had to do something. Little by little mother was won over. Father, of course, disliked leaving all his kin folks, but something must be done. There was absolutely no future for them as renters on an Indiana farm. Day and night, they discussed the proposition, some days they were fully decided to go but the next day, entirely out of the notion, the effort too great and the risk too dangerous. One of the children might get sick and die on the road and they could not think of such a thing. They would give it up. Then, the other side of the question would come up and it would seem that there was nothing to do but go and take the risk. The thought of a farm all their own, fired them with enthusiasm. --(15)--

That summer, father and mother spent a lot of time with the Dennys. As I have said, he had been around and was well informed, for that day. He had made a study of the homestead lands and painted glowing pictures of a home on the broad acres and unlimited opportunities of those western prairies. No stumps to plow around, no roots to stall the team and cause the plowman to back up, no brush to burn, what an opportunity! But the thought of leaving all the folks and friends, the dangers and the thought of what might happen, neutralized all of this, at times. Still, they must do something! No future, the way they were going! Toward the middle of August, they made their decision. They would go! They would not again allow themselves to consider the other side of the proposition. The die was cast and they would set to at once getting ready.

They decided to have a public sale and dispose of everything, except what they could take in the covered wagon. Sale bills were printed to advertise the sale. Father had set the date to start on September 15 and now all was hurry to get ready by that time. Father bought a new wagon, had extension irons made to fit on the outside of the wagon bed which made the wagon about 30 inches wider, so we could all sleep crosswise in the wagon in bad weather. Kate and John were a fairly good team. Mr. Denny was a great help to father in very many ways and told him about the extension irons.

The sale was held but father did not realize as much out of it as he had expected. When the debts were all paid and everything was straightened up, father barely had \$100 ~~xxx~~ with which to start. What courage! What fortitude! Finally the morning of the 15th came but the wagon was not ready to go. Noon came and still they were packing the wagon, but father said they would start on the 15th and father always kept his word. Precisely at 4 o'clock p. m., farewells were said and in tears the two wagons moved toward setting sun.

--(This story is continued in my book "THE HOMESTEAD URGE).

--(16)--

g. Sharon Pearce 11/2006  
2226 S. Racine Way to A-204  
Aurora, CO 80014